

## 'Schuman versus our miners and metalworkers' from Le Drapeau Rouge (20 May 1950)

**Caption:** On 20 May 1950, the Belgian Communist daily newspaper Le Drapeau Rouge condemns the threats that the Schuman Plan poses to the country's coal and steel industries.

**Source:** Le Drapeau rouge. Quotidien du Parti communiste de Belgique. 20.05.1950, n° 117; 29e année. Bruxelles: Société populaire d'édition. "Schuman contre nos mineurs et nos métallurgistes", auteur:Burnelle, E. , p. 1.

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**Last updated:** 05/07/2016

## Schuman versus our miners and steelworkers

by E Burnelle

Mr Schuman has found the remedy for the economic crisis now brewing in the countries covered by the Marshall Plan. He has 'a plan', or more precisely a plan that Washington whispered in his ear.

The plan aims to turn the countries covered by the Marshall Plan into a huge single market for coal and steel.

Mr Schuman has obviously done his best to present his scheme as a rescue plan designed to secure peace and raise workers' standards of living.

Achille Delattre immediately came out in support of Mr Schuman's 'idea'. He proclaimed that the *Internationale Jaune des Mineurs* was in full agreement with the Schuman Plan, which was a step towards a 40-hour week!

But what should really make the workers wary is Mr Van Zeeland's loud approval for the Schuman scheme.

Mr Van Zeeland has never been known to confuse the interests of the big corporations with those of the workers.

That is something that the workers have learnt to their expense on several occasions.

Approval by Mr Van Zeeland is tantamount to a warning signal to the workers.

So what exactly is behind Mr Schuman's high-flown phrases about the European community?

The Plan provides for an arrangement between French industrialists and Ruhr magnates. What can be expected of an agreement between the capitalists who backed Pétain and the ones who helped Hitler?

Certainly nothing of any use to the workers!

It is quite a different matter for the capitalists of the Fourth Reich, however. Through a huge increase in the exploitation of German workers and thanks to 'protection' from their American masters, they will be able to flood the Marshall Plan countries with their goods at prices lower than ours, while stepping up competition, thanks to Mr Schuman.

Mr Schuman's 'arrangements' will certainly not swell the pay-packets of German workers, but there can be no doubt that our own capitalists will exert greater and greater pressure on Belgian workers' wages until they get them down to the same level as those of their German fellows.

Unrestricted imports of low-cost German coal and steel into our country will deal a fatal blow first to our mining industry and then to our steelworks. The only firms that might survive here will be the biggest mines and factories. But for a whole series of mines and factories it will be same story as at Bray, Le Perron, Hornu-Wasmes and Les Chevalières, with massive closures.

Meanwhile the British press is saying that according to the Schuman plan 'European' industry will be brought under the control of an authority **THAT WILL BE EMPOWERED TO DECIDE THE NUMBER OF WORKING HOURS** and to adjust steel output.

Achille Delattre has no doubt taken this to mean that the workers will be given a 40-hour week.

But steelworkers and miners will see things differently from Achille Delattre.

What they will see in these 'supranational, European' committees is insolent meddling in our affairs by American tycoons and Nazi magnates. They will know how to silence the Delattres of this world, the smooth-talkers and accomplices of arms dealers.

And they will fight to defend their livelihood against a fearful threat and the manoeuvres of warmongers.