

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Communicated to  
the Council and to the  
Members of the League.

C.361.M.128.1926.I.

Geneva, June 8th, 1926.

S A A R B A S I N.

FREEDOM OF TRANSPORT AND TRANSIT  
OVER THE RAILWAYS OF THE SAAR  
TERRITORY.

Note by the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General has the honour to forward for the information of the Council and the Members of the League the following documents concerning the freedom of transport and transit over the railways of the Saar territory.

1) Letter dated June 7th, 1926, from the Chairman of the Saar Governing Commission, forwarding

2) Petition dated May 31st, 1926, entitled "The withdrawal of French troops from the Saar territory."

The petition comes from the Centre Party and the German Saar District People's Party of the Saar Advisory Council<sup>(1)</sup>.

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(1) Only one copy of the map attached to the petition is circulated to each member of the Council owing to the limited number of copies received.

1. LETTER FROM THE GOVERNING COMMISSION TO THE  
SECRETARY-GENERAL

Translation .

June 7th, 1926.

Sir,

The Governing Commission has the honour to forward to you a memorandum dated May 31st, 1926 - forwarded in a letter dated June 4th - regarding the "withdrawal of French troops from the Saar Territory".

The Governing Commission would refer you to the proposals which it addressed to you on May 21st last (1) regarding the measures to be adopted to ensure the freedom of transport and transit over the railways of the Territory and will merely make the following brief observations:

The authors of the memorandum confuse two totally different questions - that of the protection of persons and property, which was recently dealt with by the Governing Commission in a report dated January 28th, 1926 (2) of which the Council of the League of Nations took note on March 18th, 1926, and the question of the freedom of transport and transit which the Council itself put to the Commission at the same meeting on March 18th, 1926, and in regard to which the Governing Commission drew up proposals on May 21st last. These proposals do not in any way relate to the French garrison troops in the Territory called upon to co-operate in the protection of persons and property within the Territory.

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(1) See Note by the Secretary-General, C.306.M.115.1926.I  
(2) See C.40.M.20.1926.I.

The Governing Commission was invited by the Council to submit to it proposals in regard to the measures to be taken, "pending the completion of the withdrawal of French troops from the Territory", to ensure freedom of transport and transit. The Council pointed out in particular that a Railway Committee (Commission de Réseau) possessing the necessary powers should be at the disposal of the Governing Commission. The term "Commission de Réseau" is perfectly clear and precise, and means a military body.

By expressly placing a Railway Committee at the disposal of the Governing Commission the Council of the League replied in anticipation to that part of the memorandum which deals with the right of passage of military forces through the Saar Territory. Since 1920, troops of various nationalities have, in order to fulfil international obligations resulting from treaties, been carried over the Saar railways, and the railways have obtained important receipts thereby. Moreover, a glance at the map will show that Saarbrück is a railway centre of unusual importance, from which main lines radiate to Treves, Mayence, Ludwigshafen and Germersheim. These railways represent the lines of natural and rapid communication for the army of occupation in the Rhineland, and the Governing Commission has perfectly understood why the Council of the League should call upon it to keep a Railway Committee at its disposal to ensure transport and transit over lines of such vital international importance.

(signed) G.W. STEPHENS.

2. P E T I T I O N

TO THE

COUNCIL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

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MEMORANDUM FROM THE POLITICAL PARTIES  
IN THE SAAR TERRITORY ADVISORY COUNCIL  
(Zentrum and German-Saarland People's Party)

dated May 31st, 1926,

regarding the withdrawal of the French troops  
from the Saar Territory.

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Translation  
from the German.

SAARBRUCK,

May 31st 1926.

At its next session the Council of the League of Nations will deal with the measures of protection which the Governing Commission of the Saar Territory considers to be necessary.

We are unaware of the Governing Commission's proposals. If, however, these proposals contemplate the protection of the Saar railways by French troops, we would venture to draw the Council's attention to the following points:

The Saar Statute in the Treaty of Versailles expressly provides that there should be no troops in the Saar Territory. The Council of the League itself has in various resolutions, given proof of its wish that French troops should not be permanently organised in the Saar Territory, and that they must be withdrawn as soon as possible. Moreover, the granting of a right of passage for foreign troops through the Saar Territory is incompatible with the neutrality of the Saar Basin, which is administered by the League of Nations. In addition, there is no clause either in the Saar Statute in the Versailles Treaty, or in the Covenant of the League of Nations, which confers such a right of passage.

Further, it cannot be claimed that, to ensure the maintenance of undisturbed communication between the occupied Rhine Territory and France the Saar railways are essential, and must be protected by French troops. The strategical communications between the Occupied Territory and France are

amply secured without touching the Saar. There is an adequate number of railway lines, not passing through the Territory, which ensure rapid and undisturbed communication between France and the occupied area. The three main lines (not to mention many other strategical railways) -

Coblenz - Treves - Thionville (Diedenhofen) - Metz  
Mainz - Bingerbrück - Kaiserslautern - Strasburg and  
Mainz - Ludwigshafen - Strasburg

are amply sufficient for the transport and supply in the shortest possible space of time of an army of several hundred thousand ~~of~~ men. We attach a map which will make this point quite clear.

We would beg the Council of the League of Nations to adopt no proposal put forward by the Governing Commission which provides for the protection of the Saar railways by French troops, and gives these troops a right of passage through the Saar Territory.

Parties in the Saar Territory Advisory Council

(Signed) P. KIEFER,  
Zentrum

(Signed) SCHMETZER  
German-Saarland People's Party  
(United Liberal and Democratic  
Party)