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Schreiben Carl Bergmann and Louis Loucheur betr. Reparationslieferungen (26.08.1919)

Brief

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Formalia:

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Regest:

Der Reparationsbeauftragte der Reichsregierung, Carl Bergmann, spricht in diesem Schreiben an Louis Loucheur, dem französischen Minister für den Wiederaufbau der zerstörten Gebiete (regions devastées) über die Schwierigkeiten der deutschen Seite, die im Versailler Vertrag festgeschriebene Verpflichtung der Deutschen, Kohlenlieferungen insbesondere an Frankreich zu erfüllen. Nicht nur spricht Bergmann das Problem der Kohlenknappheit an, das Deutschland noch bis Mitte der 1920er Jahre begleiten sollte. Zudem werden die technischen und logistischen Schwierigkeiten des Transports thematisiert, die die deutsche Außenwirtschaft in den folgenden Jahren stark belasten sollten.

Versailles, 26th. August 1919

Sir,

As a consequence of our pressing recommendation, the German Government has decided to begin deliveries of coal immediately, although according to the uniform opinion of all experts, the coal is to be expected during the winter in Germany. We hope that the Reparation Commission will not insist on the quantities laid down at present if the coal production falls below present level, but that it will take into account the changed situation, as you have already personally assured us. We are, therefore, beginning coal deliveries immediately, but I feel my duty to tell you the following in all sincerity:

1. If you are counting on deliveries being carried out in good order, I would beg you to see to it that technical and transport questions are regulated in such a manner that the interested German parties are not put to inconvenience in their businesses. It would be dangerous to make modifications now in the existing trade, and transport of coal situation, or to make new institutions which would create competition with interested Germans. The voluntary collaboration of the Coal Syndicate, for example, is of substantial importance. I have been assured that the Syndicate is ready to undertake to the greatest extent possible, deliveries to the Allies in spite of all difficulties, provided that these deliveries may be carried out in the usual manner.¹ It is laid down in the conditions of Peace that deliveries by land and by waterway from the interior shall be carried out as far as the frontiers of France and Italy, etc. All the necessary machinery for this is in the existence of the German side. If it is necessary to create new organisations for this purpose, practical difficulties will result which will put the execution of deliveries in grave danger. It is just the same for deliveries by sea routes. Here again coal must be delivered by existing organisations as far as the sea port.

1 Gemeint ist hier das Rheinisch-Westfälische Kohlensyndikat. Dabei handelte es sich um die 1893 geschaffene Absatzorganisation der Kohlenindustrie des Ruhrgebiets organisiert als eine Gesellschaft bürgerlichen Rechts. *Roelevink, Organisierte Intransparenz.*

2. You can conceive that I have succeeded, after a study of the situation, as far as that has been possible during my short stay here, to put aside all objections in principle with regard to coal deliveries. Further, I should like to assure you once again and to give you proof of the fact that the gentlemen present here who have assisted at the discussions have had intention whatever of delaying delivery, but that they have believed it their duty as a consequence of past experiences, above all at the time of the Luxemburg Protocol, to see that all important technical questions should be regulated in advance in order to avoid all misunderstanding. I venture to make a proposal to you with reference to the claims to be made relative to the execution of the Luxemburg Protocol. The study of this proposal will show that the German point of view in this question at the time of the discussion, was justified by the facts. I therefore beg you particularly, in the common interest, to be good enough to see that the different points of the Luxemburg protocol are settled at the earliest possible moment to our mutual satisfaction. I am convinced that the settlement of the Luxemburg Protocol will be of great importance for the carrying out of coal deliveries in conformity with the Peace conditions.