

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

Communicated to the  
Members of the Council.

C.320.1934.I.

Geneva, July 23rd, 1934.

PROTECTION OF MINORITIES IN POLAND.

PETITION FROM M. Z. PELENSKY CONCERNING THE SITUATION OF  
THE UKRAINIAN MINORITY IN POLAND.

---

(Doc. C. 540.1933.I).

---

Note by the Secretary-General.

Under the Council resolution of June 13th, 1929, paragraph 4 i), the Secretary-General has the honour to circulate, for the information of the Members of the Council, a letter addressed to him by the Representatives of Denmark, China and Italy with reference to their examination of this petition together with the observations of the Polish Government thereon.

In accordance with the Council resolution referred to above, the documents concerning this question are in the archives of the Secretariat at the disposal of the Members of the Council.

---

LETTER FROM THE REPRESENTATIVES OF DENMARK, CHINA AND ITALY.

To the Secretary-General.

Sir,

Under the Council resolution of October 25th, 1920, a Minorities Committee, consisting of the representatives of Denmark, China and Italy,\* examined a petition dated July 1st, 1933, from M. Z. Pelensky, concerning the situation of the Ukrainian minority in Poland (Document C.540.1933.I.). The questions dealt with in the petition may be summarised as follows:

---

\* The Committee consisted originally of the representatives of Norway, China and Italy. The place of the Norwegian representative was subsequently taken by the Danish representative.

It is alleged that in the district of Chelm the use of the Ukrainian language on public posters, and on the signs of private shops and co-operative societies is strictly prohibited.

The co-operatives, it is complained, have almost all been closed by order of the authorities.

The activities of "Ridna Chata", a Ukrainian association for popular education, are alleged to have been suspended several years ago.

The existence of any Ukrainian political organisation is said to have been rendered impossible.

Theatrical performances and concerts in the Ukrainian language are not permitted by the authorities.

The authorities are said to interfere particularly with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and the Orthodox priests are entirely prevented from giving religious instruction to the young in the Church schools, especially in the Ukrainian language.

To these allegations the Government has replied partly in the observations which it submitted with regard to the petition and which are reproduced in the above-mentioned Council document, and partly in the statements which it has since communicated to the Committee.

1. The use of the Ukrainian language for private shop signs and the signs of co-operative societies is not restricted by any legal provision, those concerned being entirely free in the matter. M. Pelensky's allegation that the administrative authorities in the district in question have strictly prohibited the use of the Ukrainian language for shop signs is entirely without foundation.

2. As regards the allegation that almost all the co-operative societies have been closed by order of the authorities, the Government refers to the particulars which it had previously supplied and which are to be found in documents C.141.1933.I. and C.232.1933.I. It has further communicated to the Committee a list of Ukrainian co-operative societies in the Voivodie of Lublin.

3. As regards the "Ridna Chata" association, the Government states that its dissolution was ordered on account of the fact that its members were engaging in illegal political activities.

4. As regards the Ukrainian political organisations the Polish Government explains that when any such organisation has been dissolved the reason has always been that it was conducting Communist propaganda.

5. The Government maintains that the allegation to the effect that theatrical performances and concerts in the Ukrainian language have been forbidden in the district of Chelm is entirely without foundation. The Committee has had cognisance of a list of the performances and concerts in Ukrainian which were given in the Voivodie of Lublin during the year 1933.

6. The Government points out that there is no "Ukrainian Orthodox Church" in Poland. The official title of the Orthodox Church is the "Autocephalous Holy Orthodox Church in Poland". The latter is autonomous and is governed by a Synod consisting of orthodox diocesan bishops. The question of religious teaching in the State schools was settled by a circular of the Ministry of Education of January 5th, 1927, which was addressed to the responsible officials in each of the school districts in Poland and the text of which has been communicated to the Committee. The organisation and supervision of religious teaching is in the hands of the religious community concerned, irrespective of creed, throughout Polish territory. In the schools in the district of Chelm the orthodox religion is taught by the orthodox clergy: parish priests, curates or rectors. It is only when the representatives of the clergy are prevented from taking charge of religious instruction that it is entrusted - in agreement with the authorities of the Orthodox Church - to a suitably qualified layman.

The Committee wishes to convey its thanks to the Polish Government for the very detailed information which it has kindly supplied. Having examined the very full documentation which has been laid before it, it has decided to close the examination of M. Pelensky's petition without drawing the Council's attention to the questions to which the petition relates.

The Council's resolution of June 13th, 1929, 4 i) provides that when the members of a Minorities Committee have finished the examination of a question without asking that it be placed on the Council's agenda, they will communicate the result of their examination by letter to the other Members of the Council for their information. We have the honour accordingly to request you to be good enough to communicate the contents of this letter, for information, to the other Members of the Council.

(Signed) Gustav RASMUSSEN,

Representative of Denmark,  
Geneva, June 26th, 1934.

(Signed) Kunsz KING,  
Representative of China,  
The Hague, July 4th, 1934.

(Signed) ALOISI,  
Representative of Italy,  
Rome, July 11th, 1934.