LEAGUE OF NATIONS

PROTECTION OF MINORITIES IN UPPER SILESIA.

Petition from the Association of Poles in Germany regarding the Incidents which occurred in Connection with the Performance of the Opera "Halka" at Oppeln.

Note by the Secretary-General.

In letters dated May 16th and May 29th, 1929, the Secretary-General communicated to the German Government for its observations a telegram dated April 30th and a letter, with thirty-five appendices, dated May 8th, from the Association of Poles in Germany. These two communications, which were forwarded to the Council under Article 147 of the Convention of May 15th, 1922, regarding Upper Silesia, relate to the incidents which occurred in connection with the performance of the Polish opera "Halka" at Oppeln on April 28th, 1929. The Secretary-General also communicated to the German Government on August 16th a further communication, with one annex, from the Association of Poles, dated July 27th.

At the request of the German Government, the Acting President of the Council extended the ordinary period for the submission of observations by one month. The German Government's observations have now been forwarded to the Secretariat in a letter, with two appendices, from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the German Reich, dated August 27th, 1929.

The Secretary-General has the honour to circulate for the consideration of the Council the communications from the Association of Poles dated May 8th and July 27th, and the observations of the German Government. The text of the telegram from the Association of Poles dated April 30th is given in the communication of May 8th.
PETITION

[Translation.]

The Association of Poles in Germany, T. z. (Section I) to the Council of the League of Nations, Geneva.

Oppeln, May 8th, 1929.

In its letter of May 1st, the Committee of Section I of the Association of Poles in Germany confirmed the telegram sent to the Council on April 30th, reading as follows:

"Corporation of Oppeln at first refused application of Association of Poles for permission to use municipal theatre for performance by Kattowitz Opera Company on the pretext that Polish performance bore political character. After numerous difficulties and negotiations, Government authorities induced Corporation to grant use theatre for performance Polish Opera 'Halka' on April twenty-eighth.

"On report that Polish performance would be given, German Press inserted articles couched in aggressive terms inciting to attacks on Poles. Members of Nationalist Activist Organisations threatened Poles beforehand and distributed leaflets of provocative character. On night of April 27th-28th, Director Powolny, member of Committee of Association of Poles, was attacked by individuals, who remained unidentified. Before the performance began, National Activist Organisations assembled outside and inside theatre and menaced Poles entering. Police did not disperse demonstrators, so that at close of performance numbers of demonstrators had increased to about two thousand. Numerous youths belonging to Nationalist Organisation entered theatre unobserved and threw bombs amongst audience during first and second acts. After performance, demonstrators outside theatre menaced the people leaving, insulted them, spat in their faces, beat and abused them; two priests were insulted. Police maintained passive attitude. At station to which singers had to proceed no police were in attendance, so that several actresses and actors were beaten and even seriously injured, several soldiers of Reichswehr also participating in the aggression.

"We appeal to the Council of the League of Nations to induce German authorities to see that guilty parties are severely punished and to guarantee our safety.

(Signed) Czesław Klimas,
Stefan Szczepaniak,
Leon Powolny.

Committee of the Association of Poles in Germany (Section I)

We beg to lodge herewith a detailed petition giving an account of what took place.

After a preliminary interview with Dr. Berger, Oberbürgermeister of Oppeln, the Association of Poles, Section I, submitted through him a written application dated January 31st, 1929, to the Theatre Committee requesting that the use of the theatre should be granted free of charge to the Polish Theatre Company from Kattowitz. The Oppeln Corporation refused the said application by a resolution dated February 4th, 1929, on the pretext that a Polish theatrical performance was a political demonstration (Appendices 1 and 2).

On February 14th, 1929, through its Executive Committee in Berlin, the Association of Poles appealed to the Prussian Minister of the Interior, asking that instructions should be given to enable the Polish Theatre Company to give a performance in Oppeln.

On April 18th, reports appeared in the local German Press that the Oppeln Corporation had decided (it was ascertained later that the resolution was passed on April 17th) that the theatre was to be put at the disposal of the Polish Company on April 28th.

Not having received any written confirmation of this decision on the part of the Corporation, the representatives of the Association of Poles had another conference on Monday, April 22nd, with Dr. Berger, Oberbürgermeister, and Herr Lukaschek, Oberpräsident. As a result of these negotiations, Dr. Berger stated that he would guarantee that the Polish performance would actually take place. On April 23rd, the representatives of the Polish minority, M. Szczepaniak and Dr. Michalek, had a protracted conversation with the Oberbürgermeister concerning the expenses of the performance, when Dr. Berger stipulated that the Polish Catholic School Society, which was arranging the performance, should be responsible not only for the usual expenses connected with the performance but also for the cost of the installation of the electric light and the stage fittings which the theatre authorities had, for some unknown reason, removed this year earlier than usual.
The Oberbürgermeister made it a further condition that the organisers should undertake responsibility for all damage which might be caused to the theatre fittings in case of any disturbance. As this was a condition which had never been insisted upon in the case of German organisations, it was firmly rejected by the Association of Poles.

On April 24th, the Oberbürgermeister, Dr. Berger, finally confirmed in writing that the theatre was at the disposal of the Polish Company (Appendix 3).

We would draw attention to the last sentence in his letter, as it contains a number of stipulations which were also never made in the case of German organisations.

As soon as it became known that the theatre had been put at the disposal of the Polish Company, the German Press started a wild campaign of provocation. In articles, some of which are enclosed herewith, the German population was incited to violence against the Polish minority (Appendix 4). At a meeting of the Town Council on April 19th, two resolutions were passed opposing the giving of a Polish performance. The text of the resolutions was as follows:

"The news that the Corporation has decided at its last meeting to give the Poles the use of the municipal theatre for a Polish performance has aroused astonishment and profound indignation among the citizens of the purely German town of Oppeln. Oppeln has a population of 44,000; at the last Reichstag elections in May 1928, only 105 Poles voted. Further, the intellectual level of this tiny minority is such that only a small percentage would be interested in opera or ballet performances. The German population of the German town of Oppeln considers the object of the Polish National Theatre Company's visit to be not to satisfy the cultural needs of the Polish minority, but merely to appease the Polish leaders' appetite for propaganda.

"We consider it to be our duty to declare here that we cannot understand the action of the Corporation and formally protest against it."

The above resolution was proposed by the German National Party and the German People's Party.

We subjoin the text of a resolution submitted by the Centre Party:

"We consider that the Corporation, in voting on the question of allowing the Polish minority to have the use of the theatre, has permitted itself to be swayed by purely abstract considerations. In the name of the Centre Party, I declare that conditions in Katowice differ totally from those in Oppeln. In the former you have practically a majority of inhabitants of German stock, as the plebiscite in 1921 proved; here an insignificant Polish minority, artificially exaggerated. We regret the Corporation's decision.

Communal Centre Party."

It should be observed that, according to the official census of the population taken by the German authorities on June 16th, 1925, there are in the district of Oppeln 60,455 Polish-speaking inhabitants out of a total population of 169,584.

Leaflets of a provocative character were also distributed in the streets of the town, especially on Sunday, the day of the performance, in front of the church, before and after the service. One of the leaflets read as follows:

"German fellow-citizens!

"The Poles have the effrontery to give a Polish theatrical performance in the German town of Oppeln, in that part of Upper Silesia which, since the 1921 plebiscite, has been indisputably German. The performance is said to be justified on cultural grounds, but as a matter of fact the Poles are using it as political propaganda.

"This is being tolerated by the Republican authorities in the mistaken belief that they can thereby bargain for some advantages for the Germans in what is now Polish Upper Silesia.

"This idea is wrong.

"The Poles oppress the Germans in Eastern Upper Silesia, whatever happens. Anyone there who is German cleaves in any case to the German tradition in which he was born and brought up. Neither pinpricks nor bludgeonings can shake the loyalty of the Germans over there. Every sensible man must see that it is monstrous to allow the Poles to carry on their propaganda in German Upper Silesia and at the same time to harass the national movement, thus producing false impressions abroad regarding the German character of our province.

"Is it really desired to foster the Polish lust for conquest? What folly!

"We of the National Socialist Party are keenly opposed to this policy so lacking in national pride—this narrow, weak-kneed policy of political huckstering."
in view of the protection granted by the authorities, we can do nothing to prevent the Polish theatrical performance, as they are only seeking an excuse to forbid us to do so.

"We shall, however, to defend the honour of Germany, and to make the German nation so strong that we shall be able to give effective assistance to our brethren on the other side of the present frontiers. We therefore appeal to you, German fellow-countrymen, to join our ranks and fight for a better Germany.

"Join the National Socialist Party!" (Appendix 5.)

From the course of the negotiations regarding the use of the theatre, it is obvious that both the public and the German authorities wished in the first place to prevent the performance, and, when this failed, to terrorise the people so that they would not attend it. Nevertheless, the tickets were sold in the course of a day and a-half, the theatre was filled to overflowing with Poles, and hundreds of persons could not get tickets.

Free tickets were issued only to the Press and to the German authorities, who unfortunately did not attend the performance.

As mentioned above, the German Press initiated a campaign of provocation as soon as it became known that a Polish performance was to be given; the police authorities therefore should have foreseen the possibility of disturbances and realised the necessity of organising adequate and reliable police protection.

Nevertheless, on the critical day, police protection both in the theatre and after the close of the performance, was very inadequate, and the police failed to discharge their duties properly.

In the afternoon of April 28th, 1929, in the streets of Oppeln and especially in the street where the theatre is situated, the crowds of people were such as had never before been seen on any ordinary Sunday. Passing by, it was easy to see that small groups of people were anxiously discussing the Polish performance which was to take place in the afternoon. Distributors of leaflets ran up and down the streets handing out provocative literature to the people. It was clear that the German party was preparing to make the Polish performance impossible.

Before the start of the performance, the crowd gathered outside was increasing in size every moment; it was composed not only of youths, but also of adults of both sexes. The attention of all was concentrated on the theatre and on the people entering it, the latter being subjected to threats and scurrilous epithets (Appendix 6). It should be observed that the town hall, in which the theatre is situated, also contains the police headquarters.

The police, however, took no steps of any kind to disperse the crowd, but looked on passively while the latter continued to increase in numbers and assume a threatening attitude. Before the performance started, there was scarcely a policeman to be seen in front of the theatre.

When the first act began, stink-bombs were thrown from the gallery (Appendix 7). Shortly afterwards, an intolerable stench of sulphuretted hydrogen arose and spread over the whole theatre. As soon as the first act was over, the attention of a police officer in the gallery was drawn to this; he, however, took no notice (Appendices 8 and 9).

Stink-bombs continued to be thrown from the gallery without any interference during the whole of the first interval and the second act. The police only began to intervene when the stench in the theatre became so intolerable that people began to faint and had to be carried out, and when some members of the audience started to shout and leave the theatre (Appendix 10).

The persons who had thrown the stink-bombs were arrested by members of the audience. When five of these, who had been caught throwing bombs, were handed over by spectators to a policeman, he said: "That's all very well, but what am I to do with them?" Meanwhile an officer had arrived and gave orders to take the names of those creating the disturbance and to conduct them to the police station. A little later the police again arrested a number of people who had slipped into the theatre without tickets; but again, it was only on the insistent demand of the audience, who pointed out the suspected parties, that the police arrested the culprits and, upon the orders of the officer, took them to the police station. When, at the request of some of the people present, the police finally started to check the tickets and to remove persons who had none, the audience asked that the names of the assailants should be noted at the same time. The police released the culprits who had been arrested, and they were later seen in the crowd of demonstrators.

Meanwhile, the crowd outside the theatre had increased to about two thousand people and had pushed up into the theatre entrance, where there were groups of German activists in uniform. Some of the crowd burst into the lower corridor of the theatre shouting and whistling. The police, however, still remained passive and took no steps to disperse them. Numerous soldiers of the Reichswehr were observed amongst the crowd shouting and uttering threats, like the other demonstrators (Appendices 11 and 12).

On leaving the theatre, the audience, which had filled the theatre to overflowing and was composed exclusively of members of the Polish minority, was entirely at the mercy of the excited rabble. On their way home, men and women were attacked by the Germans, insulted, jestled and assaulted. They were also spat on. On leaving the theatre, the spectators were met by the crowd with shouts insulting to their Polish sentiments, such as "Polish swine! Down with Poland! Thrash the Polish dogs!", etc., without any intervention on the part of the police.

Two elderly priests who were making their way to the railway-station were assaulted by the crowd, and a policeman who witnessed the incident did not even try to take the names of the culprits. Young girls returning from the theatre were beaten with sticks, and a police officer who witnessed it, though he stopped the attackers, did not take their names. Another police officer...
summoned to protect the Poles, did nothing to defend them (Appendices 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26).

Three soldiers of the Reichswehr passing along the Krakauerstrasse at 8.30 p.m. stopped one of the audience who was escorting his mother to the station, hail him with shouts of: "Where are you off to ? To Warsaw ? Off you go, to Warsaw !" (Appendix 27). One of the soldiers put his hand to his sabre as if he intended to use it.

When the audience had left the theatre, the majority of the singers who were still in the building left it by the back entrance, on the instructions of the Chief of Police (Appendix 28).

Still following his instructions, they made their way through the Regierungshauptplatz and the Krakauerstrasse to the railway-station. When the Poles pointed out that the road was not safe and that the crowd would probably stand in front of the station, no attention was paid by the police; and the singers had therefore to make their way to the station alone. Along the whole distance of about one kilometre, which they, in accordance with the authorities' instructions, had to cover, there was not a single policeman. Scarcely had they appeared on the Regierungshauptplatz when they were met with hostile and insulting shouts, and groups of people ran along the road they were following. At the corner of the Schlosstrasse appeared a group of youths, about 40 or 50 strong, marching in close formation in columns of fours and singing a German song. When this group observed the Polish singers approaching the Regierungshauptplatz, they set up shouts of: "There they go ! Quickly now, everyone, to the station ". With sticks in their hands, this group pursued the singers as far as the station. The singers were quite unarmed and had no police protection. It was remarkable that on the Krakauerstrasse, leading to the station, there was not a single policeman—the more so as usually police patrols constantly pass up and down this street on Sundays.

Meanwhile, German activists, hostile to the Poles, had assembled in front of the railway-station, forming a compact mass at the entrance. The members of the theatre company, men and women, who had to push their way through this crowd, were brutally beaten by the Germans, jostled, thrown down and kicked. At the station and along the 25-metre subway leading to the platform, the German activists, were drawn up in rows, through which the players had to make their way, and here, again, the attack was repeated. Women were struck in the face and kicked without compunction. At the end of the subway there were three armed railway policemen, who did not intervene but merely looked on and made sarcastic remarks as the men and women were mercilessly beaten. When one of the spectators from the theatre insisted on a station policeman's arresting and taking the name of an assailant who had struck an actress with his fist in the face and whose arm the witness had seized in order to prevent him from dealing a further blow, the policeman pretended not to hear, and allowed the assailant to disappear in the crowd (Appendices 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35).

According to Press reports, the effects of this attack on the Polish singers were deplorable. Many persons sustained more or less serious bodily injuries, and two were said to have been permanently incapacitated for professional work.

We assert that the German authorities have failed in their duty towards the Polish minority. Bearing in mind the whole campaign of incitement to violence carried on in the German Press, the attitude of the German authorities in allowing such excesses to occur seems entirely incomprehensible. These incidents were not the unintentional excesses of irresponsible youths, as a section of the German Press is now trying to represent; on the contrary, there is every indication that they were systematically organised in advance. The proofs are:

1. The violent campaign conducted by the German Press.
2. The circulation of appeals by nationalist organisations.
3. The terrorist attitude of German activist organisations towards the Poles for several days beforehand.
4. The agitation conducted by teachers amongst secondary school pupils, some of whom were also observed amongst the demonstrators.
5. The organisation of meetings at which the breaking-up of the performance was discussed.
6. The exercises organised on April 27th and 28th by the "Landesschützenverband" near Oppeln and on the evening of April 27th by the " Jungstahlhelm " in Oppeln, very probably for the purpose of having the members of the organisations handy on the critical day.
7. The summons issued to members of the German activist organisations several days before the performance to meet, fully equipped, on the afternoon of April 28th in the square in front of the theatre for the purpose of breaking up the Polish performance.
8. The part taken in the demonstrations and disturbances by regular armed activist groups (members of these groups were wearing their insignia and some of them full uniform).
9. The fact that on the night of April 27th-28th five persons, hitherto unidentified, attacked and seriously assaulted M. Leon Powolny, the well-known Oppeln bank director and member of the Committee of the Association of Poles, as he was returning home through the Regierungshauptplatz.
The above incidents furnish additional proof of the general atmosphere in which the Polish minority of more than 500,000 persons has to live in the Oppeln district of Silesia. These people are entirely deprived of any possibility of satisfying the most elementary cultural needs. The hatred felt towards the Polish minority from time immemorial is still fostered by the nationalist Press, whose aggressive articles are tolerated by the authorities. Both in private and in public life they have to meet with the same feeling of ill-will and are subjected to vexations, and petty annoyances. In a series of petitions dated, e.g., March 24th, 1928, October 20th, 22nd, and 23rd, 1928, December 18th and 30th, 1928, March 25th and 26th, 1929, we have complained of the more flagrant instances of hatred manifested by a section of the population and of the Prussian officials towards the Polish minority—such instances as can be embodied in a petition. We have, further, submitted a number of written complaints to the Mixed Commission for Upper Silesia. Notwithstanding these petitions, the attitude adopted and the sentiments felt towards the Polish minority have not changed. The real reason for the hostile attitude of the German population to all manifestations of our cultural life is undoubtedly the equivocal attitude of the Government. Yet all the democratic constitutions of the world, including that of Weimar, guarantee their subjects opportunity and freedom to develop their own cultural life. Even the most primitives minded being has such aspirations, and it is therefore the duty of the authorities over him to give him the opportunity of satisfying them, so long as they are not incompatible with public order or public morality. The Prussian authorities, however, evidently consider the slightest proof on the part of the Polish minority of their attachment to their language and nationality as equivalent to the creation of an atmosphere of irredentism. In the case of the Polish minority in Prussia, such apprehensions can be neither maintained nor justified in any way. The demands of the Polish minority are merely the postulates of equal citizens of the Reich, who have the same rights and obligations as all others. The question of artistic and intellectual interchanges between different nations is not a matter of politics; it satisfies the fundamental needs of civilized peoples. This, also, was the aim followed by the Association of Poles in Germany and the Polish Catholic School Society, as organisations for the promotion of culture and education, in giving a performance of the Polish opera "Halka" in Oppeln. If, then, considerations of such a general cultural nature do not as yet appeal to a section of the German population in the Oppeln district of Silesia in relation to the Polish minority, and if the attitude of this section makes it impossible to foster and develop freely the traditions of their national culture, the authorities should have remembered that, apart from any general principles of human conduct, the Geneva Convention of May 15th, 1922, which was accepted and signed by the Government of the Reich, and Part III of which deals with the rights of minorities, applied also to the Oppeln district of Silesia.

The recent incidents in Oppeln have furnished another convincing proof that the state of mind of the German majority is still far from being in harmony with a spirit of true tolerance towards loyal subjects of the German State, who belong to a different race and wish to preserve their racial character. If to-day the German authorities endeavour to represent the Oppeln incidents as a reckless outburst on the part of irresponsible youths, we must point out that this is all the more regrettable, as it proves that the younger generation in Germany is growing up in the spirit of intolerance, chauvinism and hatred unhappily bequeathed by the generation which ended in 1918.

As we consider it futile to apply to the German authorities, seeing that hitherto such applications have effected no real change in the situation, and as the above facts constitute a clear violation of the rights secured us under Article 66, paragraph 1, and Article 67, paragraphs 1 and 3, and guaranteed by the League of Nations in accordance with Article 72, paragraph 1, and also of the undertakings referred to in Article 73, paragraph 1, Article 75, paragraph 3, Article 78, paragraph 1, and Article 83 of the Geneva Convention, we appeal direct to the Council of the League of Nations under Article 147, and request that the Council should, after confirming the infringement of the above articles, give the German Government whatever instructions it considers desirable with a view to ensuring (Article 72, paragraph 2, G.C.) that Part III of the Geneva Convention should no longer be "a scrap of paper" in the Oppeln district of Silesia.

Considering that it is essential to calm at the earliest possible moment the feeling which has been excited by the Oppeln incidents, and to dispel the depression prevailing amongst the Polish minority in consequence of those incidents, we request that the present petition should be treated as exceptionally urgent, and placed on the agenda of the June session of the Council of the League, in accordance with the Council's resolution of September 8th, 1928, regarding the procedure to be followed in the case of petitions submitted under Article 147 of the Geneva Convention.

(Signed) C. KLIMAS,
Stefan SZCZEPANIAK,
Leon POWOLNY,
Dr. F. MICHALEK.

Committee of the Silesian Section
of the Association of Poles in Germany.
Appendix 1.

Meeting of the Corporation of Oppeln, February 4th, 1929.

Resolution No. 151.

The performance in question bears a political complexion. In accordance with the Corporation’s resolution of November 5th, 1928, the use of municipal assembly rooms, particularly the municipal theatre, school halls and gymnastic halls for such performances is in principle prohibited. No exception has so far been made in the execution of this resolution, and it must be complied with in the present case.

The application cannot be granted.

Signatures: ....................................

(Countersigned) Witzig.

Appendix 2.

Letter from the Oberbürgermeister of Oppeln to M. Szczepaniak, Secretary of the Association of Poles in Germany, Oppeln.

Oppeln, February 6th, 1929.


We are unable to grant your application.

Copy of the Corporation’s resolution of February 4th, 1929, giving the reasons for the Corporation’s refusal is subjoined. The Theatre Committee shares the view expressed.

(Signed) Dr. Berger.

Appendix 3.

Letter from the Oberbürgermeister of Oppeln to Dr. Michalek, Representative of the Association of Poles, Oppeln.

Oppeln, April 24th, 1929.

Dear Sir,

Referring to my discussion yesterday morning and afternoon with the Secretary of your Association, M. Szczepaniak, I beg to confirm that the Corporation has granted the use of the Municipal Theatre for the performance on April 28th. I would confirm in particular that, as the result of discussion regarding the conditions for the use of the theatre, final agreement has been reached concerning the question of fees, and the Corporation will receive a lump sum of 200 marks in return for the use of the theatre fully equipped. This amount includes heating, lighting and cleaning, but not other personnel expenses (particularly those for theatre employees, cloakroom assistants, etc.). No alterations have been made in respect of the other conditions as communicated also to the Oberpräsident. The Corporation assumes, therefore, that the performance will be conducted exactly on the lines of other theatrical performances given in Oppeln Town Hall; that, accordingly, no piece will be played which might wound the justifiable susceptibilities of Germans; and that the intervals will not be devoted to musical or vocal performances or speeches or the like, but will be used solely as opportunities for the public to rest, etc.

(Signed) Dr. Berger.

Appendix 4.

Extracts from Various Newspapers.

Oberschlesische Tageszeitung — March 28th, 1929 (No. 74).

Oppeln as a Centre of Polish Agitation.

Municipal Theatre demanded for Polish Propaganda. — The news that the Polish Consulate-General, hitherto at Beuthen, is to be transferred to Oppeln, has not attracted the attention it deserves. According to the Schlesische Zeitung, the reason given for the transfer is the wish to be
nearer to the German administrative authorities. That may be one reason, but it is not the chief or underlying cause. The real purpose is to create a centre of Polish activity in the middle of the province. It is well known that all the Polish Consulates in Germany maintain close relations with Poles of German nationality. Until recently the Office of the Association of Poles at Beuthen was actually on the premises of the Polish Consulate-General. Oppeln has long been a centre of Polish agitation, and this agitation has recently shown renewed activity. It is directed mainly at the rural population. For so-called educational purposes cinema and other performances are arranged, and now the Poles have even demanded the municipal theatre of Oppeln for the performance of Polish opera by the Kattowitz Theatre and for the Warsaw Ballet. This venture hardly bears out the assertions of the Poles that their fellow-countrymen in Western Upper Silesia are economically and culturally oppressed and live in the most miserable conditions. Nevertheless, although the lot of the Poles is none too bad, in spite of all stories to the contrary, they have neither money nor interest enough to finance costly performances by visiting companies. The financial means required are obviously furnished from another quarter.

If the Polish Consulate-General is in future to be at Oppeln, its staff will constitute a strong nucleus by means of which it will be much easier to arrange for Polish propaganda performances. Every opportunity will be taken to give the utmost prominence to organised Polish nationalism. If in this way it is found possible to promote Polish propaganda in Oppeln itself and in the surrounding country, the way will be paved for its extension in one direction to the Kreise of Gross Streihltz and Guttentag, and in the other Cosel and Ratibor.

In those parts of Upper Silesia, Polish influence was recently still comparatively strong, even though at the elections there were—as elsewhere in Upper Silesia—fewer Polish votes. In future, therefore, even more than in the past, Polish effort will concentrate upon this sector separating the Upper Silesian industrial area from the western part of the province and from Lower Silesia. If these efforts are successful, the future consequences in case of further complications may be decidedly disagreeable.

Oppelner Kurier — April 18th, 1929 (No. 105).

Polish Performances in the Oppeln Municipal Theatre.

The possibility which well-informed circles have for some time been fearing has now unfortunately become a fact. As we have already reported, the Oppeln Town Council has during the week acceded to a request to place the municipal theatre at the disposal of the Poles on Saturday, April 27th, presumably for a performance by a Polish visiting company. We are informed that the Town Council bases its action upon the obligations towards the Polish minority arising out of Article 27 of the Geneva Convention. The Council is said to have adopted this resolution by the necessary two-thirds majority. Large sections of the population of Oppeln and still wider circles in the rural districts of Oppeln and Rosenberg, where Polish propaganda is making great progress, will share our astonishment at this decision. We firmly support a reasonable, wise and far-sighted minority policy such as that hitherto represented by Oberpräsident Dr. Proske and by the new Oberpräsident Dr. Lukaschek and only recently advocated by no less a person than Mgr. Kaas at the meeting of the Centre Party (Eastern Provinces) at Breslau. That, however, does not prevent us from thinking that the decision by the Oppeln Town Council goes decidedly too far.

Within the last six months Polish propaganda has been making headway everywhere, and every day we learn that our all-too-liberal interpretation of Article 27 of the Geneva Convention by no means finds an echo in Poland (vide the Kattowitz Municipal Theatre). We are convinced that the general public will be at a loss to understand the Town Council’s decision. We shall have more to say on this matter.

Oppelner Nachrichten — April 18th, 1929 (No. 90).

Polish Theatrical Performances.

Some time ago now a Breslau newspaper announced, in connection with the report of the removal of the Polish Consulate from Beuthen to Oppeln, that the Poles intended to give Polish performances in the Oppeln municipal theatre. At the time the report seemed to us hardly credible. In the meantime, however, news has been received that a Polish request to this effect has actually been submitted to the Oppeln Town Council, and now, most remarkable of all, the Town Council is reported to have given its consent to a Polish performance to be held in the municipal theatre on Saturday, April 27th.

The local Press Bureau, of which we made enquiries this morning, has not yet issued any information on the subject. If the report is true, we can only express our astonishment at the Town Council’s action. In view of the ridiculously small number of Poles in Oppeln, there is no justification for lending the municipal theatre for Polish performances.
Oppelner Zeitung — April 19th, 1929 (No. 92).

Poles at the Municipal Theatre.

A short while ago, in our article on the insufficient aid given to our municipal theatre by the Government, we pointed out that the Poles were making increasingly vigorous endeavours to obtain access to the Oppeln municipal theatre. We are to-day informed that our Town Council has actually granted a Polish application for the theatre, which is to be placed at the disposal of a Polish company on Saturday, April 27th. This is the first time since the entry into force of the Geneva Convention that such a request has been granted at Oppeln. In view of the intensive activity of the Poles it may safely be assumed that this is not the first request of the kind which has been made to our Town Council. Why has the situation suddenly changed? Why were there no Polish performances in our theatre before? What can have caused the Town Council suddenly to give its consent? Large classes of the population, both in Oppeln and further afield, will be completely at a loss to understand this decision, and particularly those circles which are daily subjected to Polish propaganda.

Oppelner Kurier — April 19th, 1929 (No. 106).

Polish Theatrical Performances at Oppeln.

The news we published yesterday regarding a forthcoming Polish theatrical performance at Oppeln and the offer of our municipal theatre for the purpose was confirmed yesterday in an interview to which the representatives of the Oppeln Press were invited by the Town Council. Oberbürgermeister Dr. Berger expressly mentioned that the reason for this communication was an article on the subject which appeared in the Oppelner Kurier yesterday.

The news we published yesterday regarding a forthcoming Polish theatrical performance at Oppeln and the offer of our municipal theatre for the purpose was confirmed yesterday in an interview to which the representatives of the Oppeln Press were invited by the Town Council. Oberbürgermeister Dr. Berger expressly mentioned that the reason for this communication was an article on the subject which appeared in the Oppelner Kurier yesterday.

The Oberbürgermeister gave an account of the previous negotiations in this matter, which had been proceeding for months, and, among other things, he said that, in January, representatives of the Association of Poles had approached him to discuss the setting aside, or at any rate arrangements for the use, of a playground for the Young Pole Movement, and also to discuss the use of the municipal theatre for performances by the Polish company from Katowitz. Dr. Berger said that at that time he told the Poles that the question of the municipal theatre was one for the Town Council to decide. Accordingly, the Association of Poles applied to the Oppeln Town Council on January 31st with the request that the Polish company from Katowitz might be allowed to give a number of performances. At a meeting of the Town Council on November 5th, it was decided that schools, halls, etc., might no longer be lent for political purposes. This resolution was communicated to the Association of Poles with the remark that the application must therefore be refused.

Thereupon the Association of Poles immediately addressed an appeal to the Prussian Minister of the Interior, and the latter ultimately asked the Oppeln authorities to report on the matter. The Town Council again considered the question, but ended by confirming its original decision.

After consultation with Oberpräsident Dr. Lukaschek, and after the latter had had his attention drawn by the Prussian Minister of the Interior to Article 75, paragraph 2, of the Geneva Convention, which may be interpreted as granting to the Polish minorities in German Upper Silesia facilities for theatrical performances, another meeting of the Town Council was called by Oberbürgermeister Dr. Berger. The Oberpräsident also pointed out that the earlier decision by the Town Council was an infringement of Article 75, and he asked for a new decision to be given.

Thereupon the Town Council discussed the pros and cons in detail. Finally, the original decision was reversed and the authorisation given, on condition, however, that no performance should be in any sense a demonstration or be calculated to lead to disturbance, and should not exceed the ordinary limits of a theatrical performance. The company was to pay all expenses or, alternatively, to refund the municipality. The Association of Poles was also made liable for compensation in case of damage.

In this connection an article in Kulturwehr, the organ of the Union of Germany's National Minorities (No. 3 of 1929), is not without interest. This article runs as follows:
"According to a decision by the Town Council of Oppeln, Polish theatrical performances in Prussian Upper Silesia are political demonstrations. The previous history of this decision is as follows: On January 26th, 1929, the Oppeln Branch of the Zwiazek Polakoww Niemcech applied to the Oppeln Municipality (Theatre Committee) repeating a former request to be allowed the use of the municipal theatre for performances by the Polish company from Kattowitz, and at the same time asked the Town Council to remit the ticket tax and to assume liability for such expenses as heating, lighting and the hire of the theatre.

On February 6th, 1929, Oberbürgermeister Dr. Berger replied on behalf of the Town Council refusing the application on the following grounds:

‘Town Council meeting of February 4th, 1929. Decision No. 151. — The performance in question is in the nature of a political demonstration. For purposes of such demonstrations the use of municipal assembly rooms, in particular the municipal theatre, school-halls and gymnasiums, is, on principle, not allowed in virtue of a decision by the Town Council, dated November 6th, 1928. This decision has hitherto been observed without exception, and must apply in the present case. The application cannot be granted.’

The Polish theatre at Kattowitz has already played the piece which it intends to give at Oppeln, at Beuthen, Gleiwitz and Hindenburg. The decision of the Oppeln Town Council therefore either was prompted by a petty pinprick policy, or else it is an amusing example of parish pump politics. We would gladly assume the latter, if it were not that the Upper Silesian Provincial Council had refused the application for a subsidy on behalf of the Polish theatre in Prussian Upper Silesia. For the present financial year, the Upper Silesian theatres were granted a subsidy of 50,000 marks, of which the Polish theatre received nothing. The Polish Party therefore asked for an increase of 10,000 marks in the grant, to be allocated to the Polish theatre in Prussian Upper Silesia. This application received no support from the Centre Party or from the other parties—Social Democrats, Democrats and Communists—and the request was therefore not granted. Both these facts well illustrate the ‘culture competition’, as the new minority policy in Prussia is euphemistically called, and may usefully serve to enlighten public opinion."

This Polish interpretation of the matter given in the Kulturwehr is not of course, the true one. The Poles in modern Germany no longer need any "protection for their culture". The Geneva Convention, based upon a Christian conception of national equality, and the Prussian minority provisions have given them adequate claims to their rightful share in the language and culture of their home country. These claims can be satisfied without any Polish theatrical performances in the German administrative capital of Oppeln, especially as the Poles in the German Kreise of Upper Silesia, thanks to wireless, have ample opportunity of sharing in the Polish performances broadcasted by the Kattowitz transmitting station. It should be remembered, too, that the situation in the three frontier towns of Beuthen, Gleiwitz and Hindenburg, where the Geneva Convention is so generously interpreted in favour of the Poles, is quite different from the situation at Oppeln in the very heart of German Upper Silesia. In the first three places there may be good reasons for such performances, but there was no absolute necessity for them at Oppeln. Regard for the comparatively modest cultural requirements of the Poles in those districts should not be allowed to endanger German culture in purely German districts situated at a considerable distance from the frontier. We only hope that this will not be the effect of the new measure. We are informed that, in addition to the conditions mentioned above, measures are to be taken to ensure that the Polish performances—for it may be anticipated that there will be more than one—do not take the form of nationalist demonstrations. Among other things, the singing of Polish songs, the carrying of Polish flags, etc., are to be strictly forbidden.

In connection with the Town Council's decision, necessitated by the Oberbürgermeister's representations, the important question arises how far the permission given to the Association of Poles is to be regarded as a concession likely to induce a correspondingly tolerant treatment of our German compatriots in Eastern Upper Silesia in the matter of theatres. If this were the case, we could resign ourselves, for we in Oppeln would gladly make sacrifices in the matter of German culture, if they were ultimately to benefit German culture in the formerly German towns of Eastern Upper Silesia, where it is far more seriously threatened. We learn that the permission given at Oppeln has already had this effect at Kattowitz and Königshütte.

There, too, concessions, hitherto unobtainable, have now, it is said, been granted. This in itself, satisfactory, and might—though reluctantly—reconcile us Germans who live a good way from the frontier to a measure which in itself is thoroughly repugnant to the citizens of Oppeln. At the same time, however, it must not be forgotten that the large number of Germans at Kattowitz and Königshütte, Polish towns which were German until a few years ago, have obviously a much better claim to the satisfaction of their cultural requirements, in the once German theatres of those towns, than the comparatively small number of Poles living far within the German frontiers at Oppeln and in the surrounding districts. If there is any comparison in this case, the scales of justice tell heavily against the Poles in Germany. Moreover, what is right for Kattowitz and Königshütte may be quite wrong for Oppeln (in contrast to Beuthen, Gleiwitz and Hindenburg).
Nevertheless, owing to the regrettable Polish attitude in these matters, concessions to the Germans in Eastern Upper Silesia have unfortunately invariably to be purchased at the price of sacrifices on the part of the Germans in Western Upper Silesia. Quousque?

Incidentally, we would request all other Oppeln papers which were so good as to communicate to their readers our first report of the Town Council’s decision regarding the Polish performance in the theatre at Oppeln, to correct a slip made in saying that the theatre had been offered to the Association of Poles for Saturday, April 27th, instead of Sunday, April 28th.

Oberschlesische Tageszeitung — Friday, April 19th, 1929 (No. 92).

A Polish Theatre for Oppeln: Unheard-of Decision by the Oppeln Town Council.

(From our Special Correspondent.)

Some time ago now we were able, on the strength of reliable information, to announce that the Poles were trying with all their might to make Oppeln a centre of propaganda from which they could more easily influence the rural Kreise of Oppeln, Gross Strehlitz and Guttenstag and also the Kreis of Cosel. Just recently Polish propaganda in Oppeln has again been especially active. Under the pretext of educating the people, cinema performances and plays have been organised and it has been a long-standing ambition to give performances of Polish opera and the Warsaw ballet in the municipal theatre. Although it would seem impossible that in a purely German town like Oppeln the way should be made thus easy for Polish anti-German propaganda, yet the inconceivable has happened, and we now learn that at its last meeting the Town Council, in response to a request from the Poles, decided by a two-thirds majority to put the Oppeln theatre at their disposal for their performances.

In view of the terrible oppression of our compatriots in Eastern Upper Silesia, this decision can only be regarded by the people of Oppeln as a slap in the face and as the most unheard-of proceeding which any East German municipality can ever have been guilty of. It is in fact a direct provocation to the population, which must decline all responsibility for the consequences. It is insufferable that a German Town Council should promote the subversive activities of the Poles. If it has not the courage to reply to these impudent Polish demands with an emphatic refusal, the inhabitants of Oppeln—good Germans all—must themselves take steps for their protection from Polish irredentism. If the inhabitants of Oppeln are roused to strong indignation. Things have really gone pretty far. No doubt in a few years we shall be building the Poles a theatre of their own and staging German plays in a barn!

Oberschlesische Tageszeitung — Saturday April 20th, 1929 (No. 93.)

Must we suffer Polish Performances? — The Story of the Town Council’s Decision. — Pressure from above.

— A Question affecting all Upper Silesia.

(From our Special Correspondent.)

As we foreshadowed, the publication of the decision by the Oppeln Town Council to allow the municipal theatre to be used for a Polish performance has roused tremendous indignation and excitement. Yesterday Dr. Berger, the Oberbürgermeister, took the opportunity of explaining the previous history of this unheard-of step to representatives of the Press. It appears that Dr. Berger was first approached by members of the Association of Poles in January, when they asked for the Town Council’s support in a number of matters. In particular, they had their eyes on our playground for the Young Pole Movement, on obtaining support for the Polish library, and on getting the municipal theatre for Polish performances. Dr. Berger replied that in these matters and especially as regards the theatre, the decision lay with the Town Council. Accordingly, on January 31st, the Association of Poles officially requested that the municipal theatre might be placed at their disposal for a number of performances by the Polish theatre at Kattowitz. On February 5th, the Town Council replied with a refusal. It only repeated the arguments it had used, five years before, on February 6th, 1924, when a similar request had been made.
At this point pressure was applied by the Prussian Ministry of State. When Dr. Berger communicated to the Poles the Town Council's refusal, they appealed to M. Grzesinski, Prussian Minister of the Interior. The Minister made enquiries at Oppeln, and Dr. Berger described the state of affairs and supported the Town Council's action. His arguments, however, were not appreciated in Berlin, probably because Berlin knows nothing of Polish aims in Western Upper Silesia and is only thinking of possible improvements in the minority provisions. In fact, obvious efforts were made to obtain permission for the Polish performances, and finally they read Article 75, paragraph 2, of the Geneva Convention on Upper Silesia and in a short interview with Dr. Łukaschek, the Oberpräsident, Dr. Berger was subsequently referred to this provision.

Although the Prussian Ministry was able to bring pressure to bear on the Oberbürgermeister through the intermediary of the Oberpräsident, it could never have compelled the members of the Town Council—free citizens of a German town—to accede to the Polish request. The attitude of the Ministry does not surprise us, for it is familiar enough; but that the Oppeln Town Council should have agreed is a thing that the people of Oppeln will never forget, and at the next communal elections they will draw their own conclusions. There will be no votes for a party whose representatives have brought this upon us.

The performance in the theatre is to take place on April 28th. Cannot our councillors still do something between now and then?

Let us now turn to the question of principle—the Geneva Convention and its Article 75, paragraph 2, quoted by the Ministry of the Interior. This paragraph runs as follows:

"Legislative and administrative provisions may not establish any differential treatment with regard to nationals belonging to a minority. Similarly, they may not be interpreted or applied in a discriminatory manner to the detriment of such persons. The above principally concerns the supply of products subject to a centralised system of exploitation, such as articles of food, coal, fuel, news-print, etc., the distribution of means of transport, the assignment of premises to persons, companies, or associations, the granting of official authorisations relating to transfers of real property and ownership, measures relating to the distribution of land, etc."

How in the world can the Ministry deduce from this text an obligation to place at the disposal of the Association of Poles a municipal theatre in a purely German town, kept up at great sacrifice by German taxpayers? There is not a single sentence even faintly implying such an obligation. The Oberpräsident has particularly in mind the passage referring to "the assignment of premises to persons, companies, or associations". This is very far from meaning the lending of a theatre for Polish performances. It is perfectly clear from the whole context that the only intention of the paragraph is to prevent Polish persons, companies or associations from being refused available accommodation. In this respect there is to be "no differential treatment". That is a provision to which we have no objection, just as it seems to us only right and natural that there should be "no differential treatment" in respect of the other matters referred to in Article 75. Obviously, a German citizen of Polish nationality will be given rooms in the same way as anyone else if he is in possession of a permit from the Wohnungsamt (Housing Department) and if he awaits his turn—granted, that is, that there are any rooms going. Nor will a Polish trader be prevented from occupying vacant premises simply because he is a Pole. In this respect German sentiment is in contrast to the ruthless terrorism of the Poles. In the case, however, of the Polish application for the theatre, we are clearly concerned with something quite different. It is not permitted to any and every German company to give performances in our theatre. The scenery, properties, etc., of the theatre are much too expensive. Accordingly, there is no "differential treatment" when the Association of Poles is refused permission to give its performance. It takes a man with a soul like M. Grzesinski's to give any other interpretation of Article 75. M. Grzesinski is Prussian Minister of the Interior: so much the worse for German Prussia.

Is there no realisation at all of what this initial Polish performance at Oppeln really means? Every child knows, the Poles themselves know, that there is not the least demand for Polish theatrical performances at Oppeln. The Poles, however, at considerable financial sacrifice will drag in the Polish inhabitants of the rural Kreise and from far beyond. Possibly there will even be a number of Germans sufficiently curious and sufficiently shameless to go and see a Polish play. In any case the theatre will be filled by hook or crook. Then they will be able to triumph and say that Polish theatrical performances are obviously urgently needed at Oppeln. And then further applications will be received and perhaps, with the kind help of M. Grzesinski and our Town Council, Polish performances in the municipal theatre of the purely German capital of Upper Silesia will become a regular event. In that event the soldiers of the Defence Corps will have sacrificed their lives on the Annaberg in vain. In that case let M. Grzesinski and the gentlemen of the Town Council take up arms and reconquer Upper Silesia for us. We shall certainly not do so until we are sure that we are citizens of a State which is prepared to keep what we win for it.
The Polish Theatrical Performance at Oppeln:

Unanimous Hostile Vote by the Right.

(From our Special Correspondent.)

Oppeln, April 19th, 1929.

In our main edition of this morning we dealt in great detail with the unheard-of decision by the Town Council to allow a Polish performance in our municipal theatre. We announced yesterday that this decision had been adopted by a two-thirds majority. As the Town Council includes members of the Right Party, we asked for information as to how these representatives voted, for the people at Oppeln must know where they stand. To-day we are able to state that the members of the Town Council belonging to the Right voted against the Polish application. These members are Councillors Kaiser, Lange and Pletz. The members of the Council belonging to other parties include the following Councillors:

Ehl, Centre.
Czech, Centre.
Schleicher, Centre.
Kontny, Centre.
Mundrzik, Communist.

The Town Council includes the following salaried Councillors:

Dr. Berger, Oberbürgermeister,
Scholz, Bürgermeister,
Dr. Born, Town Councillor,
Benkert, Stadtbaurat,
Schmidt, Stadtbaurat.

As Councillor Schleicher was absent, there were 12 members present. Therefore at least eight members voted for the Polish request and only four against. Accordingly to the three representatives of the Right, only one member had the elementary courage to refuse this preposterous demand. The people of Oppeln will be found to be very particularly interested in the result of this vote, and at the next communal elections they will consider more carefully than hitherto whom they should elect. The professions of indignation by the Centre newspapers with regard to the Polish performance and the Town Council’s decision are mere words, since the Centre Party was instrumental in its adoption.

We will refer once again to the detailed account given in our main issue, where we pointed out that the Geneva Convention, the principles of which the Prussian Ministry of the Interior regards as binding upon us, contains no provision requiring us to lend a German theatre for Polish performances. While in Eastern Upper Silesia the Geneva Convention is invariably interpreted to the detriment of the Germans, we are continually granting to the Poles rights exceeding those to which they are entitled under the Convention.

M. Kaluza, Chief Councillor, thanked the Oberbürgermeister and all officials for their work. Councillor Schiffmann then read a resolution by the German Party against giving the Oppeln municipal theatre to the Poles. Councillor Kaboth spoke for the Centre Party and read the following statement:

"We consider that the Town Council, in voting on the question of allowing the Polish minority to have the use of the theatre, has permitted itself to be swayed by purely abstract considerations. In the name of the Centre Party, I declare that conditions in Kattowitz are quite different from those in Oppeln. There you have a population hereditarily German, practically a majority—as the plebiscite in 1921 proved—here we have an insignificant minority artificially exaggerated. We regret the decision of the Town Council."

M. Girndt, the Communist speaker, considered these statements out of place and irrelevant but no one replied to him as they desired to concentrate on what was to come. In his opinion our town was paying a high price for the privilege of being an administrative capital.
Protest against the Performance of Polish Opera in the Municipal Theatre.

During yesterday's budget discussion at the meeting of the Oppeln Common Council, Councillor Schiffmann made a statement on behalf of the German Nationalist Party with reference to the recent decision by the Town Council to lend the municipal theatre to the Association of Poles for a performance of Polish opera. The statement points out that at the elections in May of last year, out of 44,000 inhabitants in the town of Oppeln, only 105 votes were given for the Polish 'list'. It adds that the cultural requirements of the Polish minority in the administrative capital of Upper Silesia were accordingly nil, but that the Polish application was simply due to the desire of the Association of Poles to make propaganda. The German Nationalist members of the Council protest against the Town Council's decision and declare that the financial resources of the Oppeln theatre must be used solely in the interests of the people of Oppeln and not to the advantage of foreigners.

On behalf of the Centre Party, Councillor Kaboth associated himself with this protest and said that conditions at Kattowitz and Königshütte could not be compared with those at Oppeln. There they had a population hereditarily German and forming practically a majority, and in Oppeln, a purely German town, a diminishing and artificially raised Polish minority. The Centre Party therefore expressed its regret at the Town Council's decision.

The sole representative of the Democrats in the Oppeln Parliament, Councillor Lange, made a similar statement. The Communist speaker was alone in maintaining that there was no need for excitement. In view of the familiar attitude of the Moscow disciples, this remark caused no surprise.

A BITTER PILL.

Visit of Polish Opera Company to Oppeln.

Oppeln, April 21st, 1929.

We have already, in two articles on the Polish theatrical performance in the Oppeln theatre, described in unambiguous terms the heavy burden which we Germans living in the heart of Germany are to be called upon to bear. On Friday, the Members of the Centre Party on the Council considered the matter and expressed their regret at the Town Council's decision. Both the Kurier and the Centre Party stressed the difference between local conditions at Oppeln and those at Kattowitz, which allowed of no direct comparison. It is left for our irresponsible contemporary, the Tageszeitung, the old German Nationalist organ at Oppeln, to describe all these protests as "play-acting", while—with its usual air of superiority—only attaching importance to the protest by its own German Nationalist Party. We note in this biased opinion the vexation of the Tageszeitung at realising that there are others than German Nationalists who are true patriots, for by this time the Tageszeitung and also the German Nationalists, who always think that they have a monopoly of German sentiment, must have learned that the Town Council's decision was clearly, though unfortunately, forced upon it under Article 27 of the Geneva Convention and that it is therefore a bitter pill which no one, even the German Nationalists, can do much to sweeten. The Geneva Convention protects minorities, and in this case, which concerns a small and dwindling minority at Oppeln, gives it almost fuller rights than those of the German majority, which must find a substitute therefore in the innate strength of the German people. Rights which are similarly accorded by the Geneva Convention to the German minority in Polish Upper Silesia must, however hard it may be for German sentiment to bear in the German administrative capital of Oppeln, be fully extended to the small Polish minority in order that our large German minorities in Eastern Upper Silesia may continue to enjoy their rights in the future as in the past. It is a fact that these have so far been respected. The theatre at Kattowitz is placed at the disposal of the local German theatrical company twice a week—in view of the number of Germans this is only elementary justice, but still it is a fact. Further, the German theatre at Kattowitz has received subsidies from the Polish Voivodeship; in 1926, 10,000 złoty; in 1927, 25,000 złoty and in 1928, 45,000 złoty. The German theatre at Königshütte in 1928 received a grant of 10,000 złoty. According to Article 73, paragraph 2, of the Geneva Convention, both minorities, the large German minority in Eastern Upper Silesia and the small Polish minority in German Upper Silesia, have an equal legal claim to give theatrical performances by their national companies.

The Germans at Kattowitz, Königshütte, etc., have hitherto insisted upon this right and so have the Poles in the three German frontier towns of Beuthen, Gleiwitz and Hindenburg. It is very regrettable that no distinction is to be made between these towns and Oppeln, but it is the truth. The Geneva Convention has prescribed for us a bitter pill, but it seems that we must swallow it. As soon as the Town Council of Oppeln communicated its first refusal of the request
by the Association of Poles, the latter immediately refused the Berlin Kammeroper permission to visit Upper Silesia, and the Germans in Eastern Upper Silesia themselves appealed urgently to the German Government for a revision of the Oppeln decision on the grounds that they themselves would otherwise suffer far more heavily. It was this which led to the adoption of the final decision by the Council, according to which the use of the Oppeln theatre is to be given to the Association of Poles at their own expense for a single performance by the Warsaw Opera Company next Sunday, April 28th — the opera to be performed is the Polish national opera "Halka". It is untrue, as appeared from the short conversation on this subject between the Oberbürgermeister of Oppeln and representatives of the local Press, that the Minister of the Interior specially intervened in the question of the Polish performance. Such intervention by the Minister, has, on previous occasions, been made in purely general terms, regarding the observance of obligations arising out of the Geneva Convention, but he took no such step specifically in connection with the Polish visit to Oppeln now under discussion. How the affair will actually work out in practice must depend in the last resort upon the self-restraint of the Germans at Oppeln. We earnestly hope that the Germans will, in their attitude towards the performance, show a sense of national dignity. Then the Polish minority need no longer cause us undue anxiety. We may recall the example of Bozen.

Oberschlesische Tageszeitung. April 21st, 1929 (No. 94).

Rechtsanwalt Schiffmann (Right), representing the Chairman, made the following statement on behalf of the German Nationalist and German People's parties:

"The news that the Town Council had decided at its last meeting to give the Poles the use of the municipal theatre for a Polish performance has aroused the astonishment of, and caused the deepest indignation among, the citizens of the purely German town of Oppeln. "Oppeln has a population of 44,000; at the last Reichstag elections, in May 1928, only 105 Poles voted. Further, the cultural level of this tiny minority is such that only a small percentage would be interested in opera or ballet performances. "The German population of the German town of Oppeln considers the appearance of a Polish National Theatre Company to be designed, not for the satisfaction of any cultural requirements of the Polish minority, but merely as a means in the hands of Polish politicians for propaganda purposes. "We consider it to be our duty to declare here that we cannot understand the action of the Town Council and formally protest against it."

M. Schiffmann added that the Right Party would refrain from voting against the theatre budget as a reprisal, but he desired most strongly to emphasise that the money contributed by the townspeople should be used exclusively for the town.

Rosenberger Zeitung, April 23rd, 1929. (No. 42.)

UPPER SILESIA.

Polish Performances in the Municipal Theatre at Oppeln.

Again and again we have drawn attention to the spread of Polish propaganda in Eastern Germany, and within our own province. The German reply has been to adopt an attitude of the very feeblest compliance and has elicited from the Poles nothing but amused contempt. Of Polish consideration for the German minorities there is not the very faintest sign. We can only describe our own measures as crazy and symptoms of a crazy age. Only two days ago, we showed how cleverly Poland understands how to exploit these measures for her own ends, and what damage the German people had already suffered in these few months of propaganda. But that is only the beginning. The warnings of all those who have lived for fifty or sixty years in the frontier zone and who thoroughly understand the Polish mentality fall on deaf ears. How can the Poles, with their low slave mentality, which now seems to have sunk still lower, appreciate this official opportunism of men who may only have come to Upper Silesia by way of promotion, or who sit round a table in Berlin far removed from the facts and whose politics are determined by party considerations. We can quite understand the remark of an Upper Silesian refugee, who said that if he had again to go through all the misery he had experienced, he would give no quarter to those responsible for such a policy. The municipal theatre at Oppeln is now to be used for Polish theatrical performances. We quote below the opinions of a Centre organ, the Oppelner Kurier, which is the mouthpiece of the leading Upper Silesian Centre paper, the Oberschlesische Volksstimme, and we would point out that, after all, the Centre gives its full support to the present minority policy.
The paper writes as follows:

"The possibility which well-informed circles have for some time been fearing has now unfortunately become a fact. As we have already reported, the Oppeln Town Council has, during the week, acceded to a request to place the municipal theatre at the disposal of the Poles on Saturday, April 27th, presumably for a performance by a Polish visiting company. We are informed that the Town Council bases its action upon the obligations towards the Polish minority arising out of Article 27 of the Geneva Convention. The Town Council is said to have adopted this resolution by the necessary two-thirds majority. Large sections of the population of Oppeln and still wider circles in the rural districts of Oppeln and Rosenberg, where Polish propaganda is making great progress, will share our astonishment at this decision. We firmly support a reasonable, wise and far-sighted minority policy such as that represented by Oberpräsident Dr. Proske and by the new Oberpräsident Dr. Lukaschek, and only recently advocated by no less a person than Mgr. Kaas at the meeting of the Centre Party (Eastern Provinces) at Breslau. That, however, does not prevent us from thinking that the decision by the Oppeln Town Council goes decidedly too far. "Within the last six months Polish propaganda has been making headway everywhere, and every day we learn that our all-too-liberal interpretation of Article 27 of the Geneva Convention by no means finds an echo in Poland. We are convinced that the general public will be at a loss to understand the Town Council's decision. We shall have more to say on this matter."

Only let this policy go on; it will not fail to bear bitter fruit.

Of the twelve members of the Oppeln Town Council, the three representatives of the Right all opposed the application, so that only one other member had the courage to vote against it. The great majority of those who voted in favour of the decision belong to the Centre Party, so that in this matter the Centre Press is conducting a campaign against its own political representatives.

Oberschlesische Tageszeitung, April 27th, 1929 (No. 99).

ANYTHING FOR MONEY!

German Newspapers make Propaganda for the Polish Theatre.

(From our Special Correspondent.)

Oppeln, April 26th.

We Germans really are a strange people. We seem to have little sense of national pride or national dignity. Before the war we used to run after everything foreign and thought it better than anything German. During the war, under pressure of circumstances we united and gave the world a striking proof of our innate strength. Later on, however, we again succumbed to foreign influences, which sapped us from within, threw down our arms and surrendered. The last ten years reveal a sad picture of a Germany unable to stand up against the foreigner and sacrificing one position after the other. We Germans in the Eastern Provinces are especially qualified to speak on this topic. And now Polish performances are to be given in our municipal theatre at Oppeln. For one moment it looked as if the people would rouse themselves from their torpor and open their eyes to what is happening. Even papers representing other political opinions protested at first. But then they began to find excuses for the Town Council's decision and now they are even inserting the announcement by the Polish School Association of the performance of the Polish opera "Halka". They are thus making propaganda for the Poles. It would seem impossible to do more to make things easy for our opponents, but our retiring disposition goes even further. In the announcement of the Polish visit, the name Kattowitz is naturally replaced by "Katowice". It is really almost surprising that Oppeln was not translated into Polish, for, as we all know, German authorities have been capable even of this. The Polish notice in the Oppelner Nachrichten, the Oppelner Zeitung and the Kurier indeed does little credit to the press of Eastern Germany.
Appendix 5.

"German fellow-citizens!

"The Poles have the effrontery to give a Polish theatrical performance in the German town of Oppeln, in that part of Upper Silesia which, since the 1921 plebiscite, has been indisputably German. The performance is said to be justified on cultural grounds, but as a matter of fact the Poles are using it as political propaganda.

"This is being tolerated by the Republican authorities in the mistaken belief that they can bargain thereby for some advantages for the Germans in what is now Polish Upper Silesia.

"This idea is wrong.

"The Poles oppress the Germans in Eastern Upper Silesia, whatever happens. Anyone there who is German cleaves in any case to the German tradition in which he was born and brought up. Neither pinpricks nor bludgeonings can shake the loyalty of the Germans over there. Every sensible man must see that it is monstrous to allow the Poles to carry on their propaganda in German Upper Silesia, and at the same time to harass the national movement, thus producing false impressions abroad regarding the German character of our province.

"Is it really desired to foster the Polish lust for conquest? What folly!

"We of the National Socialist Party are keenly opposed to this policy so lacking in national pride—this narrow, weak-kneed policy of political huckstering.

"In view of the protection granted by the authorities we can do nothing to prevent the Polish theatrical performance, as they are only seeking an excuse to forbid us to do so.

"We wish, however, to defend the honour of Germany and to make the German nation so strong that we shall be able to give effective assistance to our brethren on the other side of the present frontiers. We therefore appeal to you, German fellow-countrymen, to join our ranks and fight for a better Germany.

"Join the National Socialist Party!"

Person responsible: M. Wieschalla, Oppeln.

Appendix 6.

DEPOSITION.

Association of Poles in Germany T. z.
(Section I).

Oppeln, May 1st, 1929.

This is to certify that M. Piotr Pandza, of Królewka Nowa Wies (Königl. Neudorf), appeared of his own accord and made the following deposition:

On Sunday afternoon, April 28th, 1929, I went with my wife to the Oppeln Municipal Theatre, to see the performance of the Polish opera "Halka". As we were approaching the theatre, we noticed that immense crowds of Germans had filled the whole market square, and we observed people entering the theatre. There was booing and cat-calling. When we left the theatre, not wishing to run any risk, we went to the motor omnibus and waited there for a while, whereupon a man came to my wife and said: "I suppose you were also at the Polish theatre. You saw the Polish goat or the Polish plum there, of course? Were they nice?" My wife made no reply in order not to irritate him further.

My daughter Maria noticed two ladies leaving the theatre and being chased by some young hooligans. The ladies had to take to flight, and the situation was only saved by the intervention of a policeman.

In the theatre itself, so many stink-bombs were thrown near me that I could not stand it and had to go out into the fresh air.

(Signed) Piotr Pandza.
Alojzy Homola.

Appendix 7.

DEPOSITION.

With reference to the incidents during and after the performance at Oppeln of the opera "Halka".

At the close of the first act, I felt something strike me on the head and heard it fall on the ground. At this moment there was an outburst of applause. Fearing that the missile might cause a catastrophe, instead of applauding with the others I stooped down to look for it. Meanwhile, a terribly disagreeable odour was spreading and my neighbours began to leave their places quickly.

(Signed) Piotr Pandza.
Alojzy Homola.
When the lights went up, I observed splashes of fluid in three places on the floor. I went out into the corridor and reported to one of the gendarmes that rotten eggs or some other malodorous objects had been thrown in the theatre. I pointed out that one had hit me on the head and asked him to investigate the matter. A bystander interjected that it was stink-bombs that had been thrown. The gendarme tried to explain that that was impossible, as it could only have been done by some member of the audience and the slightest attempt to throw anything would certainly have been stopped. I asked him to come and judge for himself, how it stank. I showed him my ticket and explained exactly where the thing had happened. The gendarme turned to one of the police officials standing near and told him about it.

When the bell rang, I went in with the others and took my seat, holding a handkerchief soaked in eau-de-cologne and awaited the opening of the second act. When the curtain rose, applause again broke out and simultaneously a larger number of stink bombs fell near me. There was an immediate outburst of protest. Some of my neighbours left their places because they could not bear the foul smell. After the second act, I found on the floor an unexploded bomb which I took with me as evidence and which I still possess. My neighbours also found similar bombs.

I left the theatre in the company of others and made my way to the station. Before we had passed the Town Hall we were set upon by a group of highly excited persons, including not only youths of sixteen to twenty years, but even middle-aged men and women. All of them rained on us a shower of the filthiest epithets, menaced us with sticks and spat at us, shouting. "Just look at the cursed Poles, we will take good note of them", etc. When I turned to one man, who was constantly spitting at us, and said: "Aren't you ashamed of yourself?", there was a renewed outburst of curses and threats. I withdrew cautiously without any further consequences.

Oppeln, April 30th, 1929.

(Signed) Jan Paszenda.

Appendix 8.

Deposition.

Oppeln, May 10th, 1929.

When the theatre performance started at 4.30 p.m., I made my way across the Ring to the Municipal Theatre to attend the performance of the Polish opera "Halka". The pavement opposite the main entrance to the theatre was occupied by a large and continually increasing crowd of people. There might have been at the time about 500 persons present. Facing the theatre they conversed with one another, some standing in groups, and closely observed the people going to the theatre. A certain feeling of excitement was noticeable amongst them, and the topic of conversation was evidently the Polish performance. Both youths and grown-up persons of both sexes were there. At the first interval I went to the theatre restaurant, where I saw some 10 or 12 young people sitting at several tables in the middle of the room with their attention closely concentrated on the members of the audience entering. It was obvious that they were all of one party, and I also think they were the same people who later went into the theatre without tickets and threw stink-bombs. The people in the gallery were arrested on the instructions of M. Tabernacki, the undersigned and other spectators. Repeated requests had to be made by the spectators to the police sergeants in the gallery before they intervened. Only after receiving orders from the police officer did they conduct the people detained to the police station.

When the singers, after the performance was over, started to go through the rear exit of the theatre to the Regierungshauptplatz in order to reach the station, I noticed, when near the point where the Schlossstrasse enters the Ring, that a compact procession in column of fours was marching along the Schlossstrasse towards the Ring to the tune of a German fighting song. There might have been about 50 men in the company. Owing to the darkness, I could not distinguish whether they wore the uniform of any organisation, as I was in the Ring opposite the Schlossstrasse. When the procession was passing the Lutheran church near the point where the Schlossstrasse enters the Ring they caught sight of the players going to the station; the singing stopped, and shouts rang out: "There they are! Quickly now, all of you, to the station!" They then ran with sticks uplifted behind the players to the station. In my opinion, this particular company was an organised body of the Kampfjugend.

I did not observe the police giving any orders to the crowd assembled before the theatre to disperse. At the close of the performance, the crowd had swollen to about 2,000. During the intervals and also at the close of the performance, they yelled and shouted at the spectators and sang German songs, such as "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles".

(Signed) Dr. von Openkowski.
Appendix 9.

DEPOSITION.

Oppeln, April 29th, 1929.

The following is the deposition of the undersigned concerning the events of Sunday, during and after the performance of "Halka" at Oppeln on April 28th:

As I was going to the theatre on Sunday afternoon, I observed on the square in front of the theatre a crowd of people staring closely at everyone who entered the theatre. In the building itself I saw on the staircases, and also in front of the cloakroom, several youths with different insignia—in some of the form of a sword. When the bell rang, I took my place in the second circle on the left. During the first interval, I met on the first-floor stairs, M. Paszenda, from whom I learned that during the performance a stink-bomb had fallen on his head. I also learned from other people that several stink-bombs had been thrown. I therefore went down to the stalls to see where they had fallen. The stench in the theatre was very strong, and some spectators had left. I advised M. Paszenda to report the incident to the police, and saw him go up to a policeman. I noticed that the policeman listened to M. Paszenda and went off, but took no steps to discover the culprits. On the stairs I noticed some of the persons with insignia who had attracted my attention from the start. M. Paszenda's report gave me the idea that the stink-bombs must have been thrown from the gallery. When the bell rang, I went to my seat and determined to keep a close eye on the people leaving during the interval. I had noticed some youths standing in groups on the balcony owing to there being no room. When the lights went up, I accosted one of these suspicious characters and asked him for his ticket. He had none. I also found that two or three other persons were without tickets. I applied to the policeman on duty and asked him to take them in charge. The policeman did not seem very enthusiastic, and only when I pressed the demand did he take any steps in the matter, but without any effective result. The men tried to move off, but I detained them with the assistance of Dr. Openkowski, to whom I appealed for help. Two policemen appeared in the gallery, and were asked by Dr. Openkowski to take action. A police officer also followed, and we applied to him with the result that the policemen were then ordered to conduct the persons in question to the police station.

In order to prevent the others escaping, I remained with Dr. Openkowski at the door. I noticed that the first box on the right was full of young people, which struck me as rather curious, as I knew that the box had been reserved by the Consulate-General and that the Consul and his party had not yet arrived. It was immediately clear to me that the individuals were suspicious characters. At the beginning of the third act, the Consul-General arrived and the police took steps to clear the box, but the unauthorised occupants were not arrested and continued to stand about in groups in the gallery. During the interval, I requested an officer in the gallery to arrest the persons mentioned, and was met by the enquiry: "Who has got no ticket? What's the evidence we have to take?" I said that I would describe and point out the parties. The officer and one of the police officials then proceeded to the right-hand side of the gallery and took the persons indicated by me outside. I then demanded that the police should check the tickets, and this was done. Meanwhile I handed over to the police another suspicious youth who was without a ticket. In the gallery I found two stink-bombs, which I handed over to the police officer; another bomb was lying near the door. Eight or nine persons were arrested by the police, and taken to the police station under a strong escort of three or four policemen. I heard later that the persons detained were released by the police on the demand of the crowd. I stood at the door until nearly the end of the performance in order to see that a close check was kept on those entering.

When the performance had finished, I went down to the floor of the theatre, where some of the singers and musicians were standing. The Chief of Police was said to be on the stage, giving orders for the actors and the personnel to leave by the back door for the station, as he considered the route behind the theatre through the Square in front of the Government Building to be safe. It was agreed between us that M. Szczepaniak should lead the way; and I should follow behind the actors. Whilst the actors and musicians were still assembling, some firemen entered the theatre and requested that the premises should be cleared, as the lights had to be extinguished. The rest of the actors and I had therefore to leave the theatre by the stage, and I found myself in front of the theatre building. Along with a group of actors, I proceeded by the route indicated. Near the Regierungshauptplatz I saw a number of youths, about 10 or 15, running and shouting out loud: "To the station now."

In the Krakauerstrasse I was cut off by the crowd from the group of actors accompanying me, and could not find them again. I therefore returned to the theatre to make sure that no one had been left behind. The theatre was already closed, but the crowd still stood in front shouting and uttering threats.
From there I proceeded in the direction of the station and met M. Szczepaniak outside Form's. We went together to the station, where there were already some police mustered. In the subway we met M. Pacula, Police Commissioner, who accosted us with the words: "We had no idea that such a thing could happen at the station, otherwise we would have sent up some police. The station guard, of course, was too weak."

(Signed) Czesław Tabernacki.

Appendix 10.
DEPOSITION.

Grudzice, May 3rd, 1929.

M. Franciszek Józef Buhl, aged 36, resident of Grudzice, made the following deposition:

During the performance of "Halka" at Oppeln, I was sitting with my stepdaughter, Lucja Piechota, aged 18, in the fourth row of the stalls. At the opening of the second act, a large number of stink-bombs fell near me, one of which burst on my stepdaughter's right shoulder and another on her breast. In consequence of the strong and disagreeable odour, my stepdaughter fainted, and I had to take her outside. The Red Cross attendant rendered first-aid, and, after being unconscious for a quarter of an hour, she recovered her senses. As a result of this incident, neither my stepdaughter nor I was able to see the second act.

(Signed) Franciszek Buhl.

I confirm the truth of the above.

(Signed) Lucja Piechota,

Jan Paszenda.

Appendix 11.
DEPOSITION.

Association of Poles, in Germany, T.z. (Section I).

Oppeln, May 8th, 1929.

M. Erich Wurst, photographer, of 8, Zweigstrasse, Oppeln, appeared and made the following deposition:

On Thursday, April 25th, 1929, the "Jungstahlhelm" Society had a gymnastic practice in the Communal School Nos 4/5 in the Malapanerstrasse, Oppeln. Captain Reschke, of Oppeln, the Society's gymnastic instructor, was also present. During the exercises, a member of the Society, whose name I do not know, suddenly stepped out of the ranks, and shouted in a loud voice, so that all the members must have heard—as they were meant to hear—"Sunday, roll-call in front of the Town Hall, 5 o'clock". Captain Reschke also heard this, but said nothing. The members of the Society knew what it meant, and knew that the purpose of the muster at 5 o'clock at the Town Hall was to interfere with the Polish theatre performance. This was told me by Georg Schwiertz, photographer's apprentice, of the Apprentices' Hostel, Getreidemarkt, Oppeln, who is also a member of the "Jungstahlhelm" and happened to be taking part in the drill. At the Town Hall, I saw a large crowd in which, among others, the following associations were strongly represented: "Jungstahlhelm", "Jungscharnhorst", and "Bismarckbund", all of them wearing their association insignia.

On Sunday, April 28th, immediately after the close of the theatre performance, I saw a young man of about twenty years, apparently belonging to the "Jungstahlhelm", lift his hand to strike a woman member of the audience coming out of the theatre quite close to the Ratskeller. I intervened and stopped the blow.

Chief Revenue inspector Halberstadt is, as I have ascertained, the local section leader of the Oppeln Stahlhelm. I saw three Reichswehr soldiers standing near Raabe's shop in the Ring, looking towards the theatre entrance. This was about 8.30 p.m.

Read and approved
(Signed) Erich Wurst,

Dr. von Openkowski.

Appendix 12.
DEPOSITION.

Association of Poles in Germany, T.z. (Section I).

Oppeln, May 2nd, 1929.

M. Ignacy Rudzki came to our office and make the following deposition:

On my way to the theatre at 4.30 p.m., in the company of M. Andrecki and M. Lupp of Olesno (Rosenberg), I noticed an unusually large number of people assembling near the Town
Hall. Further, nearly all the people standing or passing by stared with ironical smiles at the people making their way to the theatre. None of us—i.e., M. Andræcki, M. Lupp, myself, and several others proceeding to the theatre—imagined that these sarcastic smiles had any significant connection with the subsequent incidents.

When the performance began and the first act was nearly over, I noticed a strange kind of suffocating smell, and when I asked my neighbours they also said that something extraordinary must have happened, as it was impossible to stand it. As was later ascertained, someone in the audience had thrown stink-bombs. One of these bombs struck M. Wawrzynek on the neck, as he himself testified.

After the second act, when I went outside the theatre to the toilet, a still larger number of people had collected near the theatre or Town Hall, and ominous mutterings could be heard, though it was difficult to make out their meaning. I did not see any police, who at the very beginning might have dispersed the crowd which was collecting. There were only a few police standing near the theatre exit, taking no action whatever in spite of the ominous mutterings of the constantly increasing crowd.

When the performance was over and all the people started to leave the theatre, I was almost the last to come out, in the company of the same people, i.e., M. Andræcki, M. Lupp, M. Wawrzynek and his wife. When we reached the bottom of the stairs, the people leaving the theatre were standing in a huddled group, so terrorised by the shouts, the inhuman howling and hissing, and the cries of: "Kill them!", that they were afraid to go out.

Only when M. Wawrzynek and I called them did they make a move, and, passing over the wall of the Town Hall, came out into the Oderstrasse.

I stopped for a moment to observe the state of affairs, and as the Polish Consul-General was about to enter his motor-car the crowd set up a mighty shout: "Down with Poland!", howling and whistling in a terrifying manner.

About fifty Reichswehr soldiers took part along with the assembled crowd in this demonstration of shouting, hissing and singing of "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles!" The police standing by, who should have furnished protection and preserved order, did not in my opinion, discharge this duty as it should have been discharged. They pushed back the jostling crowd with their hands instead of assuming the energetic attitude of the guardians of public order and ensuring the safety of the people leaving the theatre.

When I arrived at the station at 5.30 a.m. next morning, with the object of leaving for Olesno, two men came up to the table where I was sitting, and a little later a member of the secret police, who had once checked my personal papers, came up and asked me whether I had also been at the theatre. I replied that I had, and at the same time stated that what took place did not testify to the high standard of culture of which the Germans boasted. To this he replied that it would probably not have happened had the people not been incited to it.

(Signed) Ignacy Rudzki, Dr. Openkowski.

Appendix 13.

DEPOSITION.

Oppeln, May 5th, 1929.

We, the undersigned, were present at the performance of "Halka" at Oppeln on April 28th, 1929. During the performance, a crowd of about 2,000 people collected near the theatre shouting: "You cursed Poles; just come here again and we will break every bone in your bodies!"

At the close of the performance, as we were leaving the theatre, they spat on us and shouted: "Polish swine!" We were obliged to hurry off through side streets, as we were being chased; two little boys shouted to us: "Run away quickly, otherwise they will kill you".

(Signed) Pawel Kutz, Konrad Wieja, Klara Waleska.

Oppeln, May 6th, 1929.

I beg to add to the above that, on each occasion when I went outside the theatre during the intervals, I saw amongst the demonstrators members of activist organisations in uniform with green caps on their heads. These were members of the "Landesschütz" or of the "Stahlhelm". In the interval after the third act, I noticed eight "Landesschützler" standing about three or four paces in front of the theatre entrance. There were policemen standing at the doors.

(Signed) Pawel Kutz.
Appendix 14.

DEPOSITION.

Association of Poles in Germany, T.z.
(Section I).

Przywory, May 1st, 1929.

Madame Julja Kubiszkowa made the following deposition:

On Sunday, April 28th, 1929, my sister Maria and my son Wilhelm and I attended the performance of the Polish opera "Halka" at Oppeln. On our way back to the main station we were not seriously molested. Arriving at the station, we found that crowds of Germans had filled the whole station and formed lines through which we had to pass. The crowd shouted at us because we were following behind the Polish actors: "Hurrah! Here they come, the Polish swine, the dirty Polish yokels. You want to sell us our German language!". My husband replied to them: "Quite right, here we are". I pulled him by the sleeve, as I was afraid that they would beat him, and told him to go on and not interfere. Hearing me talk Polish increased the Germans' irritation, and at that very moment I received a severe blow in the left side, which I think could only have been a kick. Immediately after, I received another kick in the right side. I stumbled and at once felt a severe pain in the injured parts. This pain still continues and is accompanied by severe and persistent headaches.

(Signed) Julita Kubiszew, Alojzy Homola.

Appendix 15.

DEPOSITION.

Jadwiga Hennek, of Fohvark, aged 19, domestic servant, made the following deposition:

On April 28th, after the performance was finished I left the theatre in the company of Elsbieta Wieschall and Rocha Wieschall of Fohvark. On the market square we were accosted by a young man, who rushed on us with an uplifted stick, shouting: "You cursed beasts, support the Poles, would you!". We, however, hastily and quietly withdrew to avoid being attacked and beaten. I also heard a woman threaten: "The cursed Poles shall be thrashed to-day like dogs". I also saw a group of youths rushing in the direction of the suburbs and uttering threats more or less as follows: "Now we will keep an eye on the Odervorstadt, and thrash the Poles". Fohvark, April 30th, 1929.

(Signed) Jadwiga Hennek.

(Signed) Elsbieta Wieschall
(about 18 years old),
Jan Paszenda.

Appendix 16.

DEPOSITION.

Grabina, May 4th, 1929.

I beg to report that last Sunday, after the performance of "Halka" at Oppeln, I witnessed the following incidents at the entrance to the Oppeln railway station: Several members of the Kattowitz Opera Company were insulted and spat upon. One actor was struck with a stick on the shoulders and another was thrown down on the stone steps. I did not see any police.

(Signed) Albert Augustin
Organist.

Appendix 17.

DEPOSITION.

I must first point out that I am slightly hard of hearing, and that my attention was mainly directed to the orchestra and the stage.

On my way to the theatre, in the company of some other gentlemen, I encountered a rather large crowd of youths who kept us under close observation as if we were people who could not be trusted. During the first or second act I noticed in the stalls below, near the main entrance, a suspicious noise, which, however, did not last long.
When the opera was over, I passed out together with the Rev. Klimas to the vestibule of the theatre, and came on a group of spectators leaving, but hesitating whether to go out into the square or to remain in the vestibule of the theatre. We two priests, however, pushed our way through the crowd and reached the square, where the number of onlookers was even larger than it had been when we entered the theatre. In order to get away as soon as possible from the rather terrifying crowd around us, we quickened our pace.

About half-an-hour later, on our way to the station, we had to cross the market square, where there was now a still larger crowd, and it was only with great difficulty that we could make our way through, to the accompaniment of an ever louder and more threatening chorus of epithets. When we reached the corner of St. Adalbertstrasse, a tall youth shouted out in Polish, pointing at us: “Look at the two old priests”, and menacingly pushed his way through towards us. Seeing that we were in a dangerous situation, the Rev. Klimas shouted loudly for help to the police. A policeman (or even two) appeared, and his energetic action was so far effective that they stopped insulting us, but stubborn assailants (there were several) accompanied us, walking beside and behind us, as far as the station—no police protection being available. We were so mortified by this unpleasant company, that, in order not to irritate our undesirable escort, we walked along silently like sheep led to the slaughter.

It was only at the station that we regained our freedom.

(Signed) Rev. Ks. KOZIOŁEK.

Grabina, near Biała, May 4th, 1929.

(Grabine b/Zülz. O/S.)

Appendix 18.

DEPOSITION.

M. Henryk Kiwus, of Folwark, aged 26, model cabinet-maker, made the following deposition:

After the close of the performance, I spent some time in the “Residenz” Café. About 9 p.m., I went in the direction of the station for my bicycle. Near the “Kammerlichtspiele” cinematograph, a group of about 100 youths attacked me. With shouts of “A Pole! A Polish musician, let him have it!” they rushed at me. One of them struck me on the head, but I could not see with what. I also received two severe blows in the side, which I think were kicks. The reason for my being attacked was the saxophone which I was carrying. By their insignia, I recognised my assailants as members of the “Stahlhelm”. Two of the assailants recognised me, and with shouts of: “It is a man from Oppeln, we know him” restrained the others from further attacks. I think that, had they not recognised me, I should have been dangerously injured. When they recognised me, no one thought it necessary to apologise or smooth over the incident. I had also to look for my hat myself.

Folwark, April 30th, 1929. (Signed) Henryk Kiwus, Jan PASZENDA.

Appendix 19.

DEPOSITION.

M. Stanisław Wieszala, of Folwark, aged 25, saddler, made the following deposition:

After the performance, I left with others and proceeded towards the Nicolaistrasse. Some girls who had also been in the theatre, frightened by the shouts and threats of the crowd, started to run away, and were chased by a large number of the crowd. Amongst the expressions used was: “Support the Poles, would you? you cursed Polish dogs.”

Folwark, April 30th, 1929. (Signed) St. WIESCHALLA, Jan PASZENDA.

Appendix 20.

DEPOSITION.

M. Wiktor Wieszala of Folwark, aged 18, mason, made the following deposition:

I left the theatre by myself. In the Krakauerstrasse, I joined company with two girls, one of whom was wearing village costume. A little later, I noticed three suspicious-looking persons following me. Near the Post Office, one of them left the others, ran across the street ahead of me, turned round, and with a shout of “Polish pig”, rushed at me. As I started to defend myself, he gave up the attack. Two of his companions led him away. I would emphasise that my assailant had his fists clenched when he was still several paces distant. I could not see what it was he was holding in his hands. It was only by clever defence that I was able to avoid his blows.

Folwark, April 30th, 1929. (Signed) Wiktor WIESZALA, Jan PASZENDA.
Appendix 21.

DEPOSITION.

Association of Poles in Germany, T.z.
(Section I.)

Oppeln, May 1st, 1929.

M. Alojzy Szymaniec, of Wojtowa-Wies, near Oppeln, appeared and made the following deposition:

After 8 p.m. on Sunday, April 28th, 1929, I was going along the Krakauerstrasse when I noticed near the "Warenhaus Gold" a band of about 20 or 30 youths pacing up and down, most of them armed with sticks. They were making an uproar, uttering threats, and holding up passing motor-cars, especially those proceeding towards the station, evidently on the look-out for Poles. The occupants of the motor-cars had to prove that they were Germans. I saw three motor-cars held up in this way.

(Signed) Alojzy Szymaniec, Alojzy Homola.

Appendix 22.

DEPOSITION.

After the performance, as I was in great hurry, I brought my wife and two children out of the theatre and went towards the Kleine Krakauerstrasse. At the point where the Krakauerstrasse crosses the Regierungshauptplatz, I left my family, instructing them to proceed to Form's Hotel and wait for me there.

I myself returned, as I wanted to go to the newspaper office and write a short report for the Beuthen paper, "Katolik". When I had reached the Square and was just opposite the rear entrance of the Municipal Theatre, where the police station at present is, I was accosted by a man, who struck me with his fist on the shoulder and said: "Well, Hermann, were you at the theatre too?". On these words I turned and saw before me a rather tall man about 28 years of age, dressed in a black suit and black hat. This person then started to be provocative and, with a flourish of the hand, said: "Oh! yes, Liguda, you were in the theatre too! Off you go to Poland, you Polish scoundrel!". At the same moment, I found myself surrounded by a number of people, one of whom impudently thrust his face close up to mine and stared at me provocatively.

Seeing that the situation was becoming serious, I shouted: "Officer!". A policeman, who was standing some way off, now approached, and the rabble around me took to flight.

I pointed out to the policeman the man who had so impudently accosted me and who was now trying to push through the crowd and escape.

The policeman took no notice when I said to him: "Please take that man's name".

I would add in explanation that I do not know why the man addressed me as "Hermann".

As regards "Liguda", I might explain that this was the name of a well-known Silesian nationalist, the late Wojciech Liguda. My wife's first husband was Karol Liguda, his son, who founded a bookseller's business in Oppeln under the name of Liguda. When I married his widow, I took over the business and carried it on under the same name, which explains why I am sometimes called "Liguda" instead of by my own name.

You may make use of the above information if necessary.

(Signed) Antoni Pawlett.

Appendix 23.

DEPOSITION.

I had left the Oppeln theatre after the performance of "Halka", and was crossing the Nicolaistraße, when I heard some young people—there might have been four of them—following me and abusing and cursing me. The words: "Out you go, to Warsaw" were used.

In front of me, there were some other girls who had been at the theatre. As we were very frightened, we hastily retreated. After a time, we lost sight of the youths.

Oppeln, April 29th, 1929.

(Signed) Hedwig Czek (of Kempa).

Cz. Tabernacki.
Appendix 24.

DEPOSITION.

Association of Poles in Germany, T.z.
(Section I).

Oppeln, May 3rd, 1929.

M. Erich Wurst, photographer, of Oppeln, appeared and made the following deposition:

On April 28th, as I was going from the theatre, I stopped at the entrance to the Ratskeller. There were 15 or 20 youths inside standing around an older man who carried a stout walking-stick. The youths were saying: " Didn't we make a good job of it? " On hearing the howling in the Square outside, they rushed out and joined the others. I then proceeded with the chauffeur Kukofka to the " Rolnik "; we were followed by a young man who watched from the Sebastiansplatz where we were going. When I looked out a little later, there were some 15 men at the " Rolnik ", walking to and fro. Then they went back to the Ring.

The older man was about 35 to 40 years of age, of medium height, wearing a brown suit and brownish hat, clean-shaven and without eye-glasses. This was at 8.15 p.m.

Read and approved

Deposition taken by:
(Signed) Erich Wurst.

Kotulla.

I have ascertained that the man above described is called Halberstadt and is a Chief Revenue Inspector residing in Oppeln-Ostrowek.

Appendix 25.

DEPOSITION.

Association of Poles in Germany, T.z.
(Section I).

Oppeln, April 30th, 1929.

M. Josef Wilczek, printer, of Gross-Döbern, appeared and made the following deposition:

After the theatre performance on Sunday, April 28th, 1929, at 8.15 p.m., as I was leaving the yard of the " Rolnik ", where I had gone to fetch my bicycle, I walked along the Gartenstrasse wheeling my bicycle. At the corner of the Augustinistrasse and Gartenstrasse, where the " Oppelner Nachrichten " building is, two youths of about 20 years of age were standing. One of them was armed with a stick, whilst the other had no cap. As I was passing them, the one observed to the other: " There must be some more Poles ". I mounted my bicycle and rode along the Gartenstrasse to the Gerichtstrasse. Both the boys whistled behind me, and I noticed that they were running after me.

Karl Bieniussa, son of a peasant of Gross-Döbern, also noticed the two boys; Bieniussa was riding at a considerable distance behind me, and caught me up at the Court House in the Nikolaistrasse.

Read and approved
(Signed) Josef Wilczek.

Appendix 26.

DEPOSITION.

Grudzice, May 7th, 1929.

M. Szymon Pandza, aged 42, innkeeper, resident of Grudzice, made the following deposition:

After the performance of " Halka " at Oppeln on April 28th, I left the theatre by the main entrance and turned to the left in order to reach the " Rolnik ", No. 5, Augustinistrasse. As I was crossing the Square through a crowd of highly excited people who surrounded the town-hall, someone whom I could not identify shouted out: " There goes another Polish clown ", and rushed at me. As I did not want to run the risk of being assaulted, I fled, pursued by my unknown assailant across the square to the Regierungsplatz. Failing to catch me, he threatened: " I'll give it you, you cursed Pole! " Two elderly women and four girls who left the theatre together with me had also to take refuge in flight from their assailants. They chose another direction, however, and I could not see how far they were pursued or what happened to them.

(Signed) Simon Pandza.

Appendix 27.

DEPOSITION.

Oppeln, April 29th, 1929.

As I was escorting my mother to the station, I met three Reichswehr soldiers in the Krakauerstrasse. The soldier walking in the middle turned to me and said: " Where are you off to? To Warsaw? Out you get to Warsaw! ", at the same time making a gesture as if he wanted to draw his sabre. It was 8.30 p.m.

(Signed) K. Pawlik.
Appendix 28.

DEPOSITION.

On April 28th I was at the performance of the opera "Halka" at Oppeln. At the beginning the performance proceeded comparatively quietly. At the close of the first act, when I was in the cloakroom, M. Wawrzynek came up to me and said that someone was throwing stink-bombs from the gallery. I went into the auditorium and confirmed this. There was such a stench in the theatre that the windows had to be opened. I then went to the cloakroom and told the policeman on duty about it. The policeman conferred with a fireman, and they went up to the balcony, whence they returned a little later leading a young prisoner. I also saw a plain-clothes officer handing the cloakroom attendant a stink-bomb which they had found on the prisoner. After the release of the prisoners, I saw a motor-car with six or eight policemen, a "flying squad", arrive. The officer handed the cloakroom attendant a stink-bomb which they had found on the prisoner.

The performance proceeded comparatively quietly. At the close of the first act, when I was in the balcony, whence they returned a little later leading a young prisoner. I also saw a plain-clothes officer handing the cloakroom attendant a stink-bomb which they had found on the prisoner. After the release of the prisoners, I saw a motor-car with six or eight policemen, a "flying squad", arrive. The officer handed the cloakroom attendant a stink-bomb which they had found on the prisoner.

The police were booed, and they now started to show more energy in dealing with the crowd, which was also demanding the surrender of the actors. The officer, however, took no notice and hurried upstairs to the stage, where he evidently gave the same instructions to the actors, because when I went upstairs I found no one there except the theatre attendants waiting for their wages, and the workmen. When I had paid the theatre attendants, I went downstairs to the back door with the stage manager and one of the orchestra whom I had also met there, and we made our way together to the railway station. As we were leaving, a group of people accosted us and followed us up to the station. As we approached, I noticed two Reichswehr soldiers; when they saw us, they joined our assailants behind. At the station, as I had foreseen, we encountered the crowd in full force, making a terrible uproar and shouting, and I noticed that it was not till we got there that the police arrived and took up their position in front of the station entrance. In the rear, there was not a single policeman. As we pushed our way through the crowd, we were cursed and jostled and kicked from all sides, and in this manner we reached the station. Just in front of the entrance, one of the crowd jumped out and struck M. Fricz, the stage manager, who was walking beside me, with an iron instrument, wounding him on the temple. Thereupon the police made a rush forward and pushed us inside the station entrance. When I reached the waiting-room, I learned that all the actors were already in the station, some on the platform and some in the waiting-room, and that we were the last to arrive. I also ascertained that some of them had been seriously wounded and nearly all had been assaulted. In the station we were left unmolested, as the police had cleared the platform and the station hall so that none of the assailants could get in. The police travelled with us as far as Tarnow.

Beuthen, May 1st, 1929.

(Signed) Wojciech Michalek.

Appendix 29.

DEPOSITION.

Association of Poles in Germany, T.z. (Section I).

Oppeln, May 3rd, 1929.

M. Tomasz Hurek, chauffeur, aged 25, appeared to-day in our office and made the following deposition:

1. Before the close of the performance of "Halka", I arrived with my car at the back of the Town Hall and halted there. A little later, I heard from the other side of the Town Hall
threatening shouts, chanting of "Deutschland iiber Alles", and booing. I then saw a man and woman running hurriedly from the front of the theatre pursued by two youths with uplifted sticks, shouting: "Stop, stay where you are .". Both fugitives might have been about forty years old; they succeeded in escaping their pursuers.

2. On the first occasion, I drove off with the actors to the station unmolested. When I returned again to the back of the Town Hall, seven actors ran up, pursued on all sides by crowds of people threatening and abusing them. One of the expressions I heard used was: "You cursed Poles! You come here to drive people crazy". Some of the crowd tried to burst into the motor-car in order to assault the actresses sitting there; slamming the doors, I drove off quickly to the station. Neither on the first nor on the second occasion did I see any policemen at the station or behind the theatre. When I was approaching the station on the second occasion from the Krakauerstrasse, crowds of people were running up to the station with threatening shouts. On returning the second time from the station I stopped near the Town Hall. It was only ten minutes later that I saw policemen leaving the Town Hall in a motor-lorry in the direction of the station, followed by the menacing howls of the crowd. Owing to the noise, I could not distinguish clearly the words used. At the same time, I saw the leader of the Landesschutz seated in a red "Dixi" 4-seater car. I recognised him by his uniform, in which I had seen him previously during the procession. He drove in his car through the assembled crowd round the Town Hall.

I would also point out that the leader of the Landesschutz was of medium height, stout, clean-shaven, dressed in a Landeschutz uniform, with an officer's belt, and drove the motor-car himself.

(Signed) Tomasz Hurek,
Dr. Openkowski.

Appendix 30.

Deposition.

Grudzice, May 3rd, 1929.

M. Piotr Warwas, aged 20, labourer, resident in Grudzice, made the following deposition:

After the performance of "Halka", I left the theatre in the company of Mme. Marja Linkert, of Grudzice, and taking no notice of the shouts of the crowd gathered in front of the theatre, I proceeded in the direction of Grudzice along the Krakauerstrasse. Opposite the station I stopped, seeing people rushing with shouts to the station. Out of curiosity, I went along to see what was happening. When I reached the main station entrance, I saw in the subway a huge crowd of people with a group of artistes among them. At this moment, a police motor-car drove up, and the crowd, with shouts of "Schupo, schupo", started to retreat from the subway. The police dismounted and posted themselves at intervals over the Square in front of the station and in the subway. A few minutes later, another group of the Katowitz actors and orchestra arrived, and had to pass through lines formed by the crowd, which kept up a continuous shouting. The lines of people immediately closed in on the group of actors, and the latter were kicked and jostled from the side and from the rear. The actors kept on their way without offering resistance and without looking round. The police were standing near, some of them not more than six paces distant, others a little farther. When the actors were attacked, the police remained absolutely inactive, and only when the attack was over and the actors had gone on did the police come up and start to shoulder the crowd back with shouts of: "Stand back there!". As I wanted to leave by the motor omnibus, I withdrew, and did not see the later incidents.

(Signed) Piotr Warwas.

I confirm the truth of the above:
(Signed) Marja Linkert.

Appendix 31.

Deposition.

Association of Poles in Germany, T.z.
(Section 1).

Oppeln, May 8th, 1929.

M. Franciszek Wittek, of Malin, aged 17, innkeeper's son, made the following deposition:

After the performance of "Halka" at the Oppeln Municipal Theatre on April 28th, I left in the company of Wincenty Bartek, of Malin, aged 26, for the station, without being seriously molested by the crowd assembled round the theatre. There was a large number of youths and older people at the station. One group of actors, actresses and musicians had already passed through, and other groups were arriving. I stood in the main station beyond the subway,
looking into it, and saw the crowd striking the actors and actresses with their fists and with some objects which I could not distinguish. Among the threats uttered, I clearly heard: "Out you get, you cursed Poles, to Kattowitz." The actresses wept as they fled before their assailants. At this time there were no police to be seen—they only arrived when all the actors had passed through the subway to the main station.

(Signed) Franciszek Wittek, Jan Paszenda.

Appendix 32.

DEPOSITION.

At the entrance to the station, the crowd rushed to attack the actors. One of the crowd advanced with clenched fist to strike an actress on the head. As I was behind the actress, I dashed forward and caught the assailant by the hand. I did not, however, succeed in protecting the actress from the blow, but merely broke the force of it. The actress was struck in the face. I then caught the assailant by the collar and called on the station police to take his name. The police took no notice of my appeal, but let him go.

Oppeln, April 29th, 1929.

(Signed) Jan Kurpiers.

Appendix 33.

DEPOSITION.

Association of Poles in Germany, T.z.

(Section I).

Oppeln, May 1st, 1929.

M. Reinhold Kukofka, of 1 Klosterstrasse, Oppeln, appeared of his own accord in the offices of the Association of Poles, 5, Augustinistrasse, Oppeln, and made the following deposition:

About 8.15 p.m. on Sunday, April 24th, I was driving back from the station through the Krakauerstrasse to the Square. Near the Post Office, I saw crowds of people assembled on the pavements and in the streets beating some persons who were in flight. Two of these were thrown to the ground, their hats falling from their heads. As they were lying on the ground, they were further assaulted by several people. One of them quickly rose to his feet and ran away. I do not know what happened to the other one on the ground, as I drove off.

Deposition taken by K. Pawlik.

(Signed) Reinhold Kukofka.

Appendix 34.

DEPOSITION.

Association of Poles in Germany, T.z.

(Section I).

Oppeln, May 1st, 1929.

M. Reinhold Kukofka, of Oppeln, appeared in this office and made the following deposition:

Before the performance had finished, I left the theatre and drove my car round to the rear exit. Leaving the car, I went round to the main front entrance, where the motor-car of the Consul-General from Beuthen was stationed. I saw the Consul-General with his companions enter the car, and as they took their seats and the car slowly started off, several youths rushed up with sticks raised, cursing and uttering threats, but were restrained by the arrival of some policemen. The car drove off. I returned to my car, collected some passengers and drove them to the station.

Returning from the station, I noticed near the Krakauerstrasse, in front of the Post Office, two men being attacked. One was thrown to the ground and kicked, but the other succeeded in escaping. There were several assailants. A large number of youths and older people ran in the direction of the station. I did not see a policeman either outside the station, or outside the Post Office, or on the Krakauerstrasse. Only in the neighbourhood of the theatre were there any police.

Deposition taken by Dr. Openkowski.

(Signed) Reinhold Kukofka.
Appendix 35.

DEPOSITION.

Association of Poles in Germany, T.z.
(Section I).

Oppeln, May 8th, 1929.

M. Marcin Ratajsczak, 2a Töperstrasse, Oppeln, appeared in this office and made the following deposition:

About 8 p.m. on Thursday, April 25th, I was tolling the bell in the Church of the Holy Cross. A certain M. Stach, of Oppeln, son of the baker Stach, of Gartenstrasse, Oppeln, was also in the belfry, ringing. M. Chyrek, an assistant at the Alex Hospital, and the shoemaker Mross, formerly of 2a Kräuterei, but at present residing near the new Convent, were also in the belfry. Stach expressed this opinion: "They will catch it again on Sunday afternoon, those Poles, as they did during the plebiscite, if they give a Polish performance at the theatre". Stach continued talking, but I did not understand, as I have not a good knowledge of German. We then descended from the belfry and went our several ways home.

About 4 p.m., I was in the Market Square and saw a whole crowd of people jeering at those who were going to the theatre. There were about 500 persons in the Square and on the pavements, watching the people entering the theatre. After the performance, I estimated the crowd at about 1,500 people, shouting and reviling the Poles.

(Signed) Martin Ratajsczak,
Dr. Openkowski.

II.

SUPPLEMENTARY COMMUNICATION FROM THE PETITIONERS.

[Translation.]

The Association of Poles in Germany (Section I) to the Council of the League of Nations, Geneva.

Oppeln, July 27th, 1929.

Referring to our petition of May 8th, 1929, concerning the Oppeln incidents, we enclose for your information a copy of our application of June 7th to the Prussian Government regarding the punishment of the Oppeln police officers, President May and Majors Starke and von Gilgenheimb.

(Signed) Stefan Szczepaniak,
Secretary of the Managing Committee.

[Translation.]

Association of Poles in Germany (Section I) to the Government of the State of Prussia, through the Prime Minister, Berlin.

Oppeln. June 7th, 1929.

As representatives of the Polish minority in Upper Silesia, we beg respectfully to submit the following observations:

On April 28th, 1929, after protracted negotiations, a performance of Moniuszko's opera Halka was given at the Oppeln Municipal Theatre by members of the Kattowitz Municipal Theatre. In connection with this performance grave excesses were committed by Germans against the audience and particularly against the actors, the main responsibility for which lies with the local police authorities. By a Ministerial Decree, President May was immediately dismissed from his post and two senior police officers, Majors Starke and von Gilgenheim, were, under the same Decree, to be punished by removal to subordinate posts. According to Press reports, however, Major Starke has been promoted to the command of the Ratibor police force and Major von Gilgenheim is said to have been transferred to the Rhine Province, but whether in a responsible capacity or not we do know. It is a fact, at any rate, that Major Starke still holds a responsible
command. His transfer to Ratibor, therefore, cannot be considered a disciplinary measure in
the sense of the Ministerial Decree issued on the subject, or as adequate punishment for the
excesses committed in connection with the theatre performance at Oppeln. Major Starke's
anti-Polish sentiments, moreover, justify the apprehension that excesses similar to those which
took place on April 28th, 1929, at Oppeln may be repeated at Ratibor, since a considerable Polish
minority lives in and around that town.

For further details we would refer you to the article entitled “Disciplinary Measures against
Oppeln Police Officers” in the enclosed issue of Freiheit, No. 21, of May 23rd, 1929.

In our opinion, it would be better for the peace of the community if Major Starke did not hold
an official post in former plebiscite territory. We therefore beg to suggest that he should be
transferred from the bilingual districts.

We should be grateful for an early reply from the Government regarding the steps taken by it.

By order

(Signed) Stefan Szczepaniak,
Secretary.

III.

OBSERVATIONS OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT.

[Translation.]

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations.

Berlin, August 27th, 1929.

With reference to your letters of May 16th and 29th—No.4/11791/3256—and of August 16th,
1929, in which you forwarded to the German Government the petition of the Association of Poles
in Germany regarding the incidents which occurred in Oppeln on the occasion of the theatrical
performance of April 28th, and two supplementary petitions, I have the honour to forward to you
the observations of the German Government.

The Association of Poles followed up its telegram of April 30th, 1929, to the Council of the
League by a detailed memorandum, with thirty-five appendices, dated May 8th, giving in
exhaustive detail the Association of Poles’ version of the events which occurred in connection
with the Polish theatrical performance at Oppeln from its earliest beginnings, including both the
events said to have occurred in the theatre itself and in the immediate neighbourhood of the
theatre before, during and after the performance. Together with a number of just observations,
the memorandum and its thirty-five appendices contain grave exaggerations, misrepresentation
of the facts and inaccuracies. All the details have been examined by the German Government
and the necessary rectification made. The results of the enquiry will be found in Appendix I.

The essential facts of the case are as follows:

A large number of Polish theatrical entertainments had previously been given in various
towns in German Upper Silesia without any incident, but a performance at Oppeln on April 28th,
1929, was interrupted, demonstrations took place in front of the theatre, and certain irresponsible
elements of the population were afterwards guilty at the railway station of excesses directed
against the Polish actors. Blows were struck and a number of actors were injured.

Immediately on learning of these incidents, the competent German Government authorities
took all necessary steps to effect a reconciliation. The Oberpräsident of Upper Silesia at once
telegraphed to the Polish Consul-General in Beuthen to express his sincere regret for what had
happened and to assure him that everything had been done and, further, that all possible steps
would be taken to discover and punish the offenders. The agent of the German Government at
Katowitz made a declaration to the same effect to M. Calonder.

On May 1st, that is, on the third day after the incidents in question, the Prussian Government
placed the Police President at Oppeln on the temporary retired list and, after disciplinary action,
transferred the two principal police officers to subordinate posts. One of these officers, who was
previously in command of the Schutzpolizei at Oppeln, thereupon sent in his resignation, which
was accepted for August 31st, 1929. The other, who had been permanent representative of the
head of the Oppeln Schutzpolizei, was transferred to Ratibor and given a comparatively unimpor-
tant position; as superintendent of the Ratibor minor police inspectorate, which is under the Oppeln
police administration, he is now placed under the head of the Oppeln Schutzpolizei or his permanent
representative.

Criminal proceedings were immediately instituted against all persons who were suspected of
taking part in the disturbances in the theatre or in the attack carried out at the railway station
or who could be charged with provocative behaviour or other offences. These proceedings are at
present pending before the authorities of first, second or third instance. In no case has any definite
decision been reached as yet.
Although every effort has been made by the German judicial authorities, the persons guilty of the attack at the railway station have not yet been tried, the reason being that the injured Polish actors, whose evidence is essentially for the conviction of the offenders—who assert their innocence—have not yet appeared in response to the demand made to them to come before the German judicial authorities. The reason they give is that they are all at present on their summer holidays and will not return to Kattowitz until the opening of the winter season. The trial cannot take place until then.

The German Government has thus done everything possible under the circumstances. When the Association of Poles, after describing what happened at Oppeln, goes on to generalise these regrettable incidents, to place the blame in the last resort on the German authorities and thus to represent the matter as a "violation" of the Geneva Convention, it is drawing tendentious conclusions, which must be emphatically repudiated. No Government is in a position to anticipate and prevent excesses on the part of excited elements of the population within its boundaries. The Geneva Convention itself, which the German Government observes with the greatest loyalty, cannot and will not prevent isolated groups in a frontier district, where political feeling runs high, from committing regrettable acts which are contrary to the policy followed by the Government.

The Association of Poles then proceeds, in the course of its statement, to touch on the problem of the political education of the young. Contrary to the assertion of the Association that a spirit of intolerance and Chauvinism is being inculcated in young people in Germany, the German Government faithfully observes Article 148 of the Constitution of the Reich, which lays down that the young shall be trained in the spirit of international reconciliation.

At the meeting of the Council of the League on June 15th in Madrid, the German representative felt obliged to point out that the disturbed state of the relations between Germany and her eastern neighbour, created by the Oppeln incident, was attributable less to the regrettable occurrence itself than to its systematic and continuous exploitation for purposes of propaganda on the other side of the frontiers of the Reich, an exploitation which had been carried into the Madrid Council meeting itself. He then stated that happenings such as those which had unfortunately occurred in Oppeln would not have such far-reaching effects if they were not, as in the present case, abused for the purpose of an agitation prejudicial to the relations between the two countries. The extent to which this has unfortunately been the case will be seen from Appendix II.

For the Under-Secretary of State:

(Signed) Köpke.

Appendix I.

A. EVENTS PREVIOUS TO THE PERFORMANCE.

I.

It is quite true that the municipal authorities at Oppeln at first refused the Association’s request for the use of the theatre premises for the Polish theatre’s performance, because they were doubtful as to the non-political and purely artistic character of the representation. This decision, however, was reversed at the instance of the Prussian Government.

The Oberbürgermeister’s stipulation, complained of in the petition, that the organisers of the performance should bear the expense of again putting up the electric-lighting appliances which had been taken away, was admitted at the time to be justifiable by the representative of the Association, Dr. Michalek, himself, who expressly agreed with the Oberbürgermeister that the theatre should be let to the Association, ready for the performance, for a lump sum of 200 Reichsmarks including the lighting appliances. The electric-light installation and the scenery fittings had been taken down this year earlier than usual because, at a time when the Polish performance was not yet contemplated, the police authorities at Oppeln, in conformity with the police regulations in force all over Germany, had already ordered the overhauling of the defective installation so as to obviate the risk of fire.

As regards the question of possible compensation for damage to the theatre fittings in case of disturbances, an undertaking to this effect is demanded of any organisation if it is not absolutely certain beforehand that law and order will be preserved. There is no question of any discrimination against the minority.

The Oberbürgermeister’s stipulation that no piece should be played which might wound the justifiable susceptibilities of Germans, and that no incidental performances should take place in the intervals, was due to the fact that, at a previous Polish theatrical performance, the Polish national anthem had been played and sung in the intervals. The Oberbürgermeister’s demand was aimed at ensuring that the Polish performance should remain a purely artistic affair. In the case of German plays, too, there is no singing or other form of entertainment during the intervals.
II.

The Polish complaint speaks of a "wild campaign of provocation" by the German Press, and of articles in which the German population "was summoned to resort to violence". This statement is incorrect. It is true that most of the Oppeln newspapers were against the Polish performance. Generally speaking, however, they only printed unbiased statements in which, in view of the results of the last election, they disputed the need for any Polish performances. The articles of the Oberschlesische Tageszeitung alone gave rise to penal proceedings against the editor responsible. These proceedings are now pending before the Court of second instance.

The statement in the petition that, at the meeting of the Oppeln Corporation on April 19th, two "resolutions" were adopted opposing the giving of a Polish performance is untrue. The two texts reproduced in the petition constitute interpellations of individual parties, which, however, were neither considered nor adopted—in fact, they were not even discussed.

III.

In justifying the necessity of Polish performances at Oppeln, the petition says that, according to the official census of the population taken in 1925, there were 96,455 Polish-speaking inhabitants, out of a total of 169,584, in the kreis of Oppeln.

This statement is misleading. In the first place, the population of the rural kreis of Oppeln, which contains a much larger proportion of Poles, is added to the population of the purely German town of Oppeln, in which, after all, the performance took place. In this way, the impression is created that the town of Oppeln contains a large Polish minority. Secondly, the number of "Polish-speaking" persons includes the bilingual population, i.e., persons giving German and Polish as their mother-tongue.

The actual figures are:

1. **Oppeln Urban Kreis.**
   - Mother-tongue German ........................................... 37,742
   - Mother-tongue German and Polish .............................. 3,429
   - Mother-tongue Polish ........................................... 336

2. **Oppeln Rural Kreis.**
   - Mother-tongue German ........................................... 35,387
   - Mother-tongue German and Polish .............................. 64,956
   - Mother-tongue Polish ........................................... 27,734

Of course, in a frontier area of mixed language, persons speaking both languages as mother-tongues may belong to the minority, but they do not necessarily do so. That the chances are against it in the present case is shown by the results of the Reichstag elections on May 20th, 1928, which were as follows:

**Oppeln Urban Kreis.**
- German votes ....................................................... 19,832
- Polish votes ....................................................... 105

**Oppeln Rural Kreis.**
- German votes ....................................................... 39,844
- Polish votes ....................................................... 6,979

In any case, the above figures clearly show that, in the town of Oppeln, the Polish minority is practically non-existent. It is, after all, on account of this fact that the purely German population of the town of Oppeln shows such little sympathy with the Polish performances.

IV.

We must contradict the conclusion drawn in the petition from these events which preceded the performance that "both the German public and the German authorities wished in the first place to hinder the performance, and when this was not successful, to terrorise the people so that they would not attend it". Such arbitrary conclusions cannot be justified either by the distribution of a pamphlet by an extreme political party, or by the Press campaign which arose, or by the original refusal of the Oppeln municipal authorities. If the tickets for the performance were sold out in one and a half days, and if, as the petition alleges, hundreds of persons could not get tickets, the "terrorisation" of the population could not have been very bad.
B. Occurrences in the Theatre and its Vicinity.

I.

It is a gross exaggeration for the petition to say that the police only intervened to stop the throwing of stink bombs when the odour in the theatre became so intolerable that people fainted and had to be carried out, and when some members of the audience began to scream and leave the theatre. Nor is it true that it was only on the insistence of the audience, who pointed out the suspected parties, that the police apprehended and removed the culprits.

The thorough enquiry instituted by the German authorities has elicited the fact that, when the Chief of Police noticed the smell of the stink-bombs, he took advantage of the interval after the first act to find out the culprits. The police made all the spectators in the boxes show their entrance tickets. All the police present in the theatre denied that any of the spectators had asked them to identify or apprehend persons for throwing stink-bombs. Nor have the penal proceedings instituted in connection with this matter confirmed the Polish assertions. Equally untrue is the further reproach contained in the petition that the persons who had thrown stink-bombs were seized by the spectators themselves, that the police remained inactive and that they only took the names of those creating the disturbance when ordered to do so by an officer who had arrived meanwhile. That this assertion is untrue is shown by the fact that, in the penal proceedings taken against the persons apprehended by the police, they were only convicted of a breach of domestic peace (entering the theatre without tickets) or of resistance to the authorities, and their participation in the bomb-throwing could not be proved by any of the evidence.

The persons apprehended, who had fixed residences known to the authorities, and could therefore not be suspected of endeavouring to escape were later set at liberty after the usual particulars had been taken down. This is, however, the invariable practice followed by the judicial authorities.

II.

Nor does the description of the events which occurred in the vicinity of the theatre correspond to the facts. Neither before the performance nor afterwards did the demonstrations assume such proportions as the petitioners wish to make out.

For example, the figure of 2,000 persons mentioned in the petition as having demonstrated in front of the theatre after the performance is greatly exaggerated. According to the statements of the policemen present, there were at most 500 or 600. No Reichswehr soldiers stopped in front of the theatre at the time in question. The crowd seems in the first instance to have vented its wrath on the police, as the latter displayed great energy in driving the crowd back. The insulting cries were also mainly directed against the police.

No "attack" on two elderly priests took place. The priest, M. Koziolek, who made a statement on this point in Appendix 17 of the petition, does not allege any such thing. In fact, the two priests were chiefly alarmed by the shouts and by a young man who, according to their statement, advanced on them "in a hostile manner". One of the priests called to a policeman for help and the latter protected them. While, in Appendix 17 of the petition, M. Koziolek says that the assailants followed him and his colleague to the station, he stated, when examined by the German authorities on May 21st, that he had only "had the impression" that the crowd was following them in a threatening manner.

The three soldiers of the Reichswehr who stopped at the time in question in the vicinity of the station were confronted with Pawlik, the chief witness of the Association of Poles, whose mother was alleged to have been molested by Reichswehr soldiers. Pawlik, however, could not identify them as the authors of the attack. No other members of the Reichswehr were in the vicinity of the station at the time of the events in question.

It is quite true that police protection was lacking on the way from the Ring to the station while the actors were on their way to the latter. The petition fails to mention, however, that the actors went to the station too soon, against the express advice of the police. They were to be brought to the station under police protection, but left the theatre building of their own accord before this was provided. If they had followed the advice of the police, the occurrence at the station would have been avoided.

C. The Occurrences at the Station.

It is unfortunately true that at the station a number of persons belonging to the theatre troupe were subjected to a series of attacks and were beaten and injured. It has not yet been possible, however, to ascertain exactly the number of these attacks and the extent of the injuries. The evidence of the German witnesses so far examined differs materially from the statements
made by the victims of the aggression before the Polish authorities. It will only be possible to clear up the matter completely when the Polish witnesses have been examined before the German courts.

Nevertheless, according to the material at the disposal of the German authorities, the petition of the Association of Poles contains demonstrable exaggerations and untrue imputations. For example, it is not the case that the railway police did not intervene against the aggressors but "looked on and made sarcastic remarks as men and women were being beaten". As the thorough investigations made by the German authorities have shown, the exact contrary is the case. The five railway policemen present did all that was humanly possible to protect the Polish actors and thus prevented still greater harm from being done. As a consequence, they were themselves abused and struck by the mob. The railway policeman Labisch succeeded, for example, in extricating from the crowd a musician who carried a violin case under his arm and brought him into the station. The musician himself admitted this, and afterwards said in the train to Labisch who, with other officials, escorted the party to Tarnau, that if he had not been extricated by Labisch he might easily have had a still more unpleasant experience.


The allegation in the petition that the events it deals with were systematically prepared in advance is based on nine arguments, which call for the following observations:

1. The "violent campaign" conducted by the German Press has already been dealt with above.

2. The "circulation of appeals by nationalist organisations" can only refer to the leaflet reproduced in the petition and signed by a certain Wieschalla. No other leaflets were distributed. Penal proceedings have been instituted against Wieschalla.

3. Nothing is known the threats of "German activist organisations" against the Polish population a few days before the disturbances. The statements made in Appendices 11 and 35 of the petition are proved to be untrue.

4. According to the enquiries made, the petition’s complaints that the teachers stirred up the secondary-school students against the Polish theatrical performance can only apply to Dr. Westphal, of the Oppeln Gymnasium, against whom criminal proceeding were instituted. The proceedings had, however, to be dropped as no evidence was forthcoming of any punishable offence. Westphal had made certain uncalled-for and ill-advised remarks to his pupils about the forthcoming performance. Although the facts as ascertained could not justify the taking of disciplinary proceedings with a view to his dismissal, Westphal himself sent in his resignation, which has been accepted and will take effect as from October 1st.

When the petition speaks of "teachers", this constitutes an arbitrary and quite unjustified generalisation of a single incident.

5. As regards the organisation of meetings at which the subject of discussion was the breaking up of the performance, nothing could be ascertained. This is an entirely unsupported allegation.

6. The meetings and drills of the Landesschützenverband and of the Jungstahlhelm referred to in the petition actually took place. The dates had, however, been fixed a considerable time in advance, and the meetings had nothing whatever to do with the Polish theatrical performance. Even the Association of Poles seems to be doubtful about the connection between these meetings and the events at Oppeln, since on this occasion, in contrast to the others, it uses the word "probably".

7. The statement in the petition that notice was given to the members of the German activist organisations, several days before the performance, to meet on the afternoon of April 28th in the "Ring" in front of the theatre for the purpose of breaking up the Polish performance, as also the assumption made in No. 6, are apparently based on the statements made by the photographer Wurst, at Oppeln (Appendix 11 of the petition). The photographer’s apprentice, Georg Schwiertz, who was carefully examined regarding the occurrence, strenuously denies having said anything of the kind to Wurst. An examination of the members of the Jungstahlhelm elicited not the slightest evidence in confirmation of the assumptions and allegations contained in Nos. 6 and 7.

8. It is not true that uniformed and armed members of the German activist organisations took part in the demonstration and in the disturbances. So far, only one person has been identified who wore a knuckle-duster. The maltreatment of the actors at the station, so far as we have been able to ascertain, took the form of buffets and blows with fists, or with walking-sticks.

9. According to the information obtained, the bank director Powolny was present at a farewell party given on the night of April 27th-28th, to two Oppeln actresses and an Oppeln actor at Form’s Hotel, and left the hotel at 3 o’clock in the morning under the influence of drink—as he
himself more than once admitted in his statement. The criminal proceedings instituted against
the presumed unknown assailants had to be discontinued after a thorough search, as the persons
alleged to have attacked him could not be discovered. The forwarding agent Bosannek, of Oppeln,
who accompanied Powolny owing to his drunken condition, said nothing of the alleged attack.
Powolny having given the doctor who attended him, Dr. Schmidt, of Oppeln, permission
to depart from his professional secrecy, Dr. Schmidt made the following statement:

"M. Powolny has been under my medical treatment since April 28th, owing to a bruise
on the left shoulder which, according to his own statement, he received by falling against the
kerb of the pavement. I have not been able to find any trace of injuries caused by blows he
is alleged to have received from sticks."

The Powolny incident shows how a case which has nothing whatever to do with the regrettable
disturbances in question is used in an obviously tendencious manner to support the arbitrary and
unjustified assertion of the Association of Poles that the aggression was systematically prepared.

E. THE EVIDENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF POLES.

An examination of the documents attached as appendices to the Association's petition has
shown that these depositions were taken down in a very incomplete and biased manner, and
were forwarded to Geneva without any verification, so that they cannot be regarded as a reliable
basis for judging the occurrences in question. They contain a series of obviously false statements,
while important circumstances which, as subsequent enquiry showed, were known to the witnesses
and were of material importance to an estimate of the facts, were not mentioned. The witness
Wieschalla (Appendix 19 of the petition) even told the German authorities that he could not remember
ever having made any declaration to the Association. Peter Warwass (Appendix 30 of the
petition) completely withdrew his statement regarding the behaviour of the police, and subsequently
said the exact opposite. The qualification made by the priest, M. Koziółek, to his previous
statement (Appendix 17 of the petition) has already been mentioned.

The statements were largely taken down by Dr. von Openkowski, a native of East Prussia,
who lives in Berlin, and only goes to Upper Silesia from time to time apparently in order to direct
and carry out the work of the Association of Poles. How much value should be attached to the
statements taken down by Dr. von Openkowski may be judged from the examination by the German
authorities of Alois Schymanietz, a member of the Polish minority, who is employed as bookkeeper
by the Association of Poles and was described by Dr. von Openkowski as a leading witness in the
Oppeln affair. At the witness's request and with his express consent, Dr. von Openkowski was
present at his examination. When Schymanietz proved unable to make statements that met
with Dr. von Openkowski's approval, the latter put the following questions to the witness:

1. Did you not see that the police officers in the theatre did not take action against the
throwers of stink-bombs of their own accord, but had first to be called upon by me to do so?

2. Did you not also see the small car which kept in touch with the individual groups
in the "Ring" and in the Krakauerstrasse?

3. Did you not hear the schoolboys in the crowd abusing the Polish actors with the
others?

4. Did you not see as many as 50 soldiers in the crowd at the station and in the
"Ring"?

The witness answered "No" to all these questions, and said: "After all, I cannot say things
which I did not see or hear!"

Appendix II.

During the first few weeks, the Polish Press treated the Oppeln occurrences in a way which
far exceeded severe and legitimate criticism. Of the extensive material at our disposal, only a
small selection is given below.

From the point of view of unmitigated abuse of Germany, the first place was taken
by the organ of the Silesian Voivode Grazynski, the Polska Zachodnia, which succeeded
in the course of a single article, in its issue No. 117, of April 30th, in using among others, the following
terms of abuse: "Bloody massacre", "Brutal attack by the German mob", "Shameful blot on the
German character", "Infamous pogrom by the Huns", "A race of civilised brigands", "Bestialities of the German people", "The dainty German Gretchen—veritable hyenas who egged on their menfolk to attack defenceless people, etc."

The *Gazeta Robotnicza*, of Kattowitz, in its issue of April 30th, 1929, wrote:

"The nationalist bandits celebrated a veritable orgy here. They beat men and women with sticks. In the most bestial manner they kicked them and spat on them... Particularly brutal treatment was meted out to the women, who were seized with fits of weeping and of nerves. Neither the weeping nor supplications of the women could stop these brutes... The German police behaved in a disgraceful manner. None of them lifted a finger against these brutes, and when women asked for help, the police reviled them... The police and the railway staff greeted the injured with smiles. Thus did Prussian civilisation reveal itself in its shameful brutality at Oppeln."

The Cracow *Illustrowany Kurjer Codzienny* wrote, in an article entitled "The civilisation of the Huns at Oppeln", that at Oppeln it was not a case of an unpremeditated outbreak by foolish youths, but of a prepared and organised attack carried out under the eyes of not only inactive but cynically co-operating representatives of the authorities. First-aid officials and doctors are said to have refused their help!

The *Kurjer Poznański*, of April 30th, wrote that the German barbarians must be driven out of the country and the property of the "tyrants" liquidated. Thus did the Press for weeks stir up the population with lies and exaggerations against Germany and all that was German, and exploited the Oppeln occurrences in a most incredible fashion.

The Press campaign was systematically and deliberately supplemented by an agitation which was simultaneously undertaken by Polish societies by means of the distribution of leaflets, the publication of appeals and the organisation of meetings and processions. The Posen Academic Club issued an appeal which said:

"Our society must, if it has any feelings of responsibility and national pride, translate its protest into action and bring all its influence to bear on the competent authorities with a view to inducing them to take drastic measures and to destroy the head of the shameless Prussian hydra."

The Polish Upper Silesian "Insurgents' Union", of which the Silesian Voivode Grazynski is honorary president, issued on May 2nd an "Insurrection Order" which is signed first of all by the Kattowitz Municipal President, Koeur. It says:

"To us falls the duty of reminding the Polish people that over there in German Upper Silesia, in Teschen and in the Zipser lands, the decision of the Conference of Ambassador has left over 700,000 Poles dwelling on historic Polish territory. This is a fact which we must never forget. After the adoption of highly aggressive and in times of decisive importance to the Fatherland and to Upper Silesia. Our hereditary foe, unmindful of the solemn treaties concluded, is continually attacking our boundaries. The provocative speeches made last September at Oppeln show that the spirit of revenge remains undiminished in the German people. And it is accompanied by the barbarous German terrorism practised against our brethren beyond the frontier. After the bloody attack on a Polish educational gathering at Rossberg last year, we now witness a new outrage at Oppeln, where our artistes are maltreated in a barbarous manner, and defenceless women are roughly handled without the German police or authorities moving a finger."

At Kattowitz, a stormy meeting of the Westmarkenverein was held, at which Germany was freely abused in the coarsest manner. For example, one of the speakers, the editor of the *Posenische Zuschauer*, applied to the Germans such epithets as "beasts", "barbarians", "blackguards", "swine" and "brutes" and thus met with the enthusiastic approval of the public whose feelings had been inflamed by the Press.

At Posen, the processions of demonstrators reached the German Consulate, tore down the notice-plates in front of the "Posener Tageblatt" building, destroyed the notice-board in front of the Evangelical Meeting-hall and tore up all the German newspapers and books which they found in the bookstalls, cafés and restaurants. At Warsaw, two mass meetings were held in the open air on the Polish national holiday, at which even the Government Party was represented by a speaker. After the adoption of highly anti-German resolutions, in which the boycott of German goods, German films, German artistes and German watering-places was advocated, the expulsion of the optants and the more speedy liquidation of German property were demanded, and the conquest of East Prussia and Danzig was declared to be a leading aim of every Pole, large crowds proceeded to the German Legation carrying banners with the inscription: "We demand Königsberg and Oppeln!" There they created an uproar for a long time, singing anti German songs and whistling and booing incessantly. The German Minister, who was about to proceed, at the invitation of the President of the Republic, to the festivities celebrating the Polish national holiday, was held up at the Legation by the crowd so long that he was unable to attend. A special procession...
was organised by the students. Banners were carried, bearing the inscription: “Shame on the
civilised bandits of Oppeln! We demand the punishment of the German mob.”

At Kattowitz, a demonstration of schoolchildren was even staged. Delegations from
the schools in all the kreis towns of Polish Upper Silesia came to Kattowitz and joined a procession
of several hundred children, some of them between 8 and 10 years of age, which marched through
the main streets of the town. Apparently, even some of the Polish onlookers were unpleasantly
surprised at hearing these children discussing in the streets the “atrocities of the German barbarians
at Oppeln”, of which they had been told at a meeting before the beginning of the procession;
for cries of indignation were heard in the crowd against this systematic poisoning of the children’s
minds with race hatred.

At the Kattowitz town theatre, a demonstration was organised in the form of a special
performance, which was attended by the Voivode Grazynski in person. The injured actors
appeared on the stage with bandages. The conductor informed the public that the dance in the
opera which was being performed would be played, but that only the music could be given as some
of the artists were still suffering from the injuries received at Oppeln. At another point the actors
themselves referred to a colleague who was confined to bed in Cracow owing to his injuries. At
the end of the first act, the actors, the Committee of the Association of Friends of the Polish
Theatre and representatives of numerous organisations, of the Press and of the students, thronged
on to the stage and made a demonstration; speeches were delivered making violent attacks on
Germany which were interrupted by excited cries from the spectators, who covered the actors with
flowers. This anti-German propaganda performance was broadcast by wireless.

Naturally, these deliberate and systematic agitations—as planned by those pulling the strings
behind the scenes—had practical consequences. Under the influence of this propaganda, for
example, the cinema proprietors throughout Polish Upper Silesia had to cut out the German texts
from all the films for some considerable time and show only the Polish captions, although a very
large proportion of the persons visiting the cinema do not understand the language. The result
was a great falling off in attendance at the cinemas. Individual cinema proprietors therefore
devotedly tried to reintroduce the German text, but the Polska Zachodnia, the Voivode’s organ,
appealed always published the names of the cinema proprietors and added such threats that the cinemas
were completely intimidated.

The lot of the German Theatrical Union at Kattowitz was no better than that of the cinema
proprietors. The day after the Oppeln affair, a rowdy demonstration was made before its offices,
during which the members of the management who were in the offices were obliged by the crowd,
under violent threats, to leave the offices with their staff. All the German posters were taken
away and the name-plate of the Theatrical Union was painted over. For a long time the employees
of the Theatrical Union were unable, owing to the prevailing terrorism to return to the offices
and fetch the account books which were there. The Association of Friends of the Polish Theatre
categorically refused to enter into any binding agreements with the German Theatrical Union
with regard to the use of the theatre for German performances on certain days. Not only was
this refusal incompatible with the obligation imposed upon the Association of the Friends of the
Polish Theatre by the town of Kattowitz when it gave them the use of the theatre building namely,
that the German Theatrical Union should have a fair share of the theatre it also entirely disregarded
the fact that the German element in the town of Kattowitz is very large, as is proved by the
German majority at the last Polish communal elections.

The German Theatrical Union then applied for help to the Voivode, but the latter did not even
reply. It was not until the intervention of the President of the Mixed Commission, to whom the
German Theatrical Union ultimately had to apply, that a satisfactory settlement of the theatre
question was reached by means of an agreement.