

C.31.M.30. 1922. VII

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

11/18485/6596

24th, January, 1922.

DISPUTE BETWEEN LITHUANIA AND POLAND.

Note by the Secretary-General.

The following letter from M. Mikoushevitch and the Note thereto attached, which refers to Annex II of document C.552.M.391.1921 VII, are communicated for the information of the Council and the Members of the League.

Translation.

Lithuanian Delegation to the League of Nations,
GENEVA.

January 11th, 1922.

Your Excellency,

In a letter, dated December 10th 1921, accompanied by a Memorandum "regarding the facts alleged in the Note addressed on October 28th, 1921 by the Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs to Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary-General of the League of Nations", M. Skirmunt, the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, furnished you with some explanations regarding the pogroms to which the Lithuanian educational and economic institutions at Vilna were subjected in the early part of October.

As these explanations are in flagrant contradictions with the facts, the Lithuanian Government claims the right to submit, to Your Excellency, at an early date, a detailed reply containing all the evidence necessary to establish beyond dispute the correctness of the statements made in the Lithuanian Government's Note of October 28th.

M. Skirmunt, the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, has obviously made every effort to lessen the gravity of the facts related in the Lithuanian Government's Note by accusing the Lithuanian Authorities of intolerance to the Polish elements.

The Lithuanian Government's letter of September 23th, signed by M. Galvanauskas, refuted all the accusations contained in the Memorandum by the Polish Representative in the Lithuanian Diet.

We, therefore, consider it superfluous to reply to the fresh allusions to these statements which appear in M. Skirmunt's letter. We will confine ourselves to submitting to Your Excellency a copy of a document which only refers to the most recent incidents at Donieveja and which gives the true facts on the matter. We trust that, when the Court has given its decision, we shall be allowed to furnish some supplementary information to Your Excellency.

I have, etc.

(Signed) M. LITKOUSHEVITCH.

President of the Lithuanian Delegation.

TRANSLATION.

Minister of National Defence,

Judge Advocate General's Office.

November 21st, 1921.

To the Minister of National Defence,

I have the honour to bring to your knowledge the following facts regarding the incidents which occurred on September 24th last at Ponieveje, between the soldiers of the Instructional Battalion of the 9th Regiment and the students of the Polish Secondary School.

It appears, as the result of the very exhaustive enquiries which have been made into this matter, that the Instructional Battalion of the 9th Regiment was at its daily drill on the Vytautes Square at Ponieveje. After the roll-call, the soldiers sang the National Anthem. The students of the Polish Secondary School were playing foot-ball in the same Square, about 40 paces distant. They continued their game while the Anthem was being sung. According to the evidence of Lieut. Marzelis of the Instructional Battalion, the Polish students had been already warned that games must cease while the National Anthem was being sung, and that they must bare their heads like their Lithuanian comrades, who were playing in the Square at the same time. On September 24th, in spite of this warning, at the moment when the Lithuanian soldiers were standing to attention and singing the Anthem, the Polish students began a game of football in close proximity to the Battalion, and with the evident intention of provoking them. A student of the Lithuanian Secondary School, Sliogeris by name, who was playing with the Polish students, bared his head when the Anthem was begun and listened, standing at attention. When the Anthem was finished, Lieut. Marzelis ordered the soldiers to ask the Polish students for their identity papers and to enquire the

reason for their behaviour during the singing of the National Anthem. The students replied that they were not acquainted with the Anthem in question. Thereupon, several soldiers, indignant at this reply, took off their belts and threatened to beat the offenders, who fled hastily. According to the certificates furnished by the Doctor to the Polish School, seven students were slightly injured.

I have had this matter referred to a Court-Martial of the 8th Regiment, so that the soldiers who were guilty may be tried under Article 475 of the Penal Code. As regards the behaviour of the students of the Polish School, I have the honour to request that you will give the necessary instructions, through the Minister of Public Education, to the Authorities of the Polish School, that the students of that establishment should be taught the nature of a National Anthem, and the behaviour which is expected from Lithuanian citizens, while their Anthem is being sung.

(Signed) ZOLKEUSZAS, Capt.

Judge Advocate.

Secretary.

Certified true copy.

F. NAROUSHEVITCH,

President of the Lithuanian Delegation.