

**MINORITIES TREATY BETWEEN THE PRINCIPAL ALLIED AND
ASSOCIATED POWERS (THE BRITISH EMPIRE, FRANCE, ITALY, JAPAN
AND THE UNITED STATES) AND POLAND, SIGNED AT VERSAILLES (28
JUNE 1919)**

The UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, the BRITISH EMPIRE, FRANCE, ITALY and JAPAN,

The Principal Allied and Associated Powers,

on the one hand;

And POLAND,

on the other hand;

Whereas the Allied and Associated Powers have by the success of their arms restored to the Polish nation the independence of which it had been unjustly deprived; and

Whereas by the proclamation of March 30, 1917, the Government of Russia assented to the reestablishment of an independent Polish State; and

Whereas the Polish State, which now in fact exercises sovereignty over those portions of the former Russian Empire which are inhabited by a majority of Poles, has already been recognised as a sovereign and independent State by the Principal Allied and Associated Powers; and

Whereas under the Treaty of Peace concluded with Germany by the Allied and Associated Powers, a Treaty of which Poland is a signatory, certain portions of the former German Empire will be incorporated in the territory of Poland; and

Whereas under the terms of the said Treaty of Peace, the boundaries of Poland not already laid down are to be subsequently determined by the Principal Allied and Associated Powers;

The United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan, on the one hand, confirming their recognition of the Polish State, constituted within the said limits as a sovereign and independent member of the Family of Nations, and being anxious to ensure the execution of the provisions of Article 93 of the said Treaty of Peace with Germany;

Poland, on the other hand, desiring to conform her institutions to the principles of liberty and justice, and to give a sure guarantee to the inhabitants of the territory over which she has assumed sovereignty;

For this purpose the HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES represented as follows:

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, by:

The Honourable Woodrow WILSON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, acting in his own name and by his own proper authority;

The Honourable Robert LANSING, Secretary of State;

The Honourable Henry WHITE, formerly Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States at Rome and Paris;
The Honourable Edward M. HOUSE;
General Tasker H. BLISS, Military Representative of the United States on the Supreme War Council;

HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND AND OF THE BRITISH DOMINIONS BEYOND THE SEAS, EMPEROR OF INDIA, by:

The Right Honourable David LLOYD GEORGE, M.P., First Lord of His Treasury and Prime Minister;

The Right Honourable Andrew BONAR LAW, M.P., His Lord Privy Seal;

The Right Honourable Viscount MILNER, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., His Secretary of State for the Colonies;

The Right Honourable Arthur James BALFOUR, O.M., M.P., His Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs;

The Right Honourable George Nicoll BARNES, M.P., Minister without portfolio;

And

for the DOMINION OF CANADA, by:

The Honourable Charles Joseph DOHERTY, Minister of Justice;

The Honourable Arthur Lewis SIFTON, Minister of Customs;

for the COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA, by:

The Right Honourable William Morris HUGHES, Attorney General and Prime Minister;

The Right Honourable Sir Joseph COOK, G.C.M.G., Minister for the Navy;

for the UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA, by:

General the Right Honourable Louis BOTHA, Minister of Native Affairs and Prime Minister;

Lieutenant-General the Right Honourable Jan Christiaan SMUTS, K.C., Minister of Defence;

for the DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND, by:

The Right Honourable William Ferguson MASSEY, Minister of Labour and Prime Minister:

for INDIA, by:

The Right Honourable Edwin Samuel MONTAGU, M.P., His Secretary of State for India;

Major-General His Highness Maharaja Sir Ganga Singh Bahadur, Maharaja of BIKANER, G.C.S.I., C.G.I.E., G.C.V.O., K.C.B., A.D.C.;

THE PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC, by:

Mr. Georges CLEMENCEAU, President of the Council, Minister of War;

Mr. Stephen PICHON, Minister of Foreign Affairs;

Mr. Louis Lucien KLOTZ, Minister of Finance;

Mr. André TARDIEU, Commissary General for Franco-American Military Affairs;

Mr. Jules CAMBON, Ambassador of France;

HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF ITALY, by:

Baron S. SONNINO, Deputy;

Marquis G. IMPERIALI, Senator, Ambassador of His Majesty the King of Italy at London;
Mr. S. CRESPI, Deputy;

HIS MAJESTY THE EMPEROR OF JAPAN, by:

Marquis SAÏONZI, formerly President of the Council of Ministers;

Baron MAKINO, formerly Minister of Foreign Affairs, Member of the Diplomatic Council;

Viscount CHINDA, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of H.M. the Emperor of Japan at London;

Mr. K. MATSUI, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of H.M. the Emperor of Japan at Paris;

Mr. H. IJUIN, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of H.M. the Emperor of Japan at Rome;

THE PRESIDENT OF THE POLISH REPUBLIC, by:

Mr. Ignace J. PADEREWSKI, President of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs;

Mr. Roman DMOWSKI, President of the Polish National Committee;

After having exchanged their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed as follows:

CHAPTER I.

ARTICLE 1.

Poland undertakes that the stipulations contained in Articles 2 to 8 of this Chapter shall be recognised as fundamental laws, and that no law, regulation or official action shall conflict or interfere with these stipulations, nor shall any law, regulation or official action prevail over them.

ARTICLE 2.

Poland undertakes to assure full and complete protection of life and liberty to all inhabitants of Poland without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race or religion.

All inhabitants of Poland shall be entitled to the free exercise, whether public or private, of any creed, religion or belief, whose practices are not inconsistent with public order or public morals.

ARTICLE 3.

Poland admits and declares to be Polish nationals ipso facto and without the requirement of any formality German, Austrian, Hungarian or Russian nationals habitually resident at the date of the coming into force of the present Treaty in territory which is or may be recognised as forming part of Poland, but subject to any provisions in the Treaties of Peace with Germany or Austria respectively relating to persons who became resident in such territory after a specified date.

Nevertheless, the persons referred to above who are over eighteen years of age will be entitled under the conditions contained in the said Treaties to opt for any other nationality which may be open to them. Option by a husband will cover his wife and option by parents will cover their children under eighteen years of age.

Persons who have exercised the above right to opt must, except where it is otherwise provided in the Treaty of Peace with Germany, transfer within the succeeding twelve months their place of residence to the State for which they have opted. They will be entitled to retain their immovable property in Polish territory. They may carry with them their movable property of every description. No export duties may be imposed upon them in connection with the removal of such property.

ARTICLE 4.

Poland admits and declares to be Polish nationals ipso facto and without the requirement of any formality persons of German, Austrian, Hungarian or Russian nationality who were born in the said territory of parents habitually resident there, even if at the date of the coming into force of the present Treaty they are not themselves habitually resident there.

Nevertheless, within two years after the coming into force of the present Treaty, these persons may make a declaration before the competent Polish authorities in the country in which they are resident, stating that they abandon Polish nationality, and they will then cease to be considered as Polish nationals. In this connection a declaration by a husband will cover his wife, and a declaration by parents will cover their children under eighteen years of age.

ARTICLE 5.

Poland undertakes to put no hindrance in the way of the exercise of the right which the persons concerned have, under the Treaties concluded or to be concluded by the Allied and Associated Powers with Germany, Austria, Hungary or Russia, to choose whether or not they will acquire Polish nationality.

ARTICLE 6.

All persons born in Polish territory who are not born nationals of another State shall ipso facto become Polish nationals.

ARTICLE 7.

All Polish nationals shall be equal before the law and shall enjoy the same civil and political rights without distinction as to race, language or religion.

Differences of religion, creed or confession shall not prejudice any Polish national in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil or political rights, as for instance admission to public employments, functions and honours, or the exercise of professions and industries.

No restriction shall be imposed on the free use by any Polish national of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, in religion, in the press or in publications of any kind, or at public meetings.

Notwithstanding any establishment by the Polish Government of an official language, adequate facilities shall be given to Polish nationals of non-Polish speech for the use of their language, either orally or in writing, before the courts.

ARTICLE 8.

Polish nationals who belong to racial, religious or linguistic minorities shall enjoy the same treatment and security in law and in fact as the other Polish nationals. In particular they shall have an equal right to establish, manage and control at their own expense charitable, religious and social institutions, schools and other educational establishments, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their religion freely therein.

ARTICLE 9.

Poland will provide in the public educational system in towns and districts in which a considerable proportion of Polish nationals of other than Polish speech are residents adequate facilities for ensuring that in the primary schools the instruction shall be given to the children of such Polish nationals through the medium of their own language. This provision shall not prevent the Polish Government from making the teaching of the Polish language obligatory in the said schools.

In towns and districts where there is a considerable proportion of Polish nationals belonging to racial, religious or linguistic minorities, these minorities shall be assured an equitable share in the enjoyment and application of the sums which may be provided out of public funds under the State, municipal or other budget, for educational, religious or charitable purposes.

The provisions of this Article shall apply to Polish citizens of German speech only in that part of Poland which was German territory on August 1, 1914.

ARTICLE 10.

Educational Committees appointed locally by the Jewish communities of Poland will, subject to the general control of the State, provide for the distribution of the proportional share of public funds allocated to Jewish schools in accordance with Article 9, and for the organisation and management of these schools.

The provisions of Article 9 concerning the use of languages in schools shall apply to these schools.

ARTICLE 11.

Jews shall not be compelled to perform any act which constitutes a violation of their Sabbath, nor shall they be placed under any disability by reason of their refusal to attend courts of law or to perform any legal business on their Sabbath. This provision however shall not exempt Jews from such obligations as shall be imposed upon all other Polish citizens for the necessary purposes of military service, national defence or the preservation of public order.

Poland declares her intention to refrain from ordering or permitting elections, whether general or local, to be held on a Saturday, nor will registration for electoral or other purposes be compelled to be performed on a Saturday.

ARTICLE 12.

Poland agrees that the stipulations in the foregoing Articles, so far as they affect persons belonging to racial, religious or linguistic minorities, constitute obligations of international concern and shall be placed under the guarantee of the League of Nations. They shall not be modified without the assent of a majority of the Council of the League of Nations. The United States, the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan hereby agree not to withhold their assent from any modification in these Articles which is in due form assented to by a majority of the Council of the League of Nations.

Poland agrees that any Member of the Council of the League of Nations shall have the right to bring to the attention of the Council any infraction, or any danger of infraction, of

any of these obligations, and that the Council may thereupon take such action and give such direction as it may deem proper and effective in the circumstances.

Poland further agrees that any difference of opinion as to questions of law or fact arising out of these Articles between the Polish Government and any one of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers or any other Power, a Member of the Council of the League of Nations, shall be held to be a dispute of an international character under Article 14 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The Polish Government hereby consents that any such dispute shall, if the other party thereto demands, be referred to the Permanent Court of International Justice. The decision of the Permanent Court shall be final and shall have the same force and effect as an award under Article 13 of the Covenant.

CHAPTER II.

ARTICLE 13.

Each of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers on the one part and Poland on the other shall be at liberty to appoint diplomatic representatives to reside in their respective capitals, as well as Consuls-General, Consuls, Vice-Consuls, and Consular agents to reside in the towns and ports of their respective territories.

Consuls-General, Consuls, Vice-Consuls and Consular agents, however, shall not enter upon their duties until they have been admitted in the usual manner by the Government in the territory of which they are stationed.

Consuls-General, Consuls, Vice-Consuls and Consular agents shall enjoy all the facilities, privileges, exemptions and immunities of every kind which are or shall be granted to consular officers of the most favoured nation.

ARTICLE 14.

Pending the establishment of an import tariff by the Polish Government, goods originating in the Allied and Associated States shall not be subject to any higher duties on importation into Poland than the most favourable rates of duty applicable to goods of the same kind under either the German, Austro-Hungarian or Russian Customs Tariffs on July 1, 1914.

ARTICLE 15.

Poland undertakes to make no treaty, convention or arrangement and to take no other action which will prevent her from joining in any general agreement for the equitable treatment of the commerce of other States that may be concluded under the auspices of the League of Nations within five years from the coming into force of the present Treaty.

Poland also undertakes to extend to all the Allied and Associated States any favours or privileges in customs matters which she may grant during the same period of five years to any State with which since August, 1914, the Allies have been at war, or to any State which may have concluded with Austria special customs arrangements as provided for in the Treaty of Peace to be concluded with Austria.

ARTICLE 16.

Pending the conclusion of the general agreement referred to above, Poland undertakes to treat on the same footing as national vessels or vessels of the most favoured nation the

vessels of all the Allied and Associated States which accord similar treatment to Polish vessels.

By way of exception from this provision, the right of Poland or of any other Allied or Associated State to confine her maritime coasting trade to national vessels is expressly reserved.

ARTICLE 17.

Pending the conclusion under the auspices of the League of Nations of a general Convention to secure and maintain freedom of communications and of transit, Poland undertakes to accord freedom of transit to persons, goods, vessels, carriages, wagons and mails in transit to or from any Allied or Associated State over Polish territory, including territorial waters, and to treat them at least as favourably as the persons, goods, vessels, carriages, wagons and mails respectively of Polish or of any other more favoured nationality, origin, importation or ownership, as regards facilities, charges, restrictions and all other matters.

All charges imposed in Poland on such traffic in transit shall be reasonable having regard to the conditions of the traffic. Goods in transit shall be exempt from all customs or other duties. Tariffs for transit traffic across Poland and tariffs between Poland and any Allied or Associated Power involving through tickets or waybills shall be established at the request of that Allied or Associated Power.

Freedom of transit will extend to postal, telegraphic and telephonic services.

It is agreed that no Allied or Associated Power can claim the benefit of these provisions on behalf of any part of its territory in which reciprocal treatment is not accorded in respect of the same subject matter.

If within a period of five years from the coming into force of the present Treaty no general Convention as aforesaid shall have been concluded under the auspices of the League of Nations, Poland shall be at liberty at any time thereafter to give twelve months notice to the Secretary General of the League of Nations to terminate the obligations of this Article.

ARTICLE 18.

Pending the conclusion of a general Convention on the International Régime of waterways, Poland undertakes to apply to the river system of the Vistula (including the Bug and the Narev) the régime applicable to International Waterways set out in Articles 382 to 337 of the Treaty of Peace with Germany.

ARTICLE 19.

Poland undertakes to adhere within twelve months of the coming into force of the present Treaty to the International Conventions specified in Annex I.

Poland undertakes to adhere to any new convention, concluded with the approval of the Council of the League of Nations within five years of the coming into force of the present Treaty, to replace any of the International instruments specified in Annex I.

The Polish Government undertakes within twelve months to notify the Secretary General of the League of Nations whether or not Poland desires to adhere to either or both of the International Conventions specified in Annex II.

Until Poland has adhered to the two Conventions last specified in Annex I, she agrees, on condition of reciprocity, to protect by effective measures the industrial, literary and artistic property of nationals of the Allied and Associated States. In the case of any Allied or Associated State not adhering to the said Conventions Poland agrees to continue to afford such effective protection on the same conditions until the conclusion of a special bi-lateral treaty or agreement for that purpose with such Allied or Associated State.

Pending her adhesion to the other Conventions specified in Annex I, Poland will secure to the nationals of the Allied and Associated Powers the advantages to which they would be entitled under the said Conventions.

Poland further agrees, on condition of reciprocity, to recognise and protect all rights in any industrial, literary or artistic property belonging to the nationals of the Allied and Associated States in force, or which but for the war would have been in force, in any part of her territories before transfer to Poland. For such purpose she will accord the extensions of time agreed to in Articles 307 and 308 of the Treaty with Germany.

ANNEX I.

TELEGRAPHIC AND RADIO-TELEGRAPHIC CONVENTIONS.

International Telegraphic Convention signed at St. Petersburg, July 10/22, 1875.

Regulations and Tariffs drawn up by the International Telegraph Conference, signed at Lisbon, June 11, 1908.

International Radio-Telegraph Convention, July 5, 1912.

RAILWAY CONVENTIONS.

Conventions and arrangements signed at Berne on October 14, 1890, September 20, 1893, July 16, 1895, June 16, 1898, and September 19, 1906, and the current supplementary provisions made under those Conventions.

Agreement of May 15, 1886, regarding the sealing of railway trucks subject to customs inspection, and Protocol of May 18, 1907.

Agreement of May 15, 1886, regarding the technical standardisation of railways, as modified on May 18, 1907.

SANITARY CONVENTIONS.

Convention of December 3, 1903.

OTHER CONVENTIONS.

Convention of September 26, 1906, for the suppression of night work for women.

Convention of September 26, 1906, for the suppression of the use of white phosphorus in the manufacture of matches.

Convention of May 18, 1904, and May 4, 1910, regarding the suppression of the White Slave Traffic.

Convention of May 4, 1910, regarding the suppression of obscene publications.

International Convention of Paris of March 20, 1883, as revised at Washington in 1911, for the protection of industrial property.

International Convention of Berne of September 9, 1886, revised at Berlin on November 13, 1908, and completed by the Additional Protocol signed at Berne on March 20, 1914, for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Work.

ANNEX II.

Agreement of Madrid of April 14, 1891, for the Prevention of False Indications of origin on goods, revised at Washington in 1911, and

Agreement of Madrid of 14 April, 1891, for the international registration of trade-marks, revised at Washington in 1911.

ARTICLE 20.

All rights and privileges accorded by the foregoing Articles to the Allied and Associated States shall be accorded equally to all States members of the League of Nations.

ARTICLE 21.

Poland agrees to assume responsibility for such proportion of the Russian public debt and other Russian public liabilities of any kind as may be assigned to her under a special convention between the Principal Allied and Associated Powers on the one hand and Poland on the other, to be prepared by a Commission appointed by the above States. In the event of the Commission not arriving at an agreement the point at issue shall be referred for immediate arbitration to the League of Nations.

THE PRESENT TREATY, of which the French and English texts are both authentic, shall be ratified. It shall come into force at the same time as the Treaty of Peace with Germany.

The deposit of ratifications shall be made at Paris.

Powers of which the seat of the Government is outside Europe will be entitled merely to inform the Government of the French Republic through their diplomatic representative at Paris that their ratification has been given; in that case they must transmit the instrument of ratification as soon as possible.

A procès-verbal of the deposit of ratifications will be drawn up.

The French Government will transmit to all the signatory Powers a certified copy of the procès-verbal of the deposit of ratifications.

IN FAITH WHEREOF the above-named Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty. Done at Versailles, the twenty-eighth day of June, one thousand nine hundred and nineteen, in a single copy which will remain deposited in the archives of the French

Republic, and of which authenticated copies will be transmitted to each of the Signatory Powers.

(L.S.) WOODROW WILSON.
(L.S.) ROBERT LANSING.
(L.S.) HENRY WHITE.
(L.S.) E. M. HOUSE.
(L.S.) TASKER H. BLISS.
(L.S.) D. LLOYD GEORGE.
(L.S.) A. BONAR LAW.
(L.S.) MILNER.
(L.S.) ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR.
(L.S.) GEORGE N. BARNES.
(L.S.) CHAS. J. DOHERTY.
(L.S.) ARTHUR L. SIFTON.
(L.S.) W. M. HUGHES.
(L.S.) JOSEPH COOK.
(L.S.) LOUIS BOTHA.
(L.S.) J. C. SMUTS.
(L.S.) ED. S. MONTAGU.
(L.S.) GANGA SINGH, MAHARAJA DE BIKANER.
(L.S.) G. CLEMENCEAU.
(L.S.) S. PICHON.
(L.S.) L.-L. KLOTZ.
(L.S.) ANDRÉ TARDIEU.
(L.S.) JULES CAMBON.
(L.S.) SIDNEY SONNINO.
(L.S.) IMPERIALI.
(L.S.) SILVIO CRESPI.
(L.S.) SAÏONZI.
(L.S.) N. MAKINO.
(L.S.) H. CHINDA.
(L.S.) K. MATSUI.
(L.S.) H. IJUIN.
(L.S.) I. J. PADEREWSKI.
(L.S.) ROMAN DMOWSKI.

[Quelle: Perry, Clive (Hrsg.): The Consolidated Treaty Series, Vol. 225, New York 1919, S.412-424.]