TREATY CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF MINORITIES IN GREECE SIGNED AT SÈVRES, AUGUST 10,1920

THE BRITISH EMPIRE, FRANCE, ITALY AND JAPAN, the Principal Allied and Associated Powers,

on the one hand;

and GREECE,

on the other hand;

Whereas since January 1, 1913, large accessions of territory have been made to the Kingdom of Greece, and

Whereas the Kingdom of Greece, which has given to the populations included in its territories, without distinction of origin, language or religion, equality of rights, is desirous of confirming these rights and of extending them to the populations of the territories which may be added to the Kingdom, so that they shall have a full and complete guarantee that they shall be governed in conformity with the principles of liberty and justice, and

Whereas it is desired to free Greece from certain obligations which she has undertaken towards certain Powers, and to substitute for them obligations to the League of Nations, and

Whereas it is desired also to free Greece from certain other obligations which she has undertaken to certain Powers and which constitute a restriction upon her full internal sovereignty;

For this purpose the High Contracting Parties have appointed as their Plenipotentiaries:

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

The Right Honourable Edward George Villiers, Earl of Derby, K.G., P.C., K.C.V.O., C.B., Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of His Britannic Majesty at Paris;

And

For the DOMINION OF CANADA:
The Honourable Sir George Halsey Perley, K.C.M.G., High Commissioner for Canada in the United Kingdom;

For the COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA:
The Right Honourable Andrew Fisher, High Commissioner for Australia in the United Kingdom;

For the DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND:

The Honourable Sir James Allen, K.C. B., High Commissioner for New Zealand in the United Kingdom;

For the UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA:
Mr. Reginald Andrew Blankenberg, O.B.E, Acting High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa in the United Kingdom;

For INDIA:
Sir Arthur Hirtzel, K.C.B., Assistant Under-Secretary of State for India;

THE PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC,
M. Alexandre Millerand, President of the Council, Minister for Foreign Affairs;
M. Frédéric François-Marsal, Minister of Finance;
M. Auguste Paul-Louis Isaac, Minister of Commerce and Industry;
M. Jules Cambon, Ambassador of France;
M. Georges Maurice Palélogue, Ambassador of France, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF ITALY:
Count Lelio Bonin Longare, Senator of the Kingdom, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of His Majesty the King of Italy at Paris;

HIS MAJESTY THE EMPEROR OF JAPAN:
Viscount Chinda, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan at London;
Mr. K. Matsui, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan at Paris;

HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF THE HELLENES;
M. Eleftherios K. Venisélos, President of the Council of Ministers;
M. Athos Romanos, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of His Majesty the King of the Hellenes at Paris;

Who, after having communicated their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed as follows:

France and Great Britain hereby renounce, so far as they are concerned, the special rights of supervision and control devolving upon them in relation to Greece under the Treaty of London of May 7, 1832, under the Treaty of London of November 14, 1863, and, as regards the Ionian Islands, under the Treaty of London of March 29, 1864.

France and Great Britain, recognising that under the present Treaty Greece undertakes obligations for the maintenance of religious liberties which are placed under the guarantee of the League of Nations, hereby renounce so far as they are concerned the rights conferred upon them by the Protocol No. 3 of the Conference of London of February 3, 1830, to ensure the protection of religious liberties.

CHAPTER I.

Article 1.

Greece 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.

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

All inhabitants of Greece 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.

Greece admits and declares to be Greek nationals ipso facto and without the requirement of any formality Bulgarian or Turkish (or Albanian) nationals habitually resident at the date of the coming into force of the present Treaty in territories transferred to Greece by Treaties subsequent to January 1, 1913.

Nevertheless, the persons referred to above who are over 18 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 18 years of age.

Persons who have exercised the above right to opt must, except where it is otherwise provided in the said Treaties, 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 Greek 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.

Greece admits and declares to be Greek nationals ipso facto and without the requirement of any formality persons of Bulgarian or Turkish nationality who were born in the territories referred to in Article 3 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 from the coming into force of the present Treaty these persons may make a declaration before the competent Greek authorities in the country in which they are resident, stating that they abandon Greek nationality, and they will then cease to be considered as Greek nationals. In this connection a declaration by a husband will cover his wife, and a declaration by parents will cover their children under 18 years of age.

Article 5.

Greece undertakes to put no hindrance in the way of the exercise of the right which the persons concerned have, under the Treaties referred to in Article 3, to choose whether or not they will acquire Greek nationality.

Article 6.

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

Article 7.

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

In particular, Greece undertakes to put into force within three years from the coming into force of the present Treaty an electoral system giving due consideration to the rights of racial minorities. This disposition is applicable only to the new territories acquired by Greece since August 1, 1914.

Differences of religion, creed or concession shall not prejudice any Greek 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 Greek 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 Greek Government of an official language, adequate facilities shall be given to Greek nationals of non-Greek speech for the use of their language, either orally or in writing, before the courts.

Article 8.

Greek nationals who belong to racial, religious or linguistic minorities shall enjoy the same treatment and security in law and in fact as the other Greek 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.

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

In towns and districts where there is a considerable proportion of Greek 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 budgets for educational, religious or charitable purposes.

The provisions of this Article apply only to the territories transferred to Greece since January 1, 1913.

Article 10.

In towns and districts where there is resident a considerable proportion of Greek nationals of the Jewish religion, the Greek Government agrees that these Jews shall not be compelled to perform any act which constitutes a violation of their Sabbath, and that they shall not be placed under any disability by reason of their refusal to attend the 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 Greek nationals for the necessary purposes of military service, national defence or the preservation of public order.

Article 11.

For a period of six months after the coming into force of the present Treaty Greece undertakes not to introduce any new regulations modifying the land system in the territories acquired by Greece under the Treaties terminating the war of 1914-1919.

Article 12.

Greece agrees to accord to the communities of the Valachs of Pindus local autonomy, under the control of the Greek State, in regard to religious, charitable or scholastic matters.

Article 13.

Greece undertakes to recognise and maintain the traditional rights and liberties enjoyed by the non-Greek monastic communities of Mount Athos under Article 62 of the Treaty of Berlin of July 13, 1878.

Article 14.

Greece agrees to take all necessary measures in relation to Moslems to enable questions of family law and personal status to be regulated in accordance with Moslem usage.

Greece undertakes to afford protection to the mosques, cemeteries and other Moslem religious establishments. Full recognition and all facilities shall be assured to pious foundations (wakfs) and Moslem religious and charitable establishments now existing, and Greece shall not refuse to the creation of new religious and charitable establishments any of the necessary facilities guaranteed to other private establishments of this nature.

Article 15.

Greece undertakes within a period of one year from the coming into force of the present Treaty to submit for the approval of the Council of the League of Nations a scheme of organisation for the town of Adrianople. This scheme will include a municipal council in which the different racial elements habitually resident in the town will be represented. The Moslems will have the right of participation in executive functions.

Greece agrees that the buildings set apart for Moslem worship in the town of Adrianople shall be declared inalienable in perpetuity, and that not even reasons of public utility may be adduced for departing from this principle.

Article 16.

Greece agrees that the stipulations of 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.

Greece 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.

Greece further agrees that any difference of opinion as to questions of law or fact arising out of these Articles between the Greek 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 Greek 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 17.

Greece undertakes to make no Treaty, Convention or Arrangement and to take no other action which will prevent her from joining in any general Convention 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.

Greece also undertakes to extend to all the Allied and Associated Powers 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 Allied and Associated Powers have been at war, or to any State which in virtue of Article 222 of the Treaty of Peace with Austria has special Customs arrangements with such States.

Article 18.

Pending the conclusion of the general Convention referred to above, Greece 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 Powers who accord similar treatment to Greek vessels.

As an exception to this provision, the right of Greece or of any other Allied or Associated Power to confine her maritime coasting trade to national vessels is expressly reserved.

Article 19.

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, Greece 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 Greek territory, including territorial waters, and to treat them at least as favourably as the persons, goods, vessels, carriages, wagons and mails respectively of Greek or of any other more favoured nationality, origin, importation or ownership, as regards facilities, charges, restrictions and all other matters.

All charges imposed in Greece 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 Greece and tariffs between Greece and any Allied or Associated Power involving through tickets or waybills shall be established at the request of the Allied or Associated Power concerned.

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

Provided 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, Greece 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 the present Article.

Article 20.

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

The present Treaty, in French, in English and in Italian, of which in case of divergence the French text shall prevail, shall be ratified. It shall come into force at the same time as the treaty finally regulating the status of Thrace, as provided in Article 48 of the Treaty of Peace with Bulgaria.

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 al 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 Sèvres, the tenth day of August one thousand nine hundred and twenty, 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.) DERBY.

(L.S.) GEORGE H. PERLEY.

(L.S. ANDREW FISHER.

(L.S.) JAMES ALLEN.

(L.S.) R. A. BLANKENBERG.

(L.S.) ARTHUR HIRTZEL.

(L.S.) A. MILLERAND.

(L.S.) F. FRANÇOIS-MARSAL.

(L.S.) JULES CAMBON.

(L.S.) PALÉOLOGUE.

(L.S.) BONIN.

(L.S.) K. MATSUI.

(L.S.) E. K. VENISÉLOS.

(L.S.) A. ROMANOS.

Copie certifiée conforme:
P. le Ministre Plénipotentiaire,
Chef du Service du Protocole: [Signature illisible.]

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