

Agreement between the United Kingdom, France, and Italy, Respecting Abyssinia, signed at London, December 18, 1906

It being the common interest of France, Great Britain, and Italy to maintain intact the integrity of Ethiopia, to provide for every kind of disturbance in the political conditions of the Ethiopian Empire, to come to a mutual understanding in regard to their attitude in the event of any change in the situation arising in Ethiopia, and to prevent the action of the three States in protecting their respective interests, both in the British, French, and Italian possessions bordering on Ethiopia and in Ethiopia itself, resulting in injury to the interests of any of them, the Government of the French Republic, the Government of his Britannic Majesty, and the Government of Italy have assented to the following Agreement: —

Article 1. France, Great Britain, and Italy shall cooperate in maintaining the political and territorial status quo in Ethiopia as determined by the state of affairs at present existing, and by the following Agreements :

a. The Anglo-Italian Protocols of the 24th March and 15th April, 1891, and of the 5th May, 1894, and the subsequent Agreements modifying them, including the reserves formulated by the French Government in 1894 and 1895;

h. The Anglo-Ethiopian Convention of 14th May, 1897, and its annexes;

c. The Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of 10th July, 1900;

d. The Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 15th May, 1902;

e. The note annexed to the above-mentioned Treaty of 15th May, 1902; /. The Convention of 11th March, 1862, between France and the Dannakils;

g. The Anglo-French Agreement of 2nd-9th February, 1888;

h. The Italian-Franco Protocols of 24th January, 1900, and 10th July, 1901, for the delimitation of the French and Italian possessions on the littoral of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden; /. The Franco-Ethiopian Frontier Convention of 20th March, 1897.

It is understood that the various Conventions mentioned in this Article do not in any way infringe the sovereign rights of the Emperor of Abyssinia, and in no respect modify the relations between the three Powers and the Ethiopian Empire as stipulated in the present Agreement.

Art. 2. As regards demands for agricultural, commercial, and industrial concessions in Ethiopia, the three Powers undertake to instruct their Representatives to act in such a way that concessions which may be accorded in the interest of one of the three States may not be injurious to the interests of the two others.

Art. 3. In the event of rivalries or internal changes in Ethiopia, the Representatives of France, Great Britain, and Italy shall observe a neutral attitude, abstaining from all

intervention in the internal affairs of the country, and confining themselves to such action as may be, by common consent, considered necessary for the protection of the Legations, of the lives and property of foreigners, and of the common interests of the three Powers. In no case shall one of the three Governments interfere in any manner whatsoever, except in agreement with the other two.

Art. 4. In the event of the *status quo* laid down in Article 1 being disturbed, France, Great Britain, and Italy shall make every effort to preserve the integrity of Ethiopia. In any case, they shall concert together, on the basis of the Agreements enumerated in the above-mentioned Article, in order to safeguard:

a. The interests of Great Britain and Egypt in the Nile Basin, more especially as regards the regulation of the waters of that river and its tributaries (due consideration being paid to local interests), without prejudice to Italian interests mentioned in paragraph b;

b. The interests of Italy in Ethiopia as regards Erythraea and Somaliland (including the Benadir), more especially with reference to the hinterland of her possessions and the territorial connection between them to the west of Adis Abeba;

c. The interests of France in Ethiopia as regards the French Protectorate on the Somali Coast, the hinterland of this Protectorate and the zone necessary for the construction and working of the railway from Jibuti to Adis Abeba.

Art. 5. The French Government communicates to the British and Italian Governments:

1. The Concession of the Franco-Ethiopian Railway of 9th March, 1894;

2. A communication from the Emperor Menelek dated 8th August, 1904, the translation of which is annexed to the present Agreement, inviting the Company to whom the above Concession was granted to construct the second section of the line from Dir6 Gawa to Adis Abeba;

Art. 6. The three Governments agree that the Jibuti Railway shall be prolonged from Dir6 Dawa to Adis Abeba, with a branch line to Harrar eventually, either by the Ethiopian Railway Company in virtue of the deeds enumerated in the preceding Article, or by any other private French Company which may be substituted therefor, with the consent of the French Government, on condition that the nationals of the three countries shall enjoy in all matters of trade and transit absolute equality of treatment on the railway and in the port of Jibuti. Goods shall not be subject to any fiscal transit duty levied for the benefit of the French Colony or Treasury.

Art. 7. The French Government will endeavour to arrange that an English, and Italian, and an Abyssinian Representative shall be appointed to the Board of the French Company or Companies which maybe intrusted with the construction and working of the railway from Jibuti to Adis Abeba. The British and Italian Governments will reciprocally endeavour to arrange that a French Director shall in like manner and on the same condition be appointed to the Board of any English or Italian Company which has been or may be formed for the constuction or working of railways running from any point in Abyssinia to any point in the adjoining English or Italian territory. It is likewise agreed that the nationals of the three countries shall enjoy in all matters of trade and transit absolute equality of treatment, both on the railways which may be

constructed by English or Italian Companies, and in the English or Italian ports from which these railways may start. Goods shall not be subject to any fiscal transit levied for the benefit of the British or Italian Colonies or Treasuries.

The three Signatory Powers agree to extend to the nationals of all other countries the benefit of the Provisions of Articles 6 and 7 relating to equality of treatment as regards trade and transit.

Art. 8. The French Government will abstain from all interferences as regards the Concession previously granted beyond Adis Abeba.

Art. 9. The three Governments are agreed that all railway construction in Abyssinia west of Adis Abeba shall, in so far as foreign assistance is required, be carried out under the auspices of Great Britain. The three Governments are also agreed that all construction of railways in Ethiopia, joining the Benadir to Erythraea to the west of Adis Abeba, shall, in so far as foreign assistance is required, be carried out under the auspices of Italy.

The Government of His Britannic Majesty reserve to themselves the right, in case of need, to make use of the authorization, granted by the Emperor Menelek on the 28th August, 1904, to construct a railway from British Somaliland through Ethiopia to the Soudanese frontier, on condition, however, that they previously come to an agreement with the French and Italian Governments, the three Governments undertaking not to construct without previous agreement any line entering Abyssinian territory or intended to join the Abyssinian lines, which would compete directly with those established under the auspices of any one of them

Art. 10. The Representatives of the three Powers will keep each other fully informed, and will cooperate for the protection of their respective interests. In the event of the British, French, and Italian Representatives being unable to agree, they will refer to their respective Governments, suspending all action meanwhile.

Art. 11. Beyond the Agreements enumerated in Articles 1 and 5 of the present Convention, no Agreement concluded by any one of the Contracting Powers concerning Ethiopia shall affect the other Signatory Powers of the present Agreement.

Done at London, December 13, 1906.

[Signed] E. Grey.

[Signed] Paul Cambon.

[Signed] A. de san Giuliano.