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## DANZIG

### 1. Historical Background prior to 1918

The town of Danzig (Polish: Gdansk) is situated approximately 18.6 degrees longitude east of Greenwich and 54.4 degrees latitude north on the Vistula River five kilometres before the Vistula flows into the Bay of Danzig in the → Baltic Sea.

Danzig received its first documentary mention in A.D. 997. Until 1309 the town of Danzig belonged to the dukedom of Pomerelia (Pommerellen). After the extinction of the Pomerelia dynasty the town came under the reign of the Knights of the Teutonic Order. From 1309 until 1454, Danzig was a constituent part of the State ruled by the Teutonic Order. In 1454 Danzig, together with several other towns and rural estates of knights and bishops in the area, severed its adherence to that State and accepted the protectorship of the King of Poland. Danzig was not incorporated into the territory of the Kingdom of Poland. The Danzig/Polish relationship in this period can, perhaps, best be defined as a → confederation with certain federal features. The protectorship lasted until 1793.

Throughout its history, Danzig has always endeavoured to maintain its independence as far as possible from the regional great powers. Danzig's special status and privileges were layed down in basic documents, the most famous of which were the Danziger Handfeste, dating from the middle of the 14th century, and, in the period of the Polish protectorship, the *privilegium Casimiranum* of May 15, 1457. During Danzig's first Polish period, the town set a high value on the confirmation of this *privilegium* as a condition for rendering an oath of allegiance to a new Polish king. Upon coming under the protectorship of the King of Poland, Danzig loosened its ties with the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. As early as 1456 the town refused to attend the Reichstag in Nuremberg. Nevertheless, the German emperors continued to invite Danzig to the Reichstag until 1615, although Danzig's representatives never appeared.

Due to its privileges, Danzig was a self-governing community with its own legislative, administrative, judicial and foreign relations powers. A significant aspect of this special legal position was Danzig's neutrality during the Polish-Swedish war

of 1601 to 1611. Danzig was a member of the Hanseatic League and reached its peak as a major flourishing commercial power and as a cultural centre between 1550 and 1650.

Under the protectorship of the Catholic Polish Kingdom, Danzig was a Protestant German-speaking community. In this pre-nationalistic era the German city and its Polish environs lived peacefully together and mutual advantageous relations were maintained over several centuries.

In 1793, as a result of the second partition of Poland, Danzig was annexed by and incorporated into the territory of the Kingdom of Prussia (→ Annexation). After the defeat of Prussia in the Napoleonic wars, Danzig was severed from Prussia. Art. 19 of the Treaty of Peace signed at Tilsit on July 9, 1807 provided that the city of Danzig would be re-established in its independence under the protection of the King of Prussia and the King of Saxonia and be governed by the laws which were in force at the time when it ceased to govern itself ("la ville de Dantzick sera rétablie dans son indépendance, sous la protection de S.M. le Roi de Prusse et de S.M. le Roi de Saxe, et gouvernée par les lois qui la régissaient à l'époque où elle cessa de se gouverner elle-même"). This stipulation was annulled upon Napoleon's defeat. Art. XXIII of the Act of the → Vienna Congress of June 9, 1815 provided that the King of Prussia and all his heirs would again possess the city of Danzig and its territory as fixed by the Treaty of Tilsit ("posséderont de nouveau . . . la Ville de Danzig et son territoire tel qu'il a été fixé par le traité de Tilsit").

The territory of Prussia, including Danzig, became a constituent part of the territory of the German Reich upon the foundation of the latter in 1871 (1867). This situation remained unchanged until the → Versailles Peace Treaty of June 28, 1919.

### 2. Danzig after World War I

#### (a) Political background

At the end of World War I the State of Poland, which had been extinguished in 1795 (→ States, Extinction), was resurrected and the territory of Poland had to be determined. On historical and economic grounds, e.g. access to the Baltic Sea, Poland claimed that Danzig was included in her territory. Germany on the other hand, wanted

Danzig to remain a constituent part of her territory and pointed for support to the newly proclaimed principle of → self-determination (→ Wilson's Fourteen Points). In 1918 almost 96 per cent of the population of Danzig was German.

Having accepted Point XIII of Wilson's Fourteen Points regarding the creation of an independent Polish State with "free and secure access to the sea", Germany suggested the establishment of → free ports in Danzig, Königsberg and Memel in order to guarantee this access. The principal Allied and Associated Powers, however, deemed that Danzig had to be cut off from Germany because there was no other possible means to afford that "free and secure access to the sea" which Germany had promised to cede ("retranchée de l'Allemagne parce qu'il n'y avait pas d'autre moyen possible de fournir ce 'libre et sûr accès à la mer' que l'Allemagne avait promis de céder"; note of Clemenceau of June 16, 1919 to the German ambassador, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau). The fact that the population of Danzig was and had been for a long time German in its majority was an aspect only for the consideration not to propose its incorporation into Poland ("la population de Danzig est et a été depuis longtemps en grande majorité allemande" . . . "qu'on ne propose pas de l'incorporer à la Pologne") and the reminiscence of Danzig's legal position prior to the incorporation of the city into Prussia in 1793 gave rise to the decision that Danzig would find itself in the future again placed in a position similar to that which it occupied for so many centuries ("va se trouver désormais placée de nouveau dans une position semblable à celle qu'elle a occupée pendant tant de siècles"; Sec. XI of the Réponse des puissances alliées et associées aux remarques de la délégation Allemande sur les conditions de paix). This position of the Allied and Associated Powers led to inclusion of Arts. 100 to 108 in Part II, Sec. XI of the Versailles Peace Treaty dealing with the "Free City of Danzig" (→ Free Cities) and represented an imposed territorial compromise which satisfied neither Poland nor Germany, or the inhabitants of Danzig themselves.

#### (b) The Free City of Danzig

The special international legal position of Danzig was laid down principally in Arts. 100 to 108 of the Versailles Peace Treaty and in the Paris Treaty of November 11, 1920 which, according to

Art. 104 of the Versailles Peace Treaty, had to be concluded between the Polish Government and the Free City of Danzig. Germany was required under Art. 100 to renounce, "in favour of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers", all rights and title over the town of Danzig and the surrounding territory, altogether comprising 1951 square kilometres. When the Versailles Peace Treaty came into force on January 10, 1920, → sovereignty over Danzig and the surrounding territory passed to the Allied and Associated Powers; German nationals resident in Danzig and the surrounding territory lost *ipso facto* their German → nationality and became nationals of the Free City of Danzig (Art. 105). In fulfilment of Art. 102 of the Versailles Peace Treaty, the above-mentioned Powers established the town of Danzig and the surrounding territory "as a Free City" by a decision of October 27, 1920, which came into force on November 15, 1920, together with the Paris Treaty.

According to its constitution, the Free City of Danzig was a democratic "Freistaat" with its own flag and heraldic insignia, nationals, public power (i.e. legislature, administration, police and judiciary) and currency. Although it was a → State, Danzig was not a normal, fully independent → subject of international law because of its special legal relationship with the → League of Nations as well as with the Republic of Poland.

The Free City of Danzig was placed under the protection of the League of Nations by Art. 102 of the Versailles Peace Treaty. The League appointed a High Commissioner with residence in Danzig. The Commissioner was to decide in the first instance all disputes arising between Danzig and Poland in regard to the relevant provisions of the Versailles Peace Treaty, the Treaty of Paris and any other agreements or matters affecting relations between Poland and the Free City. The Commissioner could refer the matter, and Poland and Danzig had the right of appeal against the decisions of the Commissioner, to the Council of the League of Nations (Art. 103 of the Versailles Peace Treaty; Art. 39 of the Treaty of Paris). Decisions of the Council were binding upon Danzig and Poland.

The constitution of the Free City of Danzig was placed under the guarantee of the League of Nations. This meant that the constitution was indeed drawn up by representatives of Danzig but

"in agreement with" the High Commissioner only, and revisions of the constitution came into force only when the League of Nations declared no objections (Art. 103 of the Versailles Peace Treaty; Art. 49 of the Danzig Constitution). The High Commissioner also had the right to veto any international treaty concluded by Poland and applying to Danzig where he regarded it as inconsistent with the status of the Free City (Art. 6 of the Treaty of Paris).

The principal legal relationship between Poland and Danzig was laid down in Art. 104 of the Versailles Peace Treaty on the basis of which the Treaty of Paris formulated further details as follows: First, Poland was authorized to the conduct of the foreign relations of the Free City of Danzig. This provision recognized: the authority of Poland to conclude international agreements affecting the Free City but not without previous consultation with the Free City; the right of the Free City to contract foreign loans but only after previous consultation with the Polish Government; the right of the Polish Government with the agreement of the Danzig authorities to issue exequaturs for foreign consular officers residing at Danzig; the diplomatic and consular representation of Danzig by Poland whereby nationals of Danzig could be included in the staff of the Polish consulates; and the protection by Poland of Danzig's nationals abroad. The control of foreigners in the territory of the Free City was exercised by the City's authorities.

Second, Danzig was included within the Polish → customs frontier. Polish customs legislation and tariffs entered into force in the Free City. The customs administration in the Free City was placed under the competence of Danzig officials but remained under the general direction of the Polish central customs administration, which attached Polish inspectors to the Danzig personnel. Danzig received a fixed percentage of the customs revenues.

Third, a Polish post office, telegraph and telephone service was established in the port of Danzig for communications directly with Poland. All other postal, telegraphic and telephonic communications within the territory of the Free City and between the Free City and foreign countries were the concern of the Free City.

Fourth, "The Danzig Port and Waterways Board" was established. This body consisted of

five Polish and five Danzig commissioners and a President to be chosen by agreement between the Polish and Danzig Governments; in the absence of such an agreement the Council of the League of Nations was to appoint a President of Swiss nationality. The Board exercised within the limits of the Free City the control, administration and exploitation of the port and waterways and of the railway system specially serving the port. Ownership of all property which belonged to the German Reich or to any German State and which formed part of the port was transferred to the Board. The Board also had the right to expropriate private property.

Fifth, the Danzig railway system outside the port was placed under the control and administration of Poland; and sixth, the Free City was obliged to prevent legislative or administrative discrimination against nationals of Poland, Polish-speaking persons and persons of Polish origin.

Supplementing the Treaty of Paris, the Warsaw Agreement was concluded between Danzig and Poland on October 24, 1921. Subsequently, numerous agreements regulating special questions were concluded between the Free City and Poland.

#### (c) *The Statehood of the Free City: legal disputes*

In Polish legal literature before and after World War II it was said that the Free City of Danzig was not a State under international law (cf. Skubiszewski, p. 292). This thesis is incompatible with the fact that the Free City possessed all the attributes of Statehood (territory, nationals, public power), that the League of Nations had agreed upon the Danzig constitution in which the City defined itself as a "Freistaat", and that the Treaty of Paris of November 11, 1920 designated both Poland and the Free City as "the two States" (Art. 17(b)). It was asserted, moreover, that the Free City was only an autonomous territory in the form of an administrative → protectorate of Poland, mainly because Poland had the right to conduct the foreign relations of the Free City (see Makowski). However, the legal relationship between Poland and Danzig was international in character; it did not rest on Polish constitutional norms. Poland's right to conduct Danzig's foreign relations was not absolute but limited by the interests of Danzig. As an intermediary between the Polish Government and the Government of the Free City, a "dip-

lomatic representative" of Poland was stationed at Danzig (Art. 1 of the Treaty of Paris).

The "protection" of the City by the League of Nations, furthermore, did not amount to a protectorate in the international legal sense; the League only provided for the compliance by Danzig with its rights and duties emanating from the Versailles Peace Treaty and the Treaty of Paris. The sovereignty of the Free City of Danzig was, however, very restricted. Danzig's international capacity to act was limited to the conclusion of international treaties with Poland and to relations with the League of Nations.

Different legal conceptions of the Danzig authorities and the Polish Government concerning mutual treaty-based rights and duties led to numerous legal disputes (see *Entscheidungen des Hohen Kommissars des Völkerbundes in der Freien Stadt Danzig. Zusammengefasst und herausgegeben beim Senat der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 6 vols. (1922-1933)). Some of these disputes were dealt with in → advisory opinions of the → Permanent Court of International Justice (see → Danzig and ILO (Advisory Opinion); → Danzig Legislative Decrees (Advisory Opinion); → Jurisdiction of the Courts of Danzig (Advisory Opinion); → Polish Nationals in Danzig (Advisory Opinion); → Polish Postal Service in Danzig (Advisory Opinion); → Polish War Vessels in the Port of Danzig (Advisory Opinion)).

### 3. Danzig at the Outbreak of World War II and thereafter

When the National Socialist Party (NSDAP) gained a bare majority of 50.03 per cent in the elections to the Popular Assembly (Volkstag) of Danzig on May 28, 1933, the political system of the Free City was changed to resemble that of the German Reich. After the dissolution of the last democratic opposition party in October 1937, the NSDAP had exclusive political power in the Free City and pursued the incorporation of the City into the German Reich.

On September 1, 1939, when World War II started with an attack by the German navy on the Polish base Westerplatte in Danzig, a Danzig "Basic State Law" (*Staatsgrundgesetz*) was enacted contrary to the Danzig constitution which abolished that instrument and proclaimed the territory of Danzig to be a constituent part of the German Reich. A German law issued on the same

day declared the Danzig Basic State Law to be a German law (*Reichsgesetz*), Danzig nationals to be German nationals, and German and Prussian law to be put into force for the territory of Danzig on January 1, 1940 (*German Reichsgesetzblatt 1939 I*, p. 1547). The High Commissioner of the League of Nations was forced to leave Danzig on the same day. With these acts the Free City of Danzig *de facto* ceased to exist.

Towards the end of World War II, in March 1945, the territory of Danzig was occupied by the Soviet army which, however, soon afterwards left the city to Polish administration. A Polish decree of March 30, 1945 established the *województwo gdanskie*, an administrative unit within the Polish State which incorporated "the whole territory of the former Free City of Danzig". An exchange of the population took place (→ Population, Expulsion and Transfer): The German inhabitants of Danzig partly fled and partly were expelled; the new Polish inhabitants came mostly from the eastern parts of Poland which had become Soviet territories.

At the Potsdam Conference (→ Potsdam Agreements on Germany (1945)), it was agreed that, "pending the final determination of Poland's western frontier, the former German territories" east of the → Oder-Neisse Line "including the area of the former free city of Danzig, shall be under the administration of the Polish State and for such purposes should not be considered as part of the Soviet Zone of occupation in Germany".

### 4. Evaluation and Present Status

The incorporation of the Free City of Danzig into the German Reich was legally invalid. If the German law concerning "the reunification of the Free City of Danzig with the German Reich" of September 1, 1939 is regarded as an act of annexation, and if at that time annexation itself could still be regarded as legally permitted, the incorporation nevertheless lacked legal validity because of continuing hostilities. If the German law and the Danzig Basic State Law of September 1, 1939 are construed as forming a treaty of accession by Danzig to the Reich, this treaty was also legally invalid; Danzig had no treaty-making power in this respect. Therefore, although the Free City of Danzig ceased to exist *de facto* on September 1, 1939, its existence *de jure* continued.

The Polish decree of March 30, 1945 expressed

the will of the Polish Government to incorporate the territory of Danzig into the Polish State. The decree was an act of annexation which was invalid during the state of → war still existing. In Polish legal writings, qualification of the incorporation of the territory of Danzig into the Polish State as annexation is denied on the grounds that an object of annexation can be only the territory of a foreign State and the Free City of Danzig never constituted a State. Because Germany and the authorities of the Free City had violated the Treaty of Versailles in 1939, Poland in 1945 was no longer bound by the provisions of that treaty. In 1945 the Free City of Danzig had ceased to exist. Since no State possessed territorial sovereignty over the Free City of Danzig, Poland could extend her territorial sovereignty over the City. Neither the League of Nations nor the Four Powers protested against the extension of Polish territorial sovereignty. Thus, Poland gained territorial title not by an authorization of the Four Powers but *suo jure* (Skubiszewski, pp. 306–320).

Although both the Polish Decree of March 30, 1945 and the Potsdam Agreements on Germany spoke of "the former" Free City of Danzig, it is doubtful whether the Free City of Danzig already in 1945 also ceased to exist *de jure*. In the 1950s, former German inhabitants of Danzig living in western Germany established the Rat der Danziger, deemed to be a representative organ of the Free City of Danzig. These activities have meanwhile faded away. No → government-in-exile for Danzig exists, nor has any other organization proposed the reorganization of Danzig as a Free City. Danzig as a State or a special subject of international law has, therefore, also ceased to exist *de jure*. The present Polish title to the territory of the former Free City of Danzig has been established by → prescription. Since the occupation of Danzig in 1945, Poland has, with the requisite *animus domini*, exercised uninterrupted and effective possession of the territory. For a considerably long period of time, i.e. approximately three decades, this possession has been uncontested. Thus, → acquiescence and the passage of time have legitimated the doubtful Polish *suo jure* title of 1945 to the territory of the former Free City of Danzig.

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- [1990] THEODOR SCHWEISFURTH

## DANZIG AND ILO (ADVISORY OPINION)

In its advisory opinion of August 26, 1930 (PCIJ B 18), the → Permanent Court of International Justice pronounced on the capacity of the → Free City of → Danzig to become a member of the → International Labour Organisation. This question had been dealt with by the International Labour Organisation's Governing Body pursuant to a Polish proposal corresponding to a request of the Free City. In view of the difficult legal problems involved, the Governing Body followed a recommendation of the International Labour Office that the following question should be referred to the PCIJ: "Is the special legal status of the Free City of Danzig such as to enable the Free City to become a Member of the International Labour Organization?" On May 15, 1930 the Council of the → League of Nations decided to submit the question to the Court.

By six votes to four the Court answered the question in the negative. Two judges, Anzilotti and Huber, filed dissenting opinions.

The Court's majority opinion commenced with an interpretation (→ Interpretation in International Law) which was in parts restrictive and in

parts broad. First, it stated that it was not asked whether Part XIII of the → Versailles Peace Treaty (1919) presumed a necessary link between ILO membership and that in the League. The question was solely whether Danzig's "special legal status" was compatible with membership in the ILO. Secondly, it broadened the scope of its task by assuming that, despite the wording of the question, it should not only decide whether Danzig could become a member of the Organisation (→ International Organizations, Membership), but also whether it, if admitted, could participate in its activities and fulfil the duties incumbent upon its members.

The Court then ascertained the "special legal status" of Danzig. After an analysis of Arts. 102 to 104 of the Versailles Treaty and certain provisions of the Paris Convention of November 9, 1920, concluded between Poland and Danzig pursuant to Art. 104, it declared that the status involved two elements: Danzig's special relationship to the League and its relationship to Poland, which was entrusted with the conduct of Danzig's foreign relations.

Whereas the Court held that the powers of the League would not preclude Danzig's membership in the ILO, Poland's authority presented a legal obstacle.

In the absence of detailed stipulations in the Paris Convention, the Court considered the previous practice of Danzig and Poland to be decisive and found that the Free City was not completely free in the conduct of its own foreign affairs (→ Sovereignty). Although the Polish Government could not impose a policy on the Free City against its will, Danzig on the other hand, could not call upon Poland to take steps in connection with its foreign relations which were opposed to Poland's own policy; to this extent Poland had the right to withhold her consent.

Therefore, Danzig's freedom of action as a member of the ILO would likewise depend on Polish approval because many of the obligations connected with membership fell within the sphere of foreign relations. As the constitution of the ILO did not release a member from its duties on the ground that it could not obtain the consent of some other member, the Court concluded that Danzig could not participate in the ILO as long as no arrangement was made ensuring in advance Poland's acquiescence in any organizational ac-



tivities of the Free City. In the absence of such agreement, the majority declared the Free City to be unable to become a member of the ILO.

The dissenting judges, Anzilotti and Huber, however, considered Danzig's membership to be possible. They arrived at this conclusion not by taking a fundamentally different view of the legal question but by interpreting the Court's advisory task more comprehensively. They were of the opinion that the Court was authorized to examine the question with regard to possible future developments and not merely to consider the question in the context of the legal *status quo*. Although the two judges agreed to this extent, they expressed partly differing views on the requirements for Danzig's admission.

President Anzilotti inferred from Art. 387, para. 2 of the Versailles Peace Treaty that membership could only be acquired by means of admission to the League. Thus the Court should have declined to give an opinion. Nonetheless, Anzilotti approached the question partly as the majority had done, as he left the problem of admission aside and focused on Danzig's possibilities of exercising its rights and fulfilling its duties as a hypothetical ILO member.

On condition that Poland authorized Danzig to take all necessary steps to fulfil its duties and that the competent organs of the League did not use their right of → veto under Art. 6, para. 2 of the Paris Convention against the modification of Danzig's relation to Poland, he affirmed the possibility of Danzig's membership.

Judge Huber, on the contrary, held Danzig's simultaneous membership in the League and in the ILO to be dispensable because of its special relations to the League and its member, Poland. For the rest, he recognized Danzig's admission to the ILO as feasible, provided that Poland consented. A further → waiver of Poland's rights to conduct the foreign affairs of Danzig would not be necessary.

The advisory opinion was much criticized because of the failure to outline the prerequisites for Danzig's admission to the ILO. The dissenting opinions, which provided ample details, could not overcome this deficiency. Danzig remained outside the ILO.

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## DANZIG LEGISLATIVE DECREES (ADVISORY OPINION)

In the elections to the Popular Assembly (Volkstag) of → Danzig on May 28, 1933, the National Socialist Party (NSDAP) gained a bare majority of 50.03 per cent. One of the Popular Assembly's first legislative activities was the promulgation of the "Law for the Relief of the Distress of the Population and the State" on June 24, 1933. On the basis of this "Enabling Law" the Senate of the Free City of Danzig issued two decrees on August 29, 1935, which declared that it was admissible to apply penal laws by analogy to acts which did not lie specifically within the scope of these laws. These decrees constituted, in the opinion of the opposition parties (Social-Democrats, National Germans and the Centre), a violation of the Constitution of Danzig. The matter was submitted by the Council of the → League of Nations to the → Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ).

In its opinion (December 4, 1935; PCIJ A/B 65) the Court inferred its and the League of Nations' right to examine constitutional matters, which would normally fall within a State's → domestic jurisdiction, from the special position of the League of Nations as guarantor of the Danzig Constitution (cf. Art. 103 of the → Versailles Peace Treaty (1919); → Polish Nationals in Danzig, Advisory Opinion). The Court then answered the question of the constitutionality of

the decrees in the negative. The text of the Danzig Constitution and the principles on which it was founded required that the penal nature of individual acts should be clearly determined and foreseeable. By denying the maxim *nulla poena sine lege*, the decrees would bring about the result that the subjective views of judges and prosecuting authorities on the criminal nature of an act and on the applicability of laws by analogy would be sufficient for a person to be prosecuted and punished.

The Advisory Opinion is an extremely exceptional case of international judicial review of the constitutionality of municipal legislation, a case understandable and explicable only by the unique legal régime of the Free City of Danzig. Having now lost its practical importance, the Advisory Opinion is still of a certain interest from the international procedural point of view (→ Procedure of International Courts and Tribunals) insofar as the Court permitted members of the Danzig opposition parties, i.e. individuals, whose initiative led to the advisory proceedings, to take part in these proceedings by submitting an explanatory note to the Court (→ Individuals in International Law; cf. here Art. 69 of the Rules of the → International Court of Justice adopted on April 14, 1978; → Judgment No. 158 of UN Administrative Tribunal, Application for Review of (Advisory Opinion)).

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## DARDANELLES, SEA OF MARMARA, BOSPORUS

### 1. General Background

The Dardanelles (formerly, Hellespontus; Turkish: Çanakkale Bogazi), the Sea of Marmara (or Marmora; formerly, Propontis; Turkish: Marmara Denizi) and the Bosphorus (or Bosphorus; Turkish: Bogaziçi, or Istanbul Bogazi) have played a central role in the development of the → Law of the Sea as far as the régime of → straits is concerned. These waterways, referred to in this article as the Turkish Straits or Straits, are situated in north-western Turkey and geographically separate Asia from Europe. They link the → Black Sea to the → Aegean Sea, thereby allowing for trade and water traffic as well as a natural exchange of waters between these seas.

A rapid current from north to south on the surface of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles (less rapid in the Sea of Marmara) finds its counterpart in a strong current from south to north on the bed of the Turkish Straits. The Dardanelles, as the southern part of the Turkish Straits, links the Aegean Sea in the south-west to the Sea of Marmara in the north-east. This portion of the Straits is 38 miles (61 kilometres) long, 180 to 300 feet (55 to 92 metres) deep and 3/4 to 4 miles (1.2 to 6.5 kilometres) wide. The Sea of Marmara connects the Dardanelles in the south-west with the Bosphorus in the north-east and extends for a distance of 175 miles (281 kilometres). The greatest width amounts to 50 miles (80 kilometres); the average depth is 1620 feet (494 metres) and the maximum depth is 4440 feet (1355 metres). The Sea of Marmara came into existence some 2 500 000 years ago as a result of movements in the earth's crust. It is still an area visited by frequent earthquakes. The Bosphorus unites the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea along a straight line running south to north for a distance of 19 miles (31 kilometres). Its width varies between 2000 feet