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Documents on Prisoners of War

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**TREATY OF VEREENIGING (TREATY OF PEACE BETWEEN THE
ORANGE FREE STATE AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC
WITH GREAT BRITAIN, 31 MAY 1902)**

SOURCES

95 BFSP 160

2 Israel 1145

NOTE

This treaty, which brought to an end the so-called Boer War (1899-1902), was negotiated at Vereeniging in South Africa but was actually signed at Pretoria. By the provision quoted below the British reserved the right to try those individuals who had violated the law of war during the course of the conflict. This, of course, would have included any cases of maltreatment of prisoners of war. (It is only appropriate to note that the treatment of prisoners of war by the Boer authorities themselves was exemplary. Winston Churchill, the most famous of those prisoners of war, implicitly admits this in his book dealing with that war.)

EXTRACT

4. No proceedings, civil or criminal, will be taken against any of the burghers surrendering or so returning for any acts in connection with the prosecution of the war. The benefit of this clause will not extend to certain acts, contrary to usages of war, which have been notified by the Commander-in-Chief to the Boer Generals, and which shall be tried by court-martial immediately after the close of hostilities.