

Summary of Doctoral Dissertation

The title and subject of my doctoral dissertation is *Polish Colonial Concepts in the Years 1918-1939*. For the purposes of developing this dissertation, a research was carried out using library resources, with particular emphasis on materials relating to the interwar period (University Library in Wrocław, Jagiellonian Library in Kraków, Raczyński Library in Poznań, and National Library in Warsaw). Moreover, the research also included archival resources (Polish Central Archives of Modern Records, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Lithuanian Central State Archives in Vilnius).

The main goal set while working on the indicated issue was to present the most important political and legal solutions concerning the takeover of colonial territories by Poland in the interwar period.

This dissertation consists of four chapters. The first one has a two-fold character. In its beginning the methods of interpretation of notions such as "colony", "colonialism", "colonial imperialism" are presented as well as the most important legal acts concerning colonialism are introduced. It is worth noting that the terms "colony" and "colonialism" refer both to the process of ownership of overseas territories based on dependence according to the scheme colonial area-metropolis, and are also used as a synonym for the term "settlement".

The first chapter also presents the concept of so-called "New Poland" consisting in creating the foundations of Polish autonomy in the Brazilian state of Parana. It was developed on the pages of "Przegląd Wszechpolski".

In addition, the first chapter depicts the first postulates concerning the acquisition of overseas territories by Poland, which appeared after regaining independence.

The second chapter concerns the Maritime and Colonial League (originally the Maritime and River League), a political and social organization that was the largest organization in terms of numbers, next to the Air and Gas Defense League, operating in the interwar period. The first point of this chapter presents the history of the organization, its formation and development, together with the discussion of its structure and most important tasks. In the case of the second chapter, a time frame was adopted, that is 1918 – 1935. The chapter ends with the date 1935, which was adopted on the basis of the research results of prof. Stanisław Sierpowski, who, while analyzing Italian-Polish relations, had indicated the beginning of the 1930s as the period in which a rumor appeared in Europe about the alleged division of the German colonial power, which was quickly deemed false.

In turn, the second part of this chapter deals with the legal aspects of taking over the colonial mandates. League activists tried to create legal solutions allowing for the takeover of the former colonial areas that had belonged to Germany before the war.

The third chapter concerns the period 1935 – 1939. Its distinction is connected with the attack of Italy on Ethiopia, as a result of which the independent African state was reduced to the role of a colonial area.

The argumentation concerning the acquisition of colonial lands for Poland was also reflected in other political circles. An example is Jerzy Giedroyc, the editor of *Bunt Młodych* and *Polityka*, who in 1938 published a brochure entitled "Polish imperial idea", which also dealt with the issue of acquiring a colony for Poland.

The milieu of the National Unification Camp, which formulated the so-called *Theses on colonial demands for Poland*, consisting of eighteen points, should also be mentioned here. The theses emphasized the resource and population aspects, which were to justify granting overseas areas to Poland, on a par with other countries. Colonial slogans were also referred to in the publications of the National Unification Camp, such as *Gazeta Polska* or *Polska Zbrojna*.

Another example of propagators of the necessity to obtain overseas territories for Poland were the works of Ludwik Górski, an economist associated with the Catholic University of Lublin, or Zdzisław Harlender.

In turn, the fourth chapter is devoted to the activity of Polish authorities in order to obtain colonial lands for Poland. When it comes to the most important organs of public authority, it was not until the period 1937 – 1939 that the interest in colonial issues could be observed. There are probably two reasons for this. Firstly, Italy's international "success" in the annexation of Ethiopia and secondly, reducing it to a colonial territory with only verbal opposition from other colonial powers. In this part of the dissertation, the solutions related to the takeover of colonial territories presented at the forum of the Sejm and Senate are discussed.

An attempt to take over the northern part of Madagascar (French colony) is examined in a separate point. Finally, the most crucial documents and draft legal acts relating to the taking control over the part of the island by Poland under the so-called concession area are presented.



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