

Doctoral dissertation summary

The subject of my research is the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. It was one of the most groundbreaking events in the history of Ireland, marking the end of the British rule over the island. The title of my doctoral dissertation highlights the momentous character of the event: *The Birth of New Dominion. Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921.*

The subject of the Irish fight of independence is a rather unexplored area in Polish Academia. The only researchers who conducted studies on the subject are professors Wawrzyniec Konarski and Szymon Bachrynowski. However, their focus was on the history of political thought, birth of the nationalist movement and the history of the Irish armed struggle for independence, while my thesis focuses on the subject of Anglo-Irish diplomatic relations. This subject was discussed by English and Irish researchers but never as a whole, taking into account British, Republican and Unionist Irish points of view alike. The greatest advantage of the work is a thorough comparison of information from British and Irish diplomatic documents. There is also no work to be found that would analyse not only the negotiations but also the ratification process, press coverage of events and the impact of the settlement on the life of citizens of Britain and Ireland.

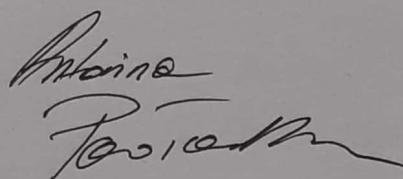
In order to obtain them, a query in foreign archives was necessary. During my research in London I have examined the documents of *The National Archives* and *Parliamentary Archives*. Later I compared them with the collection of the *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy* and notes from the *Irish Military Archives*.

During the work on the documents, the following research questions were posed: how can one describe the impact of a Great War on the Anglo-Irish conflict? How did the internal conflict in Ireland escalate and how did this process translate into the crystallisation of the Irish independence and unionist movement? What was the importance of the issue of the ethnic, social, religious and political division of the island in the considerations on the course of the conflict? Can we pinpoint key views of Sinn Féin members and consider their impact on creating Irish Foreign Policy? What factors influenced the formation of British policy towards Ireland? To fully outline the situation of the Empire, it will also be necessary to analyse its economic, social and political situation. How did various British parties respond to the Irish question? How can one characterise the approach of British society to the issue of potential independence of Ireland? A question about the condition of the Irish side and its ability to continue the fight was also a valid one. What strategies and tactics have the parties adopted? What kind of concessions was the British side ready to make, and what were the

Irish ones? Did Ulster's attitude influence the course of the negotiations? How did personal experiences and views of the negotiators influence the course of the conference? What was the final shape of the agreement adopted by Irish and British politicians? Considerations on the shape of the treaty also required an in-depth analysis of the content of the British-Irish agreement. How can one characterise the legal reality this document creates for the future of Ireland and the British Empire? What was the treaty ratification process like and what political consequences did it entail for both sides of the conflict? Finally, what was the public perception of the agreement leading to the creation of the new dominion?

Aforementioned questions suggested areas of exploration of the topics and indicated the need to divide the work into chapters. The first chapter focuses on political and social background of the conflict. The second one presents the international, imperial and domestic context of British politics during this period. In the third chapter, entitled "negotiations", the transcripts of the British-Irish talks were comprehensively analysed in order to accurately describe the course of the conference. Chapter four is devoted to the analysis of the contents of the achieved settlement. Next, fifth part is an analysis of the ratification process of the treaty in British and Irish parliaments. Last, sixth chapter is an attempt to analyse social reception of the treaty and contains considerations on opinions of British and Irish society and the influence of press narratives on its formation.

Described research has led to formation of several key conclusions: the main winner of the talks was the Ulster faction. The Unionists did not participate in the negotiations and were represented by the British side, but the agreement reached was most beneficial for them. Prime Minister David Lloyd George has solved one of the greatest problems in British politics of the last century. His skilful machinations were successful and he managed to divide the Irish delegation, leading to the final agreement. Ireland officially received dominion status. However, in fact, it was significantly limited compared to the powers of other areas of the Empire, such as Canada and Australia. However, it was an important step on the road to independence and was perceived as such by some Irish politicians. The issue of the treaty, however, divided both the Irish independence movement and society, leading to a bloody civil war.

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