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The League of Nations mandate system – success or failure?

The main topic of this article is to analysis the League of Nations mandate system mainly focusing on „B” mandates and an attempt to answer the question whether such system was a success or failure of organization. What is more, research on the topic of mandates will try to show whether today's unstable situation in Africa resulted, among others, from the activities of the League. The creation of the system in which the states that won the First World War were to progress of poorly developed areas sounds perfect. Undoubtedly, it is creating a better future for indigenous people, however, it is necessary to consider whether the form in which the mandates were able to provide help was appropriate and whether it focused on the development of these areas or even greater use colonizers. For centuries Africa has been used by Europeans as source of natural resources and workforce, the League of Nations plan to improve the transformation of areas colonized in non-sovereign states was a good idea, but you have to remember that the League of Nations survived only to be transformed into United Nations, so it is very short period in relation to the transformation of Africa colonies into independent states.

Key words: *The League of Nations, a mandate system, interwar period, United Nations, mandate territories in Africa, decolonization.*

Introduction

The mandate system of the League of Nations consisted of three types of mandates: "A" type mandates, "B" type mandates and "C" type of mandates. The first of them included territories after Ottoman Empire, which with help of mandates, were supposed to be independent soon. These were Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan (managed by Great Britain) and Syria and Lebanon (administrated by France). "B" type mandates were German colonies in Africa, which due to their underdevelopment demanded greater interference by the great powers. It was Rwanda-Urundi (administrated by Belgium, Tanganyika (today's Tanzania, administrated by Great Britain) and Cameroon and Togo shared between United Kingdom and France. The territories covered by the "C" mandate were former German possessions in the Pacific-region and Africa. They were completely dependent on the state of mandatorians:

German New Guinea and Nauru (managed by Australia), German Samoa (administered by New Zealand), Mandate of the South Pacific (granted to Japan) and South-West Africa (today's Namibia, administered by the Union of South Africa)[8].

The League of Nations system mandate was created in accordance with article 22 of League Pact. It was specified in it that due to the lack of sovereignty after losing the war by Germany over certain areas incapable of independent governance, a mandate system should be created. The nature of the mandates should depending on the level of development of the people, the geographical location of the territory, its economic conditions and any other circumstances.

Very important from the point of view of later considerations in the article were paragraphs 5 and 6 of Article 22 that degree of development of the Central African Peoples requires that mandates manage these areas, preventing the slave, arms and alcohol trade, ensuring freedom of religion and conscience limiting only in the case of the need to maintain public order and good manners. Creation of fortifications, military and naval bases and training indigenous people was forbidden, unless it is necessary to defend the territory. The same trading conditions have been ensured for members of the League of Nations. Paragraph 6 mentions the territories of South-West Africa and certain islands of the Indian Ocean, which will support its geographical location and poor development would be governed as an inseparable part of the mandatorial territory with reservation of specific rights in the interest of indigenous peoples [5].

Mandatories in Africa

Focusing mainly on the African continent, analyzing individual mandate areas, it is possible to access the influence of the League of Nations on the development of Africa. It is obvious that in assumptions of the pact there was help for poorly developed territories, but it has to be ask whether this help was success or failure.

The first African territory, which was granted as the mandate "B" to one of the great powers-Great Britain was Tanganyika. It has been incorporated into British East Africa. As part of the mandate actions, slavery was abolished in 1922, and the governments in Tanganyika were in an indirect form using traditional chief elites for this region. In 1929, the African Tanganyika Association (TAA) was formed, which included the new African elite. After the Second World War, along with the change of the League Nations in the United Nations, Tanganyika became a United Nations trust territory, which supported efforts to become independent of the state. In 1961 the full independence of Tanganyika was proclaimed [8]. This is an example of help from a European country for the development of poor areas. Thanks to the actions of the British, undoubtedly Tanganyika's independence took place much faster.

The next mandate territory was Rwanda-Burundi, which after the First World War came under the administration of Belgium. In 1925, Rwanda-Urundi became part of the Congo, which after 1945 became a UN trust territory. Belgium supported the Christianity of the territories and supported indigenous governments (the dominance of Tutsi over Hutu and Twa). Belgium granted internal autonomy under the pressure of UN what is more in 1962 declared independence to two separate states [4, 6]. Despite the fact that historically, Belgium is associated with dramatic events on the continent, the period of handing over the mandate territory by the League of Nations can be considered positive for striving for independence of the territories of Rwanda-Urundi.

Another territory that has been declared a "B" type of mandate is Cameroon, which was divided into two zones of influence: French (90% of the country) and British. At the time of taking over the UN control in the country, independence movements began to grow, the French part gained independence in January 1960 and was called the Republic of Cameroon. British part, after receiving freedom in October of the same year, a referendum was held, thanks to which same joined the already existing republic, while the second part joined the state of Nigeria [3].

Already during the First World War, the territory of Togo was occupied by British and French troops. In 1922, the "B" mandate was established. The western part was allocated to the United Kingdom, and the eastern part (the majority of the country) of France. After the Second World War, along with the creation of the UN, the territories were still under the administration of Europeans. In 1956 a plebiscite took place, through which the British part joined the British colony (later independent Ghana). The French part became an independent republic in 1960 within the French Community in Africa [10].

It is also worth mentioning Namibia, which after First World War as South-West Africa came under the administration of Union of South Africa. It was "C" type of mandate, what is associated with its much weaker development, what is more a geographical location far further from the great power.

The African countries given above, as an example of the League of Nations mandate, show a historical cross-section of the action taken by the mandatars to create opportunities for the fragile territories to lead to independence.

Idea and implementation

The intention of the League of Nations to establish a mandate was undoubtedly a good idea. It cannot be hidden that the African territories, after such a long colonization by the Europeans, when the colonizers were

removed from power, would not be able to survive. Moreover, without appreciating the rightness of imposing European right on the African continent in this article, it is undoubtedly necessary to point out that after interfering with the African governance system, leaving without help would be disastrous.

The problem appears with the project implementation. Of course, the powers began to support the idea set in the Versailles, but the history showed that there were not many years to create stable situation on the African continent.

It must be pointed out that the blame should not be sought after the appointment of mandates, nor should it be associated with the crisis with Africa. As everybody know, the twenties of the twentieth century abounded in global crisis, destroyed Germany after the First World War, feeling like victims had to finally "explode". World War II was the some extent unavoidable after the establishment of a Versailles order unfavorable to all. To a certain extent, the mandated territories were undoubtedly affected by actions through the world, and the superpowers did not attach too much importance to them. As it can be guess, World War II did not bring too much development towards the independence of African countries. However, after the creation of a new organization, often refered to as the daughter of the League of Nations- the Organization of United Nations, work on the creation of independent African countries returned to the right track again.

Undoubtedly, the United Nations should not be credited with the League of Nations and thanks to the activities of the UN, African states have been granted independence. However, the idea and the first implementation are the merits of the League.

What is more, it is hard to blame the League of Nations and the Versailles order for the Second World War, it is impossible to judge if the world wars would not exist if the mandate territories would sooner come to independence. I would be inclined to accept this vision, but on the other hand, it must be remembered that African people are slowly growing into European ideas, such as democracy, and there is high probability that whether World War II was or if there were no mandated territories the same they would been seeking for independence.

The influence of mandate territories on today's African countries

Europe's influence on the appearance and functioning of today's African countries is enormous. The mandate territories in Africa were allocated as already mentioned to the Europeans. It is not without reason that this is what has been planned, while watching the history and remembering colonialism, many systems have already been implemented in the 19th century, so it would be natural for a European country to achieving independence in Africa.

The period of activities of the League of Nations to the African territories can be saved until the positive period in the history of Africa. People who were previously illegal abused by foreigners wanted to become independent. The influence of first such a powerful international organization is hard to see in today's actions of Africa, certainly, without their actions, there would be no independent states in Africa so fast.

Assessing the influence of mandate territories on today's Africa, it is worth emphasizing the influence on independence of individual countries and help in the organization of state systems, considering the appearance of today's Africa it is hard to say whether the impact is visible. Certainly Africa after the creation of the African Union become strongly independent from external states.

Success or failure?

While analyzing the mandate system of the League of Nations in the context of success or failure, it is worth dividing the subject into several issues.

First of all, the idea was perfect. If the League of Nations did not create an administration system of former German colonies, most likely these territories would be plunged into complete chaos and independence strides could not exist. Undoubtedly, the creation of form of assistance from the states won after World War I was an obligation that the Treaty of Versailles saw over.

Another topic is the issue of executing the task of mandate territories and their administrators. The assessment is very difficult because it must be remembered that the League of Nations has been operating for a relatively short time and as an organization striving for peace has not managed to stop the outbreak of World War II.

Not judging the League of Nations as a whole, this is not the subject of article, the mandate system itself was a very good idea to repair and complete the interference of Europe and in dependent territories. However, knowing that these countries received independence as part of the United Nations assistance, it is hard to owe the entire success of the League of Nations, which undoubtedly contributed to the independence of the mandate authorities from foreign powers.

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Система мандатів Ліги Націй – успіх чи невдача?

Основним питанням цієї статті є аналіз мандатної системи Ліги Націй, орієнтованої на "В" мандати, а також спроба відповісти на запитання наскільки успішною вона була. Більше того, пропонуване дослідження з проблеми мандатів має на меті показати, чи пов'язана сучасна нестабільна ситуація в Африці з діяльністю Ліги. Створення системи, в якій держави-переможниці у Першій світовій війні мали сприяти розвитку відсталих регіонів, видавалося ідеальною моделлю. Безумовно, це мало створити краще майбутнє для корінних народів, однак, необхідно розглянути, чи була форма, за якою мандати могли надати допомогу, доречною і чи була вона зосереджена на розвитку цих територій чи ще більшою мірою використовувала колонії. Століттями Африка використовувалася європейцями як джерело природних ресурсів і робочої сили. План Ліги Націй щодо посилення трансформації регіонів, колонізованих у несуверенних державах, був гарною ідеєю, але слід пам'ятати, що Ліга Націй трансформувалася в Організацію Об'єднаних Націй. Таким чином, минув дуже короткий проміжок часу в їх відносинах, оскільки африканські колонії перетворилися на незалежні держави.
Ключові слова: Ліга Націй, мандатна система, міжвоєнний період, ООН, мандатні території в Африці, деколонізація.