

Abstract

The master's degree thesis "From British Empire to Commonwealth of Nations: Political and Geographical Aspects of the Transformation" deals with gradual transformation of the British Empire, one of the biggest colonial empires of all time, into Commonwealth of Nations, i. e. into a loose association of the United Kingdom and its former Dominions and colonies. The master's degree thesis aims to profoundly analyze all the substantial aspects of this complicated process, namely in broader (above all in political-geographical, historical and legal) relations. The initial historical chapter describes the origins and the following territorial expansion of the British Empire. The second chapter concentrates on different types of administrative units that existed within the British Empire; a special emphasis is given to Dominions whose creation marked the beginning of the disintegrative tendencies within the Empire. The third part of the thesis examines the key period of the transformation of the British Empire into a looser association of states, which means the events of the first half of the twentieth century, when couple of crucial documents amending the character of the British Empire were adopted. The fourth chapter pays attention to decolonization of British possessions taking place after the Second World War, which in its effect led to the enlargement of the Commonwealth of Nations which accepted many newly independent states, former parts of the British Empire. The concluding part of this thesis focuses on the today's position of the Commonwealth of Nations – it mentions among other things the structure, the aims and membership criteria of this organization; the analysis is complemented with a list of British Overseas Territories that nowadays represent just a fraction of once vast British Empire.