

Forgotten and/or forgiven past? The partitioning powers in confrontation with Polish émigrés' appeals for permission to return from the Great Emigration.

Dr. Oliver Zajac

The project's focal point is the question about the possibilities and limitations of returning from the Great Polish Emigration. The Great Emigration has been one of the formative aspects of the Polish contemporary historical identity. Numerous authors have paid attention to this complex and complicated historical subject. Nevertheless, for multiple reasons the question of possibilities and realization of actual attempts to return to the territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth has not been adequately addressed. The project specifically focuses on the period 1831 to 1864.

The complexity of the issue of returns makes it worth considering social, cultural, political, and diplomatic aspects. Therefore, the contextualization of these attempts is more emphasized than just the detailed re-narration of their course. Relevant questions are, for example, the one about the language presented in the communication between émigrés trying to return home and the partitioning (but also Western) governments. Is it possible to identify any pattern in their writings? What were their motives to return, formal communication style, specificity of arguments? What were their declarations of loyalty or with whom they identified? Did they consider themselves to be Poles, subjects of a particular monarch (Austrian or Russian emperor, Prussian king) or both (or even neither) of these categories?

The research project is conducted within the GHI research field titled: *Imperial Reconfigurations. The Dynamics of Statehood and Society throughout the "long 19th Century"*. My contributions to the broadly defined research subject are primarily relevant in examining governmental decision-making processes and the transformation of dynamics in the society (e.g., the problem of citizenship, traveling) during the long 19th century.

Deutsches
Historisches Institut
Warschau

Niemiecki
Instytut Historyczny
w Warszawie