

Finland

Key facts in 1929

Area: 369'057km²^[1,2]

Population: 3,462,700^[3]

Life expectancy: 51.3 years^[3]

Literacy rate: 84.1%^[4]

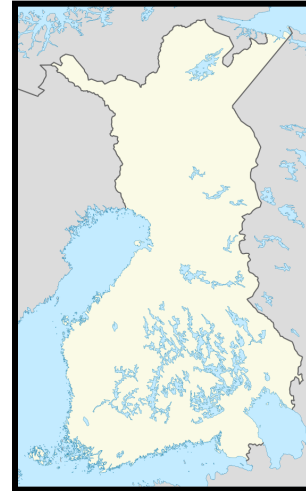
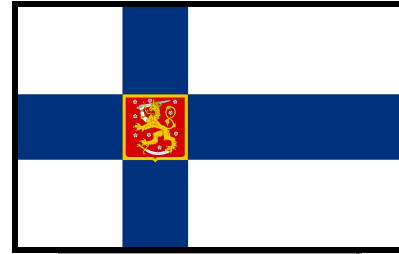
Biggest Minorities: Finland-Swedes, Sami, Karelians, Romani^[3,5]

Select Main Cities: Helsinki, Tampere, Oulu, Turku^[6]

Neighboring countries: USSR, Norway, Sweden^[1]

Sea Access: Yes, Baltic Sea, Arctic Ocean^[1]

GDP: 1'200'000'000 \$1929^[7]



Recent Historical Background

In the years following its independence from Russia in 1917, Finland experienced a tumultuous period of nation-building and reconstruction.^[8] The aftermath of the brief but brutal civil war between Reds and Whites in 1918 left scars on society and politics, leading to a conservative government.^[9,10] Despite all of this, Finland was among the countries in Europe the least affected by the 1918 Influenza Pandemic, with an excess mortality of only 33%.^[11] As Finland emerged from the chaos, it faced the daunting challenges of post-war reconstruction and economic instability were further affected by the Great Depression.^[12] Political polarization and ideological conflicts marked the interwar period, while diplomatic maneuvering was crucial for maintaining independence amid the looming presence of the Soviet Union, with which it normalized ties in 1920.^[13]

Political Situation

In 1929, Finland operated under a parliamentary republic with a multiparty system. The Finnish governments leaned toward social democracy, but agrarian policies were also common.^[1] The President was Lauri Kristian Relander, leading the country with a coalition government.^[14] Main political parties included the Social Democratic Party, Agrarian Party, and National Progressive Party.^[15] Internal tensions centered around socioeconomic disparities, particularly regarding the rights and treatment of the Swedish-speaking minority and the impoverished rural population.^[16]

Economic Situation in 1929

In 1929, Finland found itself in the midst of a transformative period, having shifted from its agrarian roots to emerge as a burgeoning industrial state. Abundant forests, alongside access to hydropower resources and mineral ore deposits, underpinned the nation's economic foundation. Despite strides in industrialization, Finland grappled with food shortages, exacerbated by the disruption of trade routes following the collapse of the Russian Empire. Nonetheless, the country's exports, including timber, pulp, paper, and wood products, found new markets in Western Europe, driven by strategic trade agreements and the establishment of export cartels. Major industrial hubs, fueled by the forest industry, were interconnected through extensive transportation networks, facilitating trade with international partners. Finland's economic landscape was marked by a blend of state intervention and private enterprise, with protective policies and commercial treaties supporting domestic industries while fostering economic growth. Throughout this period, the Finnish markka served as the currency, anchoring the nation's economic transactions.^[17,18]

Military Strength in 1929

In 1929, Finland's military was modest yet diversely equipped. With 34 Renault FT Tanks from France, they had a basis for their ground forces.^[19,20] The Finnish air force mostly relied on homemade IVL and imported Caudron planes.^[21] The Finnish Navy mostly consisted of Minesweepers, Minelayers, and similar vessels, making up 50 out of their 65 Ships.^[22] Next to all of that, Finland's military budget was 2.42% of GDP, and its military included 29,000 active personnel.^[23]

Key Facts about Military Strength of Finland ^[19,20,21,22,23]	
Active personnel	29'000
Tanks	34
Cavalry	Unknown
Other vehicles	Unknown
Ships	65
Planes	365
Funding in 1929\$	29'000'000

Allies/Enemies/Existing territorial disputes in 1929

Allies: Sweden (Historical and cultural ties)^[24]; Estonia (Shared concerns regarding soviet expansion)^[25]

Enemies: Soviet Union (Territorial disputes, previously in control of Finland before 1917)^[8,26]

Territorial Disputes: Karelia (Against USSR)^[26]

Some of the Main Goals for the 1930s

1. Economic stability and growth: Finland aims to promote policies that would stabilize the economy and foster growth, especially given the global economic challenges of the 1930s, such as the Great Depression.
2. National security and sovereignty: With neighboring powers exerting influence in the region, including the Soviet Union, Finland could prioritize maintaining its independence and national security, possibly through diplomatic maneuvering and military preparedness.
3. Social cohesion and political stability: To prevent internal unrest and maintain control, the Finnish government could pursue policies aimed at fostering social cohesion, addressing grievances, and ensuring political stability amidst growing social and ideological tensions in Europe.

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