

Poland

Key facts in 1929

Area: 388'634km²^[1]

Population: 31 Million^[2]

Life expectancy: 49 years^[3]

Literacy rate: 72%^[4]

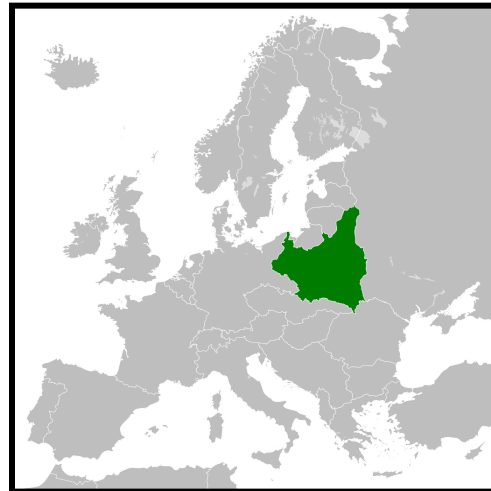
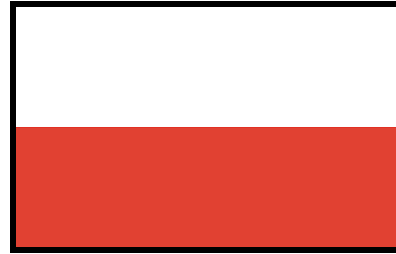
Biggest Minorities: Ukrainians, Jews, Ruthenians, Belarusians, Germans^[2]

Select Main Cities: Warszawa (Warsaw), Kraków, Poznań, Wilno (Vilnius), and Lwów (Lviv).^[1]

Neighboring countries: USSR, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Free City of Danzig

Sea Access: Yes, Baltic Sea

GDP: 8'600'000'000 \$1929^[5]



Recent Historical Background

Poland regained independence in 1918 as a result of the defeat of the Central Powers in WW1 after more than a century of foreign rule following the incorporation in 1815 of most parts of the Duchy of Warsaw into the Congress Kingdom of Poland, which was a part of the Russian Empire^[1,6]. During the period after WW1, Poland faced several border conflicts such as the Russo-Polish war in 1919-1921, which was won by Poland^[7] as well as with Lithuania, which incorporated Vilnius into Poland, leaving strained relations with its northern neighbor^[8]. The Spanish flu epidemic of 1918-1920 also had a significant impact on Poland, causing the death of 200,000 to 300,000 individuals^[9].

Political Situation

The Second Polish Republic in 1929 was a semi presidential authoritarian republic led by president Ignacy Mościcki and prime ministers Kazimierz Bartel and Kazimierz Świtalski^[10] The main political blocs in the 1928 Polish parliamentary election, which was considered free and fair, were the pro-Piłsudski “Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government” (BBWR), who got 125 out of 444 parliamentary seats, the socialist “Polish Socialist Party” (PPS) with 64 seats, the pro-Minority “Bloc of National Minorities” (BMN) with 55 seats, the right-wing “Popular National Union” (ZLN) with 38 seats, the left-agrarian “Polish People’s Party Wyzwolenie”(PSLW) with 40 seats and the right-agrarian “Polish Catholic Bloc”(PBK) with 34 seats.^[11] Internal conflicts of the Second Polish Republic included interethnic conflict between the main ethnic groups, with common antisemitic acts as well as “Polonization” policies aimed to impose Polish cultural elements to the 30% of inhabitants who were of ethnic minority.^[12,13]

Economic Situation

In 1929, post-independence Poland confronted significant economic hurdles exacerbated by the aftermath of World War I, German and Russian occupation, and the imperative to integrate diverse economic regions. Despite these challenges, Poland boasted a rich array of resources, including abundant coal, steel, textiles, and agricultural products. The nation was in the midst of a transition from agrarian to industrialized, with a notable divergence between the more advanced western territories, formerly part of the German Empire, and the less developed eastern regions. While Poland's agricultural sector played a crucial role, contributing a substantial portion to its Gross National Product (GNP), disparities in development and chronic unemployment in rural areas posed significant challenges. Nonetheless, efforts were underway to bolster industrial infrastructure and connectivity, exemplified by initiatives like the establishment of the Gdynia seaport and the Polish Coal Trunk-Line.^[1]

Military Strength

Between 1921 and 1929, the Polish armed forces were composed of infantry, cavalry, artillery, and emerging armored units, including tanks like the French Renault FT 17 and British Vickers Carden Loyd Mark VI tankettes.^[14] In 1926, The Polish Navy had access to two gunboats, 4 minesweepers, 5 torpedo boats, 4 river monitors and 2 transport ships.^[15] Poland's aircraft fleet in the late 1920s comprised fighters, light and heavy bombers, including French and Czech models, as well as French flying boats for naval aviation, transitioning to domestically designed fighters by the early 1930s.^[15,20]

Key Facts about Military Strength of Poland ^[15,16,17,18,19,20]	
Active personnel	268'000
Reserve personnel	700'000
Light Tanks	~120
Cavalry	Dismantling
Other Vehicles	Unknown
Ships	17
Planes	200-300
Funding in 1929\$	91,645,000

Allies/Enemies/Existing territorial disputes in 1929

Allies: France (Military Alliance)^[21]; Romania (Trading Partner) [The Lublin R-XIII was used in both Poland and Romania]^[19]

Enemies: Germany (World War 1)^[22], Soviet Russia (Russo-Polish war of 1919-1921)^[7]

Territorial disputes: Lithuania (Vilnius), result of Polish-Lithuanian war. As well as Territorial Jurisdiction of the International Commission of the River Oder (primarily against Germany)^[23]

Some of the Main Goals for the 1930s

1. Increasing internal peace (Reducing interethnic conflicts);
2. Improving international stability (To protect Polish territorial integrity)
3. Maintain alliances with allied countries (France, Romania)

Sources:

1. *Second Polish Republic* - Wikipedia (Date: 14.02.2024)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Polish_Republic
2. *Demographics of Poland* - Wikipedia. (Date: 14.02.2024)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Poland
3. *Life expectancy (from birth) in Poland, from 1885 to 2020** - Statista (Date: 14.02.2024)
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1041400/life-expectancy-poland-all-time/>
4. *Page 75, Polish Census of 1931, Central statistical Office of the Polish Republic* (Date: 14.02.2024) [In Polish and in French]
https://statlibr.stat.gov.pl/exlibris/aleph/a22_1/apache_media/VUNVGMLANSCOQFGYHCN3VDLK12A9U5.pdf
5. *The World Economy: Historical Statistics* (Date: 14.02.2024)
<https://web.archive.org/web/20220521073928/https://statlinks.oecdcode.org/4103063.XLS>
6. *Duchy of Warsaw* - Wikipedia (Date: 14.02.2024)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duchy_of_Warsaw
7. *Russo-Polish War* - Britannica (Date: 14.02.2024)
<https://www.britannica.com/event/Russo-Polish-War-1919-1920>
8. *Territorial Evolution of Poland* - Wikipedia (Date: 14.02.2024)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territorial_evolution_of_Poland#Polish%E2%80%93Lithuanian_War
9. *The Lethal Spanish Influenza Pandemic in Poland* - NCBI (Date: 14.02.2024)
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29021518/>
10. *II Rzeczpospolita* - Wikipedia (Date: 14.02.2024) [In Polish]
https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/II_Rzeczpospolita
11. *1928 Polish parliamentary election* - Wikipedia (Date: 14.02.2024)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1928_Polish_parliamentary_election
12. *Polonization* - Wikipedia (Date: 14.02.2024)
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polonization#Second_Polish_Republic_\(1918-1939\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polonization#Second_Polish_Republic_(1918-1939))
13. *History of the Jews in Poland* - Wikipedia (Date: 14.02.2024)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland
14. *Wojsko Polskie (II RP)* - Wikipedia (Date: 14.02.2024) [In Polish]
[https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wojsko_Polskie_\(II_RP\)](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wojsko_Polskie_(II_RP))
15. *Marynarka Wojenna (II RP)* - Wikipedia (Date: 14.02.2024) [In Polish]
[https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marynarka_Wojenna_\(II_RP\)](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marynarka_Wojenna_(II_RP))
16. *Military Personnel and Spending* - Our World in Data (Date: 14.02.2024)
<https://ourworldindata.org/military-personnel-spending>
17. *Military and Naval experiences* - CQ researcher (Date: 14.02.2024)
<https://cqpress.sagepub.com/cqresearcher/report/military-naval-expenditures-cqresrre1930072500>
18. *1 Pułk Czołgów (II RP)* - Wikipedia [In Polish]
[https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/1_Pu%C5%82k_Czo%C5%82g%C3%B3w_\(II_RP\)](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/1_Pu%C5%82k_Czo%C5%82g%C3%B3w_(II_RP))
19. *Lublin R-XIII* - Wikipedia (Date: 14.02.2024) [Used to estimate]
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lublin_R-XIII
20. *Siły Powietrzne* - Wikipedia (Date: 14.02.2024) [Used to estimate] [In Polish]
https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Si%C5%82y_Powietrzne#I923%E2%80%931932
21. *Franco-Polish alliance* - Wikipedia (Date: 14.02.2024)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franco-Polish_alliance
22. *World War I* - Wikipedia (Date: 14.02.2024) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I
23. *Territorial Jurisdiction of the International Commission of the River Oder* (Date: 14.02.2024)
https://www.worldcourts.com/pcij/eng/decisions/1929.09.10_river_oder.htm