

1 – until 1945

Polish Politics in a European Context

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Slides are available on: www.v4ce.net

Key dates

- 966 Baptism of Poland under Mieszko I in Gneзно – beginning of Piast dynasty
- 1333 Coronation of Kazimierz III Wielki (last Piast king)
- 1386 The Lithuanian Jagiełło marries Queen Jadwiga of Poland (beginning of Jagiellonian Dynasty)
- 1569 Union of Lublin – real union of Poland and Lithuania
- 1573 First election of a king (end of Jagiellonian Dynasty)
- 1400 – 1630 „Golden Age”: The Commonwealth (Rzeczpospolita) of Poland and Lithuania as multi-religious, multi-ethnic state
- 1648 – 1667 The Deluge (*Potop*) with uprisings in Ukraine and wars with Sweden and Russia

Early History

New Europe

RP II

Sanacja

Partition of the Commonwealth

Reasons for weakness of the Commonwealth:

- elected kings, powerful nobility, lack of central power and „liberum veto”
- Lack of religious and ethnic unity
- Delayed modernisation of the economy and society

Rise of absolutist empires: Russia, Austria and Prussia

1772 First Partition (becoming a protectorate of Russia)

1791 Constitution of the Commonwealth

1793 Second Partition

1794 Kościuszko Uprising of nobility and peasants

1795 Third Partition – end of the Polish/Lithuanian statehood

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Partitions of Poland and Lithuania



Mazurek Dąbrowskiego

Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła,
Kiedy my żyjemy.
Co nam obca przemoc wzięła,
Szablą odbierzemy.
Marsz, marsz, Dąbrowski,
Z ziemi włoskiej do Polski.
Za twoim przewodem
Złączym się z narodem.

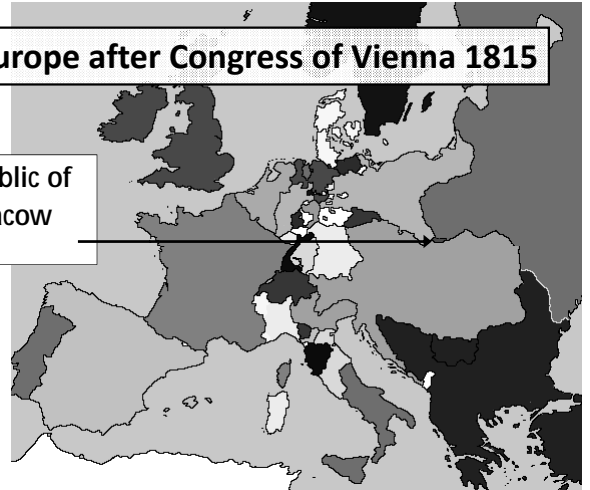
Przejdziem Wisłę, przejdziem
Wartę,
Będziem Polakami.
Dał nam przykład Bonaparte,
Jak zwyciężać mamy.
Marsz, marsz...

Poland has not perished yet
So long as we still live
That which alien force has seized
We at sabrepoint shall retrieve
March, march, Dąbrowski
From Italy to Poland
Under thy command
Let us now rejoin the nation

Cross the Vistula and Warta
And Poles we shall be
We've been shown by Bonaparte
Ways to victory
March, march ...

Europe after Congress of Vienna 1815

Republic of
Cracow



Aftermath of the Partitions

1807 Napoleon forms from Russian territory the Duchy of Warsaw as satellite state

1815 Congress of Vienna: Partitions reestablished (exception Republic of Cracow)

Suppression of Polish language and culture in all three territories

Rise of Polish romanticism with *Adam Mickiewicz* and *Juliusz Słowacki* in exile

19th century sees a row of uprisings against Russia and Austria

1868 Granting autonomy to Galicia in Austro-Hungarian Empire (Polish culture and education flourishing)

Early
History

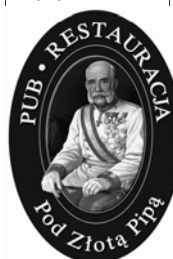
New
Europe

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Sanacja

Austro-Hungarian Empire (1914)

Austrian Empire
With German,
Slavonic,
Romanian
and Hungarian
population



New Europe

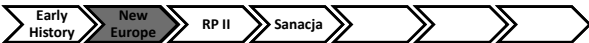
New ideas **Liberalism** and **Nationalism** from Western Europe
 ⇒ Ethnicities in “Inter-Europe” (from Finland to the Balkans and Caucasus) demand self-determination:

Problems:

- National identity not yet fully developed
- Delayed economic and social modernisation

WWI leads to collapse 4 European Empires (Russian, Ottoman, Habsburg and German)

Due to US President Wilson’s **Fourteen Points** (1918) the sovereignty of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Southern Slavonic nations becomes part of the Versailles Treaties

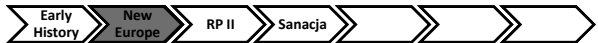


Wilson’s Fourteen Points

10. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity to autonomous development.

11. Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro ...

13. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.



New Europe

- New states on Russia’s territory:
 - Finland: 1917 independent from Russia
 - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania: independence 1918 (after Germans leaving the territory)
 - Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan – only briefly independent until 1920/21
- From different Empires:
 - Poland – independence 1918 (formed from lands of the Austrian, German and Russian Empire)
- New multi-ethnic states:
 - **Czechoslovakia** – founded 1918 (Czech lands belonged to Hungary, Slovakia to Hungary)
 - **Kingdom of SHS** (Serbians, Croats and Slovenians) – unification of the Kingdoms of Montenegro and Serbia and Southern Slavonic lands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire



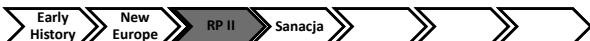
New Europe

Formation of the 2nd Republic

Two opposing concepts for Poland:

- **"Jagiellonian" Poland** - Poland in the borders of the Commonwealth, solving the ethnic problem through a *"Federation between the Seas"* (Adriatic, Baltic and Black Sea)
Proposed by General Piłsudski, the nobility and Socialists
- **"Piast" Poland** – Poland based on ethnic borders, with gaining land in the West
Promoted by Roman Dmowski and his Endecja (national democrats)

At the day of the ceasefire (11/11/1918) Piłsudski declares the 2nd Polish Republic in Warsaw



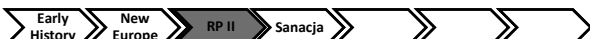
External relations of the 2nd Republic

Ethnicities:

- Borders not match ethnic territory, areas with mixed settlements
- 2/3 of the population were Polish, 20% Ukrainians and Belarusians (majority in their areas), 10% Jews

Border disputes

- Germany: Silesia, Poznan, Gdańsk
- Czechoslovakia: Cieszyn, Polish-Slovak border
- Conflict with Lithuania about Vilnius
- Question of Ukrainian and Belarusian statehood
- No border conflicts only with Romania and Latvia



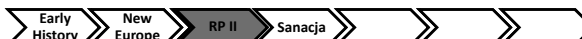
Soviet-Polish War

1919 Polish-Ukrainian War

- 1920 Ukraine allies itself with Poland against Russia
- Red Army advances on Poland to secure Ukraine and spread World Revolution through Europe
- Battle of Warsaw (*Cud nad Wisłą*): Polish army defeating the Red Army

1921: Treaty of Riga

- Poland and Soviet Russia agree on a partition of Belarus and Ukraine
- Soviets give up their efforts to spread the world revolution
- Interwar Poland includes large Ukrainian, Belarusian and Lithuanian minorities in the Eastern provinces



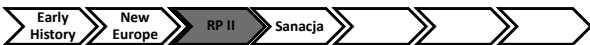
Problems of forming Poland

Social problems and conflicts:

- Land ownership – many small peasants vs. few large noble land owners
- Workers – few workers' rights, large poverty vs. small and large industrials

Other problems:

- 3 partition zones with different administrative systems, currencies, rail tracks, ...
 - Lack of democratic traditions (except of Galicia)
- Border conflicts lead also to trade conflicts with neighbouring countries

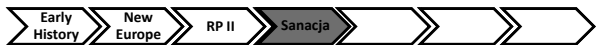


Collapse of Democracy

- Between 1918 and 1926 there were 18 governments
- Lack of democratic culture – including political assassinations, splits within political parties

1926 Piłsudski's Coup and formation of Sanacja Regime

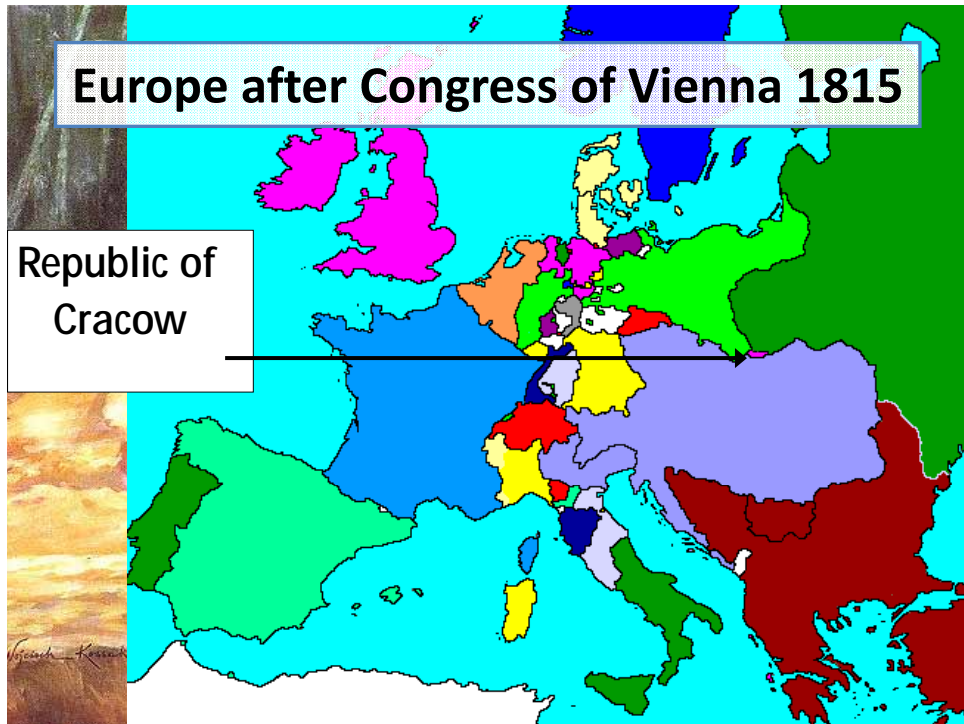
- Economic reforms to fight inflation
 - Social programmes
 - Changes of constitution towards an centralist, authoritarian regime – but still democratic elections
 - Pro-Sanacja „party” *Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government*
 - Suppression of the opposition
- 1935 death of Marschall Piłsudski



Poland after Piłsudski

- Continious problems with the „two enemies”: Germany and Russia/USSR
 - ⇒ Poland allies itself with France and later Britain
- Great Depression hit Poland very hard – social problems increase
 - ⇒ Government sponsored industrialisation of Poland focussing on heavy industry (COP, Central Industrial District)
- Falling popular support for Sanacja without its leader
 - ⇒ Constitution of 1935 turns Poland into a authoritarian state





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