THE REBIRTH OF POLAND

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THE REBIRTH OF POLAND

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North Texas State Teachers College in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

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Wichita Falls, Texas

June, 1941
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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

Poland and the World War

Among the nations of the world there is none with a more interesting and varied history than Poland. From the legendary days of her existence throughout the period of her recorded history, hers is the fascinating story of a great, brave, generous, liberty-loving people, devoted to their church and state, undaunted in the face of overwhelming odds, and battling for their very existence, as well as for the enjoyment of their rich, fertile plains and beautiful cities.

Poland was devastated and wrecked by the World War, feeling, with France, its most acute hardships. The armies marched back and forth over this section of Europe, leaving destruction and ruin in their wake. The heavy artillery as it passed back and forth across the fertile Polish land left it torn to shreds; homes and public buildings were demolished, and thousands of innocent people were killed. And the nation's treasury was completely empty.

One and a half millions of buildings were destroyed in Poland; two million cattle were killed or stolen; two hundred thousand agricultural machines and seventy-one thousand tons of industrial machinery were wrecked. Poland, indeed, by the
time she was able to lay aside the musket for the plow, was faced with poverty and destitution.\(^1\)

It is doubtful whether Poland would have been able to free herself from the three powers that held her—Russia, Prussia, and Austria—without the occurrence of the World War. However, the tragedy of being torn apart by these powers was twofold. Her sons were conscripted to fight in each of the three armies, and in many cases kinsmen were required to fight each other. Also, Poland became the main battleground for many of the major operations between 1914 and 1918. With fifteen months of war and three years of foreign occupation, the miseries of the Poles were acute.

When the Russians retreated in 1915, they took with them about three hundred young Polish men and women as hostages, and all the liquid resources of the cities, leaving the Poles without funds to face the winter. The Germans, who held the north and west, requisitioned everything movable that could be of any use in the war in France. They took great quantities of textile goods and raw materials, and all machinery, wires, or other fixtures that could be utilized, even including the church bells. Farm products were requisitioned to feed their own people. The forests, of which Poland had been very proud, soon fell under the axes of the Germans. Plans were made to raise half a

\(^1\)Edward C. Corsi, *Poland, Land of the White Eagle*, p. 112.
Fig. 1—Russia, Prussia, and Austria in 1914.
million troops from the impoverished country, to take the place of the great number of German soldiers lost in the fighting around Verdun.

At the end of the World War, the Commonwealth of Poland was recognized in turn by France, Great Britain, Italy, Germany, Czechoslovakia, and the other powers. The Polish delegates signed the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, and the country was again represented in the councils of Europe—at least on paper. Thus, to look at the map of Europe after June 28, 1919, one sees Poland as a country of impressive dimensions; but this vast land was pitifully wrecked, its people poverty-stricken and weary, as a result of the long struggle.

It is no exaggeration to say that Poland had a more difficult task to face as regards her post-war reconstruction than any other nation involved in the World War. This will be readily understood when it is remembered that the problems that had to be solved did not only relate to the reconstruction of a country devastated by war, but that the Polish people had to solve innumerable problems relating to the unification of the three partitioned parts of the country and to carry out reconstruction involving all political and fundamental social problems.

We had to plan and enact a constitution, to set the entire machinery of modern democratic government in motion, to elaborate a system of free, popular education, to introduce modern labor legislation, to create a nucleus of state officialdom, to enact and unify our laws, to organize our national defense.2

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2Jan Ciechanowski, Poland, Factor of Peace and Progress, Address by Minister of Poland to the United States, at the Joint Celebration of Armistice Day and the Tenth Anniversary of the Independence of Poland, Schenectady, N. Y., Nov. 11, 1928.
All this, the Minister further related, had to be done without delay and had to be initiated while the Poles were still at war with their neighbors. And resolutely they set to work, with their minds on the battles still being fought and their hearts set on the rebuilding of their beloved land.

Physical Geography of Poland

A knowledge of the climatic conditions and the physical geography of Poland will aid in an understanding of the rebirth and development of the country after the World War. The restored commonwealth was about two-thirds the size of France, and included 151,000 square miles.

The word "Poland" means the country of the plain, and is derived from the Polish word pole, meaning "field." This great expanse of Eastern Central Europe lying between the Baltic Sea and the Carpathian Mountains forms the transition from the smaller German plain to the greater one of Russia. The chief geographical features of the country, besides the lofty Carpathians, are its great rivers. These flow either northwest or southeast. Into the Baltic flow the Oder, the Vistula, the Niemen, and the Dvina. The Pruth, the Dniester, the Bug, and the Dnieper flow into the Black Sea. While these rivers and their tributaries form important physical features, they do not form any natural boundaries. Poland is completely open on both the west and the east, making invasion from Russia or Germany easy.
There are five general geographical divisions which extend across the country from east to west. The Carpathian Mountain region is famous, especially the Alpine section a little toward the south. The village of Zakopane attracts tourists from all parts of the world because of its magnificent scenery and its suitability for mountain climbing, for which sport picturesque Highlanders act as guides. On the slopes are to be seen numbers of inhabitants occupied with their sheep grazing. Here also is to be found much of the nation's mineral wealth. In these highlands, where live shepherds and scattering hunters, the people, old and young alike, wear homespun woolen garments. In this region are produced in great numbers "bryndza," or small cheeses made from sheep-milk and shaped "like miniature air-bombs, and nearly as hard."\(^3\)

The southern uplands are divided into four plateaus: Upper Silesia, Lesser Poland, Lublin, and Podolia. Upper Silesia is one of the richest industrial regions in Europe.

Lesser Poland had been the most important part of the old Polish State, and has remained the center of Polish culture. In Cracow, the old capital, with its ancient university and its art treasures, also was located the monastery of Czenstochowa and the Holy Cross Hills, famed in Polish

\(^3\)W. J. Rose, *Poland*, p. 58.
folklore and guerilla warfare. This whole plateau is studied with castles, mostly in ruins now, of the old nobility.

The plateau of Lublin, the most fertile part of the country, abounds in rich fields of corn and in orchards. Much of Poland's forest land is located in this section of the country.

In Podolia, the most eastern of the four plateaus, the land is covered with fields of wheat, corn, and beetroots. It has many ravines, and the villages are grouped around lakes in the wooded valley. In the southern part of this area, in the steppe region, agriculture is not profitable because of droughts and insects.

The central plain, lying between the southern and the northern plateaus and including Great Poland, Kujawia, South Mazovia, Podlasia, and Polesie, is called the "Cradle of the Polish State," and is the site of the earliest capitals. An agricultural region with a network of rivers and canals, it is known also as the "granary of Europe." In Podlasia is the famous forest of Bialowiez, which extends for about fifty miles across the country, where are found deer and boar in great numbers, and a few bison. Vegetable life as well as animal life is abundant here.

The northern uplands are divided by many rivers and are dotted with numerous lakes. This also is an agricultural region, and has some forest lands.
The climate of Poland is temperate. The summers are fairly hot, the autumns are delightful, and the winters often are long and severe. Spring, which is usually late, especially in the northwest, comes suddenly. Summer nights are short here, and the growth of agricultural crops is faster than in the south. The climate is ideal for the production of timber, grain, roots of all kinds, linen and hemp, many fruits, and a wide variety of garden products. It is well suited for all branches of agriculture, including dairying and the raising of cattle, pigs, and poultry. Poland is famous for its geese.

Along the seaboard there are thousands of lakes, furnishing a livelihood for many fishermen. For eighty-five miles of wave-swept, cliff-bound coast along the Baltic Sea there are no harbors.

Thus between the northern seaboard and the southern highlands are found a wide range of occupations. Of these, farming is the most important, since the soil is fertile and the rainfall is adequate. However, there are some regions of sand and rock where life is a hard struggle and primitive conditions still obtain. As was stated before, Poland at the close of the World War was the pitiful wreckage of a once prosperous nation. Her devastation was so complete that the problems of reconstruction seemed insurmountable. However, the Poles attacked them with characteristic courage and determination, and have since been rewarded
with a success that no doubt far surpassed the highest expectations of many of their most ambitious men in charge of the affairs of the nation.
CHAPTER II

POLITICAL REBIRTH OF POLAND

The political rebirth and development of Poland was due in a large measure to the friendly attitude of the Allies during the World War, and to the efforts of Ignace Jan Paderewski and Joseph Pilsudski.

In President Wilson's famous address to Congress on January 8, 1918, he gave his "Fourteen Points." The thirteenth "point" was:

An independent Polish State should be erected which would 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.

Feeling was quite different in Germany regarding the new Polish state, as was shown by the following statement:

In order to threaten us from the East, a gigantic Polish Empire, full of internal discord, is being constructed. We raise objections to the oppression of our German kinsmen. We demand the right of self-determination and the fulfillment of Wilson's promises, but we have no cause to fear this Poland, and the danger threatens us less than it does the originators and protectors of this mad, fantastic, harlequin foolery. Have you heard nothing of the feeling in East Prussia and Upper Silesia? Do you think that this Polish State, in which pianists govern and administrative talents are lacking,

1Raymond L. Buell, Poland: Key to Europe, p. 68.
will rule and suck up the millions of Germans who passionately protest against it, and all the other multifarious nationalities which are to be chained together within it? Right into the remotest future, France, its real protector, will be compelled to help it, to send troops, and laboriously to support a building which is bursting on all sides and cannot permanently stand.  

When revolution swept over Germany and Austria at the close of the Great War, the Poles who had been under the domination of Germany, Russia, and Austria reunited and formed the Polish Republic. However, so many quarrels occurred over the boundaries, and so many political parties arose voicing their divergent opinions, that the country, born anew under machine-gun fire and martial law, seemed again to be in danger of swift extinction. Matters of state were complicated because of the fact that the Allies had recognized the "Polish National Committee," led by the Conservative Dmowski, which group met in Paris. For a while the internal strife between the Pilsudski group in Warsaw and the Dmowski group in Paris threatened to undermine the position gained by Poland at the Peace Conference, and to cause civil war at home. Then the great pianist Paderewski, idolized by music lovers the world over, came forward to effect a reconciliation of the rival political factions in the tottering republic and to lead a coalition government for his people.

2 "Talk of Europe," (no author given), Living Age, August 16, 1919, p. 444.
In the United States when the War ended, he had returned immediately to Europe, proceeded to Paris, and conferred there with Allied representatives and with the Polish National Council. From Paris he went to London to confer with Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour, who convinced him that Poland needed him as a representative at the Peace Conference. Paderewski "promised that he would go to Poland as soon as possible, but he would only travel there by way of Danzig and Posen, and this could be done only in a British man-of-war." This request was at length granted, and the Concord was soon thereafter on its way to Copenhagen, where it was to take on board the leader of the first British Mission to Poland before proceeding to Danzig, where a special train was to be taken for Posen (Poznan).

About half-way to Posen, the train stopped, and a German officer entered the carriage to bring Paderewski the instructions that he was to proceed to Warsaw without stopping at Posen. (The Province of Poznania was as yet German territory). Paderewski explained to the officer that he was traveling with orders from the British Government, that the British envoy Colonel Wade was going on a special mission to study conditions in Poland, and that he was to meet other members of the same mission at Posen; whereupon the German officer acquiesced.

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The enthusiasm created by Paderewski's arrival in Posen knew no bounds. A wave of national ardor was released. Thousands of people were at the station to see him; people's cheeks were wet with tears. On the whole it was the German part of Poland which had the greatest sympathy with the nationalist spirit of the Comité National and of Paderewski. The whole town was en fête, and every house was gay with flags. The German Soldiers' Council feared an outbreak, and allowed the display of any flags that people cared to show, and so there were red flags and a few British and French and American; there were German flags and thousands of the red and white flags of Poland. But during the night shots were fired and certain groups of German soldiers attacked the Poles. Other German soldiers who had not joined in the occupation of public buildings by the Poles were forced from the streets. But most of the soldiers, though they wore the German "Feldgrau," were Poles by birth, and eventually there was not much resistance. Shots were even fired into Paderewski's room at the Hotel Bazar, but after a few days the disturbance came to an end, leaving the Poles master in Poznan. Paderewski had not tried to bring it about. Merely his presence had done it.4

Next, this diplomat went to Warsaw to confer with Pilsudski, who a few weeks earlier had been received at Warsaw with equal enthusiasm. Though the possibility of reaching an understanding with Pilsudski seemed remote when they first met, Paderewski determined to succeed. He finally effected a compromise, and he and Dmowski were recognized as the Polish delegates to the Peace Conference.

The Polish National Committee, which was Conservative, anti-Socialist, and Nationalist, agreed to recognize Pilsudski as the head of their government and Paderewski as Premier and Foreign Minister. They also agreed to add ten

4Ibid., pp. 127-128.
Lefts, or members of the Socialist group, to their numbers. The Polish Cabinet was chosen carefully to include leaders from all important political and geographical groups. Then Pilsudski, as the head of the army, set out to establish complete Polish domination, through subterfuge or force when necessary, of the frontier boundary areas.

Born in 1867 of an old and famous Lithuanian noble family in Russian Poland, Josef Pilsudski had been reared in the atmosphere of unrest and tsarist tyranny of the times. His mother had taught him the history of Poland, and had sent him to the high school at Vilna. At eighteen he had entered the University of Krakow to study medicine, but after one year he was expelled for being too active in politics. He went back to Vilna, where he continued his political activities in the interest of his country. When a delegate of the all-Russian universities came to Vilna and proposed to Pilsudski and his followers that they join in an attempt on the life of the Czar, it is recorded that with the following words, which showed his unswerving interest in Polish freedom, he refused: "We are not interested in a change in the government of Russia. We are interested only in the freedom of Poland."

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5"Pilsudski, Plotter and Soldier of the New Poland" (author not given), Literary Digest, LXVI (September 25, 1920), 83, quoting a Grand Rapids (Iowa) News comment.
But the attempt on the life of the Czar was made. The Russian secret police had a record of the meeting at Vilna. One by one they arrested the young Poles who had attended it and sent them to Siberia. In 1887 Josef Pilsudski thus became one of the numerous political exiles to that bleak and barren land. There he remained five years, before he was pardoned in a general amnesty proclamation.

Upon his return from Siberia, Pilsudski helped to found the Polish Socialist Party, its basic creed being the freedom of Poland. When in 1900 he was arrested, he feigned insanity and was sent to a combination prison-asylum in St. Petersburg. The next year, with the aid of a Polish physician, he escaped and fled to Austrian Poland. For a while he was in Krakow (Cracow), where he organized and drilled a secret Polish military force, which he offered to lead against the Russians, now particularly distasteful to him, at the outbreak of the World War.

Although improvised local governments had been set up throughout the war-torn nation, there was a definite need for an organized national government. When Pilsudski, released by the Germans after the armistice, arrived in Warsaw, he took over the command of the Polish armies and was given full powers by the Regency Council of Warsaw. On becoming Chief of State a few days later, he set about energetically to establish order throughout the country, to evacuate the German troops, and to form a government, his
primary object being to win the support of the Left, because he believed a revolution from this group would be more dangerous than one from the Right, particularly in view of the Bolshevik example to the north. The new government, then, was in the hands of a former Socialist with a Left government, which probably saved the country from Bolshevism. Another hindrance to the spread of Bolshevism in Poland was, no doubt, the patriotism of the peasants, which had grown steadily for several generations in spite of all Russian and German efforts to stifle it. Notwithstanding the fact that revolution and Bolshevism had become rampant around them, the lower classes were too full of pride in their native land and too intent on its improvement to lend an ear to the Revolutionary and Bolshevik agitators trying to influence them.

Meanwhile, Paderewski, as the newly recognized Prime Minister of Poland, was facing numerous problems, not the least of which was Pilsudski. He was not in sympathy with the militarist's tactics of resorting to conspiracy whenever it seemed expedient in realizing his objectives. By intellectual and artistic accomplishment Paderewski had risen to his high position, and his temperament was in direct contrast to that of the new Chief of State. Paderewski was an artistic genius and a world-renowned musician, while Pilsudski was a brusque, dynamic military leader. The Prime Minister's greatest worries often concerned the Chief.
The worst obstacle of all was Pilsudski. The meetings with him were sometimes terrible. Paderewski recognized the force and the genuineness of Pilsudski's patriotism. Of course he himself would be most loyal to the Chief of State. If only he would change his habits! Generally, he would arrive late at night, when Paderewski was worn out with fatigue; or there would be a telephone message from the Belvedere, asking the Prime Minister to come out and see Pilsudski on a most urgent matter. Sometimes this would happen at 2 a.m., often for no better reason than that Pilsudski had had some surprising new ideas which he wanted to place before his Prime Minister. But could one trust Pilsudski? Was he honest in his attitude towards his Prime Minister? Paderewski clearly perceived that Pilsudski was out to impress him. What other reason could there be for the exaggerated simplicity of his appearance which contrasted so strangely with the display of brilliant adjutants and elegant officers? Napoleonic gestures perhaps? That would not have mattered had his mentality not been so strange. His arguments seemed to Paderewski complicated, long-winded, far-fetched; he would talk for hours, mixing fact and poetry, superstitions and political planning. He was moved by mysterious impulses, he would sometimes avoid the straight and narrow path, and, worst of all, he would lose his temper. Paderewski himself could no longer control his temper. He would raise his voice, or become caustic. Pilsudski would pace feverishly across the room, stop in front of Paderewski, assume a Napoleonic attitude, gesticulate wildly with his cigarette, and shout as though to his soldiers. When Pilsudski finally left the room at about 5 a.m. thick clouds of cigarette smoke curled slowly above the table. Often an ash-tray had fallen to the floor; the remains of dozens of long Russian cigarettes lay on the carpet, amongst messy heaps of cigarette ash. Paderewski too would then leave the room, pale, exhausted, hardly able to think or to feel. . . . there was something terrible in that man, with his hypnotic eyes and his unkempt appearance! One morning Paderewski turned to a secretary and said: "You know, when he enters the room, there is a smell of sulphur, as if the devil came in." Could they blame the Prime Minister in Warsaw that sometimes he did not get up until eleven in the morning?

Rom Landau, Ignace Paderewski, Musician and Statesman, pp. 141-143.
The one supremely important thing for which Paderewski had to work at the time, however, was the recognition of his country as a free nation. To him, the success of the Peace Conference meant everything; consequently all his efforts were directed toward a conciliation of the divergent interests which might interfere with the realization of his dream of an independent and unified Poland.

Germany blamed the Prime Minister for the disorder in Posen, the capital of Prussian Poland, en route to Warsaw. The German press charged that Paderewski's provocative entrance was responsible for the fighting of the Germans, Jews, and Poles whose existing unrest needed nothing more to incite them to action. Germany had no intention of allowing Poland to have Posen without protest. However, the Poles in the disputed area refused to vote at the German elections, thereby demonstrating their secession from the German state. The English paper, the Manchester Guardian, expressed regret that Paderewski had been taken to Danzig in a British man-of-war and that he had been accompanied by a British officer, because it was "most undesired by the British government that its representative should by his presence have been connected with the disturbances at Posen."  

7"Poland Reborn" (author not given), Literary Digest, LX (February 8, 1919), 20-21.
When the Peace Conference met, it undertook to define the boundaries of Poland—a difficult task because both the eastern and the western frontiers were peopled by a mixed population. Claiming all of Galicia, an old Austrian province in which the chief city, Lemberg, was populated by Poles of wealth and influence but in which the eastern inhabitants were chiefly Ruthenian, the Poles showed no sign of relinquishing their claim without fighting; so the Peace Conference agreed to give all of Galicia to them, with the provision that the eastern part should have home rule under its own parliament for a period of twenty-five years.

The northern and eastern boundaries were also difficult to define, because of the mixed population of Poles, Russians, Ukrenians, and Lithuanians. Both Poland and Russia claimed the sector. The peace conference finally set up a provisional boundary, leaving the final settlement up to Poland and Russia. War followed, but Poland was finally successful. The Polish Minister of Affairs, Mr. Wasilewski, made this statement in 1919:

With regard to Lithuania and White Ruthenia, our point of view is that the Russian frontier must be placed as far east as possible, though we do not wish to appear as annexationists. At the same time we are resolved that these two countries, which are Polish by race and culture, shall be united to Poland in some form which will facilitate our economic relations.

\[^{3}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 20.}\]
The war between Poland and Russia taxed the already overburdened Polish government greatly, but the Republic gained its boundary objective.

When Pilsudski led his Polish legions into the Ukraine and drove the Russian "Reds" into helter-skelter flight; when, again, after the Soviet hordes had turned the tables on him, he sent them, routed and panic-stricken, into the Priepet marshes, the world woke up to the fact that, possibly, here was another military genius whose name would head a chapter in history.⁹

Still more difficult was the settlement of the dispute between Poland and Germany over Upper Silesia and the "Polish Corridor," as the Germans called Pomorze. Upper Silesia was a rich industrial center, and before the war had furnished twenty-three per cent of Germany's coal. There was some apprehension concerning the occupation of this territory in advance of the settlement to be arrived at by the Peace Conference, and many sincerely hoped that there was represented no mistrust of the sincerity of the Allies in their Polish policy. In view of the tenacity of those representing the opposing interests, an immediate settlement of the issue seemed very uncertain.

Poland insisted that Silesia must form an integral part of her territory. Though a majority of the people living in the area were Poles, their sentiments toward the boundary problem were not known. A plebiscite was to be held to ascertain the wishes of those in the section.

⁹Ibid., Vol. LXVI, p. 83.
If the Poles were to have free access to the sea, there was a necessity for their control of a strip of territory extending up to the city of Danzig on the Baltic Sea. The Germans objected to this arrangement on the ground that it would separate East Prussia from the remainder of Prussia, and because most of the population of Danzig was German. Some of the statesmen maintained that, if Germany was to be expected to pay her indemnity, she should have Upper Silesia because of the coal production upon which she depended. Others pointed out that in both language and religion (Catholic) the country had more in common with Poland and should therefore go to her. In the plebiscite a majority voted to unite with Germany, but there was much resentment to this decision manifested.

The Conference to which Dmowski and Paderewski had been chosen as delegates was in no way in accord regarding Poland. Roman Dmowski's masterly presentation of the case was offset by his extreme anti-Jewish attitude. This anti-Semitism had already shocked some of the Jewish members of the British delegation. Though Clemenceau, Wilson, and Arthur Balfour were in general agreement with the Commission's proposals, Lloyd George was so vigorously opposed to them that, despite Wilson's emphatic defense, the recommendations of the Cambon Commission were referred back and so revised as to be unjust to Poland.
Ignace Paderewski's arrival at the Conference came at a time when his own personal influence could be of the greatest help in reopening those issues most unfavorable to Poland. Through his remarkable personality he was able to win over many opponents; even Lloyd George was more sympathetic than he had ever been before. Long since had Woodrow Wilson, at a big evening party at the White House in 1916, been much impressed when Paderewski, after a two-years' discontinuance of piano performances, consented to play for the guests. The melancholy longings of the Polish spirit as expressed in the Chopin pieces at the touch of the artist so deeply moved President Wilson that a conversation followed, the only topic of which was the musician's beloved land. The shock to Wilson's keen sense of justice made him fight for the cause of Poland at the Peace Conference, even before the arrival of Paderewski, whose personal influence, together with his composure and his artistry in presenting his case, led to the signing of the Treaty which made Poland an independent state, and which gave her the "corridor" on the ground that it was a greater injustice to leave the Vistula, mouth of Poland's chief river and her main available seaport, under the control of a hostile Germany, than to include the Germans of that region in Poland and to separate one section of Prussia from the other. As a concession to Germany, however, Danzig was made a "free city" under the protection of the League of Nations, even
though, as a seaport for the administration of customs, it was under the control of Poland.

On his return from the Conference, Paderewski urged the Polish Constituent Assembly to ratify the Treaty, even though he thought much of it was unfair. In his report on the Polish provisions of the treaty he said that a great injustice was done by the peace pact in allowing language and cultural rights to Germans living in Poland while such rights were not guaranteed to Polish people living in Germany. During his address to the Diet on July 31, 1919, Premier Paderewski paid eloquent tribute to President Wilson of the United States and to Premiers Clemenceau of France and Lloyd George of England, and expressed his gratitude to the powers that had fostered and confirmed the new Polish Republic. He expressed the idea that it was time for rejoicing since, after more than a hundred years, their dream had been realized and Poland was a nation unto herself once more. "The Premier delivered this thought with such deep, quiet fervor that the Diet and the galleries, crowded with elegantly dressed women and the entire Diplomatic Corps, came to its feet and made the hall ring with applause." ¹⁰

The new Republic, the gateway to Central and Southern Europe, was fortunate with respect to territory. None of

¹⁰"Poland as a Free Nation" (author not given), Current History, X (September, 1919), p. 492.
the other countries produced by the World War compared with it either in size or in population. Although before the first partition in 1772 Poland had been almost twice as large as in 1919, by an aggressive policy after the war she acquired a total land area of 151,000 square miles.

One of the first acts of the new government immediately after the signing of the Armistice had been the passage, on November 28, 1918, of a very liberal electoral law extending suffrage to men and women on the basis of proportional representation. Then the Paderewski government, organized on January 12, 1919, had issued a call for elections to choose delegates to the National Assembly to be held February 9. The elections were held in orderly fashion, and the new Assembly met in Warsaw on February 10. The city was decorated in grand style for the occasion, the ceremonies having begun the preceding day with a solemn service at the cathedral. All the notables were present, and an elaborate parade followed to the Belvedere Palace, seat of the government, amid cheers and acclamations of the throngs that lined the streets. For the thousands of patriots who had so long endured foreign domination, this was truly a great day.

Thus Poland welcomed her first Parliament since the end of the Eighteenth Century and the first Parliament in a thousand years of national history to be based on popular elections. It was about equally divided between members of the Left and those of the Right.
But the mere establishment of a new government, one recognized throughout the world, was not the end of Poland's troubles. The tremendous struggle of the reconstruction period is suggested by Pilsudski's own words in a review of the accomplishments of the preceding six months.

Six months in a nation's life is a brief period, but we have accomplished much. We are building now for the future. I am convinced that the democratic and progressive foundations of our State will remain intact and will develop more and more strength, undisturbed by frictions growing out of political party differences. Poland will develop by evolution—not revolution.

There is no doubt that there will be many difficulties ahead of us, for we are constructing the new Poland from various sections of the country which have lived under different governments and different laws for one to two centuries. The economic situation is the most complex of our problems. The Russian, and then the German evacuation, bled the country of supplies, and every machine of any value was carried off.

Unemployment is another grave question. Temporary remedies are being tried, but a permanent plan for providing work for the people is very essential. The food situation, thanks to the United States, is no longer serious. From all present indications there will be a rich harvest.

We suffer from our inheritance from Russia. She did everything possible to transform Poland into a world ghetto, driving into our country all the Jews which Russia proper would not tolerate. She also left in the western region many discriminating laws against the Jews. I would like to call attention to the first step Poland has taken for the amelioration of the condition bequeathed to us. That is the provision which makes no exception as to religion or nationality in Polish laws. I am convinced that the democratic influence of our Government will do for the Jews what the other advanced Governments give outright by law, and that the Jewish question will be solved in the same broad spirit as has guided other nations in solving the same questions. . . . Especially must the schools which have been so long neglected be brought to a high degree of efficiency.11

11Ibid., p. 493.
The Assembly postponed Parliamentary elections and retained control of the government until November, 1922, although its main work of forming a constitution for the new Poland was completed in March, 1921.

The formulation of a feasible constitution, however, was not the only worry of the Poles after the World War hostilities had ceased. While their representatives were struggling at the Paris Peace Conference, Pilsudski was carrying on the military battle to protect the frontiers. The armistice of November, 1918 had provided for the evacuation of German troops from all territories formerly a part of Russia as soon as the Allies considered it desirable. They intended, however, to delay the removal, so that the troops would serve as a buffer against the Red army. As Germany withdrew its troops immediately, there was soon a Bolshevik invasion in the Baltic area. Shortly thereafter German control was again attempted, but Allied troops sent to Latvia once more eliminated the Germans.

In the spring of 1919 Pilsudski marched on Vilna, drove out the Bolsheviks, and issued a proclamation which revealed his desire for a voluntary federalism of the states carved out of Russia and led by Poland. Recurrent fighting between Polish, Lithuanian, and Bolshevik troops continued for some time. Pilsudski, meanwhile, had decided to launch an offensive against Eastern Galicia, although this plan
for territorial expansion displeased the members of the Peace Conference. A few months later, the Ukrainian army having been driven out of Galicia into the Russian Ukraine, Pilsudski launched another offensive, this time against the Soviet Ukraine. This task, however, was not so easy. The Ukrainian peasants disliked the Poles; and the troops in occupation were needed in the northern sector at the intended place of attack of the Russian army. Having defeated the counter-revolutionaries, this opposing government was now able to send hordes of soldiers against the troops of Pilsudski, who had recently spurned their request for the opening of peace negotiations.

The Bolsheviks took Vilna in their sweeping penetration into the heart of Poland. In a frantic appeal for help, Poland agreed to accept the decision of the Supreme Council at Spa in its insistence that Poland cease further conquest, if assistance would be sent. Russia's terms were most severe; the Czech and German governments refused to allow the transit of munitions; and the dockers in free Danzig, apparently in sympathy with Communism, were unwilling to unload munitions. With hope almost gone, Pilsudski decided to stand his ground, and was able to turn the enemy's flank outside of Warsaw. The retreating Bolsheviks were driven further into Russia by successful counter-attacks, and peace was made in the Treaty of Riga. This
victory of Warsaw was a critical one for Poland and perhaps for the world, as a Bolshevik triumph might easily have led to the spread of Communism throughout Central Europe.

Peace with Germany was in no wise assured. An article in the Literary Digest for February 12, 1921, stated that war between Germany and Poland was possible over the result of the coming plebiscite in Upper Silesia, where, of the 2,000,000 inhabitants, 1,162,000 spoke Polish and 683,000 spoke both Polish and German. Neither Germany nor Poland was willing to concede defeat in the results of the plebiscite. The Pan-Germans and the Pan-Poles were both waging a furious campaign, and the population of the entire region was kept in a state of agitation by both groups. A special correspondent of the Manchester Guardian in Germany described Upper Silesia as a battlefield where most of the fighting was done by two big armies of spies, agents, and propagandists, although occasionally physical force and intimidation were used as well.\(^\text{12}\) The same author stated that an enormous number of newspapers were being printed in this section in both German and Polish, and that in one town, Kattowitz, of about 70,000 population, there were more than forty newspapers. In Upper Silesia one could never be sure that any official or journalist had not been bought by one group or the other. With such intensity was this political

\(^{12}\text{Where Germany and Poland Clash" (author not given), Literary Digest, LVIII (February 12, 1921), 18.}
battle waged to influence the people, many of whom were highly excitable, superstitious, and ignorant, that war seemed inevitable regardless of the outcome of the vote. Both groups were either armed or had arms easily available. Numerous stores of German arms were found; the Polish arms were harder to find because most of them were concealed across the border in Poland.

In an article written by Cedric Fantleroy, who had been commander of the Kosciuszko Squadron—an entirely American unit of aviators who fought for Poland because they believed in the people and the idea of the Republic of Poland—is a vivid account of his experiences.

For eighteen months—most of them miserable, heart-breaking months—I have lived in the life of Poland and have fought for the existence of the New Republic side by side with Poles of all classes, provinces, and derivations. I have seen them in defeat and in victory, in war, disease, misery, starvation and play. I have dined with officers, diplomats, the intelligentsia, and the nobility. I have also billeted and eaten with peasants and workmen. I have dealt with bureaucrats and politicians, often with rage in my veins. I have frequently felt paralyzed before insurmountable difficulties placed in my way by those who should have helped to solve them. I have struggled with stupid, vain, and silly officials. All that is true, though it is only one side of the shield. Mentally and physically I have received the hard knocks that many others have received in trying to help the Polish nation in its years of trial.

... Alice in Wonderland could not have been more astounded than I when I came in contact with "liberal" and average intelligence in America on the subject of Poland.

There is inefficiency in Poland. There is strife among political parties. There is starvation, devastation, heartrending distress, thousands of
pitiful, underfed orphans, perhaps hundreds of thousands of cases of typhus. God only knows how much there is in Poland that is pitiful and pitiable. Nobody else can know. If the Polish nation and the Government which fairly represents that nation were responsible for these conditions, a paternal master should step in without delay and administer Poland as a dependency for humanitarian reasons. Under such conditions of responsibility a receiver should step in and liquidate the affairs of a nation bankrupt in finances, health, public morals, and national honor. Such conditions of responsibility do not exist. They never existed. The receivership is the course advocated by those who have a mote in the eye. . . .

There is inefficiency in Poland. In November, 1918, when Pilsudski returned to Poland and by edict and force expelled the remaining German and Austrian troops and officials, there was no government in Poland. The utter breakdown of defeat had already come. There was no army. There were only those few troops of Pilsudski's legions and the will of the disorganized mass of the Polish people. There was never a civilized country on earth that found itself in such utter chaos of law and the agencies of law, and utterly without central government, that by such heroic efforts maintained itself free from anarchy, rebellion, and general violence during a period of three months until a popular election could be held. . . . Despite the cumulative horrors of four years of World War and the terrible devastation caused by the Soviet forces last summer, Poland is today. Thirty million suffering people have, cut of utter chaos, maintained a government—a representative government—out of available human material and under heart-breaking conditions.13

There were within the country three sets of laws—German, Russian, and Austrian laws—and three different types of people who reflected in some way the manner of reaction caused by the oppression they had suffered for a hundred and twenty-five years. The immensity of the task of bringing these people together under one government and one constitution is easily understandable.

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13C. Fauntleroy, "There Is Poland," The Nation, CXII (January-June, 1921), 916.
The Constitution which was finally adopted after long discussion was based largely upon the French Constitution and that of the United States. No better example of the earnest desire of the Polish statesmen to establish a fair and just government can be found than that in the preamble of the Constitution itself:

In the name of God Almighty,
WE, THE POLISH NATION,

grateful to Providence for having delivered us from slavery lasting a century and a half;

remembering with gratitude the heroism and prowess shown by successive generations in their struggles, their sacrifices, their unsparing devotion and efforts in the cause of Independence;

mindful of the great traditions of the glorious Constitution of May the Third;

aiming at the welfare of our Motherland, united and independent, desirous of affirming its existence, its security and its power, of establishing a social order based on the eternal principles of right and freedom;

desiring to assure the development of all its forces, moral and material, for the supreme benefit of reviving humanity and of securing for all citizens of the Republic equality, respect for labor, recognition of all their rights, as well as individual protection by the State,

ENACT AND CONFORM THIS CONSTITUTION IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY TO THE POLISH REPUBLIC.14

The government consisted of three branches, as in the United States—legislative, executive, and judicial. It

14Corsi, Poland: Land of the White Eagle, p. 117.
provided for an upper house called the Senate, and a lower house called the Sejm. The lower house had the power to repass any bill over the veto of the upper house by a majority of eleven-twentieths. The members of the Right wanted to limit the powers of the executive as much as possible, but the Left group wanted a better balance of power between the legislative and executive branches of the government. The Right won out on constitutional issues, for the powers of the Sejm were elevated at the expense of the executive department. The Sejm could not be dissolved by the President without the consent of three-fifths of the Senate, in which case the Senate would be automatically dissolved. The President, elected for a term of seven years, was in command of the army in time of peace, but not in time of war.

This constitution was to be revised every twenty-five years. Thus Poland adopted a constitution for an advanced democracy, when she had not had the experience necessary to make it function smoothly from the start. The country lacked national unity and discipline, so essential to the success of any advanced democratic government. During the entire period of reconstruction Poland has had to combat the weakening effect of politically ambitious individuals in party politics, with the parliamentary intrigues, enmities, and muddled political tactics brought about by them.
So many factions arose that Pilsudski, resenting the limitations of the powers of the President and irritated by a struggle with the Sejm over the right of nominating cabinets, announced that while he was willing to remain as the head of the army, he would not be a candidate for the presidency in the elections of 1922, which were near at hand.

Gabriel Narutowicz was elected as Pilsudski's successor by the Senate and the Sejm, sitting together as the National Assembly. The new president was assassinated almost immediately after his election. This incident shocked the country, and fierce controversies arose in which the Peasant Party swayed between Left and Right; and no agreement could be reached concerning important financial and agrarian matters of state.

A new government was formed by Witos, leader of the Right-Centre group, and Pilsudski resigned as head of the army in May, 1923. In 1926 an anti-Pilsudski general was appointed Minister of War by a third Witos cabinet. This angered Pilsudski, who raised three regiments and marched on Warsaw. After three days of fighting, President Wojciechowski and Prime Minister Witos were forced to resign. This action taken by Pilsudski seems to have been based on the fear that his country was again drifting back into dangerous channels. At one time he had said:

Poland is the victim of her Parliamentary system. The Government loses nine-tenths of its force from the pacts made with party groups who,
however, support a Minister only so long as he fulfills the requests of the deputies.\textsuperscript{15}

Later Pilsudski called the Sejm (or Seym) "a sterile, jabbering, howling thing that engenders such boredom as makes the very flies die of sheer disgust," and declared it was like a "locomotive drawing a pin."\textsuperscript{16}

Soon after the coup d'etat of May, 1926, a new Bartel Cabinet was formed. A few days thereafter Pilsudski was elected President, but he declined, saying that he was not fitted for the role. He suggested in his place Ignace Moscicki, who was elected to the office and who made many improvements throughout the country, particularly along economic lines. A discussion of the economic changes will be found in the following chapter.

Although the Constitution of 1921 was still in force, at least on paper, a new constitutional law was passed in 1926 which gave the President the right to dissolve the Diet, as the legislative body was now called, and in a few cases to issue lawful decrees. He also was given the right to put the budget into effect if it should not have been approved by a certain date.

Meanwhile Paderewski, in his sincere, pacifistic efforts to unite the dissenting groups, found himself thwarted on all sides. The scheming politics directed against him reached a climax when, without his knowledge, the Speaker of

\textsuperscript{15}Buell, Poland: Key to Europe, p. 89.  
\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid}. 
the Sejm announced that the Prime Minister had resigned. Paderewski rushed to contradict the statement; but although he tried to rally the supporters of his cause, he was soon obliged to recognize the futility of his efforts, and he resigned officially. Then Pilsudski, sure of the other's permanent loss of any power that might threaten his own, asked him to become head of a Government, and agreed to all his suggestions about the formation of a new Cabinet. He knew, however, that the Prime Minister's following was definitely beyond recall; and Paderewski himself was forced to the conclusion that, after the sacrifice of about seven years of effort as well as the vast private fortune he had accumulated during the preceding twenty-five years, Poland had failed him utterly. Hurt and tired, he returned to Riond Bosson, his place in Switzerland on the shores of Lake Leman, where later he resumed practice for a return to concert work.

In October, 1926, Pilsudski became Prime Minister, retaining still his post as Minister of War. Many difficulties were encountered during the following years in the Polish government. Because of the large number of parties, there really existed a bloc system; and in the first twelve years of its organization the Republic had twenty-two ministries. Between 1928 and 1935 there were eight different ministries, all of which were controlled by Pilsudski.
Another new constitution was adopted in 1935, which put an end to parliamentary democracy. There were 104 electoral constituencies, and the Sejm was to be made up of two members from each of these. Candidates were to be nominated by local councils, chambers of commerce, and other such organizations, and were to be approved by special electoral boards. Deputies were to be elected for periods of five years by the vote of citizens over twenty-four years of age. The Senate was to be made up of ninety-six members, one-third of whom should be appointed by the president, and two-thirds elected by citizens over thirty who had achieved success along civil or military lines. The Senate was to have equal rights with the Sejm except in the matter of initiating bills. The chief executive was made largely independent of parliament, and was given a suspensive veto power. He could appoint or dismiss ministers or summon or dismiss the Sejm and the Senate as he desired.

The following comment appeared in a 1935 publication:

It has been rumored in Warsaw that, after nearly ten years of self-imposed exile, ex-Premier Ignace Paderewski will return to the land which he served so conspicuously in early post-war years. It is felt, furthermore, that the government sorely needs the advice and guidance he might give. Marshal Pilsudski long ago abandoned speaking and writing, and while his hand is still on the helm, it is growing feebler and the country conspicuously lacks a strong moral figure.

... Whether M. Paderewski will set foot again on his native soil will be for him to say. The last time he did so, in 1924, the parties of the Left—the present rulers—did not want him, and the parties of the Right did not come out openly
for him. . . . If Paderewski does return, some of his friends say, it will be to demand restoration of a constitutional system, of parliamentary government and of civil liberty, together with a foreign policy more in accord with the country's international obligations and interests.\textsuperscript{17}

On May 12, 1935, Marshal Pilsudski died; but he had already provided for a "constitutional dictatorship" to continue in Poland long after he himself let fall the reins controlling the affairs of his country.

Thus we realize that only after years of courageous fighting, literally and figuratively, was Poland able to weather the storms of reconstruction and emerge as a world power, to whose capital at Warsaw the other Great Powers sent their ambassadors and with whom other powerful nations readily entered into alliances. Having won for herself a seat on the League of Nations, and having established her frontiers, code of laws, army, and administration, she made consistent efforts to maintain the peace of Europe, as may be seen by the foreign policy she adopted.

Poland's foreign policy has been one principally governed by history and geography. The country lies between two great totalitarian powers, and could be crushed by their conflicting ambitions. A localized war against either Russia or Germany could hardly end other than disastrously for the Poles.

\textsuperscript{17}Ogg, "Poland's Struggle for Solvency," \textit{Current History}, XLI (October 1934--March 1935), 496.
Polish foreign policy is based on the principle of "balance." This principle is applied with two objectives in mind: to obtain outside assistance in case of attack by either Russia or Germany; and to keep Russia and Germany apart. For should these two powers either clash or form an alliance, Polish independence would be jeopardized.\textsuperscript{18}

In order to preserve this "balance," Poland has entered into various alliances, the early sanctions being designed particularly to create a general European system which would underwrite Poland's frontiers. The first of these was the Alliance of 1921 with France. This Franco-Polish Entente was a bombshell that caused much discussion in European diplomatic circles. Prince Sapieha, Poland's Foreign Minister, assured the newspapers that it was for the purpose of promoting peace and good relations with her neighbors, and of securing a stability that would enable Poland to progress, especially along economic lines. But others denounced this economic, military, and political agreement consummated by Pilsudski during his visit to Paris as secret diplomacy intended to keep Russia and Germany in their places. Still others expressed the opinion that imperialist France chiefly counted upon Poland's military aid for the realization of her old dream of the encirclement and suffocation of Germany, instead of as a safeguard to her own security and to the peace of Europe.

Poland also concluded an alliance with Rumania in 1921.

\textsuperscript{18}Guell, \textit{Poland: Key to Europe}, p. 321.
In this agreement each promised to give the other armed assistance. Several months later Foreign Minister Skirmut of Poland and Foreign Minister Benes of Czechoslovakia signed a treaty of friendship at Prague. In 1926 Poland was given a semi-permanent seat on the League Council. A non-aggression pact with Russia, made in 1932, did not bring permanent hope of eliminating the Communist threat, for in 1934 France entered the so-called Eastern Pact with Russia, and the latter joined in the same year the League of Nations. France and Czechoslovakia concluded their alliance with Russia in 1935. The threat of Polish transit in case of Russian assistance to the Czechs was of no small significance to Poland.

Russian aggression in the Baltic no longer seems to be an issue; but Russia and the Baltic countries alike have seen the threat of German aggression, with Lithuania as a possible objective. The weakening of the Russian position is desirable to Poland, but the danger of domination by Germany would be correspondingly strengthened. Cognizant of the ill feeling existing over Danzig, the Corridor, and Upper Silesia, and of the rising power of Germany, Pilsudski concluded, in 1934, the famous non-aggression agreement with Germany's Adolf Hitler, which was to base their relations on the principles contained in the Pact of Paris of August 27, 1928, and to reach direct understandings on mutual problems of their relations, in no case, however, resorting to force
in order to settle such questions under dispute. This declaration was to remain in effect for ten years, and was to continue if neither side gave notice of its termination six months before or after the expiration of this period of time. Poland, thus casting off its semi-colonial status, was recognized as a great power. Thus dispelling the bitterness formerly existing between Poland and the German Republic, and demonstrating its complete independence of France, "it now became an object of solicitation on the part of all Europe."\(^{19}\) Poland, indeed, was a nation unto herself.

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\(^{19}\)Euell, \textit{Poland: Key to Europe}, p. 332.
CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC REBIRTH OF POLAND

The economic problems facing the reborn country at the end of the World War were difficult, particularly in view of world economic conditions during this period. Roman Gorecki, Polish author and president of the National Economic Bank of Warsaw, describes thus the economic losses of the war:

The statistics of war show a total loss by fire of over 1,800,000 buildings in cities, towns, and villages, valued at over 1,500,000 gold francs. Just before the evacuation of Poland by the occupying Powers, nearly 11 million acres of agricultural land were put out of use. The losses in livestock amounted to 2 million head of cattle, 1 million horses, and 1,500,000 sheep and goats. Within the area of war operations were included about 15 million acres of forests, of which nearly 6 million acres were totally destroyed and devastated by alien armies, who removed 4,661 million cubic feet of timber from the country. The industries of the former Congress Kingdom were in total collapse. The textile industry centered round Lodz and Bialystok suffered most, because, apart from the destruction of factory buildings, it was denuded of machinery and plant, raw materials and stocks of manufactured goods. The foundry and mining industries as well as the metallurgical industry were completely immobilized; and great losses were suffered by the oil industry in South-Eastern Poland. In industry particularly the destruction was caused not only by direct military operations but by a deliberate devastation put into practice by the occupying Powers, by their requisitions, expropriations, high forced contributions, and the loss of large sums due to Polish exporters for pre-war supplies to Russia.
By way of example, it may be mentioned that there were removed from Poland 4,259 electrical motors and engines, 3,844 tooling machines, and 98,000 tons of factory equipment. The total losses of industry have been estimated at 10,000 million gold francs. The railway rolling-stock of former Russian Poland was completely removed during the evacuation of Poland by the Russian armies. One-half of the bridges, station buildings, and railway workshops were totally destroyed. 1

The United States afforded some measure of relief to the hosts of homeless Polish refugees whose own country was threatened with disease.

The problem of unifying the economic and monetary systems in the various sections of Poland was a major task. At the end of the war there were seven different worthless paper currencies in circulation, and there was no gold reserve. The main sources of revenue--agriculture, industries, and commerce--were partly or completely ruined by the war, and were in a state of complete disorganization.

The financial situation was made more serious by the fact that for two years after the close of the World War, Poland had to continue fighting for her territorial boundaries. This conflict kept the national treasury depleted. Prior to 1921 nothing of importance was done to check expenditure and inflation. Several attempts to improve financial conditions were made, but these were unsuccessful; they seemed too drastic for the existing chaos.

1 Roman Gorecki, Poland and Her Economic Development, pp. 21-22.
It was not until 1924 that any significant financial improvement occurred. Temporary relief was secured by the funding of Poland's debts to the United States and Great Britain in 1924 and by the successful floating of another American loan of thirty-five million dollars in 1925. The Polish government, meanwhile, passed laws stabilizing the currency (1924). The zloty replaced the old Polish mark. Many reforms in the administration of finance were made, and in the same year the Bank of Poland was established.

This Bank of Poland was a private joint-stock company with a capital of a hundred million zlotys. The bank was given the privilege of issuing notes, while the minting of gold, silver, and token coins remained the sole right of the Treasury. The great deficiency of revenue from which the national treasury suffered during the post-inflation economic crisis was made still more acute by the crop failures of 1924 and the fact that at about this time Germany stopped her purchases of the Polish-Silesian coal which had been of great economic importance to the country. These conditions necessitated a considerable increase in imports, which in turn further emptied the Polish Treasury. This led to the collapse of the rate of the zloty, which depreciated considerably, finally falling to one-half of its par value.

At this time the Polish government, under the leadership of Skrzynski, invited Edwin W. Kemmerer of Princeton
University in America to study the financial conditions in Poland and to make recommendations or suggestions for improvements. The Pilsudski dictatorship, again coming into power in 1926, confirmed this invitation; and the Kemmerer Commission, after studying the situation for about two weeks, made some sweeping recommendations, many of which were adopted.

Jan Ciechanowski acknowledged, in his address at the joint celebration of Armistice Day and the tenth anniversary of the independence of Poland, the valuable assistance and advice of American economic experts.

For the last three years Poland has sought American advice on matters of finance and economics. On the invitation of the Polish Government, Americans of the highest standing and authority have studied and reported upon the financial and economic conditions of Poland. They have made suggestions and given valuable advice which has been followed with marked success.

American methods of efficiency are being adopted by Polish industries. We have likewise had the benefit of American expert advice on railroad transportation in the years following the war. American capital has been and is coming into Poland and helping to develop the vast natural resources of the country.²

In 1926 the British coal strike caused an increased demand for Polish coal. Also in the same year the crops were good. These events, with the application of sounder monetary principles, greatly improved the economic conditions of Poland.

²Jan Ciechanowski, Poland, Factor of Peace and Progress, p. 7.
In October, 1927, a foreign stabilization loan of seventy million dollars, most of which was issued in the United States, was arranged with a group of leading American banks. Charles S. Dewey, then Assistant Secretary of the United States Treasury, was invited by the Bank of Poland to become one of the elected directors of the bank and to act as permanent advisor on matters of finance relating to the application of the stabilization loan.

A law was passed, also in October, 1927, for the establishment of the zloty at the parity-level of 8.91 zlotys to one dollar; and from that time the zloty remained a fully stabilized currency based on the parity to gold of 1 kg. (1000 grams) of gold to 5,924.44 zlotys, which made the gold value of the zloty equivalent to 11.22 cents. Also, the Bank of Poland was obligated to exchange notes for gold.

After the introduction of the new gold parity currency in 1924, a number of banks which had been established and had operated only because of the conditions of the inflation era closed their doors. The remaining banks, which had sound foundations, quickly recovered and increased their capital resources as well as their activities. This banking recovery was temporarily interrupted by the collapse of the zloty in 1925, but progress again resumed a steady pace with the passage of the stabilization laws.

Since Poland was a great agricultural country, the depression that began in 1929 was a distinct blow to her
economic progress. In spite of the strenuous efforts of her leaders, the year 1930-1931 closed with a deficit of 63,000,000 zlotys. However, reserves accumulated from preceding years were sufficient to cover this. From the fiscal year 1932-1933, the expenditures exceeded the revenues, until in 1934 the deficit reached 337,300,000 zlotys. The following year (1934-1935), determined effort and careful planning reduced this deficit to 61,100,000 zlotys. This marked a turning-point in Polish economic life, and this valiant nation was again on the road to economic prosperity.

The Polish budget for 1935-1936 was outlined early in November at a meeting of the representatives of the Non-Partisan Bloc of Cooperation with the Cabinet. Expenditures were estimated at 2,132,861,600 zlotys and revenues at 1,983,743,700, leaving a deficit of about 150,000,000 zlotys. Of the contemplated expenditures, 761,000,000 zlotys—more than a third of the total—was allotted to the Ministry of War.

The struggle with the deficit, Premier Leon Kozlowski explained, is being carried on "steadily and obstinately," and with appreciable success. In 1933-1934, the shortage was 337,000,000 zlotys; in the current fiscal year, 223,000,000. In coming years, it was predicted, the sums will be found cut down, until in the near future a balance will be achieved. Only by further reducing the salaries of government employees or by sharply curtailing the public services, to the impairment of the country's cultural level and international position, could a balanced budget have been attained for the coming year. Such measures the government did not deem justifiable. The prospective deficit, it was promised, will in no way affect the currency nor the gold standard.3

Poland's foreign debts were small compared with those of other countries; and they have since been gradually decreasing, partly because of the payment of redemption installments, and partly because of the fall of foreign currencies. Most of the foreign obligations assumed by the government have been met promptly.

As the economic life of the country began to improve, a great need arose for an adequate system of long-term credit to tide the Polish people over the first years of the reconstruction period. In the solution of this problem the support and the direct monetary assistance of the State was needed. Three financial institutions were set up: the National Economic Bank, the State Land Bank, and the Post Office Savings Bank.

The National Economic Bank was the most important of the State credit institutions, and was established in 1924 by the amalgamation of three existing State banks. Thus waste of resources was avoided, and the centralization of the financial aid to the economic life of the country was made possible. This bank was given the widest possible scope. It made long-term loans, covered by mortgages, for all types of economic expansion and development in municipal, agricultural, and industrial enterprises. Within ten years the National Economic Bank became the greatest financial institution in Poland. Its capital had increased from 35,000,000 zlotys to 150,000,000; and the reserve capital
had reached 71,000,000. The total credits granted by the
Bank by January 1, 1935, amounted to 1,882,000,000 zlotys.
Of this total, 807,000,000 was in long-term credits granted
in mortgaged bonds and obligations, and the balance was
lent in cash in medium- and long-term loans. The greatest
amount of credits went to the building industry. Next in
order came the local government authorities. The under-
takings included many metallurgic and chemical concerns,
among which were the Potash Salts Marketing Company, the
Starachowice Mining and Smelting Company, and the Chemical
Industry Boruta Company.

Agriculture received a very small share of the credits
from the National Economic Bank of Poland because of the
special institution established for dealing with agricul-
tural credit. This was the State Land Bank, which was
created to finance the reconstruction of the agricultural
system and to help the farmers. The total amount of long-
term loans granted by the State Land Bank by 1934 was
284,000,000 zlotys, of which 173,000,000 was granted in the
form of mortgage bonds issued for the purchase of land and
for various other agricultural investments. One hundred
and eleven million zlotys were allocated to land improve-
ment obligations. During the same ten-year period, this
bank also granted short-term and medium-term credits to the
extent of 288,000,000 zlotys.
Besides these credit duties, the State Land Bank also was in charge of the subdivision of the large estates, to be discussed later in the chapter. Thus this financial institution bettered the economic conditions of the agricultural class—a class which comprised sixty-four per cent of the people and which held nearly sixty-eight per cent of the total area of the country.

The third State financial institution established during the early years of the Republic was the Post Office Savings Bank. Its chief purpose was to encourage popular thrift. Credit operations were of secondary importance and were carried on only in order to earn the necessary interest on deposits. The savings deposits in the bank showed a steady increase during the first ten years, and by 1934 had reached a total of 624,000,000 zlotys. Also, the deposits on checking accounts amounted during this period to 234,000,000 zlotys. Thus the Post Office Savings Bank did much to aid the progress of economic life during the period following the World War.

These three institutions were assisted by many smaller banks and cooperative credit organizations established throughout the country.

Agriculture is the dominant branch of the economic life of Poland, and is the occupation of two-thirds of her people. Faced with agrarian chaos at the close of the war,
the Polish Government set about to better conditions by three means: (1) the redistribution of peasant holdings, (2) land reform, and (3) the drainage of six million acres of waste marsh land in Eastern Poland.

It had been an old Polish custom for a man to divide his farm equally among his children. In this way a large farm became several smaller farms, varying in size with the number of children in the family. In the case of different kinds of land, such as fertile fields, timber lands, and barren sections, each type had to be divided, for the sake of fairness to the children. As a result, the farms of each were small and might be widely scattered. From generation to generation, as the heirs divided their holdings among their children and as the farms became smaller and smaller, the number of scattered fields held by each man increased. Even the nobles were poor and their farms were small. A tremendous loss of time was entailed by the moving of plows and other machinery from one strip of land to another. At the beginning of Polish reconstruction there were a million and a half of these farms with widely scattered and badly shaped fields. In some parts of the country one man might have a dozen pieces of land—in some cases, fifty or even a hundred pieces. One man's farm was broken up into two hundred pieces, although its total extent was but seventy-five acres. It was impossible to manage or to operate such a farm successfully.
After the war the Socialists and the radical peasants clamored for the breaking up of the large estates and the redistribution of land in order that they might support their families. The correction of this situation resulting from ill management was one of the first steps taken by the new Polish government. In 1925 an act was passed for the gradual redistribution of farm lands. Twenty-four million acres were involved; and by 1935 more than seven million acres were rearranged under a government program which was to continue the redistribution at the rate of half a million acres a year. Most of this was done voluntarily by the people, who were allowed to make land payments partly in cash and partly in bonds. The redistribution and land valuations were made under the supervision of agricultural commissions which facilitated agrarian reconstruction.

The second plan of the government to better agricultural conditions was a program of land reforms. This was to be achieved by changing the two extremes of farms—the very large and the very small. Half a million acres per year were to be taken from the large estates and sold to the peasants. The money was to be paid to the owners, half in cash and the balance within a fifteen-year period. The amount of land which the original owner was allowed to keep depended on its location and value. Peasants who did not have the cash to pay for the land they wanted could secure a loan from a state fund at a reasonable rate of interest.
In the eastern part of Poland were about six million acres of waste, marsh land too wet to grow crops, and with grass too bitter for animals to eat. The third part of the government's economic plan concerned the drainage and reclamation of this waste region and the encouragement of its settlement. By 1935 half a million colonists had settled in this reclaimed area. The government offered many inducements, such as large grants of land, or loans to be paid back within fifteen years, for the building of homes in the sector. The Ministry of Agriculture even worked out building and landscaping plans for the homes and gardens, and furnished all directions for putting these plans into effect. The Ministry also studied materials best suited to the needs of the people to live in this area, and advised them as to the most economical use of these materials. Many who settled here were ex-soldiers who came from all parts of the country, some of them exchanging their old farms for new ones.

New methods of agricultural production were introduced by government officials for the betterment of agrarian conditions, and Polish agriculture was again started on its way toward economic success. By 1935 Poland was one of the greatest producers and exporters of grain in Europe. Cereals were more important than livestock. This country alone produced fourteen per cent of the world's rye—being
exceeded only by Russia and Germany—and fifteen per cent of
the world's potatoes. The following table shows the annual
crops of the most important cereals from 1909 to 1934:

**TABLE 1**

ANNUAL CROPS OF POLAND'S MOST IMPORTANT CEREALS, 1909-1934

(In Million Hundredweights)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wheat</th>
<th>Rye</th>
<th>Barley</th>
<th>Oats</th>
<th>Potatoes</th>
<th>Beetroot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1909-13*</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>247.9</td>
<td>41.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924-28*</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>246.3</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-33*</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>303.9</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>317.5</td>
<td>49.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>309.0</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>309.9</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>299.7</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>283.3</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>334.7</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Annual average.

While many improvements had been made in the field of
agriculture, many sections of the country in 1934 were still
backward, and marketing facilities were inadequate.

In the absence of commission houses, the urban
population buys its food direct from the peasants.
Land prices are amazingly high. Within a radius of
fifty miles of Warsaw, it is difficult to find good
land costing less than two hundred dollars an acre.
Very few of the rural inhabitants have cars. A
Ford car costs about two thousand dollars, and
gasoline is fifty cents a gallon. At this time

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4Roman Corecki, *Poland and Her Economic Development*, p. 77.
Poland, with a population of thirty-three million, has only about thirty thousand motor cars and this number has been decreasing.\(^5\)

In the world production and trade of various agricultural commodities for 1934, Poland stood fifth in the breeding of pigs, with 7,082,000 head; eighth in the raising of horned cattle, with 2,253,000 head; and fifth in the raising of horses, with 3,782,000 head. Here also were produced 2,554,000 head of sheep. With the production of 344,000 tons of sugar, of which 100,000 tons were exported, this country ranked sixth in the world production of beet sugar.

The average productions of agricultural crops in Poland in 1939 are shown by the following table.\(^6\)

**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVERAGE CROPS IN POLAND IN 1939</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar beets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Poland's average production of sugar was about 500,000 tons. In afforestation the country occupied sixth place in Europe in 1935. With an area of 19,800,000 acres, her


\(^6\)Polish Institute for Collaboration with Foreign Countries, *Did You Know That?*, p. 18.
annual timber output amounted to 760,000,000 cubic feet. Her highest peak in the export of timber was reached in 1927, when she shipped out 6,426,000 tons. The development of the lumber industry has led to the growth of furniture manufacturing and of those related trades requiring lumber as raw material.

While Poland is primarily an agricultural country, industry also holds an important place in the life of her people, employing approximately one-tenth of the men. The three main industrial centers are: Lodz, in textiles; Upper Silesia, in mining; and the oil country in southeastern Poland near Borysław and Drohobycz. In 1918 the textile center had been idle for years. Thousands of the machines had been damaged, destroyed, or carried away; and the Poles determinedly set to work to restore or replace them—one of their greatest achievements. Old mills were repaired or rebuilt, and new ones were erected. Modern methods of production brought improvements both in quantity and in quality of goods. New branches of the business were established, such as the silk industry. Textile expansion is reflected in Table 3.\(^7\) Three artificial silk factories were established during this period, and many developments were made in dyeing, always an industry closely related to textile production.

\(^7\) Gorecki, op. cit., p. 92.
TABLE 3
MACHINERY EMPLOYED IN TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN 1935

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Spindles</th>
<th>Looms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>1,817,000</td>
<td>47,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollen</td>
<td>777,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jute</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linen</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>....</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reconstruction period following the World War brought for the first time the establishment of rubber manufacturing in Poland. Within a few years not only was the domestic demand supplied, but also there was a great quantity for export. Among other manufactures of Poland that have progressed considerably since the War are brick, cement, glass, paper, clothing, leather, and lace. In 1933 about fifty per cent of the workers in the textile mills were women.

After the smoke of battle had cleared, the vitally important mines, blast furnaces, and factories of Upper Silesia were in ruins, and had to be restored before they could be of help in the economic reconstruction of Poland. That this restoration did take place is evident from the observation that in 1935 "the tall factory chimneys are thick as trees in a forest."\(^8\) This section of the country

\(^8\)Grace Humphrey, *Poland Today*, p. 98.
is rich in deposits of coal, iron, lead, and zinc. After intense effort and perseverance Upper Silesia once again had its rightful place of importance in the economic welfare of the country.

Coal-mining reached its highest level in 1929 and its lowest in 1933. This decline was caused by the contraction of both the domestic and the export market. The production and sales of coal are shown in the following table.

**TABLE 4**

**POLISH PRODUCTION AND SALES OF COAL, 1925-1934**

(000's omitted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Sales on the Home Market</th>
<th>Exports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>29,081</td>
<td>17,168</td>
<td>8,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>35,747</td>
<td>17,642</td>
<td>14,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>38,084</td>
<td>22,195</td>
<td>11,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>40,016</td>
<td>23,561</td>
<td>13,407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>46,238</td>
<td>27,123</td>
<td>14,371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>37,511</td>
<td>20,292</td>
<td>12,811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>38,265</td>
<td>19,042</td>
<td>14,326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>26,885</td>
<td>15,125</td>
<td>10,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>27,339</td>
<td>15,261</td>
<td>9,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>29,233</td>
<td>15,784</td>
<td>10,408</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The losses in Central European export trade after 1935 were compensated by gains in trade to western and southern Europe. The advance made was due largely to the superiority of the product and to the technical progress and the growth

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9Gorecki, op. cit., p. 85.
in ability to organize and manage industry during this period of reconstruction.

Considerable growth was made also in the production of steel and pig iron. In 1928-1929, there came from Polish mills 700,000 tons of pig iron and 1,400,000 tons of steel, a large part of which was exported. During the depression this industry showed a decline; but a rise occurred during 1933 and 1934. This upward tendency continued steadily until 1939. In the world production of zinc, Poland was third in 1935. Between 1936 and 1939 Polish production of coal increased from 30,000,000 tons to 38,000,000 tons; of steel, from 1,100,000 tons to 1,400,000 tons; of zinc, from 93,000 tons to 103,000 tons; of cement, from 1,100,000 tons to 1,720,000 tons; and the production of other commodities showed proportionate increases.

In recent years there has been a corresponding growth in the country's metal manufactures, such as locomotives, motor-cars, airplanes, bicycles, motor-cycles, all types of tools and engines, typewriters, and various other products.

Close to the southeastern frontier is the oil country. The development of this region has been another achievement of the resurrested Poland. This section is hilly and is thickly dotted with tall, weatherbeaten, wooden structures which protect the drilling machinery. The houses in these oil settlements are usually small, one-story cottages—in reality, shacks. They are often torn down or moved within
a few years, as old wells run too low in production to make their maintenance profitable and new wells are drilled in other localities. Drohobycz, a refinery town, appears in marked contrast to the small communities where the wells are actually located. In 1925 its population was approximately forty thousand, and its streets were clean and its homes well-kept. The oil was piped from Borysław to the refineries of Drohobycz, where ten or twelve different grades of oil were produced, the highest type being used in airplanes. The largest oil refinery in Europe was owned by the Polish government. To this huge plant came the peasants with the unrefined oil which they received as rent for the land leased to the various companies for their operations.

Because of the importance of agriculture to the economic life of the country, the availability of inexpensive, satisfactory fertilizers was a vital consideration. During the period of rebirth and growth, the government met this need, at the same time saving millions of zlotys annually, by building an immense chemical fertilizer plant at Moscice, near Parnow. It covered fifteen hundred acres and included fifty buildings. Construction of the plant, employing six thousand workers, was begun in the spring of 1928, and work was continued day and night until its completion. Exactly eighteen months later the sale of nitrogen fertilizers began. The method used in the production of the fertilizers was originated by Ignace Moscicki, who was formerly a
professor of chemistry in Switzerland and who was made President of Poland in 1926 upon Pilsudski's recommendation.

Production in this factory is carried on day and night. The men work in eight-hour shifts, changing every week. All of the labor is done by machine; even the coal is put into the furnace automatically. In the plant there are approximately seven hundred electric motors. The workers watch and control the gauges. Much water is required; but after it has been used it is cleaned and cooled in tall tanks, and is used over and over again.

The process by which the nitrogen fertilizer is made is that of taking hydrogen from air by means of heat, of taking nitrogen from air by means of cold, and heating and then cooling the hydrogen and nitrogen to form ammonia; this, heated with platinum, yields nitric acid, to which is then added phosphorite for one type of fertilizer and limestone for another. In all there are five different kinds of fertilizers made here. The daily output (with the lowest possible production cost) has reached as much as two hundred carloads. By 1934 production in this plant averaged about 120,000 tons per year, about half of which was exported. This industry has been entirely created and developed by the post-war government of the new Poland.

The wonderful progress along economic lines made by this stalwart country after the War is also reflected in the growth and development of her transportation facilities and
those of communication. The most important means of transportation in Poland is the railway. By 1934 the total length of railroad lines amounted to 11,250 miles of normal gauge and 2,227 miles of narrow gauge. Of this, 823 miles had been constructed since the war, and practically all of the remainder had necessarily been rebuilt after the destruction occasioned by the fighting. One of the most important railways extends from Silesia to Gdynia, and is the chief route connecting the industrial and mining districts with the Baltic Sea. During the reconstruction period, a great increase in the number of locomotives and cars was made. Poland had 5,400 locomotives, 12,000 passenger cars, and 160,000 freight cars by the end of 1934. In 1939 the Polish State Railways had the lowest rate of accidents on the continent.

Transportation by motor car shows less expansion than other means of conveyance, because of the lack of adequate roads and the inability of the government to finance a wide road-building program and to carry on the other improvements simultaneously. In 1934 there were only 35,173 registered motor-cars in the country. In 1933 there were in operation 1,741 motor omnibuses which covered 13,125 miles of roads, thereby supplementing the railways as a means of conveyance.

Air transportation was established in 1922. By 1934 the Polish Air Lines L.O.T. maintained regular local transportation service between the principal cities, as well as
routes between seven different foreign countries. During that year 6,793 flights were made, covering 1,071,875 miles, and carrying 18,301 passengers. The Polish air line from Helsingfors to Beyrouth via Warsaw and Athens was the longest in Europe. The airplanes used in the maintenance of this service were made in the factories of the Central Industrial Region, the monthly production being estimated in 1939 at about three hundred machines. The Polish Air Force was estimated as consisting of 2,500 planes, and of 20,000 reserve pilots. At that time the Polish League of Air Defense maintained 100 flying schools and over 400 training aircraft, besides hundreds of gliding and soaring centers for training.

Postal and telegraphic communications also made rapid advances after 1919. By 1933 there were 4,171 post offices and 4,770 telegraph offices. The total length of telegraph lines was 16,750 miles, and that of telephone long-distance cables was 21,000 miles. By 1939 the country had over one million registered wireless listeners.

Also in 1939, Poland had one of the most powerful radio broadcasting stations in all Europe—the Warsaw Radio Station of 158-kilowatt power. The Polish Broadcasting Company had ten medium- and long-wave stations and several short-wave transmitters.

Foreign trade has shown a continuous growth and expansion since the rebirth of the Republic. The export trade
is based on highly developed agricultural production and the rich resources of industrial raw materials which are sent out either as raw materials or as semi-manufactured goods. In addition, a marked rise in the export of manufactured goods has accompanied the progress of the revitalized industries throughout the country. Table 5 shows the value, in million zlotys, of the foreign trade between 1926 and 1934, with the surplus or deficit for each year.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Total Turnover</th>
<th>Surplus or Deficit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>1,539</td>
<td>2,246</td>
<td>3,785</td>
<td>-707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>2,892</td>
<td>2,615</td>
<td>5,407</td>
<td>-377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>3,353</td>
<td>2,508</td>
<td>5,870</td>
<td>-854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>3,111</td>
<td>2,563</td>
<td>5,674</td>
<td>-298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>2,246</td>
<td>2,433</td>
<td>4,679</td>
<td>-178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>1,468</td>
<td>1,879</td>
<td>3,347</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>1,084</td>
<td>1,946</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>827</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>1,787</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>799</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>1,774</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus it was that the economic rebirth and growth of Poland progressed with that of her national life. For the first ten years this progress was very rapid.

A Polish National Exposition was held at Poznan in 1929, giving a fairly accurate idea of her progress since the end of the War. It was much more

10Gorecki, op. cit., p. 98.
than an exposition. It was an epoch-making event in the history of Poland. It showed her progress during the past ten years. It was a monument of her achievement and a forecast of her future. It was a source of exhibition of her great agricultural resources and her industrial development. It showed the rapid growth of her trade and commerce through her railroads and her ports. Her universities, colleges, and schools were represented, showing the exalted value she places on learning and education. The area covered by the Exposition buildings was almost as large as that covered by the British Exhibition at Wembley, and, unlike the latter, it did not have a deficit; it paid expenses. More than four and a half million people visited the Poznan Exposition, of whom three hundred thousand were foreigners. Their pleasure and delight were evident and for the first time many of them beheld the greatness of Poland.\(^{11}\)

A check to this economic progress was caused by the depression of 1929, from which another recovery was well begun by 1933. After that time Poland's economic life was well on the way to still greater achievements than had ever before been realized.

\(^{11}\)Corsi, Poland: Land of the White Eagle, p. 154.
CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL REBIRTH OF POLAND

The social conditions existing in Poland at the close of the War were pitiful in the extreme. Before the war, the freeing of the serfs had caused the rapid growth of the middle class. Approximately one-third of this group was composed of the impoverished old nobility, of professional men, and of commercial and business workers. The other two-thirds was composed chiefly of the peasants who were freed from serfdom. In the minds of most of the Poles for years had been the idea that they would probably some day have to die for the freedom of their native land; instead, they now had to learn to live for their country. At the close of the war the population of Poland was 27,000,000; and the plight of the great masses of peasants, thousands of whom were homeless and starving, made the problem of social reconstruction a tremendous one. Swarming over the country in distressingly large numbers were children sick and orphaned by the war, and wretched men and women, many of whom were horribly crippled. Thousands were destitute of sufficient food, clothing, or shelter. Their homes, buildings, bridges, and means of transportation and communication, as well as their means of livelihood, had been ruthlessly
destroyed, both in the course of battle and in the deliberate destruction ensuing.

The social needs of the people of the reborn Poland far exceeded the capacity of private welfare agencies to meet them. The new government, recognizing this fact, promptly initiated a program for the relief and betterment of the urgent social conditions of its people.

With practically everything needing reconstruction, the Poles, much to their credit, decided that the first thing to do was to build schools. Illiteracy was appalling; most of the schoolhouses were in ruins; there were almost no Polish textbooks; and few teachers were available. Soon after the new Republic was recognized, Pilsudski, assisted by Paderewski and other able Polish leaders, began a study of the various educational systems of other countries. The American school system furnished the foundation for the new educational institutions in the land.

The educational plan adopted by the Polish government provided for every child a seven-year period of elementary-school training, to be followed by four years in the gymnasmum (high school), two years in the lyceum (vocational-industrial school); and still further training at the university. This determined, the government then set out to plan, erect, and standardize schools, to work out courses of study, and to establish training schools for teachers. Compulsory
elementary education was guaranteed, and child labor was prohibited by the constitution.

The prudence thus manifested by the government was an important factor in the rebuilding of Poland. Within a few years ten thousand elementary school rooms were constructed, and the building program still continued. The percentage of children in schools increased in 1929 from sixty-six to ninety-three. This increase included the children in the area which was formerly Russian Poland and in which, even at that time, only nineteen per cent attended school. Also, during this period the number of children had increased by two million. By 1939 the population of the country was thirty-five million.

The cost of this educational system was met in part by the government and in part directly by the people. In most cases the peasants gave the land, and the Ministry of Education in Warsaw drew the plans and lent needed money (sometimes as much as 10,000 zlotys) for a period of ten years, without interest. The county, or "Powiat," as it was called, usually gave a thousand zlotys, several thousand bricks, and the mortar constituents, and lent the balance of the money needed. If extra bricks had to be bought, they were purchased by the peasants at cost. The work was done without charge by the fathers of the children of the villages. Teams and tools needed for the construction of the buildings were provided by the workers themselves. This
harmonious cooperation between people and government for the welfare of their country produced amazing results in the schools.

In a typical public school in a suburb of Warsaw the children attended in two shifts: one thousand students from 8 A.M. until 1 P.M., and the second shift of one thousand from 1 P.M. until 6 P.M. This arrangement was made temporarily because of the still inadequate educational facilities. Two rooms at the end of the hall were for the use of the morning students who wished to study in the afternoon, and vice versa. Near the entrance of the building were the coat-rooms, where each child had a hook with a bag for his street clothes. Inside the school building the children all wore felt slippers, because they were cleaner, more quiet, and more hygienic for the feet of the growing boys and girls.

There were flowers growing in every window. All the classrooms had lighting from the left, and movable blackboards that could be placed higher or lower. A workshop for the boys; a kitchen and dining-room where the older girls prepare and serve breakfast to the youngsters who don't get it at home—at a cost of a cent and a half; a natural history room with an aquarium, stuffed birds, plants pressed or growing; an assembly hall that could be used for meetings, for motion pictures, for athletics; shower baths in the basement; the dentist's room—two thousand patients are enough to keep him busy (no time lost from lessons to go for these appointments); near by the rooms of the doctor, the nurse, and the women psychologist who makes a special study of the abnormal youngsters who don't fit in with their groups—all these things the Pole
took for granted, saying this school was not a shining exception, that as rapidly as people with the right training are available they'll have them everywhere.¹

Great stress was placed on the physical fitness of the student; and gymnasium rooms were furnished with ample facilities for physical training and exercise, and were equipped with shower rooms.

Rapid progress in education was also made in the army. Classes were formed for the soldiers who could not read and write. In many areas evening classes were established for adults and for others who wished to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by them. Since Poland was primarily an agricultural country, numerous agricultural schools were established, where improved methods of farming and allied courses of instruction were taught. Industrial training was given to the girls as well as to the boys. The numerous dormitories at these schools were kept orderly and clean, and in most cases students apparently took great pride in them.

Many trade schools were built in Warsaw, Sandomierz, Zamosc, Liskow, Wilno, Cracow, and other towns for the purpose of fitting the boys to become efficient in such trades as those of the blacksmith, the carpenter, the locksmith, the tailor, the shoemaker, and the makers of fine furniture, wrought iron, or leather articles. For the training of

¹Grace Humphrey, Poland the Unexplored, pp. 202-203.
girls in the arts of cooking, sewing, weaving, clothes designing, and managing a large household, one school was housed in what had in pre-war days been the magnificent palace of the Wisniowiecki family. Various other buildings, including some former monasteries and fortresses, also were utilized for housing such schools.

All of the children went to school six days out of each week except the Jews, who attended only five days but had to do the six days' lesson assignments. They had many national and church holidays.

Numerous playgrounds, with many play devices, afforded recreation to the children, who were even weighed and measured by the supervisors. In reality, these recreational centers were child welfare organizations.

With reference to the institutions of higher learning, the law that inaugurated the new educational system in Poland on March 11, 1932, made only a few general provisions. Most of these related to the requirements for admission to diploma and degree courses. The purpose of this legislation was to insure, insofar as was possible, the selection of students who were well-fitted for higher studies. The Minister of Public Instruction was given the task of working out the details of the methods to be used.

On March 15, 1933, a law was passed governing the accredited institutions of university rank, which were called academic schools, and which could be universities, principal
schools, institutes, or academies. The status of "academic school" was to be conferred by law, and only schools of such rank were to be allowed to confer degrees. There were two classes of these schools—government and private. Besides these, there were many other institutions of higher learning, both public and private, that were not fully recognized as being of academic status. All of these establishments were under the strict control of the Ministry of Public Instruction, which approved all statutes.

In 1936 there were in the country thirty-five important institutions of higher learning. Eight of these were classical universities, located at Krakow, Lwow, Wilno, Warsaw (2), Poznan, Lublin, and Lodz. There were four technical institutions—two at Warsaw, one at Lwow, and one at Krakow. The agricultural and veterinarian schools were located at Warsaw and Lwow. There were in addition nine institutions of advanced learning in commerce, foreign cultures, political science, and journalism, besides three teacher-training establishments, one school of dentistry, four of fine arts, music, and dramatics, and four schools for national defense.

Certainly Poland, during the post-war period, attained a surprising degree of success in education. Progress in arts of many kinds was encouraged by the State through the awarding of scholarships in music, art, and literature, as well as prizes in competitions in these fields.
The early rebuilding of homes for people throughout the war-torn country was hindered greatly by a lack of capital. The work of the government in making economical plans for new homes and in making some loans available to its people for long periods of time at low interest rates have been discussed in a previous chapter. Many cooperative apartment-houses were built by Polish workers, who in such cases were required to raise one-fifth of the cost of the land and the building, the balance being obtained through a loan from the government.

One of the greatest social problems facing the new Republic concerned the Jews. Centuries before, Poland had become known as "the Paradise of the Jews," since they were allowed complete religious toleration and were welcomed because of the need for more businessmen and shopkeepers. However, the Jews were not admitted to citizenship. Distinctly a separate group, they made their own laws, had their own courts, schools, and districts in which to live, and their own churches. Seven centuries later they were still Jews, not Poles, and their presence in Poland constituted a major problem. Because of the persecutions in other countries, the Jews flocked in through the doors still open to them. In 1938 there were 40,000 in Cracow alone, and almost one-half of the Jews in the world were living in Poland. The tendency to remain isolated from the other nationalities had been strengthened in the Jews by their
suppression under the domination of the partition partners, Russia, Prussia, and Austria.

In early times, Christians were forbidden by canon law to lend money for interest, with the result that banking of this type became a monopoly of the Jews, whose bankers became advisors to the Crown. The University of Cracow, founded in 1364, provided for a Jewish money-lender to aid its students.

Immigrants of other nationalities were absorbed into the general population; but, because of their distinct racial characteristics, religious beliefs and ceremonies, and general solidarity, the Jews remained a separate group. Some dropped their habits of dress and moved out of their original quarters, but these were greatly in the minority. Most of these were still orthodox, and wore long black coats that reached nearly to their ankles, tiny peaked hats for summer and fur-lined turbans in the winter; and their hair was curled in stiff cork-screw fashion on each side of the temple in front of their ears. If they were semi-orthodox, the hair was screwed up into a tight little curl and tucked around their ears.

On the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday), the long black coat worn was of satin, and the hat was of velvet with brown fur. The rich Jew in black satin coat and fur-trimmed velvet hat made a striking picture. The Talmud stated that they must be distinctive from the Christians in dress and in food, and
even the poor Jew generally had a satin coat and a fur- 
trimmed hat. But the satin was usually very cheap, very 
sleazy, very dirty and spotted with grease, and frayed at 
the back where his heels kicked against it; and the fur on 
his cap was usually mangy and old. On Saturday the richer 
class of Jews generally swarmed the city streets. The girls 
were ordinarily dressed mostly in black, and were beautiful 
with their high coloring and dark eyes.

In stature many of the Jewish men were slight, under-
sized, and frequently stoop-shouldered, with heads seem-
ingly too large for their bodies. Their eyes and hair were 
very dark, usually; their features varied from the near-
negro type, with thick lips and snub nose, and from the 
long-nosed Armenian-looking Jews, to the European type of 
exceptional beauty. The "Judas" or red-haired member of 
the race is also very common, especially among the bakers.

As a rule the ghettos, or Jewish districts, had narrow 
dirty streets and alleys. Not all of the houses were small 
or poorly built, but they were discolored and were crowded 
together in a state of squalid neglect. There was no 
drainage system except on the surface, and the odor was so 
offensive that visitors and tourists usually spent little 
time in these districts. The children and adults who 
sprawled about the streets and houses were filthy and un-
kempt. Their rooms were crowded and without baths; and most 
of the Jews preferred to stay dirty rather than to go to the
trouble of keeping themselves, their clothing, and their homes, streets, and shops clean.

A Jew described the way in which his grandfather ate:

This is how he eats: with his fingers, mostly—no napkin—wiping his mouth and his dripping chin on his sleeve. And he never washes his sleeve!²

On the streets in the business sections of the larger towns of Poland, most of the people were Jews, because they were the traders and shopkeepers who stayed out on the streets, bargaining or trading with anyone whose attention they could attract by shouting and talking. On the other hand, the Poles carried on their business transactions inside of their offices and shops.

Religious rituals and money-making seemed to constitute all the activities of the Jewish population. Because of their religious customs they "closed shop" on Friday and Saturday—and complained because they were not allowed to sell on Sunday. On Monday, they usually sold their wares for less than the prices they would ask on days later in the week. There was even a superstition that he who on Monday let a customer leave without making a purchase would have bad luck all the rest of the week. He generally followed his prospective customer out of the shop, finally selling his merchandise at almost any price in order to make a sale.

In Kazimierz, the Jews comprised ninety per cent of the population; in Poznan, there was less than one per cent. In
Bialystok, a textile center situated about 140 miles north-east of Warsaw, the factory workers were largely Jewish, as were eighty per cent of the population of the whole town.

Of the many Jewish synagogues throughout the country, some were famous for their architecture. Numbers of these synagogues were private; in these, the Jews paid for their seats and refused to allow any others to come into the building. This practice sometimes resulted in near riots when others who had not paid for seats tried to force their way in to pray.

A synagogue typical of many found in Poland consisted of a huge room with round arches and barrel vaulting, and with a narrow balcony on three sides. The pulpit was red, and there were two seven-branched candelabra lighted by electricity. The seats were marked with brass plates. The women sat in the balcony, the men downstairs, where they listened to the solemn service. While there were many synagogues famous for their beauty and architecture, there were also many small prayer houses supported by groups of Jews.

In Poland the social problem of the status of the Jew was serious because of the antagonism and enmity between the two peoples, stimulated principally by three things. First, there was a great social barrier between the two groups because of differences in race and in living customs. The Poles, unusually exclusive as a group, would have no social
dealing with the Jews. Second, the economic situation created by the government in an attempt to help the rising peasant class was resented by the Jews because it placed many of the Poles in businesses that before had been carried on mostly by their own race. A third reason for the antagonism was the strong feeling of patriotism felt by each group for its own nationality. The schools of both races, however, were doing as much as they could to modify the existing mutual dislike.

The government of the new Republic tried to better the conditions of the Jews, but progress was difficult. In March, 1919, Paderewski issued the following proclamation:

Persons with evil intentions, who are aiming to bring quarrels and disorder into the rejuvenated Poland, have been spreading rumors that the beating of Jews will not be opposed by the Polish safety organs—namely the police and militia. These rumors are being spread for the purpose of inducing the ignorant and light-minded inhabitants to assist the dark forces (persons) in their criminal acts, outrages, and robberies.

In free, independent Poland all her citizens are found under the protection of the law, and this law is administered in equal measure to all, without distinction as to religion or extraction.

The Government calls, therefore, to all the people to guard the peace and public order and warns also that everyone who will permit himself, of his own account, or through the inducement of another, to attack, rob, or commit outrages, or who would take any step against the safety of Jews or Christians will be arrested and punished according to the entire severity of the law.

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3"Stormy Days in Poland," (author not given), Current History, X (July, 1919), 84.
By 1931 plans were being made to abolish the ghetto, except for bits of picturesque architecture here and there, and to provide adequate housing for the Jews.

To protect labor, laws were passed providing for a forty-eight hour week and for sanitary working conditions. Manual workers were to be allowed each year a two-weeks' vacation, and brain workers a four-weeks' vacation, with wages paid. In factories where a hundred or more mothers were employed, a nursery for their babies was required. Industrial plants were refused permission to operate until adequate housing facilities were furnished their workers. Other laws were passed providing for accident and unemployment insurance and old age pensions.

Organizations of young people having their own club rooms grew up as social centers throughout the country. In Warsaw was built a Y.M.C.A. Building (the largest in Europe), at a cost of two hundred thousand pounds. The "White Cross," a peace-time social organization for the soldiers, ex-soldiers, and would-be soldiers of Poland, was of help in keeping up the morale of its members.

A Ministry of Social Welfare was formed with three main departments: labor, social welfare, and health, and was responsible for much of the social improvement of the times. By 1939 there were over nine hundred institutions for the social protection of over fifty thousand needy
children. There were also numerous day nurseries and orphans' homes, health resorts, and community centers.

Great progress in the means of transportation and communication aided in the social development of post-war reconstruction days. By 1933 over 1,200 miles of railroad lines had been opened, and over 8,500 miles of new highways had been constructed. Great progress in the development of airlines also had been made. The facilitation of travel continued to be one of the important factors in bringing about a degree of social unity.

In spite of the improvements made in this phase of the national life, there were still, in 1939, many sections of the country showing a very primitive type of village life. Although in such areas much help and reform were needed, Poland's social life has, as a whole, progressed to a great extent. Grace Humphrey gives the following interesting account of a typical social center in 1931:

I wish we could borrow the old Polish custom of having a President of the City, who is the social head of the government. This is a very great honor--and it should be. The President is usually an elderly, white-haired gentleman, very dignified, who knows how to wear a frock-coat and gray gloves in the morning, or evening dress, who makes an excellent impression when he speaks or presides. The position is for life, though if the people are displeased there is a way to get rid of him and choose another. The actual supervision of the city affairs is in the hands of a group of vice-presidents serving a few years.

How many times, at banquets, at important public meetings, our good citizens have hung their heads in shame at the impression made by some politician! You remember the tale of the mayor's wife who turned to
Elizabeth of Belgium with "Queen, you've said a mouthful!" New York City has indeed recognized this need and has a Committee for the Reception of Distinguished Visitors. Why not go one step farther and have a social head, a President of the City? Why don't we use our national coat of arms? In Poland whatever belongs to the national government is labeled with the white eagle. Every postman has it on his cap, every railroad employee, the customs officials, and many others. It's used for all sorts of decorations—on banners, in processions.  

A comprehensive view of this valiant nation in 1938—twenty years after the devastation that was the World War—was one of varied interest and beauty of individualistic life and customs. In all the scenes, shifting from the most primitive to the most cultural, there was a picturesque distinctiveness belonging to no other country.

Gdynia, Poland's "Window to the Sea," has within twelve years grown from a small fishing village to a beautiful modern city of handsome buildings, boulevards, and bathing resorts, of huge loading cranes, warehouses, and railway tracks. It has completely transformed a desolate region of Baltic sand dunes into a busy industrial center.

On the Vistula River is Warsaw—city of striking elegance and magnificent buildings of architectural beauty and design, and of beautiful boulevards and landscaping. Parks and gardens add to the natural beauty of the main part of the city, which has a population of 1,350,000. The river

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4Humphrey, Poland the Unexplored, pp. 282-283.
teams with picturesque craft of various kinds. In Warsaw are the Royal Palace, the Cathedral, the City Hall, the Grand Theater, the universities, and many other structures of note.

There is an aerial cableway at Zakopane in the High Tatras; and the round little steel "cars," pulled up and down by strong cables, lift their passengers a distance of two and one-half miles up to the summit of the Kaspowry, which is a mile and a quarter above sea level. From the upper station, on clear days, can be seen the towers of Cracow, seventy miles away.

The largest and finest Gothic church in the country, the Church of St. Mary, is in Cracow. It is famous for its stained-glass windows, its wood carvings, its murals, and its chapels. The church stands on the Rynek Square. Every hour from one of the towers the famous trumpeter of Cracow plays the heynsal, or benediction. Also in Cracow, overlooking the Vistula River, is the massive royal castle, home of the early kings; and close to this is the historic cathedral, the Westminster Abbey of Poland. The Tower of the Town Hall, and the cloth hall of Cracow, are in the market square. On market days "the whole town and half the country-side seem to be concentrated in the Rynek of Cracow," and Cracow is indeed a colorful city.

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5Robert M. McBride, Towns and People of Modern Poland, p. 143.
Brightly colored scarves knotted around their heads, and brightly clothed, the peasant vendors display their vegetables, flowers, fruits, eggs, butter, and other country products.  

Another interesting place in Poland is the hunting lodge of the Czars in the heart of Bialowieza, the vast national forest. It is an ornate brick villa, and is now used by the President of the Republic for occasional hunting parties, and for the entertainment of distinguished visitors.

Scenes of unusual natural beauty are to be seen in the highlands in and near the Carpathian Mountains of southern Poland; this famous Alpine region has been previously mentioned. A few miles east of the Tatras is the swiftly flowing river, the Dunajec, which has cut through the forested slopes and limestone cliffs, forming deep gorges. Visitors seeking both beauty and excitement are carried down this stream on sturdy rafts piloted by native boatmen in their national costume.

The homes of the mountaineers, in villages where great flocks of geese continually throng through the streets, are usually one-storied structures of beams and plaster, with steeply-pitched roofs. The strips of plaster are often painted a bright blue. The inhabitants of these gaily-colored dwellings still wear their national dress on Sundays and holidays.

The traditional costume of the men consists of white hand-woven trousers, enlivened with wide,
striped seams and embroidered top, bound around the ankle, while a broad leather belt studded with metal ornaments encircles the waist; a white blouse is rich with embroidery. The headgear is a broad-brimmed felt hat with rounded crown and a white or variegated cord supplemented by a bit of white plumage, set jauntily at an angle. In cool weather an embroidered waistcoat is worn and on cold days a white, thickly woven coat embellished with colorful embroidery is hung cape-fashion over the shoulders. The women wear a figured skirt, a tight, embroidered bodice oftentimes laced in front, and several strings of beads. When head covering is used, it consists of a scarf over the head and tied under the chin.

Sunday service is a picturesque affair; the peasants in full regalia entering the church and gathering together afterwards to gossip over the week’s events. Even more colorful and animated are weddings and popular festivals. On these occasions their dances, primitive in origin, have a robust vigor that is highly stirring, while the native orchestra, fiddlers, cellists and cymbalists, contribute music that impels the participants to impetuous movement.7

On the high hills of this region are numerous Glider Clubs which have a large membership of expert pilots and of students learning to fly. On the European continent, Poland is second only to Germany in gliding.

Wilno's most notable edifice is the Cathedral of St. Stanislaus. Originally built by King Jagiello in 1387 on the site of a temple to the pagan god of light, it has been reconstructed in the form of a Greek temple. From the ruins of Gedimin's Castle on Castle Hill one can see the city, lying along the banks of the Wilga River, and the beautiful cathedral and the domes of the Russian Church. The Chapel

7Ibid., pp. 168-169.
of Ostra Brama, in Poland second only to the shrine of the monastery of Jasna Gora, is also located in Wilno, and is visited by thousands every year.

In many sections of the country, especially toward the north where the winds from the Baltic Sea are felt, are numerous picturesque windmills. Their large arms are built of wood and are fastened near the top, on the side of the tall, fairly narrow wooden mill-houses, which have steep roofs. These windmills are used for pumping water and as grist mills, and they make a typical picture as they stand, often close together, silhouetted against the fields of waving grain.

One of the most unusual sections of Poland is the Pripet marshlands, where fishermen pole their small flat-bottomed boats through the maze of waterways, and generally use cone-shaped traps made of net or grass reeds, to catch the fish. Fishing is the most important occupation of the marsh-dwellers, who keep their nets and other equipment in small crudely-built huts erected on elevated ground in the marshes. Herring, sturgeon, and sterlet make their way into the waters of the Pripet marshes by way of Dnieper River from the Black Sea. The sight of the marsh-dwellers transporting with their small boats their products for market is a familiar one near Pinsk.

Another interesting fact about the Pripet marshlands is that hundreds of species of birds make their homes in
Fig. 8--Principal Towns of Poland, 1939.
Over 100,000 population underlined.
Warsaw 1,350,000 population.
this region, which is a favorite hunting ground for sports-
men. It is a common sight to see storks or other birds
alight on top of the haystacks, which are placed on woven
platforms of reeds and branches to keep them above the high-
water level.

In this, as in other remote sections of the country,
the farmers have a very unusual, primitive method of sending
messages. They use a trombita, a hollow reed-like pole
about ten feet long, through which they call out their news
or questions across the countryside to neighboring farmers.
The vocal code system they use instead of words produces a
queer and unusual effect on the ear of the listener as the
message echoes across the fields.

The women of the marshlands wear many coral and amber
necklaces with their brightly embroidered costumes, and
adorn their heads with fruits and flowers when they set out
to celebrate the harvest festival.

Thus we observe that Poland, twenty years after her
rebirth as a nation, afforded the source of a wealth of
interesting study and discovery concerning the social life,
the traditions, the habits, and the homes of her people.
CHAPTER V

RELIGIOUS REBIRTH OF POLAND

Many of the churches throughout Poland were damaged or destroyed during the course of the Great War, and were stripped of all fixtures and other materials that could be used by the enemy forces. Among those plundered and sacked, if not utterly destroyed, were numbers of the finest and richest of the cathedrals and shrines. For centuries the countrysides had been studded with churches. In the hills, especially, were to be found interesting old wooden churches which dated back to the thirteenth century. Even wooden pegs had been used as nails. The interiors—nearly the entire surface of the walls, ceilings, rafters, and pillars—were frescoed, and the colors were faded and softened. Many religious pictures were to be found on the walls, as well as designs of leaves, flowers, and geometrical figures. The roofs of these buildings were steep, and lean-tos along the sides protected them from the snow.

These small, unpainted churches, from long exposure to the weather, usually presented to the eye of the visitor a picture of rustic beauty in brown or gray. Even these historic little sanctuaries felt the terrible effects of the widespread destruction caused by the armies during the War.
In 1919 the task of repairing and rebuilding their churches was another of the many problems confronting the stout-hearted Poles. With the same spirit of loyalty to the best interests of the Republic, they set to work to improve their churches and their religious conditions.

For centuries the country had had religious toleration. This guarantee was confirmed in the Constitution of March 17, 1921, by the following passage:

Freedom of conscience and religion is guaranteed to all citizens. . . . Every religious community recognized by the state has the right of organizing collective and public services; it may conduct independently its internal affairs; it may possess and acquire movable and immovable property, administer and dispose of it; it remains in possession and enjoyment of its endowments and funds, and of religious, educational, and charitable institutions.\(^1\)

A report sent to his government by a Polish conservative publicist charged that, up to 1923, the Polish authorities had seized and given over to the Roman Catholic clergy more than five hundred Orthodox churches in the Ukranian and White Russian provinces of the country. The complaint further charged that most of these churches had been closed entirely. It was further stated that Orthodox bishops were imprisoned, interned in monasteries or exiled, and replaced by appointees of the government. As an example of a typical church seizure was given the following case:

\(^{1}\)"Civil Liberties in Poland" (author not given), The Nation, CXXIV (April 20, 1927), 428.
The church at Stuzyca, district of Lublin, was built in 1870, the cost of building as well as procuring the site having been borne entirely by the members of the local Eastern Orthodox congregation. This congregation now has 1,350 members. However, on May 11, 1924, this church was occupied by Catholic priests and their parishioners, whom they had been openly instigating against their non-Catholic neighbors. The invaders were accompanied and assisted by the State Police, and when the members of the Orthodox congregation tried to defend their church the police beat them up, pulled the women by the hair, and threw them down the church steps. The mounted policemen forced themselves among the crowd and trampled down many men, women, and children.

This publicist also stated that there was much bloodshed and that many scenes were reminiscent of medieval fanaticism and horrors, though all complaints against this unjust treatment were made in vain. Since the decrees of December 16, 1918, and July 9, 1921, the government had been the legal guardian of all the properties of the Eastern Orthodox Church in Poland; and, for that reason, help could be obtained only through that agency.

Such an account shows how serious were the religious problems confronting the struggling government of the new Republic. However, its leaders were sincere in their desire and in their efforts to improve such conditions, as was shown by the previously discussed proclamation issued by Ignace Jan Paderewski in 1919. According to the best accounts available, in certain instances in which individuals of one religious denomination were intimidating persons of

\[\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{See page 77.}\]
different faith, the government was quick to step in and stop this practice.

The constitution of Poland granted to the Roman Catholic religion "chief position among enfranchised religions." The Catholic church was supported by public taxation, and was given many privileges with regard to the administration of justice and to public education. For all pupils under eighteen years of age, instruction in religion was compulsory in every educational institution; and there were hundreds of schools. Ukrainian and White Russian children were forced to attend Roman Catholic schools. This same situation was found in state-supported orphans' homes.

A survey of the religious situation in Poland in 1938 showed that Roman Catholicism was the predominant faith of the people, comprising about two-thirds of the population. The doctrine or creed of the Church was very strict. By a concordat concluded with the Pope in 1924, Poland was divided into five provinces: Posen, Vilna, Lemberg, Warsaw, and Cracow. There were twenty dioceses, with two cardinals, four archbishops, and thirty bishops. In 1925 there were seven thousand Catholic parishes; by 1938 the number was greatly increased.

The next largest groups of the Catholic religion were in the Greek Catholic, or Uniate group, which comprised about twelve per cent of the country's population, and the Greek Orthodox denomination, which was made up of about ten
per cent. The status of the Orthodox Church in Poland, an independent unit, was not settled until 1938. This body established a seminary in the capital for the purpose of training its priests, and continued to grow rapidly. At the time of the World War, few of the members of this group were Poles; but by 1938 this was no longer the case. Many of the Catholic and the Orthodox churches have established schools that are famous throughout the country, and both groups have separate Orders for men and women.

This faith differed from the Roman Catholic faith principally in church government and in its relation to the Pope at Rome. The Greek Orthodox Church was divided into five dioceses and was headed by the Metropolitan of Warsaw and the synod of bishops. There were seventeen Orthodox monasteries in Poland in 1938. The Greek Church had no rigid creed as did the Roman Catholic Church. It was governed by a Council which established at will the doctrines by which it was ruled. The highest rank in this church was held by four patriarchs, who were not allowed to marry. Priests and deacons were required to marry once; but, if their wives died, they were not permitted to re-marry.

Frequent severe fasting was practiced in the Greek Church, just as it was in the Roman Catholic Church. However, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was not recognized, although the Virgin Mary was revered.
Most of the Greek churches are rectangular in form and have five gilded, silvered or painted domes surmounted by the Greek cross, the largest dome being in the middle. The principal entrance is on the west side; in front of it usually rises a detached bell tower or campanile in which the bells are not swung but are fixed, the tongues alone being movable. Since the worshipers stand or kneel during the service, there are no seats, neither is there an organ. Graven images being prohibited, the crucifix alone excepted, there are no sculptures. At the east end of the edifice a raised choir accommodates priests and singers, but a screen enlivened with sacred pictures separates the choir from the inner sanctuary. Before these gorgeously framed pictures burn perpetual lamps and wax candles placed there by the devout.

Those not accustomed to the Greek Orthodox service will be impressed by the obeisances of the worshipers before open church doors, the frequency with which they cross themselves, their prostrations and the kissing of the floor before the holy relics. In spite of the strict observance of all rites and customs in the Greek faith, strangers are welcome and no objection is made to the examination of the churches and their treasures, even during divine service.4

In spite of its imposing cathedral at Lwow, one of the smallest sects in Poland in 1938 was the Armenian Catholic Church, which was governed by an archbishop. This group consisted of only twelve churches and twenty-seven priests, and its faith was distinct from both the Orthodox Greek and the Roman Catholic beliefs. It was an autonomous church, not only refusing to form an alliance with the Greek Orthodox Church, but taking an antagonistic attitude toward it. The doctrines were similar to those of the Copts of Egypt. This church rejected the belief in the dual nature of Christ.

4McBride, Towns and People of Modern Poland, pp. 149-150.
Located at Lwow were three cathedrals, particularly interesting because they represented within one city the three different branches of the Christian religion. And Lwow, surprisingly enough, had three archbishops, one for each of the three "rites." Of the three cathedrals--the Roman Catholic, the Greek Catholic, and the Armenian Catholic--the Roman Catholic Cathedral was the largest; but during the eighteenth century its Gothic style was somewhat modified when it was remodeled along newer, more simple lines. Although both the interior and the exterior were remodeled, its detached Boim Chapel, with its richly carved façade of sculptured stone, compensated to some extent for the visitor's disappointment in the modernization of the cathedral itself.

Standing on a hill and completely dominating its surroundings, the Greek Cathedral at Lwow--a baroque edifice designed by an Italian architect, Merettini, in the eighteenth century--was one of the finest cathedrals in Poland.

To the visiting lover of art, probably the most satisfying was the Armenian Catholic Cathedral, in spite of the fact that it belonged to the very smallest Polish Catholic group, whose members comprised less than one per cent of the population in 1938. It was a beautiful blending of Armenian and Gothic architecture. "Distinguished by an ancient belfry and rising from a tiny courtyard," it had a
domed entrance which was "embellished with Byzantine mosaics and frescoes." 5

One modern writer who made a study of the religious situation in Poland said that among the educated Catholic people there were to be found three fairly distinct groups:

1. Those whose connection with the Church is only formal or nominal, the number of whom is said to be growing. The clergy refer to these people as "indifferent," and puts down their existence to the powerful secularizing tendencies of science, business, and other forces. My own feeling is that the number of these people is not as great as is charged.

2. Those who "believe," to whom religion is a personal reality, but who are not captivated by institutional Christianity. They rarely go to church, and the confessional and the sacraments have little or no meaning for them. Of these, the number is relatively large. They are interested in deeds rather than in dogmas, and they can usually be found carrying more than their share of the burden of service to their fellows. If questioned closely, they would announce themselves enemies of clericalism, insisting on the right and the duty of the layman to share in the spiritual guidance of the nation.

3. Those who "practice." For them the church is their spiritual home. They go regularly to the Communion and the Confessional, and the counsels of the clergy are the deciding factor in their lives. Among these devout people can be found both highly intellectual men and women and still more of those who are in the habit of rarely using their minds at all. Here, too, will be found zealous workers for social causes, while many others live their lives apart, and love God rather than their neighbors. 6

In 1938 the total number of Catholics in Poland was over 21,000,000, and of Protestants, over 1,000,000. The

5Ibid., p. 147.
6Rose, Poland, pp. 208-209.
Protestants included several groups—the Lutherans, the Calvinists, the Baptists, and the Methodists. From a number of pre-war administrative units, one Lutheran Communion, with its bishop located at Warsaw, was formed during the period of religious reconstruction. After much planning and discussion of various church problems, the status of this church was finally defined by act of Parliament in 1937. A single Faculty of Theology was established, which was to serve all Evangelical groups, at the University of Warsaw. Here, for the first time since Reformation days, candidates for the ministry were trained for their work in their own mother tongue. This was one of the most important accomplishments of the post-war period. The religious problems caused by the Jews, of whom there were great numbers in Poland, have been discussed in the preceding chapter.

While Roman Catholicism has had the favored position in Poland as the largest denomination in the country, there has been no unfair partiality or discrimination shown by the authorities toward any sect. All churches in the land have the material support of the state, and all members of the clergy are public officials. After the War, strenuous though unsuccessful efforts were made by ardent Catholics to have the schools made subject to the clergy. The school system established was secular, but religion was taught at appointed hours every week by trained teachers who were usually ordained. All members of the clergy, regardless
of their denominations, were considered on equal footing in the schools.

One of the most interesting sights in Poland was the pageant afforded on Sundays by the peasants from various localities on their way to church. "Dressed up" in their picturesque and varied costumes, they lent decided color to the native atmosphere. Grace Humphrey sat near a window in a Polish church one Sunday, and gazed at the scene which later she described in one of her books.

Across the fields came peasants, single file, along the narrow paths that separate the fields (there aren't any fences in Poland); here two together, there five or six; old women, young women, girls in their teens, maids of six or seven, in striped skirts and striped capes and white blouses and gay, spotless headkerchiefs. Such colors! Orange, green, dark blue, pink, black, red. Primary colors as vivid as those in a child's paint-box.

Very wide stripes—two inches or more—of orange or red, then narrow stripes, four, five, six, eight of them, all different, and this design repeated time after time. Never two skirts alike. But all of them yards and yards around, gathered in at the belt. Sometimes an apron of the same, and the cape; sometimes of a different striping. Out-of-doors, against the green of the fields or against the snow, they suit perfectly.

"There comes another!" I cried, "and two more. There's a whole family—five, no—seven. Why, even the men are in Lowicz stripes; how the trousers show up against the long white coats! One picture after another!" 7

A unique and most interesting sight for the traveler in Poland is "The Chapel of St. Anthony," which is located in the government salt mines of Wieliczka near Cracow.

7Humphrey, Poland the Unexplored, p. 144.
The workers, in their spare moments, from the earliest days, fashioned part of the mines into a city. The mines are divided into three divisions and each division is composed of seven levels. Each level has its own chambers, interestingly furnished and carved from crystal salt. There are streets, staircases, monuments, a restaurant, and a chapel carved from salt.

An elevator lowers the visitor into the mine, or it can be reached by staircases, the steps of which are composed of salt. "The Chapel of St. Anthony" was begun in the seventeenth century. It contains many statues. There is a salt pulpit and altar and when the chapel is illuminated all the furnishings sparkle like diamonds.

There is also a ballroom three hundred feet long with an arched roof two hundred feet high. A remarkable chandelier, made of salt crystals, is suspended from the ceiling. The miners in their spare time are busily engaged in carrying on this labor of love.8

There were in many of the churches art treasures which were almost priceless. Such a collection was in the treasury of Czestochowa in Lowicz. This is a large room with glass cases for displaying the gifts brought through the centuries to the Madonna of Czestochowa. Here are found objects of gold and silver and precious stones—silver trays and jeweled swords, ornaments for altars, reliquaries and rosaries, kings' scepters, vestments embroidered with jewels, orders and honors, porcelains and tall candlesticks, and many other gifts of kings and bishops and noble families.

The religious reverence of the people in many sections of the Poland of 1938 was very impressive. For example,

8Corsi, Poland: Land of the White Eagle, p. 177.
for miles in every direction from the city could be heard
the hauntingly beautiful melody of the trumpeter of Cracow
as he sounded his call from each of the four small windows
of the tower of the Cathedral of St. Mary.

Every hour of the day and night the sweet and
haunting notes of a bugle call, known as the heymal,
ripple from the highest story and always end on a
broken note. According to legend, this ceremony
began in the thirteenth century with the Mongolian
invasion headed by Genghis Khan. It was a custom of
the time for a traditional air to be played hourly
in honor of the Virgin, the trumpeters taking an
oath, as they continue to do, that they would faith-
fully perform this task even at the cost of their
lives. In those far-off days of 1241 the Tartar
horde, having swept through Poland in a whirlwind of
death and destruction, at length entered the capital.
Some of the terrified inhabitants had fled to the
Wawel; others had scattered to the north and west.
The trumpeter of the day, faithful to his trust,
alone remained to do honor to St. Mary. As he, on
the hour, sounded the hymn of praise, a Tartar arrow
found its mark and in the middle of a note the trum-
 peter fell. In commemoration of his heroism the
bugler's call today, as through the centuries, always
ends on this same broken note.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Whether in the clatter of the midday or in the mid-
night silence of the sleeping city, the trumpeters
of Cracow bring a benediction to the listener.9

Through great perseverance Poland had done much, by
1939, to restore and develop that vital phase of her life--
the religious.

One has only to be present at Mass . . . to feel
the dynamics of the Faith of the simple people. . . .
The Polish nation is devout by nature and by tradition;
from this devotion springs a peculiar power.10

9McCrie, Towns and People of Modern Poland, pp. 183-184.
10Rose, Poland, p. 212.
The road to the rebirth of Poland was a long and rocky path, strewn with countless hardships and tribulations; and the courage, loyalty, and faith with which the Poles met and triumphed over the obstacles of the period of rebuilding their country have won for them the admiration and respect of the world. In 1939, except for the war clouds hovering over Europe, the outlook was very bright indeed for the future of Poland.
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