



Poland



By Magdalena Leśkow

Once upon a time ...

(a short outline of Polish history)



- ✧ Several West Slavic tribes united to form small states between the years 800 – 960. One of these came to be ruled by the Piast dynasty.
- ✧ The year 966 is accepted as the founding date of Poland when the Piast ruler Mieszko I adopted Christianity.
- ✧ The Piast dynasty continued to rule Poland until 1386, at which time *Jagiello*, grand duke of Lithuania, married *Jadwiga*, the crown princess of the Piasts and thus founded the Jagiellon dynasty.



- ✦ Jagiellon heirs reigned over Poland and Lithuania until 1572.
- ✦ The Jagiellon monarchs ruled Hungary and Bohemia for much of 15th and 16th century and repelled powerful enemies (Ottoman Turks, the Grand Principality of Moscow)



- ✦ In the end of the 18th century a partition of Poland took place, the country was seized by Russia, Austria and Prussia. Finally in 1795 Poland was eradicated and replaced by the invaders sectors.

✦ Following World War I (1914 – 18) and the Russian Revolution (1917), and independent Poland was reestablished by the Allies in 1918.

✦ Poland's uneasy coexistence with the Soviet Union to the east and Nazi Germany to the west ended in 1939 when they invaded and occupied Poland.

✦ Germany's occupation policy was designed to eradicate Polish culture through mass executions and to exterminate the country's large Jewish minority.



✦ **In 1945 Poland's boundaries were redrawn.**

✦ The communist Polish United Workers' Party was officially formed in 1948 to rule the country, 1952 brought Soviet – style constitution and **Poland was in the grip of Satalinist totalitarianism.**

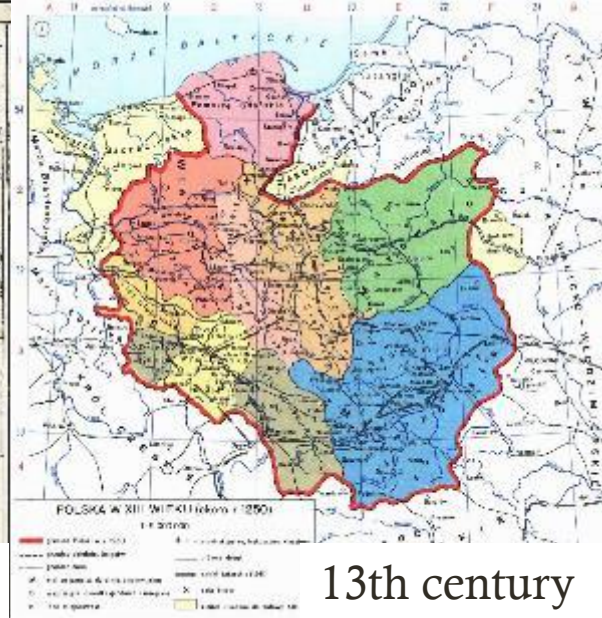
- ✦ In August 1980 strikes led by **Lech Wałęsa**, an electrician, erupted at the Gdańsk shipyards and quickly spread to other cities.



- ✦ After Solidarity's overwhelming victory in elections in June 1989, Solidarity formed a coalition government with the communists (who converted to social democracy)
- ✦ Since that time a wind of change has blown through Poland and Eastern Europe. Poland transformed from communist state to a free-enterprise economy land.



11th century



13th century



POLAND THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES



17th century



during partition
in 18th century

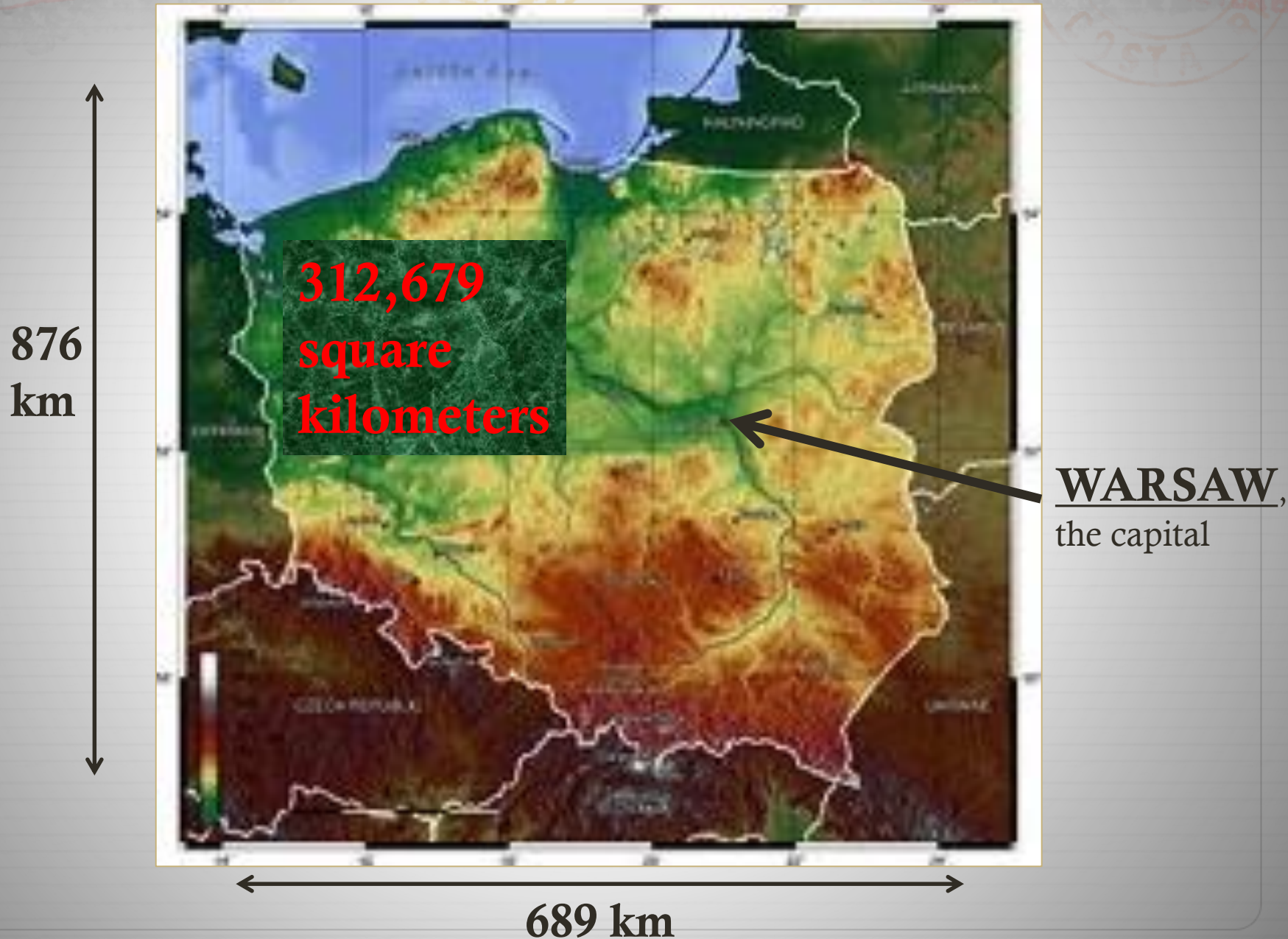


The Flag, anthem and Coat of arms of Poland



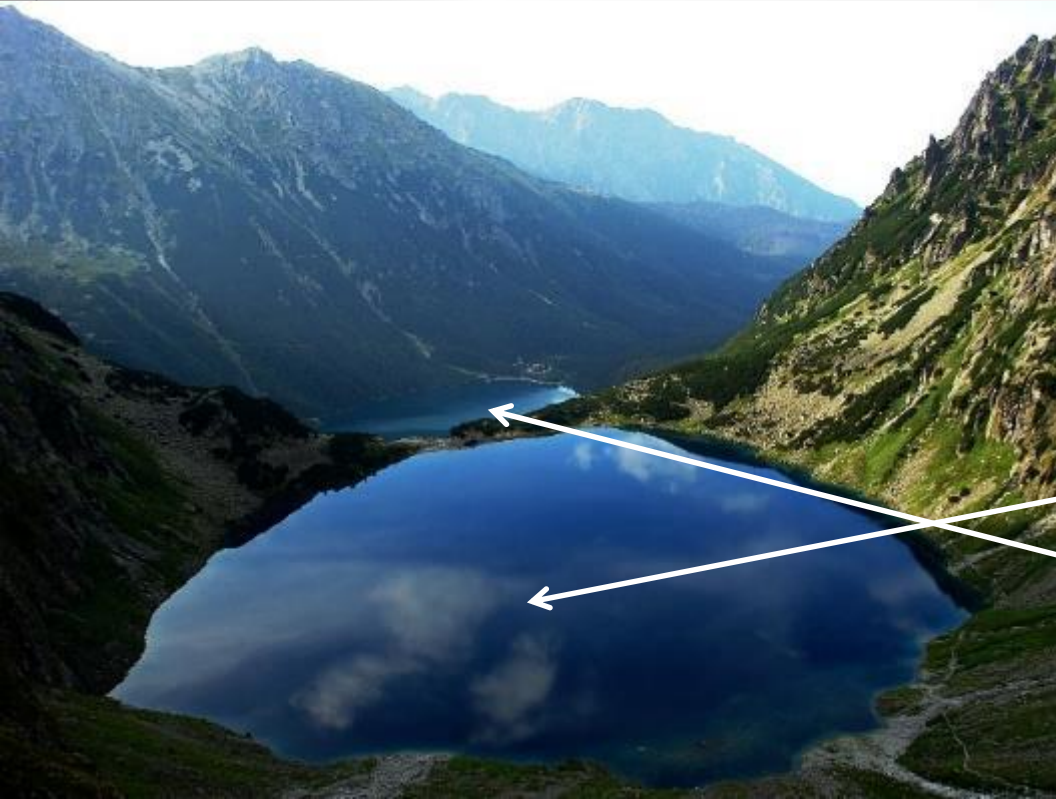
- ✦ The anthem's called Mazurek Dąbrowskiego, also known as *Song of the Polish Legions in Italy*.
- ✦ The lyrics were written by Józef Wybicki in 1797 (two years after the Third Partition of Poland).

Geography of Poland



Polish mountains

- ✦ Poland has over 70 mountains over 2,000 m in elevation. All in Tatras, Carpathian Mountains.
- ✦ The highest point is Rysy at 2,499 m.



At Rysy's foot lie mountain lakes :

- Czarny Staw (Black lake)
- Morskie Oko (Marine Eye)

Lowlands

- ✧ The lowest point in Poland at 2 metres below the sea level is Raczki Elbląskie in the Vistula Delta.



Sea level

Desert and Dunes



- ✦ The only desert in Poland and one of only 5 natural deserts in Europe is Błędów Desert. It has a total of 32 square kilometers.
- ✦ The Baltic Sea activity created sand dunes which separated the bay from the sea. As the wind carries sand the dunes move about 3-10 meters per year.



Waters...

✦ Poland has a lot of rivers, the longest one is *Wisła (Vistula)* 1,047 km.



✦ Poland has one of the highest number of lakes in the world.

*Lake Śniardwy, Lake Mamry,
Lake Łebsko and Lake Drawsko*
cover more than **100 square kilometers**

MASURIAN LAKE DISTRICT ➡



...and land use

- ✦ OUR COUNTRY IS KNOWN TO BE THE 4th MOST FORESTED ONE IN EUROPE.



30,5%
OF POLAND'S LAND IS
COVERED BY FORESTS

- ✦ We have 23 national parks, the oldest one was established in 1921
- ✦ The biggest one covers 102 square kilometers





Fields benefits...



- ✧ Since Poland's accession to the European Union (2004), agriculture has performed really well. The nation has over 2 milion farms(!)
- ✧ In Europe we're leading producers of potatoes and rye.
- ✧ In EU the 4th biggest suplier of pigmeat.





Politics and law



Current president :
Andrzej Duda (elected in May 2015)



Current prime minister :
Ewa Kopacz (elected in September 2014)



BICAMERAL
PARLIAMENT

Lower house (Sejm)
460 members

Senate
100 members

Privileges and human rights

Driving a car is allowed when we turn **18**



Drinking is allowed since you turn **18** years old as well..

LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) rights -

LGBT

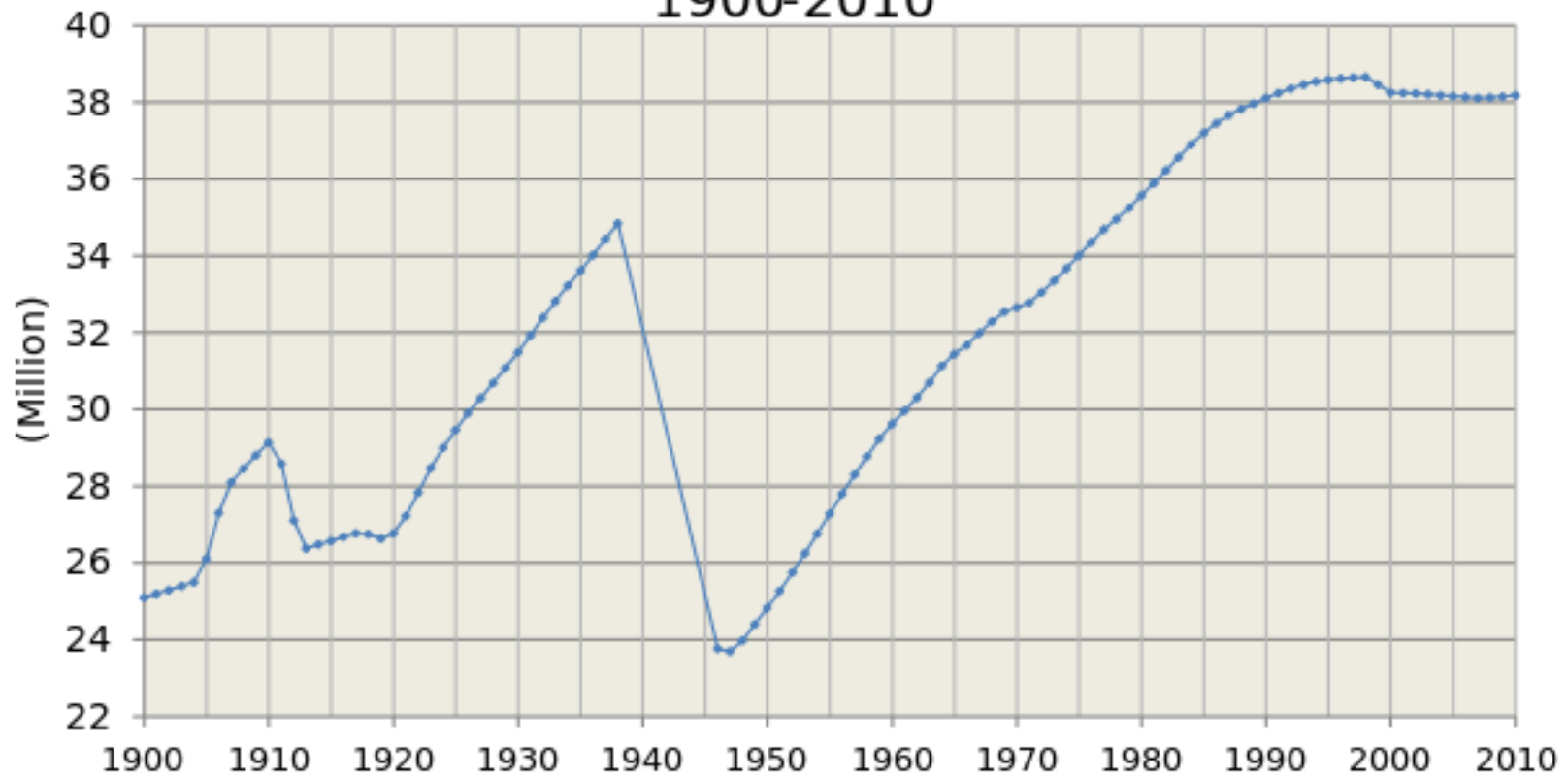
- Male and female **same-sex** sexual activities are legal in Poland.
- Same-sex **couples and households** headed by these couples **are not equal** as the opposite-sex couples.

Freedom House Research Institute
classified Poland as first class political and civil rights.

Demographics



Population of Poland
1900-2010



About 38,325,000
people live in Poland

However...the number of residents living in the country is 37,200,000 with 1,125,000 living abroad for more than 6 months.



Traditional Polish costumes
from Krakow region

Recently a lot of young people migrated abroad because of the opening of EU's labor market.

Education in Poland



- ✦ Kindergarden – optional kids 3-5 or 6 years old
 - ✦ Elementary school – 1st - 6th class (at the end of 6 th class students take an exam to determine their acceptance to a lower secondary school)
 - ✦ Middle school (lower secondary school) – 7th – 9th class (at the end of this part of their education, students take an compulsory exam to determine their upper secondary school they will attend.
 - ✦ High School – 10 th – 12 th class
- Or
- ✦ Technikum – 10th – 13th class



**Both end with maturity exam,
and can be followed by many
forms of upper education.**

Religion



- ✦ Roman Catholic – 87,5%
- ✦ Opting out of answer – 7,1%
- ✦ Non – believer – 2,4%
- ✦ Not stated – 1,6%
- ✦ Orthodox – 0,7%
- ✦ Other religions – 1%

Freedom of religion is now guaranteed by the 1989 statute of the Polish Constitution.

Culture of Poland

✦ **Famous Poles** throughout the history :

- ✦ *Mikołaj Kopernik* (founder of Heliocentrism)
- ✦ *Fryderyk Chopin* (pianist and virtuoso of Romantic era)
- ✦ *Maria Skłodowska-Curie* (chemist , idea of radioactivity, discovered two elements radium and polonium)
- ✦ *Józef Piłsudski* (statesman, First Marshal of Poland)
- ✦ *Pope John Paul II* (first Slavic and Polish pope, and first non-italian pope since 1522)
- ✦ *Jan Matejko* (known for paintings of notable historical events)
- ✦ Academy Awards winners : *Roman Polański, Andrzej Wajda, Agnieszka Holland*
- ✦ Actresses known outside of Poland : *Pola Negri and Helena Modjeska*

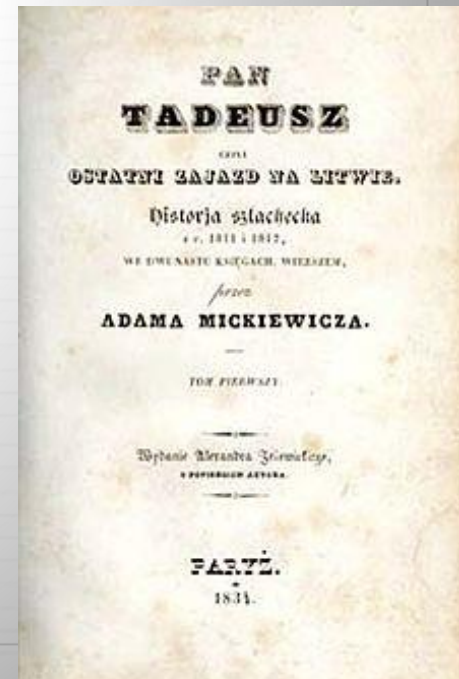
Literature

Nobel Prize in Literature winners : *Henryk Sienkiewicz*

Władysław Reymont, Wisława Szymborska, Czesław Miłosz.

In Middle Ages most polish writers wrote only in latin, the rule was broken by *Jan Kochanowski* (first Polish Renaissance author to write in mother-language).

Polish Romantism was largely a movement for independence against the foreign occupation.
Leader – *Adam Mickiewicz*





Cuisine



✧ It is rich in meat, especially pork, chicken and beef (depending on the region) and winter vegetables (cabbage in the dish bigos), and spices.

✧ National dishes :

Bigos

Pierogi

Kotlet schabowy (breaded cutlet)

Gołąbki (cabbage rolls)

Rosół (meat broth)

Barszcz

Pączki



