

# ARDUOUS ROAD TO STATEHOOD AT THE END OF IMPERIAL RULE

## SACRIFICE COOPERATION TRADITION

### POST-PARTITION UNIFICATION OF THE COUNTRY THE SHAPING OF THE BORDERS AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE COUNTRY

The borders of the reborn Republic of Poland after World War I were an arena of conflicts and disputes involving various states and ethnic groups. As a result of the plebiscites (votes of the inhabitants of a given area) held in Warmia, Mazury and Powiśle, Poland regained access to the Baltic Sea; in turn, following three uprisings, Rzeczpospolita [the Republic] was granted the industrially valuable areas of Silesia. There had also been long disputes over the course of the eastern border, which led to a war with Soviet Russia that ended with the signing of the Treaty of Riga. Over time, Poland also acquired part of the Lithuanian lands (Vilnius). These actions provided the young state with a foundation for gradual economic development. At the time of regaining independence, in 1918, Rzeczpospolita remained in ruins after the years of partition and the World War I period. However, by the 1920s, Polish society had already made an effort to develop industry and the economy and introduce its own monetary system. The number of factories in the food, metal, chemical, electrical engineering, automotive, and textile and clothing industries, among others, increased significantly at a rapid pace. Poland, at the time, was also one of the major lignite coal miners, which was an important element in the establishment of the domestic energy industry. An important aspect of Poland's economic expansion during the interwar period was also the creation of communications infrastructure. New roads, railroads, airports and the seaport in Gdynia (the so-called "Polish window on the world") facilitated the further development of trade and transportation.



*Behold, today is a day of honor and glory! It is a day of freedom, for the White Eagle has spread its wings not only over the Polish lands, but also over the Polish sea. The nation feels that it is no longer suffocated by the hydra that has so far wrapped around its neck and breasts. Now free worlds and free countries lie before us. The Polish sailor today will be able to reach everywhere under the sign of the White Eagle, the whole world stands open to him.*  
Józef Haller



The painting "Poland's Wedding to the Sea" by Wojciech Kossak - after a long period of partitioned captivity, Poland regained access to the sea, which Gen. Józef Haller expresses symbolically by throwing a platinum ring into the depths of the Baltic Sea



Celebrations to mark the incorporation of the Vilnius region into Poland, attended by Marshal Jozef Pilsudski

Second Republic in 1923



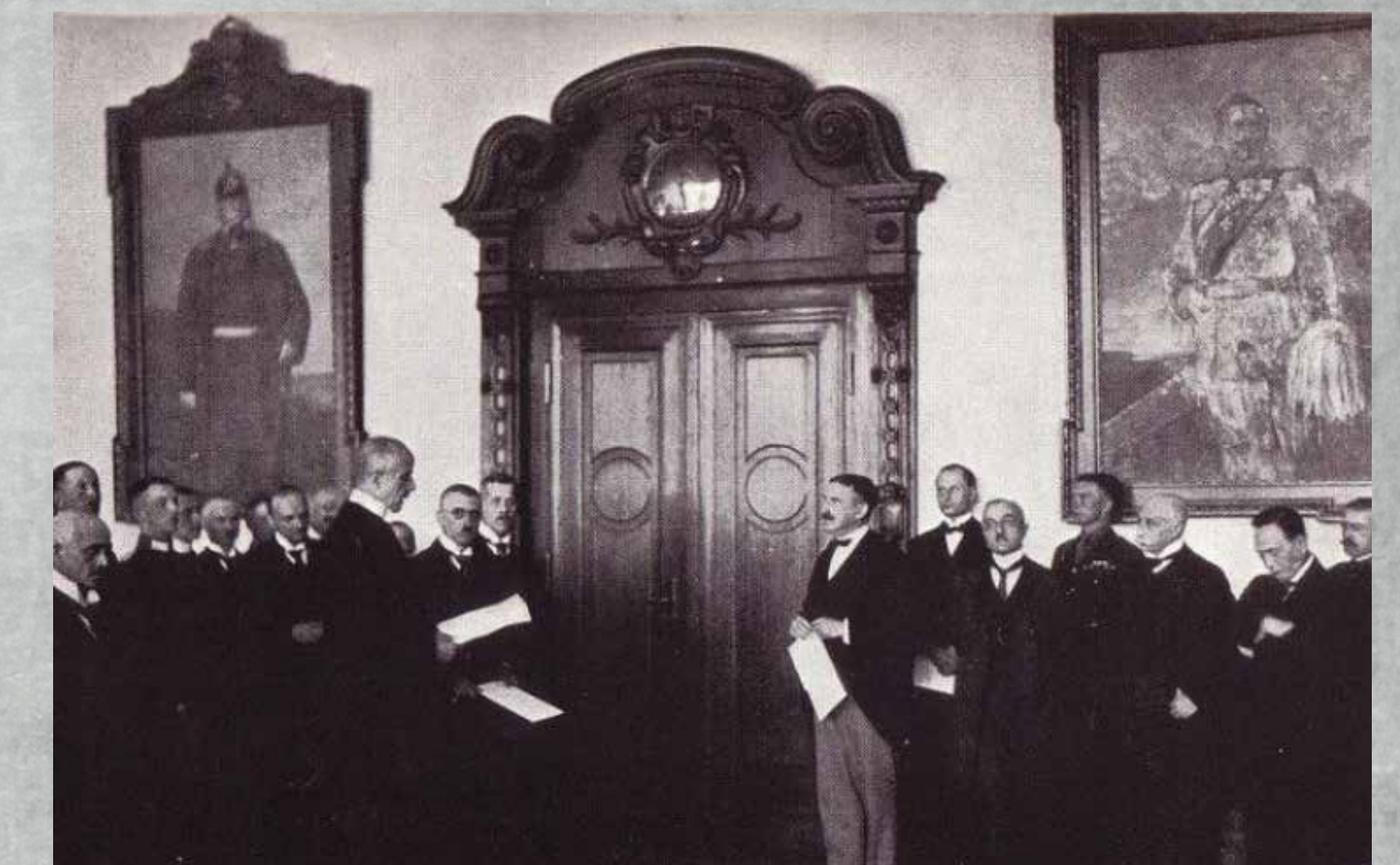
Signing of the Treaty of Riga - a document ending the Polish-Bolshevik war and regulating the borders between the Second Polish Republic, Ukraine and Russia, Riga March 18, 1921



Stamp encouraging Poles to participate in plebiscites deciding the affiliation of lands disputed with Germany - slogan: "The will of the people will perform a miracle"



Field gendarmes during the Third Silesian Uprising, 1921



Signing of the Treaty of Riga - a document ending the Polish-Bolshevik war and regulating the borders between the Second Polish Republic, Ukraine and Russia, Riga March 18, 1921



Polish banknote "Two Zlotys" of 1936

*We have reached such a state that no progress in any field, not even education, let alone an agricultural reform or social improvements, become impossible if we do not first, and soon, deal with the financial difficulties that not only paralyze all impulses to improve our internal state, but produce a danger both to the preservation of internal peace and the state of our country's defense, which require considerable monetary expenditures.*  
Władysław Grabski - Prime Minister, Treasury Minister, author of the currency reform



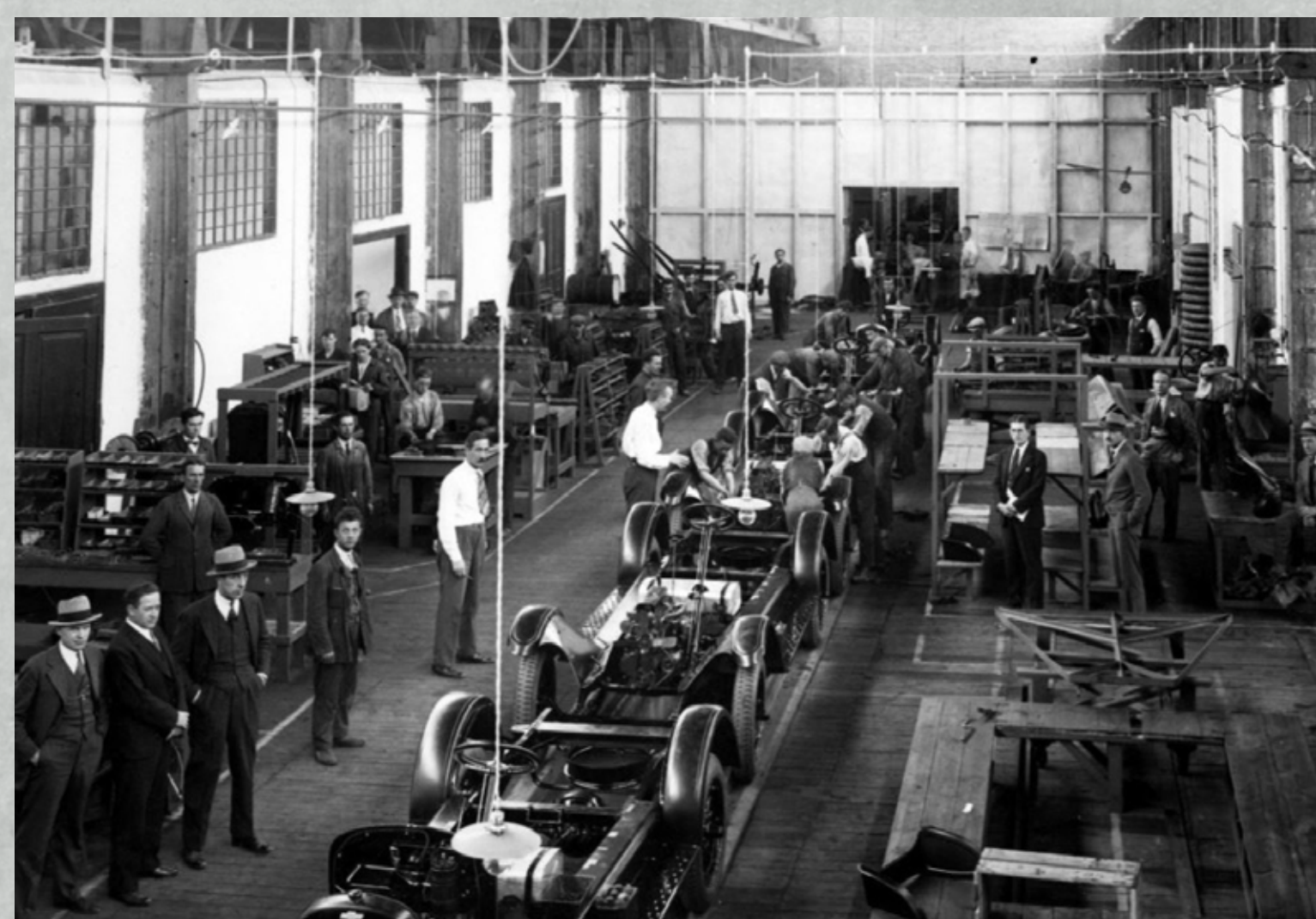
State Nitrogen Compounds Factory in Mościce

*At this moment, Poland is virtually borderless, and all we can gain in this regard in the West is determined by the Entente and as far as it is willing to squeeze Germany. In the East it is a different matter; here there are doors that open and close, and it depends on who and how wide force will open them...*  
Józef Piłsudski

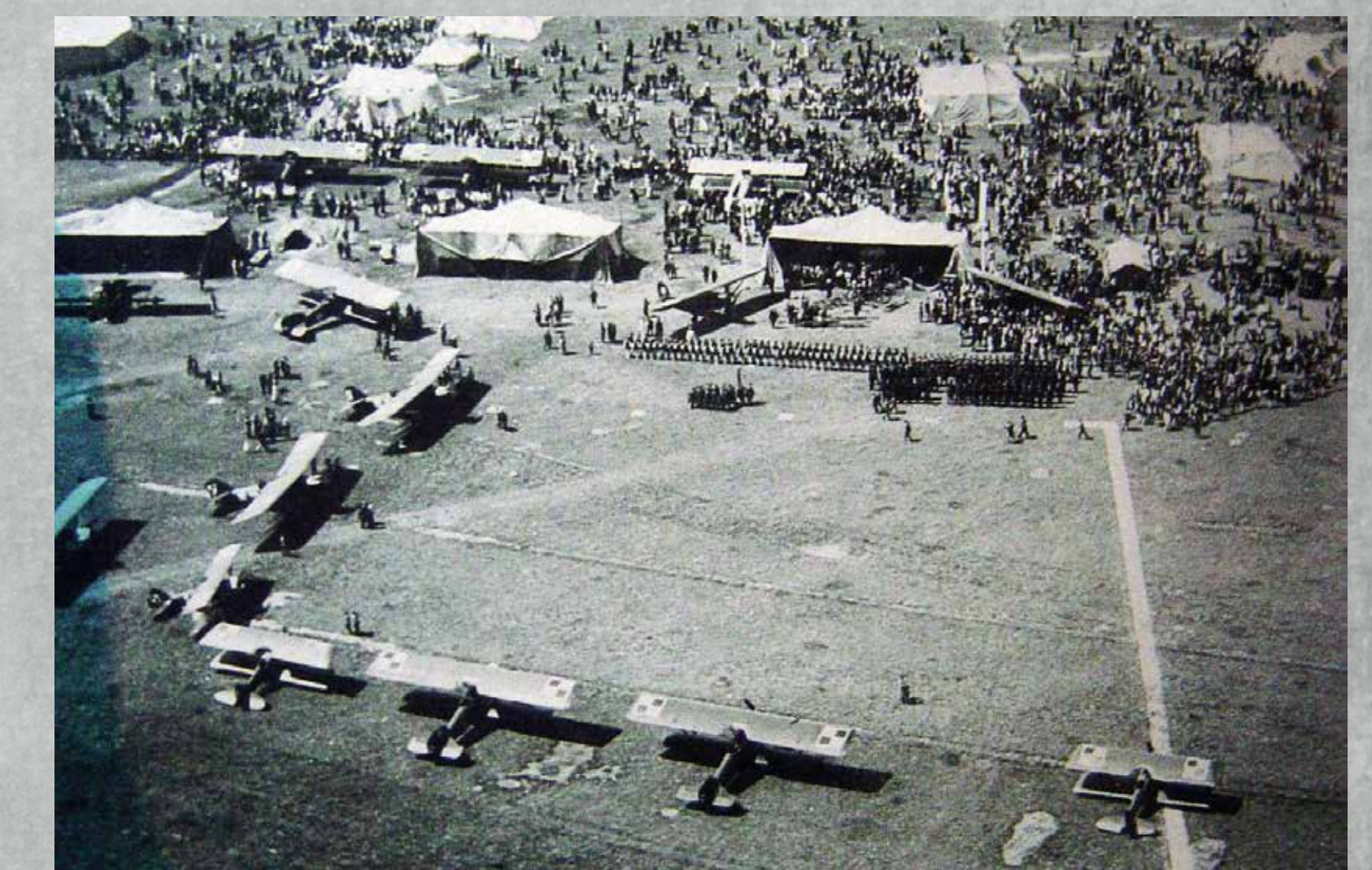


Assembly hall of the "Fablok" steam locomotives in Chrzanów

*Efforts greater than those we are putting in today are needed not only in economic work, but also in intellectual, artistic and any other kind of work. Nothing more valuable is created without greater effort. To avoid effort is to fall downward in the life of civilization.*  
Władysław Grabski - Prime Minister, Treasury Minister, author of the currency reform)



Production hall of the General Motors car factory in Warsaw, circa 1930

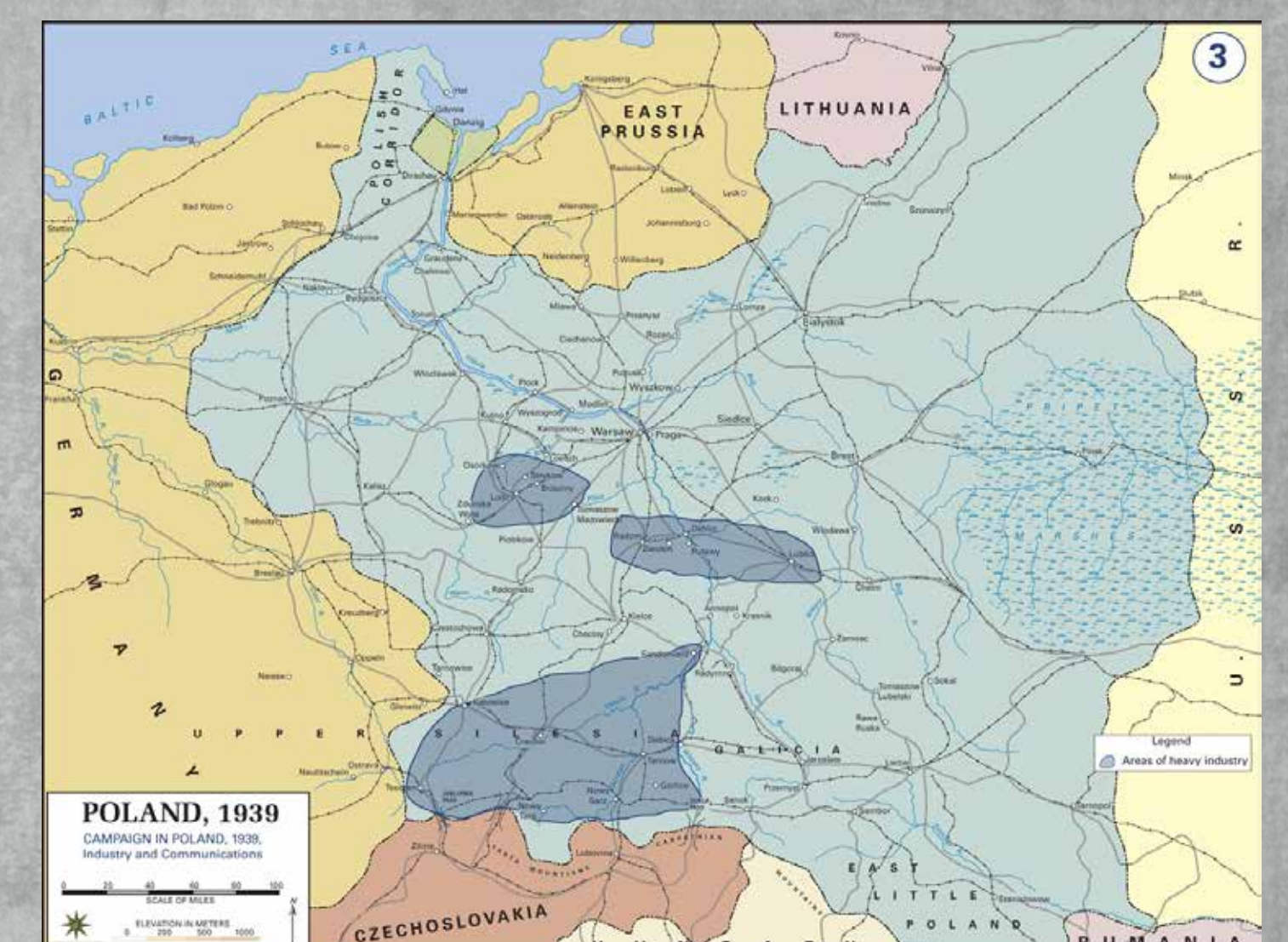


Opening ceremony of the airport in Nowy Targ, 1930

*Poland without its own sea coast and without its own fleet will never be either united, independent, economically and politically self-reliant, nor respected in the great family of states and nations, nor capable of securing the conditions of existence, work, progress and prosperity for its citizens.*  
Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski, Minister of Industry and Trade, promoter of the construction of the seaport in Gdynia



The city and port of Gdynia in 1938



Map showing industry and communications in Poland at the end of the interwar period

