



## **Manifest Tymczasowego Rządu Ludowego Republiki Polskiej - Tekst angielski**

To the Polish people! Workers, farmers, and soldiers of Poland!  
A new dawn of peace and freedom is breaking over a humanity blood-stained and anguished. The rule of capitalists, factory-owners, and large-scale landlords – the rule of military oppression and social exploitation of the working masses – is now collapsing into rubble. The working people are coming to power everywhere. No bright fortune shall shine upon the Polish nation unless its backbone and vast majority – the working people – take it into their own hands to lay the foundations of our societal and state life. The destiny of the Polish nation can no longer be entrusted to the Regency Council, imposed upon us as it is by foreign and hostile actors, and which through its acquiescent and reactionary policies – whilst at the same time having given virtually dictatorial power to the Austrian mercenary Rozwadowski<sup>1</sup> – is driving the Polish nation toward the abyss.

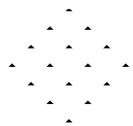
People of Poland! You, Polish peasant and worker!

If you wish to take your proper place in the family of free nations, if you wish to be the master of your own land, then you must take hold of power in Poland. You yourself must build the edifice of an independent and united People's Republic of Poland.

In the conviction that you will rise to this great and sacred task, we hereby announce ourselves, upon recommendation of the peasant and socialist factions of the former Kingdom and Galicia, to be the Provisional People's Government of Poland and, until the Constitutional Sejm<sup>2</sup> is convened, we shall assume power in its entirety and indivisibly, vowing to wield it in a righteous manner, to the good and benefit of the Polish people and state, never shrinking, however, from severe and ruthless punishment of those unwilling to acknowledge the authority of Polish democracy in Poland. As the Provisional People's Government of Poland, we hereby ordain and declare the below-stated laws to be binding on the entire Polish nation upon the issuance of this present decree:

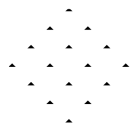
<sup>1</sup> Appointed Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Army by the Regency Council, General Tadeusz Rozwadowski (1866–1928) set about organising Poland's central military institutions, but resigned in 1918 owing to a conflict with Józef Piłsudski over how to do so. He made his mark in the fight for Lwów during the Polish-Bolshevik war (1919–21). Rozwadowski commanded the defence of Warsaw during the coup d'état of May 1926.

<sup>2</sup> The Constitutional Sejm – the single-chamber Polish parliament in existence from February 1919 until November 1922. Its main task was to lay down the legal foundations of the nascent Polish state – first and foremost to prepare a constitution. It was dissolved after the first parliamentary elections held according to the rules defined in the 1921 constitution. At that point, the first Sejm of the Republic of Poland took office.



1) The Polish state, extending to all the lands populated by the Polish people, with its own sea-shore, shall constitute for all time the People's Republic of Poland, whose first President is to be elected by the Constitutional Sejm; 2) The Regency Council, acting to the detriment of the Polish nation, shall, by the will of the Polish people, cease to exist as from this very day. In the event that the Regency Council and the government it has formed be opposed to submitting to the will of the Polish people, they shall be declared outlaws. It shall be the duty of every citizen of the Polish state to pursue, capture, and place them in the hands of our executive authorities. 3) We hereby order the provisional government<sup>1</sup> presently existing in Warsaw to subordinate itself to us forthwith and then to continue performing its functions until it receive further instruction from us, otherwise [its officials] shall be arraigned before the people's tribunal whose composition and competencies will soon be announced. 4) The Constitutional Sejm shall be convened by us within the present year, and shall be based, without consideration of sex, upon popular, equal, direct, secret, and proportional voting. The electoral system shall be announced within a few days from now. Both the franchise and eligibility to stand for election shall be vested in every citizen, both male and female, aged twenty-one and older.

<sup>1</sup> The Regency Council appointed, on 25 October 1918, a government with Józef Świeżyński as the prime minister. On 3rd November, following an attempted coup-d'état, this government was replaced by a preliminary government led by Władysław Wróblewski.

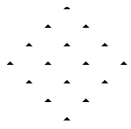


5) As of this day, we declare the complete and equal political and civil rights for all citizens, without regard to descent, faith, or nationality, along with freedom of conscience, of the press, of speech, freedom to assemble, to march, to association, to form labour unions, and to strike.

6) All the donacje and majoraty within Poland we hereby declare to be state-owned property; separate regulations will be issued in order to counteract land speculation.

7) All forests, private as well as formerly government-owned, we hereby declare to be state-owned; any sale and cutting-down of forests is forbidden, unless with a special permit, as from the publication of this decree. 8) In industry, crafts, and commerce, we hereby institute an eight-hour working day.

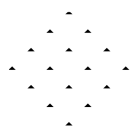
9) With the final consolidation of our authority, we shall immediately embark on the reorganisation, upon genuinely democratic principles, of village councils, county-level authorities [sejmiki], and municipal governments, and shall at once organise people's militias across towns and villages in the aim of ensuring order and security to the populace, obedience to and execution of the instructions of our executive bodies, and the appropriate approach to the problem of provisioning the people. We consider assuring the populace has essential foodstuffs at a cheap price to be one of our primary duties. In extinguishing criminal profiteering and concealment of supplies, as well as in the facilitation of food deliveries, we shall rely upon self-governmental and societal organisations.



We shall submit to the Constitutional Sejm projects for the following societal reforms:

- a) the coerced expropriation and abolishment of large and medium land-holdings and handing over the same to the working people, under state control;
- b) the nationalisation of coal-mines, saltworks, the oil industry, and transportation roads, along with other sectors of industry, wherever this may be done at once;
- c) the participation of workers in the administering of those industrial factories which will not be nationalised at-once;
- d) a labour protection law; unemployment, health, and old-age insurance;
- e) the confiscation of capital amassed during the war through criminal profiteering in basic necessities and supplying the army; f) the introduction of a universal, compulsory, secular, and free-of-charge schooling system. We appeal to the Poles residing in the lands of the former Duchy of Lithuania that, in brotherly concord with the Lithuanian and Byelorussian nations, they strive to reconstruct the Lithuanian state within its former historical boundaries. And to the Poles from eastern Galicia and in Ukraine [we appeal], that they peacefully settle the contentious issues with the Ukrainian nation<sup>1</sup>, until they can be finally regulated by the competent officials in both nations.

<sup>1</sup> Polish-Ukrainian struggle for Lwów was on from 1st November 1918.



People of Poland! The political and societal reforms that we desire to enact are of greatest exigency. Without carrying them out, Poland will never lift itself out from the present-day misery, inertia, and humiliation. However, the aim to carry out these reforms across the whole territory of Poland is obstructed by the fact that part of the country is still held by German armies<sup>1</sup> that are robbing and destroying it. This is why there are no representatives of the People from the Poznań region in our body, and why as-yet we are not officiating in Warsaw – the capital-city of Poland.

We believe that the German people, which with such difficulty is coming to power in its home country, will command its armies to immediately leave all Polish lands, will return to us our finest citizens, above all Piłsudski, as well as the Polish prisoners-of-war and workers imprisoned to this day in Germany. But if the German armies do not voluntarily withdraw from all Polish lands, we shall call upon you, the People of Poland, that, with weapons in your hands, you move to liberate our country from the German invasion, and join its lands into a unified state. This is why we deem the organisation of a regular people's army to be one of the most important and most urgent tasks before us. We believe that the rural and worker youth will joyfully join the ranks of the revolutionary Polish army arisen from the People in defence of the political and societal rights of the working People, an army loyally and entirely devoted to the people's Government and heeding solely its commands.

<sup>1</sup> The German army withdrew from Warsaw after an armistice was concluded on 11th November 1918 between Germany and the coalition allies, which put an end to World War 1.



With Józef Piłsudski now absent, we have entrusted the formation of the army to his deputy Edward Rydz-Śmigły<sup>1</sup>, Colonel of the Ist Brigade of the Polish Legions.

People of Poland! The hour for you to act has come. Take the grand task of liberating this land, so drenched with the sweat and blood of your fathers and forefathers, into your worn, strong hands, and pass on to the next generations a great and free united Homeland. Stand now, as one, and act, never begrudging property, sacrifice, or life in the great work of liberating Poland and the man labouring therein.

You, fraternal nations – Lithuanian, Byelorussian, Ukrainian, Czech, and Slovak – we call on you to live beside us in harmony and that we reciprocally support one another in the great work of creating a union of free and equal nations.

The Provisional People's Government of the Polish Republic: Tomasz Arciszewski<sup>2</sup>, Ignacy Daszyński<sup>3</sup>, Medard Downarowicz, Gabriel Dubiel, Marian Malinowski, Jędrzej Moraczewski<sup>4</sup>, Tomasz Nocznicki, Juliusz Poniatowski, Edward Rydz-Śmigły, Wacław Sieroszewski, Błażej Stolarski, Stanisław Thugutt, Bronisław Ziemięcki.

Lublin–Kraków, November 7, 1918.

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Śmigły-Rydz (1886–1941) was a close associate of Józef Piłsudski. He joined the ranks of the Polish Legions, and ran the Polish Military Organisation after Piłsudski was imprisoned in 1917. He served as Minister for Military Affairs with the Provisional People's Government of the Polish Republic. Following Piłsudski's death in 1935, he assumed the office of General Inspector of the Armed Forces and was nominated Marshal of Poland.

<sup>2</sup> Tomasz Stefan Arciszewski (1877–1955) succeeded S. Mikołajczyk as Prime Minister with the Government-in-Exile (in office November 29, 1944 to 1947).

<sup>3</sup> Associated with the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), Ignacy Daszyński (1866–1936) took the lead in the Provisional People's Government of the Polish Republic, but resigned on November 12, 1918 – the day after Józef Piłsudski's return from the prison in Magdeburg. On November 14, 1918 Piłsudski entrusted Daszyński with the mission to form a government. Having failed in his attempt to build a coalition cabinet, Daszyński resigned a few days later on behalf of Jędrzej Moraczewski. He supported Piłsudski in the coup of May 1926, but in time he came to oppose the Piłsudski's 'Sanacja' regime. In 1928–30 he was the Marshal (Speaker) of the Sejm.

<sup>4</sup> Jędrzej Moraczewski (1870–1944), associated with the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), was a member of the Polish Legions and co-leader of the Polish Military Organisation. He was Minister of the Post and Communication with the Government led by his predecessor Ignacy Daszyński. Moraczewski headed the Provisional Government of the Polish Republic, formed by Józef Piłsudski (November 18, 1918). Later he served as Minister of Public Labour (1925–9).