

NOTES

ON THE SENATE



SENATE
OF THE REPUBLIC
OF POLAND

Marshals of the Senate of the Second Polish Republic

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During 17 years of its existence (1922–1939), the Senate of the Second Polish Republic was headed by 5 marshals. They all came from families with a long tradition of struggle for independence, which was characteristic of the generation born after the insurrection of 1863. They were all educated in higher education institutions of the countries that had invaded and occupied Poland – Austro-Hungary, Germany and Russia. They all entered into adulthood at the turn of the 20th century (1880–1914). In 1918, the year Poland regained independence, all five future marshals of the Polish Senate held public offices either at home or abroad, also in patriotic organizations. Before taking up their duties as co-leaders of the parliament in Wiejska Street, they held different public functions in the Second Polish Republic. Throughout their lives they took interest in politics and Polish issues.

WOJCIECH TRĄMPCZYŃSKI (1860–1953)

Senate of the First Term (1922–1927)

Wojciech Trąpczyński was born in 1860 in Dębowa in Wielkopolska (Greater Poland), to a landed gentry family. He studied law at the universities of Wrocław and Berlin. In 1886, he opened a legal practice in Poznań. He was a member of the Council of the City of Poznań, where he served as the chairman of the Polish Circle. After election to the Reich parliament in 1912, he became the chairman of the Polish Parliamentary Circle. In late 1918 and early 1919, he carried on negotiations with representatives of the German government on the peaceful separation of Wielkopolska from Germany, having been authorised to do so by the Supreme People's Council. On 14 February 1919, he was elected Marshal of the Sejm (Lower House) by a majority of votes. Trąpczyński organized the Chancellery of the Sejm from scratch. He presided over the Civic State-Defence Committee during the war with Soviet Russia in 1920. By virtue of constitutional entitlements bestowed upon him by the Constitution of March 1921, he played the role of a mediator between the Head of State and the Sejm during the formation of successive governments. **ON 1 DECEMBER 1922, HE WAS ELECTED MARSHAL OF THE FIRST TERM SENATE.** Although critical of the May 1926 coup d'état, he acted as a mediator between Wielkopolska – which was ready to reinstate the abolished legal government by force and K. Bartel's cabinet supported by Marshal Piłsudski. Trąpczyński brought to Poznań a letter from the new prime minister guaranteeing the rule of law. The threat of a civil war was thus averted. After the new constitution was adopted in 1935, he joined the opposition, convinced that the winners of the latest election were not true representatives of the nation.

Wojciech Trąpczyński died in Poznań in 1953 at the age of 93. He was buried in the Poznań Cemetery for Meritorious Citizens of Wielkopolska.





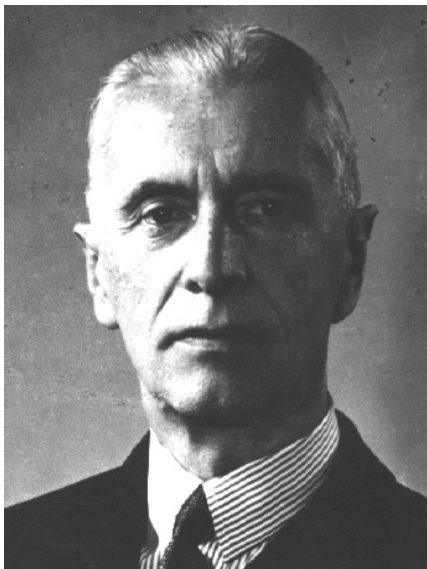
JULIAN JULIUSZ SZYMAŃSKI (1870–1958)

Senate of the Second Term (1928–1930)

Julian Szymański was born in Kielce in 1870. In 1896, he became a doctor, having graduated with honours from the University of Kiev.

He took part in anti-tsarist demonstrations during the revolution of 1905. Fearing reprisals, he fled to the United States, where he combined an ophthalmologic practice with journalism and cultural activities in the Polish community of Chicago. Between 1916 and 1920, he lived in Brazil, where he worked as a professor at the university in Curitiba. After a long time abroad, he returned to independent Poland in 1922 and became the Head of the Ophthalmologic Clinic in Vilnius. In 1928, with support of Marshal Piłsudski, he opened a state-of-the-art eye clinic and a military ophthalmologic department. Julian Szymański was **ELECTED TO THE SENATE OF THE SECOND TERM ON 27 MARCH 1928, FROM THE STATE LIST OF THE NON-PARTISAN BLOCK OF COOPERATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT (BBWR) AND BECAME ITS MARSHAL**. He initiated legislation on combating tuberculosis, physical education, compulsory hygiene education in schools and the establishment of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Public Health. During the second term of the Senate, the conflict between the opposition and the government intensified. Although Szymański sympathized with Marshal Piłsudski, he was in favour of a compromise between the government and the opposition for the sake of the common good. When K. Bartel's cabinet resigned, in March 1930 Szymański was tasked with establishing a new government. On August 30, 1930, the President dissolved the government on the pretext of its inefficiency. Szymański returned to Vilnius, where he retired in 1935. In 1949, he emigrated to Brazil with his family. In 1956, he returned to homeland at the age of 87, after his wife died. His return was possible due to liberalisation of the political system in Poland.

He died in 1958 in Białystok and was buried there.



WŁADYSŁAW RACZKIEWICZ (1885–1947)

Senate of the Third Term (1930–1935)

Władysław Raczkiewicz was born in 1885 in the Caucasus. In 1911, he graduated from the universities of Saint Petersburg and Dorpat (later Tartu), where he studied law.

During World War I, the Russian government authorized him to establish the First Polish Corps. He served as Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Polish Military Force in Russia. In December 1918, he provided President Piłsudski with a report on the situation in the Eastern Borderlands. Between 1921 and 1930, he served three terms as Minister of Internal Affairs and the Voivode of Novgorod. After the establishment of the voivodeship of Vilnius, he became the voivode of that voivodeship too. As the Minister of Internal Affairs, he was responsible for public administration, local governments, public safety and healthcare. In addition, he supervised the work of the Central Statistical Office, the Office for Silesian Affairs and Border Protection Corps. Władysław Raczkiewicz served as Chairman of the Ministerial Committee for the Eastern Borderlands and National Minorities. Advocated the policy of solving social conflicts by negotiation. Helped to establish the Eastern European Research Institute in Vilnius. Served as a substitute for Prime Minister Władysław Grabski during the latter's trips abroad. In 1930, was elected to the Senate from the Non-Partisan Block of Cooperation with the Government (BBWR) list. **FROM 9 DECEMBER 1930, HE SERVED AS MARSHAL OF THE THIRD TERM SENATE**. Introduced the custom of seeking presidential approval of the Senate Marshal-elect, which became law in 1938. The adoption of a new constitution on 10 July 1935 ended the work of the Third Term Senate.

Marshals of the Senate of the Second Polish Republic

Raczkiewicz was appointed as the Voivode of Kraków, then as the Minister of Internal Affairs and finally as the Voivode of Pomerania. He presented a plan for the development of the local government and supported the aspirations of national minorities. During World War II, he became the President of the Polish Republic in exile. For the sake of the country's good, he collaborated with prime ministers who opposed Marshal Piłsudski, including General Władysław Sikorski. However, he was against policies which jeopardized the territorial integrity of the Republic of Poland. In a letter to Pope Pius XII, he intervened in matters associated with the extermination of the Polish Jews. He also demanded an inquiry into the circumstances of death of the Polish officers in Katyń.

Władysław Raczkiewicz died in Wales in 1947, after a serious illness. He was buried at the Polish pilots' cemetery in Newark. In 2022, his mortal remains were transported to Poland and placed in the Mausoleum of the Presidents of the Republic of Poland in Exile in the Temple of Divine Providence in Warsaw's Wilanów district.

ALEKSANDER PRYSTOR (1874–1941)

Senate of the Fourth Term (1935–1938)

Alexander Prystor was born in Vilnius in 1874. Between 1894 and 1901, he studied mathematics and medicine in Moscow and Dorpat (later Tartu).

When he was a student, he conspired for the independence of Poland as a member of the Polish Socialist Party. During the revolution of 1905, he set up anti-tsarist combat organization. Between 1908 and 1912, Prystor participated in officer courses at the legally operating Shooting Association in Kraków. In 1912, he was arrested and deported to Orel in Russia. He regained his freedom when the revolution broke out in February 1917. In May 1918, he took up the post of an advisor at the Ministry of Public Health and Labour Protection in the Regent Council government. At the same time, he served as member of the Supreme Headquarters of the Polish Military Organization. From 1918 to 1922, he served as the Under-Secretary of State in the Labour Ministry. He also worked as a Special Assistant of the Commander-in-Chief. After the May 1926 coup d'état, he became the chief of staff at the General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces. In 1934, he represented Marshal Piłsudski during talks on the normalisation of Polish-Lithuanian relations in Kaunas. Prystor served as the Labour Minister (1929–1930) and the Prime Minister of the Polish government (1931–1933). His cabinet developed policies based on the economic experience of western democracies, the USA and authoritarian states (USSR, Italy). Prystor took part in the development of a new electoral law. He was elected to the Senate as a representative of Vilnius and was **ELECTED MARSHAL OF THE SENATE** at its first sitting, on **4 OCTOBER 1935**. In the Senate of the Fifth Term (1938–1939), he presided over the budget, economic and agricultural committees. After the Nazi invasion in 1939, Prystor sought shelter in Lithuania. In 1940, when Lithuania found itself under Russian occupation, he was arrested, taken to Moscow and imprisoned at Lubianka.

He died in Moscow in the summer of 1941. There is a symbolic grave of Aleksander Prystor at Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw.





BOGUSŁAW MIEDZIŃSKI (1891–1972)

Senate of the Fifth Term (1938–1939)

Born in Miastków near Warsaw in 1891. Between 1910 and 1914, he studied agronomy and chemistry in Lviv and Kraków.

Bogusław Miedziński was an activist in the Kraków branch of the Shooting Association, where he met J. Piłsudski. Co-founder of the Polish Military Organization during World War I. As an activist of the political underground, he earned a reputation of excellent organizer. When Piłsudski became the Head of State, Miedziński was tasked with political responsibilities (for example, he headed the Second Information Department of the Staff of the Ministry of Military Affairs). He won a seat to the Sejm of the First Term Sejm (1922–1927) as a deputy of the Polish Peasant Alliance Piast (PSL-Piast). Miedziński belonged to the Piłsudski-led pressure group inside and outside the parliament. In 1926, he was appointed the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs. Miedziński, who was known for his ability to act behind the scenes, participated in developing an election and propaganda strategy for the Piłsudski camp. These activities led to the establishment of the Non-Partisan Block of Cooperation with the Government (BBWR). In the Sejm of the Second Term (1928–1930), Miedziński was a member of the Military and Foreign Affairs Committee. He was a Deputy Marshal of the Fourth Term Sejm (1935–1938). Miedziński was involved in the drawing up of the Constitution of April 1935. As president of the Prasa Polska S.A. conglomerate, he promoted the concepts of a one-nation state and primacy of the executive branch of government. Miedziński won a seat to the Senate of the Fifth Term (1938–1939) and **BECAME ITS MARSHAL ON 28 NOVEMBER 1938**. After 1939, was sent to South Africa by the anti-Piłsudski government of General Sikorski for the duration of the war. In 1947, he went to London, where he occasionally published historical articles. He also contributed many editing notes to the Modern History of Poland written by W. Pobóg-Malinowski and served as a member of the Council of the Piłsudski Institute. He remained loyal to Marshal Piłsudski until his death.

Died in London in 1972 and was buried at South Ealing Cemetery near London.