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Photography to Pumpkin

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Warsaw's Old Town, systematically destroyed by the Germans in World War II, has been completely restored. EASTFOTO

POLAND

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Coat of Arms

INFORMATION HIGHLIGHTS

Official Name: Polish People's Republic (Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa).
Head of State: Chairman of the Council of State.
Head of Government: Chairman of the Council of Ministers (premier).
Legislature: Sejm (Assembly).
Area: 120,725 square miles (312,677 sq km).
Boundaries: North, Baltic Sea; east, USSR; south, Czechoslovakia; west, East Germany.
Elevation: Highest point, Rysy (8,199 feet, or 2,499 meters) in the High Tatra mountains.
Population: (1982 est.) 36,100,000.
Capital: Warsaw (Warszawa).
Language: Polish.
Major Religious Group: Roman Catholic.
Monetary Unit: 1 zloty = 100 groszy.
Weights and Measures: Metric system.
Flag: Horizontal halves of white over red.
National Anthem: Jeszcze Polska nie zginela (Poland is not yet lost).

POLAND, pō'land, is a country that lies in the north of northern Europe. It is the largest and most populous of the East Central European countries. Poland is bordered by Communist Russia and is a member of both the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON, or CMEA), a military and an economic alliance between the USSR and its European satellites.

Throughout its history, Poland has been overwhelmed by its powerful neighbors to the west and to the east. The eastward expansion of Germany, beginning in the Middle Ages, was at the expense of Poland. But Poland was able, during periods of Russian weakness, to spread into territory that now belongs to the Soviet Union. In the late 18th century, when both Prussia (which later became the core of a united Germany) and Russia were strong, the Polish state was extinguished and divided between those nations and Austria.

Poland was not revived until 1918, when Russia was in the throes of the Bolshevik Revolution and Germany had been defeated by the western Allies. By 1939 both Germany and the Soviet Union were again powerful and well armed.



CZESLAW MOMATIUW, PHOTO RESEARCHERS

The Tatra Mountains on Poland's border with Czechoslovakia attract vacationers and skiers in the winter.

Their invasion of Poland in September 1939 again destroyed the Polish state, which in turn precipitated World War II.

By 1945, Germany had been defeated and the military strength of the Soviet Union was unchallenged in eastern Europe. The part of Poland that had been incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1939 was retained by the USSR. In compensation, Poland received land in the west that had been German. Today the territory of Poland is about 20% smaller than it was on the eve of World War II.

Since World War II, Poland has been dependent on the Soviet Union for economic aid, and Soviet troops have been stationed, though unobtrusively, on Polish soil. These circumstances have severely limited Poland's freedom of action. Despite a revolt against Soviet control in 1956, Poland remains one of the most docile of the Soviet Union's satellites.

Poles, however, have resented their subservience to the Soviet Union. Much of their history has been marked by war with the Russians, and Poles have always tended to see themselves as guardians of Western civilization against Eastern barbarism, with which many Poles identify Soviet Communism. Polish fear of Germany has been as conspicuous as Polish contempt for the Russians. In particular they have dreaded a resurgence of German nationalism, which might threaten Polish occupation of the formerly German territory on the west (the Western Territories). Even though Poland's boundaries are recognized by both West and East Germany, there remains a feeling that Poland is dependent on the Soviet Union for the protection of its frontier along the rivers Odra (Oder) and Nysa (Neisse). The southern boundary with Czechoslovakia follows the Karkonosze and Carpathian mountains, and over most of this distance there is no dispute. There has, however, been a long disagreement between the two countries regarding the small territory of Teschen (Polish: Cieszyń), important for its coal and steel. At present the territory is divided between them.

1. Land and Natural Resources

Poland is a country of the plain. Except in the mountains, which form Poland's southern boundary, its surface rarely rises to more than 1,000 feet (300 meters) above sea level. Relief, except in the mountains, is gentle, and the country consists essentially of the valleys of two rivers—the Odra and Vistula (Wisła)—and of their tributaries. Both rise in the mountains that border Czechoslovakia on the south, and flow northward to discharge into the Baltic Sea.

The rocks that make up the plain are mostly soft and easily eroded. But areas of older and harder rock are found in south central and southern Poland, which account for small zones of bolder relief. The most important of these areas is formed by two hilly ridges known respectively as the Holy Cross Mountains (Góry Świętokrzyskie) and the Kraków Jura (Jura Krakowska).

During the Quaternary Ice Age most of the plain was covered by ice sheets, which spread southward from Scandinavia. On their retreat they left behind a vast, uneven sheet of sand, gravel, boulders and clay, known as boulder clay. Although this has been largely eroded away from southern Poland, it covers the northern districts of Pomorze (Pomerania) and Mazury (East Prussia). Much of the clay land is poorly drained and is dotted with large and small lakes, of which Mazury has thousands.

As the ice melted away at the end of the Ice Age, vast torrents of water made their way to the sea, scouring a series of small valleys as they did so. These now lie across the country in a roughly east to west direction, forming shallow depressions that have been of great importance in cutting canal links between the main rivers of central Europe.

Over much of southern Poland a dustlike deposit, known as loess, has been blown from the drying boulder clay to the north. It gives rise to a well-drained and fertile soil, which makes the loess regions agriculturally the most productive in Poland.

The mountains that form the southern boundary of the plain belong to two separate systems. To the southwest are the Karkonosze Mountains, part of the massif of hard, ancient rock that forms Bohemia. To the south lie the higher and more complex mountains of the Carpathian system. These consist of a series of parallel ranges across which movement is difficult. They culminate in the Tatra (Tatry) Mountains, whose highest point reaches 8,199 feet (2,499 meters). The Polish Carpathians, known as Beskidy, are mostly a beautiful forested region, containing a number of resorts, of which Zakopane is the best known.

The two ranges are separated by a gap known as the Moravian Gate, which provides an easily negotiated route from southern Poland, across Czechoslovakia, to Vienna and the Danube basin. The Moravian Gate has played an important role in Polish and East European history, guiding the movement of invaders in the past and today acting as a funnel for road and railway traffic and

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Natural Resources

country of the plain. Except which form Poland's southern face rarely rises to more than 100 meters above sea level. Relief is gentle, and the country is essentially of the valleys of two great rivers, the Vistula (Wisła)—and of the rise in the mountains that border the south, and flow north into the Baltic Sea. The plain is made up of the plain are mostly eroded. But areas of older ground in south central and south account for small zones. The most important of these are the hilly ridges known respectively as the Świętokrzyskie Mountains (Góry Świętokrzyskie), the Jura (Jura Krakowska), and the Quaternary Ice Age most of it was covered by ice sheets, which spread from Scandinavia. On their retreat, a vast, uneven sheet of sand and clay, known as bolder clay, has been largely eroded away from it covers the northern districts of Pomerania and Mazury. The clay land is poorly drained with large and small lakes, and is the most productive. At the end of the last ice age, the ice made their way to the valleys as they flowed across the country in a rough fashion, forming shallow depressions of great importance in the drainage between the main rivers of the

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for the movement of trade. Plans have been made to cut a canal through the Moravian Gate to link the Odra Valley with that of the Danube.

Climate. Poland typically has warm summers, with a July average of 64°–68° F (18°–20° C), and long, cold winters. The January average ranges from 23° F to 30° F (–5° C to –1.1° C). Winters are increasingly severe toward the north and the east, where the growing season may be two or three weeks shorter than in the south and west. Although there is a prolonged snow cover over most of the country, the heaviest precipitation is in the summer, when severe thunderstorms are not infrequent. Total precipitation is quite low over the plain, ranging from less than 19 to 25 inches (483–635 mm), but somewhat higher near the Baltic coast and a great deal higher—up to 40 inches (1,016 mm)—in the mountains.

Vegetation and Soils. Poland was once densely forested. Today at least one fifth of its area is under forest, with a heavy concentration of forests in the poor sandy soil region of northern Poland. Broad-leaved trees formerly prevailed, with conifers increasing in importance toward the northeast. Recent plantations have tended to be of softwood, so that the character of the forests is slowly changing.

The soil quality varies greatly. Apart from the thin and stony soils of the mountains, every gradation is found from heavy and poorly drained clays to blowing sands. Most fertile are the loess soils of southern Poland and the loam soils that occur over large areas in the center of the country.

Mineral Resources. Poland has rich reserves of fuels and minerals. Foremost is coal. There are large reserves of soft coal, mainly in the coal basin of Upper Silesia, and small reserves of brown coal or lignite in central Poland. In Upper Silesia, coal underlies an area of about 2,000 square miles (5,180 sq km). Seams are thick and lie at relatively shallow depths, making them suitable for mechanical extraction. Petroleum and natural gas occur in southern Poland, but reserves are nearing exhaustion.

There are valuable sulfur deposits. Zinc and lead are mined in Upper Silesia, and copper in Lower Silesia. Reserves of iron ore are small.

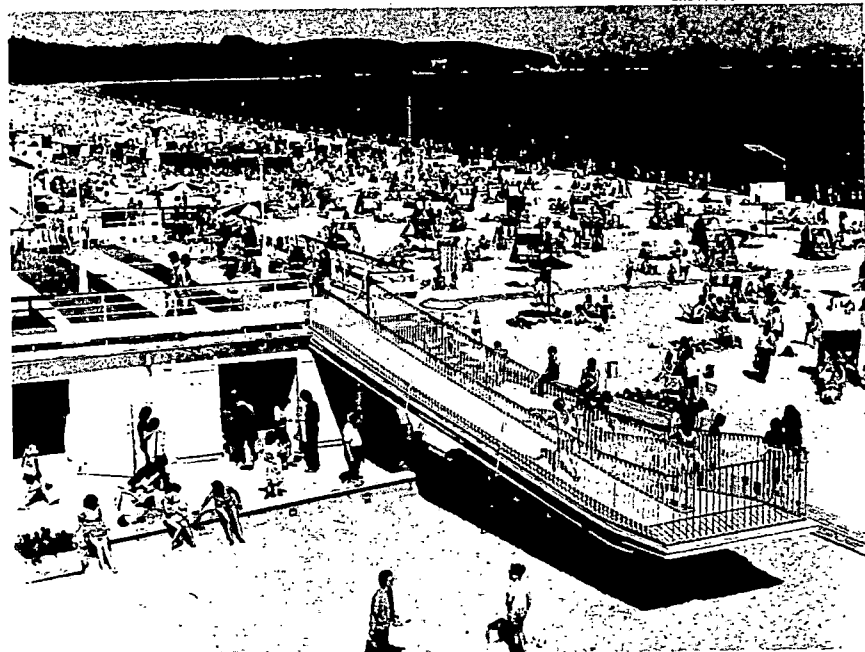
2. The Economy

Poland suffered severely during World War II. The whole country was twice fought over, and the destruction of factories, farms, and farm stock was enormous. Recovery was hindered both by the postwar exactions of the Soviet Union and the changes of boundaries and consequent migration. Poland lost its eastern provinces, notable chiefly for their agricultural and forest resources. But it regained the Western Territories, which were more richly endowed in mineral resources and better developed. The Western Territories, however, were almost depopulated by the emigration of much of their German-speaking population. This loss was far from offset by the immigration of Poles from the territory ceded to the Soviet Union. Because Poland thus suffered a severe shortage of labor at a time when mechanical equipment was scarce and the task of reconstruction overwhelming, rebuilding was slow.

Nationalization of Industry and Commerce. The state nationalized all natural resources and most of the means of production, and attempted to reconstruct the society and economy along Communist lines. To some degree, nationalization was inevitable, since about one third of the country's assets had belonged to Germans who left Poland at the end of the war.

Rebuilding and development were directed by a series of economic plans prepared and implemented by the Central Planning Board (later the State Commission on Economic Planning), set up by the Council of Ministers. By the end of 1946 less than 10% of gross industrial production came from privately owned undertakings, and by 1953 this had fallen to less than 1%. Wholesale and retail trade also passed from private to public hands, and the government used its powers to control the supply of goods to private retailers and thus drive them out of business.

The beach at Sopot, on the Gulf of Danzig, is a popular resort with both the Poles and foreigners. It is located only a few miles from the cities of Gdynia to the north and Gdańsk (Danzig) to the south.



In spite of the extensive nationalization of production, the state continued to tolerate, and may even have tacitly encouraged, small private workshops, primarily because the quality of their output was generally higher than that of the state-run operations.

Collectivization of Agriculture. The attempts of the Polish government to control all aspects of the economy were, however, rebuffed in agriculture. Poland traditionally was a land of large estates, which were owned by the aristocracy. Between the two world wars there had been a measure of land reform, which involved the breaking up of some of the estates into peasant holdings. After 1945 the peasants expected this process to continue. But the government, following the Soviet model, planned to combine small holdings and estates into collective farms that were to be operated by government-appointed officials. In those parts of Germany that passed to Poland after World War II, many German-owned estates were taken over by the Polish authorities, and many were run as state farms, particularly in the Western Territories.

Elsewhere, the peasants strenuously resisted attempts to establish collective farms, and forced the government to postpone its plans. These were revived, however, in the 1950's. The government played upon the jealousy of the poor peasants toward the rich, and gradually eliminated the latter. However, the peasants, with very few goods available to them on which to spend their income, withheld produce from the market to protest the attempts at collectivization. This led to acute hardship in the cities. Pressure mounted against the government, which after the uprising of 1956 was compelled virtually to abandon, at least for a time, its plans to collectivize agriculture. Collectivization remains, however, a long-term objective.

About 80% of all cultivated land is in private hands. However, the percentage of land in state or collective farms is slowly increasing. It is noteworthy that productivity is somewhat greater on this public land and, more importantly, that the ratio of output to labor is significantly higher than on peasant land.

The Postwar Shift in the Economy. In the decades that followed World War II, manufactured goods formed a steadily increasing proportion of total production, so that Poland was transformed from a predominantly agricultural country into one primarily engaged in manufacturing. At the end of this period over half of the gross national product was derived from manufacturing, mining, and power production. Less than 20% came from agriculture.

During this same period there was a consequent shift in employment. Agriculture, which had employed more than half the population before the first national plans went into effect after the war, accounted for only 38% in the 1970's. At the same time employment in manufacturing increased.

Poland's concentration on capital-goods industries in the first national plans meant that the production of consumer goods received little encouragement. Clothing, footwear, and all forms of domestic equipment were continuously in short supply, and housing construction was inadequate for local needs. These conditions began to change very slowly in the 1970's, as the state planners diverted more resources from capital-goods to consumer-goods industries.

Poland's Role in the Communist Trading Bloc. Poland's economic plans have been integrated through the machinery of COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance), with those of other East European countries, Yugoslavia and Albania excepted. COMECON calls for a degree of specialization and mutual trade between members of the bloc, and it became Poland's role in this integrated system to concentrate on the manufacture of steel and heavy engineering equipment. While Poland welcomed this particular role, it has generally opposed the policy of a complete "socialist division of labor" and has aimed at a more broadly based economic development than envisaged by COMECON.

MINING, POWER, AND MANUFACTURING

Beginning with the plan of 1950-1956, large-scale capital investments were made in mining, hydroelectric development, and iron and steel production. New coal mines were opened up, and coal production rose from 50 million metric tons in 1946 to 130 million in 1970, almost all of it from the Upper Silesian field. Poland became, after Britain and West Germany, Europe's largest producer of coal. Coal mining did not suffer as acutely from the competition of other forms of fuel as happened in many other countries, partly owing to its relative cheapness. Furthermore, Poland retained a significant export trade in coal.

Zinc and lead mining continued to be important, and copper mining was developed in Lower Silesia. Poland ranked among the leaders in the production of sulfur.

The development of power sources other than coal was also one of the goals of the national economic plans. Power generators were built with Soviet aid, the hydroelectric potential of the mountain streams was utilized, and energy was made available to factories and workshops.

The iron-smelting and steel industry has been concentrated on the Upper Silesian coalfield. Its capacity was greatly increased by the incorporation of the previously German sector of the coal basin.

Large additions were made to existing steel plants. A new works was built near Warsaw, and integrated iron and steel works were built at Częstochowa and to the east of Kraków, where the planned city of Nowa Huta was founded in 1949 for the workers in the nearby factory. Since Poland's reserves of iron ore are small, much of the ore for the furnaces is brought by rail from the Soviet Union.

The mechanical and electrical engineering industry was greatly expanded, particularly in Wrocław (Breslau), Poznań, Bydgoszcz, and Upper Silesia. Shipbuilding has been developed at Szczecin (Stettin) and Gdańsk (Danzig), and the manufacture of automobiles at Warsaw.

Other important industrial products include chemicals, textiles, and artificial fertilizers. Food processing is another important industry. An aluminum industry which is based on Hungarian bauxite and domestic brown coal, has also been developed.

AGRICULTURE

The expansion of agriculture in the decades following World War II was little short of remarkable. Gross agricultural output rose by over 80% between 1950 and 1970. Cereal production increased twofold, with a significant shift from

in the Communist Trading Bloc. Plans have been integrated into the machinery of COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance), with those of other countries, Yugoslavia included. COMECON calls for a development of trade between its members, and it became Poland's role to concentrate on the metal and heavy engineering equipment. Poland welcomed this particularly, as it generally opposed the policy of "unequal division of labor" and a broadly based economic development envisaged by COMECON.

POWER AND MANUFACTURING
With the plan of 1950-1956, large investments were made in mining development, and iron and steel works coal mines were opened. Production rose from 50 million metric tons in 1950 to 130 million in 1970, almost all from the Silesian field. Poland became a major steel producer in Western Europe, Europe's largest. Coal mining did not suffer from the competition of other forms of energy in many other countries, due to its relative cheapness. Furthermore, it has a significant export trade.

Coal mining continued to be important. Mining was developed in Lower Silesia, ranked among the leaders in the world.

Development of power sources other than coal was one of the goals of the nation.

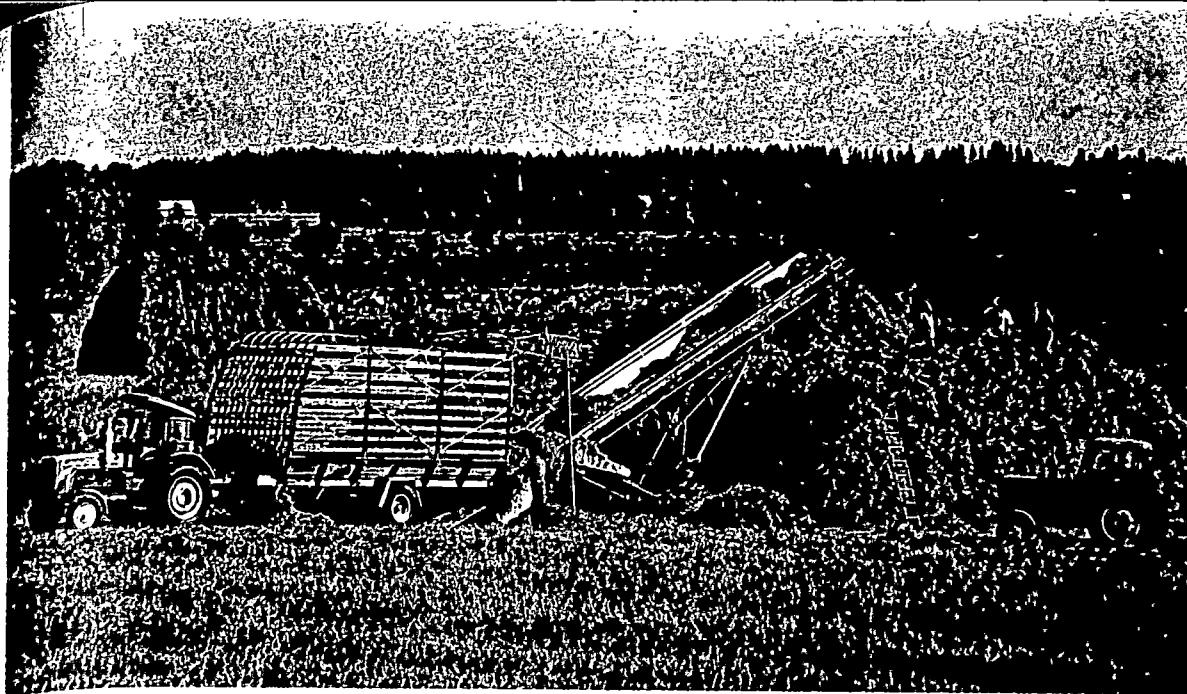
Power generators were built, and the hydroelectric potential of the Silesian coalfield was utilized, and energy was made available to factories and workshops. The steel industry has been greatly increased by the incorporation of the German sector of the country.

Investments were made to existing steel works near Warsaw, and new steel works were built to the east of Kraków, where the city of Nowa Huta was founded. Workers in the nearby factory. Since the reserves of iron ore are small, much of the iron ore is brought by rail from the Soviet Union.

Chemical and electrical engineering have been greatly expanded; particularly in the cities of Poznań, Bydgoszcz, and Wrocław. Shipbuilding has been developed in Gdynia and Gdańsk (Danzig), and the production of automobiles at Warsaw. Important industrial products include chemicals, and artificial fertilizers. Food is another important industry. A food industry which is based on Hungarian rye and domestic brown coal, has also been developed.

AGRICULTURE

Development of agriculture in the decade after World War II was little short of remarkable. Agricultural output rose by over 50% between 1950 and 1970. Cereal production increased, with a significant shift from



Mechanization of farm operations is widespread on government-run farms but has lagged on peasant holdings.

rye to wheat. The area planted to oats, grown primarily as fodder, also expanded. The production of potatoes, which supply much of the human diet, doubled. The output of sugar beets, which are grown in rotation with cereals on the better soils, rose threefold. Corn is locally important in the warmer southern districts.

Poland has restored and expanded the number of livestock on its farms, especially pigs and cattle. Few peasant farms are without pigs, and though cattle raising is less important than raising swine, the size of the herds has been increased in an attempt to improve the country's living standard. The number of sheep is restricted by the scarcity of good grazing land. Horses are less in demand since small tractors are replacing them for farm work.

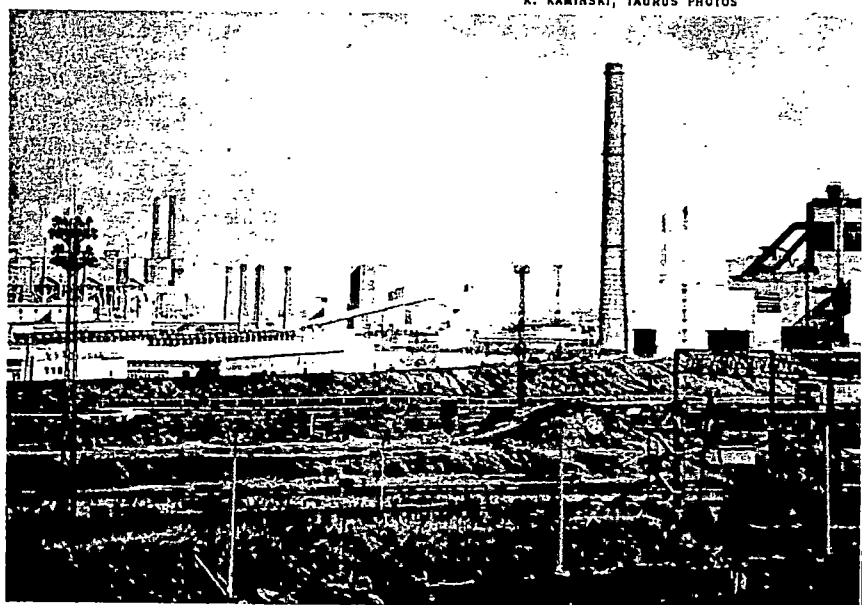
TRANSPORTATION

Poland's internal transportation network was almost completely destroyed during World War II. Rebuilding railroads and bridges and re-equipping docks became a major objective.

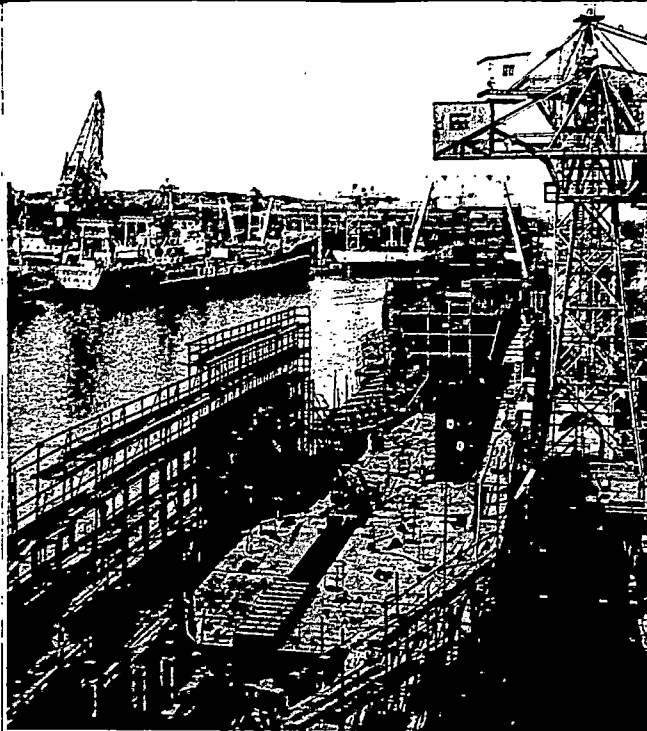
A network of main roads radiates from Warsaw to all parts of the country. They are well maintained but narrow. Cross-country roads, however, are often in very poor condition.

The railroads are relatively more important for both passengers and freight than in western Europe. The total length of track is about 14,425 miles (23,214 km), of which at least 2,000 miles (3,220 km) are electrified. The railroads are much more developed in areas taken from Germany than in the rest of the country.

K. KAMINSKI, TAURUS PHOTOS



The great steel city of Nowa Huta was founded just east of Kraków in 1949. It is a major metallurgical center, based on Polish coal and iron ore that is imported primarily from the Soviet Union.



K. KAMINSKI, TAURUS PHOTOS

Shipbuilding at Gdańsk (above) and Szczecin (Stettin) provide Poland with one of its most profitable exports.

Rivers and canals are of comparatively little importance as transportation routes. However, the Odra is used for freighting Silesian coal to the port of Szczecin (Stettin) and for importing iron ore. Coal and iron ore are also shipped along the Gliwicki Canal, which links the Upper Silesian coalfield with the Odra. The Vistula (Wisla) is too shallow for modern barges.

Trade with fellow members of the Communist bloc goes largely by rail. Seaborne trade with the rest of the world is mainly through the ports of Gdańsk and Szczecin. (Szczecin, on the west bank of the Odra, was included in Poland after World War II since the Odra basin, which formed its hinterland, lay mainly in Poland.) Gdańsk embraces for administrative purposes the port of Gdynia, developed between the two world wars chiefly for the handling of bulk commodities such as coal and iron ore. Gdańsk-Gdynia is served mainly by rail and road since the Vistula is of little value for commerce.

FOREIGN TRADE

The volume of foreign trade steadily increased in the post-World War II period. About two thirds of it is with other members of the Communist bloc. The most important trading partner is the Soviet Union. The integrated specialization in production among members of COMECON has had the effect of increasing the volume of their mutual trade, since their economies are complementary rather than competitive.

Poland has become an important supplier as well as importer of machinery and equipment. Coal has long been a very important export, but it is approximately balanced by the import of petroleum. The latter comes largely from the Soviet Union by way of the "Friendship Pipeline." Iron ore and textile raw materials are significant imports.

Poland at one time was a major exporter of grain to western Europe. Agricultural exports,

however, now take the form of animal products with pork products among the most important of its food exports. The amount of grain that must be imported increases as agriculture declines in relative importance in the country's economy and as the population expands. Helping to offset these imports are significant exports of chemicals, textiles and clothing, footwear, and fishing and other vessels.

Apart from the Communist countries, West Germany is Poland's largest trading partner, followed by the United Kingdom and the United States. In the 1970's, Poland became increasingly dependent on the United States for grain.

3. The People

The Poles are a Slavic people. The core of their country was established in the 10th century by Slavic tribes called the Polane (Poljane), who lived along the bend of the Warta River. Gradually other Slavic tribes to the north and the east were brought under their rule. The Poles then spread across the Vistula, where they partially absorbed the Prussian, Lithuanian, and Ruthenian peoples.

Language. The early Slavic tribes of east-central Europe had their distinctive dialects. These were gradually replaced by standard Polish in the area ruled over by the descendants of the Polane. Standard Polish was derived from the speech of the Polane tribes. Traces of the earlier dialects still exist, however, among the Kaszub of eastern Pomerania and in a language akin to Slovak in some areas of the Polish Carpathians.

Population Growth and Composition. The growth of the Polish population was particularly rapid during the Middle Ages, when the Poles suffered much less severely than the rest of Europe from the ravages of the Black Death. Although the population suffered serious declines during the wars of the 17th century, it recovered during the relative peace of the 18th century and again grew rapidly during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The population of Poland on the eve of World War II was more than 35 million. Of this total almost one third belonged to minority peoples, the most numerous being the Ukrainians or Ruthenians, who made up nearly 14% of the total population. The Jewish community numbered nearly 3 million, most of whom spoke Polish and were fully integrated into Polish life. The Ruthenians and a high proportion of the Jewish population lived in the eastern provinces, which in September 1939 were annexed to the USSR.

It is difficult to estimate the extent of Poland's wartime population losses, but these, including the liquidation of Polish Jews, cannot have been less than 6 million.

Poland's overall reduction in population after World War II was due largely to the loss of Germans. The Germans who had been living in the area that became postwar Poland numbered more than 8,765,000 before World War II. They were concentrated in Pomerania, Silesia, in the former German province of Posen, in Gdańsk, and in East Prussia. Their numbers had increased to well over 10 million during the war by the settlement in German-occupied Poland of refugees from Allied bombing in Germany.

As the war drew to its end, many Germans fled before the Soviet troops advancing on Germany. By 1946 the exodus of Germans had reduced the German population in Polish territory

take the form of animal products among the most important. The amount of grain that increases as agriculture declines. The country's economy is helped by the export of chemicals, clothing, footwear, and fishing.

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drawn to its end, many German troops advancing on the Soviet Union. The exodus of Germans had a large impact on the Polish population in Polish territory.

to about 2,288,000. This was reduced even further by migration during the following year. When migration effectively ceased in the late 1940's, the German-speaking population of Poland had dropped to between 125,000 and 300,000. In 1975 a treaty was signed by Poland and West Germany relating to the further migration of Germans from Poland. The treaty was ratified by West Germany in 1976. It provided for the issuance by Poland, in the succeeding four years, of exit visas to over 100,000 individuals of German extraction wishing to leave Poland for West Germany.

This enormous migration from Poland after World War II was only partially offset by the immigration of about 1.5 million Poles from the eastern territories of Poland that had passed to the Soviet Union, and by the repatriation of about 2,266,000 Poles who had been taken to Germany as forced labor or who had served in the armies of the western Allies.

A census taken in 1946 revealed that the population of Poland within its new boundaries was about 24 million. The birthrate was high during the following years, and the population rose steadily. By 1960 it had reached 30 million. Thereafter the rate of increase slackened, as the birthrate declined from its postwar peak of more than 25 per 1,000 to 18 per 1,000 in 1974. By 1982 the estimated population totaled 36.1 million.

Religion. The Polish population is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic. In the 16th century the Reformation made some progress, but this was reversed during the Counter-Reformation. During the following centuries Poland was faced with the hostility of Prussia and Russia, the one Lutheran, the other Orthodox. The effect was to intensify the Catholicism of Poland. Indeed, Russian interference in the internal affairs of Poland and Russia's involvement in the partitioning of Poland in the 18th century had as their immediate cause the Polish treatment of the Orthodox population in the eastern provinces of the country. During the 19th century, when Poland had ceased to exist as an independent state, the Roman Catholic church played a vital role in keeping alive the spirit of nationalism. Without the village priests who identified loyalty to the church with loyalty to the concept of a Poland, it is possible that many Poles would have become assimilated with their powerful neighbors.

With the establishment of the Polish Communist state after World War II, the very existence of the church was threatened. Yet in no other Soviet-bloc country has Catholicism proved so tenacious in resisting the onslaughts of Communism, which is committed to the promotion of atheism. In the decades following World War II, relations between state and church have oscillated: at times the state seemed to be seeking some kind of partial reconciliation with the church; but more frequently their relationship has been marked with hostility, as the state has stripped the church of all but its spiritual power, which has proved to be beyond the state's grasp.

Jewish Population. The Jewish population of Poland numbered about 2,750,000 before World War II, almost 80 times larger than it is today. The Jews lived chiefly in the cities, and of these urban dwellers a higher proportion lived in eastern than in western Poland. In eastern Poland the Pale of Jewish settlement was established during the Russian Czarist period.



HANS KRAMARZ

Hundreds of thousands of Polish Roman Catholics make a pilgrimage in August to Częstochowa monastery.

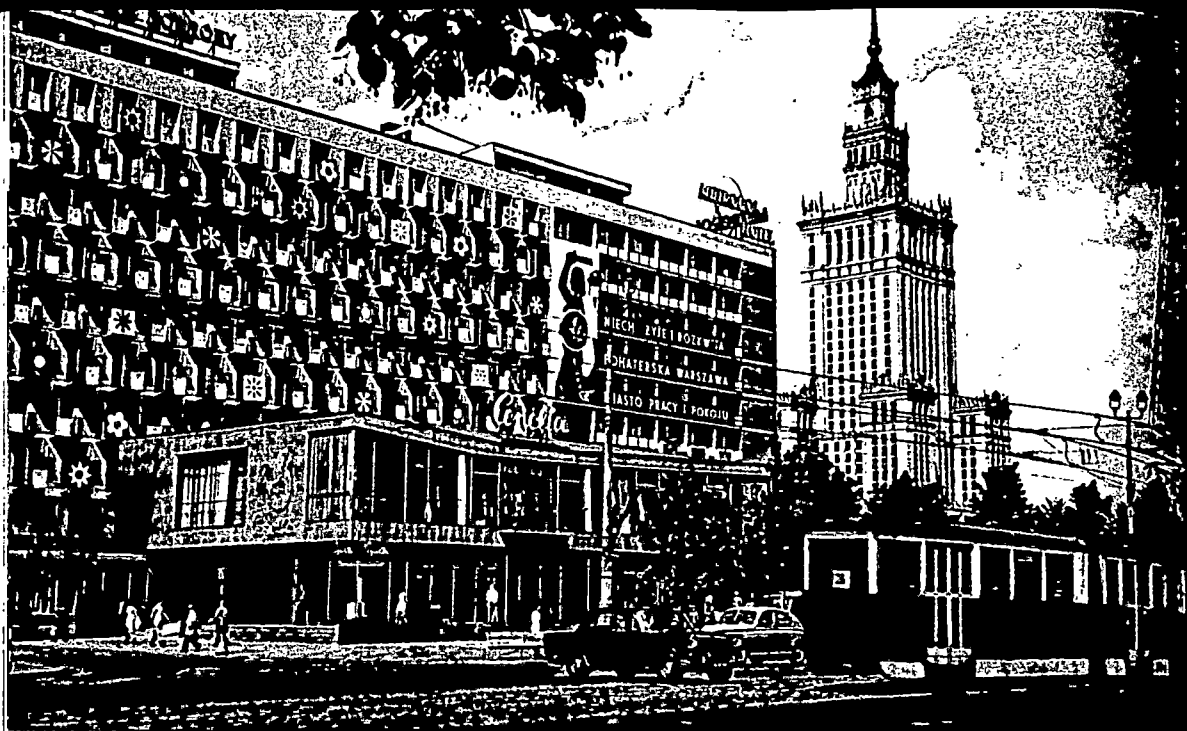
In some small towns in eastern Poland the Jews formed, if not a majority, at least a large minority. In Warsaw, where they formed a large and closely knit community, they chiefly inhabited the Muranów suburb, to the northwest of the Old City. Although they were to be found in all walks of life, they were most numerous in urban retailing and in handling the cash sales of the peasantry. Their role in landowning and farming was limited.

The liquidation of Polish Jewry began soon after the German conquest of most of the country in September 1939. Two of the most notorious extermination camps—Oświęcim (Auschwitz), near Kraków, and Majdanek, near Lublin—were on Polish soil. Continued harassment of the Jews provoked the so-called Ghetto Rising in Warsaw in April 1943, when Muranów was barricaded and defended by its Jewish population. Its resistance, however, was short-lived. Muranów was completely destroyed, and those of its inhabitants who survived were sent to concentration camps.

The Jewish population of Poland today is estimated to be about 35,000, but no official count has been made. Furthermore, the Polish government has adopted to some degree an anti-Semitic policy.

Cities, Towns, and Villages. When the Polish Republic was established in 1918, only about one quarter of the population lived in cities and towns. Economic development during the interwar years led to a considerable increase in the size of cities. Nevertheless, the urban population was only slightly more than 30% by 1939. As a result of World War II, Poland lost the lightly urbanized eastern provinces, but gained the more heavily urbanized German provinces in the west. Despite the wartime destruction of such cities as Warsaw and Wrocław, the urban population in 1950 made up 40% of the total, and this increased to more than 50% in the 1970's.

The largest city is Warsaw, with a population of almost 1.6 million. It replaced Kraków as



The Russian-built Palace of Culture and Science, viewed from a modern hotel plaza, is Warsaw's tallest building.

Poland's capital in 1596 because of its central location. The castle (*zamek*) was built overlooking the Vistula. To the north lay the Old City; to the west and south there developed elegant suburbs, in which the Polish aristocracy built magnificent urban palaces. Many of them survive, most of which house departments of the Polish government. Industrial and residential suburbs, including Muranów, grew up at a greater distance from the city center, some of them across the Vistula to the east.

Warsaw's growth was very rapid in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and by 1939 it had a population of 1,289,000. It was then more than three quarters destroyed in the fighting in September 1939 before it capitulated to the Germans, during the Ghetto Rising in 1943, and above all during the general rising against the Germans in 1944.

Rebuilding began soon after this. The Polish government decided on the slow and costly process of reconstructing the Old and Inner City in their traditional styles. They used as models the paintings and drawings made between 1770 and 1780 by Bernardo Bellotto, known as the "Younger Canaletto," when he was court painter to the last king of Poland. The result was widely praised as a prime example of period restoration. The cost was immense, and the rebuilding of housing was unquestionably starved of resources as a result. Warsaw became a museum of Polish history, as it was intended to be, and it was indicative of the prevailing mood of patriotism that scarcely a voice was raised in protest against this example of extravagance.

After Warsaw and its surrounding region, the most highly urbanized areas of Poland are Upper Silesia and the Łódź region. Upper Silesia, with a population of about 1.5 million, is the leading center of heavy industry. Although some of its closely spaced cities antedate the rise of modern industry, most grew up in the 19th century, and are among the worst examples in Europe of unplanned urban growth. Much of the housing

is deplorable. But the Polish government has established new residential towns around the periphery of the region, made up largely of row houses, which are generally superior to the earlier forms of workers' housing. The largest towns within the industrial region are Katowice, Zabrze, Bytom, and Chorzów, inhabited mainly by miners and workers in the metal industries.

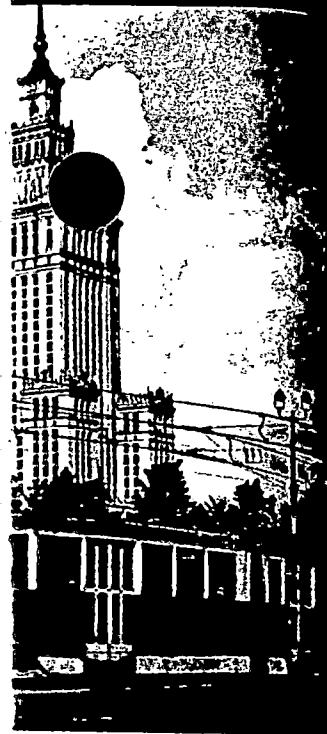
Łódź, the second-largest city, is southwest of Warsaw. A large, sprawling industrial town, it is engaged largely in textile manufacture. It grew up in the mid-19th century and at one time was notorious for its squalor.

Other important urban centers are Kraków, Wrocław, Bydgoszcz, and the port cities of Gdańsk, Gdynia, and Szczecin.

Kraków (Cracow), the medieval capital of Poland, is a city of great beauty and charm. It is located within a bend of the Vistula, and is dominated by its castle, the Wawel, now a museum and art gallery, and the cathedral, which contains the tombs of many of the early kings of Poland. It was considered to be a conservative and aristocratic city, and it is said to have been for this reason that the Communist regime located the largest of its new iron and steel works and its workers' colony of Nowa Huta a short distance from it. Nowa Huta has been incorporated into Kraków, which has thus been transformed into a mainly working-class city.

Wrocław, formerly the German city of Breslau and capital of the former province of Silesia, is an industrial town lying on the Odra River. Before World War II it was a city of great historical interest and an important center of the engineering and metallurgical industries. It was, however, defended by the Germans against the advancing Russians in 1945 and reduced to ruins. The older part of the city has been rebuilt in traditional style.

Gdańsk (Danzig), the old port city near the mouth of the Vistula, was predominantly German-speaking before World War II. Though it had been constituted a "free city" after World



DPI, FLORENCE

tel plaza, is Warsaw's tallest building.

But the Polish government has built many residential towns around the country, made up largely of modern apartment houses, which are generally superior to the old workers' housing. The largest industrial region are Katowice and Chorzów, inhabited by many workers in the metal industries. The second largest city, is southwestern Poland, being industrial town, largely in textile manufacture, since the mid-19th century and at one time for its squalor. Important urban centers are Kraków, Poznań, and the port cities of Gdansk, Szczecin.

Kraków, the medieval capital, is a city of great beauty and charm, situated on a bend of the Vistula, and has a royal castle, the Wawel, now a museum, and the cathedral, which was the seat of many of the early kings. It is considered to be a conservative city, and it is said to have been the only city that the Communist regime did not destroy. It is one of its new iron and steel works, the colony of Nowa Huta, which has been incorporated into the city. Nowa Huta has been incorporated into the city, which has thus been transformed into a mainly working-class city. It was formerly the German city of Breslau, in the former province of Silesia, and is now lying on the Odra River. Before World War II it was a city of great historic importance, a center of the engineering and chemical industries. It was, however, destroyed by the Germans against the advancing Poles, and reduced to ruins. The old city has been rebuilt in traditional style.

Gdynia, the old port city near the Vistula, was predominantly a German city before World War II. Though it was destroyed, it is now a "free city" after World

War I, its population was highly sympathetic to Hitler's Reich. It was the center of heavy fighting in 1945, when it was overrun by the Red Army and severely damaged. The city and its port were rebuilt and reequipped. The older quarters were reconstructed, as in Warsaw and Wrocław, in traditional Renaissance style. The Poles were eager to emphasize that Gdansk was a Polish city before it passed under German rule. Gdynia, 12 miles (19 km) northwest of Gdansk, was built up as a port city in the 1920's, and lacks distinction or charm.

Szczecin (Stettin), which is a port city near the mouth of the Odra, was almost wholly destroyed during World War II, and its German population was driven out. It was rebuilt and colonized by Polish immigrants from the lost eastern provinces. Other important industrial cities are Poznań (Posen), Bydgoszcz (Bromberg), Lublin, and Częstochowa. There are many medium-sized and small towns.

Generally, the cottages in the villages line both sides of a street, usually have one story, and are built of wood and thatched according to traditional designs, which vary from one part of the country to another. Peasant costumes are still worn in some areas on holidays and other festive occasions.

4. Culture

Few European peoples are more deeply conscious of their past than the Poles. This is reflected in their preservation of traditional styles in the postwar rebuilding of ruined cities and of customs that in other Communist countries would have been condemned as bourgeois.

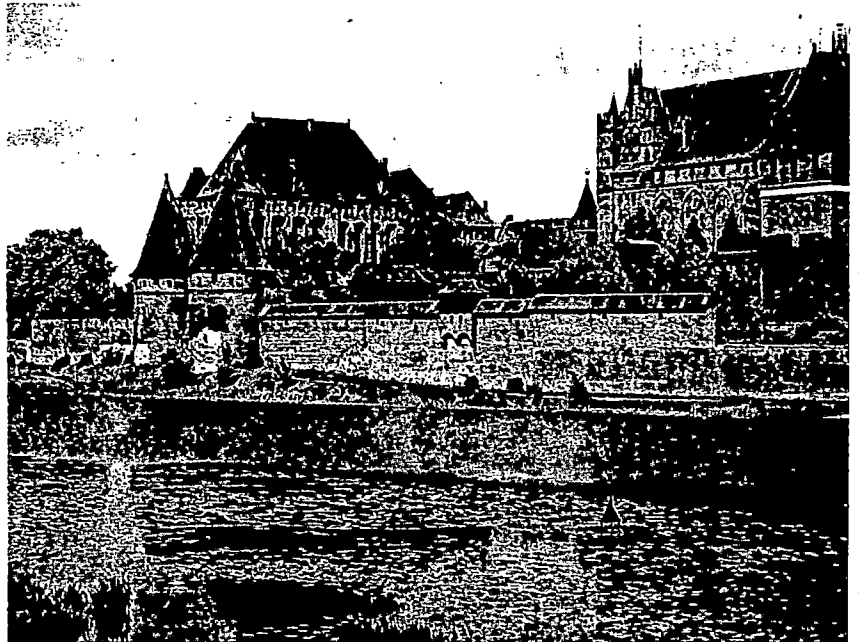
A great deal of Polish culture has an aristocratic quality. The Polish nobility and gentry, shortsighted though they were politically, nevertheless set a standard of graceful living that other sections of society have in varying degrees tried to approximate. In art and architecture, music and dancing, even in daily personal relationships, this quality is apparent. The nobility

and gentry were of the same ethnic stock as the peasantry and shared with them the same language. By contrast, the upper classes in the Czech lands tended to be German, and in southeastern Europe they were for a long time Turkish.

Literature. The Polish cultural tradition took shape between the 16th and 19th centuries. By the 16th century a flexible and versatile written language had evolved. A literary tradition began to develop, and within a century a large and varied literature had come into existence. Prominent among a large number of Renaissance writers was Mikołaj Rej, whose most important work was one in prose on the rural life of the Polish gentry. Among early poets was the 16th century humanist Jan Kochanowski, who created a national poetic literature in the classic and humanistic spirit. Outstanding writers in the 18th century included the political reformer Hugo Kołłątaj, the real drafter of the Constitution of 1791; and Ignacy Krasicki, a poet and the author of Poland's first novel, *The Adventures of Mikołaj Doświadczyński* (1776).

The Romantic period was the most distinguished in Polish literature, because the deeply felt tragedy of the partitions and the demise of the Polish state gave rise to intense literary expression. It was dominated by the work of three poets, Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki, and Zygmunt Krasiński. Mickiewicz fled his country with the failure of the 1830-1831 rising against Poland's Russian rulers and became the literary leader of the Poles in exile. He published many poems, but he is chiefly known for his epic poem *Pan Tadeusz*, which presented a sympathetic picture of rural life in Lithuania. Thanks to him, Polish literature came into the orbit of world literature. Słowacki was a poetic dramatist of great power and intensity, whose work revolved around the tragedy of the Polish nation. Krasiński, the last of the three great figures of Polish Romanticism, was also a dramatist whose plays had a deep political purpose. He was a prominent exponent of what has been called Polish

HANS KRAMARZ



Malbork (Marienburg) Castle is one of the largest medieval secular buildings in Europe. It was built by the Teutonic Knights in the 13th century after they had conquered Prussia. The headquarters of the knights in what is now northern Poland, this castle withstood several sieges before the Poles took possession of it in the 15th century.



K. KAMINSKI, TAURUS PHOTOS

The royal castle on Wawel Hill in Kraków was the seat of the kings of Poland in the 14th–16th centuries.

messianism—the view of Poland, “the Christ among the nations,” as suffering, dying, and rising again.

The Romantic tradition gave way to a more realistic vein after the failure of the final rising against Russia in 1863–1864. Polish writing became less visionary and concerned itself more with economic and social improvement within a political framework that clearly could not be changed in the near future. The short stories and novels of Bolesław Prus, pseudonym of Aleksander Głowacki, were of paramount importance for the development of the art of realistic narration in Poland. Best known to the West of the writers of this period was Henryk Sienkiewicz, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1905 for *The Teutonic Knights*. His *Quo Vadis* had a world circulation in the millions.

At the turn of the century, realism gave way to symbolism and modernism. One of the outstanding poets of the new era was Jan Kasprowicz, a lyric poet. The gifted novelist Stefan Żeromski brought an unprecedented lyrical vividness to his descriptions of poverty, suffering, and social evil. The novelist Władysław Reymont won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1924 for his novel *The Peasants*. The most creative dramatist of the period was Stanisław Wyspiański.

In the first decade of Poland's rebirth as a sovereign nation, lyric poetry predominated, under the aegis of a group called the Skamandrites. Its outstanding poet was Julian Tuwim. The novelists generally were realists.

After World War II, socialist realism took root, with literature tending to serve the political aims of the state. However, when Nikita Khrushchev came to power in the Soviet Union in 1956, a temporary “thaw” ensued in Poland that permitted greater literary freedom.

Music. Poland has a rich legacy of folk song and dance, which was refined for performance in the homes of the gentry. Most Polish composers made use of traditional materials, and none more than Chopin, Poland's most famous composer. Karol Kurpiński and Stanisław Moniuszko were leading operatic composers of the 19th century, who used the stage to present various aspects of Polish life and aspirations. The 20th century composer Karol Szymanowski, while never forgetting the national tradition in music, reflected more closely the impressionist trends of western Europe. Witold Lutosławski and Krzysztof Penderecki reflect contemporary trends in musical thought.

Architecture and Painting. Though architecture in Poland has always been influenced by foreign styles, it has never lost its traditional and national flavor. This is shown in the Renaissance architecture of the cities of southern Poland. In the 18th century the landowners built rural manor houses and urban palaces in the restrained classical style known as Palladian. Warsaw contains some of the finest Palladian architecture in Europe. Every effort is made to preserve the older buildings as part of Poland's cultural heritage. This is particularly true in the carefully rebuilt parts of Warsaw, Gdańsk, Poznań, and Wrocław.

Painting developed later than literature and architecture. Bernardo Bellotto, an Italian, portrayed Polish life in the late 18th century. Painting in the 19th century was romantic and nationalist, and Jan Matejko, the best-known artist of the period, portrayed heroic scenes from Poland's history.

As in the case of literature, socialist realism was the dominant style in the post-World War II period. However some artists, working without public sanction, painted in the same modernist styles that were current in the non-Communist world.

Cinema. Two Polish film directors gained an international reputation after World War II. Andrzej Wajda directed a trilogy consisting of *A Generation* (1954), *Kanal* (1957), and *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958). Roman Polanski's *Knife in the Water* appeared in 1962. On the strength of this work he was welcomed by foreign producers and continued his work in the United States and elsewhere.

5. Education

In 1918, Poland faced the enormous task of overcoming the inadequacies of the educational systems as they had developed in German-, Russian-, and Austrian-held Poland. In Russian Poland, illiteracy was high. In German Poland, education had been subordinated to other objectives of the state, two of which were to counter the influence of the Roman Catholic Church and to destroy Polish nationalism.

The educational system devised for a united Poland reduced illiteracy to 12% by 1939. Schooling was made compulsory for all between the ages of 8 and 15. Education was organized in two stages, primary and secondary, with a third stage for selected students between the ages of 16 and 18. Private organizations, in particular the Roman Catholic Church, played an important role in organizing education. The Polish authorities permitted teaching in non-Polish languages in communities where these were spoken. In a large number of schools, German, Lithuanian,

land has a rich legacy of folk music which was refined for performance in the country. Most Polish composers used folk materials, and none more so than the most famous composer, Fryderyk Chopin. Stanisław Moniuszko was a nationalistic composer of the 19th century, who sought to present various aspects of Polish life and aspirations. The 20th century brought new influences. Karol Szymanowski, while never fully breaking with the national tradition in music, reflected the impressionist trends of western Europe. Witold Lutosławski and Krzysztof Penderecki, on the other hand, followed contemporary trends in music.

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Russian, Ukrainian, Czech, Yiddish, and Hebrew
were used.

Education in Communist Poland. After World War II the Communist authorities imposed a more uniform and closely controlled educational system. Few concessions were made to linguistic minorities, and the role of private organizations in education, in particular that of the church, was blocked. Education in the schools was organized on Marxist-Leninist lines. Textbooks were rewritten to fit the new educational philosophy. The history books now portrayed the Soviet Union as Poland's savior. At the same time the teaching of the Russian language was made compulsory, and training in mathematics and scientific subjects was strengthened.

Below the university level, education is organized into three stages. Children are required to attend nursery schools from 4 to 6, in part to indoctrinate them at an early age, in part to allow their mothers to take factory or office jobs. Compulsory schooling continues to the age of 15 and is followed by an optional period of three years, during which the student usually specializes in scientific subjects. In attempting to fulfill its declared objective of creating a skilled and literate work force for a modern industrial society, Poland has undoubtedly achieved considerable success with this educational system. The price has been the suppression of religious education, the loss of the richness and variety of a system that was adjusted to ethnic and regional differences, and the imposition of a crude Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

Before 1939, Poland as it then existed had five universities. The Jagiellonian University in Kraków, founded in 1364, was one of the oldest in Europe. The others were at Warsaw, Poznań, Lwów, and Vilna. The last two are now in the Soviet Union. In addition, there was a Catholic University at Lublin, supported and staffed by the church. This still survives as the only private university in the whole Communist bloc. As a result of boundary changes, Poland acquired the university of Wrocław (Breslau). It has also founded five new universities at Łódź, Lublin, Gdańsk, Katowice, and Toruń. The one at Lublin was clearly designed to counter the influence of the Catholic University of Lublin, located a short distance away on the same street.

There are in addition ten technical universities, in which instruction is geared to the needs of industry; seven agricultural colleges; six institutes specializing in economics and social sciences; and a number of training colleges for teachers, music academies, schools of art and drama, and vocational schools that provide part-time training for those already employed. Medical schools, which were formerly attached to the universities, are now dependent directly on the ministry of health. A number of new academies of medicine were founded in the 1950's.

At the summit of the Polish educational system is the Academy of Sciences. In its organization it is modeled directly on the Soviet Academy, with a number of institutes or divisions corresponding with special fields of knowledge. It is not primarily a teaching institution, though its staff has close links with the University of Warsaw. Its purpose is to carry on research, to provide a link between the government and academic bodies, and, above all, to ensure that higher education and research conform strictly with the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

6. Government

Before World War II, Poland was, according to its constitution, a parliamentary democracy. However the spirit of the constitution was violated when Marshal Pilsudski, minister for war and inspector general of the army, exercised almost dictatorial control in the decade before his death in 1935. This constitution effectively lapsed with the fall of the republic in 1939, though appeal was constantly made to it by the postwar government. A temporary constitution was adopted in 1947, but it was continuously modified in the direction of the Soviet Union's.

A new constitution was adopted on July 22, 1952. Openly modeled on Stalin's constitution of 1936, it provides for a single chamber assembly, or Sejm, elected for a four-year term by all citizens over 17 years old. There is, however, a single list of candidates, so that the elector can vote only for or against the official nominee.

The chief function of the Sejm is to choose the Council of State, which corresponds to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet within the Soviet Union. The chairman of the Council of State is the titular chief of state. The council serves as a kind of collective sovereign body for the Polish state. It can issue binding decrees in time of emergency and is the supreme interpreter of the constitution in cases of dispute. It does not, however, exercise executive functions under normal conditions. These are vested in the Council of Ministers, a kind of cabinet, presided over by a chairman who serves as premier. The Council of Ministers is elected by the Sejm. It is the duty of the Council of Ministers to prepare the budget and to formulate the economic plans all of which must be submitted to the Sejm for ratification. This constitution establishes certain outward forms of democracy, including the responsibility of the premier and Council of Ministers to the Sejm. They are, however, nominees of the party, as is the Sejm itself. Furthermore, the Council of State also includes nominees of the Communist party.

Communist Party Structure. The Communist party of Poland, known as the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza), was formed in 1948 by a fusion of the Communist Polish Workers' party with the Polish Socialist party. Its membership, always quite small, is about 2.5 million. This is in keeping with the general Communist practice of preferring a small party of indoctrinated and dedicated cadres to a larger group of doubtful loyalty. The party is more highly organized and more active in the industrial cities and the western parts of the country than it is in the east, where the relatively conservative peasantry is numerically dominant.

The local Communist parties elect members to the central committee of the party, which in turn delegates control over all political activity to its politburo (political bureau). The most powerful person within both the central committee and its politburo is its first secretary.

Power in Poland ultimately rests with the central committee and its first secretary, since they in fact control all the institutions of government provided for in the constitution. This is not to say, however, that they are beyond the reach of public pressure. In 1956, in 1970, and in 1980, rioting led to shakeups in the party and the replacement of the first secretary.

Local Government. Following the reform of the administrative structure in 1973-1975, the number of provinces (*województwa*) was increased from 22 to 49, of which three are the metropolitan cities of Warsaw, Łódź, and Kraków. In each there is a twofold structure of civil government and party organization. At the local level of administration there are 2,365 *gminy* (communities), which have replaced the earlier and more complex structure of counties, municipalities, and communes. In each of these lower-order units, peoples' councils, similar to the soviets in the USSR, exercise jurisdiction over local affairs.

These major reforms in local administration had the effect of reducing the size of the bureaucracy, since thousands of jobs were eliminated with the demise of the counties (*powiaty*). Furthermore, increasing the number of provinces meant the reduction of each in size. In this way Warsaw was able to dilute the political importance of the provincial party chiefs.

Defense. Poland is a member of the Warsaw Pact (the Eastern European Mutual Aid Treaty). It maintains a standing army with paramilitary units. It is organized on the Soviet model, with three military areas based on Warsaw, Bydgoszcz, and Wrocław. Polish youth are subject to conscription at the age of 18, and may be recalled for service up to 50.

There is also an air force, equipped with Soviet-built planes. The navy consists of a few destroyers and submarines, together with minesweepers and auxiliary craft.

A Soviet force of two divisions is maintained on Polish soil for the ostensible purpose of maintaining communications with the Soviet forces in East Germany. Though stationed away from centers of population and rarely seen, this military presence is a guarantee of the loyalty of Poland to the Soviet Union.

7. History

The Polish state was born in the middle of the 10th century. It appears in recorded history in 963, and this date is commonly taken to mark its beginning. Poland was formed by Slavic tribes that lived in the area between the Odra and the Vistula rivers. The most important of these Slavic tribes were the Polane (Poljane), literally "the people of the plain." It is from them that Poland derives its name.

The Polane, originally a loosely knit group of tribes, were first brought under a common leadership in the early 10th century. To the north of the Polane lived the Slavic Pomorzanians, whose name survives in the regional name of Pomorze (Pomerania). The Slavic Mazowszanie lived to the east in the Vistula Valley. These regional groups of Slavic tribes persisted through the Middle Ages in Poland and were reflected in Poland's political divisions. Some of the tribes continued to exist in almost complete independence.

The Piast Dynasty. The first historically verifiable member of the family that dominated the area between the Odra and the Vistula was Mieszko I. He founded the Piast dynasty, the name being the name of one of his family's legendary ancestors. Mieszko (reigned about 963-992) was recognized as king by Emperor Otto III, and his immediate successor, Boleslav the Brave (Bolesław Chrobry; reigned 992-1025), greatly expanded the limits of their state, conquering territory westward to the Odra, northward to the Baltic, and southward to the mountains. The general limits of the state over which the early Piasts asserted at least nominal control were approximately those of modern Poland, exclusive of its northeastern section. The seat of Piast authority was Gniezno, in the center of their

Highland shepherds wearing traditional costumes drive their sheep into summer pastures in the Tatra uplands.



state was born in the middle century. It appears in recorded history and this date is commonly taken as the beginning of Poland. Poland was formed by the union of the area between the Odra and Vistula rivers. The most important tribes were the Polane (Poles), "people of the plain." It is from them that the name derives its name. Originally a loosely knit group, it was first brought under a common rule in the early 10th century. The Poles lived the Slavic Pomorze, "people beside the sea," whose regional name of Pomorze (Pomerania) Mazowszanie lived to the east. These regional groups persisted through the centuries and were reflected in Polish history. Some of the tribes continued to complete independence. The first historically known dynasty of the family that dominated the Odra and the Vistula was the Piast dynasty. One of his family's legends says that Bolesław I (reigned about 963-992) was crowned king by Emperor Otto III. Bolesław's successor, Bolesław the Brave (reigned 992-1025), gave up the claims of their state, conquering the Odra, northward to the mountains, and the state over which the emperor had nominal control was the Polish state. The seat of the Piast dynasty was in Gniezno, in the center of

state. From here it was moved to Poznań, and by their successors in about 1300 to Kraków.

Mieszko converted to Christianity and placed Poland under the direct authority of the pope. Gniezno became the seat of an archbishop, which it remained until the 19th century, when the seat of the archbishop and primate of Poland was moved to Warsaw.

The political history of Poland during the next 500 years is extraordinarily complex. The country continued until the late 14th century to be ruled by members of the Piast dynasty. But for much of this period Poland was not a united country. It was the practice among the Piasts to make provision for younger sons by granting them a duchy or province for their support. The king continued to have a nominal suzerainty over the whole country, but his authority was effective only in those areas that were under his direct control. Periodically, however, those Piast families holding appanages from the crown would die out, and their territories would revert to the king. As a result, the country alternately disintegrated and drew together again.

Among the rulers who restored unity to the country were Casimir (Kazimierz) I, named Odnowiciel, the "Restorer," in the 11th century; Bolesław III, nicknamed Krzywousty, the "Wry-mouthed" (reigned 1102-1138), who tried unsuccessfully to terminate the practice of royal alienation of land; and Vladislav (Władysław) I, called Łokietek, "the Short" (reigned about 1306-1333). Vladislav was succeeded by his only son, Casimir III, known later as Wielki, "the Great" (reigned 1333-1370), the most distinguished ruler Poland was to know. He is remembered for his founding of Poland's first university, the University of Kraków, his patronage of the arts, and the encouragement he gave to the economic development of the country.

The weakness of the Polish crown under the Piasts, coupled with the political divisions within Poland, permitted Germans to encroach on Polish territory. Germans advanced across the Odra, which had served as the western boundary of the early Polish tribes, and much of Pomerania became German in speech. Rulers of the western provinces changed their allegiance from the Polish crown to the Holy Roman Empire, and even Casimir III relinquished the rich province of Silesia to the king of Bohemia. The Polish state was thus in retreat from its earlier boundary along the Odra river.

There were even times when Piast leaders invited Germans to aid them in their internal disputes. In this way the crusading Knights of the Teutonic Order went to East Prussia about 1226, invited by the Polish prince Conrad of Mazowsze (Masovia) to help him defend his borders against the fierce, marauding Prussian tribes. Inevitably, the German knights stayed to occupy the land they had been asked to protect.

The Jagiellonian Dynasty of Poland-Lithuania. Casimir III the Great left no direct heir. The throne passed to his nephew Louis, who was also king of Hungary. In 1382, Louis died and was succeeded as "king of Poland" by his daughter Jadwiga. In 1386 she married Vladislav Jagiello (Władysław Jagiello), grand duke of Lithuania, who was crowned king of Poland, the first of the Jagiellonian line. In his person he united the Polish state with the vast duchy of Lithuania. For two centuries the two countries were almost continuously united in the sense that they had a

common sovereign. By the Union of Lublin in 1569, concluded a few years before the death of the last Jagiellonian king, this personal or dynastic union was replaced by the political union of the kingdom of Poland and the grand principality of Lithuania.

The Poles had already begun to penetrate Lithuania, still largely pagan and tribal in its organization, when the Lithuanian duke Jagiello became king of Poland. The Polish nobles soon formed a blood brotherhood with the Lithuanian landed aristocracy and carved out for themselves vast estates in this thinly populated land. At the same time the Lithuanians were converted to Roman Catholicism.

The Poles hoped to use Lithuanian manpower in order to help stem the advance of the Germans. Of the Germans, the Teutonic Knights of Prussia presented the gravest threat because they were well disciplined and efficiently armed and equipped. From their fortress of Malbork (Marienburg), they made raids into Polish territory. But in 1410, Jagiello and his Polish-Lithuanian army defeated the German knights at Tannenberg (Grunwald). The Poles failed to follow up their victory, but at least they contained the Germans, who thereafter posed no serious threat to them for more than two centuries. The Teutonic Order retained its land in Prussia, though in 1466 it was obliged to accept Polish sovereignty over it. At the Reformation, these Prussian lands were secularized and ultimately passed to the Hohenzollerns of Brandenburg, by whom they were eventually used as a springboard for an attack on Poland.

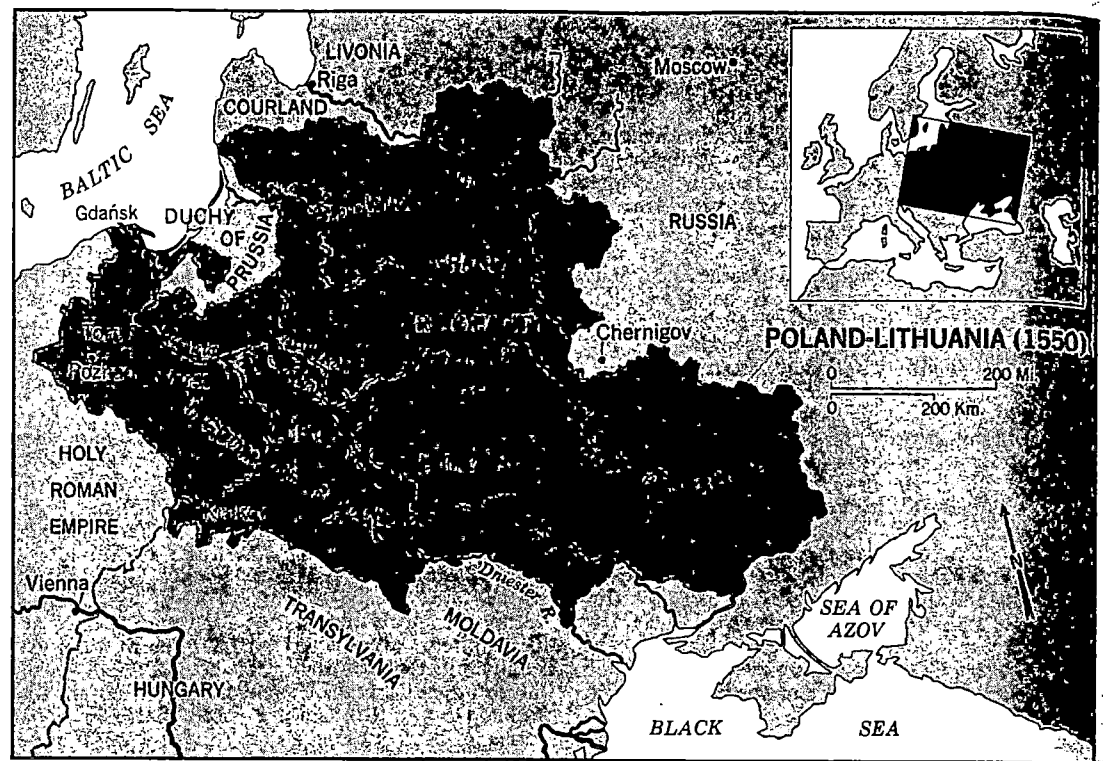
During the Jagiellonian period, which lasted almost two centuries, Poland became at least outwardly prosperous: the estates of the aristocracy produced grain for export to western Europe, and the merchants of Gdańsk grew rich on trade. Yet all was not well with the Polish state. The kings, in origin Lithuanian rather than Polish, made far-reaching concessions to the gentry, or *szlachta*. This numerous body of landowners gained exemption from taxation in 1374 and the right to fill the major offices of state. The *szlachta* were given wide powers over their tenants, whose status they soon depressed to that of serfs.

Decline of Poland. In 1572, Sigismund (Zygmunt) II, the last king of the house of Jagiello, died. Thereafter, until the disappearance of Poland at the end of the 18th century, rulers were elected not only from among the Poles but also from various royal and princely houses of Europe. None of the foreign rulers had any deep interest in the fortunes of Poland, and all were prepared to make concessions to the politically powerful landowning gentry to secure election to the throne or to preserve an outward peace and order.

The most successful of these elected kings was Stephen Batory (Báthory; reigned 1575-1586), prince of Transylvania. He was followed by the Vasa kings, members of the Swedish royal family. In 1669 a Pole, Michał Wiśniowiecki, was chosen king. He ruled as Michael I and was followed by another member of the Polish aristocracy, Jan Sobieski, who ruled as John III. John's death in 1696 was followed by the choice of Augustus II, who as Frederick Augustus I was elector of Saxony. His son, who succeeded him as Augustus III, was confirmed as Poland's king in 1736. The last king of Poland, Stanisław

her pastures in the Tatra uplands





Poniatowski, who ruled as Stanislaw II (reigned 1764–1795), was once again a native Pole.

This succession of weak rulers was confronted with problems that were far more serious than those the Jagiellonian kings had faced. The influence of the gentry continued to grow, and the power they usurped was generally used for selfish ends. Eventually they acquired the right of *liberum veto*, by means of which any one of them could veto the proceedings and decisions of the gentry meeting in the Sejm. Thus no policy could be adopted or consistently pursued, and government gradually came to be replaced by the “golden anarchy” of the Polish gentry.

The spread of serfdom impoverished the peasantry and reduced their demand for goods. Craft industries withered, and the commerce of the small towns dried up. Poland became one of the least progressive countries in Europe.

The political unification of Poland and Lithuania in important respects weakened rather than strengthened the state. The Poles were almost exclusively Roman Catholic, as were many in the Lithuanian aristocracy and gentry. But the peasantry and lesser gentry of at least the southeastern parts of Lithuania were Orthodox and resented the imposition of Catholic practices such as the payment of the tithe. The feudal and social stratification already present in these regions was reinforced by a religious gulf that was to have disastrous consequences.

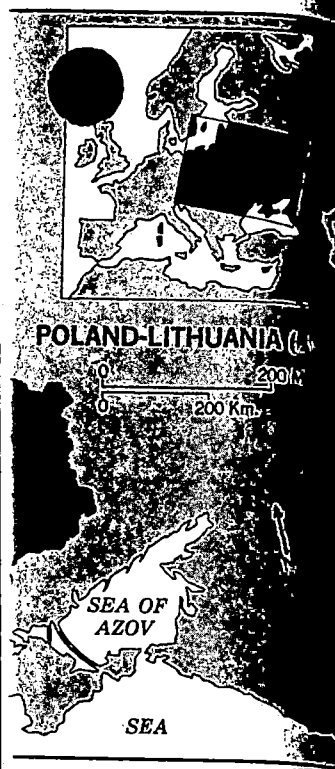
International Repercussions of Poland's Decline. As Poland's domestic problems increased, so did the power of its neighbors: Prussia to the west, the Habsburg Empire to the south, the Tatars and Turks to the southeast, and Muscovy, or Russia, to the east. The only external threat that Poland had previously faced was from the Germans. Now land-hungry neighbors watched as Poland grew steadily weaker, until at last they fell upon the helpless country and divided it among themselves.

The first intimation of this fate came in the mid-17th century. Poland, which had been able

to avoid entanglement in the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), became deeply involved in war on its southeastern frontier. Poles were pressing into the Ukrainian steppe, and their leaders were establishing large estates there. This aroused the hostility of two separate groups: the native peoples of the steppe, the seminomadic Tatars; and the mixed group of frontiersmen or Cossacks, whose leader Bohdan Chmielnicki (Ukrainian, Khmelnytskyi) became the most determined adversary of Poland. The Tatars and Cossacks were supported in their resistance to the Poles by the Turks to the south and the Russians to the north. Poland suffered severely during these confusing frontier wars.

In 1655, Poland was invaded by the Swedes, who sought to extend their control in the Baltic region. The Swedes were joined by the Brandenburgers, and Poland was overrun by foreign armies. The Swedes were victorious until they attacked the hilltop monastery of Jasna Góra at Częstochowa in southern Poland. There they met with unexpectedly stubborn resistance and were defeated. According to Polish legend, the defenders were aided by the direct intervention of a religious ikon, the so-called Black Madonna, which hung within the monastery. In any case, the Poles were heartened by what they considered divine support and forced the Swedes back to the coast. The war dragged on for almost five more years. It ended with the Peace of Oliva (1660), by which Poland lost territory to both Sweden and Brandenburg. Poland was devastated and impoverished, but it had at least survived.

The war in the steppe, however, was not over, in part because the Russian czar had everything to gain from stirring up the Cossacks and Tatars against the Poles. Muscovy began its steady pressure against the Polish-Lithuanian state and in 1667 succeeded in annexing the Kiev region. To the southeast the Turks joined in the war against Poland. They were held by Jan Sobieski, later King John III, the last heroic king of Poland, who ultimately drove them back.



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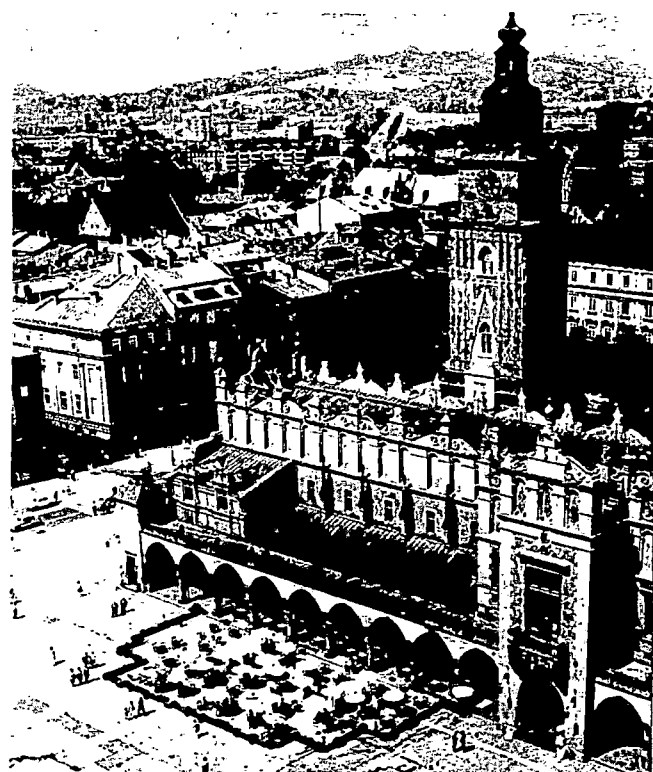
The power of the Turks was spent, and they ceased to trouble the Polish state. But the power of the Russians continued to mount.

The 18th century was marked by the continuing weakness of Poland. The country again was fought over in the course of the wars between Sweden and Russia. Augustus II, Poland's king, who was also elector of Saxony, put the interests of his Saxon electorate before those of his Polish kingdom. In 1733, when the Polish Sejm tried to elect a native Pole as his successor, it was foiled by the Russian empress Anna Ivanovna, who won the succession for the elector's son who ruled as Augustus III. On the death of Augustus III, the last "Saxon" king, in 1763, the Russian empress Catherine the Great nominated her former lover, Stanisław Poniatowski, who ruled Poland as Stanisław II. He failed to become Catherine's pawn and so won her enmity.

Social and Religious Conditions in Poland Prior to the Partitions. In the 18th century the political scene within Poland was dominated by a small number of aristocratic families, of which the Czartoryski, Lubomirski, Radziwiłł, and Potocki were among the most important. Each owned vast estates. The Lubomirski were said to have held 10,000 square miles (26,000 sq km) of land, 31 small towns, and more than 700 villages. The gentry, each of whom held an estate, however small, numbered more than 700,000. They were a turbulent and unruly lot. Many were impoverished. Most were prepared to sell their vote and their sword to the highest bidder, and they tended to form factions centering on one or more of the rich magnates. Towns were numerous but small. Only Warsaw exceeded 50,000 inhabitants by the end of the century, and the urban middle class was small and politically powerless. The rest of the population—no less than 85% of the total—was made up of the peasantry. They were poor, weighed down by feudal obligations to their lords, and wholly without political rights or aspirations.

The social and political problems of Poland tended to assume the outward forms of a religious dispute. Most ethnic Poles were Roman Catholic. Protestantism had made some headway in the towns in the 16th century but had then been largely suppressed by the forces of the Counter-Reformation. Lutheranism had made progress among Lithuanians. But most of the lesser gentry and much of the peasantry in southeastern Poland and southern Lithuania belonged to the Eastern (Orthodox) Church, though some belonged to the compromise Uniate Church, Orthodox in ritual and organization but under the authority of the papacy.

The Partitions of Poland. The dissolution of the Polish state was precipitated by these religious differences. The Roman Catholic *szlachta* had never been well disposed toward their Orthodox peasantry. By the mid-18th century, however, the latter had found a champion in the Russian czar. Under Russian pressure, the Sejm took steps to protect the Orthodox subjects of the Polish state. The Catholic gentry of southeastern Poland, inspired by religious fanaticism, hatred of the Russians, and fear that their control over their own peasants might be restricted, broke into revolt in 1768. The rebellion was suppressed by a Russian army, while Turks, Austrians, and Prussians watched from the sidelines, each eager to be in the forefront in case of any general dismemberment of the Polish-Lithuanian state.



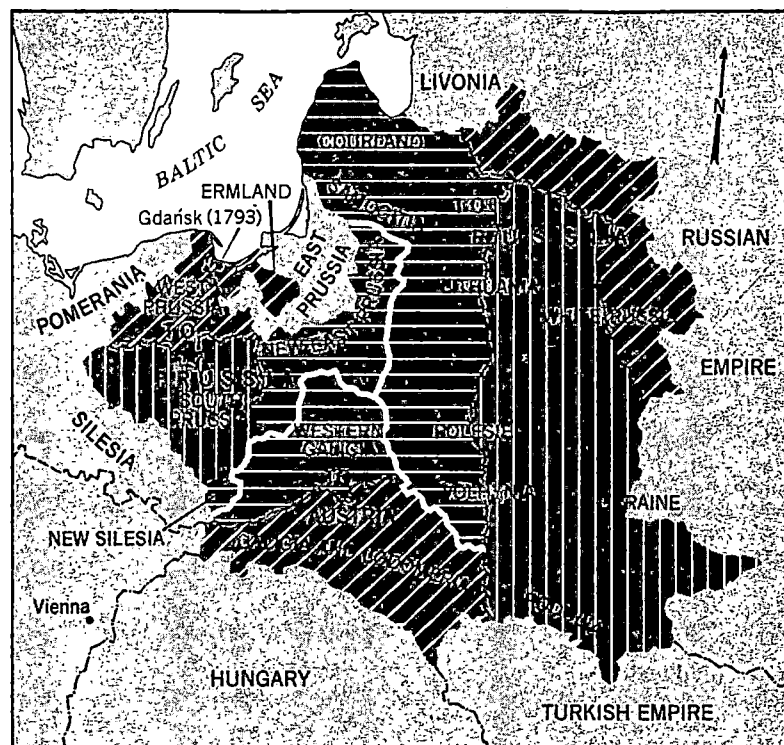
Eastfoto
Kraków's historic Cloth Hall, backed by the Town Hall tower, encloses one side of the city's large market square.

The first partition (1772) was organized by the ambassadors of Poland's three most powerful neighbors. Prussia took Ermland and Pomerelia (renamed West Prussia), but without Gdańsk. Austria acquired Galicia, and Russia absorbed a substantial part of what is today White Russia. The Ottoman Empire was too weak to claim a share of the spoils.

The first partition occurred because the Poles lacked the unity and leadership to resist. But the next 20 years were marked not only by an outpouring of visionary, patriotic fervor but also by a realistic attempt to reform the constitution. The reform movement had a strongly anti-Russian character, and its progress was continuously watched and, where possible, opposed by Russian emissaries. A constitution was accepted on May 3, 1791, a date that subsequently became the Polish national day. It was for its time a liberal document. The legislative process was defined; the *liberum veto*, the source of so much inaction in the past, was abolished; a strong executive was established; and the kingship was made hereditary.

Yet there still remained some Poles, chiefly in the steppe region of the southeast, who clung to their ideals of *szlachta* power and "golden anarchy." In 1792 they revolted against the new order and were supported by the Russian empress Catherine. The Russian Army advanced on Warsaw, and, as Catherine prepared to annex a substantial area of Poland, the king of Prussia hastened to ensure that he was not omitted from any division of the spoils.

In the second partition (1793), Russia claimed a vast tract of land from northern Lithuania to the Ukraine, while Prussia took western Poland (Wielkopolska, renamed South Prussia) with the cities of Poznań and Gdańsk. The Sejm was



THE PARTITIONS
OF POLAND

First Partition (1772)

Second Partition (1793)

Third Partition (1795)

powerless to resist the Russian Army and unwillingly accepted the demands made. Not so the more patriotic elements among the gentry. These were led by Tadeusz Kościuszko and supported by some of the small middle class and even by some peasants. They turned against the king and seized Warsaw in 1794, but they were quickly overcome by the superior Russian Army.

Catherine the Great was determined to solve the Polish question by destroying Poland. What was left of the state was divided in 1795 (the final settlement was not completed until 1797) among Russia, which took the lion's share, Prussia, and Austria.

A Polish state, the so-called grand duchy of Warsaw, was revived by Napoleon in 1807. It was never more than a puppet state of the French.

Russian, Prussian, and Austrian Poland. The Congress of Vienna in 1815 constituted the so-called Congress kingdom of Poland. It included the greater part of Napoleon's grand duchy of Warsaw, and its kings were to be the Romanov emperors of Russia.

The 19th century was marked on the one hand by continued Polish resistance to foreign, in particular Russian, rule, and on the other by considerable economic progress. In 1830, Polish discontent broke out in a rising against Russian rule. It was undertaken with enthusiasm, but conducted without military or political skill, and was savagely suppressed. A stream of refugees, including the cream of Polish intelligentsia, went into exile, chiefly to France. The Russians replied by suppressing the limited autonomy the Congress kingdom possessed and, after incorporating the kingdom into the Russian Empire, ruled the territory firmly and autocratically. Anti-Russian feeling, however, continued to build up, fanned by the writings of Polish exiles, some of them—by

Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Słowacki, for example—of the highest literary quality. In 1863 another ill-planned and disastrous rising was ruthlessly suppressed by the Russians. The failure of the 1863 rising and its savage aftermath marked the end of the period of direct action against Russian rule.

In Austrian and Prussian Poland, events followed a similar course. Risings, especially in 1848, were suppressed. In Galicia, the Austrians succeeded in diverting the peasants' wrath from themselves to the peasants' own Polish landlords. Austrian rule, however, was easygoing, and Austria provided a safe haven for those who conspired against Russian and Prussian rule. Prussia's rule over its Polish lands was in some ways the most reactionary of the three, though its economic policies were generally progressive.

In all parts of historic Poland, the second half of the 19th century was marked by social and economic progress rather than by direct political action. In Russian Poland the serfs were freed in 1864, a step designed more to injure the landowning gentry than to conciliate the peasants. Its effect, however, was to give the latter a greater stake in the land and to lead to their more active participation in the national movement. Though no significant revolution was effected in agriculture, manufacturing made considerable advances. Ironworking was expanded in Russian Silesia, and the great textile center of Łódź grew from a village to one of the foremost industrial cities in eastern Europe. At the same time a railway network spread over Poland, a rudimentary educational system was established, and the nation prepared itself for ultimate independence.

It is impossible to overestimate the role of the Roman Catholic Church and clergy in keeping Polish nationalism alive during this period. The

Russians were Orthodox and the Prussians Lutheran. To be Catholic was a way of expressing hostility to both, and the church became and has remained a very important symbol of Polish nationhood.

The Prussian government attempted to destroy Polish nationalism by restricting the use of the language and attacking the role of the Catholic Church in protecting Polish culture. The Austrians, however, were Catholic like the Poles, and in Galicia it was impossible to use religion as a rallying point for Polish nationalism.

Establishment of the Polish Republic. World War I marked a turning point in the history of Poland. All three partitioning powers were involved in the struggle, and it seemed to most Poles that they had to back either the Russians or Germany and Austria and extract what concessions they could. The two sides found protagonists respectively in Józef Piłsudski and Roman Dmowski. The former was fanatically anti-Russian. He organized a brigade that fought for the Central Powers against Russia. Dmowski, on the other hand, regarded Germany as the chief enemy of the Poles and argued for the unity of all Slavic peoples, including the Russians, to resist German pretensions.

Events, however, settled the issue. The Russian Revolution and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 1918) removed Russia from Polish affairs. Piłsudski now turned against the Central Powers as the only force preventing the revival of the Polish state and thus joined with Dmowski. In the meantime, the Polish question had assumed a new dimension. Powers not directly involved in the partitions regarded the revival of the Polish state as important, and U. S. President Woodrow Wilson declared this to be one of the conditions of a peaceful and stable Europe.

The Western allies meeting in Paris could determine in part the territorial shape of the new Poland and could impose their decisions on Germany and Austria. A boundary was traced between Poland and Germany, giving the former the so-called Polish Corridor, South Prussia, including the German province of Posen (Poznań), and a substantial part of the Upper Silesian coal basin. The boundaries with East Prussia, which remained part of Germany, and in Upper Silesia were subject to plebiscites. Gdańsk (Danzig), which was heavily German in language and sympathy but nevertheless served as the chief commercial outlet of Poland, was established as a separate free city under the protection of the League of Nations.

The Western allies had no authority to impose a boundary between Poland and the new Bolshevik Russian republic. The Poles made ambitious claims. In response, the Red Army forces pushed the Polish Army back on Warsaw in July 1920. At the Battle of the Vistula (August 1920), the Poles, led by Piłsudski, checked the Russian advance, then attacked and invaded Russia. The Western allies had urged caution on Piłsudski and had suggested a boundary, the so-called Curzon Line, that was too restricted for Piłsudski's ambitions. When the Russo-Polish war was ended by the Treaty of Riga (March 18, 1921), the Poles found themselves in possession of a substantial area of White Russian and Ukrainian territory, well to the east of the Curzon Line. In much of it, no ethnic Poles were to be found. The advance into Russia also raised the question of the Polish boundary with the Lithuanian

republic, which had recently been formed from Russian territory. Wilno (Lithuanian, Vilnius), the traditional capital of Lithuania, was included in the new republic. But Wilno was also of great significance in Polish history and culture. It was seized by the Poles in 1922 and incorporated into Poland. The Lithuanians, without allies and unable to resist, closed their borders with Poland and broke off all diplomatic relations for nearly 20 years.

The western boundaries of Poland were not free from trouble. The plebiscite regarding the border with East Prussia went in favor of Germany. The regime established for Gdańsk worked far from smoothly. The city's German population was accused, with reason, of working against the interests of the Polish state. Poland began the construction of the port of Gdynia to the north of Gdańsk on a virgin site that it could control. Gdynia inevitably detracted from the business of Gdańsk, and this further antagonized its Germanophile population.

The industrialized region of Upper Silesia contained a mixed population through which it was extremely difficult to draw a boundary. The line finally approved by the Allied Powers in 1921 awarded to Poland that part of the region that contained most of the coal mines, the coal reserves, the iron-ore deposits, and the industrial enterprises.

There was, lastly, a bitter dispute with Czechoslovakia regarding the duchy of Teschen on Poland's southern border. For much of its history this small territory had been included

A cartoon that appeared at the time of the partitioning of Poland shows Stanisław II, king of Poland, trying to hold on to his crown as the rulers of Russia, Austria, and Prussia select parts of his kingdom to annex.



THE PARTITIONS OF POLAND

First Partition (1772)

Second Partition (1793)

Third Partition (1795)

and Juliusz Słowacki, for the best literary quality. In 1846, a disastrous rising broke out against the Russians. The failure and its savage aftermath marked the end of the period of direct action.

In Prussian Poland, events took a different course. Risings, especially in Galicia, the Austrian province, against the peasants' wrath against the landlords, however, was easygoing, and a safe haven for those who fled from Russian and Prussian rule. The Polish lands were in the hands of the three, though they were generally progressive. In historic Poland, the 19th century was marked by social progress rather than by direct action. In Russian Poland the serfs were designed more to injure than to conciliate the peasants. It was to give the latter a land and to lead to the national revolution. The significant revolution was in agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce. Ironworking was in Silesia, and the great textile mills from a village to one of the cities in eastern Europe. A railway network spread over the educational system was in place. The nation prepared itself to play a role in the future. The role of the church and clergy in keeping the nation alive during this period.

within Bohemia and the Habsburg lands. But the Poles claimed that it was ethnically Polish. The real issue, however, was control of its coal mines and iron and steel works. In the end, the territory was partitioned, the Czechs retaining its valuable economic assets.

The Piłsudski Era. The republic of Poland had an unhappy history during its independent existence between the two world wars. The country was, in the first place, pieced together from fragments of territory taken from Prussia, Austria, and Russia. These were in varying stages of economic development. Almost every feature, even the gauge of the railroad tracks, had to be reconciled.

A multiplicity of political parties developed, and these tended to cluster around three groups. The first included nationalists and conservatives, led by men such as Dmowski and the pianist Ignacy Paderewski. They supported free enterprise and a strong central government; they were also in varying degrees anti-Semitic. Next came the parties of the left, including the Polish Socialist party, which derived its strength in part from the fact that Piłsudski had been one of its earliest leaders. These were to some extent Marxist. However, the Communist party itself remained very small because it was so closely identified with Russia's Bolshevik regime. Between these extremes came the agrarian parties, including the Polish Peasant party led by Wincenty Witos.

Marshal Józef Klemens Piłsudski was the chief architect of Poland's independence in the 20th century. From 1926 to his death in 1935 he was virtual dictator of Poland.

CULVER PICTURES



Their declared objectives were land reform and the improvement of the lot of the peasantry. But their effectiveness in these areas was limited, and they tended to become a conservative force in Polish politics.

Strictly political issues were complicated and to some extent obscured by the personalities of the political leaders. From the first, the dominant person was Piłsudski, appointed chief of state and commander of the armed forces in 1918. Attitudes toward him, however, were ambivalent. He was respected for his great achievements during and after the war, and feared for his political ambitions and autocratic tendencies. Indeed, the constitution of 1921 was so framed that the powers of the presidency, to which it was assumed he aspired, would be limited. In fact, he withdrew from public life in 1923.

The first representative government was formed by Paderewski in 1919. It lasted only a short time and was followed by a succession of governments, each representing an unstable coalition of mainly center and rightist parties. Such governments were incapable of curing the ills of the country. The mark was depreciating, and its replacement by a new currency, the zloty, in 1924 was followed by a sharp fall in the value of the latter. Unemployment was high, and the government was unable to raise foreign loans sufficient to carry through its reconstruction programs.

The breakdown of parliamentary government and the failure of the political parties to cope with the economic situation led to Piłsudski's seizure of power in May 1926. Large elements within the army supported him, and the Polish Socialist party came to his help. There were, nevertheless, three days of heavy fighting before the resistance of the government forces could be overcome.

From the first, Piłsudski enjoyed a large measure of popular support, and there was never any significant opposition to his rule. On the other hand, he and his supporters never developed a coherent policy, assuming that all that was needed was the smooth functioning of government. He was a military man who had come to power by force of arms, and under his rule Poland was excessively militarized. Officers were placed in executive positions for which they were ill suited, while at the same time the exclusion from authority of those who had supported the government during the coup of 1926 weakened the army and contributed to its poor performance during the German invasion of 1939.

The political opposition to Piłsudski was weak. He became increasingly conservative in his outlook and did nothing to advance the land reform that was urgently needed by the peasantry. During his last years he helped to formulate a new constitution, which greatly restricted the powers of the elected Sejm and increased the authority of the president and government. He did not, however, live to assume the autocratic position that was thus prepared for him. He died on May 12, 1935.

The Clique of "Colonels." The death of Marshal Piłsudski left a vacuum in Polish politics. The leadership of Poland fell to a clique of "colonels," led by Edward Śmigły-Rydz, who had neither the ability nor the popular appeal to play his role. Factions developed among the followers of the late leader, further weakening the government. The powers of the Sejm were reduced, and government became increasingly unresponsive to the

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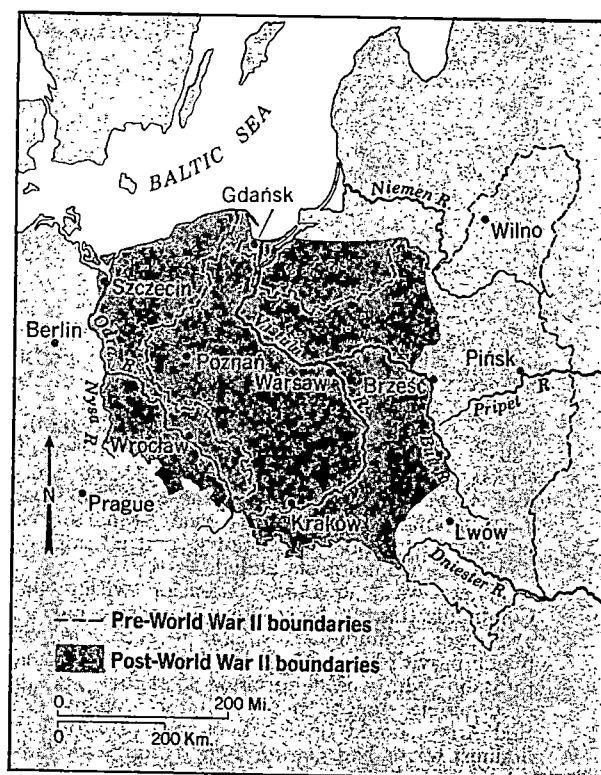
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At the same time, Polish foreign policy suffer-
 ed from the legacy of Polish history. Poland
 nourished an illusion of greatness, which it lacked
 both the military strength and the political astute-
 ness to support. This was shown in the contin-
 uance of the old feuds with Czechoslovakia and
 Lithuania and in a certain coolness toward France,
 Poland's traditional ally. Polish leaders, notably
 the foreign minister Józef Beck, seemed to think
 that they could deal with Germany on almost
 equal terms at a time when Hitler was rearming
 and preparing for war. At the same time, Polish
 leaders clung to Piłsudski's view of Poland's role
 as the protector of Western values against East-
 ern, that is Russian, barbarism. The result was
 that Poland was not prepared either militarily or
 ideologically for the conflict that lay ahead and
 refused, until too late, to recognize the reality of
 Germany's threat to all eastern Europe.

The Destruction and Revival of Poland. World
 War II had as its immediate cause Germany's
 unacceptable demands for changes in Poland's
 boundaries. Germany claimed Gdańsk, the "Cor-
 nitor," and Upper Silesia. But its overriding pur-
 pose was to eliminate Poland from the path of its
 eastward expansion. The Poles mistakenly be-
 lieved that the fundamental hostility between
 Germany and the Soviet Union would prevent
 any collaboration between them. A people as
 devoted to its own history should have known
 better, for the partitions had been brought about
 by just such a combination. The war was pre-
 ceded by an agreement between Germany and
 the Soviet Union to partition Poland. With Rus-
 sian neutrality secured, Germany invaded Poland
 on Sept. 1, 1939. The campaign was short. But
 before it had been completed, the Russians in-
 vaded Poland from the east and advanced to a
 prearranged line of partition.

Part of German-occupied Poland was incor-
 porated into Germany. The rest became the
 "General Government," a puppet state to which
 unwanted Poles could be driven and where slave
 labor could be recruited for German factories.
 Poles were a minority in the Russian-occupied
 sector. Most of the population was Ukrainian,
 Belorussian, or Lithuanian. The northern part,
 with the city of Wilno (Vilnius), was incorpor-
 ated into Lithuania, which in turn was annexed
 to the Soviet Union in 1940. The rest of Russian-
 occupied Poland was divided between the Belorussian and Ukrainian republics of the USSR.

In June 1941, German forces crossed the par-
 tition line and invaded the Soviet Union. From
 that time until early in 1944 the whole of Poland
 was under German rule. The native population
 was reduced to starvation. The Warsaw rising
 of the Jews against the Germans in April 1943 was
 suppressed, and the Jewish suburb of Muranów
 in Warsaw was leveled and its inhabitants taken
 to concentration camps. The Jewish population
 was almost eliminated, and a large part of the
 Polish population, including many of the intel-
 lectuals, suffered similarly. On the other hand,
 many members of the government, together with
 a significant part of the army, escaped to the
 West, where it formed the nucleus of a Polish
 corps. Within the country there was intense un-
 derground activity, and the Home Army (Armia
 Krajowa) performed invaluable services to the
 Allied cause. It is noteworthy that the Germans



never succeeded in enlisting the support of a single Polish leader of significance.

On the other hand, the Russians sacrificed the goodwill that they might have fallen heir to. They suspected the intentions of all Poles except Communist party members who had been schooled in Moscow. When Poles in Warsaw rose against the Germans in August 1944 in support of the advancing Russians, the latter allowed them to be destroyed by the Germans.

Elements of the Polish government-in-exile in London were regarded by the Soviet Union's leader, Joseph Stalin, as completely under the control of the West. A rival government, the Polish Committee of National Liberation, commonly known as the Lublin Committee, was formed in the Soviet Union, its membership drawn from Poles who had been indoctrinated with Moscow's brand of Marxism. It followed westward in the wake of the Red Army, suppressing or eliminating elements that were supposed to be more nationalist than Marxist.

Well before the end of hostilities the Polish question became one of the more divisive issues confronting the Allied leaders. Both Poland's boundaries and the composition of the future government of Poland were matters of dispute.

The Soviet Union made it clear that, although minor boundary changes would be permitted, Soviet-occupied Poland would not be restored. Stalin encouraged the Poles to occupy the Western Territories, those lands to the west that had once been Polish but had been retained by Germany after World War I. The Oder-Neisse (Odra-Nysa) boundary between Germany and Poland, which placed the Western Territories within Poland, came to be recognized by the Soviet Union's Western allies and even by West Germany.

The composition of the future Polish government was a more difficult issue to resolve. The government-in-exile, headed by Stanisław Mikołajczyk, was in London, whereas a government made up of Soviet nominees, headed by Bolesław Bierut and Edward Osóbka-Morawski, was in Warsaw. The Western powers had obtained from Stalin an undertaking that the new government should be a coalition drawn from both groups. In fact, only two members of the London government, including Mikołajczyk, joined the first post-war administration of Poland.

Communist Poland. The sovietization of Poland began as soon as the Germans had been driven out. Mikołajczyk and the other non-Communist members of the government were exposed to intimidation and pressure. The Peasant party, the only effective democratic party, was consistently vilified. The promised land reform consisted of forced collectivization. All industrial and commercial undertakings, except the very smallest, were nationalized. After two years, Mikołajczyk was forced to leave the country, and all opposition to the Communists ended.

There was, however, dissension within the Communist party. Most Poles were nationalists, and many Communists sought to reconcile nationalism with Marxist beliefs. This was anathema to Stalin, who was determined to reduce Poland to complete dependence on himself, using the Red Army should this be necessary. By 1949 a Stalinist terror had engulfed the country. Władysław Gomułka, foremost among the nationalist members of the party, was forced out of office in 1948-1949 and narrowly escaped death. The country was controlled by Soviet-trained Bierut, and every aspect of life was under the scrutiny of the secret police of Stanisław Radkiewicz.

Stalin died in March 1953. In the following autumn an increase in consumer goods was promised. There was a flurry of literary activity, in which Polish writers attacked the regime and called for greater personal freedom. In June, workers in Poznań rioted to express their demands for better living conditions. The government began to yield. Political prisoners were released, among them Gomułka, and the demand spread for the "democratization" of Poland.

Khrushchev, accompanied by members of the politburo, flew to Warsaw in an effort to restrain the reformers. The Polish leaders, now joined by Gomułka, Edward Ochab, and others, resisted the Soviet demands but promised to remain within the Soviet bloc. Gomułka became first secretary of the party, and the government was filled with his supporters. The system of collective farms collapsed. The liberal Adam Rapacki became foreign minister, and Poland began to look for close political and economic relations with the non-Communist world. There was almost complete freedom of the press, and Poles were able to read Western newspapers.

This "spring in October" was short-lived. Poland remained a one-party state. Censorship was gradually reintroduced. Intellectual freedom was restricted, and the government's relations with the Roman Catholic Church, which had been improving, worsened.

Gomułka, who had returned to power in 1956 in the wake of workers' riots, was himself deposed in 1970 as a result of renewed rioting by workers dissatisfied with high prices and shortages in housing and household goods. He was replaced as first secretary of the party by Edward Gierek,

an economic specialist and leader of the powerful local Communist party in Silesia. Gierek committed the government to programs that would meet the workers' grievances.

Virtually the same pattern of events was repeated in the next decade, culminating in country-wide strikes in the summer of 1980. Workers struck the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk on Aug. 13, 1980, and by the end of the month strikes had idled industries throughout the country. On August 31 the government granted the workers the right to strike and to form independent, self-governing trade unions. Within less than a month a nationwide union, Solidarity, had come into being, with Lech Wałęsa at its head. At the same time the Roman Catholic Church won new rights from the government, and on September 6 the Communist party itself faced change within its own organization when Gierek was replaced as party secretary by Stanisław Kania.

Kania's relatively conciliatory policies as party chief were aimed at preventing the Soviet Union from invading the country and at the same time keeping Poland's economy from foundering altogether by placating the workers and farmers with new concessions. But continuing strikes paralyzed the economy, and Solidarity's demands for greater democratization of the governmental process became increasingly insistent.

On Oct. 18, 1981, Kania, who seemed unable to curb dissent, was replaced as party secretary by the premier, Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, who imposed martial law on December 13. Lech Wałęsa and other Solidarity leaders were among thousands arrested. In response to the martial-law restrictions, the United States imposed economic sanctions against Poland.

Martial law was suspended one year later, but not before the parliament had dissolved all unions, including Solidarity, on Oct. 8, 1982. When a general strike, called for November 10 to protest the dissolution decree, failed to get widespread popular backing, Wałęsa was released from prison, and other leaders were given their freedom in late December. Martial law was formally lifted in July 1983, soon after the eight-day visit of Pope John Paul II to Poland, but many of its controls were preserved by incorporating them into the legal code. Moreover, the government was granted the legal right to impose a state of emergency and assume extraordinary powers in times of disorder and unrest.

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VOLUME 28

Venice to Wilmot, John

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA
AMERICANA
INTERNATIONAL EDITION

COMPLETE IN THIRTY VOLUMES
FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1829



GROLIER INCORPORATED

International Headquarters: Danbury, Connecticut 06816



View of Warsaw, Poland, looking northwest from the Palace of Culture across a complex of new apartment houses. ©PORTFIELD—CHICKERING/PHOTO RESEARCHERS

in-law of Richard Henry Lee and attorney general of the United States in 1795-1801. The town was incorporated in 1810 and named for Gen. Joseph Warren of Bunker Hill fame. It adopted the council-manager form of government in 1920. Pop. 3,907.

WARRINGTON, wŏr'ing-tən, county borough, England, in Cheshire, on the Mersey River and the Manchester Ship Canal, 16 miles (26 km) east of Liverpool. Although its suburbs were located in Lancashire to Cheshire until 1974. Warrington grew up at the lowest convenient crossing of the Mersey, and there is evidence that such a crossing has existed here since Roman times. A bridge was first mentioned in 1305. Modern Warrington is a busy industrial borough, with wire manufactures, leather tanning, soapmaking, chemicals, engineering, and the manufacture of iron, steel, and aluminum goods and electrical products. One of its three breweries has for over 200 years been based on exceptionally pure water from wells in the Bunter sandstone.

Notable buildings include the municipal headquarters, housed in a beautiful 18th century mansion; the Georgian building of Warrington Academy, associated with Joseph Priestley, the discoverer of oxygen, and other notable men of the time; the parish church, dedicated to St. Elfin, with a spire 280 feet high; and Bewsey Hall, dating from 1600. There is a good museum and art gallery. Pop. (1981) 168,846.

H. GORDON STOKES
Author of "English Place-Names"

WARRINGTON, village, Florida, in Escambia County, on Pensacola Bay, adjacent on the southwest to the city of Pensacola and on the north to the U.S. Naval Air Station. Pop. 15,792.

WARS OF SUCCESSION. See SUCCESSION WARS.

WARS OF THE ROSES. See ROSES, WARS OF THE.

WARSAW, wŏr'sŏ, city, Indiana, Kosciusko County seat, on the Tippecanoe River, 40 miles west-northwest of Fort Wayne, at an altitude of 825 feet. It has a municipal airport. Located in an agricultural area, it is an industrial, trade, and resort center. Its manufactures include orthopedic and surgical equipment, metal products and machinery, furniture and other wood products, toys, and breakfast foods. Nearby Winona Lake, the home of Grace College and Seminary, is a religious and cultural center. Warsaw, named for the capital of Poland, was settled in 1836, incorporated as a town in 1854, and as a city in 1875. It is governed by a mayor and city council. Pop. 10,647.

A. JAMES SLOAN

WARSAW (Pol. WARSZAWA), city and capital, Poland, on both sides of the Vistula River, at an altitude of 240 feet. Its winters are cold and summers are warm, with an average temperature of 25.7° F. in January and 65.4° F. in July. The average annual rainfall is 22.2 inches.

Warsaw is a major industrial center producing automobiles, steel, pharmaceuticals, cement, radio and television sets, electrical equipment, and clothing. The city is also the transportation hub of the country; seven railroad trunk lines connect it with the major cities of Poland, as well as with Berlin, Kiev, Leningrad, Moscow, Prague, and Vienna. The airport and Okęcie connects Warsaw with 14 European capitals. Żerań serves as the port of the city.

Located in Warsaw are the government ministries, the economic planning agencies, the Par-

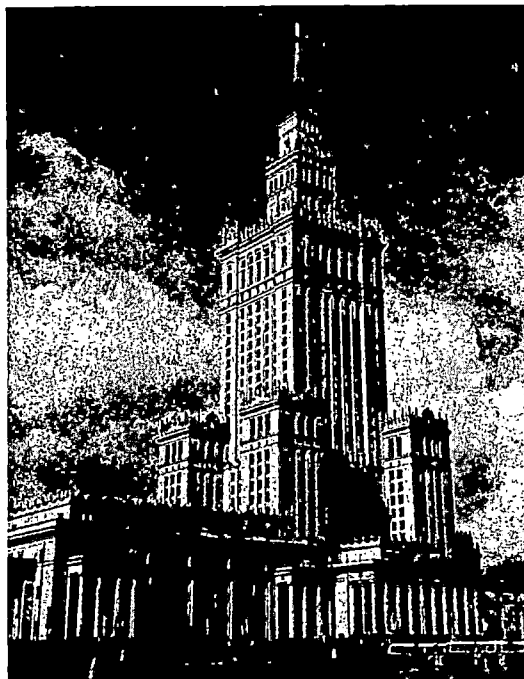
ment, the National Bank of Poland, and the Polish Chamber of National Trade, the central export and import agency. It is the seat of the primate of Poland (Roman Catholic) and the metropolitan of Poland (Orthodox) as well as the heads of the other religious bodies. The three national political parties maintain their principal headquarters in Warsaw.

As the intellectual center of the country, Warsaw houses the Polish Academy of Sciences, the chief scientific institution, with more than 74 affiliated research institutes throughout Poland. Major libraries of the city include the National Library, the Library of the University of Warsaw, the Public Library of Warsaw, the Central Medical Library, and the Library of Parliament.

Fourteen institutions of higher learning are in the city including the University of Warsaw, the Central School of Agriculture, the Warsaw Polytechnic, the Foreign Service College, the Central School for Planning and Statistics, and the Catholic Theological Academy. Of the 15 museums, the National Museum is outstanding, with a fine collection of ancient, medieval, and modern art.

Many of the major newspapers and magazines of Poland are published in Warsaw. Its chief newspapers are *Trybuna Ludu*, *Głos Pracy*, *Express Wieczorny*, *Zycie Warszawy*, and *Slowo Politechniczne*. Among the major periodicals are *Przegląd Świat*, *Polityka*, and *Nowa Kultura*. The city has three radio stations and one television channel. The major theaters are the Teatr Polski, well known for its renditions of Polish and foreign classics, and the National Theater, which has a more contemporary repertoire. The National Philharmonic Hall in Warsaw is the home of the outstanding symphony orchestra of Poland.

The city contains many world-famous palaces and churches. Łazienki Palace, home of Stanisław II Augustus, the last king of Poland, is an outstanding example of Polish classicism. Other historic buildings are Namiestnikowski Palace, now the seat of the government; Staszic Palace, which houses part of the Academy of Sciences;



EDITORIAL PHOTOCOLOR ARCHIVES

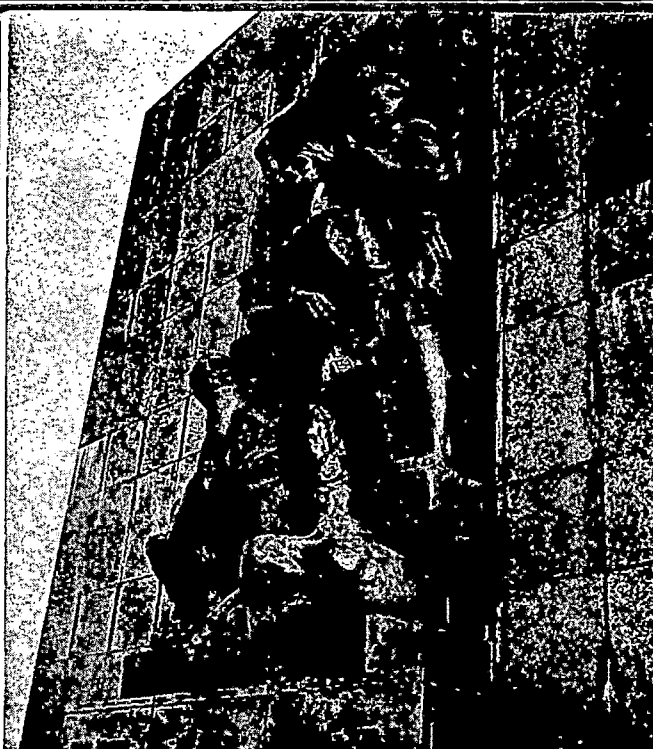
The 40-story Palace of Culture, a gift to Warsaw from the USSR, is built in Soviet architectural style.

and the Palace of John III Sobieski in Wilanów. The 14th century Gothic Cathedral of St. John, the Church of the Visitation Nuns, and the baroque-style Holy Cross Church are outstanding examples of Warsaw's ecclesiastical architecture. Noted postwar buildings include the 40-story Palace of Culture and Science and the Ten-Year Stadium, which seats more than 80,000 people. Most of Warsaw was destroyed during World War II, but the old town, Stare Miasto, with its famous Sigismund III Column, has been

The late Renaissance and baroque buildings of the Old City were rebuilt after total destruction in World War II.



EASTFOTO



Malo Darrat from Black Star

A monument in the former Warsaw Ghetto honors Jewish heroes of the 1943 revolt against the German forces.

fully restored to its original state, and the area appears today as it did centuries ago.

History.—Warsaw first appears in the 12th century as a village adjoining Ujazdów, a castle of the princes of Masovia. It became the capital of Masovia in 1413. In the 16th century it was the seat of the joint Polish-Lithuanian Sejm, and the kings of Poland were elected at Wola, a nearby suburb. In 1596 Sigismund III moved his court from Kraków to Warsaw, and from that time Warsaw assumed a central position in the life and history of Poland. In the 17th and 18th centuries it was occupied at various times by the Swedes and the Russians; and when Poland was finally partitioned in 1795, the city was given to Prussia. Captured by Napoleon I in 1806, it became the center of the short-lived Grand Duchy of Warsaw under Napoleon's protection, but in 1813 it was taken again by the Russians, to whom it was awarded by the Congress of Vienna in 1815.

During the 19th century, under Russian rule, Warsaw grew into a large industrial center. Its population increased from 127,000 in 1832 to 383,000 in 1882 and 884,000 in 1914. Despite bloody insurrections in 1830-1831 and 1863 and serious rioting in 1905, Russia held the city until it was lost to Germany in August 1915.

In November 1918 Warsaw became the capital of newly independent Poland, and by 1939 the city's population had grown to 1,289,000. Attacked at the outbreak of World War II, it capitulated to Germany on Sept. 27, 1939. During the next five years, more than 85 percent of the city was destroyed, and more than 600,000 inhabitants of Warsaw lost their lives. On April 19, 1943, the Jews in the ghetto rose against the Germans, and after a few weeks of fighting the entire area was razed and its people annihilated. The city revolted against the Germans on Aug. 1, 1944, but after 62 days of bitter fighting the revolt ended in defeat. Never-

theless, the Soviet and 1st Polish armies liberated Praga on Sept. 14, 1944, and the entire city was retaken by Jan. 17, 1945. Population: (1978 est.) 1,552,300.

WARSAW, University of, a Polish institution of higher education founded in Warsaw in 1816 and opened in 1818. Closed by the Russians after the failure of the Polish revolt of 1830-1831, it was not reopened until 1869. From 1884 to 1916 it was completely Russianized. The university made substantial progress during the interwar years. With other Polish educational institutions, it was closed by the Germans after they captured Warsaw in 1939 and was not reopened until 1945. During this period, however, some instruction was given in secret. Russian influence, dominant in the decade after the war, lessened to some extent after 1956.

The university has faculties of biology and geography, chemistry, journalism, political economy, philosophy, philology, geology, mathematics and physics, history, law, and pedagogy.

WARSAW PACT, a military alliance between the Soviet Union and its European satellites. The pact was conceived as an answer to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and it was concluded soon after West Germany's rearmament and admission to NATO.

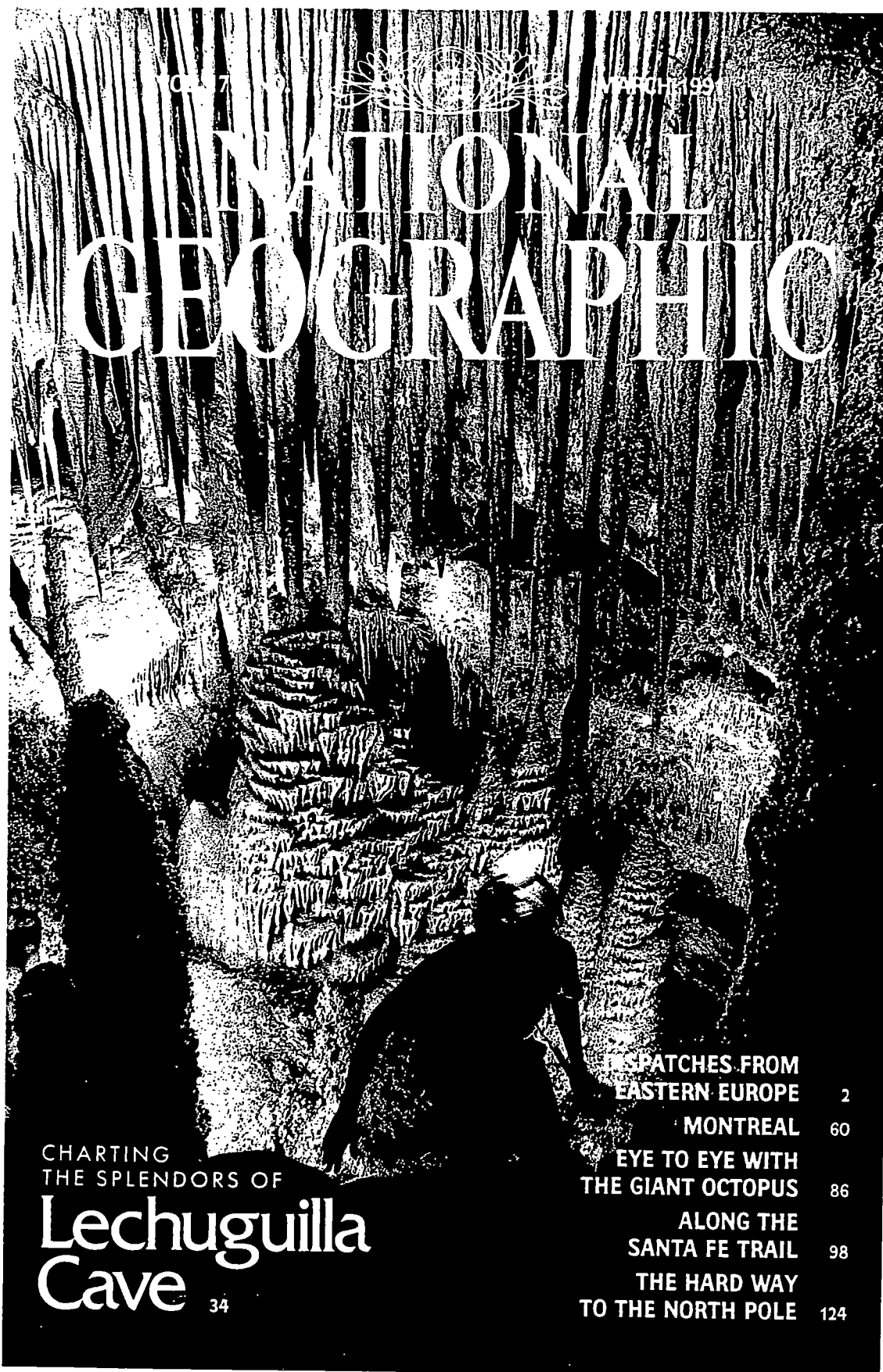
More formally known as the Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance, the treaty was signed in Warsaw, Poland, on May 14, 1955. Its signatories were Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union. Besides representatives of the signatory nations, an "observer" from Communist China attended the Warsaw conference that led to the treaty and announced that his government would come to the aid of its European partners in the event of a war with the West. The defense treaty was automatically renewed in 1975 when its 20-year term expired.

The joint command of the armed forces, with its headquarters in Moscow, was placed under Marshall Ivan Konev, a Soviet military hero of World War II. Soviet troops stationed in Hungary under the Warsaw Pact crushed the 1956 revolution in that country. All the Warsaw signatories with the exception of Albania and Romania participated in the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 to end the liberalization policies of Alexander Dubček. Albania had supported China in its split with the USSR and in 1961 boycotted Warsaw Pact activities. In 1968 it formally withdrew from the pact. Romania condemned the invasion of Czechoslovakia and later, as an expression of its fundamental disagreement with the Soviet Union on matters of policy, withheld its troops from maneuvers of Warsaw Pact forces.

ROBERT D. WARTH*, *University of Kentucky*

WARSHIPS, wôr'ships. Down through the ages warships have tended to fall into three major categories. *Capital ships*, representing maximum strength, have ordinarily operated together in large fleets or in smaller squadrons. *Cruisers*, including frigates and similar earlier types, have generally emphasized speed rather than strength; they have often acted singly in scouting, raiding or protecting commerce, or in carrying messages. Finally, there have often been various lesser types of *auxiliaries and specialized craft*; a large

9120



CHARTING
THE SPLENDORS OF
**Lechuguilla
Cave** 34

DISPATCHES FROM EASTERN EUROPE	2
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EYE TO EYE WITH THE GIANT OCTOPUS	86
ALONG THE SANTA FE TRAIL	98
THE HARD WAY TO THE NORTH POLE	124

THE MAY SUN is hot in the military cemetery, deserted except for two very young and very sunburned Soviet Army privates. The soldiers crouch in front of the tombstones of comrades who fell in this southwest corner of Poland nearly 45 years ago, in the battle against Nazi armies at Wrocław. Time and weather have dulled the Cyrillic inscriptions on the graves, but the troopers are remedying that, meticulously applying fresh gold paint to each headstone.

It is a final act of decency, a rite of farewell to the tens of thousands who died here, for under an accord with the new democratic government of Poland, the Soviets have agreed to withdraw all troops in the early 1990s.

"When do you go?" I ask one of the young soldiers.

"Oh, I'm not sure when we leave."

"What do you know about these graves?" I inquire.

"*Nichevo*," he says. "Nothing." He turns to his work again. I am startled by his response, but then I remember that these soldiers were born more than 20 years after the war. I find myself feeling a little sorry for them. Ignored by Poles and cut off from home, they face even worse conditions when they return to the Soviet Union, where their colleagues are being housed in tents and abandoned factories. I sense their alienation, recall their vacant stares, see their rumpled uniforms, and wonder: Is this the great Soviet Army we so feared?

The sun fades, a breeze rustles the shadowy oaks, and the moment is gone. But I know that I have just seen the end of an era. After four decades on Polish soil, the Russians were really going. All across this long-tormented region, the spring of 1990 would be a time of reawakening.

I had come to Eastern Europe to witness, with photographer Tomasz Tomaszewski, the rebirth of freedom. Over a period of a hundred

Prize-winning American author TAD SZULC returned to his native Poland to begin his journey through Eastern Europe. With him was Polish photographer TOMASZ TOMASZEWSKI, whose most recent GEOGRAPHIC assignment, "Discovering America," was published in January 1988.

days Tomasz and I covered 30,000 miles, from the Baltic of Poland to the Balkan Mountains of Bulgaria, from the Berlin Wall to the Soviet-Czechoslovak border.

We met hundreds of people—students and farmers, priests and factory workers—as they savored democracy for the first time in a half century. We heard the hymns and wedding songs and poetry of hope—and, sadly, the shouted curses and the crack of bones, as new freedom brought dissension and the age-old specters of ethnic prejudice, racial hatred, and nationalism. All through the season, Tomasz and I piled up these and other impressions of a remarkable moment in history. My journey began at Easter because it symbolizes, well, resurrection.

BIAŁOWIEŻA, POLAND, EASTER SUNDAY

Cold rain falls outside, but we are warm inside the home of Michał Bajko, an engineer of the Orthodox faith who works at a nearby factory. On the spur of the moment he and his wife, Eugenja, a surgeon, have invited



SOVIET SOLDIERS, SOON TO DEPART POLAND, GILD HEADSTONES OF FALLEN WWII COMRADES.

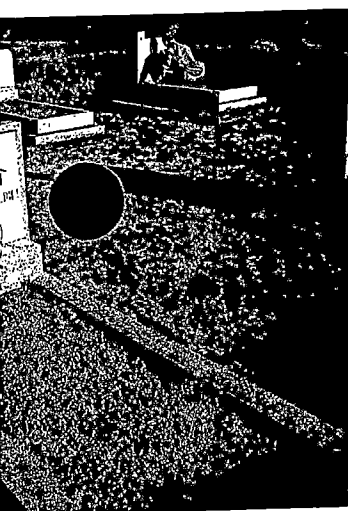
Tomasz and me to join the family for the traditional Easter breakfast called *Święcone*, a feast of sausage, ham, smoked meat, fish, eggs, and cakes. The meal had been blessed the day before by a priest in black robes, black beard, and black, boxy headgear who wound his way through the neighborhood, saying a few words of grace in each home.

With the Bajkos we clink tiny glasses of vodka to keep body and soul together, another Polish tradition, and we chat about the Soviet government's admission, on Good Friday, that in 1940 Stalin's security forces had

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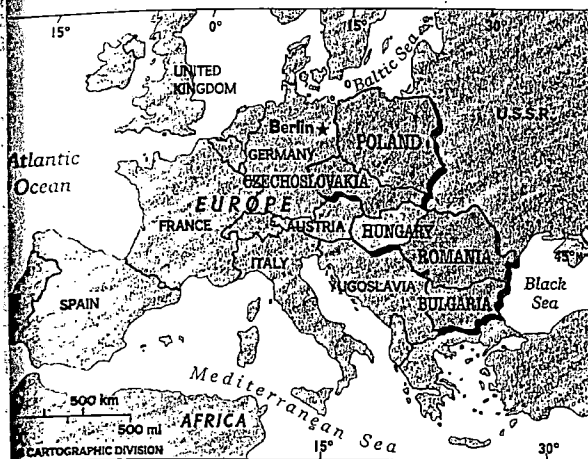


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nal Graphic, March 1991



indeed executed as many as 15,000 Polish
Army officers in Katyn Forest and nearby sites
in Byelorussia.

It's no news to anyone, least of all Michał's
father, Stefan, a lively octogenarian who
remembers two World Wars fought across this
stretch of eastern Poland. But it is clear that
Stefan, who spent many years in Soviet labor
camps, takes solace in last week's confession.

"Thank God for the truth!" he says. Michał
raises a glass. "To the future!" We drink to
that, and I silently wish the Bajkos well. Over
the years they and other Orthodox believers in
this strongly Roman Catholic country were
seldom treated fairly or well. Perhaps they
would fare better under democracy.

"Let's see if it really changes," Michał says.
"Until now we were second-class citizens."
Nobody forgets the past here. Most of the
Orthodox priests I meet are friendly enough,
until I ask their names. "How do I know
you're not with the police?" one asks me.

The Bajkos leave for their first Easter Sun-
day under democracy, while Tomasz and I
drive from Białowieża into the dank country-
side. We stop to chat with worried farmers
who cannot sell their potatoes, the region's
principal crop. The Soviet Union is broke and
can no longer import the spuds, and the Polish
government won't buy them. Under the old
system all the potatoes were sold.

One big farmer with rough hands looks
exasperated: "Hey," he tells me, "we can't
eat democracy."

A local priest who has been eavesdropping
nods in sympathy. When I ask about his
relations with the democratic government, he
brightens.

"You know, we priests no longer need

official permission from the police or the
Communist Party to hold religious proces-
sions. We just do it. And lots of the old Reds
now come openly to the church. We don't shun
them. They belong here."

PRAGUE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, APRIL 21

I am waiting for the Pope in Hradčany
Square, along with thousands of other people.
This is his first visit to an Eastern European
nation outside of Poland. Roman Catholicism
is the largest faith here, and it was savagely
persecuted by the communists. I know priests
who had to be ordained in secret and who
worked underground until last year. So, even
though the Catholic Church is not the mono-
lith here that it is in the Pope's native Poland,
today's visit represents the rebirth of religious
freedom for millions of Czechoslovaks.

As I wait, mingling with the happy crowd, I
recall the last time I saw Prague, more than 21
years ago, as a *New York Times* correspondent
covering the Soviet invasion. These same
streets were thick with smoke and fear. Soviet
tanks strafed the National Museum with
machine-gun fire and surrounded the Czecho-
slovak radio and television building to silence
the resistance broadcasts. Armored vehicles
chased students around Wenceslas Square,
and a few of the kids managed to stuff burning
newspapers up the tanks' exhaust pipes,
exploding the engines.

Back then, in August 1968, the Soviets
wanted to crush the reforms of Communist
Party leader Alexander Dubček, whom they
considered a subversive. Moscow replaced
him with a hard-line puppet more to their
liking, and the new regime expelled me for
writing about the wave of repression.

What I see now is a different country.
Prague looks peaceful and golden, spreading
along both sides of the Vltava River, with the
steeple and cupolas of a hundred churches
caressed by sunlight. It is a city intoxicated
with liberty. People walk around clutching
bunches of spring flowers, and on Wenceslas
Square I see that someone has scrawled a mes-
sage on a wall: "IT'S OVER! CZECHS ARE
FREE!" Smiling, stylish young women like to
pose for photographs beside the slogan, ren-
dered in English.

Suddenly the Pope appears, flashing by in
his white Popemobile to wild applause and
cheers, on his way to St. Vitus Cathedral to
bless the sick and the disabled. For the crowds

Dispatches From Eastern Europe

in the square the moment is gone, but delight lingers. "So you see he finally came to see us too," an elderly gentleman in a black fedora says to nobody in particular. Everybody around him smiles, nodding in agreement: "Ano!" they say in chorus. "Yes!" I notice that the policemen and young soldiers are smiling and joking with the crowd. That hasn't happened for a long while.

But even in this joyous time, there is a hint of trouble. The next day I listen to the Pope in the Moravian town of Velehrad, where he delivers blessings in Czech, Slovak, Polish, Hungarian, German, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, and a few other languages. It is a lesson in the difficulties of living in a part of Europe with disparate populations, each with its own language and strong nationalist urges, and a long history of wars and shifting borders.

The people of Czechoslovakia, for instance, proudly insist on their own identities as Bohemians, Moravians, and Slovaks, even though all live under one flag. Chatting with farmers and townsfolk in Velehrad, I learn that they would like more autonomy, and I hear about a disturbing price one pays for freedom of movement as ethnic tensions rise. A teacher, conversing in Polish, tells me that Poles are resented here.

"They come like locusts across the border, buy up all the inexpensive Czech food, and go home." Poles, for their part, don't like the Czechs—who, in the Polish view, act too superior. Relations get more complicated. The Slovaks resent Prague for granting equal rights to the large Hungarian minority and to Gypsies. Hungary has problems with the Slovak and German minorities on its soil. Romania has problems with Gypsies and with its long-settled Hungarian and German minorities. The Bulgarians still harass their ethnic Turkish minority. In the north, Poles and Germans quarrel across the Oder-Neisse frontier, drawn at the end of World War II when Germany lost important territories to Poland.

These animosities have been bubbling just beneath the surface through years of communist rule, but as long as the communists were in charge, there was a lid of "socialist solidarity" on the kettle. Now that people can speak their minds, the racial prejudices and regional

hatreds boil over. Signs of anti-Semitism and other ethnic prejudice have reappeared, and the neofascists called skinheads are persecuting Vietnamese, Gypsies, Turks, and anyone who does not look "European."

WARSAW, POLAND, MAY 1

It is easier to topple a dictatorship than to start a democracy. In a democracy even people with despicable ideas can have their say, and sometimes the talk leads to action.

Today I visit a convention of the Polish right wing, a small political group that gathers, of all places, in the Palace of Culture and Science. The palace, the Soviet Union's gift to Warsaw in the 1950s, is the city's tallest, ugliest, and most despised building, because the communists used to meet there.

I am frisked at the door by muscular young men searching for weapons. Inside, I am invited to buy an anti-Semitic tract called "Protocol of the Elders of Zion," which depicts, among other things, a communist, presumably a Jew, shooting at the heart of a



COMMUNION CHALICE COVERED, A PRIEST AWAITS THE POPE IN PRAGUE.

Roman Catholic priest. One wonders why the anti-Semites even bother. Only about 6,000 Jews remain among Poland's 38 million people, down from the nearly three million Jews who lived here before the war.

In the hall we are subjected to a tedious speech by a politician who drones on and on about the death of communism, the beauties of the free market, and the Jewish peril. When his talk finally ends, the muscular men who had frisked me earlier join up with a score of skinheads to attack another group of young people who have been outside, protesting the

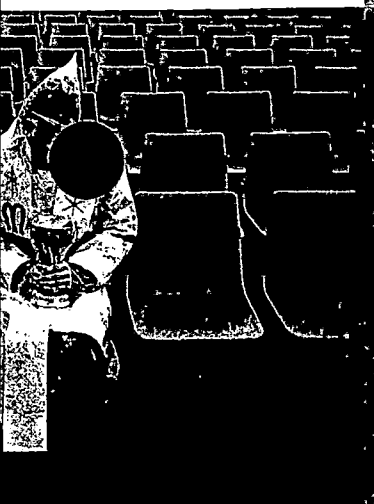
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nal Geographic, March 1991

right-wing gathering. The skinheads, carry-
ing heavy clubs, seem to have the upper hand.
Some even wear swastika armbands. I watch
the fists flying and see the ambulances arrive.
They load rightists and leftists into the vehi-
cles, gun their engines, and disappear into
the warm spring evening. The pavement is
splotted with blood.

WARSAW, POLAND, MAY 4

With the collapse of the police state, law and
order have broken down. Cops are seldom
seen, except halfheartedly directing traffic,
and clearly they would just as soon not inter-
fere in the lives of fellow citizens. As a result, a
wave of burglaries, stickups, muggings, and
murders is sweeping Eastern Europe.

"Business is fantastic," says the young man
running the gas gun store. He is about 40, well
dressed, has impeccable manners—and he
sells all kinds of gas weapons. Imported from
West Germany, these pistols fire gas pellets:
tear gas, temporarily paralyzing gas, asphyxi-
ating gas, and skin-burning gas, all perfectly
legal now, and perhaps of some comfort to
those who fear the crime wave. The most popu-
lar gun, at least among younger customers, is
a heavy black model known as the "Miami,"
after the *Miami Vice* television program, a
favorite in Poland.

The irony is that this gun merchant is a for-
mer agent of Urząd Bezpieczeństwa, Poland's
disbanded secret-police force—UB for short.
Hundreds of former communist UB have gone
into business for themselves, using their net-
works and party assets to open gun boutiques,
consulting firms, and travel agencies, often in
partnership with Western businessmen.

"So," says the gun salesman, "what do you
think is going to happen to the three and a half
million members of the Communist Party? You
think they'll just vanish into thin air?" He
smiles. He knows that I know he's a former
UB agent and no explanations are necessary.

But his question makes me wonder: What
happens to the hundreds of thousands of
secret-police agents and informers in Eastern
Europe? Will they find a place in the new
democratic order? The most extensive net-
work, in East Germany, was the dreaded
Staatssicherheitsdienst, the State Security
Ministry. Known as the Stasi, this agency kept
files on four million East Germans and two
million West Germans.

The files still exist, presumably in the hands

of new authorities. Until those records are
opened, no one will know the details of the
state's collective crimes. But blackmail, mur-
der, and torture existed on so vast a scale that it
would be almost impossible to exact punish-
ment. In most of Eastern Europe the new gov-
ernments won't even attempt to pursue former
agents, now that the nightmare has ended.

"It would be unfair to deprive them of their
retirement," says Jacek Kuroń, Poland's min-
ister of labor and social policy. A former dissi-
dent and a veteran of several UB prisons,
Kuroń believes in the rule of law—even for the
secret-police agents who once abused him.
"Only if they are convicted of specific crimes
in a court of law should they be denied their
benefits," he says.

In Czechoslovakia I meet another former
prisoner of the communist regime who is now
the country's interior minister. He refuses to
publish lists of former informers, fearful that
vengeful citizens would "hunt them down."
Some countries, lacking a pool of experienced
talent, are forced to hire former agents for
security and intelligence jobs. "We must do
the best we can," says a Polish friend who is a
senior security officer. "Sometimes we look
the other way when it comes to hiring." Some-
times, in fact, the new regimes are embar-
rassed to learn that they have inadvertently
hired former agents. In East Germany, for
instance, three new cabinet ministers and 68
new parliament members were accused of
having worked for the Stasi.

LWÓWEK ŚLĄSKI, POLAND, MAY 8

This is the 45th anniversary of the Third
Reich's fall, an event that changed the map of
Europe. I drive along the Neisse River, which
divides Poland and Germany, and I am re-
minded of the extensive German territories
ceded to Poland after the war.

On the Polish side you see towns and vil-
lages that look tidy and prosperous, unmis-
takably German to this day, but there are almost
no Germans here. Millions of them were
expelled to the west after 1945 to make room
for millions of Poles who settled in this wheat-
farming country after the Soviets expelled
them from territories Stalin had seized.

Late in the morning we reach the Polish
town of Lwówek Śląski, where elderly men in
sport shirts sit around enjoying the first beer of
the day and the warm sun. They play chess on
the sidewalk with giant knights and pawns

Dispatches From Eastern Europe

and queens. The chess champion of the town is Antoni Dubicki, a 59-year-old Pole who looks much older, perhaps because he spent the war in a Siberian labor camp. The Soviets sent him here, with other settlers, to start a new life after the war. He pauses from his chess.

"This is ancient Polish land," he says, "and I'm not worried that the Germans will try to take it from us." (Editorial writers in Warsaw *do* worry about such things.) Dubicki is more concerned about Soviets, perhaps because of his Siberian experience.

"I fear them a lot," he says. He grips my hand, and his faded blue eyes fill with tears.

"Say hello to your President Bush from an old Siberian prisoner," he whispers. "Tell him we count on him."

Driving from village to village, we finally chance upon Erwin Wusman, one of the few Germans still living in this part of Poland. He refused to leave Sulików, now a shabby farm community of huts and lean-tos not far from the river. At 95 he is frail and slow but still holding his ground.

"No, I never agreed to be evacuated. . . . This is where I belong," Wusman told me in squeaky German, as we sat among the chickens on his back porch. As far as he is concerned, this is still Germany, with borders as they were before 1945. He can be cranky at times, but I am told that Wusman's neighbors have developed a grudging affection for him.

"Three times the Poles threw him out, and three times he came back," says a Ukrainian neighbor. "So let old Erwin die here."

BERLIN, EAST GERMANY, MAY 10

Just north of the Brandenburg Gate, which towers over the former Berlin Wall, I find children playing in the rubble, boys chasing other boys with plastic pistols. I know it's just a game, but it gives me the willies. An endless queue of West Germans flows through the majestic gate. They come across to visit relatives, to stare at the once forbidden city, and to buy everything in sight.

An East German friend tells me that West German investors are spending hundreds of millions of marks to purchase the imposing, modern apartment buildings the communist regime built for its top officials—just before the government changed.

Other buildings in the neighborhood are filling up with refugees nobody else wants—ethnic Germans who fled the Soviet Union, Polish

peddlers, Romanians, and Gypsies. Those fresh from the railroad stations congregate around the fountains of Alexanderplatz. They've heard that this is the best place to find help or friendship.

Then there are Asian and African laborers imported by the communist regimes as virtual slaves—Vietnamese, Angolans, and Mozambicans. I hear that some 60,000 Vietnamese were sent here for menial labor, another 30,000 to Czechoslovakia. I don't give it much credence until I meet a Vietnamese named Nguyen Huy Thanh in a suburb of Prague.

Thanh, a highly educated engineer, moved to Zličín some years ago, after the Hanoi government promised him he could work abroad to improve his professional skills, earn some money, and see the world. In fact, Hanoi was scheming to pay its war debts in Eastern Europe and to earn hard currency by exporting the best of its technical talent. Thanh signed a five-year contract, leaving his wife and three children in Hanoi. But when he got to Czechoslovakia, he found himself washing floors in an iron factory. Because Hanoi kept most of Thanh's salary, his cut amounted to less than a hundred dollars a month.

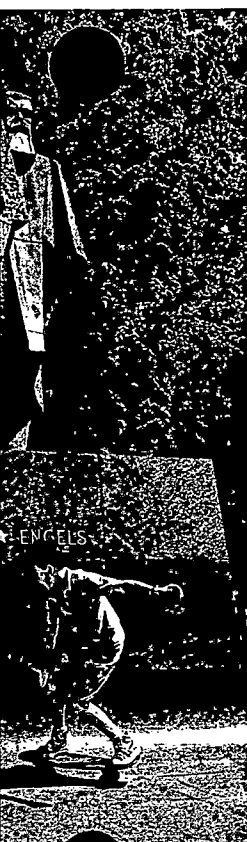


SKATEBOARDERS PLAY ON A MONUMENT TO THE FATHERS OF COMMUNISM.

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TO THE OF COMMUNISM.
ograph, March 1991

"There is no way out," he tells me as we sit in the tiny room he shares with another Vietnamese worker. "I cannot afford transportation home, and the government here no longer needs me. The Vietnamese Embassy in Prague will not permit me to go ahead of time." I meet others in a similar fix.

To make matters worse, Thanh says, the Vietnamese who remain in Eastern Europe are often chased and beaten by skinheads, who waylay Asians headed for work in nearby factories. And on at least one occasion the thugs barged into Vietnamese barracks and assaulted them at home.

Thanh is a gentle man of quiet charm who is obviously pained to discuss his troubles. "Perhaps," he tells me, "democracy will come to help us."

BRATISLAVA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, MAY 27

Just north of here the Morava River runs blue through green hills on a warm afternoon, forming the border between Austria and Czechoslovakia. Until recently, this bucolic stream was a piece of the Iron Curtain. From the Czechoslovak side a person could cross the Morava only after negotiating minefields, eluding border guards, wriggling through barbed wire strung between tall concrete pylons, and swimming 300 or 400 yards in the dark.

At one of the most famous river crossings, near the village of Devínska Nová Ves, there is a stone bridge, framed by weeping willows with branches that sweep the waters. This bridge, once the passageway to freedom for thousands of Jews crossing into Austria from Eastern Europe, was closed for years after the Iron Curtain descended, but it is open again.

Young lovers hold hands, and families push babies in prams on the pathways where guards watched over the bridge with machine guns. Tomasz and I wave to the lovers and parents, and the smiling people wave back.

The concrete pylons still stand along the river at hundred-yard intervals, like ugly signposts. I wonder idly what the local people make of these remnants of the old frontier, when the answer comes. I spy a fat stork nest on one of the pylons, with the mother sitting snugly on it. The father, flying back and forth across the old border, brings food and straw and branches. They are free to come and go as they please, as is the white-haired man I watch getting into a rowboat down below. He calmly



paddles across the Morava River, from Czechoslovakia to Austria, to pass the afternoon with friends and relatives on the other side. It looks so natural that I have to remind myself that this short trip might have been fatal six months ago.

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY, JUNE 4

By 5:30 a.m., 3,000 or 4,000 workers of the first shift are pouring through the gates of the iron and steel works on the Danube River island of Csepel. Expanded by ardent communists in the 1950s, it became Hungary's largest industrial site. But now the workers worry about the future. Most of the complex, they tell me, is obsolete, and the government is looking for private buyers. But there are no takers, foreign or domestic. Serious unemployment is suddenly menacing.

Today's worker wants to become part of the middle class, to own a car and a weekend cottage in the country. "That's what I want," says Gábor Szabó, a young welder, "to become a European."

Elsewhere on the Danube I see that the headquarters of the Communist Party Central Committee is padlocked and that boys on skateboards are zipping around in front of it, using the pedestal of a Marx and Engels monument as a runway. All the years of communism seem forgotten in this country.

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY, JUNE 6

You don't see many Csepel workers on Váci Utca, the pedestrian shopping district in Pest, the section

(Continued on page 24)

of the capital lying along the Danube's left bank. This part of Budapest is full of fine restaurants and elegant women and well-tailored men who pass the evening dining on goose and listening to the discreet musical charm of strolling violinists. Across the river at the grand old Gellért Hotel (named for the 11th-century bishop whom pagans are said to have rolled into the river inside a barrel spiked with nails), couples in skimpy swimsuits sun themselves among the statues in manicured gardens. Most of these fashionable people are foreign tourists—and erstwhile members of the Communist Party who have recently discovered the joys of capitalism.

Meanwhile the Soviets are withdrawing from this nation, usually by train. "If they depart at once," a cab driver tells me, "we have offered to take them to the border for free." And while few Hungarians would complain of the Soviet pullout, the leave-taking will carry a big price tag. Hungary has a foreign debt of 20 billion dollars, the highest per capita in Eastern Europe. And in 1991 the Soviets will make them (and all others in the region) pay for oil in hard currency.

ÁRTÁND, HUNGARY, JUNE 7

"We are a transit country," sighs Capt. Miklós Halmos, a deeply tanned man with white hair, who has guarded the Hungarian border for 27 years. Halmos, now commander of this crossing, points to a long line of cars with Romanian license plates.

"Our orders are to let them come and go freely," he says—and they do. More than 500,000 travelers passed through the month before.

Ethnic Hungarian and German refugees flee here from Romania, as do Romanians and Bulgarians seeking a better life in Hungary or points west. As a fresh-born democracy Hungary is reluctant to impose obstacles to free travel, so the refugees keep coming, and so do the problems.

A half hour's drive from the Ártánd border crossing is the grim and sooty town of Berettyóújfalu, where smuggled goods reach open-air markets operated by Gypsies, Romanians, and Hungarians who try outshouting one another to attract customers. Hanging around an outdoor bar where tough, sinister men

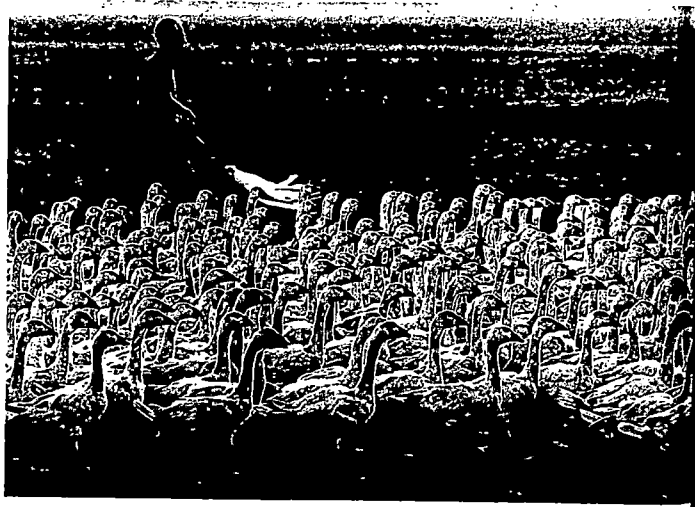
drink beer from mugs, I gradually learn how this black market works.

"The Poles specialize in smuggling coffee," one of the beer drinkers says, explaining how the coffee is hidden in car fenders and resold to smugglers who pop up from Romania for the day. Romanians sneak over here to sell cheap shoes. Gypsies sell rock audiotapes. The competition is nasty, and tensions run high. A corpulent Hungarian woman points to a neighbor's stall. "Ah," she says, "the Gypsy thieves."

HORTOBÁGY, HUNGARY, JUNE 8

Many Hungarians are farmers who let others worry about refugees and economic plans while they themselves concentrate on the age-old concerns of the Great Hungarian Plain—shoeing horses, planting wheat, and fattening animals.

I meet about 7,000 geese at sunset outside town. They march along in regimental formation, led by other geese, a noisy, honking sea of white feathers advancing from field to barn.



A REGIMENT OF HUNGARIAN GEESSE, 7,000 STRONG, MARCHES TO THE BARN.

The amazing thing is that this complex logistical operation is directed by only two men and one woman.

One of the men, Gáspár Gyula, stands at the barn gate and simply calls the geese home.

"Gyertek! Gyertek!" he shouts in a rich baritone, using the Hungarian phrase for "come here." The geese obey, conditioned by habit and by the tapes Gyula broadcasts through loudspeakers.

Hungarian agriculture was largely collectivized under the communist regime, and Gyula has now worked out a compromise with

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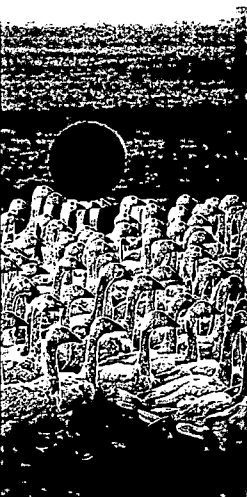
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the government. He leases his barn and fields from a cooperative, buys geese from the cooperative for cash or credit, fattens them at his own expense, and sells the meat and plucked feathers to the cooperative for a profit. In effect, this is a market economy, although Gyula has to pay only one farmhand. His wife works for free.

Across a ditch in one of his fields I watch this capitalist tending his geese with obvious pride. He shouts back: "Raising geese is awfully hard work—but think of the money I'll make!"

Even old Reds talk that way nowadays. In the wine country south of Budapest, I meet Gábor Kemény in the little town of Izsák. Kemény, a former Communist Party member, is Izsák's most successful entrepreneur. He owns a pleasant restaurant named Fekete Bárány (Black Sheep), the general store, and the local gas station. He makes wine and champagne on land leased from the local cooperative. He would like to expand his financial empire, and he believes that all the land confiscated by the communists should be returned to its original owners.

After a few hours in Kemény's town I can see that he is well liked. Neighbors smile and wave at him. He fits into the new scheme, I think, because he has been absolutely honest all along. He tried to be a good communist ("so long as I believed in it," he says and laughs), yet he maintained a close friendship with a labor leader jailed after the 1956 anticommunist rebellion.

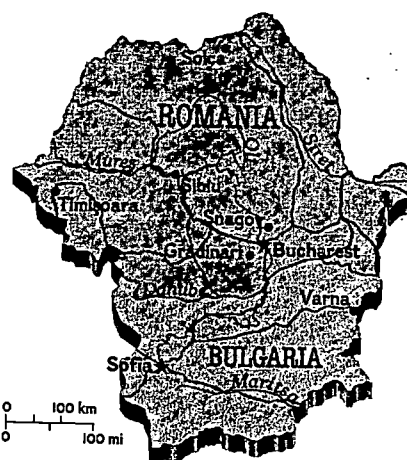
"I am what I am," he says over coffee at the Black Sheep, "and people know it."

BUCHAREST, ROMANIA, JUNE 14

The peaceful death of communism—which Czechoslovakia's President Václav Havel described as the "velvet revolution"—seems like a faded memory on the night we land in Romania. The sky is black with clouds and slashing rain, the streets are dark and empty of traffic, the government palace is surrounded by army tanks.

The new government is ruthlessly smashing its liberal opposition. President Ion Iliescu, once a top communist leader, has assembled an army of several thousand coal miners to rout the students and intellectuals who oppose him. "Enemies of democracy," he calls them.

Driving from the airport, we see miners charging after fleeing, screaming people.



Wielding clubs and crowbars, they grab a young woman in a red dress from the sidewalk, slap her in the face, hit her with their weapons. She cries and falls. A miner kicks her. We see other miners beat two young men with long hair. They beat a teenager. They beat an old woman.

There are no police in sight, and now we see a knot of miners in the road, blocking our taxi. We stop. They gather around, rough men in tattered clothes. Their faces, black with soot, look menacing in the yellow glow of their helmet lamps, and I notice that they carry pipes and clubs. Our driver is trembling with fear. He opens the trunk to show that he is not transporting weapons. I hear the trunk slam. The miners wave us on.

At the hotel we find more miners patrolling the lobby. Their eyes reveal nothing, but all of them exude power and importance, probably for the first time in their lives. Throughout the night they exercise their newfound influence with raw fury, as if to settle long years of resentment and frustration.

Looking down on Nicolae Bălcescu Boulevard from my hotel balcony, I see a Dantesque scene of darkness occasionally broken by the flash of automobile lights and by what seems like thousands of tiny lightning bugs crawling and running on the ground. The scene is garish, intensely alive. I flick on the television to discover that a government channel is showing a wartime movie with Nazi SS troopers beating people.

By midnight, drained from viewing the savagery, I go to the hotel's rooftop restaurant in search of food. There I find a few happy couples dancing in an air-conditioned room. The band is playing a tango.

(Continued on page 30)

Dispatches From Eastern Europe

BUCHAREST, ROMANIA, JUNE 15

I wake to see the miners still in control, surrounding the hotel and patrolling University Square across the street. The toll from last night: at least one dead, hundreds injured. President Iliescu makes a speech, thanking the miners for "saving democracy" and warning them—a bit late, I think—against excess.

Meanwhile, I notice something odd on the streets. While some miners lounge around, relaxing and enjoying the spring sun, others rush about grabbing fellow citizens, cracking more skulls. Almost every group of miners is led by a civilian I assume to be a former agent of Securitate, the dreaded secret police who were the muscle behind Nicolae Ceaușescu's brutal dictatorship. Are they still running the place?

BUCHAREST, ROMANIA, JUNE 16

A thousand students have been arrested, and more citizens beaten since yesterday. On a hunch, Tomasz and I drive to the Bucharest Emergency Hospital to find the 28-year-old



ROMANIAN FARMER ARISTIDE COSMIUC OFFERS A GIFT OF POETRY.

leader of the Students' League, Marian Munteanu, with his foot in a cast and his hand smashed.

"I guess we had better change our strategy," he says, smiling feebly.

His brother, Bogdan, also active in Romania's prodemocracy movement, is propped in an adjoining bed. Somebody had taken a crowbar to him, cracking his ribs and piercing a lung.

The next day police come to the same room, armed with arrest warrants, to remove the brothers. They recuperate in a hospital of the

Interior Ministry; then they are transferred to prison for two months until tens of thousands of demonstrators finally secure their release through protests.

BUCHAREST, ROMANIA, JUNE 18

It is impossible to understand the brutality of this springtime in Romania, but it helps to know what came before. First the Romanians were forced to fight, successively, on both sides during World War II. Then came communism and the megalomaniacal regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu, which ended only with his execution on Christmas Day 1989.

Romanians had no rights of any kind, barely enough food to survive, a few hours of electricity a day, no heat in the harsh winters, no contact with the outside world. To increase the country's population, contraceptives were banned and abortions were virtually forbidden, which spawned a generation of abandoned children—all of which must have left deep scars in the national psyche.

"What Ceaușescu had undertaken," a friend with long diplomatic experience in Romania told me, "was to turn 23 million Romanians into zombies with the sole purpose of producing for the state—and for the pharaonic life-style of the ruling family."

To get an idea of Ceaușescu's values, you need only visit his newly constructed—but never occupied—House of the Republic. One of the largest buildings in the world, it is boxy and outlandish, dwarfing any human who stands before it. With more than a thousand rooms and a hundred public reception halls, it is fitted out with fine furniture, gold-leaf walls, and thick slabs of marble. This communist palace supposedly cost a billion dollars to build, perhaps more.

Twenty miles to the west in the village of Grădinari, I see the other side of Ceaușescu's legacy. Here, in a decaying mansion called the Home for Non-recuperable Children, the government sent severely disabled patients to be forgotten, rather than waste official funds on remedial programs.

I see a hundred children wandering the halls or sitting outside, sleeping, screaming, defecating, sometimes fighting. Mosquitoes and flies buzz at their open sores. I see autistic, spastic, and retarded children, children with

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IA, JULY 13

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ren wandering the halls
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hting. Mosquitoes and
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children, children with

March 1991

cretinism. I am told that some could be helped
with training or teaching, but little money
is forthcoming from Iliescu's government.
Although one physician commutes here daily
from Bucharest, her duties are largely admin-
istrative; otherwise, no trained nurses, psy-
chologists, or instructors care for the children.
A kindly woman named Joana Dodoiv and a
staff of 13 others provide for these patients as
best they can, but there is little at Grădinari
except empty time, day in, day out.

When one of the little patients, a boy no
more than ten, takes my hand and silently
looks into my eyes, I can take no more. I have
to walk away.

SOLCA, ROMANIA, JUNE 23

Even Ceausescu could not snuff out certain
instincts. Driving along a country road in Mol-
davia, searching for a medieval monastery,
Tomasz and I happen upon a wedding party
walking in the opposite direction.

The groom, looking impeccable in a black
suit, smiles, as does the bride. She wears red.
Both carry flowers, and everybody is singing.
It is the happiest thing I have seen in this tor-
tured country. We stop and ask for permission
to photograph the couple, and the groom
waves for us to join them.

"You will be our guests!" he says.

Of course, we accept. I find a bottle of
Scotch stashed away in our battered red Dacia
station wagon and present it to the couple.
They pile into the car, and we drive several
miles to the home of the bride's parents.

We join the other guests who gorge on
meats, pâtés, sausages, eggs, and Moldavian
specialties I am unable to identify. They tell
me I am the first American to attend a Molda-
vian wedding. We begin a round of toasts with
powerful Romanian vodka—To Dorin and
Georgeta Gralis! To Romania! To the United
States! Someone produces a violin and an
accordion, and the dancing begins, men and
women plunging into the *hora* and, to my
amazement, something very much like the
earthy *lambada*.

It is all very festive and warming, and I
wonder if it would have been this way a year
before, when food and foreigners were so
much scarcer. Tomasz and I quietly slip away,
delighted to have been part of it.

Making our way back to the city, we round a
switchback on a mountain road and encounter
an old man walking. He has a white beard and

he carries a scythe, the very image of Father
Time. He flags us down.

"I am Aristide Cosmiuc," he says with a
flourish, "a poet and a philosopher." He begs
to recite a few verses. His voice is soft but
strong, rising and falling through the poetry,
and I catch only the drift of his Romanian,
enough to know he's saying something about
love and faith and wisdom. When he is fin-
ished, he tips his hat and resumes his solitary
progress up the mountain, stepping lightly.

SOFIA, BULGARIA, JULY 4

After the turmoil of Romania, it is a pleasant
surprise to arrive in a country where the gov-
ernment isn't trying to kill its citizens. Bul-
garia, which was the oldest communist police
state in the region, seems highly civilized
by comparison. Students seeking democratic
reforms argue with the new socialist govern-
ment here, but the debate is good-natured and
peaceful, which is extraordinary when you
remember that postwar Bulgaria has no demo-
cratic traditions whatsoever.

At Sofia University I find student strikers
dozing in the sun on the steps. Others strum
guitars, read newspapers, and chat pleas-
antly. A professor with a white beard
climbs out of a third-floor window, moves gin-
gerly along the ledge to the next window, then
repeats this feat in reverse, disappearing into
the building. Nobody knows why. But the stu-
dents are mildly amused. ("He teaches Greek
history," one of them tells me.) Nobody is
seeking confrontation, and no police show up.

Looking around town, I pass the massive
building of the Central Committee of the Com-
munist Party, and on Ruski Street I find a huge
statue of Lenin, a figure more tolerated than
admired these days. "We let the statue of Tsar
Alexander II stand during the communist
years, so why not let Lenin stay?" a Bulgarian
official asks, shrugging.

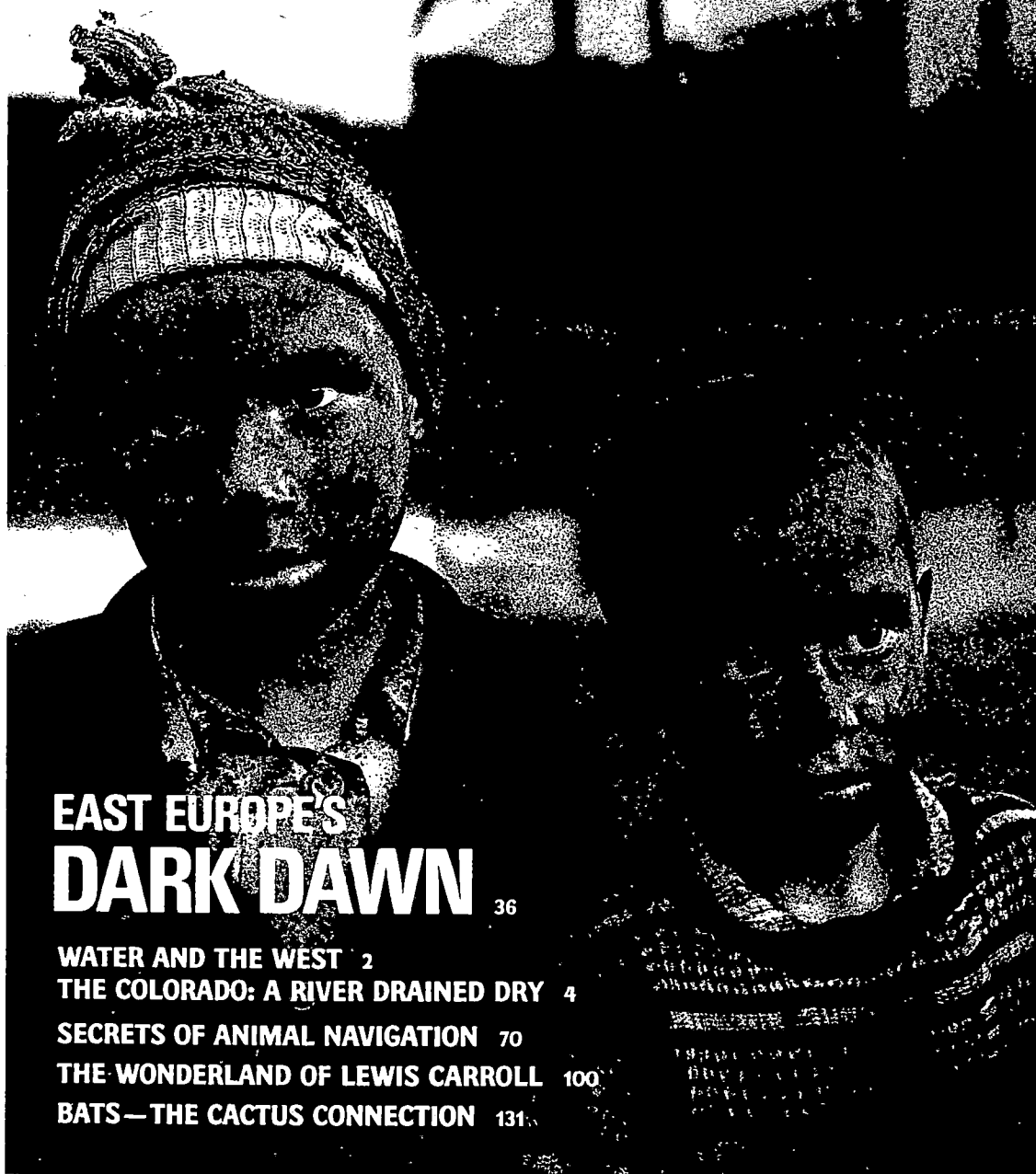
The tolerance is surprising, given the sup-
pression and enforced isolation Bulgaria has
suffered, but I am relieved, here at the end of
my journey, to find that spark of goodwill. All
over Eastern Europe the days ahead will be
difficult, with mounting debt, rising unem-
ployment, and civil unrest demanding much
of these already fatigued nations. But they
have been through worse, and I know how
their immense reserves of courage, common
sense, and humor sustained them. They will
survive—of that I am certain.

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OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY WASHINGTON, D.C.

While the world wasn't looking, Eastern Europe's regimes poisoned their environment in the name of progress. Now new leaders must assess the damage and set priorities for reversing it.

IN THE FALL OF 1989 the communist governments in Eastern Europe began to crumble. As the Iron Curtain was torn apart, journalists—nosing around in Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria with a newfound freedom—were met by an outpouring of complaints about polluted air, contaminated water, and poisoned soil.

The headlines in the Western press—"Pollution Chokes East-Bloc Nations," "Environmental Catastrophe in Eastern Europe"—brought a crowd of questions to my mind: Why all the fuss right now? How bad is it? How did it happen? Is it affecting people's health, and how are the new governments responding?

As a doctor by training and a scientist by inclination, I was disturbed by what I read. For two months in 1990 I traveled throughout Eastern Europe, eager to discover the truth. What I found was not nearly so simple as the headlines had led me to believe. Eastern Europe's industry is backward and outdated, its workers are exposed to hazards no longer accepted in the West, and little thought is given to pollution control. The natural environment is being destroyed, as in the West before antipollution and industrial health regulations were introduced. But the clamor announcing an environmental catastrophe seemed out of proportion. It turns out that in the late 1980s complaints about the environment became focused into a way of showing disapproval of communist rule. So pollution, certainly a major problem, attracted intense and sometimes exaggerated public interest.

My journey began in Kraków, the historic

JON THOMPSON, a physician formerly specializing in internal medicine, is now a writer living in London. He wrote "Inside the Kremlin" for the January 1990 NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC.



capital of Poland, a city spared the ravages of war and adorned with many old churches and fine buildings. I took a walk along the grassy bank of the Wisła (Vistula) River. The air was clean and fresh, and the river, dark and greeny brown. A lone fisherman sat by the water gazing at the reflected beauty of the town.

"How's the fishing?" I asked.

"We catch some carp, but it's been terrible until recently," he said. "It's all to do with the poisons put out by the factory upstream."

I was surprised at how much he knew.

A local taxi driver showed an equally remarkable interest in pollution by giving me a rundown on how much sulfur dioxide was put



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ography June 1991

out by the city's power stations and the nearby
giant steel mill at Nowa Huta (New Foundry),
built in the early 1950s with a Soviet version of
1930s Pittsburgh technology.

"Every day on TV there are discussions
about the sulfur dioxide level in the air, the
state of the rivers, and other pollution prob-
lems," he explained. "Kraków lies in a valley,
and in the winter a blanket of foul air often
covers the whole city. When it rains, the
smoke is dissolved and falls as acid. Our old
stone buildings are just being eaten away.

"Everything was secret under the commu-
nists, and we spent all our energy simply stay-
ing alive. Now we have some information, and

ENERGY LIFELINE and environmental nightmare both
begin in the coal mines. These Polish miners dig
high-grade black coal, some of which Poland will
export to raise cash. The nation keeps all of its dirtier,
high-sulfur brown coal for industry and home heating.

we realize how important these things are."

Jan Lach, head of a team making indepen-
dent measurements of dust and gas emissions
from 19 factories around Kraków, soon con-
firmed what the taxi driver and fisherman had
told me. He was nervous and unused to foreign
journalists and anxious to give facts rather
than opinions.

"On a yearly basis the maximum permitted

East Europe's Dark Dawn

levels for sulfur dioxide are exceeded the whole time," he said, "and only once did the fluorine level fall to within the permitted range. We have a long way to go to meet our targets." I was intrigued to note that in 1989 the amount of dust falling on the city was less than in previous years. "During that year we had a lot of strikes, and many factories were not working properly," he explained. "It had nothing to do with improvements in pollution control."

Pollution in Kraków was nowhere to be seen, but appearances can be deceptive—it was summer after all. From the walls of an old fort on the outskirts of the city, I could see Nowa Huta's forest of smoking chimneys looming in the distance. In winter with wind blowing smoke toward the city, I could imagine quite a different picture—the dirty one my taxi driver had painted earlier.

The next day, I met Stanisław Juchnowicz, a distinguished-looking architect with spectacles and silver hair, president of the Polish Ecology Club. "Why," I asked him, "was a huge steelworks built next to a city of such historic importance?"

He paused, weighing his answer. "You must understand, it was a political decision. There is no iron ore here, and we had very little industry. According to the theory of our communist masters, the wage-earning class was supposed to have a leading role in society. In the 1950s all the countries under communist rule underwent massive industrialization. Kraków was a university town with very few wage earners. Putting the steelworks here was a deliberate attempt to destroy the old order by creating a class of wage earners where none existed before."

Like Juchnowicz, other members of the Polish Ecology Club were highly qualified and intelligent. They all showed deep concern, speaking with passion about the horrors of pollution. They told me about the uncontrolled discharge of fluorine gas from an aluminum plant, the escape of organic solvents from a pharmaceutical factory, the fallout of cadmium-laden dust onto the soil from smelting works, and the uptake of cadmium by some vegetables eaten by humans. They also reported that 170 tons of lead were released into the air from Nowa Huta annually, and that electrostatic precipitators fitted to factory chimneys to control the escape of dust were switched off at night to save electricity. Then there was the appalling state of Poland's

Pollution's long shadow

FROM THE BALTIC to the Black Sea, half a century of runaway industrialization has left a smear of destruction through the heart of Eastern Europe. Under orders from Moscow, factories appeared where only farms and markets had stood. The historic university city of Kraków was "given" the huge Nowa Huta steelworks simply because the Stalinist regime mistrusted the city's intellectual elite. Now the city lies within the "dirty triangle" formed by Poland, Czechoslovakia, and eastern Germany—a region of dense population where pollution controls are often nonexistent. Eastern Europe's network of rivers has become a convenient method of disposal—especially the Danube, recipient of eight nations' waste.



Dead and dying conifer forests, downwind from two blue-plumed Czechoslovak power plants, appear orange at center in this false-color satellite image. Healthier stands appear black. Pollution affects some 173,000 acres in this region. Lines between the plumes are strip-mine scars.



Shadow

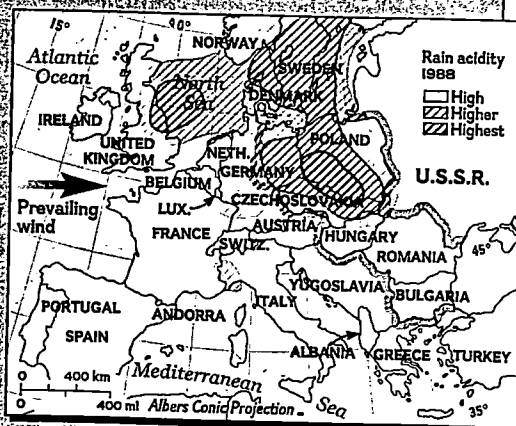
to the Black Sea, half a century of industrialization has left a smear of pollution in the heart of Eastern Europe. In Moscow, factories appeared and markets had stood. The hills of Kraków was "given" the steelworks simply because the city's intellectual life lies within the "dirty triangle" of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the U.S.S.R. A region of dense population and no environmental controls are often nonexistent. A network of rivers has become a highway of disposal—especially the eight nations' waste.

s, apparently, satellite images. Pollution affects some 173,000 people. The plumes are strip-mine scars.



ACID RAIN

Already choking on its own waste, Eastern Europe is also the acid-rain dumping ground for the West, thanks to winds that bring pollutants from as far away as Britain. In Poland more than 600,000 acres of woodland have been damaged; in Czechoslovakia, close to one million acres.



B. N. ROCK, J. E. VOGELMANN, UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE; H. KADRO, UNIVERSITY OF FREIBURG; AND D. ZLOTYK, CIRRIUS TECHNOLOGY, NASHUA, N.H.

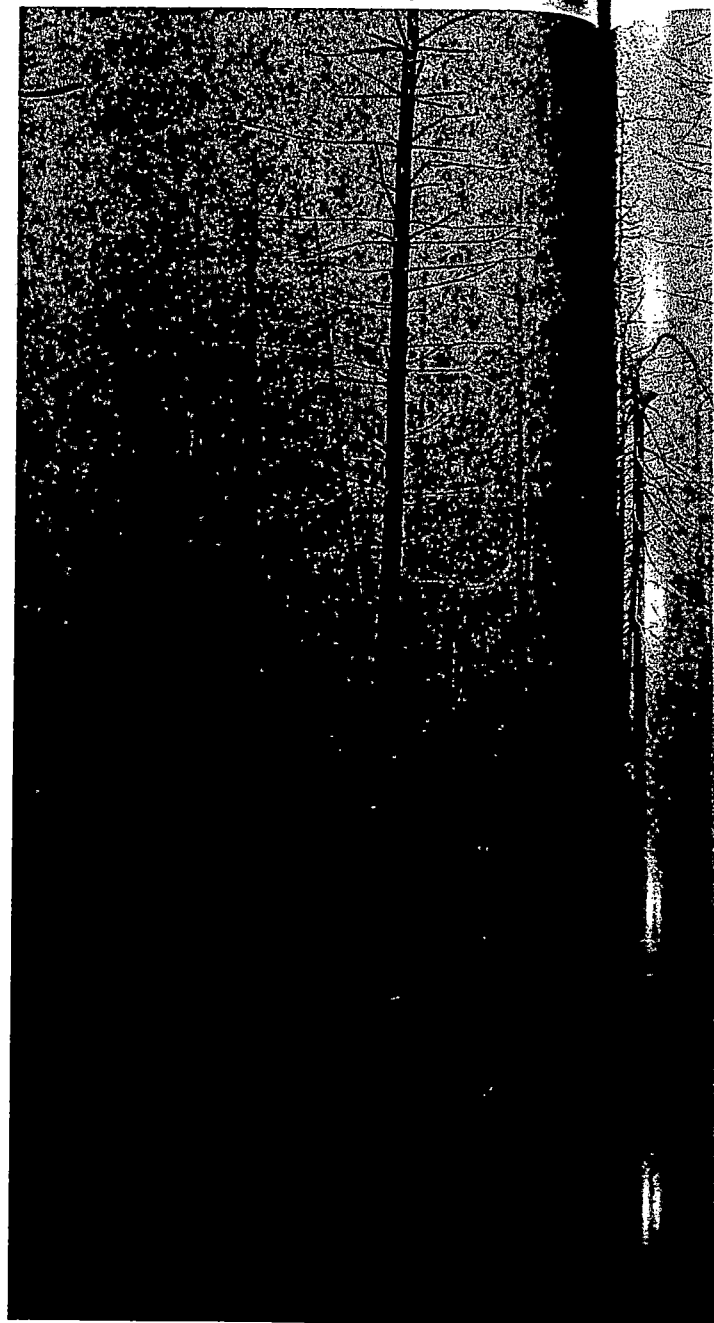
MIST CARRIES a deadly payload to the remains of a Czechoslovak forest. Sulfur from coal-burning industries combines with moisture to create airborne acids that kill and denude woodlands. The acid rain that created this timber graveyard in the Ore Mountains could have risen from any neighboring country. Further damage is done to surviving woodlands by insects like the larch bud moth. Thriving under conditions other forest animals cannot withstand, the moth has devastated a large area in Poland.

rivers, polluted by untreated sewage, industrial effluent, and brine pumped out of coal mines. The picture that club members presented was one of unrelieved mismanagement and disaster.

Polish intellectuals were clearly the driving force behind the surprising awareness of pollution I had noticed earlier. In Nowa Huta, where a gray-black dust cakes everything, I found another point of view. There I met a 50-year-old smelter, round, grimy, toothless, and proud. "They're always on TV and radio going on about this place," he told me, pointing his callused finger in the direction of Kraków. "Why don't they campaign for a modern plant here instead of trying to close us down?"

KATOWICE, an old industrial center where miners have been digging zinc, lead, and silver for more than 300 years; sits on rich deposits of coal. This coal belt extends in a broad band through southern Poland into eastern Germany and northern Czechoslovakia, where Eastern Europe's chemical, metallurgical, and other heavy industry is concentrated. Katowice and the surrounding area consist of a huge urban-industrial development with a dozen or so satellite centers crisscrossed with roads and lurching tramlines bent out of shape by subsidence of the mines. Fetid lakes, massive spoil heaps, rows of grubby houses, shops, schools, factories, hospitals, and mines are all jumbled together in haphazard confusion.

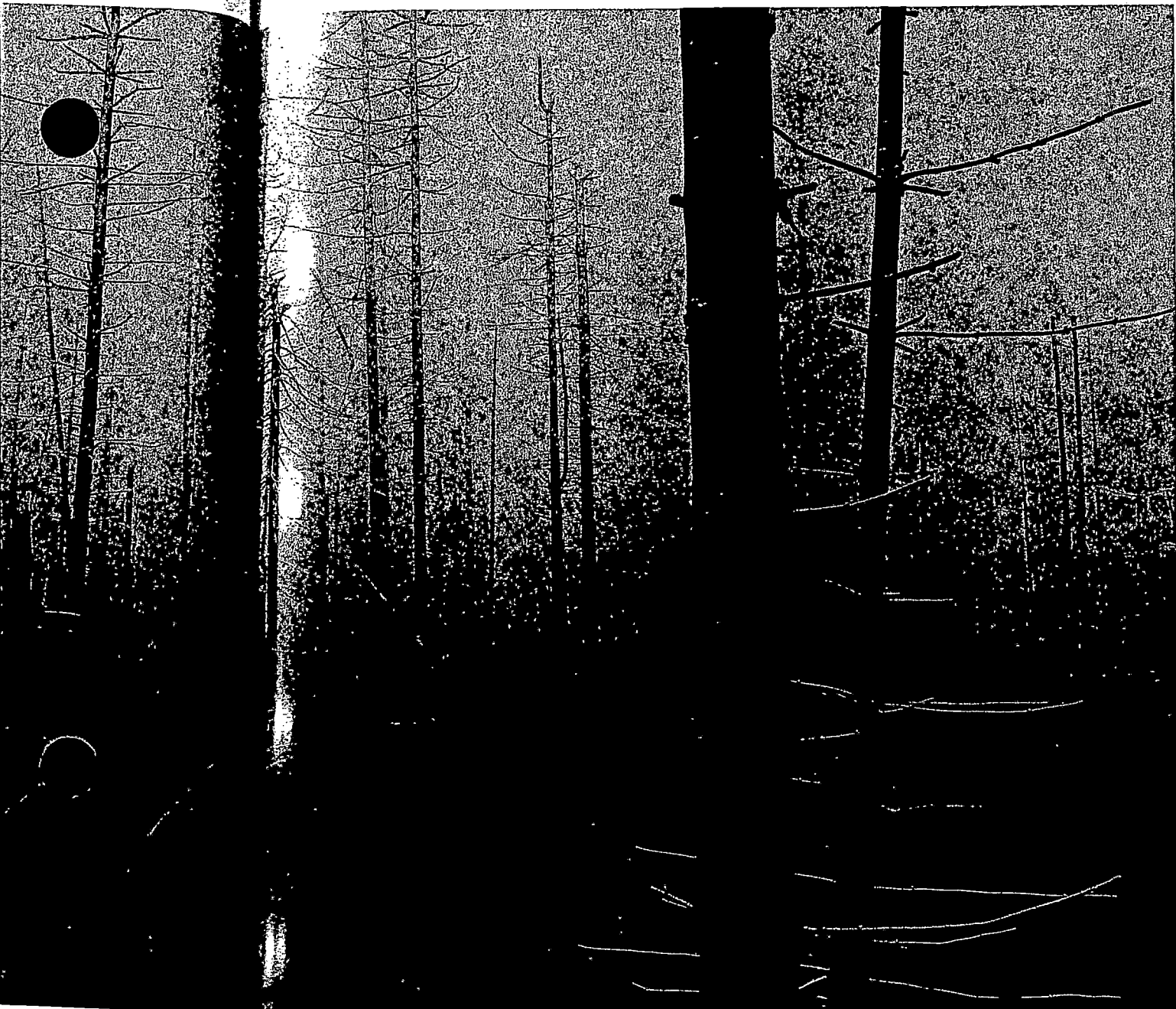
The air has a distinctive sulfurous smell. To provide the power and heat for industry and homes, great quantities of poor-quality coal—mainly brown coal, or lignite—are burned, while the more expensive low-sulfur coals are exported for precious foreign currency. Gray skies and dirty cobbled streets add gloom to an already dismal city. People live amid poverty and squalor, cramped in blackened tenement buildings. I felt as if the clock had stopped 40 years ago: I was back in the



industrial Midlands of my English childhood.

A retired joiner invited me to his home in one of the tenement buildings. The rooms were spotless. His wife said she had to wash the curtains every two weeks and found it almost a full-time job cleaning the apartment. From their living room window I could see the nearby smelting works and right into the furnaces, which glowed orange and shimmered in the intense heat. I asked what it was like living amid all the foul air and dust.

The joiner lit a cigarette: "This is my life," he said, "I've worked here for 45 years. It was



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hard, but we had enough to raise our family, and we have somewhere to live. If they close the works, there will be no jobs. What will people do then?" His view—a dirty job is better than no job at all—I heard echoed time and again by working people in all the countries.

My focus at this point was on air and soil pollution caused by the burning of coal. The enormity of the problem was exposed in a map of Europe I was given in Wrocław, showing the amount of sulfur falling on the ground in dust and in precipitation. The highest fallout, marked as a great gray blotch, covered the

"dirty triangle" formed by the coal belt of northern Czechoslovakia, eastern Germany, and the Silesian district of southern Poland.

Highly acidic rain falls in the same area and extends in a streak to the east, where the prevailing wind carries the acid-forming smoke. Here the forests are dying. Some people believe the trees are being killed by fluorides washed out of the smoke; others blame acidification of the soil and the reduced availability of trace elements, already depleted by the practice of growing only one type of tree on the same land all the time. Whatever the exact

East Europe's Dark Dawn

A RENAISSANCE SCULPTURE on Kraków's Cloth Hall melts away, its porous limestone vulnerable to airborne sulfuric acid from the smokestacks of the Nowa Huta steel mill, just miles away. Western companies are lining up to sell scrubbers and other antipollution devices to the region's governments, which are at last trying to halt industry's destructive march against art and nature. But leaders are walking a tightrope between spending money to clean up the environment and keeping their foundering economies afloat.



cause, forests all over Europe are in trouble.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in Jelenia Góra, a resort town in southwest Poland near the Czechoslovak border, once a German-speaking region. Most of the Germans left when Poland's boundaries were redrawn at the end of World War II. My guide at Jelenia Góra was bilingual and much in demand by Germans returning to the haunts of their childhood. As we drove out of the valley, winding slowly through densely forested hills, he pointed out that many of the trees were losing their needles.

"It's the first sign of ill health," he said. "The needles get fewer and fewer, and eventually the tree gives up and dies." We climbed through the forest, which gave way to irregular treeless spaces covered with scrub and small birch trees and finally opened out into what could have been rolling grasslands were it not for the tree stumps.

"Last year so many trees died that the army was called in to fell them," he said. "I brought an elderly German couple up here, and the old man broke down and cried. He kept saying

how beautiful the forest used to be. He couldn't believe how it has been destroyed."

We turned off the road onto a rough track. "Climb up there," he said. "Then you'll understand what acid rain is all about." On the way up I nearly fell into a deep gully gouged out of the mountainside by water rushing down the treeless slopes. From a high ridge I saw a forest of stark, gray, dead tree trunks extending as far as the eye could see. The feeling of desolation was overpowering. If the chimney smoke has had this effect on trees, what could it be doing to human health, I wondered?

EVERYWHERE I WENT, I tried to find out, but garbled and fanciful stories led me to several dead ends. Someone in Bratislava told me about a village in Slovakia where the people were moved because they were dying of cancer caused by fumes from a nearby aluminum factory. I went there to find that they had been moved because the factory wanted to expand and

have a new road built straight through the village—hardly a democratic decision, but with the communist command system such things are possible. And it was the factory workers exposed to tar fumes released during the electrolytic process who were getting the cancers, not the villagers. I looked into a report of an alarming infant-mortality rate in a highly polluted East German city. The rate, in fact, turned out to be comparable to those of Western Europe. I listened to frightening tales of malformed babies being born, a theme that came up so often I asked a psychologist in Hungary to explain.

"You've hit on an interesting question," she said. "There could be poisonous chemicals in your drinking water, heavy metals in your vegetables, cancer-forming gases in the air, or radioactivity in your home, but they're all invisible. Fear of the unknown is the problem. Our most deep-seated fears are connected with ill health, death, and the safety of our unborn children. That is why we always hear about cancers and birth defects when people are worried about harmful things in the environment.

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ic, June 1991

Linking a defect or cancer to a single environ-
mental hazard is extraordinarily difficult."

Common sense says it is unhealthy to live in
a city with air contaminated with smoke and
metal-laden dust, but it is unrealistic to blame
the poor health of people living in polluted
areas entirely on the fumes and chemicals put
out by industry. The effect of overcrowded
housing, unhealthy food, inadequate medical
facilities, smoking, and alcohol are probably
much more harmful. Why was everything
being blamed on pollution
when it was obvious that
better medical care would
immediately improve the life
expectancy of adults and
newborns?

I began to understand
when I visited the State En-
vironmental Inspectorate in
Halle, East Germany, where
I was greeted by their press
officer, Manfred Klima.

"Our organization was set
up in 1985 to set norms," he
said, "and to measure emis-
sions and control them by
means of fines. Until recent-
ly the results were secret;
however, the West Germans
applied heavy pressure to have them made
public, and now we publish them."

He showed me his files of 1987 and 1988
with the words "Secret Confidential" crossed
out. "By keeping the local figures secret," he
went on, "it was possible to present only selec-
tive figures as national totals given out at inter-
national conferences. It is also our job to
investigate complaints made by members of
the public about pollution. We did have a few
complaints, but the level of interest and
awareness was rather low.

"Around the time of the political changes in
the fall of 1989, the number of complaints rose
enormously. When the communist regime fell
and the Berlin Wall came down, the com-
plaints came down too." He went on to
explain how the level then settled to a figure
even lower than before the political changes.

In his view the increase in complaints about
pollution and health risks during the upheav-
als was linked to opposition to the communist
regime. It was the only means then available to
the people. Open opposition was impossible.

"With the coming union of East and West

TROUBLE IS IN THE AIR for an unmasked worker in
Magdeburg, Germany, who opens bags of asbestos,
then feeds them into a hopper to make reinforced-
cement water pipes. Prolonged breathing of asbestos
multiplies the risk of cancer of the lining of the lung
ten times. Compounding the peril: Smoking, epidemic
in Eastern Europe, increases an asbestos worker's
cancer risk 50-fold. Such exposure to multiple cancer-
causing agents hampers experts seeking to isolate
the effects of individual pollutants.



Germany," Klima told me, "people's con-
cerns have turned to matters of money, family,
employment, and so on, which are much more
important to them than pollution. Actually the
true level of awareness of environmental prob-
lems in East Germany is very low, and we
must try to raise it by education."

Now things began to make sense. To pre-
serve the illusion that everything in the com-
munist paradise was just fine, the true figures
were kept secret. Because those in power were
quick to stamp out any dissent or opposition, it
was extremely difficult for people to make
their feelings known without risk of punish-
ment. I remembered Professor Juchnowicz
telling me that when all forms of political
opposition were banned in Poland during the
period of martial law, the Polish Ecology Club
was spared. The government considered it
acceptable for citizens to complain about pol-
lution but not about the current regime, so
with the ecology club as a rallying point, envi-
ronmental matters became an important focus
of anticommunist activity.

I remembered seeing in the lovely Gothic



church in Pirna, East Germany, a notice board with the title: "Protecting the Creation." On it were photographs of rubbish dumps, factory chimneys, and other unnatural and ugly things. The message was that humans are part of God's creation and therefore responsible for it. The Protestant Church was, in its own quiet way, acting as a channel for protest against the regime in East Germany, where the ever present secret police made any open opposition extremely difficult. Concern for the environment was a perfect way of registering protest without alarm bells ringing in police headquarters. After all, what could be wrong with people wanting pure water, clean air, and

a rubbish-free environment for their children?

As the communist regimes with all their characteristic secrecy and paranoia fell apart, the people who were politically active, mainly intellectuals, did their best to tell the outside world about the poor state of the environment. Air and water pollution and declining life expectancy in Eastern Europe were pointed out as evidence of the unsatisfactory performance of the communist system. In place of the old message "Look how good our statistics are; everything in our communist paradise is wonderful" was the new message: "Look how bad everything is; communist rule is a disaster, please help us."

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FROM CRADLE TO GRAVE, East Europeans pay a lethal price for forced industrialization. Alexi Dermendjiev, 48, worked 25 years amid heavy-metal dust at a Bulgarian copper smelter. A lung-cancer victim, he breathes with an oxygen mask as a doctor removes fluid from his chest. In southern Poland, a premature baby battles respiratory problems at Kraków's Institute for Pediatrics. Experts suspect, though they have yet to prove, that pollution contributes to the region's high infant-mortality rate.



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IF ONE REASON for people's wish to exaggerate the horrors of pollution had become clearer, its real effect on the health of the population had not. To get some facts, I braved the cheerless corridors of Prague's Ministry of Health to study statistical maps of Czechoslovakia, looking for the link between pollution and disease. The most polluted area for sulfur dioxide emissions and dust fallout is in the extreme northwest, near the border with Germany. This same area has the highest overall mortality, the highest mortality from cancer, and the lowest life expectancy and is, therefore, also the most unhealthy part of the country. So the link seems to exist, though the

effect of poor living conditions and lack of medical facilities is unknown.

The region is blessed with a spectacular rolling landscape studded with wooded hills rising steeply to the mountains. Passing bleak stands of dead conifers, I climbed to a spot overlooking the valley, where many chemical factories and coal-burning industries are strung out between Chomutov, Most, and Teplice. I counted seven major industrial complexes and could see open-pit mines and an odd-looking green lake. Here I met Miloš, a truck driver in his 30s, who had constructed a special aerial at home and was making good money by selling videos illegally recorded from West German

YEARNING TO BREATHE FREELY, many East Europeans become refugees from the air. At Primary School 10 in Most, Czechoslovakia, children practice donning face masks issued by the town council for use on sulfur dioxide alert days.

Shrouded in steam mist (facing page), a Hungarian respiratory patient finds relief from Budapest's polluted air in an "inhalatorium" booth. Some days the smog is so bad that residents of Buda can barely see their companion city, Pest, just across the Danube.



television. I asked him what it was like living in the most polluted and unhealthy part of Czechoslovakia.

He looked vacant, shrugged, and started to tell me his plans to buy a restaurant. When I pressed him, he told me how cool, smoke-laden air trapped between the mountains causes the frequent buildup of smog in the valley. "Sometimes they announce an emergency on the radio," he said. "Old people and children are not supposed to go out, so I keep my two daughters at home away from school. I've had both of them in the hospital with bronchitis. I suppose it must be the bad air," he added, as if these were things in life that just have to be accepted.

But what does this smoke laden with cadmium, fluorides, lead, organic solvents, and other pollutants I had heard about actually do to people? I questioned every specialist I came across to try to find out. The effect of absorbing fairly large quantities, I was told, is well-known. For example, cadmium causes thinning of the bones; fluoride causes thickening of the bones; lead causes anemia and

mental retardation in children; and organic solvents have various effects, including dulling of the brain and severe liver damage. The difficulty is in trying to establish the effect of small quantities taken over a long period of time. What, for instance, is the effect on bones if cadmium and fluoride are taken together? The truth is that research is continuing and nobody really knows, though many substances, in particular some chlorinated compounds and heavy metals, seem to make people susceptible to cancer.

In the hope of getting more specific information, I returned to the city of Prague to call on Vladimír Bencko, a tall, dignified doctor internationally known as an environmental health specialist. "Now that people here are smoking more, how is it possible to tell whether their diseases are caused by smoking or pollution?" I asked.

"This is extremely difficult," he said, "but there are effects on health that can be linked to specific pollutants. There was a power station in Slovakia burning coal with a high arsenic content. It was depositing between a half and one ton of arsenic a day onto the countryside for 20 miles around. The first we knew was a report of bees dying out. Then we learned from music teachers of many partly deaf schoolchildren. We investigated the problem and found that children in the area had a high level of arsenic in their hair, blood, and urine, compared with a control group. At the power station we found people were dying from cancer at a younger age than workers at other power stations. People living near the power station have an increased risk of developing skin cancer too. We have also studied exposure to nickel, cobalt, and beryllium. These metals all seem to promote the development of cancers."

I asked him what can be done to remove harmful substances from smoke.

"Electrostatic precipitators can remove 98 percent of particulates," he said, "but the most harmful part, if inhaled, is the remaining 2 percent. To clean that residue, the emissions must be put through a scrubber, which uses a limestone slurry to rinse out the remaining

substances. But that creates another problem—how to dispose of the toxic rinse water? I believe we must consider very seriously the possibility of expanding nuclear power.”

THE PROSPECT of Czechoslovakia turning from coal to nuclear power is hotly debated. I discussed it with Dušan Obernauer and his colleague Igor Pinter, partners in a company making geophysical instruments in Bratislava.

Dušan smiled scornfully: “Ten nuclear power plants were originally planned, but only two are working, one near Trnava. How it came to be built there is typical of the system. Some party official probably looked at a map and said: ‘This is an underdeveloped region. This river can be a source of water, so we will place it just here.’

“Nobody asked a geologist for advice because if they had, anyone could have told them that it is situated in the most active earthquake zone in Slovakia, on a classic tectonic fault line. Earthquakes could also be a problem when they fill the dam at Dunakiliti.”

The dam, itself highly controversial, is part of a hydroelectric project being built with Austrian finance on the Danube near the Czechoslovak-Hungarian border. It is a gigantic undertaking of the “man conquers nature” variety. Though proposed in the early 1950s, when vast engineering constructions were in fashion, work began only in 1978. It is an odd enterprise because the turbines are on the Danube floodplain (at Gabčíkovo) where there is very little slope to the ground. To achieve sufficient flow for generating electricity, the Danube will be diverted into a concrete canal 15 miles long, with a large artificial lake at Dunakiliti, the upper end of the canal; there the water will be held until it is needed at times of peak electric demand. To regulate the outrush of water, a second dam is needed downstream in Hungary at Nagymaros.

“Absolutely Stalinist,” was how Juraj, a student I met in Bratislava, described it. Juraj, a blond and fiery 20-year-old, was a Green, as Europe’s environmental activists are known.

“They’ve already destroyed a major area of the floodplain forest, and there’s more to go,” he observed. “It’s a unique habitat.” When we went to see the forest near Dunakiliti, the Danube was in flood. I removed my shoes and socks, rolled up my trousers, and waded

through shallow water dappled with leafy shadows. The partly submerged forest was a sublime world of peace and silence broken only by the soft plop of frogs and toads in retreat. “They talk about flood control. . . . This is nature’s way,” said Juraj with a defiant wave.

In a rented car Juraj and I followed the course of the huge canal to Gabčíkovo. The sun beat down, swallowtail butterflies danced before us, and the dead-flat, empty farmland seemed menaced by the canal’s massive banks as they rose above the plain.

“The canal is impervious,” Juraj said, “so the water table on the plain will fall. Then they’ll have to irrigate—that’s just stupid.”

At Gabčíkovo, a building site in the middle of the plain, controversy over the project had brought work to a halt. Cranes and compressors lay idle, and the site was deserted except for a few curious sightseers. We clambered around, overawed by the huge scale of the canal, shipping locks, and power plant. Will this ill-conceived scheme ever be put to work, I wondered, and if not, how will the Austrians get their money back?

That evening I was discussing the importance of industrialization in communist thinking with a group of environmentalists when someone pulled some bills out of his pocket. Pointing to a picture of belching smokestacks on the hundred-crown note, he said: “Look at this, our proudest achievement, symbol of the bright future! And how much longer can they go on advertising this disgrace?” he mocked, waving another bank note bearing a picture of the Slovnaft oil refinery.

“In 1972,” he continued, “oil appeared in Bratislava’s water supply, and for months half the city had no central water.” Only then did it become known that oil and oil products were escaping from the Slovnaft refinery. The point is that beneath the soil, extending over 70 miles from here right into Hungary, is a huge basin about a quarter of a mile deep filled with gravel and water. The refinery had for years been leaking oil into the groundwater at the edge of what is perhaps the largest reserve of drinking water in Europe. When the danger was realized, wells were sunk around the refinery in a protective ring and then pumped continuously to try to limit the spread of oil.

“The refinery should never have been built there in the first place,” the environmentalist said. “The only thing to do is to close it.”

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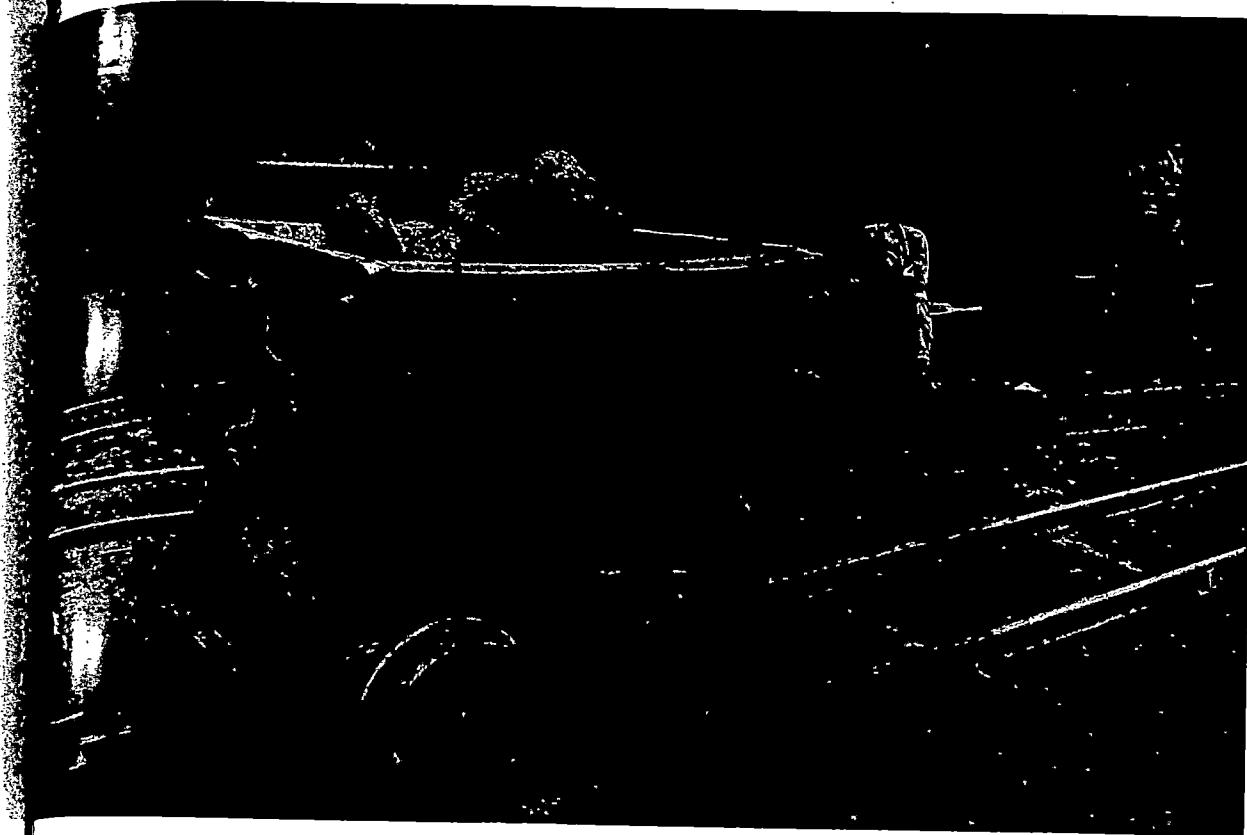
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EXHAUSTED FROM PUSHING a rail cart loaded with lead ore, this worker at the IMN Firiza factory near Baia Mare, Romania, sits motionless, head in hands, for long minutes. Factory employees work amid thick dust containing lead, which even in trace amounts is known to damage the brain, kidneys, and red blood cells.

AS I TRAVELED SOUTH AND EAST away from the coal belt along the course of the Danube, water quality overtook air pollution as the most talked about environmental issue.

In Budapest's Institute of Hydrology, Géza Jolánkai, a bearded man who spoke faultless quick-fire English, ran through some of the main problems.

"Nitrates and phosphates coming from fertilizers, human sewage, and pig farms are important concerns of ours," he declared. "They cause long-term contamination of the groundwater and promote the growth of algae in rivers and lakes."

Dr. Jolánkai pushed a multicolored satellite map across the table to me. "Lake Balaton is a major tourist attraction. In recent years, there has been such a serious deterioration in the water quality that we had to do something about it. We have achieved some success by treating sewage and diverting runoff from agriculture, but damage has been done because the sludge on the bottom of the lake will release phosphates for years to come."

Anyone traveling through Hungary will soon notice long, seesaw poles with a rope and bucket on one end, which are used for drawing water. Wells are everywhere; in a large area of the country the water table lies only about ten feet below the surface. To have such easy access to the groundwater supply is convenient, but it means that nitrate fertilizers get there quickly too.

When I visited a strawberry-growing area in the north, I noticed the sign "Not for drinking" on a hand-operated water pump. I asked a woman, whose red head scarf and dark features led me to believe she was a Gypsy, why the sign was there. "I don't know," she said blankly, evidently unable to read. I asked her if she knew that some water was unsafe for infants. "We've never had any trouble," she said. "Everyone in our family always drinks from the wells because piped water stinks of chlorine."

When infants drink contaminated well water, the nitrates prevent their blood from efficiently transporting oxygen. They can turn blue and may even die. Most cases occur in the

poorest and least educated section of the community. To help offset the problem in Hungary's 800 villages with high-nitrate water, the government provides a free supply of safe drinking water in plastic bags to mothers with small children.

THE PROBLEM of groundwater contamination is intimately bound up with that of toxic waste. At Budapest's Institute of Hydrology, I saw a map marking the location in 1970 of all the waste dumps in Hungary. Small points dotted the entire country.

"If you added all the dumps in use today, the map would be almost black with dots," I was told. "It would need a different scale to show them properly."

Others at the institute joined in the conversation. "We don't know what to do with all the chemicals produced by modern industry," said one. "We can't even keep track of them. People don't understand that it's no use burying hazardous substances or putting them down old mine shafts. If they are allowed to contaminate the groundwater, they will be sources of micro-pollution for centuries."

"Hazardous wastes," said another expert, "must be accessible and stored where we can keep an eye on them until appropriate technology is developed. The Greens don't like this idea. They oppose every waste dump."

He was right. My Green friend Juraj, for example, had taken me to a waste dump near his home belonging to Bratislava's largest chemical factory. Though it was well thought out and guarded by a resident caretaker, Juraj had been passionately opposed to it and every other waste dump, however well designed. In his opinion, there should be no such thing as toxic waste.

"It's so easy for hazardous chemicals to soak into the soil," said Zoltán Illés, an analytical chemist who did postdoctoral work at Yale and had recently become Hungary's deputy state secretary for the environment. His brown eyes flashed as he spoke of his concern. "We produce five to six million tons of

ABANDONED by their families and by a health-care system already pushed past its limits, two girls share a common fate in the Home for Children with Mental Diseases in Dobromirski, Bulgaria (facing page). The girl at right has deformed bones. Institutionalized close to home in Teplice, Czechoslovakia, mentally disabled Martin Höfer (below) is able to visit his family every few weeks. Pollution is not a certain villain in either case, but in both areas pollution-related illnesses strain meager health resources.

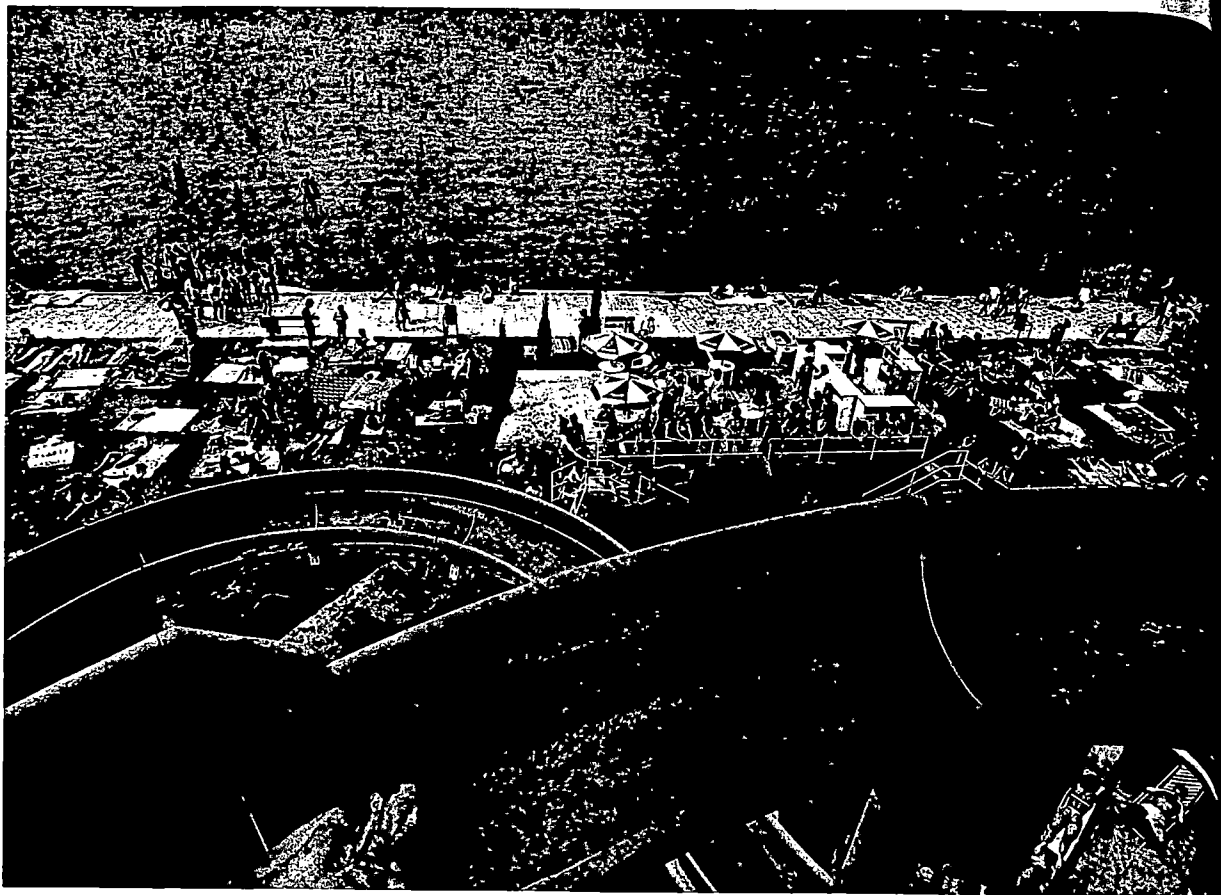


hazardous waste a year in this country. We know of more than 2,000 illegal landfills—imagine how many there are that we don't know about."

He told me about a recent discovery. Next to the Kiskunság National Park, which is also a United Nations-designated biosphere reserve, a state farm wanted to make extra money by reprocessing waste from a paint factory in Budapest. When their reprocessing equipment failed and the waste-filled barrels kept coming, they dumped them illegally, 500 actually inside the park.

"These," Illés told me, "were found by chance when their covering of sand was blown away by the wind; 2,000 barrels are still not accounted for."

Out in the countryside I learned that Illés's concerns were well-founded. Visiting the state farm on the Great Hungarian Plain near Kécskémét, where attractive reed-thatched cottages dot the landscape, I attempted to get into the bleak, wire-fenced enclosure where the remaining barrels are stored in the open. A broad-hipped, aproned, middle-aged lady



SWEET SPLASH OF SUCCESS, Hungary's Lake Balaton was heavily polluted by sewage and agricultural runoff until the government launched a massive, continuing cleanup. The popular holiday spot provides at least one happy ending for those trying to reclaim Eastern Europe's shattered environment.

guarding the gate looked me over with distinct lack of enthusiasm. After 20 minutes of hard persuasion, she agreed to let me in. I counted more than 10,000 rusting barrels there, some of them already leaking. It seemed only a matter of time before the whole storage area would become an unmanageable nightmare.

MY THOUGHTS WERE DIVERTED by a call of nature. I found my way to a little shack with two footprints and a hole in the ground, where I made my personal nitrate contribution to Hungary's groundwater. Lack of sewage treatment is an issue in all the countries I visited.

About half Hungary's inhabitants simply have no sewage system beyond the kind of facilities I had been using, and only a quarter of Budapest's sewage has any form of treatment at all; the rest is just discharged into the Danube. Though rivers have the power to cleanse themselves if they are allowed to tumble naturally over little rapids and gravelly

beds, they are too rarely left alone. Dams are constructed to create reservoirs, water is extracted for irrigation, and the river is confined by embankments to control floods, aid navigation, or allow gravel extraction. Any single dam or project considered by itself might seem a good idea, but the effects of many added together can have far-reaching consequences, as I learned on a visit to the Danube Delta in Romania.

Nicolae Bacalbaşa-Dobrovici, a wiry, weather-beaten professor, has devoted his working life to the Danube fisheries and knows every corner of the delta.

"In the past 25 years," he told me, "man's activities have caused enormous changes. The delta is an incredibly rich habitat for birds, fish, and other wildlife, but it is literally vanishing. When dams interrupt the flow of rivers, their sediment settles, silting up reservoirs instead of building up the delta."

More than 30 dams now trap sediment along the Danube itself, and dozens more block

its tributaries

According to a number of fishers, the dropped discharges prevent submerged plants from growing more and more.

"I once saw a choked river with serious problems of enrichment. Only a fraction is assimilated; the rest enters the water.

In enrichment, the water grows very quickly, adding oxygen to it. Eventually, the fish die and rot, using the formation of which can kill where the river.

"Under Nicolae, the government made it turn farmland," says a local economist. "It was economic to say anything."

He took no artificially cut water for irrigation. Water was brought through the Sinoe, we saw fishermen working, dragging a net boat, swerving afraid; one, turned his back.

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According to Bacalbaşa-Dobrovici, the number of fish in the Danube and its delta has dropped disastrously. Flood-control embankments prevent fish from spawning among the submerged plants, and the water is becoming more and more polluted.

"I once saw a 60-mile section of the Danube choked with dead fish," he told me. "A very serious problem is eutrophication—water enrichment with nitrates and phosphates. Only a fraction of fertilizers used in agriculture is assimilated by plants. The rest eventually enters the water system."

In enriched, sediment-free water, algae grow very quickly. In the daytime the algae add oxygen to the water, but at night they use it up. Eventually the oxygen level may fall so low that fish and other aquatic creatures die. And when the algae die, they fall to the bottom and rot, using up all the oxygen. This allows the formation of poisonous hydrogen sulfide, which can kill fish even out in the Black Sea where the river discharges.

"Under Nicolae Ceauşescu an attempt was made to turn 250,000 acres of the delta into farmland," said Bacalbaşa-Dobrovici. "This was economic madness, but it was impossible to say anything against it."

He took me by boat to see Lake Razelm, artificially cut off from the sea to provide fresh water for irrigation and fish culture. The water was bright green, as opaque as pea soup. Passing through a lock into the brackish Lake Sinoe, we suddenly came across a group of fishermen wading up to their armpits and dragging a net through shallow water. As our boat swerved toward them, they looked afraid; one, trying to make himself invisible, turned his back to us.

"They are poaching," said Bacalbaşa-Dobrovici. "Fishing is not allowed here until October, but these are difficult times—we cannot be too hard on them. They probably don't have enough to eat."

We walked along the Black Sea coast and saw the rotting remains of two dolphins. Bacalbaşa-Dobrovici shook his head sadly. "In the past 50 years the number of dolphins in the Black Sea has declined from an estimated million to about 200,000. We *must* improve the water quality, but how will it be possible financially and administratively when the Danube flows through eight countries, and 70 million people live within its drainage area?"

HIS WORDS ECHOED IN MY MIND. I could see that the Danube's decline, like the larger problem of environmental degradation I had witnessed across Eastern Europe, was an international concern. So what exactly is the "environmental catastrophe" of Eastern Europe?

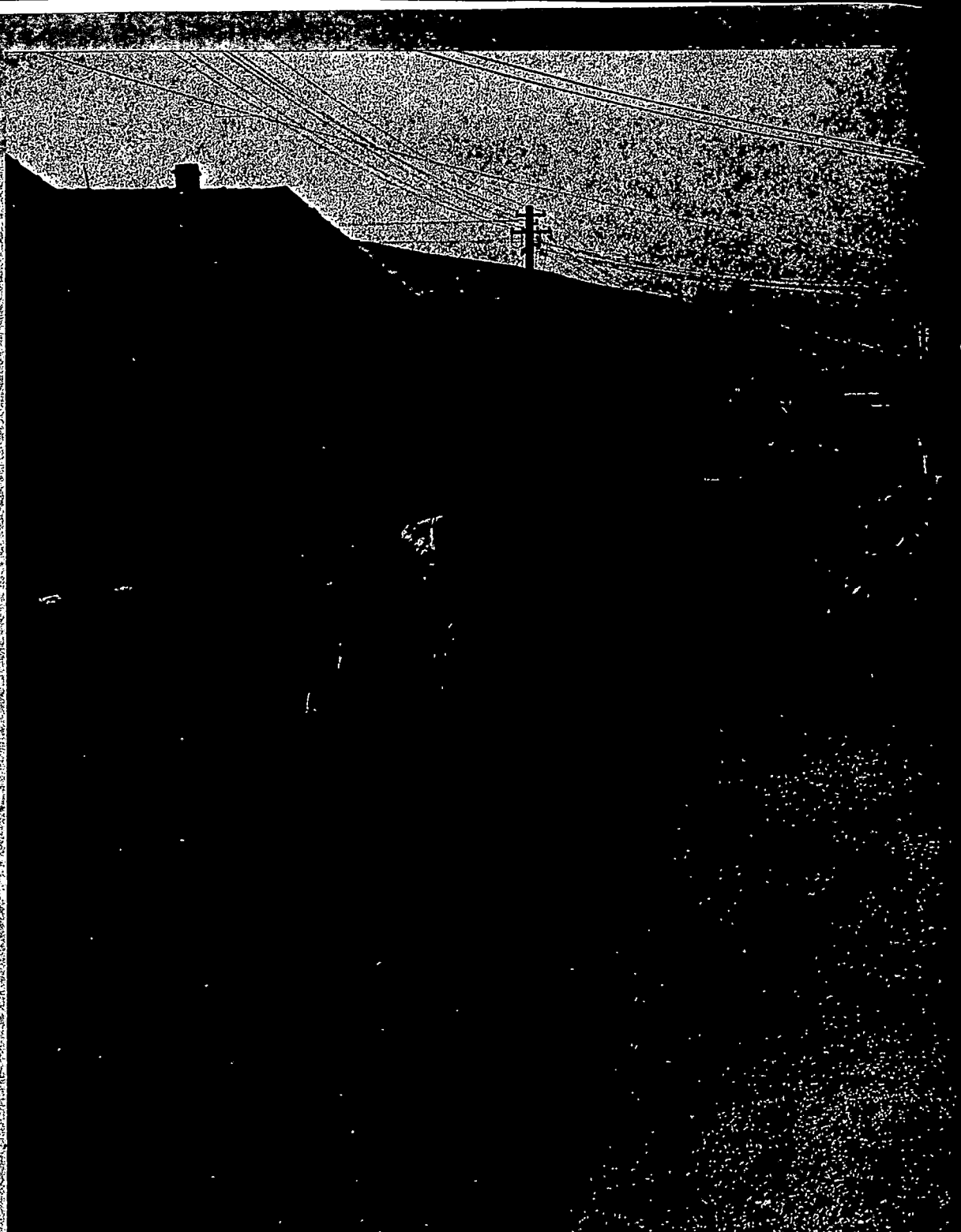
Eastern Europe, it seems to me, was devastated by what I often heard described as the "industrial megalomania" of the 1950s, when communist governments were still trying to force into practice the hundred-year-old theory based on Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto*. The industrial revolution in the West by this time was also more than a hundred years old, and hard lessons were being learned about pollution, waste, limited resources, and other matters Karl Marx had never considered. The Eastern-bloc rulers, however, were blind to these problems.

A Czechoslovak friend described what it was like in the 1950s. "We had to live under various five-year plans. The bright future lay in industrializing as fast as possible. This way we would exploit all natural resources and gain mastery over nature. The technology was often out of date, but we were after short-term benefits—there was no thought of the future environmental consequences."

Now that the Eastern bloc has opened up, the most outdated, inefficient, and uneconomical factories—often the worst polluters—will simply disappear, and thousands will find themselves out of work. With massive unemployment and backward industry, it will be almost impossible for any government to make the environment a top priority.

Because pollution was used by political activists as a stick to beat the ruling communists and, as Manfred Klima observed, because money and jobs are far more important to the man in the street, the pollution issue will likely fade from the headlines. The sewage and sulfur dioxide, however, will still be there. To achieve the standards we take for granted, huge sums of money will have to be spent. But whose money? How will Eastern Europe's struggling economies pay for these necessary improvements, let alone the clean technologies we are now beginning to expect?

Enormous tasks lie ahead. To tackle them, East and West must join together. But will Eastern Europe's new rulers find the environment as important now as they did when they were in the opposition?



WHERE NIGHT FALLS ALL DAY LONG

Every sheep in Romania, who snowfall of ca nearby plant stance for ma local workers a community



Every sheep is black in Copșa Mică, Romania, where a day-and-night snowfall of carbon black is fed by a nearby plant that produces the substance for making tires. With most local workers employed in factories, a community shepherd goes from

home to home at dawn gathering sheep and goats, then leads his flock to the hills, where they graze on carbon-coated grass. The wool will be washed for sale—but only a drastic cleanup will enable Copșa Mică to emerge from its carbon shroud.

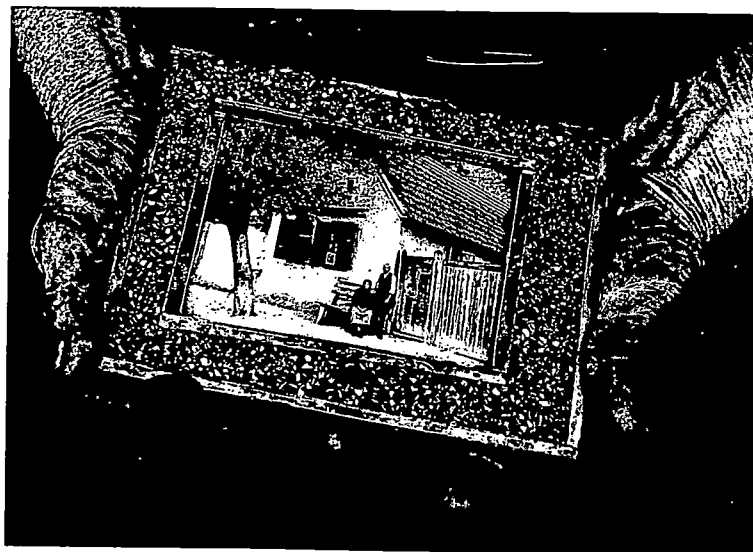


second skin of carbon camouflages a worker awaiting a shower at Copșa Mică's Carbosin plant. Even work clothes give no relief from the all-permeating powder—when the worker removed his trousers moments later, he was black from head to toe.

Life in Copșa Mică revolves around the plant, part of dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu's drive to drag pastoral Romania into a major industrial role. He was also responsible for draining huge areas of the environmentally delicate Danube Delta, home to one of the world's largest reedbeds, to create more farmland. Although the despot is dead and his

policies disgraced, Copșa Mică's 7,000 residents cannot dig out from beneath Carbosin's never ending fallout. They depend on the plant—and a nearby lead factory—for their livelihood.

No link has been shown between carbon black and cancer, yet workers at the Carbosin plant still try to protect themselves by coating their insides with milk. At lunch, most will down an entire bottle (above). Carbon black can aggravate bronchitis and asthma. Ironically, residents show less concern for what is probably a greater health risk: high soil levels of lead, zinc, and cadmium from the local lead plant.



he heaviest carbon snowfalls come at night, when the plant gears up. Awakening to a fresh coat, a man sweeps a street sign as distant stacks doom his efforts (below). Still proud Copșa Micăns often hose down their houses to reveal blues and greens painted underneath. Grimy hands frame an old woman's photo of her parents posing by the house she lives in. Her

home, now blackened, lies across the Tîrnava Mare River from the factory, backdrop for Gypsy youngsters wading by a campfire (right).

Will Copșa Mică's darkness ever be lifted? Romania's leaders have pledged massive investment in environmental cleanup. Meanwhile, housewives will keep digging through carbon to plant gardens and hanging wash in the dirty breeze. □







SPRINGTIME OF HOPE IN POLAND

By PETER T. WHITE

Photographs by
JAMES P. BLAIR

BOTH NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STAFF

SPRING WAS WARMING the Polish People's Republic. Larks sang high over freshly sown fields of rye, and along the country roads sprouted blue sprinklings of forget-me-nots. Little girls brightened villages and towns in their white dresses for first Communion, and everywhere young men's fancies fiercely turned to bicycling—to the international rally called the Peace Race.

Of all the 33 million Poles, some 15 million would be watching this race on TV: Warsaw-Berlin-Prague in 16 days, with competitors from 17 countries.

"The theme is international understanding," says my interpreter, "but the main thing is that a Pole must win! Did you know that Poland makes the world's best bicycles?"

I didn't, but I had heard how Poles love to exaggerate, to go to extremes in word or deed. Quite a few here in their bustling capital of Warsaw told me so themselves.

"Take fashions," says a stylish lady editor. "Where else do girls put on such enormous sunglasses, or so much eye shadow?"

"Take eating," adds a youth from Warsaw University. "On Christmas day about 10 or 11 o'clock it's fish, pâté, beef loin, sausages, red beet soup, and pickled beets, cucumbers,

When food prices soared in 1970, Polish workers like these steel-mill hands triggered riots that put a new leader in power. Economic reforms now point to a brighter tomorrow, but many Poles, mindful of the fate of past promises, remain skeptical.

and onions. That's breakfast. At 2 or 3, lunch—the same. And again for dinner, about 6. It's all repeated the next day. Can you imagine, there were 40 ambulance calls at Christmas just to pump out stomachs!"

Easter means another two days of joyous overeating—not to mention one's name day.

"Or take cars," says an engineer. "A car is such a luxury that it's treated as the most important part of the family. So on Sunday a man can think only of washing and polishing the thing—he'll drive 500 yards from home to the Vistula River and wash away, while his wife and kids get mad and madder. In the end he'll be so tired, or it'll be so late, that they drive straight home."

The lady editor: "That's a typical Polish exaggeration! More likely, when they finally get off on their excursion, the man drives so fast and inexpertly that he has an accident."

The engineer: "Now *you* are exaggerating! I haven't driven much, but I can safely go 90 miles an hour. . . ."

AND YET some things the first-time visitor is likely to hear and find surprising are not exaggerations at all.

For instance, I had always thought of Poland as being in eastern Europe. Not so, say the Poles. We are the heart of the Continent. Really? Draw a line on a globe from easternmost Europe, in the central Urals, to Lisbon in the extreme west; and another line from the northernmost point in Norway to southernmost Greece. Those lines intersect near Warsaw.

Or consider Poland's scenic variety. True, 90 percent of it stretches monotonously flat or modestly hilly. But in the north sparkle hundreds of lakes in Mazury and hundreds of miles of surf and sandy beaches on the Baltic Sea. Mountains rise in the south, in the High Tatra, as jagged and spectacular as the Alps (page 498). A truly untouched forest of the plain stretches in the northeast, in Białowieża National Park.

I want to sample all this, of course, but first I wander around Warsaw on a sunny Sunday. In Łazienki Park, on a platform beneath a three-times-life-size statue of Fryderyk Chopin, a young woman at a Steinway plays the master's mazurkas and polonaises. Hundreds sit unfidgeting on stone benches, raptly, as if enjoying these gems for the first time.

In another greening enclave, next to the 768-foot-high Palace of Culture and Science, thousands crowd the annual outdoor book



Poland emerged as a state in the late tenth century, when dukes of the Polanie—inhabitants of the Warta River basin—united neighboring Slavic tribes under Mieszko, first recorded Polish ruler.



Successful wars, treaties, and dynastic unions ballooned Poland's size. By 1492 territories of Lithuania, Hungary, Prussia, Bohemia, and Pomerania came within its sphere of influence.



Wars and civil strife toppled the nation from its 16th-century zenith of power. By 1667 Poland's size had been considerably reduced as expansionist neighbors nibbled away at the borderlands.



The snack became a feast in the 18th century. In three partitions between 1772 and 1795, Russia, Prussia, and Austria completely devoured Poland, erasing the country from Europe's maps.



Revival came in 1807 and 1809, when Napoleon conquered Prussia and Austria and reestablished a Polish state. After his defeat in 1815, the Russian-ruled Kingdom of Poland was established.



After World War I, when Germany and Austria-Hungary defeated and Russia weakened by revolution, Poland emerged as a partitioned republic. It remained under Nazi Germany until invaded in 1939.

Baltic Sea



HITLER'S JUGGERNAUT stormed into Poland from the north, west, and south on September 1, 1939, meeting fierce but futile resistance. Sixteen days later the Soviet Union—then a German ally—invaded from the east, and subsequently finished thousands of Poles to Siberia. By war's

end, Russians and Poles had joined forces against Hitler; the Nazis had killed an estimated 6,000,000 Poles—half of them Jews; industry and agriculture lay devastated; and 2,000,000 Poles had been deported to Germany for forced labor.

Modern Poland, its present borders established by the Allied Powers, occupies approximately the same territory it did at its birth more than a millennium ago.

AREA: 120,664 square miles. POPULATION: 33,000,000. CAPITAL: Warsaw, population 1,300,000. GOVERNMENT: Actual power in the Polish People's Republic resides with the Politburo of the Polish United Workers' (Communist) Party; the elected 460-seat Sejm holds legislative authority. ECONOMY: Dominated by industry—steel; coal and copper mining. RELIGION: Predominantly Roman Catholic. CURRENCY: One zloty (100 groszy) equals 5 cents U. S. at the official rate, and half that much at the tourist rate.







VEIL OF TEARS identifies the happy white-clad bride at this traditional wedding celebration in the Tatra Mountains. The party will last for three days, fueled by countless fruit and meat pies and toasts of vodka flavored with honey or lemon.

fair: 57 publishers, from the Defense Ministry to the Social Committee Against Alcoholism, are selling at 90 kiosks. Indefatigable authors are autographing.

By now I have an inkling of what's in the back of everyone's mind, something that makes this a very special spring. Poles call it simply "the changes," meaning dramatic changes in the leadership and policies of the PZPR, the Polish United Workers' Party—that is, the Communist Party; and because Poland is a Communist country, the significance of these changes cannot be exaggerated.

"You have come at an interesting time," a senior bureaucrat assures me as we browse side by side. "This is the most hopeful moment in Polish history since World War II."

WHAT EXACTLY had happened? One of those indefatigable authors takes me to dinner. He says it's a long story, but he'll try to make it brief.

"We had a party leader named Gomułka; he was extremely well liked. But over the years he became less and less popular. Why was this so? He asked people to work harder, but they found their standard of living not rising, but going down. They felt frustrated and helpless."

"Now switch to December 12, 1970. The government announces new prices: Lower for razor blades, TV sets, refrigerators—fine, but higher for food! Meat up 17 percent, lard 33 percent! Incredible, raising food prices just before Christmas! It's the last straw. Shipyard workers in Gdańsk go on strike. They march on provincial party headquarters, asking to be heard. The demonstration turns into a riot, party headquarters burns, there's bloodshed. More strikes, in Gdynia and in Szczecin, more blood."

"Gomułka and some others in the Politburo want to call out more troops, but still others say no, dozens are dead already, we don't want to kill thousands. The moderate faction prevails and makes one of their number the new leader—Edward Gierek, an ex-miner, the party chief from our most prosperous region, Silesia. Gierek calls off the troops. He meets with the workers, he promises improvements for everybody. Since then, every

week, big news! Higher pensions. Food prices rolled back to where they were, and frozen for two years."

And a new political style. Gomułka was remote, Gierek is everywhere. Day after day I see him in news photos, with youth activists, with hard hats, with lady machinists.

"He knows what Poland needs to pick up steam," a Western diplomat tells me. "Look at agriculture. Eighty-three percent is in private hands—12 acres is average, 120 is the limit. But farmers had to deliver fixed quotas of pigs or steers, milk or grain. Gierek promised to end the quotas. Overnight, the outlook for Polish farmers became a lot brighter."

This much was certain: Never before in a Communist state had a wave of popular, non-revolutionary demonstrations led to such a change in the whole tone of political life so fast as here in Poland. What it would lead to in the long run was, alas, far from certain.

Poland has a 770-mile border with the U.S.S.R. (map, page 469). Would the Russians send tanks, as they did to Czechoslovakia after the Czech leadership changed course?

"That was in people's minds, and in the minds of our politicians too," a Polish journalist recalls. "The new leadership convinced Moscow they were still loyal Communists." So far, the Soviets were providing credit, and feed grain to help Poland produce more meat, so that Gierek could keep his promises.

But would he? "That's what people asked Gierek in all those meetings. 'How do we keep things from turning sour again?' He told them, 'It's up to you; you must keep pressing to control the leadership from below.' Sounds great, but how to do it, that's the big question."

That week there is another of those blithely skeptical Polish political jokes. *What's the real difference between Gomułka and Gierek? There isn't any—but Gierek doesn't yet know that we are aware of this.*

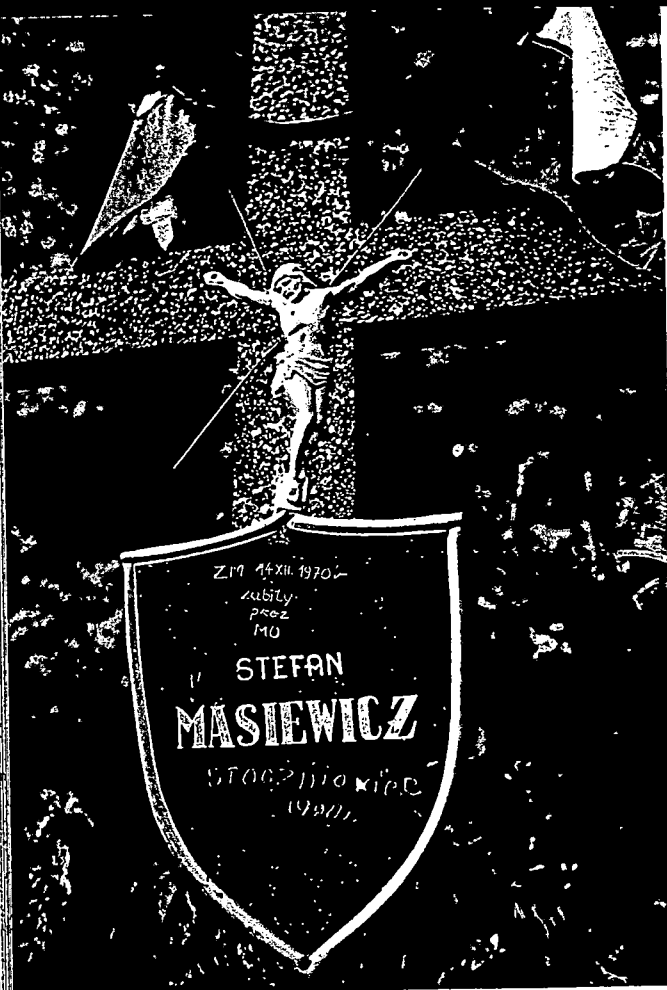
I drive south for the most vigorous fun-making in Poland, the Juwenalia in venerable Kraków, a 2½-day pre-exam carnival of students at Kraków's 608-year-old university.

Fifteen minutes from Warsaw's center I'm in the country. Orchards in white bloom, green meadows with black-and-white cows.

(Continued on page 478)

Risen from World War II devastation, Warsaw stands as a monument to Polish pride and determination. Germany's troops punished an insurrection by methodically leveling almost the entire city. Modern structures replace the old in most areas, but Old Town, in the foreground, has been restored to its 17th-century Baroque elegance.





Martyr's memorial reminds fellow workers of the price Stefan Masiewicz paid for his part in a drama that promises to better the lives of all Poles. "Died 14 December 1970," the hand-scratched lettering says, "killed by the M.O."—the national police.

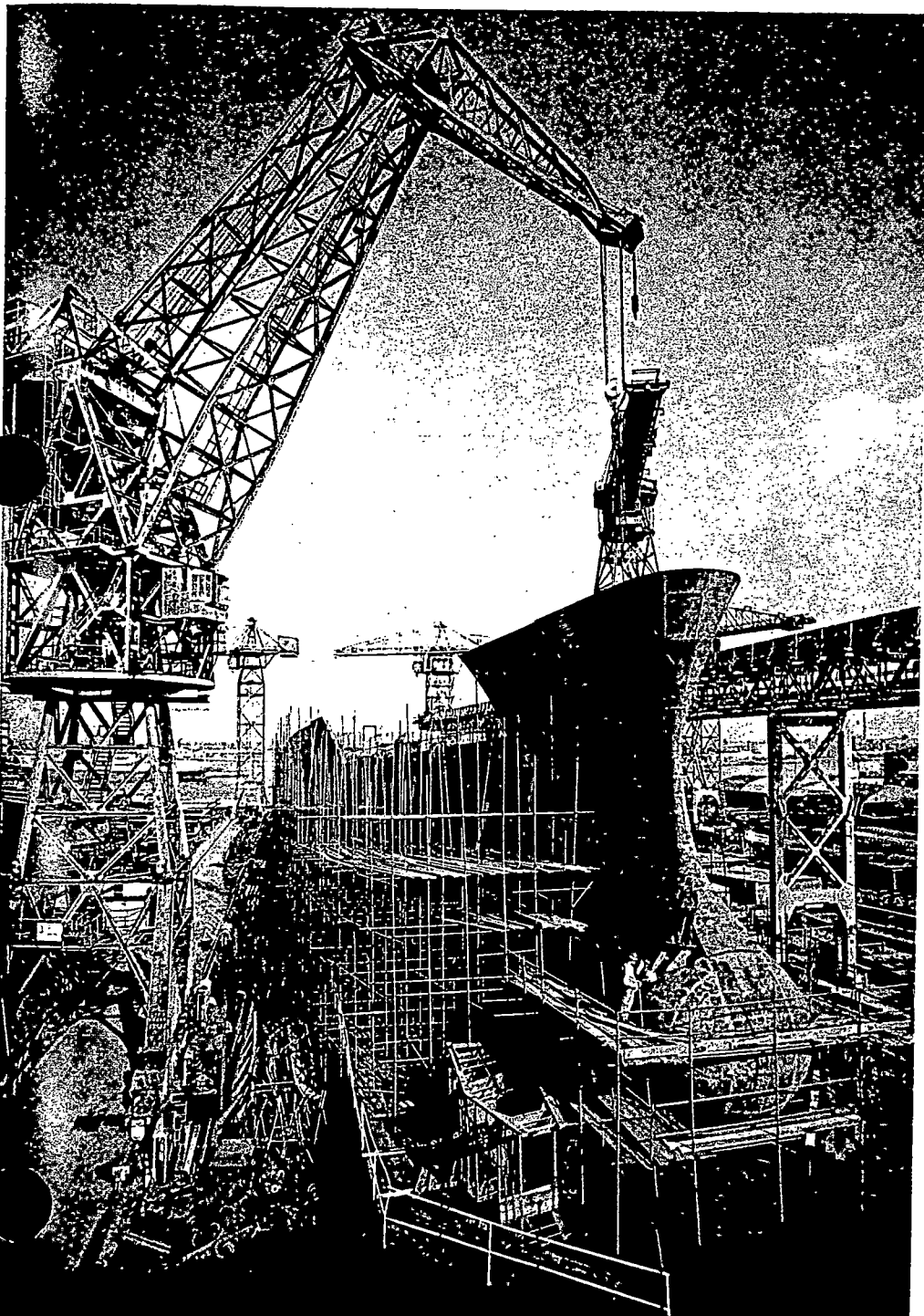
Riots flared after a pre-Christmas announcement of higher food prices dealt a staggering blow to workingmen already beset by low wages, a housing shortage, and an unresponsive



bureaucracy. Masiewicz and others at the Lenin Shipyards in Gdańsk were the first to take to the streets in protest; the unrest spread to other cities. At least 45 died in the ensuing disorders, which ended Władysław Gomułka's predominance after 14 years and brought to power Edward Gierek, a more sympathetic leader.

Daughter's hug greets Henryk Stoliński as he arrives home from his job at the Gdańsk shipyards. Like others who

weathered "the events of December," he already benefits from changes they brought. His salary has risen more than 10 percent, and working conditions have measurably improved. But his daily routine remains much the same: After welding plates on a bulb-nosed freighter ordered by Colombia (below), he cleans up (center left), then returns to his small but comfortable apartment for supper and, often, the delight of watching a favorite team prevail in a televised soccer game (bottom left).



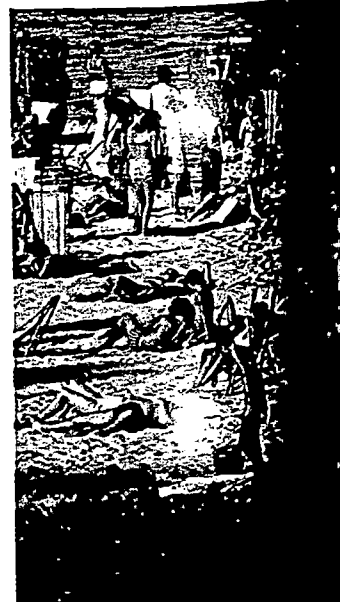


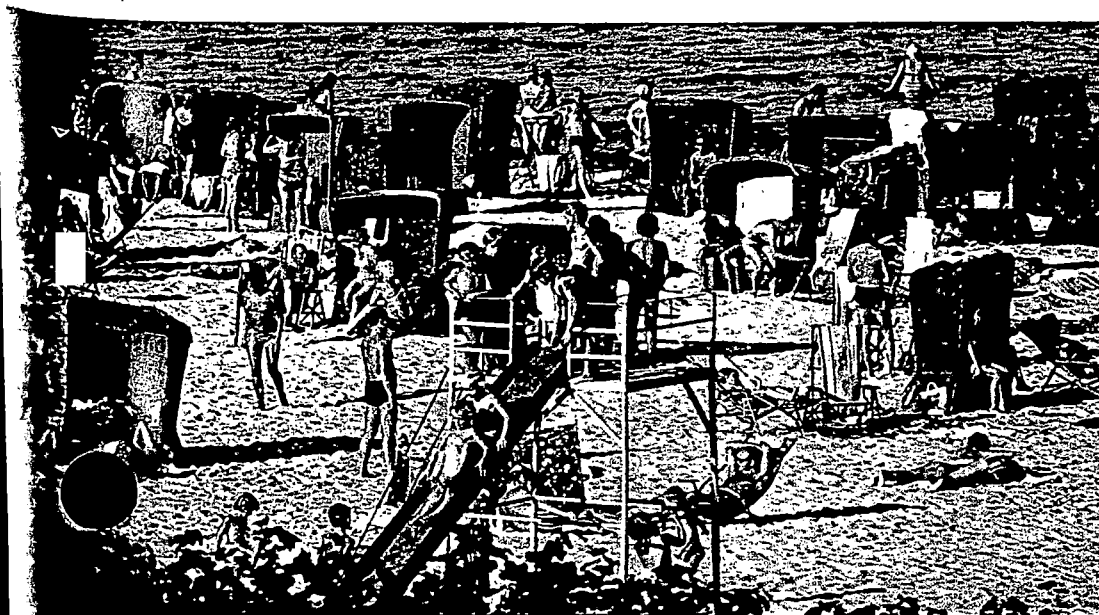
Pity the poor postman! All the mail for this 2,000-foot-long apartment building in Gdańsk (above) comes to the same address, No. 10 Lumumba Street. The new 11-story structure is part of a complex housing 40,000 people. It offers tenants a shopping center, orchestra, club-rooms, and restaurants.

Apartment residents need travel only four miles to mingle with foreign tourists on the popular Baltic Sea

beach (right) at Sopot, one of three cities comprising the metropolis of Gdańsk-Sopot-Gdynia.

Still rebuilding the 55 percent of the city destroyed by World War II, Gdańsk—which the Germans called Danzig—hastens housing construction at the urging of party leader Gierek.





Brown fields and an occasional tractor, but most of the plowing is horse-powered and the sowing is by hand, mostly by women.

In passing, I glimpse the industrial towns of Radom and Kielce, three ruined towers of a castle, a new motel. I am frequently delayed at railroad crossings, but I don't mind. To see such magnificent steam locomotives at home in Washington, I'd have to visit the Smithsonian Institution. People sidle up to inspect the waiting autos. Ah, a Volvo! A Ford Capri!

My car gets short shrift; it's only a Polski Fiat, made near Warsaw, but, oh, it has power-assisted disk brakes on all four wheels. I need them. There's no speed limit outside the towns, and I cannot help getting into the swing of the Polish highways: speed up, then slow down fast—there's a child, or a rubber-wheeled horse wagon full of coal or manure. Hitting a chicken is no crime, says my interpreter, but hitting a goose can cost you money. I assure him of my nonaggressive attitude toward everything Polish, including geese.

After four hours we're in the heart of Kraków, in the Main Market surrounding the 16th-century Cloth Hall. It's bedlam. Pirates and cavemen, Batman and Zorro, a red-haired Cleopatra. A skeleton in a top hat misdirects traffic. The police don't interfere. At Juwenalia time the students own the town (pages 482-3).

Whistles! Horns! Bells! Youths hop in a circle and sing, "The dean is our best friend!" to the tune of "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Then, instead of the dean, it's Mao. Then Nixon. Finally, "Władysław was our best friend!" Who? Władysław Gomułka.

Decorum reigns briefly in a sports hall for the selection of the girl student who is *najmilsza*—the sweetest. All the candidates look luscious, but I am informed that what counted most heavily in the preliminaries was ready wit. Really?

"You see Ela there? She was given two minutes to do a striptease. She said, 'Oh, that means to present myself naked. Very well, I shall bare myself, I shall bare my soul.' She just talked and talked...."

THE RECTOR of the university, Professor Dr. Mieczysław Klimaszewski, is a geographer. He also is a vice president of the Council of State, thus ranking as a vice president of Poland. I met him at the university's Geographical Institute, where

he delivers lectures himself because he likes to be in regular contact with the young.

"They differ from the youth in America, and even in Western Europe, because of our historical and geographical position, which has brought us so many rounds of invasion and destruction. So often we have had to start anew, to rebuild and rebuild again, which is a task of the youth. Now Poland is changing its economic structure, from being primarily agricultural to being primarily industrial. Already 52 percent of our population is urban. This change stimulates the young. They want to be in the forefront of it."

Rector Klimaszewski also presides over the Polonia Society, created to keep in touch with people of Polish origin abroad. "There are at least six million in the United States, perhaps ten million," he says. "We send them books and urge them to visit Poland. Many are young and speak no Polish at all. But we are particularly interested in them because we know that there are people in the United States who do not speak well of Poland, who think of us as a nation without history, without culture. That is why we are so glad when such young Americans come for special courses here in Kraków. We want them to be loyal to the United States, but we also want them to be proud of their Polish origins."

And what a history! It speaks to the visitor on Kraków's Wawel Hill, from the royal tombs in the Wawel's Gothic cathedral, from its lofty Renaissance palace. Of a kingdom that arose a millennium ago, that triumphed over the Tatars and the Teutonic Knights, until by 1492, after Poland had for a century been united with Lithuania, the Jagiellonian dynasty held sway from the Baltic to the Black Sea, over Prussia and the Ukraine, and eastward to within 100 miles of Moscow.

Then, torn by Turks and Cossacks and Swedes, Poland weakened and shrank. By the end of the 18th century it was carved up by Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Poland re-emerged only at the end of World War I (maps, pages 468-9). But in those 120 years of bondage, what fiery uprisings, what heroes!

Down in the market I see an engraved granite slab where Tadeusz Kościuszko mustered the insurgents of 1794. He had fought in the American Revolution, he helped fortify West Point. George Washington asked that he be made a general. Congress voted him tracts of land. Could his gallant Poles—half of them

only with scythes fashioned into pikes
—fail in their own country?

They nearly did, liberating much of the country. Then they were overwhelmed, and Kościuszko, severely wounded, was captured by the Russians. He died an exile in Switzerland, asking in a will that his American investments be liquidated to buy Negro slaves and set them free. He remains Poland's most revered patriot to this day.

More uprisings, more repressions, through the 19th century. Hoping to gain support for their homeland's liberation, Polish exiles formed legions and fought for Napoleon in Spain and Santo Domingo, for Garibaldi in Italy. "Poland is not lost forever," they sang, "while our lives remain. . . ." The song would become the Polish national anthem.

Again in World War II, Poles fought the Germans, not only at home but also at Narvik in Norway, at Tobruk in North Africa, in Russia, France, and Italy. On the critical day of the Battle of Britain, 26 out of 56 Luftwaffe planes shot down were credited to Poles flying with the RAF. One of the saddest songs I heard in Poland recalls the Polish infantrymen who died in the taking of Monte Cassino.

EAST to Łańcut—fast, so as not to miss the last of the May chamber-music concerts in the palace there. Highway E-22 rolls through lush country, through Tarnów, noted for a fertilizer plant and thundering folk dancers. The car radio reports the Peace Race, and my interpreter is annoyed. A Belgian won yesterday's lap; today it's a German. What's going on? Are these umpires blind?

After Rzeszów—a provincial capital full of machine shops, office buildings, and mini-skirts—I nearly run afoul of a meandering truck full of cardboard and rags. "The truck goes from village to village to buy this stuff," says the interpreter. "We need it to make paper; we don't have enough wood." I need the chamber music; it helps me to unwind.

Next morning the palace at Łańcut swarms with sight-seeing groups from factories and schools, Scouts, kids with guitars, handicapped kids with crutches. Brisk ladies point out cannon and stag heads, dark portraits and gilded Louis XVI furniture, the trappings of the Polish aristocracy. Łańcut was one of their showplaces, built by a Lubomirski, whose grandson married one of the Czartoryski, who left it to a Potocki, whose

grandson married one of the Radziwiłłs. . . .

Last year 300,000 visitors came, says the curator. "It is good for the children to learn the vocabulary of art. It is good for everyone to see the richness of the life of the magnates, who were one of the main forces in our history. Łańcut is evidence of the highest level of European culture."

I find myself much taken with the Princess Izabella Elżbieta z Czartoryskich Lubomirska, an 18th-century magnate. Not only because she owned 14 towns and 365 villages, and river ports, factories, and breweries—plus palaces in Lwów, Warsaw, and Vienna, and a wing of the Palais Royal in Paris. She knew Voltaire and Marie Antoinette, Goethe and Jefferson. "She was not tall," wrote a contemporary, "but full of charm." A great lady of the Enlightenment.

"A great scandalmonger too," adds the curator. "It is difficult to be proud of every one of these magnates. Many did absolutely nothing for the people."

The last aristocratic owner of Łańcut, Alfred Potocki, departed for Austria as the Soviet Army closed in toward the end of World War II, and took the most valuable art with him. The Germans gave him a special train because he had been friendly. But he was an exception, says the curator; most Polish aristocrats fought in the resistance.

There are still quite a few of them left in Poland, and they still marry one another.

In Łańcut's main square a sign proclaims "Socialism is charting the course for world development." Four dozen stores reflect what can be found in any Polish town of 10,000. Three dozen of the shops—food, clothes, yard goods, hardware, appliances—belong to MHD, a state-owned trading enterprise, or PSS, a nationwide cooperative. A custom shoe store belongs to an invalids' cooperative.

But a dozen shops are private: a hairdresser and a baker; G. Wasylewicz, ladies' hats; and Jan Paczka, selling paints, glue, and soap powder, all privately produced.

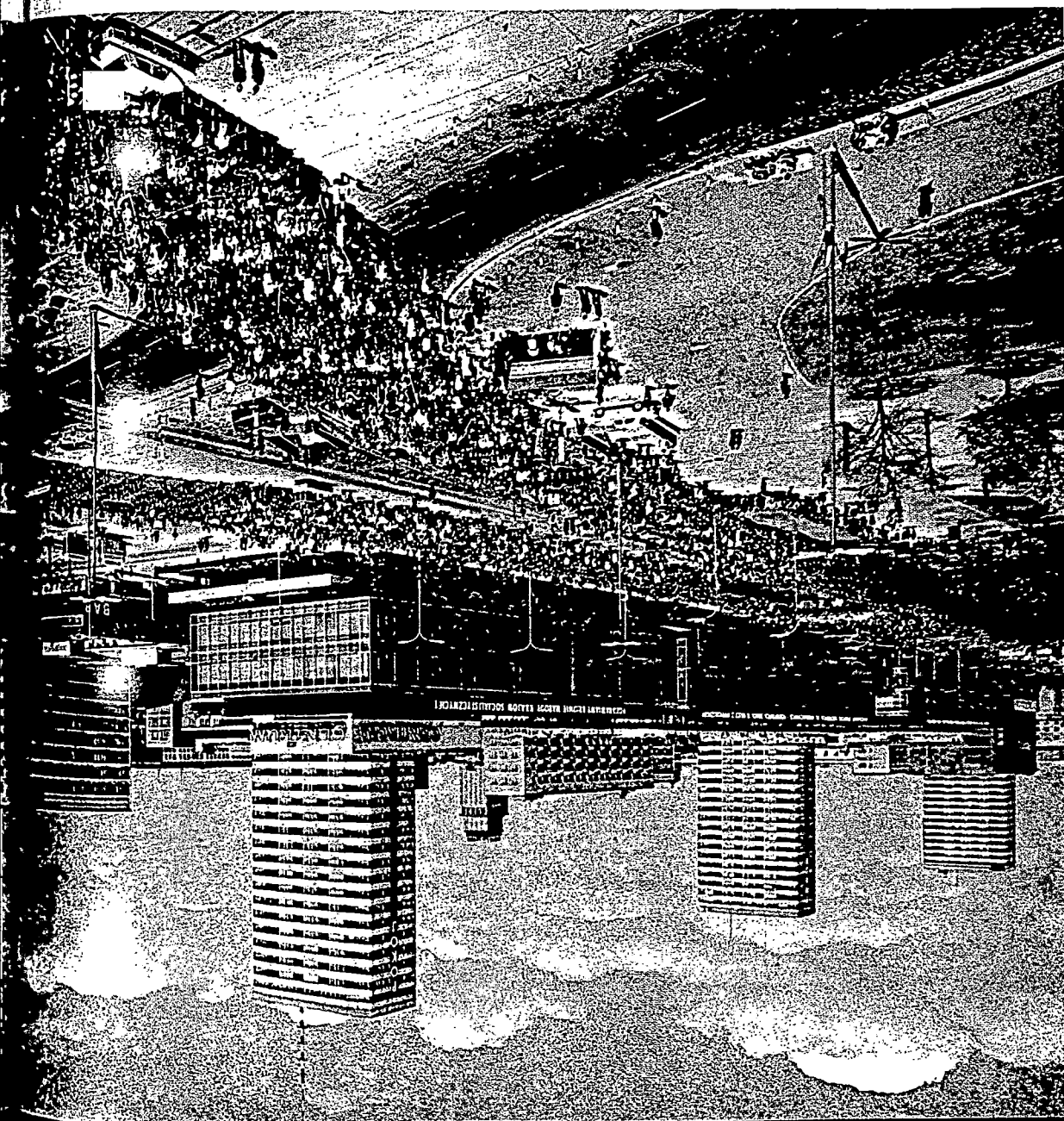
I ask a saleslady in the MHD food shop if she has better lettuce than the private competition. She says no, it's the same.

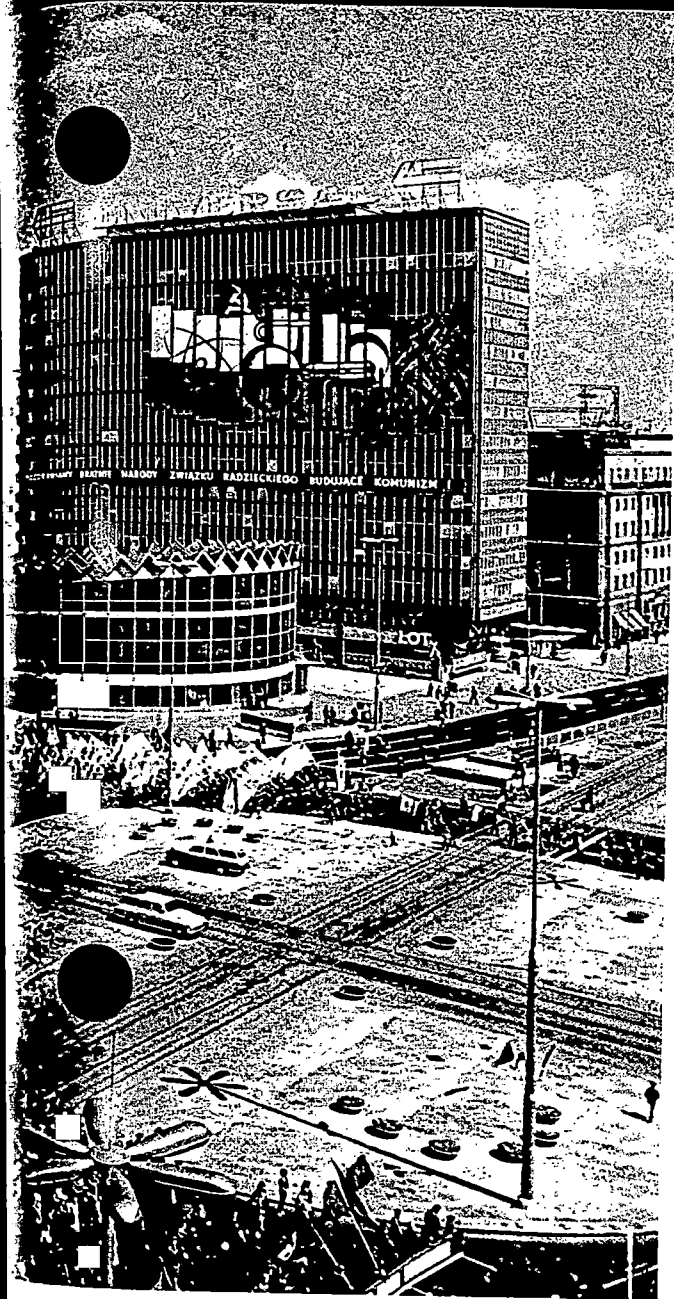
The saleslady in the private shop agrees. "The prices are the same too, set by the government. But sometimes I can sell a little cheaper, because I grow things myself. The government sets only maximum prices."

(Continued on page 486)



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Half a million strong, festive Poles parade through Warsaw on May Day, a holiday honoring the country's laboring class. Factory and shop workers arrive singly or in organized groups to participate in the annual event.

In previous years, their route through



the city was lined with posters of former Communist Party chief Gomulka. But in 1971 the well-dressed throng (left, lower) followed new party leader Gierk through the streets, past posters on the "Eastern Wall" (upper left) featuring slogans and symbols celebrating Poland's technological and industrial progress. An impressive row of modern office buildings, stores, and apartment houses, the Eastern Wall extends along a main Warsaw thoroughfare. Across the avenue, Gierk (above) addresses the multitude from a rostrum in front of the Palace of Culture and Science, the tallest building in Warsaw.

Living canvas for whimsy's brush, a student in Kraków (below) turns paint into fashion for Juwenalia, a zany festival that preserves medieval student high jinks. Street dancing (right) helps erase the cares of school life during the May celebration.

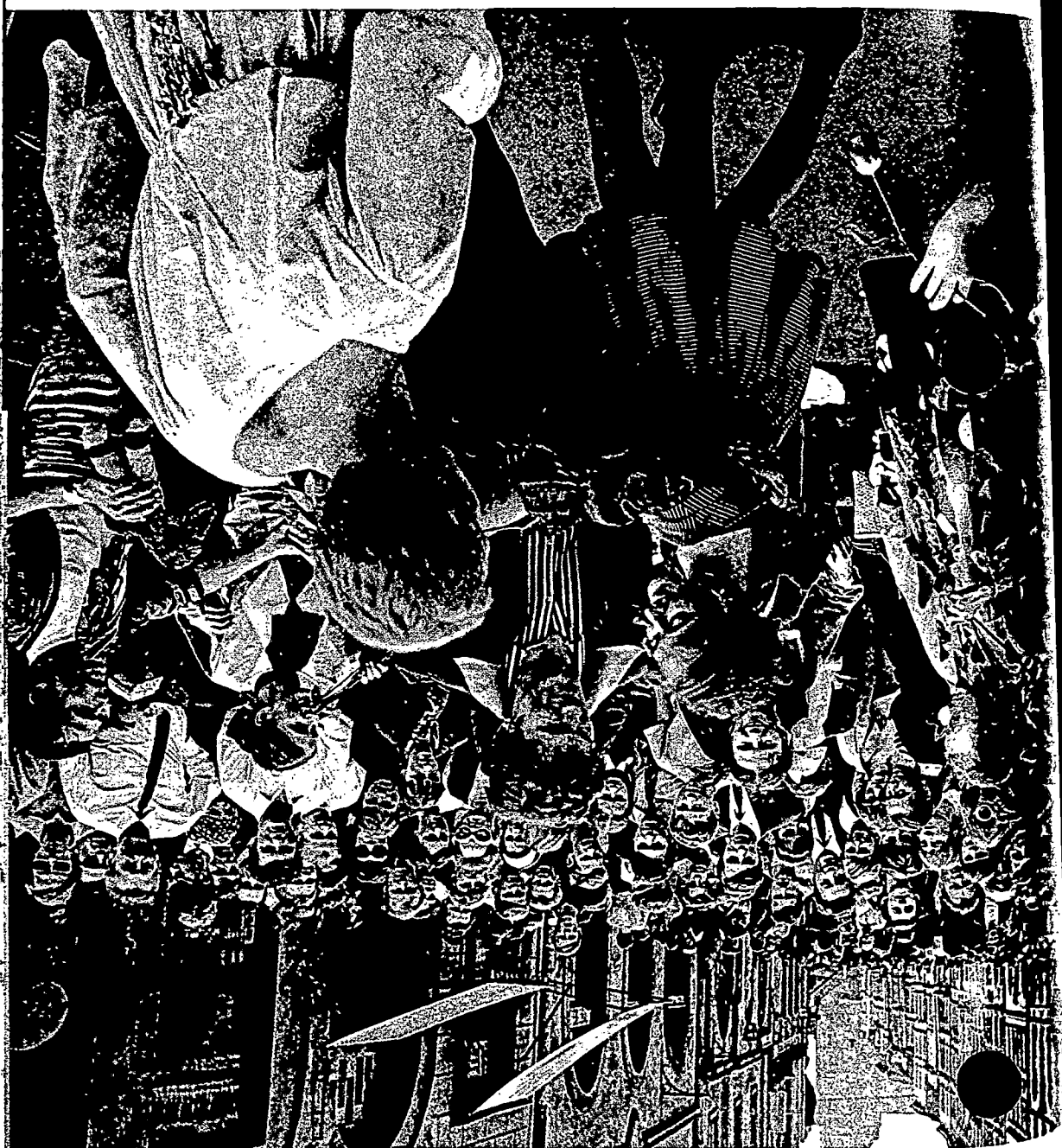
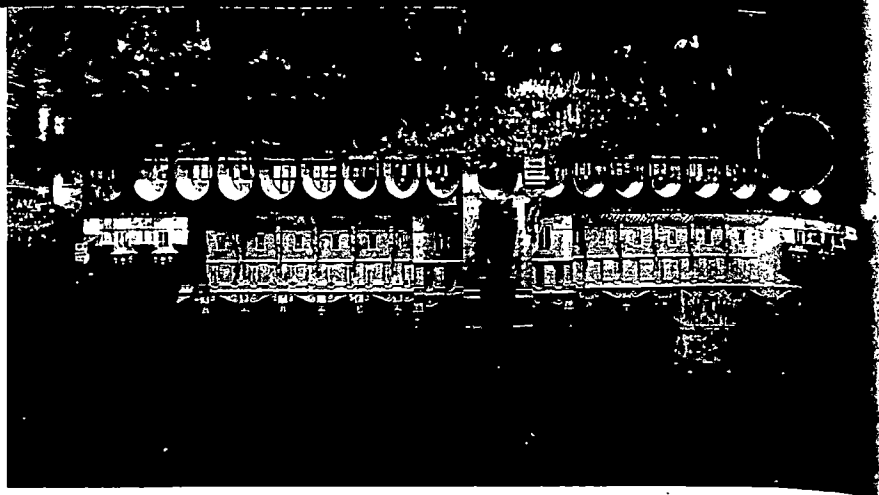


Less than thrilled by the goings-on of Juwenalia celebrators, a police officer dons a scowl. Most adults view the merrymaking with amused tolerance.



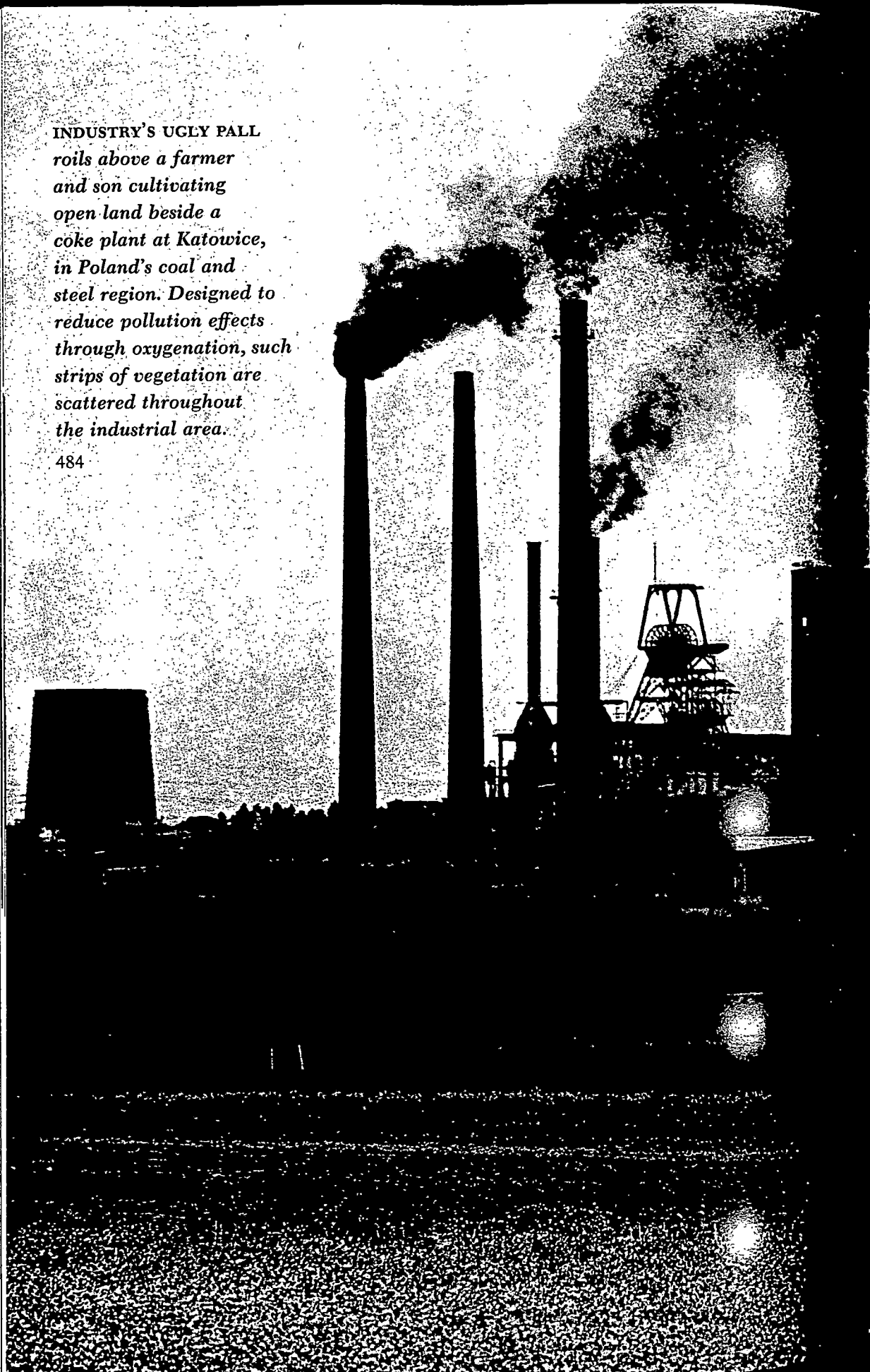
Undaunted by nightfall, Juwenalia revelers swarm to the lighted Main Market (right) and cluster around a statue of Romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz. Cloth Hall's 16th-century facade looms beyond. The building, now housing a branch of the National Museum, once drew merchants from all over the world to this old town square, one of the largest in medieval Europe.

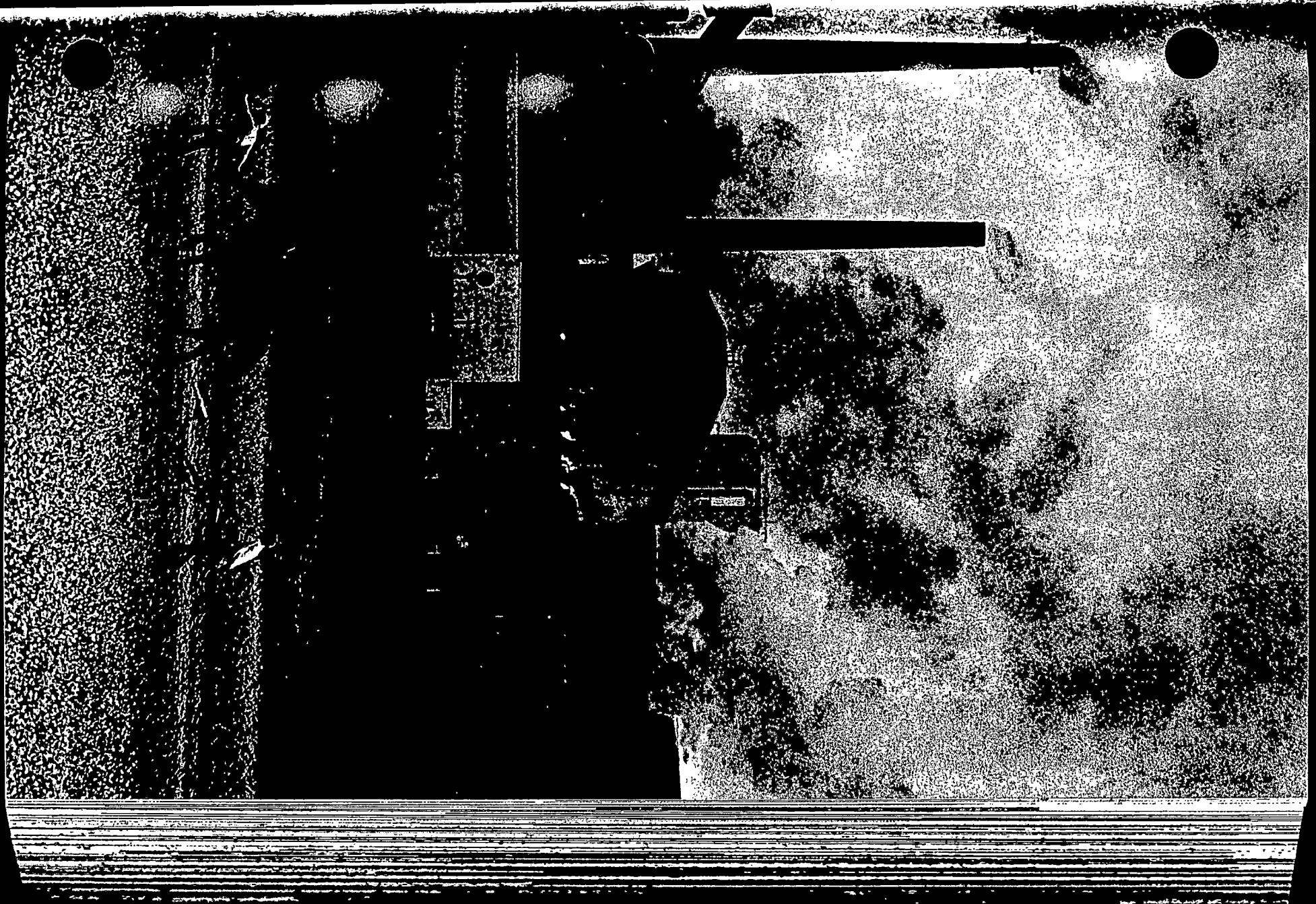
Situated at the crossing of several international trade routes, Kraków—a populous settlement since the eighth century—developed early as a major mercantile center. Poland's capital from 1320 to 1609, Kraków established its Jagiellonian University in 1364. Still education oriented, the city today has 11 institutions of higher learning.

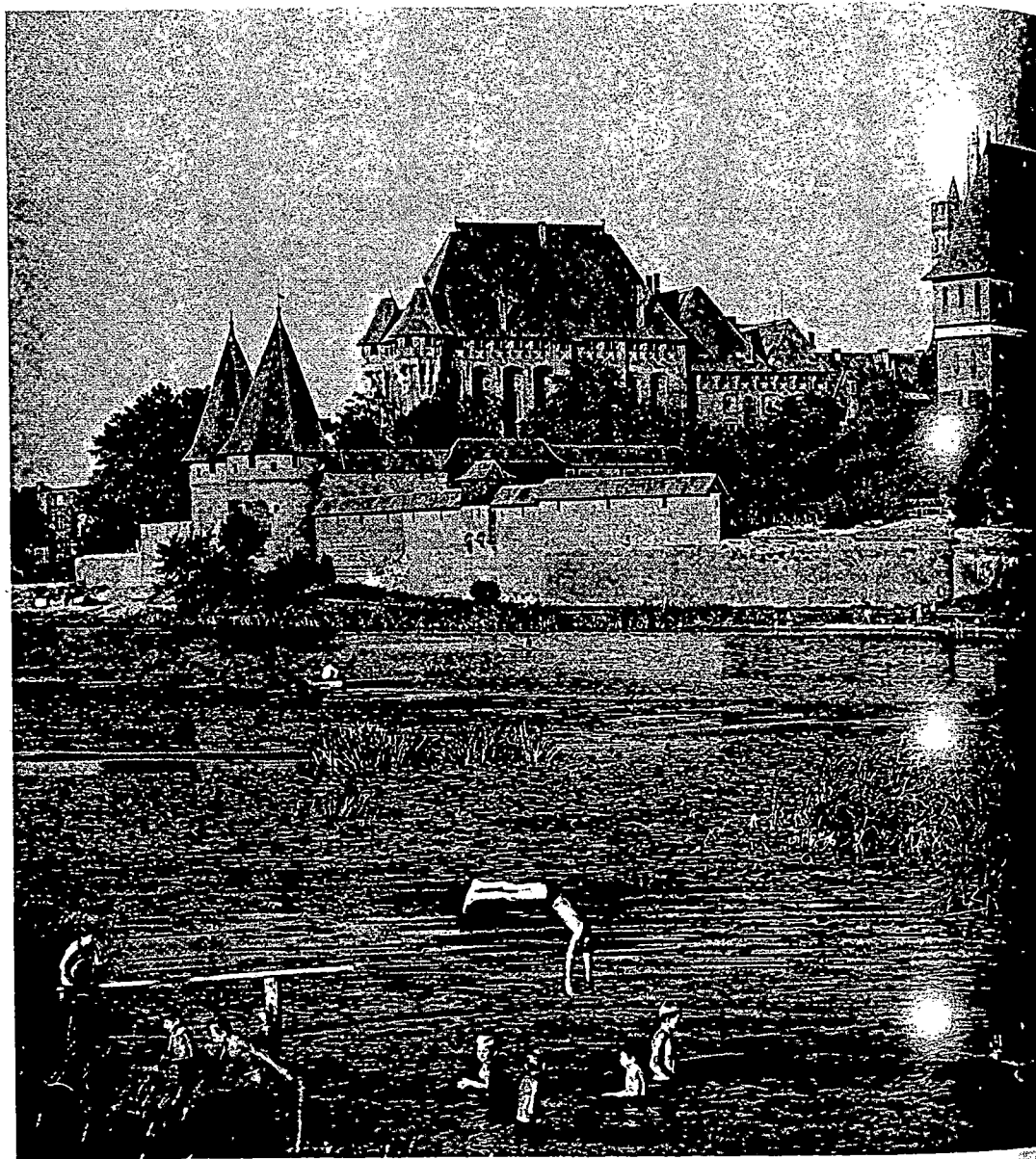


INDUSTRY'S UGLY PALL
roils above a farmer
and son cultivating
open land beside a
coke plant at Katowice,
in Poland's coal and
steel region. Designed to
reduce pollution effects
through oxygenation, such
strips of vegetation are
scattered throughout
the industrial area.

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In M. Jachowica's notions shop I see a tiny plastic Model-T Ford. Private workshops turning out plastic items like this—or watchbands, or little things for hardware stores—can make fortunes. So can private growers of strawberries, flowers, and vegetables. The most fortunate few drive expensive German sports cars.

Before leaving Łańcut, I stop at a gas station. It's a hybrid: The state owns it and grants a franchise to a private operator; the more he sells, the more profit he makes.

The general rule is that no private enterprise may employ more than 50. Out of ten million working Poles, half a million are

privately employed, and these official figures do not cover the six million in the overwhelmingly private agricultural sector.

As we head for the Bieszczady, the Carpathian Mountains in Poland's southeast corner, our car radio flashes the Peace Race finish. The final winner is—SZURKOWSKI! Justice has been done. There'll be records set tonight—in vodka.

From the road I see brick houses going up in the hilly farmland, replacing the old wooden ones. The finest of these, with thatch roofs, open central fireplaces, and separate but equal sections for cows, have been taken to an outdoor museum in Sanok, as showpieces

Hulking headquarters of the Teutonic Knights, Malbork Castle rose beside the Nogat River in 1276, after the German crusading order conquered Prussia. Poland acquired the fortress in 1457 and transformed it into a favorite hideaway for royalty.

a smell of paint. "Adding two rooms upstairs," he says, "for vacationists. Some city people like to sleep in the hay; they think it's romantic. But others like their comfort."

In May it dawns early. There's light shortly after three a.m., and a little after four an edge of fire rises over the hazy Bieszczady skyline; five minutes later there's the sun, in a red-gold haze. The air is soft.

From Ustrzyki Górne, in the very southeastern tip of Poland, I walk up through a beechwood and needle forest, up along little streams, up past the tree line, where the wind makes silvery waves in the grass.

Up another 600 feet along a wind-whipped ridge and I am on top of Połonina Caryńska, surrounded by the majesty of the Bieszczady. I can see nothing man-made: to the horizon, green mountains and green valleys.

Three miles south lies the Soviet border. The Czech border is five miles to the southwest. But from here, at this moment, all is unbounded. It is an indescribable joy.

PERHAPS I stayed up there too long. Perhaps it was the haunting wind. It struck me then, as it must sooner or later come to most visitors, how much this verdant Poland—so various, so beguiling, so alive—is impelled by memories of indescribable horror.

Thousands of plaques and monuments attest to places of torture and execution, on city streets, in forests, in vast concentration camps (following pages). Here 50 were hanged, or 3,000 burned alive; 80,000 were harried and starved to death there, or 800,000 gassed. The memorials do not accuse Germans; it was the *hitlerowcy*, the Hitlerites.

Of the victims, hundreds of thousands were Soviet prisoners of war. Millions were Jews from Poland and all Europe. But millions were Poles who were not Jews. And so, for a third of the country's population—for anyone over 39 now, who was at least a teen-ager then—the slaughterhouse that was Poland is more than a matter of history and impersonal numbers. It is a matter of one's own vivid recollections, one's own grief.

of folk architecture. I especially admire one that had belonged to the Dołżycki family. I visit Tymoteusz Dołżycki because I've never met a man whose birthplace went to a museum.

He is tall, blue-eyed, white-haired, with a creased face, strong teeth, and a black cap, every inch the *soltys*, or chief, of the village of Komańcza. He has been chief for 25 years. How does one get to be *soltys*?

"By being the best man of all," he says. He has been reelected every 3 years. He has 27 acres, 2 cows and 3 calves, 2 horses and 4 sheep. He grows potatoes and barley. His son just became a doctor of medicine.

There's a noise of sawing in the house, and



"There is only one way out, through the chimney." Hitler's executioners killed more than 360,000 Jews at Majdanek (above), one of the dozens of crematorium-equipped extermination camps established in Poland in World War II. At the largest, Oświęcim-Brzezinka—the infamous Auschwitz—Nazis systematically murdered an average of more than 2,200 persons a day for 4½ years.

Thousands of suitcases, like that of the infant Thomas Fischer (left), remain at Auschwitz as gruesome reminders of the Europeans of 28 nationalities brought here to die after being told they were moving to resettlement areas. Poles maintain the camps as museums in the belief that preserving the memory of such horrors will keep them from ever happening again.



Those who are younger are constantly confronted with the Hitlerite years in plays and movies, in novels and comic books and on TV. Back in Warsaw the director of PTTK, the national tourist organization, tells me that young people are especially encouraged to see the places of "martyrology." For each visit, children get points toward special badges.

Why is such a nightmare kept so strenuously alive? "Because we don't want it to be repeated. *Nigdy więcej!* Never again!"

I find this thought expressed many times; it is a deep Polish feeling. It surfaces unexpectedly, even during my visit to a plant that supplies half of Warsaw with meat, most of it in the form of 21 varieties of sausage.

In a borrowed white coat I follow the making of the plant's top sausage, the four-inch-thick Krakowska: mixing of meat and spices, smoking over oak fires. As

I sample the delicious result, I learn that soon the Krakowska won't be smoked for five hours anymore. "We'll add a powder to give it the smoked taste," says the director, "we must do this to expand production."

But will it still taste as good?

The director whistles through his teeth. "We all realize that development brings disadvantages. Isn't it true that more Americans have died in-car crashes than in wars?" Then it comes: "Well, it's better to die in a car crash than in a war! *Nigdy więcej!*"

As deep, though, more complicated, is Polish feeling toward the Russians—so often enemies in the past, now allies, and under no circumstances to be criticized in public.

Every Pole knows that only through bitter fighting and luck did their resurrected country survive its clash with the Soviets after World War I. And in 1939, 16 days after Hitler's

onslaught came from the west, Stalin's armies rolled in from the east. They occupied much of Poland and dragged off hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens to Siberia, until Hitler turned on the Soviet Union too. After Hitler's defeat, moreover, Stalin took over a great slice of what until World War II had been eastern Poland, including the cities of Wilno and Lwów.

The Poles regained slices of prewar eastern Germany; Poland thus shifted about 130 miles to the west, so that the present borders roughly outline the area of the first Polish kingdom of a thousand years ago (maps, pages 468 and 469). But the memory of lost homelands still tugs on Polish heartstrings. One night, in private, I heard people sing songs of Lwów. They had smiles on their faces, but in their eyes were tears. Yet even they did not question the Soviet alliance. "Who else would help us against the Germans?"

EN ROUTE NORTH to the Baltic, I savor spring in western Mazury: green meadows with lupine blooming blue, languid magpies, red brick castles built and lost by the Teutonic Knights (pages 486-7). On Vistula Bay, within the walls of the fortified cathedral of Frombork, a new museum makes ready for 1973: the 500th birthday of Mikołaj Kopernik, or Nicolaus Copernicus, the Pole who revolutionized astronomy.

He studied at Kraków, Bologna, and Rome, and became a physician, theologian, and commander against the Teutonic Order. The last half of his life he spent in Frombork, administering the cathedral, observing the skies, and writing a six-part work, *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*. It established that the earth is not the center of the universe but revolves, along with the other planets, around the sun. It built the foundation for man's flight into space.

Off the port and shipbuilding center of Gdańsk, guns boom and missile boats speed by—the Polish Navy on maneuvers where Polish men-of-war plied in the Middle Ages. The Teutonic Knights took Gdańsk in 1308 and called it Danzig, but by 1466 Polish kings were sovereign here once more. Their portraits mark the ducats struck in the city's golden age, when Poland included the Ukraine and was the granary of Europe and Gdańsk its trading port, rich in Renaissance and Baroque architecture.

Prussia made it Danzig again, after the partition of Poland in 1793. Those architectural treasures crumbled in the fires of World War II. Today they stand splendidly restored. Impressive, too, for sheer size, is a cooperative apartment project (pages 476-7) where the 12,000th family has just moved in.

A 2,500-foot-long block is nearly finished. I see plots of grass with signs: Teddy Bears. Bisons. "These are groups of children," I am told, "each assigned to care for a plot, to teach social responsibility. If the buildings are well kept, and everybody makes his payments on time for a year, the payments drop. If not, they go up."

Beautiful Baltic beaches beckon. Sopot (page 477). Hel. Łeba, where wind and sea constantly add sand to wild dunes up to 150 feet high, protected in a national park lest 150,000 annual visitors stomp them down. One must stay on staked paths.

May I now pass along a few hints on Polish pronunciation?

For "ck," as in Branicki or Potocki, say "tsk," as in—ahem—Trotski. That's right, Pototski. When it comes to all those "cz's," be fearless. The city and province of Bydgoszcz is simply Bydgosh-tsh. And when coming to the great Baltic port of Szczecin, as I am now, take your time and try to say: Sh-tsh-e-tsin.

OK? Please say *tak*, meaning "yes." Or *dobrze*, pronounced *dobzhe*—"good," or "OK."

Szczecin, near the mouth of the Odra River, hums with the goings and comings of freighters of many flags. Mainly it's Polish coal going to Denmark, France, Italy; iron ore coming from the U.S.S.R., Sweden, Brazil. Also grain. At a 50,000-ton storage tower, the *Komiles* from Leningrad discharges wheat.

Szczecin's shipyards build freighters and trawlers for Britain, India, Kuwait. "They pay cash," I am told, "in hard currencies." That's what Poland wants to import most of all.

On the docks, among black-headed gulls and heavy hoists, I see soldiers with sub-machine guns. They watch, lest a Pole without a passport jump onto a foreign ship. I follow ore barges south along the Odra, which forms the border with the German Democratic Republic; Germans call it the Oder. Near Ognica I stop and sit on the grass to enjoy a restful scene: the river, gentle green hills, great-crowned trees, a distant cow.

Oh, oh, here's a soldier with a submachine gun. He politely asks for my documents. I

stay and finish my picnic. The amiable
 keeps standing by.

Strange that this border should be so closely guarded. Who'd want to sneak out into East Germany? It's not that, I learn; the danger is Western agents sneaking in.

The soldier says he's 20 and was born here. His parents came from central Poland, after the Germans who used to live here left. Those who didn't flee with the retreating Nazis were deported after World War II. It's the same story in Frombork, Gdańsk, and Szczecin.

Germans coming to visit their former farms used to say that one day they'd be back for good. But they haven't said that lately. The Bonn Government has recognized Poland's western frontier, in a treaty signed in December 1970. This makes Poles breathe a little easier—it's another reason why this is such a hopeful spring.

FOLLOW the Odra through Słubice, Wrocław, and Opole to Koźle, the inland port connected by a canal with Gliwice, in the Upper Silesian Industrial District. Imagine 13 townships bunched much like Los Angeles. Downtown is Katowice, with brand-new blocks of glass and concrete and a huge park. The district boasts Poland's highest standard of living; here hard hats are king, especially miners. On festive occasions they wear black uniforms with gold embroidery, medals, and feathered hats. I witness a Silesian rite of spring: the awarding of swords to outstanding mining-school graduates.

Billboards proclaim Poland tenth in the world in industrial production, ninth in copper and steel, fifth in coal. A quarter of all this comes from right here, and I find it depressing to be hardly ever out of sight of mine towers, slag heaps, blast furnaces, and smokestacks producing smog (pages 484-5).

It is a relief to come upon extensive woods, carefully maintained to help purify the atmosphere. I walk in this forest and breathe deeply. It just stopped raining, and the air is clear and invigorating.

Back in Katowice I had brushed my hand against a wall and found it streaked with brown-black grime. Now in the forest I take a shiny leaf, still pearly with water, and look at it closely. I see black specks on it. I brush the leaf against my notebook. It's the same brown-black grime.

I wonder. How many attractive things

in Poland might, on closer inspection, turn out to be flawed? It's a nagging feeling I've had all along—under the surface, what's the reality? And so I've asked all kinds of people, What's it like to live here?

"Terrible," says a pretty blonde in Kraków. "Wonderful," says a pretty brunette. Both are from upstate New York, studying at the university.

Says the blonde: "Every month you've got to stand in line six hours, to buy your meal tickets!" The brunette: "I never wait more than ten minutes. You've got to know when to go, or you send a friend. You've got to know how to operate..."

Blonde: "Those rules in the dorm—boys can visit only twice a week, and have to be out by 10!" Brunette: "Come on, guys sneak in all the time... I wish I could stay five years." The blonde can't wait to go home.

A Polish-born real-estate man from Los Angeles has been driving all over in his big red car. He says the country is in a mess. "Look at these glum faces of the people waiting for a bus. No wonder, they don't have any incentive! But they won't tell you the truth because you go around with a government interpreter."

Sometimes, though, I go alone. I speak German, and so do many Poles over 40—it's a legacy of the occupation, or of forced labor in Germany. What I hear and see leaves me leery of simple answers.

In a village I meet a couple about to visit their daughter in the factory town of Polkowice, and I give them a lift. The daughter teaches school, her husband is an electrician in a copper mine. Eighteen months ago they put down money for a cooperative apartment in a five-story building.

Father notices a shaky railing in the stairway, a badly fitting door. "This'll have to be fixed," he says. Mother is wide-eyed. Electric refrigerator, gas hot-water heater, and a bath! Her own home is a big comfortable farmhouse, but to her these tiny rooms are pure luxury—veneered furniture, Persian-style carpets!

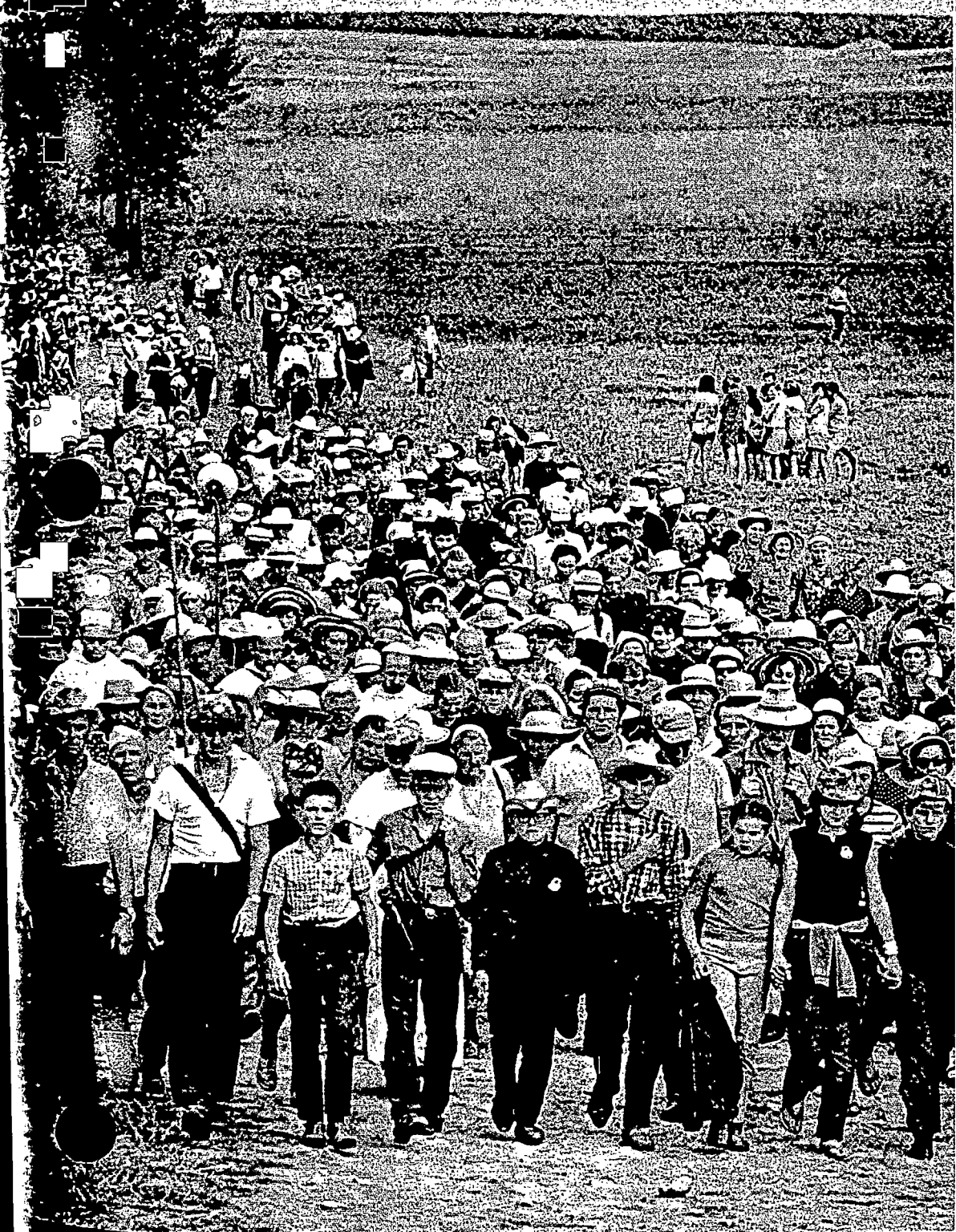
For all this, the young husband works extra hard. He gets a month's vacation, in a resort belonging to the mine; the rest of the year he takes only two Sundays off each month. He seems full of incentive to me.

Another fine interpreter-less day I hear a

(Continued on page 496)



MARCH OF FAITH: *Each August more than a million people journey to Czestochowa to honor the Virgin of Jasna Góra Monastery. This group of some 8,000 pilgrims walked 130 miles from Warsaw. Tenaciously Catholic since 966, Poles for 300 years have hailed the Blessed Virgin as "Queen of Poland."* 493







JASNA GÓRA MONASTERY

Catholicism's voice in an overwhelmingly Catholic nation, Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński welcomes pilgrims arriving at Częstochowa. Among the country's most formidable public figures, Cardinal Wyszyński has never ceased his struggle against government restriction of church activities, even though his opposition resulted in a three-year prison term in the 1950's. Poland's new political leadership appears eager to ease strained relations between church and state.

Beyond the cardinal, within the Jasna Góra basilica, resides the object of the pilgrims' veneration, Our Lady of Częstochowa (above). She never appears this way in public; always she wears one of her "gowns"—overlays of gem-encrusted gold and silver. Poles credit her with saving the country in 1655. The presence of the icon at the monastery, Poland's only unconquered fortification, gave 230 defenders the strength to repel 4,000 Swedish invaders. Legend also tells that a would-be thief slashed the Madonna's face—then fell dead.

rotund, middle-aged Pole speak his mind on the beach at Sopot. I say it's beautiful here, the sand, the sun. . . .

"Yes, but life is not beautiful for Poles. One works hard all day and has nothing. There isn't even enough sausage. . . ." (He reaches into a bag, brings out a sausage sandwich, and eats. He has six more sandwiches.)

"Now take the directors of all the enterprises, they're party people, they don't work hard, but they have everything. They steal! Why, the party isn't even run by Poles; they're all Jews! Some of these Politburo types can't even read and write!" (Stupendous exaggerations! Fewer than 10,000 Jews are left in Poland, none in the Politburo. Poland's literacy rate is 98 percent; the Politburo's can safely be put at 100 percent.)

I point to new apartments facing the sea and say it must be nice to have such a view.

"*Nie*, everybody's too tired to look out. What can you expect from a system like this?"

Others told me the problem is not the system, it's certain attitudes.

An engineer said in Gdańsk: "In our factory a man had five children and very little money. I was on the Workers' Council and we had funds to help people, so the council gave him some money. One morning I thought I'd watch this fellow. He came in late and smoked a cigarette. Then he made tea. Then he went to chat with other workers. Then he made some private thing on a factory machine, and then he went to the factory store and stole some sheets of tin.

"Could we fire him? Oh, no! We gave him a warning, and he behaved better. But this kind of attitude is met in Poland. There's a lot of waste, because there's not enough respect for public property."

A retired manager of a state enterprise answered me simply: "What's wrong in Poland? People—from top to bottom!"

Back in Warsaw, a lady tourist from New York wants to know what things cost in Poland. It's a question of what and for whom.

In Warsaw she can pick up bargains in silver or leather or linens. She can get a very good meal in any Polish town for the zlotys she gets for \$1.50; or take the waters in a Polish spa for \$3.25 a day, including bed, food, and medical services. She can buy a Polski Fiat—like my zippy four-door sedan—for as little as \$1,330.

But for Poles that car would cost roughly

six years' wages for an unskilled worker; or four years' for a miner or policeman. Or two years' salary for a director.

On the other hand, workers get bonuses, and contributions toward buying apartments. Higher education is free for those who qualify. Vacations are extremely cheap.

I told a Pole what I spent to have a tooth fixed, and he was astounded—that in a civilized country like America dental work isn't free. American hospital bills sound as far-fetched to Poles as the idea of six years' salary for a car sounds to us.

But the harsh fact is that an hour's pay of the average Polish factory worker buys only half a pound of meat. And so in most city families both husbands and wives hold jobs. Nearly everybody looks for ways to save money and to earn extra income—just to make ends meet, or to save for something, for a washing machine or a hi-fi.

Women, by the way, are commonly found in the full range of occupations—street sweepers, crane operators, doctors, administrators. Most of them do not expect their men to share the shopping, cooking, or housework. But they do expect to be made much of as ladies, and they are, as I saw reflected in Poland's high rate of hand-kissing.

Even traffic policemen are said to do it occasionally, when relieving traffic policewomen. I walked up to one of those pretty girls in white jacket and black mini-skirt, a tanned, blue-eyed blonde with lots of eye shadow. A silvery Polish eagle flashed from her cap. I asked her, Is it true?

"It's not in the regulations," she said. "Regulations call only for a salute. But it's very nice, don't you think?"

Later that day I noticed a news photo: Comrade Gierek, First Secretary of the Party's Central Committee, kissing the hand of a lady worker in a helicopter plant near Lublin.

IT IS THE MORNING of the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, the Feast of Corpus Christi, a holiday in the Polish People's Republic, where the overwhelming majority are Roman Catholic. After the traditional procession in Warsaw, His Eminence Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński will speak, undoubtedly about the changes. What will he say?

By now I realize how powerfully the Church speaks to Poles. One Sunday in Sannok, among a congregation overflowing onto

the church steps, I heard the amplified voice of the priest ring across the square:

"Our real mother must die, her heart which beats only for her children's happiness must stop. But our Heavenly Mother remains forever. We can always count on her; the love of all the mothers in the world is as nothing to the love of Mary for us all..." A tall man next to me swallowed hard, a young woman with a baby carriage fumbled for a handkerchief.

The priest's terminology is significant too: Most Sainted Lady Mary, Queen of Poland. It has been that way since the 1650's, when with the help of a miraculous icon the monastery at Częstochowa was the only Polish stronghold to withstand the Protestant Swedes. Every year the Virgin of Częstochowa is the focus of a vast pilgrimage (pages 492-5).

In thousands of Polish churches, banners mix the letter M for Mary with Polish eagles—a reminder of all those years of foreign oppression when the Church provided the sole public outlet for nationalist emotion, when in a way the Church *was* Poland.

And here's a joke of Gomułka days: *The congregation kneels, but one man remains standing. Whispers: Why don't you kneel? B. I'm an atheist. Then why are you in church? Because I'm against the government.*

Now tens of thousands crowd before St. Anne's in Warsaw as the silver-haired cardinal speaks with quiet passion, his gold-and-ivory staff in his left hand, his golden ring flashing from his right. "We are waiting for the promises recently made to be fulfilled.... In Warsaw we need 50 more churches.... In the whole of Poland, after 17 years of restraints on church construction, we need thousands... we wait for deeds, not words!"

I saw a tiny makeshift church trying to serve thousands—with 16 masses each Sunday. "It is to cry," said a parishioner. The problem isn't money; to build a proper church requires a construction permit, and a permit for materials. Would Gierek grant enough to reconcile crusty old Cardinal Wyszyński?

What kind of man is Edward Gierek, on whom so much depends? I was eager for a close-up impression; I got it, at the 40th international trade fair in Poznań.

Exhibiting or just shopping here are businessmen from Düsseldorf and Milan, engineers from Irkutsk and the People's Republic of China. Edward Gierek is touring the major

exhibits. In the U. S. pavilion the American Ambassador waits. This will be his first chance to talk with the man who for six months has been the leader of Poland.

Here he comes, with a swarm of Politburo members, ministers, and security men in black raincoats. During the ensuing chat, I stand four feet away.

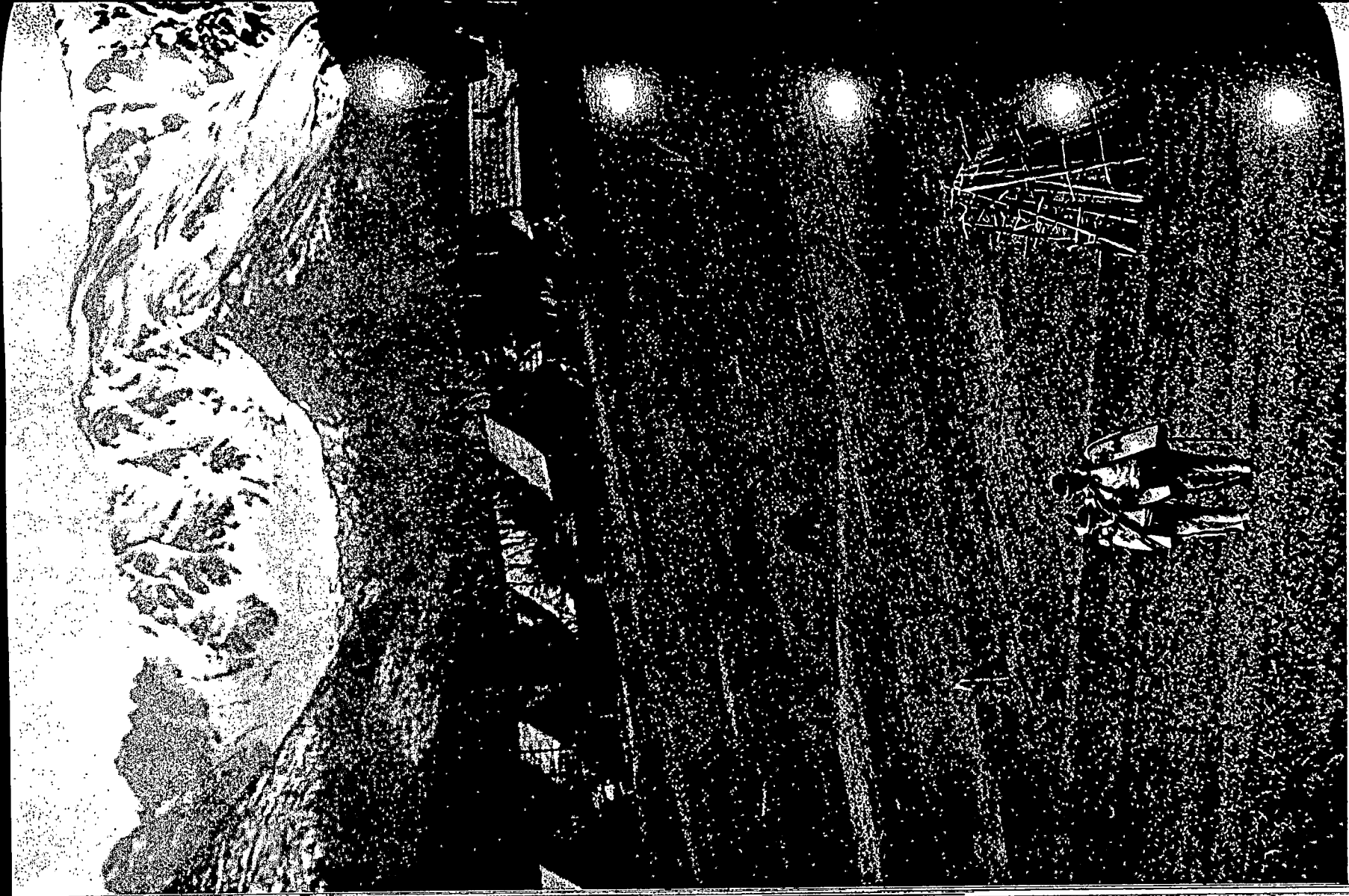
Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz stresses that Poland would like more licenses for American industrial processes, saying, "We hope..." Gierek breaks in: "In Poland we say hope is only half the matter. We hold talks and talks, but apparently some ears cannot hear..."

No doubt about it, this stocky man with the gray crew cut is tough. Two months after this encounter, the U. S. Government at last grants a license the Poles want badly: an oil-cracking process for their refinery at Płock, which converts crude oil from the U.S.S.R.

ON MY LAST SWING through Poland I stop at the state museum of Oświęcim-Brzezinka, the place the world knows as Auschwitz. By 9 a.m., 18 buses are in the parking lot. The exhibits are detailed and heartrending, a monument to cold-blooded human bestiality on a scale unparalleled in modern Europe. This inferno alone murdered four million people in less than five years.

That night, at the Hotel Giewont in Zakopane, in the Tatra Mountains, vacationists from Warsaw are dancing. Visiting Americans are dancing, too. Watching them, I feel that America can be everlastingly proud to have helped put an end to Auschwitz.

Driving through foothills of the jagged Tatras, I notice new brick houses with stone foundations and wooden gables. This used to be the poorest part of Poland, whence many emigrated to America. A mountaineer in a battered black felt hat tells me at Bukowina Tatrzńska: "Nearly everybody here has relatives in America. If they send an invitation, and if you can get an American visa, the government may let you go for a visit. My neighbor just came back after a year and a half in Chicago. He worked as a butcher, two shifts a day. His young wife stayed behind, she was very sad. Now she is so happy! They bought land, they're building a house, they have a car. You should see her new clothes! In Poland you could work all your life and never have all that..."





Sheep hush their bleating when a *góral*, or mountain man, plays on his goat-headed *kobza* (above), a Polish counterpart of Scotland's bagpipes.

In their storybook land, a father and son take a Sunday stroll (left). At home in the High Tatra of southern Poland, the *góral*s cling to traditional attire and customs.

Elsewhere in the swiftly modernizing People's Republic, old habits and costumes emerge only for special events. During the harvest festival at Opole, in southwestern Poland, students relive the past through the graceful dances of their forebears (right).



School is out, and I pick up a teen-age couple with rucksacks. The official hitchhiking season has begun.

Anyone over 17 can buy a green hitchhiking booklet; it provides accident insurance, and contains sheets of coupons. The hitchhiker holds up his booklet and, after he is picked up, he gives the driver a coupon for every 25 kilometers; drivers turn in these coupons for a lottery; first prize is a Polski Fiat. Should a hitchhiker misbehave—well, there's his number on the coupon.

This was mentioned to me by the police colonel in charge of crime prevention and traffic safety for all Poland. "Those little booklets introduced order into hitchhiking."

He also told me why young people wear the number of their school on their sleeves: "So they'll be easy to identify. If they behave improperly, we send special postcards to their parents. It works very well."

Such devices, plus 380,000 auxiliary police, may explain why I could see people walking in the parks even after midnight.

In eastern Mazury, where the beautiful lakes are, I go sailing with students vacationing at the International Yachting Center at Giżycko. The biggest lake measures only ten miles across, but there are many of them, connected by canals. Blue water, green meadows, and woods for camping.

But what a pity about the beautiful trees lining the roads. They'll have to go, a traffic engineer tells me, because trees are stronger than cars and the number of crashes is appalling. A bus has just hit a tree, trying to avoid a driver who didn't stick to his side of the road; 71 children are hurt.

The annual death rate from motor accidents has reached 13 per 10,000 vehicles. That's almost three times as many as in the U. S., and so, in a way, it seems fortunate that Poland has only one vehicle for every 12 inhabitants. (In the U. S. it's three for every five.) But Gierek promises "universal motorization," through a cheap small car. Roads must be widened, or at least made safe from trees. When a driver sets out on a journey, one tells him "*Szerokiej drogi*," meaning "I wish you a wide road."

ANOTHER LONG DRIVE induces long thoughts. Will the Polish harvest be sufficient? Can Gierek stay the course?

One of his aides tells me: "Before, the leadership thought of doctrine. Gierek thinks along pragmatic lines; he is a pragmatic patriot. Of course there are thousands of people—especially in small places, small kings—who are not happy about the changes. But millions support Gierek, especially the youth. This makes him very strong."

In the primeval forest of Białowieża National Park, on the northeastern border with the U.S.S.R., I lose myself among the giants. Oaks and lindens up to 130 feet. A 156-foot spruce. It's a green and awesome day.

I get to the lodge so late that again I've missed Poland's favorite TV program, "Bonanza." It runs on Sunday afternoons, with a spoken Polish translation. But I'm in time for the daily "Goodnight to Children," at 7:20. It's a cartoon about a boy who helps birds. He has a magic pencil—whatever he draws begins to exist. A cat attacks some birds' nests, so he draws a fire engine and hoses the cat away. Then he draws bird-houses with refrigerators and bathrooms, with all the marks of a high standard of living.

The birds in their beautiful homes sing in gratitude. The boy draws himself a piano and plays a cheerful accompaniment. I wish I had such a pencil, so I could draw for Poles the things they want, and protect them from all the marauding cats of the world.

Next morning I see the famous European bison, once nearly extinct but now bred back to a herd of 230. From a stockade wall, the veterinarian who looks after them points to a charming bison bull calf, 15 days old. His parents are Poleszuk and Polarna. Would I care to name the baby? The name, like that of all purebred bison in Białowieża, must start with the letters PO.

I think and think and say—Pontuk!

The veterinarian asks what it means. I say it sounds Polish to me, and strong. May he grow up to be a brave Polish bison.

And I think of all the charming Poles I met. On their journey toward a better life, I wish them all a wide road. □

Stalwarts of the national economy, independent farmers like wheat grower Kazimerz Steinborn share their city cousins' cautiously hopeful view of the future. Recognizing the importance of privately owned farms—which comprise 83 percent of Poland's croplands—the government has now extended to them many of the incentives formerly granted only to state-owned cooperatives.

