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# **Poland**

**December 1973**

**NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY**

**SECRET**

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# Country Profile: **Poland**

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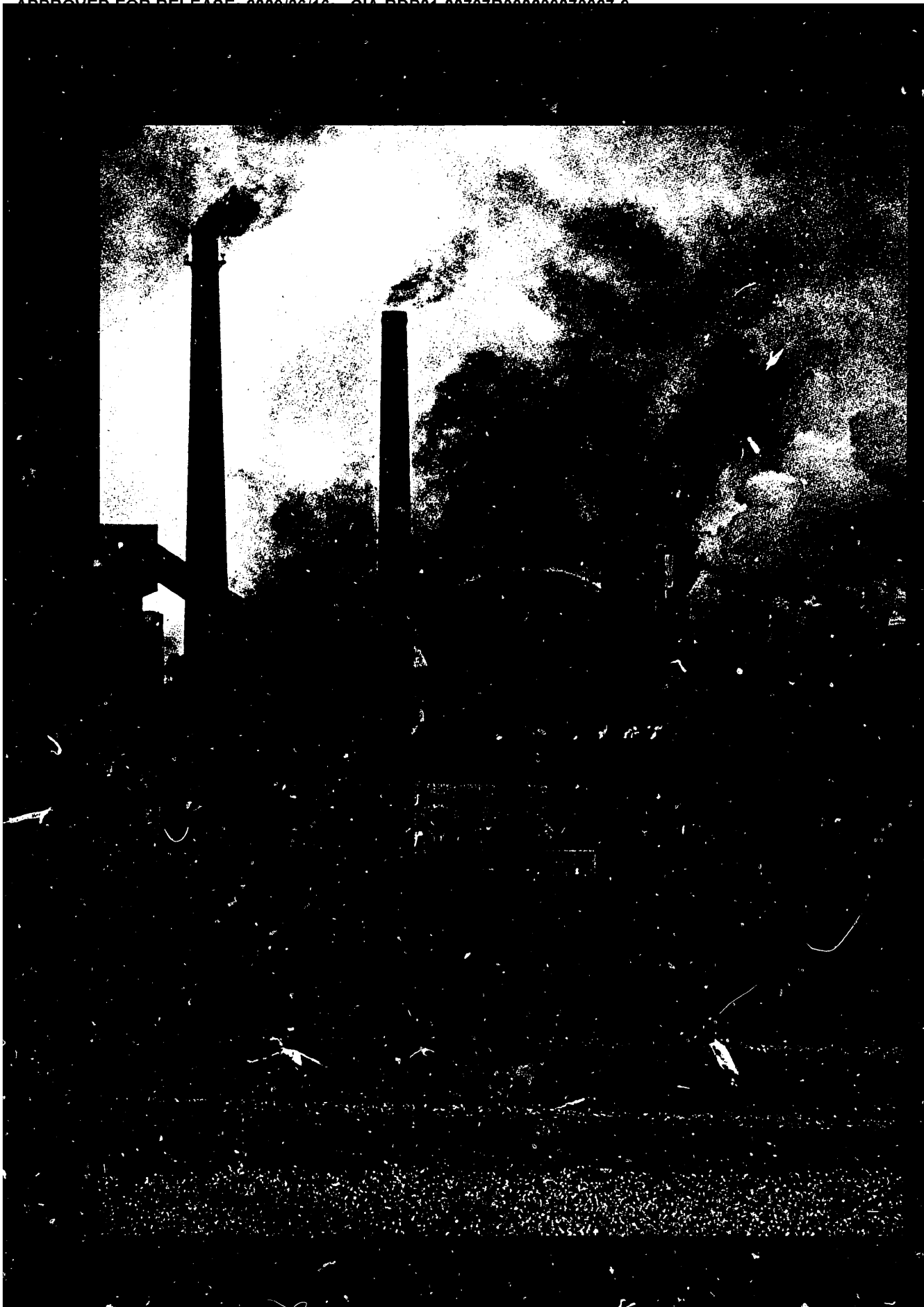
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## The Imperative of National Revival

When Edward Gierk took over leadership of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) from Wladslaw Gomulka on 20 December 1970, the violent workers' demonstrations which had erupted in several of Poland's coastal cities during the preceding week were threatening to spread to Warsaw itself. Although the immediate cause of the disorders had been Gomulka's ill-timed action in raising food (mainly meat) and fuel prices on the eve of Poland's traditional Christmas feast, the crisis had been brewing for years. The dramatic circumstances surrounding Gomulka's return to power in 1956 had generated exaggerated expectations about his intentions with regard to liberal domestic reforms and the exercise of Polish sovereignty alike. By the early 1960's, his seeming retreat on both fronts had badly tarnished his popular image. Thereafter, a sort of sickness—characterized by cynicism and apathy on the part of the general population and by increased factionalism and opportunism within the ruling Communist elite—settled in on Polish society. (C)

There had been plenty of danger signals: troubles with intellectuals and students, discipline and morale problems in the military establishment, more and more pilfering and malingering in the factories, and mounting evidence of tension between the younger and older members of PUWP. Only a combination of Soviet political support, fortuitous circumstances (including the sobering lessons of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia), and a compromise with impatient "young Turk" elements in the party enabled Gomulka to survive a challenge to his leadership mounted by factional rivals in the spring and summer months of 1968. Yet even this close call did not result in any great change in Gomulka's internal policies or priorities. Preoccupied with foreign affairs and insulated from the realities of the Polish scene by a small clique of like-minded associates, he continued to neglect his country's domestic problems. (C)

By mid-1970, the period of respite that Gomulka had won less than 2 years earlier was simply running out. The economy, suffering from mismanagement and the zigzag course of halfhearted reforms, was in serious trouble. Worse yet, the regime was woefully out of touch with the mood of the population. Finally persuaded of the need for more forceful and consistent action on the economic front, Gomulka pressed forward with a belt-tightening program involving, among other things, a planned increase in unemployment, a complex and controversial revision of the existing wage/bonus system, and a marked alteration of established domestic consumption patterns through selective price adjustments. These measures hit Poland's factory workers and their families the hardest. And in December, the unexpected explosion of the accumulated economic and social grievances nourished by a relatively prosperous and skilled segment of the ideologically favored industrial proletariat finally and irreparably exposed the bankruptcy of Gomulka's domestic policies. (C)

Demoralized by incessant factional infighting and by 14 years of Gomulka's cramped and autocratic style of rule, the existing PUWP leadership was ill-prepared to deal with the new crisis. At Gomulka's direction, it attempted to put down the protest demonstrations by force. This only made matters worse, and it soon became evident to the members of Warsaw's inner councils that Gomulka's harsh response had cost him Moscow's confidence and support. But by the time that those PUWP leaders who favored greater restraint had managed to oust him and his principal lieutenants, impromptu strike committees had gained control of a number of factories and shipyards, dozens of people had been killed in clashes between the workers and the security forces, and well over 1,000 more had been injured. In Gierk's own assessment, Poland stood at the brink of civil war. (S)

With Soviet intervention as the possible price of



failure, Gierek was confronted with a number of formidable tasks. First of all, he had to defuse the explosive situation on the coast and gain control over the cumbersome PUWP and government bureaucracies. Equally important, he had to inaugurate a new but ideologically acceptable style of rule which would restore popular confidence in the regime, appeal to patriotic sentiment, and engage the cooperation and support of the largest possible part of the population in efforts to revive Poland's sagging economy. He was faced, in effect, with the need to foster a genuine national revival without altering the basic features of Poland's existing Communist system or releasing the spontaneous pressures for societal change which had doomed the Dubcek experiment in Czechoslovakia. Finally, although the Soviet Union and Poland's other Warsaw Pact allies had been quick to endorse his regime, he had to insure that they would go along with his domestic innovations and continue to provide him with both political and economic support. (C)

Fortunately for Gierek, there were some aspects of the situation in December 1970 which worked to his advantage—including the widespread reputation as a tough, competent, and fair administrator he had earned during his 13-year tenure as PUWP chieftan in Katowice province (the core of the Silesian industrial area). For one thing, although the dissident workers laid most of their grievances at the party's door,

Poland's socialist system as such was not under direct attack. Nor had the demonstrations taken on an anti-Soviet coloration. Moreover, open agitation was pretty well limited to the urban working class and, even more narrowly, to the skilled workers who felt they had the most to lose from Gomulka's heavy-handed economic policies. Despite growing uncertainty about Gomulka's ultimate intentions with respect to collectivization, the peasants were quiet. Whether out of caution or out of pique over the failure of the workers to come to their support in protesting political and cultural repression in 1968, so were the students and intellectuals. Although clearly sympathetic to the workers, the powerful Roman Catholic Church kept its peace except to counsel nonviolence. On a more general plane, still fresh memories of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia operated both to temper the behavior of the Polish population and to incline Warsaw's allies toward cooperation with Gomulka's successor in hopes of avoiding the need for a repeat performance. (C)

Even so, popular skepticism and impatience, the critical state of the economy, and Moscow's ever-present shadow all imposed severe restrictions on Gierek's freedom of maneuver. Hence his success in meeting most of his initial objectives before he had completed a full year in office attests to his considerable political and administrative skills. Indeed, things did not go too well at first, and Gierek was soon confronted with a second—albeit nonviolent—round of strikes. But by mid-February, he had persuaded Moscow to provide him with the financial assistance and added measure of political support he needed to stabilize Poland's domestic scene. Thus he was able to roll back Gomulka's aggravating price increases and to initiate a carefully phased series of personnel changes designed to remove incompetents and potential opponents from positions where they could hinder his plans. (C)

By mid-1971, Gierek had greatly strengthened his control over the principal mechanisms of political power, and his cautiously implemented program of domestic renewal—with its emphasis on constructive dialogue, patriotism, material well-being, and social reform—had won him a period of grace in the eyes of most Poles. His improved position enabled Gierek to



extend his housecleaning campaign to the lower echelons of the party and government and to advance the scheduled date for the 6th PUWP Congress a full year to December 1971. And when that carefully prepared meeting was convened, he used it both to effect further key personnel changes and to enshrine the basic features of his political and economic policies in the new PUWP program. (C)

In many ways 1972 was an even more encouraging year for the Poles. Their country emerged from the 6th PUWP Congress and from the governmental elections a few months later with the youngest and best educated leadership of any Warsaw Pact nation. Comprised largely of individuals who began their political or professional careers in the postwar period, Gierek's new team shared his pragmatism, his commitment to a new relationship between the rulers and the ruled, and his concern for popular welfare. Moreover, by year's end Gierek could cite an impressive array of actions and accomplishments to substantiate his claim that Poland was not "on the right road" and to show that his policies were indeed serving his declared objectives of promoting domestic prosperity and of making Poland "count in the world." Among other things, increases in agricultural production, real wages, and industrial productivity had exceeded initial forecasts. In the field of foreign affairs, Poland had not only clearly regained its leading position among Moscow's partners in Eastern Europe, but had succeeded in forging promising new political and economic links to the West as well. (C)

Despite the fact that Gierek has won most of his initial battles, however, final victory in his struggle to revive the Polish nation is still far away. As underscored by the rejection of his proposed new labor code by the trade union congress held in November

1972, he is still very much on probation as far as most of Poland's workers are concerned. Their continued support seems likely to depend on further tangible improvements—social, political, and, particularly, material—in their way of life. Yet Gierek's ability to deliver may be limited by a number of factors, not the least of which is his seemingly rather conservative position on the need for major institutional reforms within Poland's existing economic system. (S)

Indeed, the key to Gierek's ultimate success or failure probably lies in the economic field. The Polish people know that he is no liberal and that his programs promise no miracles. At the same time, however, part of the bargain he has offered them rests on the promise that hard work and dedication will be suitably rewarded. Hence, failure to maintain a steady and relatively substantial rate of economic progress would greatly complicate Gierek's efforts to achieve a delicate balance between seemingly contradictory objectives—for example, popular mobilization and discipline versus a freer internal atmosphere; Party supremacy versus a democratized and decentralized governmental system; and strong, responsible one-man management versus increased worker participation in the decisionmaking process. (S)

Thus, while Gierek has entered into his third year in office in a rather favorable position, the situation which he faces is still too complex—and his long range plans as yet too vaguely defined—to permit any confident judgment as to just how smooth or rocky Poland's new path to socialism may turn out to be. But it is possible to review the internal and external factors—including the influence of history and geography—which affect Gierek's options, to assess his specific moves and policies in the light of the problems he inherited from the Gomulka era, and to identify areas of possible future difficulty. (S)

## The Polish Nation (u/ou)



Poland was born in A.D. 966 when Mieszko I, the first known ruler of the native Piast dynasty, united the Slavic tribes living in the Vistula and Oder river basins between the Carpathian Mountains and the Baltic Sea, adopted Christianity, and placed his principality under the protection of the Papacy. A purported later copy of the instrument by which Mieszko performed the latter act indicates that the boundaries of his domain closely approximated those of present-day Poland. The validity of this document has been challenged, but it makes little difference. Piast control over the territory described therein was soon firmly established by Mieszko's son, Boleslaw I ("the Brave"),

who succeeded his father in A.D. 992 and who had himself crowned as Poland's first king 33 years later.

Poland's geographic location astride the flat plains of the north-central European corridor has resulted in an almost uninterrupted struggle for national identity and territorial integrity in the face of real or threatened domination by neighboring powers. No other European country has known such contrasts in its fortunes. There have been times of grandeur when Poland was the largest and most populous state in Europe west of Russia. And there have been times—in the late 18th century and again in 1939—when a strong Germany and a strong Russia have joined forces to erase Poland from the map (in the first instance, for 123 years).

Their turbulent history, in turn, has been the main determinant of the characteristics and attitudes of the Polish people. Centuries of adversity and of externally encouraged rivalry between members of their native nobility have made the Poles tough, individualistic, resistant to change, and disrespectful of authority. Above all, however, their long struggle for national survival has imbued the Poles with a fierce and unique form of patriotism, one in which Poland's Roman Catholic Church is seen as the essence of all that is Polish and as the principal guardian of the nation's interests.

The roots of this identification between Roman Catholicism and the nation extend back to Mieszko's action in making Poland an eastern outpost of the church. Later, during the Middle Ages, Polish forces fighting under the sign of the cross stemmed the advance of the Turks and Tartars into Europe on several occasions. But the bond was really sealed in 1655 when a Polish victory over superior Swedish forces at Czestochowa was attributed to the miraculous intervention of a holy painting, the so-called Black Madonna. The grateful Polish monarch proclaimed the Madonna as Queen of Poland (an appointment that has been renewed annually in colorful religious ceremonies ever since). In the years that followed, the aggressive actions of a Lutheran Prussia and an Orthodox Russia further tempered the link between Polish patriotism and the Roman Catholic Church.

Then, in 1795, when all that was left of Poland was divided up and occupied by the Germans, Russians, and Austrians, the Polish church survived intact and became the chief unifying force contributing to the rebirth of the nation in the wake of World War I.

Although societal change generated by modernization and industrialization added a new dimension to the problems faced by the leaders of the Polish state which emerged in 1918, the traditional factors of geographic location and national character continued to play a key role in shaping the country's fortunes and course. The nationalism which was later to find such heroic expression during World War II contributed to the mounting of a successful military campaign against a strife-torn Russia in the early 1920's. However satisfying to the Poles, this action resulted in the inclusion of sizable new—and potentially dissident—minorities within their country's eastern frontiers and laid the basis for the collaboration between Moscow and an equally irredentist and expansionist Berlin which brought devastation and dismemberment to Poland in 1939. At the same time, the Polish population proved to be, in the words of one Western observer, "charmingly impossible to govern." Interwar Polish politics were characterized by a succession of weak parliamentary coalitions which finally gave way—in 1926—to semidictatorial government, first under Marshal Pilsudski and later under a collection of military leaders called the "colonels regime."

World War II greatly altered the face of Poland. Above and beyond its bitter legacy of material destruction, it resulted in boundary shifts by which Poland lost nearly 69,000 square miles to the Soviet Union in the east and gained about 40,000 square miles from Germany in the west. The effective wartime extermination of Poland's sizable Jewish minority by the Germans and the massive transfers of people which accompanied the postwar border adjustments produced an ethnically and religiously homogenous population about 98% Polish and 95% Roman Catholic. Full sovereignty remained a thing of the past as German occupation gave way to Soviet domination. The Marxist regime imposed upon the country by Moscow soon completed the destruction of old social patterns and of the prewar political and economic elite which had

been begun under Nazi rule.

But despite radical changes in class distinctions and relationships, the fundamental attitudes and character of the Polish people remained as before. Polish individualism and resistance to imposed authority proved impervious to efforts to imbue the population with a new and ideologically determined set of values. If anything, the cumulative effect of all the traumatic changes in Poland's internal and external circumstances was to reinforce the linkage between Polish nationalism and the Roman Catholic faith. Hence Gierek, just as his predecessors, must cope with the fact that his countrymen are just about the most unnatural Communists in the world.

In its present configuration, Poland is a rectangular country slightly larger than Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky combined. Its population at the end of 1972 was estimated at a little over 33 million. With its southern boundary at approximately the same latitude as the U.S.-Canadian border west of the Great Lakes, it lies in a transitional weather zone between the continental extremes of the U.S.S.R. and the milder marine climate of northwestern Europe. Thus despite the moderating influence of the Baltic Sea, bitter cold winters and long summer hot spells are not uncommon.

The Baltic Sea forms the major portion of Poland's northern frontier. The sandy and low-lying Polish coastline—305 miles long—is bereft of good natural harbors, but hooks of land enclosing shallow lagoons and bays have permitted the development of major ports at Szczecin (Stettin), Gdynia, and Gdansk. To the south and southwest, the Carpathian and Sudeten mountain ranges—separated by the strategically important 20-mile wide lowland area known as the Moravian Gate—form a natural boundary with Czechoslovakia and provide the Poles with a year-round resort area. Most of Poland is flat or gently rolling, however, and its flanks remain as vulnerable as ever to overland attack. In the west, its border with the German Democratic Republic generally follows the course of the Oder and Neisse rivers. On the opposite side of the country, the Polish-Soviet frontier is anchored on segments of the Bug and San rivers, but much of it was drawn with little regard for natural terrain features.



Poland can be divided into three main geographic regions crossing the country in roughly parallel zones from east to west. Since geography has played a prominent—if indirect—role in shaping the attitudes and character of Poland's colorful and oftentimes hotheaded people, it is somewhat of a paradox that most of the country owes its surface features to the southward invasions of the Scandinavian ice sheet which began to creep across the North European Plain about 1 million years ago. At its point of greatest advance, this ice sheet covered nearly three-quarters of present-day Poland. With each retreat, the great glaciers left a thick blanket of clays, sands, and gravels—known as drift—spread over the land, eventually completely obliterating the preglacial landscape. At the end of the Ice Age, huge rivers, swollen by melt water from the ice sheet, flowed westward across the middle of Poland creating wide, marshy valleys which are still traceable today and which have facilitated the construction of canals linking Poland's present river systems.

The plains region which makes up the northern two-thirds of Poland bears the strongest traces of this

glacial period. It is an area of generally poor soils, of many lakes and marshes, and of a number of roughly parallel east-west ridges of glacial drift—called moraines—which in some cases reach more than 650 feet in height. Much of the land is employed for agriculture and forestry, but transport and communications are easy, and a number of cities (particularly Warsaw, Poznan, and the major Baltic ports) have become important industrial centers.

This vast region, from which Poland ("land of fields") derived its name, rises southward into a much narrower central belt consisting of low hills and tablelands of the type found in Upper Silesia. A part of the mineral-rich contact zone between the North European Plain and the European uplands, this area is the economic backbone of modern Poland. Its well-drained loamy soils (the product of fine, windblown deposits from the face of the Scandinavian ice sheet) are the most fertile in Poland and each year produce substantial tonnages of sugar beets, rye, and potatoes. The region's mineral resources include bituminous coal (Silesia's coalfields are among the most important in Europe with reserves exceeded only by those of West

Germany's Ruhr Basin), lignite, sulfur, copper, iron, lead, and zinc. Benefiting from its natural wealth and central location, Katowice province (Silesia) has become the industrial heart of Poland as well as one of the country's most densely populated areas.

Farther to the south, the rolling hills of Poland's central geographic zone give way to the Carpathian and Sudeten mountain ranges: peaks and ridges thrown up in ages past by the northward thrust of the Alpine-fold mountains against the unyielding rock of the Bohemian Massif and the deeply buried Polish Platform. Elevations here range from about 1,000 feet above sea level in the Moravian Gate area to 8,200 feet in the

loftiest part of the Carpathian system. A small mining area—the Lower Silesian coalfield—is located in the Sudeten mountains, and minor deposits of oil and natural gas have been found in the Carpathians. Tourism, however, is currently the most significant economic activity in the area, with its principal center in the attractive environs of Zakopane. As a whole, the region is relatively backward by Polish standards, but its forests and, particularly, its hydroelectric potential offer promise for the future. The Oder and the Vistula, which together with their many tributaries drain almost all of Poland, both rise in this mountainous border zone and course northward across the country's east-west geographic divisions to empty into the Baltic.

## Stalinization, De-Stalinization, and The Gomulka Legacy (s)



Poland's postwar internal evolution—political and economic—has gone through a number of distinct phases roughly paralleling changes in the general character of Soviet-East European relations. Transition from one to another of these periods has generally been marked by varying degrees of violence. In part, this has been due to the character and attitudes of the volatile Polish people. But the basic causes lie elsewhere, in the dismal history of the prewar Polish Communist party, in the stifling influence of the Soviet Union, and in the inability of Poland's leaders to shed their ideological blinders and to adopt a flexi-

ble approach to the new problems and requirements generated by marked changes in the internal and external environment.

The foundations of Poland's postwar political order were laid in 1944 when the advancing Soviet Red Army set about the systematic dissolution of the political and military centers then controlled by the non-Communist underground and the London-based Polish Government in exile. To take their place, the Soviets established a single Communist-controlled body, the Committee of National Liberation, in Lublin, granting it recognition in January 1945 as the

Provisional Government of Poland. Six months later, following the Yalta agreements and the broadening of the Lublin group to include four non-Communist Poles from abroad, Moscow's creation was recognized by the major Western powers as Poland's legitimate government.

With the negotiation of this hurdle, Poland had moved well into the first phase of its postwar evolution, that of the suppression of democratic forces and the consolidation of Communist (local and Soviet) power. These processes were hindered, however, by the fact that Poland's Communists were woefully ill-prepared to assume control of their war-torn country. Among other things, they were few in numbers, weak in organization, and generally unpopular. During the interwar years, their small party had been paralyzed by factional struggles, police penetration, and repeated purges. In 1938 it had been dissolved altogether on Stalin's orders. Although the party had been resurrected in 1942, wartime conditions had delayed progress toward filling out its ranks and rebuilding its domestic organizational base. And neither its new name, the Polish Workers Party, nor the minor role it ultimately came to play in the anti-Nazi resistance movement had served to alter the decades-old conviction of most Poles that their country's Communist party was antinational and therefore an alien organization.

Popular prejudices notwithstanding, however, the Polish party had never been entirely immune to the nationalist virus. Thus one effect of World War II was to create a basic division within its ranks between the so-called native Communists—those individuals, typified by the Party's First Secretary, Wladyslaw Gomulka, whose roots were firmly in Poland and who had spent the war years in their homeland—and the emigres (popularly known first as the Stalinists and then, as times changed, simply as the Moscovites who had returned home from varying periods of exile in the Soviet Union in the baggage of the Red Army. Both groups were agreed on the necessity of active collaboration with Soviet advisers, military units, and secret police during the consolidation period, but the emigres were understandably far more prepared than the Gomulkaites to subordinate purely Polish interests

to those of the Soviet Union.

As time passed, Gomulka became increasingly uneasy about the Kremlin's hegemonic ambitions in Eastern Europe and its insistence on slavish adherence to the Soviet model. He was firmly in favor of maintaining the closest possible ties with the Soviet Union, but he wished to see the partnership develop on a more equal basis. By 1948, his outspoken objections to the supranational character of Stalin's newly established Cominform organization, his refusal to inaugurate a program of forced agricultural collectivization, and his criticism of the insufficiently national orientation of Poland's prewar Communist party had placed him on a collision course with the Stalinists.

It was an unequal contest. Gomulka may have enjoyed the sympathy of the bulk of the party rank and file, but he did not have control of the party machinery, and, more important, he had incurred Stalin's wrath. Yet even after he was forced to resign his job as party chief in September 1948, he refused to renounce his basic views. In 1949 he was stripped of his remaining party and government posts. In 1951 he was placed under strict house arrest and disappeared from public view. However, memories of his stubborn defense of his position lingered on. The Polish people compared Gomulka to his Stalinist successors, and in time the legend grew that he had been a truly "liberal" and "nationalist" leader.

Gomulka's fall from power and the "merger" of Poland's Communist (Workers) and Socialist parties which gave birth to the PUWP a few weeks later marked the end of the consolidation period. With Soviet help, Warsaw had broken the back of all organized political and paramilitary opposition. Most of Poland's prewar political parties had been disbanded and their leaders converted, jailed, or forced into exile. The two non-Communist parties still in existence, the United Peasant Party and the Democratic Party, were mere appendages of the PUWP. The voice of the Roman Catholic Church, while not stilled, had at least been somewhat muted. The ouster of Gomulka and his associates had cleansed the party of its own potential troublemakers. Its new leadership, headed by Boleslaw Bierut, was unquestioningly loyal to Moscow.

The next phase in Poland's postwar evolution—its Stalinist era—was more or less coterminous with the 7-year period of Bierut's rule. It was a time of forced draft industrialization, of energetic but largely ineffective efforts to collectivize Polish agriculture, of police terror, and of total subservience to the Soviet Union. The Warsaw regime's repressive policies and the degree of control which Moscow exercised over Poland's internal affairs deeply alienated the bulk of the Polish population. Passive resistance to the party's dictates became widespread. For their part, however, Poland's top leaders were wedded to the Stalinist system, and when this began to break down under the pressures for change released by the Soviet dictator's death in early 1953, a factional struggle developed between conservative and reform-minded forces in the PUPP which finally reached its climax 3 years later.

1956 was quite a year for the Poles. In February, Khrushchev's secret speech at the 20th Soviet Communist Party Congress set the stage for the first round of de-Stalinization in Eastern Europe as well as in the Soviet Union. The convenient death of Boleslaw Bierut a few weeks later removed one potentially formidable obstacle to domestic reforms in Poland. In late June, just before the outbreak of rioting in Poznan convinced Bierut's successor, Edward Ochab, of the urgency of such reforms, President Tito of Yugoslavia secured the Soviet Party's first official endorsement of the concept of separate roads to socialism. For a moment it appeared that the Soviets had given a green light to their allies to emulate some of the more innovative features of the Yugoslav experiment. But Khrushchev hastened to dispell this illusion. Laying the blame for the Poznan riots on the old bogey of imperialist provocation, he held fast to the view that radical political and economic reforms were neither needed nor permissible within the Soviet empire. And he made it clear that the Kremlin still regarded Titoism as a particularly dangerous form of heresy.

Under these circumstances, Gomulka—who had been released from detention in 1954—became the man of the hour in Poland. Not only was he an advocate of a uniquely Polish path to socialism who had stood up to the Soviets in the past, but he alone among Poland's more prominent Marxists enjoyed a public

image favorable enough to bridge the gulf that had developed between the regime and the general population. Courted by the reformists (both liberal and moderate) as a seemingly ideal champion in their struggle with the still well-entrenched Stalinist faction, Gomulka was quietly readmitted into the party in August. Thereafter, pressures for change mounted both within and outside the party as a steady decline of the effective power of the security apparatus opened the way for a virtual flood of liberal proposals and commentary in the Polish press.



*Soviet forces such as these on maneuver were near at hand during Poland's Internal crisis in 1956*

Poland's internal crisis reached its climax on 19 October. Benefiting from Ochab's support and growing popular enthusiasm for their cause, the reformists had made steady gains, and it was no secret that they hoped to use the PUPP Central Committee Plenum which was convened on that date to elect Gomulka as Party First Secretary and to adopt his political line. An attempted coup by the beleaguered Stalinist faction was thwarted on the very eve of the plenum. Then, as

the meeting opened, Moscow intervened. Soviet forces began to mass along Poland's borders and those Red Army units already on Polish soil moved out of their garrisons toward Warsaw. A star-studded Soviet delegation headed by Khrushchev himself flew to the Polish capital uninvited in order to assess the situation and, if need be, to bully the Poles into submission. Ochab thereupon adjourned the PUWP plenum and, together with Gomulka (who had been hastily coopted into the Central Committee on the news of Khrushchev's arrival) and a number of other senior Polish leaders, entered into a stormy negotiating session with the Soviets which lasted into the early morning hours of 20 October.

In the end, the Poles not only persuaded Khrushchev that Gomulka's accession to power would strengthen Polish socialism (and that, on the other hand, any attempt to block his election as First Secretary would have very bloody consequences) but also succeeded in hammering out the basis for a new and healthier relationship between Warsaw and Moscow. The Soviet delegation departed for home as hastily as it had arrived. The PUWP plenum resumed its work, and on 21 October Gomulka was confirmed in office as party chief. The events of the preceding week had made him a national hero. His countrymen were prepared to believe that such a man could do no wrong, and Poland entered the third phase of its postwar development on a great wave of popular enthusiasm.

For a time it seemed that Gomulka might live up to popular expectations. He halted the forced collectivization of agriculture and allowed those peasants who wished to withdraw their land from established collectives to do so. Rejecting the rigidly hostile stance of the old Bierut regime, he negotiated a mutually acceptable, if somewhat uneasy, accommodation with Poland's powerful Roman Catholic Church. Despite the tense atmosphere which prevailed in Eastern Europe in the wake of the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolt, he successfully defended and consolidated his country's newly expanded autonomy in the conduct of its domestic and foreign affairs. These were no mean achievements, and they endured to become an important and positive part of the legacy

which Gomulka bequeathed to Gierk in 1970.

But the process of accommodation with Moscow involved many compromises, and, in any event, Gomulka's views on the proper lines of Poland's future evolution were far different than those of most of his countrymen. The people hoped that he would democratize and rationalize Poland's political and economic institutions and that he would lead them into ever greater independence from Moscow. Gomulka, on the other hand, wished only to correct those Stalinist distortions which had derailed Poland's existing socialist system and which had reduced his country to the demeaning status of a Soviet satellite.

Gomulka was, in fact, in a very uncomfortable position during his first few months in office. The chain of developments which culminated in his return to power had left the PUWP in total disarray and had released spontaneous forces for change which had pushed him much further in the direction of radical reforms than he wanted to go. Though he had, of necessity, dealt with his Stalinist opponents forcefully and quickly, he was convinced that if Soviet hostility to the Polish experiment were to be overcome and the disaster of Hungary avoided, the more tenacious and more destabilizing liberal elements in Poland's post-October internal environment would have to be suppressed—and the control of the party over all aspects of national life reasserted—as soon as possible. He set about this task with characteristic determination and thus planted the seeds of popular distrust and disillusionment which were to bear such bitter fruit less than 14 years later.

The consequences of Gomulka's retreat from liberalism might have been less serious had it not become a self-feeding process or had Gomulka found it in himself to be more responsive to changing internal and external conditions once he had consolidated his domestic position. As it was, Gomulka became increasingly preoccupied with the task of maintaining a delicate factional balance within the PUWP and governmental hierarchies and therefore tended to neglect his country's other internal problems. When this resulted in outbreaks of popular dissatisfaction, he responded by incorporating increasing numbers of hardliners into his regime to control the population



rather than by trying to identify and remedy the underlying grievances. Hence the cycle would repeat itself, with the population becoming increasingly alienated and the top echelons of the regime increasingly hostile to criticism and resistant to change at each turn.

Unlike his peers in Romania and Hungary, Gomulka made no attempt to exploit Khrushchev's second round of de-Stalinization or the burgeoning Sino-Soviet dispute to his country's domestic or international advantage. By 1967, his unimaginative policies had resulted in a miasma of political repression, economic stagnation, stifling bureaucratization, and moral corruption. In June of that year, Israel's victory over Moscow's unpopular Arab clients and the subsequent campaign against "Zionist" elements in the ruling parties of Eastern Europe opened the way for a virtual revolt of the frustrated younger generation of PUWP functionaries against the Gomulka leadership. Focusing their attack on Gomulka's suddenly vulnerable Jewish supporters in the party and governmental bureaucracies, some of these tough, young, and relatively nationalistic officials rallied to the hardline PUWP faction headed by security chief Mieczyslaw Meczar. Others, equally tough but generally more sophisticated and more concerned with seeking practical remedies for Poland's mounting social and economic problems, clustered about Gierk.

As indicated earlier, a number of factors eventually combined to enable Gomulka to turn back this challenge and to reimpose a semblance of stability under his leadership at the 5th PUWP Congress in Oc-

tober 1968. But once this had been accomplished, he once again allowed his attention to be diverted from his country's domestic problems. This time, the object of his concern was Bonn. In 1967, Gomulka's dismay over Romania's action in establishing diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany and his abiding fear that Moscow—then still the sole guarantor of Poland's western frontier—might someday reach an accommodation with Bonn at Warsaw's expense had prompted him to sign a number of new "solidarity" agreements with his East European allies that had effectively tied his own hands in dealing with the West Germans. He had quickly recognized his mistake, but his initial efforts to jettison the burden of this multilateral approach had been interrupted by Poland's party crisis. Now, Gomulka was determined to lose no more time. With Moscow's approval and the active encouragement of the newly coopted young Turk elements in his regime, he labored to secure a negotiated settlement of the issues—particularly the emotion-laden question of the Oder-Neisse frontier—which had long impeded the development of normal political and economic relations between Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany and, to a lesser degree, between Poland and all of the NATO powers. These negotiations were protracted, and Gomulka's continued neglect of problems closer to home ultimately resulted in his downfall. But the long-awaited Polish-West German agreement was finally signed on 7 December 1970. It was the last—but by no means the least significant—positive element to be included in the Gomulka legacy.

## Gierek's New Deal (s)



Gierek's accession to power was not greeted with much popular acclaim. It was generally agreed that he had done a good job at Katowice, but the restless Polish nation—wiser and more skeptical than in 1956—was unwilling to accept any new leader at face value. Moreover, the party machine he now commanded was held in deep contempt. Thus Gierek had to prove himself anew. He began by reversing the Gomulka regime's condemnation of the December disorders, declaring them to have been—by and large—the expression of legitimate working-class grievances. Attributing the conditions which gave rise to these grievances to the erroneous practices of his predecessor, he promised to introduce a more democratic style of leadership, to improve the party's contact and cooperation with all elements of the population, to insure a freer flow of information, to raise living standards, to correct existing distortions in economic policy, and to provide the average Pole with greater opportunity for direct participation in the political and economic decisionmaking processes.

Suiting action to words, Gierek moved swiftly to allay the immediate grievances of Poland's angry workers. He granted a substantial increase in wages and allowances to low income families. He first shelved and then discarded Gomulka's controversial incentive pay plan. He rolled back the December price increases and froze food prices through 1972 (since extended through 1974). With the help of a \$100 million loan from the U.S.S.R. he was able to substantially increase the supply of meat available to consumers. He traveled from factory to factory, talking directly with the workers in order to hear their complaints, to tell them of what was being done to improve their lot, and to explain why he couldn't do more. Although he resisted demands for the introduction of Yugoslav-style workers' selfmanagement, he gave the workers substantially increased representation in high party and trade union organs. In addition, he undertook to draft a new and more equitable labor code, but this project has turned out to be a bit more sticky than he anticipated.

Poland's private peasants (whose 3 1/2 million farms occupy 83% of the country's arable land) were not forgotten in the press of efforts to satisfy their urban cousins. Recognizing that he could not assure adequate supplies of food in the future unless he won the confidence of the peasantry and induced it to produce more, Gierek promptly increased the procurement prices for slaughter livestock and directed the nation's well-equipped state farms to provide a wide variety of assistance to their small private competitors. He also abolished state control over sales of coal to farmers. Furthermore, the hated compulsory deliveries of farm products to the state were abolished and replaced with a contract system that gives the peasants a fairer return for their labor and considerable leeway in determining just what to produce. Land taxes were altered in such a way as to facilitate the expansion of private holdings. Poland's health insurance program was extended to cover most of the previously ineligible private farmers and their families. Lest some fears and suspicions remain about the future direction of his farm policies, Gierek publicly pledged that private ownership of most land would continue. And he backed up his words with legislation that granted many peasants clear title to land they had been tilling but which previously had been considered to be state property.

Although important in themselves, these specific (and carefully limited) concessions to workers and peasants have represented only one side of Gierek's overall program for revitalizing the Polish nation. Like all his other moves to improve the internal political and economic climate and to bridge the gap between the party and the public, they have been keyed to his basic pledge to introduce a new style of leadership—a conveniently ambiguous commitment which underscores his determination to eliminate the errors of the Gomulka era without raising undue hopes for radical change.

In keeping with this approach, Gierek has tried hard to convince his countrymen that Poland's new leadership is more open and communicative, more responsive to well-directed criticism, and sincerely desirous of staying in touch with the needs and aspirations of all the citizenry. Thus the precedent established by Gierek's early factory visits has been maintained. Party and government leaders have held

innumerable meetings with workers and other groups throughout the country. High-ranking officials have submitted to critical interviews on radio and television, in some instances responding to questions submitted—both in advance and during the broadcast—by their listening audience. A new post of government spokesman has been created to publicize and explain the activities of the cabinet. The results of the meetings of the party Politburo and Central Committee, now held more frequently than during the Gomulka era, are regularly publicized. The appearance of frank and mildly provocative articles is now tolerated, and in some cases encouraged, in the public press. A few previously banned journalists have been permitted to reappear in print. And far from silencing the more outspoken critics of Poland's social and economic ills, Gierek has coopted a number of them into the establishment.

Underlying this emphasis on a more open—but still disciplined—society is Gierek's acceptance of the basic concept, first articulated by Kadar in Hungary, that "all those who are not against us are with us." Not only has he ostentatiously appointed nonparty people to a number of responsible positions previously held by party stalwarts, but he has repeatedly pledged to eliminate discriminatory distinctions based on an individual's class background or religious beliefs. More important, Gierek has followed through on his early promise to try to normalize church-state relations—relations which had never progressed beyond the stage of an uneasy truce during the Gomulka era and which still bore the scars of a period of renewed confrontation in the mid-1960's. A meeting of Prime Minister Jaroszewicz and Cardinal Wyszynski, Primate of Poland, in March 1971—the first such church-state "summit conference" in 8 years—marked the beginning of an ongoing high-level dialogue between church and government officials. The Jaroszewicz-Wyszynski encounter was followed by the opening of direct talks between the Gierek regime and the Vatican and by the enactment of legislation giving the Polish church legal title to ecclesiastical property in the former German territories. Another cause of friction was removed in early 1972 when Warsaw abolished regulations requiring the church to keep a full inventory of its property for tax purposes.



Staatswappen

Gierek has combined his conciliatory approach to "believers" and other nonparty elements with a broad but cautiously implemented campaign to engage Polish patriotism in support of his policies. This distinctive aspect of his renewal strategy was highlighted by the decision to rebuild the ancient royal castle in Warsaw and by the substitution of the centuries-old national seal—the Polish eagle—for the previously omnipresent portraits of party and government leaders in official buildings throughout the country. It has also been reflected in unprecedented public praise of the past patriotic exploits of individual religious leaders and in the muting of ideological themes during Poland's national day celebration.

Gierek's new style of leadership has also been evident in the changes—both cosmetic and substantive—that he has effected in Poland's political in-

stitutions. On one hand, it has resulted in a concerted campaign to upgrade the technical competence of the government bureaucracy as well as in a radical streamlining of Poland's rural administrative structure. On the other hand, it has dictated a number of modest moves designed to breathe some life into Poland's moribund organs of "socialist democracy." Thus Gierek has sought to encourage debate in the *Sejm* (parliament) and its commissions. He has made some gestures toward Poland's non-Marxist political parties—the United Peasant Party and the Democratic Party—as well as toward various other organized interest groups by soliciting their advice on matters of interest to their members. He has rejuvenated the leadership of Poland's political umbrella organization, the National Unity Front, and has made it more representative of the full spectrum of the front's membership. In addition, he has promised his countrymen a new constitution.

The party, like the government, has been given a new face and a whole new team of leaders. Gierek has not only staffed its upper echelons with younger and more competent officials, but he has quietly purged some 100,000 rank-and-file members from its rolls. In keeping with the spirit of the times, he has stressed collegial leadership and restoration of "democratic" practices. Breaking with Gomulka's methods, he has regularly convened full meetings of the Politburo and has often invited nonparty specialists to attend. And although he has emphasized party discipline and moved firmly against old factional alliances, he has encouraged constructive debate, a freer flow of information and suggestions from below, and the delegation of sufficient authority to lower echelons to permit resolution of most local problems without reference to Warsaw.

Gierek's approach to the democratization and decentralization of the PUPP has been understandably cautious. He is very much determined to preserve the "leading role" of the party—both his position at home and his acceptability to Moscow depend upon his doing so. He has, in fact, declared his intention to anchor party primacy in constitutional law. But, although Gierek is no more willing than Gomulka to countenance reforms which could weaken the party,

his ideas on how the organization should carry out its functions are far different from those of his predecessor. This too has had a marked effect on Poland's internal climate.

In general terms, Gierek has sought to lower the party's profile, not only vis-a-vis the people, but also in relation to the government. He believes that the party should formulate general policy guidelines (drawing heavily on nonparty expertise), monitor and mobilize, persuade and pressure. Without prejudice to the PUP's ultimate power to intervene, the practical implementation of basic policy should be left to the appropriate governmental bodies and mass organizations. Increased efficiency is one consideration, but by divorcing the party from the day-to-day management of Poland's political and economic affairs, Gierek evidently also hopes to cushion it against future crises in public confidence.

In the economic field, Gierek has had to contend with structural problems resulting from under-investment in food processing, the construction industry, transport and communication, and agriculture. Moreover, Gomulka's policies had caused Poland to drag its feet in introducing technological change and improvements in management and planning. By rights, Poland—with its relatively ample natural resources, with nearly half of its total land area under cultivation, and with its consistently high overall level of investment—should have been one of the most prosperous countries in the Soviet bloc. Yet after a quarter century of Communist rule, its per capita GNP was only \$1,650, about on a par with Bulgaria and Hungary but far lower than the levels that had been achieved in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, or the U.S.S.R.

Thus Warsaw has had to pursue its quest for greater efficiency and increased production on a number of fronts. Hand in hand with his efforts to win the cooperation of the peasantry, Gierek has sought to encourage the growth of private services and of state-licensed but otherwise relatively independent private or cooperative enterprises. He greatly intensified the drive to acquire Western technology in order to restructure and modernize Polish industry. He has come up with a new program for improving the system

of planning and management which prescribes greater responsibility to the enterprises but also the strengthening of central control. In addition, he has made some effort to streamline Poland's cumbersome economic bureaucracy.

Nevertheless, Gierek's approach to institutional change has been cautious. No economic reforms of the scale introduced in Hungary in 1968 are presently in sight. For the time being, at least, Gierek hopes simply to "energize" the existing system, and thus his most striking departure from Gomulka's economic policies has been to cast aside their orthodox emphasis on heavy industry in favor of a more balanced—and more consumer-oriented—approach to economic development. A change in procedure as well as in priorities has been involved here. Reversing previous practice, targets for increases in average real wages, consumption, and employment are now established at the outset of the planning cycle. In theory, at least, these figures are then used in working out all other indices of the plan, including, for example, production targets and estimated investment outlays.

The draft 1971-75 economic plan which Gomulka had prepared quite naturally had to be scrapped. A substitute, embodying Gierek's new approach, was developed during 1971 by a commission of experts headed by Politburo member Jan Szydlak and was formally approved by the parliament in 1972. Its goals with respect to improving the economic and social lot of the average Pole are ambitious. Real wages are to rise by 18% while working hours are to be reduced. In contrast to Gomulka's willingness to countenance a high jobless rate, full employment is to be sought—a goal which will require the creation of some 1.8 million new positions for young people entering the job market. A comprehensive review and reform of the educational system is scheduled. The variety and quality of consumer goods are to be improved, in part through imports. A substantial number of inexpensive personal automobiles are to be produced and marketed. Over 1 million new dwelling units are to be constructed. If, however, Gierek is to fulfill his pledge that every Polish family will have its own suitable place to live by 1990, about 6 million more dwellings will have to be completed during the next three 5-year planning periods.

The construction industry itself is scheduled for major modernization. Agricultural investment has been accorded a higher priority. Social services are to be increased, and new hospitals and health centers are to be provided for both urban and rural areas.

Gierek's innovation in the foreign policy field have been less dramatic, largely because the situation he inherited there was basically satisfactory. Even though Gomulka ultimately failed to take full advantage of his achievements, he had forged an acceptable new relationship with Moscow, won Poland the place of first among equals—behind the Soviet Union—in Warsaw Pact councils, and pioneered in establishing useful contacts and cooperation with the West. While he had gradually entered into a bitter feud with East Germany's Walter Ulbricht, he had been largely successful in overcoming the chill in Warsaw's relations with Belgrade, Bucharest, Prague, and Budapest that had resulted from the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia (and from Hungary's only half-hearted participation therein). Finally, his hard-won agreement with West Germany in December 1970 had laid old fears about the Oder-Neisse frontier to rest and had substantially increased Poland's room for maneuver.

For Gierek, who shares Gomulka's conviction that Warsaw's and Moscow's basic interests now generally coincide and that Polish policy must rest on active membership in the Soviet Union's alliance system, there was little that needed to be done except to build upon his predecessor's work, resolve Warsaw's differences with Pankow, and give Poland's foreign policy a slightly more assertive and independent cast. The relatively relaxed atmosphere in both halves of Europe which has resulted from Moscow's drive toward detente with the West—and Walter Ulbricht's timely retirement—have been of great help to Gierek here. Relying heavily on summit diplomacy, he has restored Poland to its former position of special grace within the Warsaw Pact and has developed especially close bilateral ties with East Germany and Czechoslovakia. He has nursed Warsaw's warming



relationship with Bonn through the ratification of the Polish-West German agreement and the establishment of formal diplomatic relations. As part of his effort to stake out a larger role for Poland in European and East-West affairs, he has hosted Presidents Nixon and Tito in Warsaw and has traveled to Paris himself. Speaking as a man who has spent more than 20 years of his life in France and Belgium, he has appealed to people of Polish birth or parentage everywhere—particularly in the United States where the Polish community is several million strong—to support the renovation of Poland with their talents as well as with their money. And although he has voiced his disapproval of Romania's ostentatiously independent behavior, he allowed the notion advanced by a leading Polish commentator that the "role of the middle powers" (read: Poland) "increases proportionately to the progress of detente in East-West relations" to pass unchallenged.

## The Years Ahead (s)

Gierek is taking Poland down a new road that, because of necessity as much as his own pragmatic inclinations, has left largely undefined. His policies have resulted in a marked improvement in the material lot of most Poles and in the domestic political climate as well. Because of this, he has gained a considerable measure of support from a skeptical people—a people he has promised not only to lead but to consult.

Nevertheless, Gierek's credit with the population is not unlimited, and the ultimate stability of his regime is likely to depend on his maintaining the momentum of his reforms. On this question, Polish public opinion seems to be divided into three camps. The first—and probably the largest—segment of the population

believes that Gierek will take effective steps to assure continued improvement of the situation. A second group also has trust in Gierek's leadership, but feels that he is unlikely to succeed in view of the serious obstacles in his path. A third group simply has no confidence in Gierek and believes that, once he has consolidated his power, he will revert to the conservatism and inertia of the later Gomulka period. Although the breakdown may have since shifted somewhat in Gierek's favor, a survey conducted by Western researchers in late 1971 indicated that 39% of the population supported the first view, 25% the second, and 34% the third—with younger people displaying considerable more confidence in Gierek than their elders.

For the time being, these divergent trends in public



opinion present no problem for Gierek. He has, in fact, given measured encouragement to "creative unrest" and "constructive dissatisfaction" as needed catalysts for change. Yet popular expectations in this era of slackening East-West tensions almost certainly exceed the regime's ability to fulfill them. There will be many Poles, even among those who now have faith in Gierek's good intentions, who will be inclined to view any slowdown in his course as an abandonment of his entire program. And any consequent shirking of effort or open demonstrations of protest could make this a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Gierek himself may recognize the need for continuing change. For one thing, his present efforts to imbue his countrymen with a Germanic work ethic may not suffice to overcome the remaining shortcoming in Poland's existing economic mechanism. But he will have to contend with forces of inertia—born, ironically, of his initial successes—within the PUWP, with still powerful vested interests in the political and economic bureaucracy who feel that passive resistance to Gierek's reforms will permit them to outlast even this latest threat to their sinecures, and last, but not least, with Moscow.

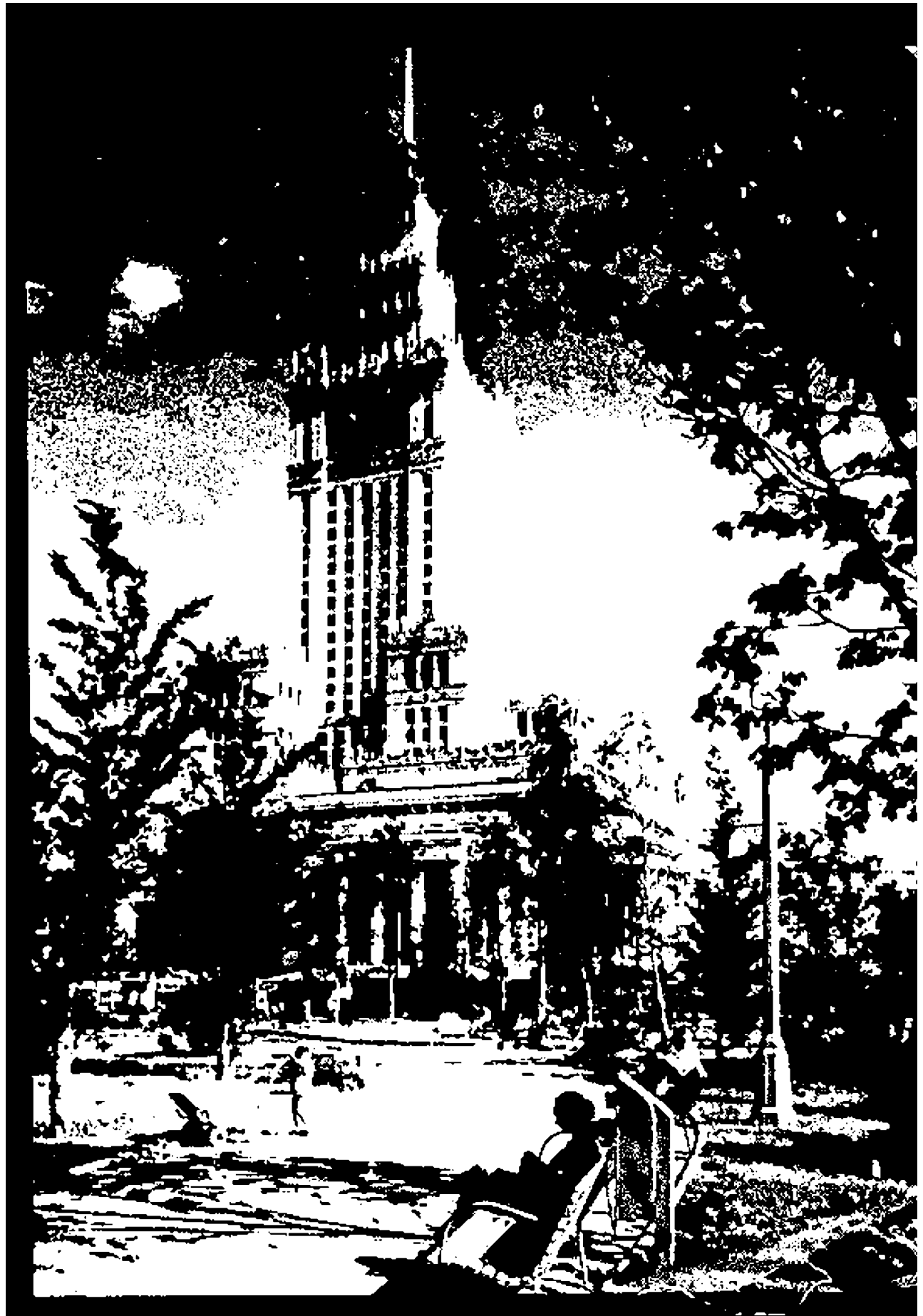
Indeed, the future direction of the Polish experiment will unquestionably continue to depend heavily on the mood of the Kremlin. Gierek's success in restoring

domestic order and his care not to maneuver very far from Moscow's position on basic foreign policy issues have won him the respect and the unqualified public endorsement of the top Soviet leaders. Even so, he has shown great caution in assessing the limits of Soviet tolerance of economic and political change—and apparently with good cause. The Soviets are reported to have warned Gierek—directly and through trusted intermediaries—of their displeasure with certain of his moves. Their concern has apparently centered on his agricultural and religious policies as well as on his personnel changes.

There is nothing to suggest that the Soviets are at present really alarmed—much less that they might be considering some dramatic move to bring Gierek to heel. Nevertheless, the Kremlin's persistent ideological orthodoxy gives heart to like-minded bureaucrats in Poland and generally complicates the Warsaw regime's task in trying to maintain the momentum of its reforms. Thus it would appear that Gierek will long have to continue to display considerable firmness and skill in dealing with the Soviet leadership in order to prevent its unimaginative views from frustrating his efforts to improve the material lot of his countrymen or from otherwise suffocating his campaign to rejuvenate the Polish nation.

*The Palace of culture in Warsaw. Stalin's gift to Poland, this towering building serves as a constant reminder of the Kremlin's influence on Polish affairs.*





## Chronology (u/ou)

962

Prince Mieszko unites several Polish tribes (Polans, or dwellers of the plains) into a political union, accepts Christianity, and places Poland under the protection of the papacy—thus establishing traditional relationship between Polish state and the Roman Catholic Church.

1025

Mieszko's son, Boleslaw I, crowned as first king of the Piast dynasty; extends Polish rule from Oder-Neisse rivers in the west to Dnieper in the east, and from Pomerania to Carpathian mountains. Boleslaw's death signals a period of internal division, and decline of kingdom into principalities.

1241

Devastation of much of Poland by Tatar invasions, which are stemmed with the help of Teutonic Knights; influx of Germanic settlers ceases.

1320-1370

Cultural revival and political reunion takes place under Kings Ladislas I and Casimir III the Great; royal power consolidated; administration, justice, and currency are reformed after Western models, and University of Krakow is founded in 1374; Jews, persecuted in Western Europe, are allowed to settle in Poland.

1386

Jagello, Grand Duke of Lithuania, accepts Christianity and is crowned Ladislas II, King of Poland—the first ruler of the Jagiellonian dynasty; Poland and Lithuania formalize political union after defeating Teutonic Knights at Grunwald in 1410.

1495-1540

Golden age of the Polish state, the largest and most powerful in east-central Europe; flourishing culture under King Sigismund II resides in Krakow, which becomes a major European center of science, humanist scholarship, art, and for a time, of the Reformation.

1573-1733

Age of Poland's "elective kings" is characterized by steady decline of internal cohesion, debilitating wars with Sweden, and general upsurge of foreign intervention; growing power of the nobility, gentry, and the clergy progressively erode royal power and Poland's ability to keep Protestant Prussia and Orthodox Russia at bay.

1793

Count Casimir Pulaski leads Catholic patriotic uprising against growing Russian control.

1772

The first partition of Poland; about one-quarter of Polish territory is lost to Prussia, Russia, and Austria.

1791

Model constitution adopted on 3 May providing for hereditary monarchy, elected parliament, judicial autonomy, and gradual abolition of serfdom.

1793

Intrigue between domestic opponents of 1791 constitution and Prussia and Russia leads to second partition of Poland by them (see page); remainder of Poland becomes a puppet state of Russia.

1794

Patriot Tadeusz Kosciuszko leads futile national revolt against Russian rule.

1795

Third partition by Prussia, Russia, and Austria results in the disappearance of the Polish state.

1807-1815

Grand Duchy of Warsaw is created by Napoleon but liquidated by the Congress of Vienna; constitutionally autonomous "Congress Poland" under Russian control is created.

1830

Uprising against Russian rule initially successful; rebellion fails to depose Czar Nicholas I, but revolt is eventually suppressed and autonomy revoked.

1848-1849

Attempts at further uprising in Russian-dominated areas are quashed.

1863-1865

Two years of guerrilla warfare against Russian rule end in defeat.

1914

Outbreak of World War I makes Poland a main battlefield and puts Poles in opposing camps.

1917

January

President Woodrow Wilson endorses creation of independent Poland.

October

Polish National Committee, organized in France, is recognized as the representative of Poland by the Allied Powers.

**1918****January**

President Wilson makes independent Poland with access to the sea one of the 14 points constituting Allied war aims.

**November**

Polish Republic proclaimed on 3 November; General Jozef Pilsudski, supreme commander of Polish forces, arrives in Warsaw.

**December**

Creation of Communist Workers Party.

**1919****January**

Pilsudski becomes head of state; Versailles Conference draws borders of Poland, but frontier with revolutionary Russia remains unsettled.

**1920****April**

Russo-Polish border war between Bolshevik forces and Pilsudski, who seeks to extend Poland into Ukraine along Jagiellonian concept; Polish forces advance to Kiev, but are rolled back to Warsaw where, on 15 August, they defeat the Red Armies.

**1921****March**

Treaty of Riga embodies Polish-Soviet territorial compromise.

**1919-1926**

Succession of weak coalition governments results in domestic instability and emboldens Germany to territorial demands.

**1925****March**

Communist Workers Party is renamed Communist Party of Poland.

**1926****May**

Pilsudski engineers military coup d'etat, and rules until his death in 1935 via a series of surrogate presidents.

**1932****July**

Nonaggression pact signed with U.S.S.R.

**1934****January**

Nonaggression pact signed with Nazi Germany.

**1935****April**

New constitution, greatly increasing the power of the President, is proclaimed, but is vitiated by political controversies; a succession of authoritarian military cliques, the "colonels' regimes," rules Poland until outbreak of World War II.

**1938**

Communist Party of Poland is dissolved by the Comintern, having become a liability to Stalin. The Comintern action, shrouded in silence and never precisely dated, was declared invalid in 1955.

**1939****August**

German-Soviet (Molotov-Ribbentrop) nonaggression pact concluded; secret clauses provide for partition of Poland between the two powers.

**September**

Nazi Germany attacks Poland and defeats Polish forces in 3 weeks of "blitzkrieg"; U.S.S.R. occupies eastern half of the country.

**1940****July**

Polish Government-in-exile formed in London and headed by General Wladyslaw Sikorski; recognized by Western Allies but not by U.S.S.R.

**1941****July**

Under Allied pressure Sikorski agrees to establish relations with Moscow.

**1942****June**

Communist party reestablished in Poland as the underground Polish Workers Party, led by Wladyslaw Gomułka.

**1943****April**

Uprising begins 19 April in the Warsaw Ghetto; ends on 10 May with systematic destruction of the area by Nazi forces.

Moscow breaks diplomatic relations with Sikorski's government over latter's appeal to the International Red Cross to investigate the massacre of 10,000 Polish officers in the Katyn Forest.

**July**

Communist controlled Committee of National Liberation formed in Moscow.  
Sikorski dies in an air crash; Stanislaw Mikolajczyk succeeds him as Premier of the London-based Polish Government-in-exile.

**December**

Tehran summit conference agrees that Curzon Line, roughly corresponding to Nazi-Soviet boundary of late 1939, should be Poland's postwar, eastern frontier.

**1944****July**

Soviet troops enter territory of present-day Poland, install Polish Committee of National Liberation as *de facto* government.

**August**

Warsaw uprising 1 August-3 October, led by non-Communist underground and supported by the West, is crushed by Nazi forces while Soviet troops stand inactive on eastern approaches to the city.

**1945****January**

U.S.S.R. recognizes Committee of National Liberation as the Provisional Government of Poland.

**July**

Government of National Unity, formed in June after international negotiations in pursuance of the Yalta Agreement, is recognized by major Western powers.

**August**

Potsdam Conference places German territories east of Oder-Neisse line under Polish administration pending a peace treaty.

**September**

Poland denounces Concordat with Vatican.

**1947****January**

Fraudulent elections result in demise of non-Communist political opposition led by Mikolajczyk, who flees Poland in October.

**1948****September**

Gomulka, as exponent of "Polish road to socialism," is removed from post of Secretary General of the Polish Workers Party.

**December**

Polish Socialist Party is absorbed by Polish Workers Party to form Polish United Workers Party; Boleslaw Bierut becomes party leader.

**1949****November**

Konstantin Rokossovskiy, Soviet marshal of Polish birth, is appointed Minister of National Defense.

**1952****July**

Constitution of Polish People's Republic is promulgated.

**1953****September**

Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, Primate of Poland, is placed under house arrest.

**1955****May**

Warsaw Pact is signed on 14 May.

**1956****March**

Bierut dies in Moscow; Edward Ochab succeeds him as party leader.

**June**

Workers' "bread and freedom" uprising in Poznan.

**October**

Gomulka is elected as party First Secretary in face of Soviet hostility, Marshal Rokossovskiy and Polish Stalinists are removed from power, Cardinal Wyszynski is released, spontaneous dissolution of collective farms is sanctioned by Gomulka, and the party's weakness permits wide non-Communist activity.

**November**

Polish-Soviet Declaration is signed as basis of more equitable relations between the two Communist parties and states; long period of mutual ideological accommodation begins.

**1957****January**

Elections result in 98.4% vote for Gomulka-sponsored candidates; gradual tightening of domestic controls ensues.

**June**

United States grants first interest-free credits for purchase of U.S. surplus agricultural commodities.

**1959****March**

At Third Polish Party Congress Gomulka reaffirms consolidation of his regime and restoration of party control over national life.

**July**

Khrushchev's first official visit to Poland results in full Soviet endorsement of Gomulka regime and its autonomy in domestic affairs.

**1960****June**

Gomulka backs Soviet stand in developing Sino-Soviet ideological rift but begins mediation attempts.

**November**

United States restores most-favored-nation treatment to Polish exports, which had been withdrawn in 1952.

**1961****April**

Regime-sponsored candidates receive over 98% of the vote in elections marked by public apathy and disillusionment.

**1963****March**

Polish-West German trade agreement signed, providing for exchange of trade missions with semidiplomatic status.

**1964****June**

At Fourth Polish Party Congress Gomulka reasserts leadership over diverse party factions and continuation of conservative-moderate line.

**1965****February**

Deeper U.S. involvement in Vietnam strains relations with Warsaw, but wide U.S. "presence" in Poland is maintained.

**April**

Renewed 20-year Polish-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Alliance stresses formulation of common foreign policy objectives by mutual consultations.

**May**

Fifth postwar elections result in virtual carbon copy of 1961 balloting.

**1966****May**

Polish-West German trade agreement is renewed.

**May-June**

Public disturbances mark church-state crisis brought on by rival celebrations marking the millennium of Christianity in Poland and of Polish statehood.

**1967****June**

Impact of Arab-Israeli conflict kindles new intraparty discord with anti-Semitic overtones; officially encouraged emigration of Polish Jews begins.

**1968****March**

Student demonstrations are repressed but spark acute party crisis and anti-Semitic purges lasting most of year.

**August**

Poland participates in Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia.

**November**

At Fifth Party Congress Gomulka reasserts his leadership but yields some influence to young pragmatic elements.

**1969****May**

Gomulka publicly opens door to dialog with West Germany by proposing negotiations on treaty to formalize Poland's western border; diplomatic approaches to West on European security are intensified.

**June**

Sixth postwar elections produce results identical to 1965 balloting. Gomulka leads Soviet bloc condemnation of Chinese Communist leadership at International Communist Conference in Moscow.

**October**

Polish-West German economic negotiations are initiated; Polish goals include new trade treaty and credits.

**1970****February**

Polish-West German political talks start in Warsaw.

**June**

New Polish-West German 5-year trade agreement concluded.

**October**

Cumulative impact of poor harvests and agricultural disincentives leads to meat shortages and mounting popular disgruntlement.

**December**

Polish-West Germany treaty, initialed in November, is signed in Warsaw on 7 December by Chancellor Brandt and Premier Cyrankiewicz; despite Western qualifications, treaty is viewed by the Poles as definitive recognition of the territorial integrity of the postwar Polish state.

Gomulka regime announces price increases on 13 December, as part of economic measures that include onerous work rules and potential reduction of take-home pay.

Strike and riots begin among shipyard workers in Gdansk on 14 December, spread to Gdynia on 16 December, and to Szczecin and other northern cities on 17 December.

Party Central Committee meets on 20 December to approve and announce replacement of Gomulka leadership by that of Edward Gierek; shift is promptly endorsed by the Soviet Union which, though anxious and watchful, retains posture of strict nonintervention.

New government installed on 23 December, with Piotr Jaroszewicz as Premier and Cyrankiewicz as head of state; Jaroszewicz offers to "normalize" relations with Roman Catholic Church.

**1971****January**

Gierek and Jaroszewicz are warmly received during inaugural visit to Moscow.

**February**

Party Central Committee plenum condemns former leaders' policies and pledges broad program of gradual but potentially far-reaching economic, political, and social reforms.

New wave of strikes by militant workers brings Soviet hard-currency credit and rescission of December 1970 price increases.

**March**

Jaroszewicz and Cardinal Wyszynski meet to explore avenues toward improved church-state relations.

**June**

Regime grants the Roman Catholic Church legal title to church property in former German territories.

**December**

Sixth Party Congress endorses Gierek and his program; visiting Soviet leader Brezhnev gives Gierek full support.

**1972****March**

National elections, with a rigged, single slate as in the past, result in no change in party representation; however, heavy turnover of deputies bolsters regime claim that new parliament is more representative of the people. New government appointed with Henryk Jablonski replacing Cyrankiewicz as head of state.

Period of rapidly improving U.S.-Polish relations is climaxed by President Nixon's visit to Warsaw—31 March-1 June—following Moscow summit.

**June**

Following West Germany's ratification of the treaty with Poland in mid-May, the Holy See reorganizes and regularizes ecclesiastical administration in the former German territories—in effect recognizing Poland's postwar frontiers.

**September**

Poland and West Germany establish diplomatic relations; ambassadors exchanged in November.

**October**

Gierek pays official visit to France.

**November**

Major U.S.-Polish trade agreement concluded.

**December**

Gierek is accorded rank of "first among equals" vis-a-vis other Eastern European party chiefs attending observances in Moscow of 50th anniversary of the U.S.S.R.

## Area Brief

### LAND (U/OU)

**Size:** 120,600 sq. mi.

**Use:** 48% arable, 14% other agricultural, 27% forested, 10% other

**Land boundaries:** 1,922 mi.

### WATER (U/OU)

**Limits of territorial waters (claimed):** 3 n. mi. (fishing, 12 n. mi.)

**Coastline:** 305 mi.

### PEOPLE (U/OU)

**Population:** 33,146,000 (January 1973 estimate); density about 275 persons per square mile

**Ethnic divisions:** 98.7% Polish, 0.6% Ukrainians, 0.5% Belorussians, less than 0.05% Jews, 0.2% other

**Religion:** 95% Roman Catholic (about 75% practicing), 5% Uniate, Greek Orthodox, Protestant, and other

**Language:** Polish; no significant dialects

**Literacy:** about 98%

### GOVERNMENT (U/OU)

**Legal name:** Polish People's Republic (PRL)

**Type:** Communist state

**Capital:** Warsaw

**Political subdivisions:** 17 provinces, 5 city provinces, 391 districts

**Legal system:** Mixture of Continental (Napoleonic) civil law and Communist legal theory; constitution adopted 1952; court system parallels administrative divisions with Supreme Court, composed of 105 justices, at apex; no judicial review of legislative acts; legal education at 7 law schools; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

**Branches:** Legislative, executive, judicial system dominated by parallel Communist party apparatus

**Government leader:** Piotr Jaroszewicz, Premier; Henryk Jablonski, chairman of Council of State (President)

**Suffrage:** Universal and compulsory over age 18

**Elections:** Parliamentary and local government every 4 years

**Dominant political party and leader:** Polish United Workers Party (PZPR) (Communist), Edward Gierek, First Secretary

**Voting strength (1972 election):** 97% voted for Communist-approved single slate

**Communists:** 2.27 million party members (December 1971)

**Other political or pressure groups:** National Unity Front (FJN), including United Peasant Party (ZSL), Democratic Party (SD), progovernment pseudo-Catholic Pax Association and Christian Social Association, Catholic independent Znak group; powerful Roman Catholic Church, Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, Primate; Socialist Union of Polish Students (SZSP)

**Member of:** CEMA, GATT, ICAO, IHB, Indochina Truce Commission, Korea Truce Commission, Seabeds Committee, U.N. and all specialized agencies except IMF and IBRD, Warsaw Pact

### ECONOMY (C)

**GNP:** \$54.6 billion in 1972 at 1971 prices, \$1,650 per capita; 1972 growth rate 7%

**Agriculture:** Self-sufficient for minimum requirements; main crops—grain, sugar beets, potatoes, oilseeds, exporter of livestock products and sugar; importer of grains; 3,200 calories per day per capita (1970)

**Fishing:** Catch 520,400 metric tons (1972)

**Major industries:** Chemistry, food processing, transportation equipment, machine building, iron and steel, textiles, and shipbuilding

**Crude steel:** 13.5 million metric tons produced (1972), about 410 kg. per capita

**Electric power:** 16,100,000 kw. capacity (1972); 76.5 billion kw.-hr. produced (1972), 2,305 kw.-hr. per capita

**Exports:** \$4,533 million (f.o.b., 1972); 42% machinery and equipment, 34% fuels, raw materials, and semimanufactures, 15% agricultural and food products, 9% light industrial products

**Imports:** \$4,903 million (f.o.b., 1972); 43% machinery and equipment; 38% fuels, raw materials, and semimanufactures; 12% agricultural and food products; 7% light industrial products

**Major trade partners:** \$9,436 million (1972); 62% with Communist countries, 38% with West

**Monetary conversion rate:** 3.32 zlotys = US\$1 (commercial); 19.92 zlotys = US\$1 (noncommercial); old commercial rates 4.00 zlotys = US\$1 prior to 1972, 3.8 zlotys = US\$1 in 1972

**Fiscal year:** Same as calendar year; economic data are reported for calendar years except for caloric intake which is reported for the consumption year, 1 July–30 June

**Note:** Foreign trade figures were converted at the 1972 rate

SECRET

**COMMUNICATIONS (S)**

**Railroads:** 16,469 route miles; 14,381 miles standard gage (4'8 1/2'') including 4,644 route miles double track and 2,400 route miles electrified; 2,088 route miles various narrow gages

**Highways:** 190,095 miles; 39,700 miles classified state or national routes; 40,389 miles concrete, bituminous, cobblestone, stoneblock; 39,479 miles crushed stone, gravel; 110,227 miles earth (improved and unimproved)

**Inland waterways:** 3,700 miles navigable streams and canals

**Pipelines:** 3,150 miles; est. 2,100 miles natural and manufactured gas; 875 miles crude, 175 miles refined. Additionally, 772 miles under construction, mostly natural gas

**Ports:** 4 major (Gdansk, Gdynia, Szczecin, Swinoujscie); 6 minor

**Merchant marine:** 252 ships (1,000 g.r.t. and over) totaling 1,792,473 g.r.t. and 2,528,331 d.w.t.; consists of 166 dry cargo, 76 bulk cargo, 4 refrigerated cargo, 4 tanker, and 2 passenger

**Civil air:** 48 major transport aircraft

**Airfields:** 146 total; 63 have permanent runways and 85 have runways 6,000 feet or more in length

**Telecommunications:** Domestic and international facilities, relatively modern and effective; good radiobroadcast coverage (28 AM and 40 FM transmitters) reaches 96% of population, 5.7 million receivers; 18 regional TV transmitters, 5.3 million TV receivers; 1,970,856 telephones (85% connected to automatic exchanges)

**DEFENSE FORCES (S)**

**Military manpower:** Males 15-49, 8,893,000; 7,030,000 fit for military service; 356,000 reach military age (19) annually (1972-76)

**Personnel:** (Estimated) \*ground forces 210,000, naval forces 26,000, air force 55,000, frontier guard 20,000, internal security forces 25,000, territorial defense regimental force 28,500

**Personnel in reserve (not on active duty):** (Estimated) ground forces 1,800,000, naval forces 46,500, air force 12,500

**Major ground units:** 15 divisions (8 mechanized, 5 armored, 1 airborne, 1 assault landing, amphibious), 7 brigades (4 SCUD (SS-1) tactical missile, 3 artillery, 7 regiments (3 antitank, 4 antiaircraft artillery)

**Ships:** 4 destroyer types, 4 submarines, 101 coastal patrol types, 62 river/roadstead patrol types, 49 minewarfare types, 38 amphibious types, 32 auxiliaries, and 114 service craft

**Aircraft (operational):** 800 combat (mostly jet fighters and jet attack), plus 66 (58 jet) in naval air (48 attack, 8 light bomber reconnaissance, 10 helicopters)

**Missiles:** 36 operational SA-2 SAM sites, 9 operational SA-3 sites\*

**Supply:** Produces armored and transport vehicles, light arms, some light artillery, most electronic equipment, copies of Soviet air-to-air and antitank missiles, chemical and biological warfare defensive materiel, and small quantities of agents; other equipment primarily from U.S.S.R.; Poland builds minesweepers, medium landing ships, small submarine chasers, motor torpedo boats, auxiliaries, and service craft for the Polish Navy and coast guard, as well as landing ships and naval auxiliaries for the U.S.S.R. and also produces helicopters and small transport utility aircraft

**Military budget:** For fiscal year ending 31 December 1973, 39,206 million zlotys; about 8.4% of total budget

**INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY (S)**

Citizens Militia (MO) strength not known; Security Service (SB) about 23,000; Volunteer Reserve of the Citizens Militia (ORMO), 379,400 in 1970; regular police force, 100,000

\*National SA-2 force capability is increased by the presence of 3 SA-2 battalions and 9 SA-3 battalions which are subordinate to Soviet Northern Group of Forces (stationed in) Poland (S)

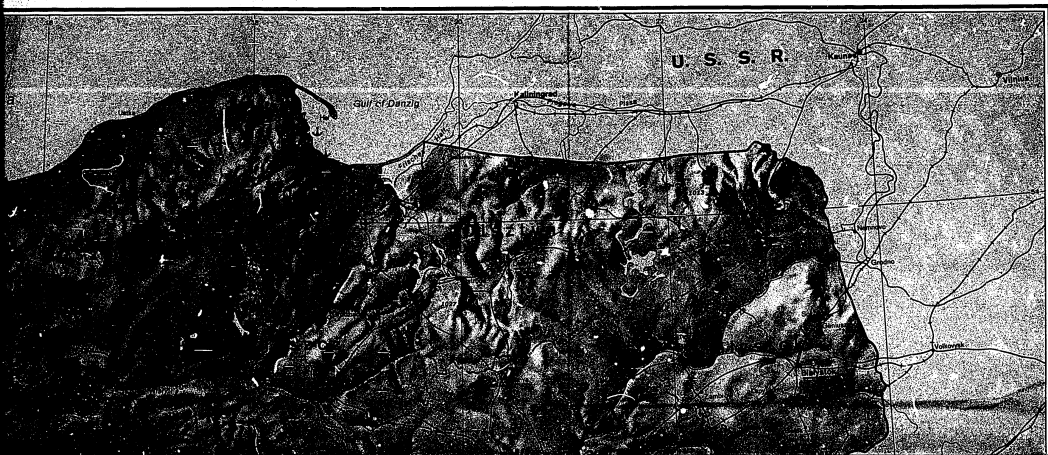
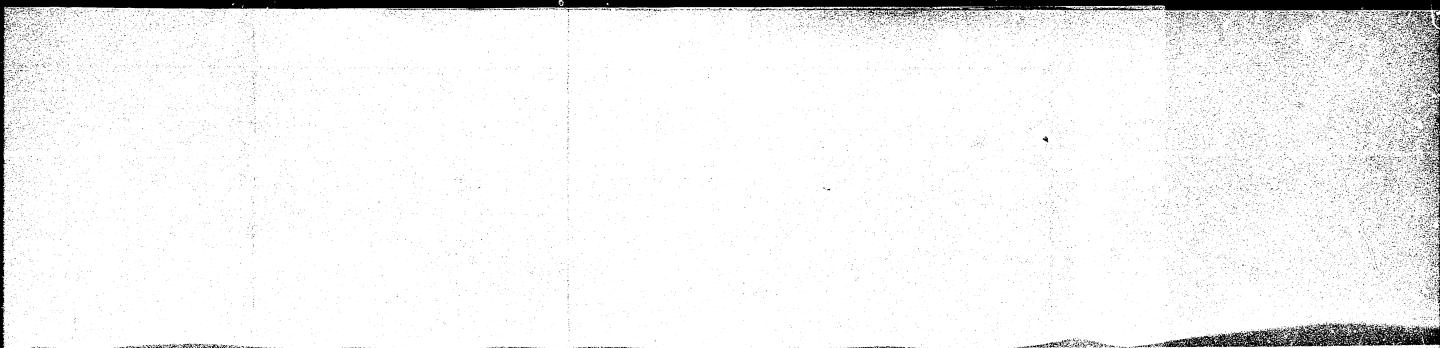


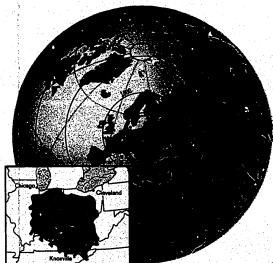


Places and features referred to in this General Survey (u/ou)

	COORDINATES			COORDINATES			COORDINATES	
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Antolka.....	50 24	20 05	Krynica.....	49 26	20 58	bkarysko Kamienna.....	51 07	20 54
Bakar, Yugoslavia.....	45 18	14 52	Xutno.....	52 14	19 22	Skawina.....	49 59	19 50
Bakak Dudy.....	51 59	20 49	Lapp.....	52 59	22 52	Sluch.....	52 21	14 55
Bialystok.....	53 08	23 09	Legonowo.....	52 50	21 52	Shupek.....	54 27	17 02
Bielak.....	53 09	18 55	Legnica.....	51 12	16 12	Shukwice.....	52 10	21 00
Blachowice.....	50 47	18 58	Leningrad, U.S.S.R.....	56 55	39 15	Sochaczew.....	52 14	20 15
Buchowice, Silesia.....	50 22	18 17	Liegalis.....	51 12	16 12	Sopot.....	54 27	18 34
						Strumie, Wola.....	53 31	22 03

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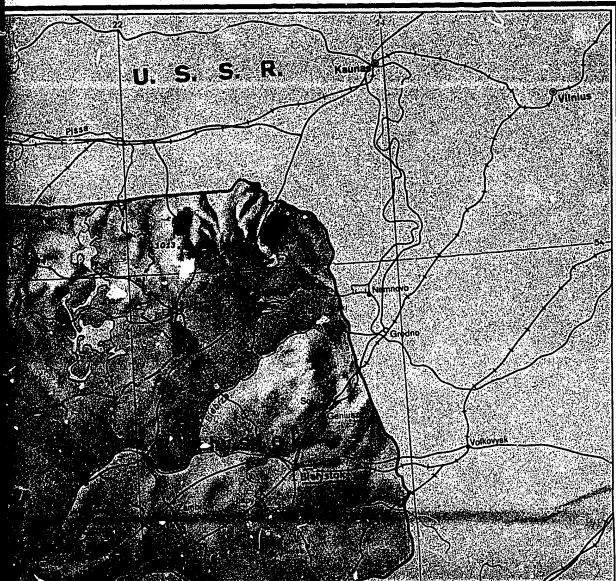




**Population**

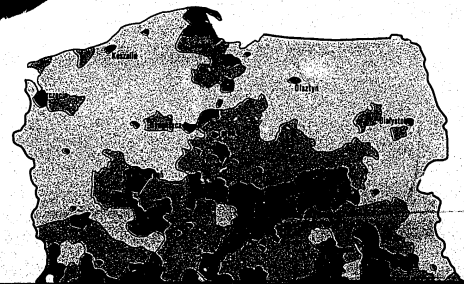
Percent per square mile  
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500 600 700 800  
Percent per square kilometer  
(1988 estimate)



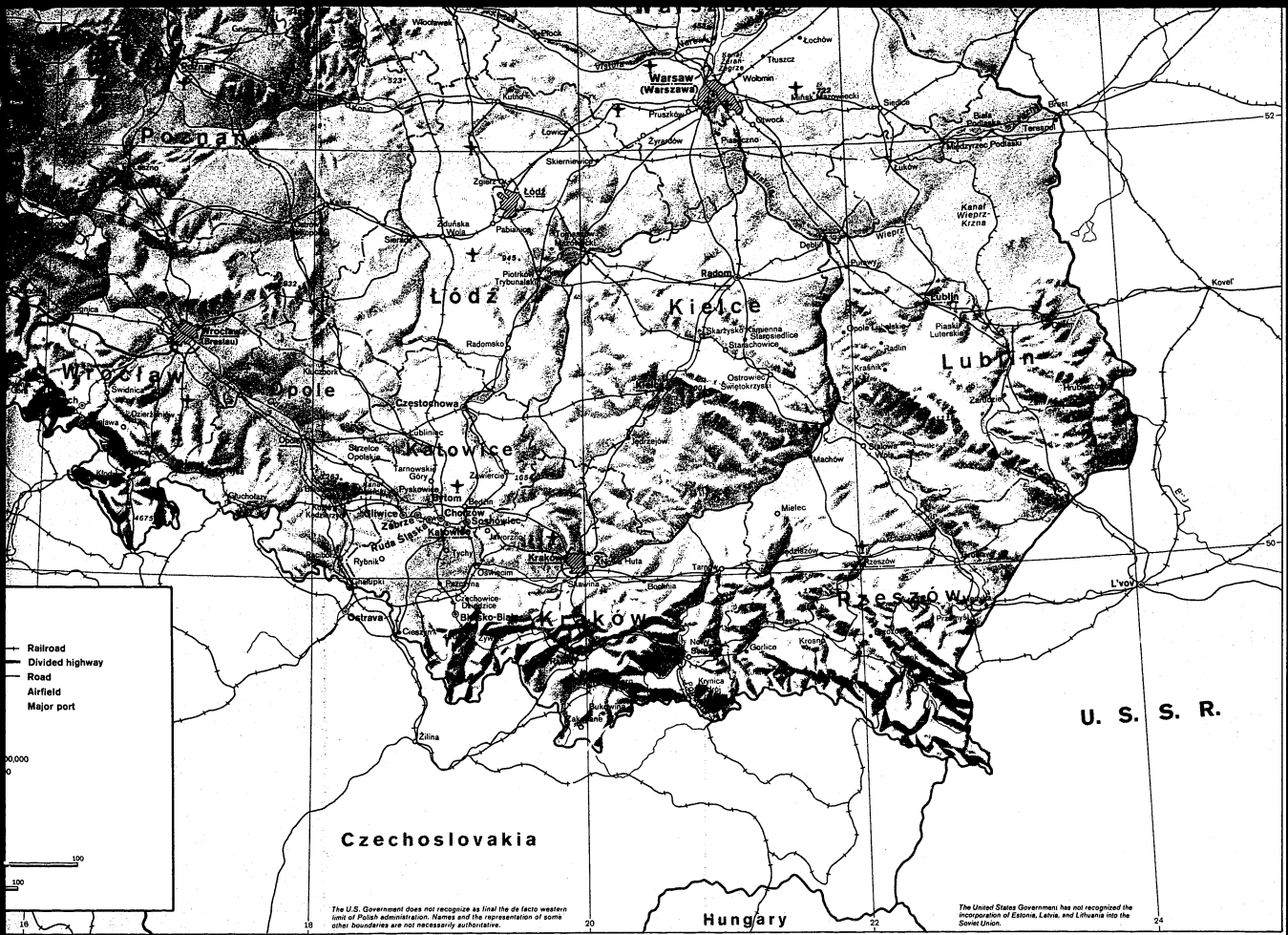


**Population**

Persons per square mile  
0 100 200 300  
0 60 80 100 150  
Persons per square kilometer  
(1968 estimate)



Albania (incl. Kosovo)	10 79 37 02	Albania	10 79 37 02	Algeria	32 31 21 18	Algeria (incl. Kabylia)	32 31 21 18
Algeria	32 31 21 18	Algeria	32 31 21 18	Algeria	32 31 21 18	Algeria	32 31 21 18
Angola	13 26 18 06	Angola	13 26 18 06	Angola	13 26 18 06	Angola	13 26 18 06
Argentina	34 04 54 42	Argentina	34 04 54 42	Argentina	34 04 54 42	Argentina	34 04 54 42
Armenia	39 51 35 29	Armenia	39 51 35 29	Armenia	39 51 35 29	Armenia	39 51 35 29
Australia	35 16 18 13	Australia	35 16 18 13	Australia	35 16 18 13	Australia	35 16 18 13
Austria	48 10 16 18	Austria	48 10 16 18	Austria	48 10 16 18	Austria	48 10 16 18
Azerbaijan	39 51 35 29	Azerbaijan	39 51 35 29	Azerbaijan	39 51 35 29	Azerbaijan	39 51 35 29
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Bahrain	26 21 18 06	Bahrain	26 21 18 06	Bahrain	26 21 18 06	Bahrain	26 21 18 06
Bangladesh	23 42 18 06	Bangladesh	23 42 18 06	Bangladesh	23 42 18 06	Bangladesh	23 42 18 06
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Belarus	53 21 18 06	Belarus	53 21 18 06	Belarus	53 21 18 06	Belarus	53 21 18 06
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Costa Rica	9 21 18 06	Costa Rica	9 21 18 06	Costa Rica	9 21 18 06	Costa Rica	9 21 18 06
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North Korea	37 21 18 06	North Korea	37 21 18 06	North Korea	37 21 18 06	North Korea	37 21 18 06
Norway	59 21 18 06	Norway	59 21 18 06	Norway	59 21 18 06	Norway	59 21 18 06
Oman	23 42 18 06	Oman	23 42 18 06	Oman	23 42 18 06	Oman	23 42 18 06
Pakistan	33 21 18 06	Pakistan	33 21 18 06	Pakistan	33 21 18 06	Pakistan	33 21 18 06
Panama	9 21 18 06	Panama	9 21 18 06	Panama	9 21 18 06	Panama	9 21 18 06
Papua New Guinea	14 21 18 06	Papua New Guinea	14 21 18 06	Papua New Guinea	14 21 18 06	Papua New Guinea	14 21 18 06
Paraguay	25 21 18 06	Paraguay	25 21 18 06	Paraguay	25 21 18 06	Paraguay	25 21 18 06
Peru	10 21 18 06	Peru	10 21 18 06	Peru	10 21 18 06	Peru	10 21 18 06
Philippines	12 21 18 06	Philippines	12 21 18 06	Philippines	12 21 18 06	Philippines	12 21 18 06
Poland	51 21 18 06	Poland	51 21 18 06	Poland	51 21 18 06	Poland	51 21 18 06
Portugal	8 21 18 06	Portugal	8 21 18 06	Portugal	8 21 18 06	Portugal	8 21 18 06
Romania	45 21 18 06	Romania	45 21 18 06	Romania	45 21 18 06	Romania	45 21 18 06
Russia	55 21 18 06	Russia	55 21 18 06	Russia	55 21 18 06	Russia	55 21 18 06
Rwanda	2 21 18 06	Rwanda	2 21 18 06	Rwanda	2 21 18 06	Rwanda	2 21 18 06
Saudi Arabia	24 21 18 06	Saudi Arabia	24 21 18 06	Saudi Arabia	24 21 18 06	Saudi Arabia	24 21 18 06
Senegal	14 21 18 06	Senegal	14 21 18 06	Senegal	14 21 18 06	Senegal	14 21 18 06
Serbia	45 21 18 06	Serbia	45 21 18 06	Serbia	45 21 18 06	Serbia	45 21 18 06
Singapore	1 21 18 06	Singapore	1 21 18 06	Singapore	1 21 18 06	Singapore	1 21 18 06
Slovakia	48 10 16 18	Slovakia	48 10 16 18	Slovakia	48 10 16 1		



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