For a Western reader the book is tedious and, frankly, boring. It goes into ponderous descriptions of events which are well known to us. One has read all this before, many times. So the question arises, why translate it into English and publish it here? Especially now, when, after the collapse of the military regime in Poland in 1989, so many facts about this period appeared in print there (e.g., the books mentioned above). At the same time, the work is of considerable scholarly merit even if it is not any more the revelation it was in 1984 in Poland. It is well-researched and well-documented, and missing only some Western works on the same subject. There is, however, a serious flaw in the book. It is mostly descriptive, and the author never even attempts to bring to the work a broader analytical and theoretical perspective. How does the Polish case fit into the general human experience?

The translation is generally good, but for two annoying mistakes. The Polish word "dzialacz" is constantly translated as "activist," when, in fact and depending on the context, it should have been: politician, party worker, or civic leader. The English "activist" corresponds to the Polish "aktywista," a member of an "aktyw"—an action group—which generally is used only in relationship to the Communist Party. The second error is to use the English word "populist" to describe a member of the Polish Peasant Party. Populism means a belief in the rights, wisdom and virtues of the common people. Mao Dze-dong was a populist. In that sense, the Polish Peasant Party was as much or as little populist as the Communist Party. The proper English name for a member of the Polish Peasant Party is "agrarian." The annotation is generally good, especially regarding the different persons mentioned. The index is sufficient. References are adequate but with some glaring omissions, e.g., the source for the size during German occupation of the Home Army (A.K.) or the People's Guard (G.L.—the armed units of the communists). The bibliography, restricted to the sources mentioned in the references for reasons of space in what is already a rather long book, does not give the reader a true picture of all the material investigated. It is difficult to ascertain how aware the author was of non-cited sources. But it does seem that she has little knowledge of the existing literature in the United States. The list of abbreviations is useful but a glossary would have been most helpful, especially for a foreign reader who might soon get lost in the forest of unfamiliar names and acronyms.

In sum this is a highly detailed work of considerable scholarship, of use to specialists or as a reference source, but too tedious and descriptive for a more general professional reader.

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This book is the product of a dissertation and as such it suffers from scientific anxiety. Its theoretical framework, enunciated in the introduc-
tion and somewhat developed in the first chapter, is not rigorously applied and only casually returned to in the conclusion. It argues that the phases of development of postwar Poland could effectively be viewed as a repetition of trends and periods of the years before World War II. According to the author the similarities are (a) lack of personal, group and administrative integration; (b) a weak international position; and (c) failure of the elites to cope with the problems of transition from an archaic agricultural society to an industrial one. Some of this undoubtedly makes sense, as, for example, the weakness of Poland's international position, but in more general terms the theory fails to put these categories into a proper perspective and measure their intensity. Even if it looks "good" in theory, how can one equate the 1921-26 period of a multiparty parliamentary democracy with the Stalinist period of 1948-56, or the Gomulka period of 1956-70 with Piłsudski's rule of 1926-35? The sharp and meaningful distinction is that prewar Poland, even under Piłsudski, was not a one-party idiomocratic (totalitarian) state.

But if one forgets about the "theory," this is an excellent work. It does exactly what the title promises. It provides an extensive, well-balanced and well-argued examination of the Gieriek period and the reasons for the failure of its policies. Gieriek himself emerges as a tragic figure whose well-intentioned goals turn against him. In foreign affairs, his continuation of Gomulka's policy of accommodation with the Federal Republic of Germany brought the triumph of the final peace treaty and German recognition of Poland's western borders; but, at the same time, it awakened the dormant anti-Russian cast of Polish nationalism as it removed the only reason for the Soviet-Polish alliance. His opening to the West provoked suspicion in Moscow and forced him to do obeisance to his Soviet masters, especially since, as the "non-Moscow" communist, he felt never quite at home there. It was this which eventually alienated him from the Polish people.

His economic policies of development and modernization with capital brought from the West, to be repaid with increased exports, brought the country to the verge of economic ruin as the creation of OPEC occurred simultaneously and led to a worldwide depression. Here the author noted an interesting point that the interest rates, initially low from the readily available funds from OPEC deposits, eventually began to rise at a time of increased Polish economic difficulties, making additional necessary borrowing more and more expensive.

His administrative reforms, meant to increase professionalism of the bureaucracy and to reduce the size of the administrative units to make them more manageable, created incredible chaos precisely at a time when greater stability was required to cope with the growing economic and political troubles.

Most interesting is the author's treatment of Gieriek's agricultural policies in which he illustrates that in the end the drive toward industrialization and modernization contributed to the destruction of the nation's adequate food supplies as it eliminated the small and "inefficient" industries' producing for the needs of the Polish small-farmer who constituted the major source of agricultural production. Here lies the originality of the book, its discussion of this factor never noticed by previous commentators on the subject, but in agreement with the newest theories of development.