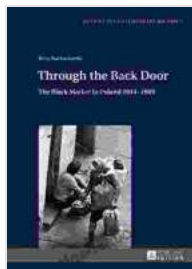


The Black Market in Poland, 1944-1989: Studies in Contemporary History



Through the Back Door: The Black Market in Poland 1944-1989 (Studies in Contemporary History Book 5)

by Jerzy Kochanowski

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

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The black market in Poland was a thriving enterprise that operated outside of the official economy. It provided goods and services that were not available through legal channels, and it played a vital role in the lives of many Poles. This article explores the history of the black market in Poland, from its origins in the aftermath of World War II to its decline in the late 1980s.

Origins of the Black Market

The black market in Poland emerged in the aftermath of World War II, when the country was struggling to rebuild its economy. The war had destroyed much of Poland's infrastructure, and the government was unable to provide basic necessities such as food, clothing, and housing. This created a vacuum that was quickly filled by the black market.

The black market was initially dominated by small-scale traders who sold goods on the streets or in makeshift markets. These traders often obtained their goods from factories or warehouses, where they were able to purchase them at below-market prices. They then sold these goods on the black market at a profit.

The Black Market in the 1950s and 1960s

In the 1950s and 1960s, the black market continued to thrive in Poland. The government's efforts to suppress it were largely unsuccessful, and the black market actually grew in size and scope. This was due in part to the government's own economic policies, which created shortages of goods and services.

The black market also benefited from the growing demand for Western goods. Poles were eager to obtain Western products, such as clothing,

electronics, and cars. These goods were not available through legal channels, so they could only be obtained on the black market.

The Black Market in the 1970s and 1980s

In the 1970s and 1980s, the black market in Poland reached its peak. The government's economic policies continued to create shortages of goods and services, and the demand for Western goods remained high. This led to a thriving black market, which operated in all major cities and towns in Poland.

The black market in the 1970s and 1980s was dominated by large-scale organizations that smuggled goods into Poland from Western countries. These organizations had close ties to the government and the Communist Party, and they were able to operate with impunity.

Decline of the Black Market

The black market in Poland began to decline in the late 1980s. This was due to a number of factors, including the government's economic reforms, the rise of the Solidarity movement, and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

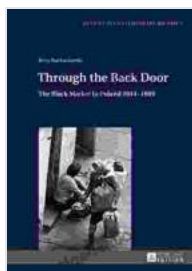
The government's economic reforms, which began in the mid-1980s, led to a gradual improvement in the supply of goods and services. This made it less necessary for Poles to turn to the black market.

The rise of the Solidarity movement also played a role in the decline of the black market. Solidarity was a non-communist trade union that emerged in the early 1980s. Solidarity challenged the government's authority, and it played a key role in the collapse of communism in Poland.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 also contributed to the decline of the black market. The Soviet Union had been a major source of goods for the black market, and its collapse led to a disruption in the supply of goods. This, coupled with the government's economic reforms and the rise of Solidarity, led to a rapid decline in the black market in Poland.

The black market in Poland was a complex and dynamic phenomenon that played a vital role in the lives of many Poles. It emerged in the aftermath of World War II and thrived for decades, but it declined in the late 1980s as a result of government reforms, the rise of Solidarity, and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The black market in Poland is a reminder of the power of human ingenuity in the face of adversity. Poles found a way to survive and thrive in a difficult environment, and the black market played a key role in their success.



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