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David R. Pichaske

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David R. Pichaske : Poland in Transition: 1989-1991 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Poland in Transition: 1989-1991:

Book by Pichaske, David

From Publishers Weekly "The old symbols are dead," muses one of Lech Walesa's countrymen in this perceptive and seductive portrait. "All our lives it's been the Party or the Church, but neither works any more." From 1989 to 1991 Pichaske (*A Generation in Motion*) was a Fulbright lecturer living in working-class Lodz. In these personal essays he chronicles the inflation, political chaos and economic reform as well as the cultural transformation that would result in Stalinist memorials being replaced by ads for Diet Coke and Levi jeans. "Poles love the West," he writes, "because to them it represents the Future in which they believe as fervently as Jay Gatsby believed in the green light at the end of Daisy's dock." Pichaske loves the old Poland and realizes that the country's venture into free market economics is not without its painful lessons. Still, his descriptions of Poland are always entertaining, especially in poetic "cityscapes" and his comparisons of U.S. and Polish student life. Literature parties at the University of Lodz, for example, reflect a 1960s American culture in which Bellow and Vonnegut are lionized and Toni Morrison is unknown. With a scholar's analysis, a traveler's practicality--and 95 worthwhile photographs--Pichaske illuminates many facets of the nation and its inhabitants. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. With the sharp eye of a sympathetic outsider, David

Pichaske examines life on the Polish streets during the country's difficult transition from communism to free market capitalism. Recounting adventures in the markets, bureaus, hospitals and shops in his own working-class city of Lodz, and in the great old Polish cities of Krakow, Warsaw, Poznan and Gdansk (as well as auto and train trips to Berlin, Leningrad, and Greece) he introduces artists, businessmen, bureaucrats, foresters, shopkeepers, street workers, students and intellectuals. Discovering his own lost Other in the landscape and its people, Pichaske comes gradually to an impatient and provisional acceptance of this strange landscape as "home. " *Poland In Transition, 1989-1991* puts a human face on impersonal, transnational changes in the politics and economics of a major European nation. *Poland In Transition, 1989-1991* provides insight and understanding through which its readers will better understand the strains, stresses, and hopes for an emerging eastern Europe in general and a reestablished Poland in particular. -- Midwest Book