EMPOWERING REVOLUTION
America, Poland, and the End of the Cold War
Gregory F. Domber

As the most populous country in Eastern Europe as well as the birthplace of the largest anticommunist dissident movement, Poland is crucial in understanding the end of the Cold War. During the 1980s, both the United States and the Soviet Union vied for influence over Poland’s politically tumultuous steps toward democratic revolution.

In this groundbreaking history, Gregory F. Domber examines American policy toward Poland and its promotion of moderate voices within the opposition, while simultaneously addressing the Soviet and European influences on Poland’s revolution in 1989. With a cast including Reagan, Gorbachev, and Pope John Paul II, Domber charts American support of anticommunist opposition groups--particularly Solidarity, the underground movement led by future president Lech Wałęsa--and highlights the transnational network of Polish émigrés and trade unionists that kept the opposition alive.

Utilizing archival research and interviews with Polish and American government officials and opposition leaders, Domber argues that the United States empowered a specific segment of the Polish opposition and illustrates how Soviet leaders unwittingly fostered radical, pro-democratic change through their policies. The result is fresh insight into the global impact of the Polish pro-democracy movement.

"Empowering Revolution is well-written, well structured, lapidary in its arguments, and very thoroughly researched. There is nothing like it in either English or Polish (or German or French). It is by far the most comprehensive treatment of this important subject, and Domber will be the most authoritative source on the late 20th century Polish state's transition to democracy for many years to come."
--Mark Kramer, Director, Cold War Studies, Harvard University

"This is an excellent study of the United States' reaction to the 1981 martial law crisis in Poland and its subsequent role in the democratic transformation of the Polish People's Republic through 1989. Domber provides a multi-perspective analysis that weaves into one compelling narrative both official and private views and actions based on pathbreaking research in governmental and private American and Polish archives and other sources. This is international history at its best."
--Dr. Christian Ostermann, Director, History and Public Policy Program, Woodrow Wilson Center

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