



# Empowering Revolution: America, Poland, and the End of the Cold War (The New Cold War History)

By Gregory F. Domber

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*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 emigres 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.

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#### Review

"*Empowering Revolution* will lead to fundamental revisions in history. . . . The book . . . teaches us about present-day international politics: the failures of intelligence, the power of civil society, and the lesson that the efficiency of soft diplomacy remains relevant in the twenty-first century." --Idesbald Goddeeris, Leuven University

[A] richly detailed work of history.--*International Affairs*

An example to many graduate students of how to do contemporary international history.-- Sarah Snyder, American University

A fine book which shall ignite controversy regarding where the credit lay for the overthrow of Communism.--*American Historical Review*

An absorbing account...based on meticulous research.--*Journal of American History*

A tour de force of new diplomatic history.--*Journal of Slavic Military Studies*

Domber's overall argument for "empowering" is crisp and nuanced, while his intervention in the ongoing discussions of the US role in 1980s Poland is incisive.--*H-Net Reviews*

A subtle and thoroughly researched analysis of the U.S. part in Poland's path to freedom.--*Slavic Review*

This important book will be of interest to historians and social scientists of Eastern Europe, social movements, and revolutions, and to political scientists and diplomatic historians as a case study and cautionary tale of the limits of diplomatic power.--*Journal of American History*

Domber properly places in context the respective roles of the reform policies of the Reagan administration and the Gorbachev government.--*Choice*

#### Review

*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 twentieth-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 of the History and Public Policy Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center

#### About the Author

Gregory F. Domber is associate professor of history at University of North Florida.

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