



Solidarity: The Great Workers Strike of 1980 (The Harvard Cold War Studies Book Series)

Michael M., Ph.D Szporer

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In the summer of 1980, the eyes of the world turned to the Gdansk shipyard in Poland which suddenly became the nexus of a strike wave that paralyzed the entire country. The Gdansk strike was orchestrated by the members of an underground free trade union that came to be known as Solidarnosc [Solidarity]. Despite fears of a violent response from the communist authorities, the strikes spread to more than 750 sites around the country and involved over a million workers, mobilizing its working population. Faced with crippling strikes and with the eyes of the world on them, the communist regime signed landmark accords formally recognizing Solidarity as the first free trade union in a communist country. The union registered nearly ten million members, making it the world's largest union to date. In a widespread and inspiring demonstration of nonviolent protest, Solidarity managed to bring about real and powerful changes that contributed to the end of the Cold War.

Solidarity: The Great Workers Strike of 1980 tells the story of this pivotal period in Poland's history from the perspective of those who lived it. Through unique personal interviews with the individuals who helped breathe life into the Solidarity movement, Michael Szporer brings home the momentous impact these events had on the people involved and subsequent history that changed the face of Europe. This movement, which began as a strike, had major consequences that no one could have foreseen at the start. In this book, the individuals who shaped history speak with their own voices about the strike that changed the course of history.

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