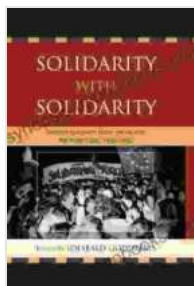


# Western European Trade Unions and the Polish Crisis 1980-1982: The Harvard Cold War Studies Book



**Solidarity with Solidarity: Western European Trade Unions and the Polish Crisis, 1980–1982 (The Harvard Cold War Studies Book)** by Colin Delany

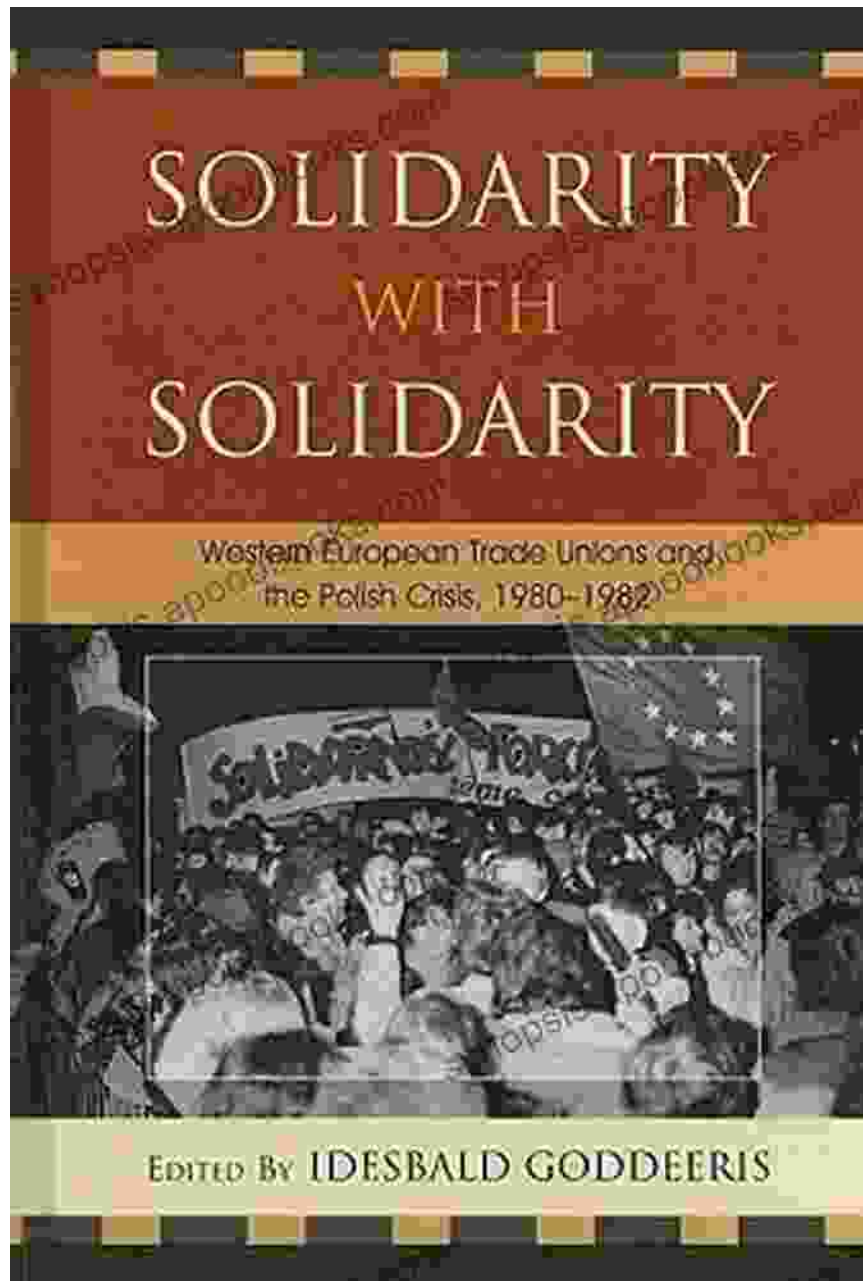
★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

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File size : 1924 KB  
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Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 322 pages

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In the annals of Cold War history, the Polish Solidarity movement stands as a beacon of hope and resilience. Born in the shipyards of Gdańsk in 1980, Solidarity became a symbol of workers' struggle for dignity, rights, and democratic change in communist Poland.

While the Solidarity movement captured global attention, less known is the unwavering support it received from Western European trade unions. This

book delves into this crucial but underappreciated aspect of the Polish crisis, shedding light on the multifaceted role played by these organizations in aiding the Solidarity movement and its fight for a better future.

## **Solidarity and the Polish Crisis**

Poland in the late 1970s was a tinderbox of discontent. Economic stagnation, political repression, and widespread labor unrest had created a volatile situation. The formation of Solidarity in August 1980 represented a watershed moment, as workers across the country united to demand better working conditions, democratic rights, and an end to communist rule.

The Polish government's initial response was a mixture of concessions and repression. However, the crisis escalated in December 1981 when General Wojciech Jaruzelski declared martial law, crushing Solidarity and imprisoning its leaders.

## **Western European Trade Unions Respond**

The crackdown on Solidarity sent shockwaves throughout the West. Western European trade unions, with their long history of fighting for workers' rights and social justice, were deeply moved by the plight of their Polish counterparts.

Led by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), Western European trade unions launched a multifaceted campaign to support Solidarity. This campaign included:

- **Humanitarian Aid:** Western European trade unions provided vital humanitarian aid to Solidarity members and their families, including food, medicine, and financial assistance.

- **Diplomatic Pressure:** Western European trade unions lobbied their governments to pressure Poland to restore Solidarity's rights and release its imprisoned leaders.
- **International Solidarity:** Western European trade unions organized international conferences, demonstrations, and campaigns to raise awareness of the Polish crisis and build support for Solidarity.

## **The Impact of Western European Trade Unions**

The support provided by Western European trade unions had a profound impact on the Polish crisis and the Solidarity movement.

**Material Support:** The humanitarian aid provided by Western European trade unions helped sustain Solidarity members and their families during a time of economic hardship and political repression.

**International Pressure:** Western European trade unions' diplomatic efforts played a crucial role in pressuring the Polish government to negotiate with Solidarity and eventually restore its legal status.

**Moral Support:** The international solidarity shown by Western European trade unions boosted the morale of Solidarity members and demonstrated that they were not alone in their fight for freedom and democracy.

The support provided by Western European trade unions to the Polish Solidarity movement during the 1980-1982 crisis stands as a testament to the power of international solidarity and the unwavering commitment of workers to fight for their rights.

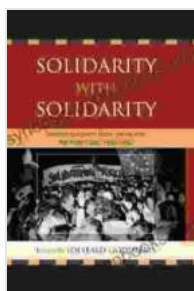
This book fills a significant gap in our understanding of the Polish crisis and sheds new light on the crucial role played by Western European trade unions in supporting the fight for workers' rights and democratic change in Poland.

By examining the multifaceted campaign undertaken by these organizations, this book provides valuable insights into the complexities of the Cold War and the ongoing struggle for human rights and social justice around the globe.

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