Survivors tells the harrowing story of life in Warsaw under Nazi occupation. As the epicenter of Polish resistance, Warsaw was subjected to violent persecution, the ghettoization of the city’s Jewish community, the suppression of multiple uprisings, and an avalanche of restrictions that killed hundreds of thousands and destroyed countless lives. In this study into the unique brutality of wartime Warsaw, Jadwiga Biskupska traces how Nazi Germany set out to dismantle the Polish nation and state for long-term occupation by targeting its intelligentsia. She explores how myriad resistance projects emerged within the intelligentsia who were bent on maintaining national traditions and rebuilding a Polish state. In contrast to other studies on the Holocaust and Second World War, this book focuses on Polish behavior and explains who was in a position to contest the occupation or collaborate with it, while answering lingering questions and addressing controversies about the Nazi empire and the Holocaust in Eastern Europe.

Jadwiga Biskupska is Assistant Professor of History at Sam Houston State University in Hunstville, Texas. She is co-director of Second World War Research Group, North America (SWWRGNA) and a former fellow of the Mandel Center at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
Figure 0.1 Map of Nazi-Occupied Europe
Figure 0.2  Map of Occupied Warsaw
In recent years the field of modern history has been enriched by the exploration of two parallel histories. These are the social and cultural history of armed conflict, and the impact of military events on social and cultural history.

*Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare* presents the fruits of this growing area of research, reflecting both the colonization of military history by cultural historians and the reciprocal interest of military historians in social and cultural history, to the benefit of both. The series offers the latest scholarship in European and non-European events from the 1850s to the present day.

A full list of titles in the series can be found at: www.cambridge.org/modernwarfare
SURVIVORS

Warsaw under Nazi Occupation

JADWIGA BISKUPSKA

Sam Houston State University
I dedicate this project to the late Olga Karnauchov, who wanted me to return to graduate school. Knowing her allowed me to embark on a study of eastern Europeans upended by Hitler’s war in the assurance that some of them went on to make beautiful lives out of the horror. To her and to those who did not survive: *requiescat in pace.*
CONTENTS

List of Figures page x
Acknowledgments xii

Introduction 1
1 Warsaw Besieged: September 1939 22
2 The Killing Years 48
3 Pawiak Prison 80
4 The Warsaw Ghetto: A People Set Apart 105
5 Information Wars 140
6 School of Hard Knocks: Illegal Education 169
7 Matters of Faith: Catholic Intelligentsia and the Church 192
8 Spoiling for a Fight: Armed Opposition 226
9 Home Army on the Offensive: Violence in 1943–1944 254

Conclusion 278

Bibliography 297
Index 317
FIGURES

0.1 Map of Nazi-Occupied Europe page ii
0.2 Map of Occupied Warsaw iii
1.1 Civilians walk and bicycle past a business protected by sandbags in besieged Warsaw, September 1939. 26
1.2 A Polish family huddles in front of the Opera House in besieged Warsaw while a Polish soldier looks on, September 1939. 33
1.3 Varsovians celebrate at the news that England and France declared war on Germany, September 1939. 41
1.4 Stefan Starzyński (fourth from left in dark coat and hat) formalizes Warsaw’s capitulation to the Wehrmacht, September 1939. 43
2.1 Hans Frank (right) hosts Heinrich Himmler (left) at a dinner held at Wawel Castle during his visit to Krakow, the General Government capital, 1940. 58
2.2 SS personnel lead a group of blindfolded Polish prisoners to an execution site in the Palmiry forest near Warsaw, fall 1939. 69
3.1 Pawik Prison under Russian partition viewed from Dzielna Street, 1906. 81
3.2 Auschwitz prisoner intake photographs for Witold Pilecki, prisoner 4859, September 1940. 94
4.1 Soldiers exiting a segregated “O” tram reserved for German use in downtown Warsaw, 1941. 106
4.2 Polish-Jewish diarist Miriam Wattenberg (Mary Berg) walks down a street in the Warsaw Ghetto alongside boyfriend Romek Kowalski, March 1942. 116
4.3 Surrounded by SS and SD personnel, Juergen Stroop (center), watches the Warsaw ghetto burn, spring 1943. 130
5.1 Front page of Aleksander Kamiński’s underground Bulletin during Holy Week listing Varsovian victims of Nazism, April 1942. 154
5.2 Jan Karski during his mission to the United States, July 1943. 162
6.1 Warsaw University’s main gate on Krakowskie Przedmieście, 1931. 180
LIST OF FIGURES xi

7.1 Warsaw’s Catholic leadership before the war: Aleksander Kakowski (center), Antoni Szlagowski (second from right), and Stanisław Gall (third from right), 1938. 201

7.2 View from the Staszic Palace looking north up Krakowskie Przedmieście. Visible in the foreground is a statue of Copernicus and behind it the double towers of Holy Cross Church, ca. 1937. 205

7.3 Zofia Kossak, date unknown. 220

7.4 Auschwitz prisoner intake photographs for Władysław Bartoszewski, prisoner 4427, September 1940. 223

9.1 Warsaw uprising capitulation. Home Army Commander Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski (left) meets with Erich von dem Bach-Żelewski (right) outside Warsaw, October 1944. 273
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project had an unusually long gestation, and has accumulated numerous debts and obligations over the years. I will forever be grateful for the help and advice I received along the way. Thanks go first to my original Yale University dissertation committee of Timothy Snyder, Marci Shore, and Adam Tooze, for their guidance throughout my time in New Haven and since. At Cambridge University Press, I would like to thank series editor Jay Winter, editor Michael Watson, editorial assistant Emily Plater, and the anonymous readers for their comments.

To all those who have generously funded the project at different stages: the Fulbright Program and my Warsaw University hosts; the Institute of Human Sciences, Vienna; the Baden-Württemberg Exchange Fellowship; the Kościuszko Foundation; the European Studies Council at Yale University; the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; the Smith Richardson Foundation; the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, DC; the REEEC Summer Research Laboratory at the Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center (REEEC) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and my own history department at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas: all my thanks.

I am especially grateful to the librarians, archivists, and staff at the collections I have visited over the years in the United States and Europe who endured my garbled questions and went out of their way to make material available, often on short notice. Special thanks to those who work in the libraries and archives at the Mandel Center, whom I burdened without end. Steve Feldman’s help and support during my time as a Mandel Center fellow and afterward were essential to the project’s completion: I cannot thank him enough.

At an early stage, this work benefited from a manuscript review workshop created by Andrzej Kamiński’s Recovering Forgotten History program. Thanks to Grzegorz Berendt, Dobrochna Kalwa, Sebastian Rejak, Bożena Szaynok, and Jakub Tyszkiewicz, who reviewed the whole manuscript and provided revision suggestions. Thanks also to Eulalia Łazarska, John Merriman, Adam Koźuchowski, Susan Ferber, Gabriel Finder, Anna Krakus,
and the late Alexander Prusin and Mark von Hagen for their advice, ideas, and help during the workshop and thereafter.

Thanks also to all of the commentators who have offered criticism and suggestions on parts of this work as it developed, especially Michael David-Fox, Piotr Wróbel, Norman Naimark, Amy Elise Randall, Tarik Cyril Amar, Mark Roseman, and the late Geoffrey Megargee and Włodzimierz Borodziej. I owe a particular debt to Jesse Kauffman for his feedback and support. Thanks also to Mary Kathryn Barbier, and to my colleagues in the Second World War Research Group for the forum they have built and the camaraderie it has provided. Barbara Kalabinski and her family put me up in Warsaw and answered a thousand questions. Barbara Nowak indexed the book beautifully.

At my home institution of Sam Houston State University, I would like to thank my history department colleagues and my fellow participants in the PACE writing circles program, especially Siham Bouamer, the organizer. Special thanks to Pinar Emiralioğlu and Steve Rapp for reading and commenting on the whole manuscript, and Brian Domitrovic for his advice and help as my first departmental chair and since. And to Uzma Quraishi and Maggie Elmore: you know I would never have made it without you.

Friends and family have supported me and this project for much longer than they could have imagined without complaint. Many thanks to my entire family, but especially my siblings. I am indebted to colleagues and classmates who have become dear friends: Amanda Behm, Christian Burset, Kathleen Conti, Nicole Eaton, Kimberly Lowe Frank, Jeremy Friedman, Anna Graber, Kristy Ironside, Elana Jakel, Emily Suzanne Johnson, Marta Kalabinski, Yedida Kanfer, Nathan Kurz, Vojin Majstorović, Kathleen Minahan, Anna Müller, Iryna Vushko, Marita von Weissenberg, and Jennifer Wellington. Mattie Amanda Fitch read every word of this manuscript several times and found a way to make it coherent when it was not. Thanks to Sara Edeiken and her family, Anastasia Grivoyannis, and Matthew Menezes for their friendship. And to Meagan Fitzpatrick and Ryan Eargle, my dear friends, and Olesia and Andrew Doran, my sister and brother-in-law: thanks for feeding me, housing me, and reminding me what my life is for. All errors and eccentricities in the work are my own.