



# The Spring Will Be Ours: Poland and the Poles from Occupation to Freedom

*Andrzej Paczkowski*

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One can think of countries that traversed the twentieth century free from war, revolution, or social upheaval. Such countries, however, are far outnumbered by those that struggled, often constantly, with severe internal conflicts, fought in bloody wars, or were attacked by their neighbors and deprived of their sovereignty. Poland is one of the more startling examples of a country subjected to a steady stream of trials and tribulations from Hitler's Nazi Germany through decades of Soviet repression. *The Spring Will Be Ours*, by one of Poland's leading historians, is the first book written after the collapse of state socialism in 1989 to tell this dramatic story based on research in newly declassified records.

*The Spring Will Be Ours* focuses on the turbulent half century from the outbreak of World War II in 1939, which started the chain of events that would lead to the communist takeover of Poland, to 1989, when futile attempts to reform the communist system gave way to its total transformation. Paczkowski shows how the communists captured and consolidated power, describes their use of terror and propaganda, and illuminates the changes that took place within the governing elite. He also documents the political opposition to the regime—both inside Poland and abroad—that resulted in upheavals in 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976, and 1980. His narrative makes evident the pressures that the elite felt from above, from Moscow, and from below, from the population and from within the party. The history of Poland and the Poles is of special interest because on numerous occasions in the twentieth century this relatively small country influenced developments on a global scale.

First published in Poland in 1995, *The Spring Will Be Ours* has been translated into several other languages. For this edition, translated by Jane Cave, Paczkowski has added an introductory chapter on Poland's twenty years of independence prior to 1939 and an extensive postscript exploring the changes that have taken place since the fall of communism in 1989. A bibliography of English-language works, prepared by Padraic Kenney, makes this book an indispensable starting point for anyone seeking to understand the remarkable course of events that brought an independent Poland into the twenty-first century.

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