

Anna Kozłowska-Ryś, Krzysztof Drozdowski, *Świat odosobniony. Bydgoska służba penitencjarna w latach 1920–1939*, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Historii i Stosunków Międzynarodowych Wydziału Filologiczno-Historycznego Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego Filia w Piotrkowie Trybunalskim, Poznań–Bydgoszcz–Piotrków Trybunalski 2017, pp. 264.

The subject of the review is the scientific monograph by Anna Kozłowska-Ryś and Krzysztof Drozdowski published by the Institute of History and International Relations at the Faculty of Language Studies and History of the Jan Kochanowski University (Branch in Piotrków Trybunalski), devoted to the history of penitentiary service in Bydgoszcz in the Second Polish Republic.

First of all, it should be noted that both the topic and the time period covered in the work were well defined by the authors. As of yet, the prison service in Bydgoszcz (as well as in the rest of the country) has not been a subject of more in-depth historical studies. Thus, the reviewed book may fill a significant gap in the historiography of the interwar period in Bydgoszcz and its region as well as that of Poland before the outbreak of World War II.

The monograph, preceded by an introduction (which justifies the choice of subject matter, provides an outline of the book, specifies the sources and literature of the subject) and closed with a summary, consists of four main parts according to the principles of thematic analysis.

The first part treats on the history of penitentiary service in Bydgoszcz in the years 1920–1939 with particular emphasis on: the custody suite in Bydgoszcz, the penitentiary and remand prison in Wały Jagiellońskie Street in Bydgoszcz, the issue of feeding inmates in the penitentiary and remand prison, the matters of organization and proceedings of celebrations and festivities in the prison during the interwar period and, finally, the topic of prisoners' escapes and executions in Bydgoszcz in the Second Polish Republic. The second part is entirely devoted to a particular institution

which was subordinate to the Bydgoszcz prison service, i.e. the Agricultural Penal Colony in Trzeciewnica.

The next chapter includes the listing of the Bydgoszcz penitentiary staff's biographical notes. Being the most extensive part, it is divided into smaller sections. The first one contains the biographical notes of the governors of the penitentiary and remand prison in Bydgoszcz, arranged in the chronological order: Kazimierz Gaj, Stanisław Kostrzewski, Antoni Matuszewski, Ludwik Makuch, Leopold Fortuna, Mirosław Błaszek, Aleksander Tucholski, Władysław Wieczorek, Edmund Bogusławski and Alfred Meisser. The following section consists of biographic entries on the prison officers in Bydgoszcz, this time organized alphabetically: Tadeusz Furman, Ignacy Głowik, Kazimiera Guglerowa, Marian Hliniak, Franciszek Kantorski, Franciszek Korzeniewski, Wiktor Lehmann, Tadeusz Pieróg, Stanisław Ratajczyk, Michał Sierakowski and Andrzej Szewczyk. The last subchapter deals with the personnel of the custody suite and presents Paweł Dziwnik's biographical note.

The fourth part of the reviewed monograph describes the history and activity of the "Patronat" Association for the Protection of Prisoners in Bydgoszcz.

In addition, the main text of the study is accompanied by: annexes (containing a table summary of statistical data related to the penitentiary and remand prison in Bydgoszcz and the Agricultural Penal Colony in Trzeciewnica in 1922–1939; legal acts and illustrations depicting the uniforms of the prison service in interwar Poland; plans of buildings used by the Bydgoszcz penitentiary service and photographs of prison governors and officers in Bydgoszcz), a bibliography, a list of figures and an index of names.

Any reader interested in the history of the Polish uniformed services or interwar Poland, be it a professional member of the Klio guild or an amateur enthusiast, would agree that the reviewed monograph has many strong points. Apart from the above-mentioned, well-chosen subject matter, the advantages of the work include: a logical, thematic structure; a narrative in which the Authors skillfully combine the presentation of interesting facts and historical processes with their own opinions, evaluations and accurately selected quotations which are smoothly woven into the text, supporting the scientific argument; a high level of Authors' writing skills which is demonstrated, among other things, through a proper, clear and legible set of footnotes and references, a thorough

proofreading (resulting in the absence of typographical errors or stylistic vagueness) and an extensive bibliography.

What is more, special attention should be given to the annexes which are interesting and justified by the content of the book. They complement the narrative, exploring these aspects of the functioning of the penitentiary service in the Second Polish Republic which were not taken (and did not have to be taken as the Authors added the said annexes into their work) into detailed consideration in the main body of the monograph – especially the statistical data and plans, compiled with the diligence and meticulousness of the Benedictine monk, reflecting the functioning of a prison in Bydgoszcz, the work of its staff and the uniforms of penitentiary service officers.

A. Kozłowska-Ryś and K. Drozdowski base their analysis and conclusions on the vast variety of sources and literature of the subject. It presents a clear evidence of their scholarly integrity. They worked with the fonds collected in the State Archives in Bydgoszcz, Poznań and Kalisz, in the Central Archives of Historical Records, in the Institute of National Remembrance and in the General Elżbieta Zawacka Foundation in Toruń. Additionally, the authors make use of diverse printed sources, several positions from the press of the times and nearly a hundred papers and subject-related web pages.

Even though the foregoing, numerous arguments clearly speak for the great scholarly and cognitive value of the reviewed publication, the work is not utterly devoid of structure and content-related shortcomings. First of all, an obvious drawback lies in a disproportionate volume of the four main parts of the monograph. While the first and the third count about a hundred pages, the second and the fourth chapters consist of less than twenty pages. The differences clearly stem from the subject matter and the amount of the available materials (sources and literature of the subject) on which particular parts of the book were based. Yet, the question remains whether the authors, aware of such disproportions, should not have come up with another thematic structure of the book.

When it comes to content, it should be pointed out that the annex devoted to the uniforms of the penitentiary service in inter-war Poland lacks color illustrations. Since including them would seem entirely appropriate, one can only assume that the authors and the publishers must have taken such a “self-limiting” decision

due to financial reasons as the printing of illustrations in color would entail a significant increase in the publication costs.

Nevertheless, the above critical remarks do not influence reviewer's essentially positive evaluation of the book. The Polish historiography of the Second Polish Republic has been enriched with a very successful monograph, firmly rooted in the sources and existing literature of the subject, presenting a less known and less frequently studied by historians, and yet, such an absorbing aspect of the functioning of the Polish State and its uniformed services before World War II.

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