

They risked their lives to save others

The latest publication of the Institute of National Remembrance entitled “Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej” [“Repression for Helping Jews in the Occupied Polish Lands During World War II”] has hit the publishing market. Its authors, Martyna Grądzka-Rejak and Aleksandra Namysło, have mentioned that the first volume contains only part of the new findings and announce the next one.

“Leon Stroszczyński provided bread to Jewish prisoners imprisoned in the forced labour camp in Krzyżowniki near Poznan. He was arrested for this by the Poznan Gestapo and sentenced to death by the verdict of a Special Court” – this is one of the accounts contained in this book.

The publication contains 333 notes (concerning 654 people) describing the causes, circumstances, and course of events related to the provision of assistance to the Jewish population and the consequences in the form of actions of the Third Reich’s military and civil authorities towards persons who violated the rules of contacting the Jewish population, governed by occupation law. The authors of the publication tried to reconstruct the dependency between aid and repression as fully as possible, learn the motivations of those participating in the events and the circumstances of disclosing the fact of providing help. This gave the opportunity to show the variety of attitudes, and at the same time the complexity of the issue studied.

The publication is a partial result of work carried out under the project entitled “Index of Poles murdered and repressed for helping Jews during World War II”. Its aim is to determine the names of Polish citizens, not covered by the Nuremberg legislation, but living on the territory of the Republic of Poland within the borders of 31 August 1939 and repressed for providing help to Jews during World War II.

– We should know as much as possible about these noble people who decided to risk their lives. They are our national heroes – Dr. Mateusz Szpytma, Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance, highlighted during the book's premiere.

This volume is the first one from the series of publications entitled "Repressions for helping Jews during World War II".

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