

Mariusz Chrostek

Instytut Filologii Polskiej, Uniwersytet Rzeszowski
[Institute of Polish Philology, University of Rzeszów]

**Romantycy i socjaliści – w konspiracji, w areszcie i na zesłaniu.
Uwagi o etosie dziewiętnastowiecznych więźniów politycznych**

**Romanticists and socialists – in conspiracy, in prison and in exile.
Remarks on the ethos of 19th-century political prisoners**

SUMMARY

(goal) The paper presents various attitudes adopted by Poles in conspiracy, in prison and in exile in Siberia in the 19th and the beginnings of the 20th centuries, with special focus on the differences between the generation of the romanticists and the socialists.

(method) The problem is analysed on the basis of source materials: Polish literary texts which dealt with the motif of the conspirator, prisoner and exile (19th century), and the memoirs, letters and testimonies of Polish prisoners and exiles (until 1914). The two kinds of sources have been contrasted by the author.

(results) Before they were arrested, the romantic conspirators strived to incite a national rising. Despite repeated failures, new underground organizations were continually formed, driven by a belief that victory was attainable. Socialists could not hope that the ideas they voiced would prevail, as they operated in much more difficult conditions (isolation, resentment by society). In prison, the romantic conspirators frequently broke down as a result of brutal investigative methods, while the socialists showed more courage and kept silent. In exile, the romantic conspirators kept up their spirits, they cultivated high moral values, and worked to develop themselves intellectually and materially, thus preserving the good image of Poles and contributing to civilizing Siberia. After the January Rising of 1863-64, disputes and conflicts began to appear among them with regard to their material conditions and political views. A crisis in the ethos of the Polish exile was observed at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. The socialists were at loggerheads with one another, and there was infighting between their various parties and factions; they were very irritable, intolerant and resentful towards the Russians. They also got very badly on with the Russian administration, because of the mutinies and constant resistance which they put up. Among the revolutionary youth morale was very low – there were cases of alcoholism, thefts and denunciation.

(conclusions) The attitudes of the two groups of Poles involved in conspiracies in the 19th century showed differences between the stages of conspiracy and imprisonment (with the socialists coming out slightly better than the romanticists), on the one hand, and exile in Siberia, on the other, where it was the socialists who undermined the noble ethos of the Pole developed by the romanticists.

Analecta – Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Nauki

[Analecta – Studies and Materials on the History of Science]

XVII, 2008, 1-2, 33-69