Adam Kozłowiecki, S.J.

Not und Bedrängnis: Als Jesuit in Auschwitz und Dachau; Lagertagebuch. Edited by Manfred Deselaers and Bernhard Sill. Translated by Herbert Ulrich. Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 2016. Pp. 687. Hb, €29.95.

In his June 1942 entry in his memoir, *Suffering and Anguish: As a Jesuit in Auschwitz and Dachau*, Father Adam Kozłowiecki, S.J., wrote: "I spent two years of my priesthood in freedom and almost three years in a prison or a concentration camp. God has His own plans for me and surely knows why He allows all this. I trust His plans and surrender to His will but in my heart I rebel against it all. The question burns on my lips: And how much longer?" (431).

Unfortunately, Kozłowiecki had to endure this torturous odyssey for almost three more years. It all began, on November 10, 1939, when the Gestapo arrested him and twenty-four of his fellow Jesuits in Kraków and impounded them in a local prison without cause. Kozłowiecki was only twenty-eight years old at the time and ordained just over two years. Months later, following his arrest and imprisonment, a sympathetic police officer informed him that his only "crime" was professing a worldview that did not please the National Socialists (108). His agonizing journey would find him detained in two former Polish prisons, Kraków Prison on Montelupi Street (November 10, 1939–February 2, 1940) and Wiśnicz Prison (February 3–June 20, 1940) and in two concentration camps, Auschwitz I (June 20–December 10, 1940) and Dachau (December 11, 1940–April 29, 1945). Kozłowiecki did not experience freedom until precisely 5:27 PM on Sunday, April 29, 1945, a date and time he marked for posterity, when American troops liberated Dachau. He survived the Nazi subjugation, but one-fifth of his fellow priests from Poland, more than 2,500 priests, did not (Jerzy Kłoczowski, *A History of Polish Christianity* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 301). The cruel treatment Kozłowiecki endured, left him with vivid memories. Though his captors did not allow Kozłowiecki to write while imprisoned, he recorded his experiences in diary form after his liberation, while in Rome. The first edition of ten thousand copies appeared in 1967, though Communist authorities censored it. By this time, Kozłowiecki had already worked many years as a missionary in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), been ordained a bishop (1955), served further as apostolic vicar (1955) and then was made archbishop of Lusaka (1959). In 1969, Kozłowiecki resigned as archbishop to return to parish ministry in order to open the path for a native Zambian to be appointed. After the fall of Communism, in 1995, Kozłowiecki published a revision of his memoir, the edition used for the German translation. In 1998, Pope John Paul II honored

Kozłowiecki by creating him a cardinal, an honorary title, since he was past the conclave voting age.

Kozłowiecki divided his memoir into eight sections. In the first three briefer sections, he offered an overview of the origins, organization, and life of prisoners in the concentration camps. These sections were clearly drawn from his personal observations and experiences and, more than likely, enriched with information from secondary sources. He never refrained from describing the constant pangs of hunger prisoners endured due to insufficient nourishment. He then recounted the German invasion of Poland and life before his imprisonment as he and his fellow Jesuits sought safe haven from his country's subjugators. The remaining sections dealt with Kozłowiecki's four distinct experiences of captivity in prisons and concentration camps. While his writing is descriptive, it is also matter-of-fact, generally void of any literary prose that one might find in other more widely read World War II-era memoirs or diaries. In addition, Kozłowiecki often provides litanies of names of individual priests but offers little or no background on them. During the worse years of captivity in Dachau, generally before the autumn of 1943, such lists take on a different meaning, this time recording priests' death from torture, disease, or exhaustion. The sheer number of such entries overwhelms and illustrates the climate of death and destruction ever-present in the camps. Still, an English translation, if and when one becomes available, will require significant editing and annotating.

Striking are the different climates present in the four diverse experiences of captivity that Kozłowiecki encounters under the Germans. In Kraków and Wiśnicz, he faces both sadistic and sympathetic guards, the latter of whom permit, at times, the celebration of the sacraments and preparation of prisoner meals by religious sisters. Regularly, Kozłowiecki and his fellow priests also enthusiastically serve in chaplaincy roles to their fellow prisoners, though often improvising with "dry Masses," celebrating Mass with no hosts or wine. Auschwitz offers its own set of challenges throughout the ordeal. While the SS men forbid prayer and anything that smacks of religious discourse, Kozłowiecki finds a few of them merciful. Likewise, the close quarters between the priests and lay prisoners discourage anticlericalism and create the opportunity for bonding among them. Still, Kozłowiecki describes his experience at Auschwitz as a "summer without sun," viewing his overall treatment there much worse than at Dachau. At Auschwitz, he was allowed to bathe only two to three times a month and to change his undergarments rarely. By contrast, at Dachau cleanliness was emphasized more with prisoners permitted to take baths every week, with regular changes of clothes. Work details also differed

between the camps. At Auschwitz, prisoners worked harder and received less nourishment and only a half-day off on Sunday while, after 1942, prisoners at Dachau were allowed to stop work from Saturday afternoon through early Monday morning.

Though the SS-men generally showed little sympathy to priests, they specifically created a climate in Dachau which promoted ostracization from lay prisoners and persecution. At times, the SS gave priests special privileges, including larger rations, which only increased the ire of lay prisoners. Priests were also separated from their fellow prisoners in special barracks (Blocks 26, 28, and 30). Kozłowiecki escaped some of the resentment for periods of his Dachau captivity by being sporadically assigned to barracks of mostly non-clerical prisoners. Likewise, he made friends and contacts through his work assignments. No matter how much he thought he understood the nature of Dachau, the SS seemed determined to thwart him by making decisions that had little rhyme or reason other than to torture him and his fellow inmates. While SS guards permitted Masses, only priests were allowed to attend and their length was limited. At times, the SS also separated priests of different nationalities, especially keeping Poles away from Germans. There is scant evidence in the memoir of sympathy between the German priests and their Polish confrères.

Kozłowiecki also mentions Jews only a handful of times. In Dachau, he eventually befriended a Jew whose name he recalls and whom he describes as initially hostile toward priests. However, the majority of Jews he mentions are left unnamed, whom he characterized as clever and wealthy with an ability to purchase their freedom from prison while economically deprived Poles are left to suffer (76, 122, 140, 594). Despite such anti-semitic rhetoric, Kozłowiecki shows awareness of the severe persecution that Jews endured by contrast to what other groups sustained (89). Yet, the Holocaust of European Jews receives no mention in the memoir. At best, we learn in oblique references of the disappearance of sick Dachau inmates and the construction of questionable crematoria.

By the end of his almost six-year ordeal, Kozłowiecki was nearly a broken man whose nerves were, at best, on edge. Yet, somehow he endured. Unlike many of his fellow priests, he remained healthy enough to avoid being carted off for medical “treatments” and luckily escaped being chosen for medical experiments. Regular beatings and abuse from the *Kapos* and guards did not break him.

Kozłowiecki's memoir is an important one. It portrays prisoner life under German captivity in significant detail. Similarly, it offers insight into prisoners' experience in the early months of Auschwitz I's existence. It also provides a cohesive continuum of the life and captivity of one prisoner—a priest—from

the beginning of German occupation to the cessation of the war in four different institutions of torture and imprisonment. It is a unique document for anyone interested in the harrowing experiences of Polish Catholic clergy under National Socialism.

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