Summary

This dissertation concerns the penalty of life imprisonment. This penalty is the most severe penalty provided for in Polish criminal law. It was restored to the Polish legal order after 25 years of non-existence in the legislation of the Polish People's Republic, i.e. in 1995. This means that the 25-year period since it was restored to our legal system has just passed. This period is the right moment to make theoretical considerations and to put forward practical conclusions, which also take into account in particular the history of legislation in this field.

The work has been divided into five chapters. The first relates to the history of life imprisonment. This chapter explores the genesis of life imprisonment. The author did it in an original way, deriving the genesis of life imprisonment as an independent penalty. The functioning of the penalty of life imprisonment in early modern period was also presented, when its dynamic development took place. Then, its existence was characterized in the interwar period, i.e. at a time when social consciousness regarding any punishments was already influenced by the experience of World War I and when the next visions were revealing on the horizon. At the same time, these were years of relatively intensive work on the shape of this institution in general. There were also quite detailed proposals regarding the desired vision of life imprisonment. Next, the disappearance of this penalty during the legislation of the Polish People's Republic was discussed. Residual regulations were presented, which provided for this penalty as a sanction and were still in force. However, they were largely related to war crimes or constituted an expression of sanctioning by the authorities specific, undesirable proceedings.

The second chapter focuses on the dispute about life imprisonment. This dispute appears to be particularly lively during periods of intense debate on the death penalty and potential solutions that would replace it and take over its functions. So this is not a just nowadays dispute. For this reason, the thinkers' views on the sentence of life imprisonment have been presented throughout the ages. Of course, the important role and contribution of contemporary representatives of criminal law science to the discussion on the development of life imprisonment and its links with otherlegal institutions was also appreciated. There were also numerous arguments put forward today to justify its

functioning in the system of codexial penalties and arguments for the removal of life imprisonment from this system.

The third chapter presents the penalty of life imprisonment in terms of current criminal law. This chapter, however, began with the presentation of the process of restoring life imprisonment to the Polish legal order. Next, the focus was on the currently applicable Penal Code of 1997. Crimes punishable by life imprisonment were cited. The specificity of these crimes strongly convinces about the exceptional nature of the punishment discussed in this dissertation. In connection with this, and the conditions for imposing such an exceptional penalty, which is a life sentence, should be given separate attention. The imposion of life inprisonment on accused in a criminal trial is also associated with the possibility of elongation the period necessary to apply for conditional early release by a convict on that penalty. Therefore, these relevant regulations were discussed. In subsections devoted to the above topics, the view of representatives of science on these institutions and their possible construction is also presented.

Chapter four is devoted to the practice of sentencing on the life inprisonment in the light of the examination of files resolved in the first instance before the Regional Court in Włocławek. The choice of this constituency was justified by many factors related to the greatest extent to the selection of cases. Six cases were presented extremely meticulous and in details. The focus was not only on the justification of sentencing on life imprisonment for individual defendants, but also on their characteristics and conduct of proceedings.

In the fifth chapter, opinions on the penalty of life imprisonment in the light of surveys were quoted. These studies were conducted in the years 2018-2020. Their concept was to divide the group of respondents and get the answer to the question of how life imprisonment is perceived in the views of practitioners of law, and how in the views of those who are not professionally connected with applying the law and whether these views differ from each other. Specific conclusions were drawn from these studies.