



Kamil Kijek

Ph.D. Student from The University of Wrocław

Lahnstein Scholarship 2009

E-mail: kamil.kijek_at_gmail.com

Publications:

Kamil Kijek (2011): Max Weinreich, assimilation and the social politics of Jewish nation-building, *East European Jewish Affairs*, 41:1-2, 25-55

“The Political generation of the 30-s and Jewish Political Consciousness before the Shoah: The Evolution of political values of the Jewish Community in Interwar Poland.”

My doctoral study deals with the character of political consciousness of the Jews in Interwar Poland. It is focusing on the evolution of political value system and those conditions affecting its development during the Interwar period, with special emphasis on the 1930s. Description and explanation of the problem is organized around the category of the political generation. Following category tries to grasp Polish Jews as social group organized by the experience of life in the new social reality, Polish Second Republic. It is created by the participation in various spheres of social life such as politics (parliamentary, local, self-government), education (Polish and autonomous Jewish educational system) and connected to the cultural experience (language of the press, leaflets, school text books, practices and content of teaching). The category of political generation stresses also the demographic aspect of change in political normative system. In the 1930s a new generation of Jewish youth and young adults entered the political scene. It was shaped by the, new, Polish political reality mentioned above, and supposedly characterized by the different political consciousness. While this generation gradually absorbed, Polish culture, at the same time it became more alienated by the events and social processes taking place in its surroundings. Processes of acculturation, hardening barriers of assimilation and integration, and anti-Semitic experience, will be studied in its relation to the changing political value system.

Goal of my doctoral work is to describe political consciousness, not the political ideologies of the last generation of the pre-war Polish Jewry. It focuses more on categories of social perception connected to the politics, such as main symbols, values and highly evaluated norms of political behavior, and less on the particular views and actions, already well described in the literature on the Interwar Polish Jewry. That kind of political consciousness can be defined as particular socio-cultural context in which functioned the narrowly defined Jewish politics, such as electoral campaigns, political debates, elections and actions of political leaders. By analyzing this particular socio-cultural context, I would like to add important explanatory context of the change in the political behavior of the Polish Jewry in the last years of the II Republic.