

Abstract

The thesis deals with the social position of the Jewish minority in Germany during the first decades of the *Second Reich*; it is intended as a contribution to the social history with an emphasis on the history of everyday life. It attempts to answer a question, why despite (what seemed to be) a highly successful assimilation, or more precisely acculturation, the Jews became a target of hateful attacks again in the late 1870's and 1880's. Various methods have been applied to determine, firstly, how the German-Jewish family life looked, whether and how its education approach and job structure differed from those of the majority; secondly, in which way the social-economic situation affected the minority position, its participation in public life and its attitude to the recently established state; and last but not least, the way the German-Jews understood and perceived themselves, as well as the East European immigrants (so called *Ostjuden*) and the public's anti-Semitism. The result of the study shows that the German-Jewish values and customs were mainly identical to those of the *bourgeoisie*, probably with an endogamy being the only specific feature. At the time of rising Conservatism and in spite of experiencing bitter disappointment at the again appearing anti-Semitism, their optimism and trust in state prevailed as did their liberal political views. However, the rampant race theory discourse – with its over exaggerated patriotism, Germanism (*Deutschtum*) and negative attitude to the Slavic inhabitants within the *Reich* – influenced even them.

Key words: *Jews, social position, Germany, 19th century, Bismarck, ego-documents, memory, everyday life, Ostjuden, anti-Semitism*