

Review of the Study *Preconditions of the Holocaust. Anti-Semitism in Lithuania (19th c. - First Half of the 20th c. (Until 15 June 1940)* of Vygantas Vareikis

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It is hard to review the whole study by Vygandas Vareikis due to a relatively narrow specialisation of the reviewer, therefore, the focus of attention will be on the Lithuanian-Jewish relations and their development only in the 20th century and only up to 1941.

It is evident that the author is an expert on the issue. He reveals and discusses the years and periods of political rapprochement and ever-growing estrangement, explains the causes of the said processes, gives the picture of the growth of anti-Semitism in Lithuania, clarifies its motivation and the factors which predetermine the change in motivation.

Vareikis does not limit himself to Lithuania; the study covers a wider context of anti-Semitism, i.e. comparison of the Jewish rights and peculiarities of anti-Semitism in the neighbouring countries (e.g. when the stereotype of a 'Jewish communist' started crystallising not only in Lithuania, but also in Poland, etc.).

The study pays quite a lot of attention to the goals of the Jewish community and a changing or varying approach of the Lithuanian authorities and the society concerning them; discusses the realisation of and obstacles to the said goals; highlights the position of the Lithuanian Catholic Church towards the Jewish community; draws attention to growing radicalism in the Lithuanian society and the causes for anti-Semitism to develop as well as to the consolidation of the myth of ritual murders in the thirties, etc.

It would be hard to list all the interesting and current aspects of the study. Nevertheless, comments should be made, which would probably help to make some improvements in certain statements of the text.

On page 18 the author writes that 'on 8 March 1926, the Kahal Council [...] was dispersed, the Jewish communities were no longer allowed to collect taxes, register relatives, etc.' Indeed, the kahals of the Jewish communities were abolished, however, the registration of relatives was passed to the rabbis. Could they possibly be considered non-members of the community?

There is some vagueness in the description of the incident between the Jews and Lithuanians in summer 1929 when commemorating the international anti-military red day (p. 19). Firstly, I will allow myself to doubt whether imprisonment could be the measure prescribed according to the administrative procedure. Secondly, in terms of the ruling of the court, there is a reference made to the imprisonment of 8 persons. However, I happened to find another figure, namely 12, in historical literature.

Moreover, it is insufficient to specify the year only when dealing with the issue of the Jews in soviet party organisations and administration (p. 26-27), considering that the situation in 1940-1941 changed for several times and due to different reasons. The national composition of the communist party and soviet structures of repression is important, however, expression in per cents of the number of communists of one nationality or another in the soviet administration leads nowhere.

In the part about deportees, the author decreases the total number of the Jews deported in June 1941 almost twice (p.27); the thought by Dov Levin is interpreted inaccurately, too, because it was not 57 per cent of the Jewish factories nationalised by the soviet government, but 57 per cent of the nationalised factories and workshops with 20 or more hired workers, which belonged to the Jews.

I suppose that it would be easier for reading if the study had its emphasis more specified and the textual structure divided into chapters. This comment leads to another one, namely topic-related and chronological consistency of some parts of the text, e.g. the description of approach of the Lithuanian Riflemen Union (LRU) towards the Jews, then the approach of the Jews to the introduction of Litas and the position of the LRU leaders.

Vareikis examines the position of the leaders of the Nationalist party and representatives of different other organisation with regard to the Jews, however, the position of the Christian Democrats who happened to be in power more than a year remains unexplained. The political affiliation and dependency of the newspaper *Trimitas* (whose fragments were quoted) also remain unclear, although explanations follows in other similar cases.

In addition, I think that the conclusions could have been broader and more comprehensive to have a more precise summary of the text.

A faultfinding reader could miss notes in some places of the text. The value of the study is also decreased by the remaining proof-reading, stylistic and even logical mistakes. I would like to point out some of those which might escape a non-specialist's eye, including the one on p. 13 where *kahal* becomes *kelihe*; the meaning of the 'falsification of products' remains unclear (p. 17); I have failed to understand the meaning of the *devaluacija* in the text where this word was mentioned for several time (has it derived from Fr. *devaluation*?).

Nevertheless, these comments (a part of them remain open for a discussion) only witness attention paid to the text in question rather than lessen its importance and value.

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