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For many years, the history of Polish Jews has seemed to be a very popular topic in Poland and elsewhere. The latest research focuses mostly on "dark periods" and dramatic developments during the Second World War and afterwards, or even the development of antisemitism. While this focus is fully understandable, simultaneously there are other neglected or minimally cultivated research fields. Among these "not usually remembered pasts" are the Jewish activities in secular self-governing institutions. My interests concentrates on the beginning of the Jewish participation in them, on the period from the socond half of the 19th century to World War I, and on one particulat Galician city: Krakow. During this period, Krakow enjoyed a broad municipal self-government, whose archives are still well preserved.

The people of interest are those Jews who made use of the equality of rights to participate in the local self-governement (municipal council). Due to the liberal election order, they were either wealthy or educated (or both), the latter meaning acculturated to Polish culture. In this way, the Jewish representation in Krakow´s municipal council became dominated by Polonised Jews who belonged to the tiny Polish liberal stratum. Orthodox Jews constituted a minority among Jewish municipal councillors.

The election order indeed opened the municipal council for Jews, but they always built a minoriry there. Therefore their participation alone did not guarantee success for their interventions. In the municipal council, a strong faction also participated which was anti-Jewish and whose interests opposed those of Jewish liberals. Jewish councillors needed supporters and built coalition with other representatives, who did not come exclusively from Jewish milieus.

The applicant would like to present and analyse the negotiation process in the Krakow municipal council as conflicting and compromising stories. The real output of Jewish interventions is understood as local test cases for universal rights equality. The hypothesis is that the representatives of liberal Jews were not only an object of Polish municipal politics but a powerful partner there, which tried to achieve its aims through cooperation with other parties. Therefore, Jewish liberal councillors created a modern politics concerning Jews much earlier than the Zionists did. Last but not least, it will be possible to verify the hypothesis that Cracovian liberal Jews formed part of a much broader bourgeois social stratum in the Habsburg Empire, with iis unique self-understanding and habitus. The history of Jewish liberalism in the Habsburg Empire is remembered mostly as a "shining" and successful story. The developments of Krakow´s Jewish municipal liberalism could perhaps be seen in this way too.