

A summary of the dissertation by Katarzyna Kwiatkowska-Moskalewicz:

"I dream of building a socialist Poland, a free homeland of free and happy people. But I am terribly scared.... Identity and political dilemmas of Jewish communists in Poland 1918-1968 - a study of a double defeat" [Moim marzeniem jest budować Polskę socjalistyczną, wolną ojczyznę wolnych i szczęśliwych ludzi. Strasznie się jednak boję... Tożsamościowe i polityczne dylematy Żydów komunistów w Polsce 1918–1968 – studium podwójnej klęski]

This dissertation presents the fate of a group of Polish communists of Jewish origin, born around 1918, who began their political activity in the 1930s, mainly in the ranks of the school organization operating under the name of the Union of Socialist Youth/Revolutionary Union of Nonaffluent School Youth/Socialist Union of School Youth, and who survived the Second World War and the Holocaust, mainly in the USSR, or in the ranks of the communist resistance movement - People's Guard/People's Army. After the end of the German occupation, under the auspices of the Polish Workers' Party/Polish United Workers' Party, they constructed the new Polish system at various levels of the party and state hierarchy. In 1968, they became victims of anti-Semitic purges, most often manifesting themselves in dismissals from work, expulsions from the party, and general harassment targeted at their ethnicity. Many were forced to emigrate, which at the time meant renouncing their Polish citizenship. Irrespective of whether individual members of the group decided to leave Poland, the practices of the March turned out to be a moment of symbolic defeat for this community, a collapse of the chosen strategy of political identity.

The biographies of a married couple, Helena Wolińska (1919-2008) and Włodzimierz Brus (1921-2007), and selected individuals from their milieu exemplify the collective fate of the group. The primary source corpus included personal documents of various origins from several dozen individuals, which served to analyze the eponymous identity and political dilemmas, in line with the chosen assumption that this dissertation is a group biography, a doubly extended one. The research confronted the fragmentary ego documents of Helena Wolińska and Włodzimierz Brus with analogous sources concerning selected representatives of the studied group. Their shared experiences, as revealed by the analysis of the sources, are arranged in a model of group biography.