

Foreword by Sigmound A. Königsberg

In recent years, we have come to learn that hate speech and fake news have had a massively adverse impact on society in many countries. We re-encounter conspiracy myths, hatred and prejudice we erroneously thought had faded away. When people taking part in demonstrations today ‘adorn’ themselves with the ‘Yellow Star’, when people dare to publicly show the picture of Joseph Mengele, the Auschwitz murderer-doctor, next to a photo of Dr. Christian Drosten, chief virologist of Berlin’s Charité hospital, thus comparing the mass murder of European Jewry to public health managers dealing with a pandemic, we recognize that hatred and prejudice are still virulent even 75 years after the liberation from the Nazis. In addition, we recognize that knowledge about antisemitism and the mechanisms of Nazi persecution is limited. For this reason, it is essential that the work done by historians regarding Nazi persecution and – in the case of this publication – especially the history of deportations is accessible to a broad public. We are in a situation where our society is nearing a crossroads. Will we continue to live in an open, liberal and democratic society, or will it drift into an authoritarian and intolerant form we will not be able to endure? It remains to be wished that civil society will respond to the impulses generated by the authors of these contributions in helping to counteract inhuman societal developments.

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