

FOREWORD BY THE EDITORS

INTRODUCTION: ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF THIS VOLUME

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The purpose of this volume of *PUBLIC POLICY.bg* is to draw attention to a topic that is usually considered primarily a matter of history. Thus, Holocaust remembrance is usually debated by historians. The study of this past is often in narrowly specialized academic units of Jewish studies or in Holocaust Studies Centers. Such academic structures exist in many universities around the world. They have long developed an extremely high level of expertise on this historical heritage. Conferences are held, exclusive publications appear in many languages. This autonomous scientific space is being reproduced and developed further. The problem, however, is that it remains relatively encapsulated and isolated within the narrow boundaries of experts on the subject. It can be said that the *first problem* that caused us to dedicate this issue of the Holocaust Remembrance Policy journal was *the need to draw attention to the interdisciplinary nature of these studies and highlight the importance of horizontal links between different scientific fields in them.*

The rise of anti-Semitism virtually everywhere in the world is an indicator not only of many other problems existing in the social environment, but also of certain deficits in Holocaust remembrance policies. The Holocaust is more than a valid research topic for all social sciences, and for the sciences in the field of governance in particular. We hope that this specialized issue of our journal will be met with the necessary attention and understanding of the insatiable valences in the study and teaching of Holocaust knowledge in a wide range of academic programs.

The level of education that is typical for the systematic teaching about the Holocaust *is the second problem.* Assuming that the rationale for teaching about this historical past in school curricula has long been clear, at least two questions arise in light of the current shortages of knowledge and sensitivity to Holocaust issues. The first is whether the lessons provided consist in a way that makes the knowledge taught comprehensible and leaves students involved in the subject matter (i.e. how it is taught). Next question is about the capacity of teachers in various fields to cope equally well in teaching of this complex subject. The word is about *the limited extent to which teachers themselves are prepared to teach this complex subject in a comprehensive way.* This latter question leads to the academic programs in an alternative way. Is it enough for history students alone to study the historical heritage of the Holocaust? For example, do teachers of civics, psychology, philosophy, and teaching in general have to focus on content about the Holocaust, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, human rights, and many other related topics? If so, what was it in their education that prepared

them, and if it did not, why important issues like that would not be discussed with students? Where do we learn about the Holocaust in a systematic way and the ways in which we interpret the meanings of this heritage? The latter leads to the importance of the interdisciplinary nature of the Holocaust. If academic programs ignore the subject of the Holocaust in their broader academic profile, then it is not clear how the capacity for systematic teaching in schools is created and reproduced, as well as how basic literacy of specialists from different professional fields on these issues is formed.

A key subject in the current issue of the journal *PUBLIC POLICY.bg* is that of *the policies of memory* themselves. If academic programs do not offer broad-based university courses related to the Holocaust, then where do lawyers or future judges learn about Holocaust deniers, hate speech, and various minority issues? How would future journalists, politicians, government officials, police officers and many others understand not only current regulations on issues such as hate speech, fake news and distortions of the past, but even more so how and how we actually understand history so that we do not experience it again? In short, how do we actually know about the Holocaust – from curricula, or rather from fiction and cinema? All this finds its focus in a general issue of memory policies.

This issue of our journal is dedicated entirely to the memory of the past. In memory of the Holocaust, the way we remember the persecution and the way we remember defending and opposing that persecution. We cannot change history, but we can look at it in its entirety. This is necessary not only because of our integrity to the past, but also because of the quality of the present and the future we are building.

Apparently this issue of the journal itself has a specific focus. It is dedicated to the institutional efforts of modernity to build a capacity for a responsible attitude towards history. The issue presents publications by nine authors on three important aspects of the research, educational and institutional status of Holocaust studies:

1. *Presentation of research* results or theoretical analyses of the legacy of the Holocaust and problems of anti-Semitism.
2. The Holocaust and anti-Semitism as an object of education or academic research. It is about the experience and opinion of *teaching the Holocaust knowledge in diverse academic programs*.
3. Memory protection policies. Articles in this section are focused on the results of the institutions on the sensitivity to the Holocaust, the state of human rights and problems of raising of anti-Semitism. It is about the role of civil servants and institutions of public governance.

We express our deep gratitude to each of the authors for contributing with their article to the achievement of the goals of this issue, namely to focus on the issue of *remembrance policies* for a *wider range of specialists*.

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