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Die Themen dieser Ausgabe

1.	Rahmenabkommen über iranisches Atomprogramm.....	1
2.	Tragödie von Yarmouk.....	3
3.	Koalitionsverhandlungen und Perspektiven für eine Einheitsregierung.....	4
4.	Medienquerschnitt.....	6

1. Rahmenabkommen über iranisches Atomprogramm

Das Anfang April erreichte Rahmenabkommen der fünf UN-Vetomächte und Deutschlands mit der iranischen Regierung stieß in Jerusalem auf scharfe Kritik. Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu warnte in einem Telefonat mit US-Präsident Barack Obama vor einer existentiellen Gefahr für Israel. Die Eckpunkte, die bis zum Sommer in einen Vertrag münden sollen, halten u.a. fest, dass Iran in den kommenden zehn Jahren in etwa zwei Drittel der Zentrifugen zur Urananreicherungen still legt. Die Atomanlagen sollen außerdem für Kontrollen der Internationalen Atomenergiebehörde (IAEA) zugänglich sein. In Israel bleibt man jedoch weiterhin besorgt.

The "historic" agreement that ignores history

(...) In 1994 President Clinton made a television address from the White House remarkably similar in wording to that of Mr. Obama following the Lausanne meetings. (...) It celebrated an "agreement" reached with North Korea to end that country's nuclear weapons program. Subsequently North Korea violated every aspect of that agreement with impunity, and is now a nuclear power. The same will happen again with Iran unless (1) sanctions are maintained and strengthened leading to regime change in Iran or (2) military force is used to destroy or seri-

ously damage Iran's nuclear facilities. The alternative is living (or dying) with a nuclear weapons-capable fanatical, tyrannical, aggressive regime much more dangerous for the rest of the world than North Korea will ever be. Too bad the meetings weren't held in the holy city of Qom. In that case the comparison with the betrayal of Czechoslovakia by the British and French in 1938 would have been even more perfect. That famous meeting, leading to an "historic" agreement, was of course, held in Munich, birthplace of the Nazi Party.

Norman Bailey, GLO, 06.04.15

Israel will benefit from an Iran nuclear deal

(...) we should take a breath and try to understand what each side is trying to achieve (...) The real goal of the world powers is to keep Iran in this situation, or return it to a situation in which it cannot produce enough fissile material for the core of a nuclear weapon for more than 10 years. No fissile material, no bomb. (...) The West is hoping that within the next 10-15 years, the ayatollahs will fall or be overthrown, or become more open and less militant. (...) Iran is primarily interested in the removal of sanctions (...) and (...) to protect the honor and prestige of the regime. (...) Israel's aim is to completely prevent – in the present and in the future - the possibility of Iran developing and producing nuclear weap-

ons (...) by preventing Iran from acquiring fissile material (...). one must consider the prospect that something will go wrong, leading to an escalation in the political conflict and the ongoing development of Iran's nuclear program. (...) For now, the military option does not seem to be on the table (...). If an agreement is reached within the next three months, Israel would benefit as Iran be out of the nuclear bomb business for at least ten years – which could well be the same result as attacking Iran's nuclear facilities. It is always better to achieve through diplomacy what could also be achieved with military measures.

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED, 01.04.15

The unfolding farce of Obama's deal with Iran

(...) President Barack Obama and his indefatigable secretary of state promised that they (...) would not sign a bad deal with Iran on its nuclear weapons program. (...) But the deal is far worse than even our relentlessly lowered expectations had given us reason to anticipate. The Arak heavy water plant is not to be dismantled. (...) The Fordo enrichment facility, built secretly into a mountain, is not to be shuttered. (...) Thousands of centrifuges are to be allowed to keep on spinning. Thousands more will remain intact. For heaven's sake, why? Because this was the best deal we could get. (...) If it were not so grave it would be farcical to witness the disingenuous attempts by the Obama administration to depict the unfolding disaster as an achievement worthy of admiration — the best deal; historic; a guarantee, in the glib, empty formulation of presidential adviser Ben Rhodes, that Iran will never get the bomb. (...) It gets worse. The Iranians' latest contention is that the deal gives them the right to start injecting gas into their most sophisticated centrifuges — the IR-8s — which they say can enrich uranium 20 times faster than their current IR-1s. And therefore, that smiling, avuncular Foreign Minister Zarif and his nuclear expert colleague Ali Akbar Salehi told Iranian MPs on Tuesday, Iran will begin working with the IR-8s on the first day that the deal goes into effect. (...) Needless to say, that makes a mockery of the entire deal. (...)

David Horowitz, TOI, 08.04.15

The Iran deal

(...) Iran will be allowed to keep in operation just 5,060 centrifuges, fewer than leaked estimates of 6,000 or 7,000 or 12,000. And only Iran's most basic model – the IR-1 centrifuges – will be in operation. (...) Also, all enrichment activity will be concentrated

at a single site, the Natanz facility, making inspections easier. The level of enrichment will be kept to 3.67 percent, vastly below weapons-grade. And the stockpile of low-grade uranium would be capped at 300 kilograms for 15 years. (...) The agreement sets up an aggressive inspection regime. (...) Yet, (...) there are also quite worrisome aspects to the framework agreement (...). Iran's nuclear infrastructure will remain intact, though some of it may be mothballed for 10 years. (...) Another problem is that Iran will be allowed to engage in "limited research and development with its advanced centrifuges" at Natanz (...). Not only is no mention made of Iran's development of long-range missiles that could only be used to carry nuclear warheads, the key parameters are silent on Iran's support for terrorism, not just in the Middle East but in far-flung locations such as Buenos Aires and Burgas. Indeed, while talks progressed between Iran and the P5+1 (the US, Britain, France, China and Russia plus Germany), Reza Naqdi, the commander of the Basij militia of the Revolutionary Guards, declared that "erasing Israel from the map" is "nonnegotiable." (...) The skeptics have every reason to remain skeptical.

Editorial, JPO, 06.04.15

There is no 'better deal' with Iran

(...) The deal is basically dangerous in nature, and needs to be rejected outright. (...) Even in the absence of a signed full agreement, the U.S. and its negotiating partners already have awarded legitimacy to Iran's nuclear threshold status. (...) Iran is getting more or less what it wanted: the capability to produce enriched uranium and to research weapon design; agreement to keep its missile program intact; and no linkages to Iranian behavior in the region. The deal is a prelude to nuclear breakout and Iranian regional hegemony. (...) Unfortunately, no better deal is in the offing. (...) Obama is right that the only alternative to this deal is an Iranian nuclear fait accompli or the bombing of the Iranian nuclear infrastructure. Obama's penchant for engagement, his reluctance to use force, and his liberal prism on international relations (...) has led to this miserable result. Netanyahu is wrong in demanding a better deal because no such deal exists. Yet denying its ratification by the U.S. Congress could create better international circumstances for an Israeli military strike. (...) It is more evident than ever that only military action can stop a determined state such as the Islamic Republic of Iran from building a nuclear bomb. (...)

Efraim Inbar, IHY, 09.04.15

Deal makes Iran stronger than ever

(...) The memorandum of understanding shows that the Iranians got their way on most of the issues. (...) The importance of the results of the talks is that Iran will be recognized as a country on the brink of nuclear capability. (...) Iran demanded that the deal be limited to a few years, after which the limitations on its nuclear program would be removed and it would be allowed to do what it wants. (...) Iran has come out of the deal in a new position. The sanctions against it will be removed and governments and private companies will rush to do business with it. Its regional status will be bolstered when its involvement in neighboring countries -- Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and the Gaza Strip -- is already unprecedented. Iran becoming a state on the verge of nuclear capability could prompt other countries to follow suit. (...) Will Iran take advantage of the loopholes in the deal to develop nuclear weapons? Its ultimate interest in acquiring nuclear weapons has not diminished, and we can assume that its attempts to do so will continue despite the agreement. The likely possibility is that Iran will not rush to reach a nuclear bomb in the next few years so as not to destroy what it gained in the deal and be punished severely. But when the restrictions are lifted about a decade from now, Iran could attempt to achieve nuclear weapons capability -- possibly at a new, secret facility -- hoping to present the world with a fait accompli.

Dr. Ephraim Kam , IHY, 05.04.15

2. Tragödie von Yarmouk

Die Lebensumstände in dem palästinensischen Flüchtlingslager Yarmouk, südlich von Damaskus, nehmen so dramatische Formen an, dass UN-Generalsekretär Ban Ki Moon den Vergleich zu einem „Todeslager“ zog. Die rund 18.000 noch dort lebenden Menschen geraten im syrischen Bürgerkrieg zwischen die Fronten der Rebellen und der Regierungssoldaten, obschon die Palästinensische Befreiungsorganisation (PLO) erklärte, keinen Anteil an den Kämpfen zu haben. Internationale Hilfsorganisationen fordern ein Ende der Kämpfe und Zugang für humanitäre Hilfe. Den Palästinensern, die das Lager verlassen wollen, sollte freies Geleit gewährt werden.

Encountering peace: We have the chance to do the right thing in Yarmouk

(...) The residents of the refugee camps in Syrian come mostly from the Galilee, and became refugees

after the establishment of Israel in 1948, and many were refugees at least twice before settling there. (...) They remained Palestinian in their identity, and part of the larger family of displaced Palestinians (...) most of the Palestinians in Syria did not take sides; nonetheless the Assad regime decided that they were the enemy. (...) Now the Yarmouk camp has been brutally attacked by Islamic State (IS), who are fighting against Assad and his Iranian-backed Hezbollah allies. The Palestinians are being bombed and killed by both sides (...). There are daily reports of massacres and rapes inside of Yarmouk. This is a humanitarian crisis that almost no one in the world cares about. (...) This is (...) is the time to save human lives. (...) It is the humane gesture that we Jews should understand the need for, recalling with empathy when we had no place to run to and no place to call home. Israel should announce immediately its willingness to have those 18,000 remaining residents of Yarmouk come to the West Bank. (...) The United Nations should provide safe passage for these people. The international community should assist with funds and resources – especially from the Arab world – to enable these poor suffering people to have a new beginning in their homeland. (...) This gesture on Israel's part would be so valued and appreciated regionally and internationally. There is so much to gain from it in trying to build a new relationship with the Palestinian people. It could be a whole re-start of the launching of a new process looking toward more peaceful relations between Israel and the Palestinians. Once settled into their “old-new” homeland, the rescuing of these people would create a new reality for them settling home with their brothers and sisters in Palestine. As the Talmud states, whoever preserves a single soul, it is as though he had preserved a whole world.

Gershon Baskin, JPO, 08.04.15

Why doesn't Israel help Palestinians in Yarmouk?

From afar, it's hard to recognize them. They are swaying human shadows, staring out into space, faces gaunt and their bones protruding from the skin that's meant to cover them. But if you look at them closely, you'll see who they are: They are the children and grandchildren of those who were expelled in 1948 (...). You can claim that you are not involved (...) no moral question is being raised regarding Israel's role in creating the killing fields there. (...) History, as we know, can't be changed, but examining historical events is crucial to changing how we relate to the past. And if we succeed in creating hy-

pothetical options for events of the past, perhaps we can change the future. Given the horrific tragedy of the Yarmouk refugee camp, it is time for Israel to think differently about the Palestinian people, some of which is part and parcel of this country and its future. (...) Instead of running to the end of the world to show the beautiful face of Israel, extend a hand to your neighbor. Learn something from Jordan, a country that has no moral or political obligation to Syria yet has already absorbed more than a million refugees from there. For once in your life, do something that you can relate proudly to your grandchildren. Let them say with pride that in Yarmouk, the process of reconciliation with our cousins began.

Oudeh Basharat, HAA, 13.04.15

Be a 'good Arab,' dear Oudeh: Let us ignore Yarmouk

(...) My colleague Oudeh Basharat, (...) why don't you learn from us? You should know already that in the Jewish country of refugees there's a hierarchy. Jewish refugees are above Arab refugees. Among the Jewish refugees, European refugees are preferable to refugees from Arab countries, the "Mizrahim." In the ranking of the "Mizrahi" refugees there's a big difference between refugees from Iraq and refugees from Morocco. (...) At the bottom of the list, which should be called the waiting list, are the immigrants from Ethiopia. That's how it is in the kingdom of refugees. And suddenly you are threatening to destroy this hierarchy. Suddenly the Yarmouk refugees are becoming the refugee aristocracy. (...) Your problem, Oudeh, is that of all the refugees, only your people want to return to the homeland. Only your people walk around with big keys to your homes, dreaming about distant days when Jews and Arabs lived together in harmony. It's because of you that there is no peace. Because in our imagination we see "refugees coming en masse in buses." We want you to promise to forget about this dream, to erase the Nakba from your lexicon, for your history to begin in 1949, and most importantly, for your people to internalize that it's not we who are to blame for your problems. (...) there's no room for two victims in the country of the refugees. It's you or us. So please, Oudeh. As a Christian Palestinian refugee, a minority within a minority within a minority, don't teach us what compassion is and don't look for it in our byways. (...) The refugees in Yarmouk will be taken care of by the United Nations. After all, it's an international problem. Not Israeli, not Zionist and certainly not Jewish. (...)

Zvi Bar'el, HAA, 15.04.15

When Muslims murder Palestinians

While the Israeli Defense Force were storming into Gaza the streets of Europe were overrun with demonstrators. There were virtual riots outside of the Israeli embassy in London, tens of thousands of people marched there in support of Palestinians as they did in Paris, Madrid and elsewhere. With every march came cries that the IDF were perpetrating a massacre in Gaza. The pictures of dead Palestinian children filled Facebook feeds. There was no massacre of Palestinians at the hands of the IDF last Summer. But in Syria there is. Right now as you read this. (...) There are no demonstrations at all. There are no rallies. There are no screams of massacre. There are no demands on governments to take action. There is simply a sad, deafening silence. It's not as if people don't know what's happening in the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Syria, Yarmouk. (...) Yet there is no action. (...) Perhaps the silence regarding Palestinians in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East comes from a belief that it is only worth demonstrating when a Palestinian is killed by an Israeli. (...)

Marc Goldberg, TOI, 08.04.15

The chaos in Yarmouk

(...) Those who did manage to escape Yarmouk sought refuge in other areas of Syria and in neighboring countries. But precisely now, when the Palestinians would expect Arab solidarity, they have found none. In Jordan and Lebanon, they have been denied entry, which has resulted in a flourishing smuggling industry. (...) Moreover, if the Palestinians expected any kind of help from the international community, here too, they have been met with closed doors. Western incompetence, especially America's, in handling the Syrian crisis affected them as well. If the bloody conflict in Syria, which has already claimed the lives of more than 200,000 people and produced millions of refugees, has not spurred the world to find a solution yet, then why would the world be interested in the plight of Palestinian refugees in Yarmouk?

Dr. Yehuda Balanga, IHY, 07.04.15

3. Koalitionsverhandlungen und Perspektiven für eine Einheitsregierung

Mühsamer als anfangs zu erwarten gestalten sich die Koalitionsverhandlungen für den Wahlsieger Netanyahu. 67 der insgesamt 120 Abgeordneten hatten bei den Beratungen mit Staatspräsident Reu-

ven Rivlin den Chef des Likud für die Mission vorge-schlagen, eine Regierung zu bilden. Nichtzuletzt die übersteigerten Ansprüche der kleineren Parteien lassen Netanyahu nun offenbar eine große Koalition mit dem Zionistischen Lager unter der Führung von Isaac Herzog in Erwägung ziehen. Offiziell gibt es noch keinen Austausch zwischen den beiden Partei-chefs.

Zionist Union must resist temptation of joining Netanyahu's government

(...) One gets the impression that Netanyahu would prefer a stable government based on Zionist Union, the ultra-Orthodox and Moshe Kahlon's Kulanu party to entanglements with dubious parties like that of Avigdor Lieberman, or extremist parties that threaten democracy, like Habayit Hayehudi. (...) Zionist Union must not betray the trust of its voters and of the peace-and-democracy camp. Blocking legislation like the nation-state bill or the bill that would restrict foreign funding for nonprofit organizations, important as that is, is not a sufficient reason for those meant to lead Israel's opposition to declare moral bankruptcy. If Zionist Union joins the Netanyahu government, it will strengthen the regime of the man who, on the eve of last month's election, promised that a Palestinian state would never be established on his watch, and who on Election Day made a shockingly racist remark against 20 percent of Israel's citizens. (...) Zionist Union, with the 24 seats it received from Israelis wanting a change, must not render a clearly right-wing regime kosher, or try to beautify its ugly face to the international community. It must not encourage, by its participation, the gallop toward the end of the democratic Zionist dream that has resulted solely from extreme right-wing governments and the settlements. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 14.04.15

Zionist Union, don't join Netanyahu

It's clear Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wants center-left Zionist Union to join his next government. But (...) it would be bad for the center-left party. It would demoralize many of that party's 786,000 voters who rejected a right-wing worldview in the March 17 election. (...) Zionist Union cannot improve Israel's relations with the United States by joining Netanyahu's coalition. There is nothing Zionist Union can do from within the coalition to change its foreign policy, because its right-wing disciples endorse it fervently, blindly and implacably. (...) Furthermore, if Zionist Union joins Netanyahu, this would cripple Israeli democracy. Instead of exposing

right-wing folly from outside the coalition, the appearance of center-left leaders in political selfies with right-wing extremists would serve as a fig leaf for the right. Such a coalition would leave Israelis without an attractive alternative to Netanyahu and his gang. It would keep Zionist Union from playing its proper opposition role in a democratic society - offering a hopeful vision of change. (...) Herzog, Livni and their colleagues must take a break while Netanyahu dithers and blathers. They must use the time to organize their party and attack right wing projects creatively and relentlessly until Netanyahu's right-wing coalition collapses. And collapse it will.

David Ricci, HAA, 14.04.15

If asked to, Herzog must join coalition

(...) Those who want Netanyahu and his next government to "rack their brains" in order to teach his supporters a lesson are thinking first of all about themselves: They may care about the state, but the party comes first. It's what we call "to hell with the world" or "told you so" or "it's your problem." The thing is that it's everyone's problem. Hamas and the Islamic State, Hezbollah and al-Qaeda, as well as the Arab armies, don't inquire about a person's political affiliation before shooting or launching rockets and missiles. (...) The person who developed a good and clear understanding of the political and security situation at the time was Menachem Begin. On the eve of the Six-Day War, when we appeared to be facing a second Holocaust, he overcame his and his party's political rivalries and suggested - unbelievably - that his hater and great political rival, David Ben-Gurion, would be appointed head of an emergency government. With the lack of such an option, he agreed to join the left-wing government and became part of the great victory. The public didn't forget this national gesture of his. (...) I say this with a lot of grief. We would have liked things to be different, but this is what we got. And it's always important to know and to remember that the state is more important than the party and than being in power. Always.

Eitan Haber, JED, 12.04.15

Which way will Netanyahu jump?

(...) It is in Netanyahu's DNA, before Iran and before anything else, to kill his opponent. To lure him into the government and ensnare him in a honey trap, which is exactly what he did to Yair Lapid. His second ambition is to lead by consensus, to present the world with a sane and moderate face. But this time it is different: the prime minister explicitly pledged be-

fore the elections that he would not establish a unity government with Herzog and Livni. (...) The prime minister has been able to create an environment of impotence. He uses people as pawns rather than as allies he consults with. He really has no confidence in people, real confidantes, people he trusts and whose intentions he believes. (...) So what are the chances of a unity government? Probably about 50-50. And if Netanyahu does pick up the phone and Herzog does answer in the affirmative, there is a chance that the vast majority of Zionist Union would be ready to join the coalition.

Sima Kadmon, JED, 10.04.15

4. Medienquerschnitt

Präsidentenskandidatur von Hillary Clinton

Hillary Clinton's bravery is no small thing

(...) Many women play the good wife and pay the full price just so it will buy his victory, and not hers. Because even if you are the most privileged, the most career-oriented, you walk that path behind him. That path has never ended with the woman being elected president. For all those reasons, we women need to hope very much that there is no one who can stop Hillary Clinton. Because you cannot be what you cannot see. And until now we could not see a woman in the role of leader of the free world. Until now, we haven't even seen a candidate for that. Even the candidacy is a glass ceiling that must be cracked. And Hillary Clinton is not just any woman who will be a U.S. presidential candidate, but the first woman who brought the expression "women's rights are human rights" onto the global stage. (...)

Merav Michaeli, HAA, 15.04.15

Is it the ice lady's turn to lead America?

(...) Clinton will be nearly 70 years old if she starts serving as president in early 2017. Only once in American history was a president elected at this age – Ronald Reagan in 1980. The problems from his second term, in which memory lapses were revealed, is not an encouraging sign. Another hurdle Clinton will have to overcome is the fact that a woman has never been elected president. (...) The relationship between Obama and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been taking place, for six years now, in the freezer. Will Clinton change direction if she is elected president? (...) Clinton doesn't have sweeping charisma, one which bursts out of the television screen and sweeps away the voters.

That's why she was beaten by the inexperienced Obama. In the television debate between them, she was asked by the moderator why people appreciate her, but find it difficult to like her. Historically, this is a trait which could harm a presidential hopeful. People vote not only for a head of state for the White House, but also for a friend for their family. (...) After George W. Bush's emotional presidency, which led to an unnecessary war, and Obama's messianic presidency, which damaged America's standing in the world, it may be the ice lady's time. A level-headed president, acting with unemotional coolness and without thunder and lightning.

Baruch Leshem, JED, 14.04.15

Fiktive Geiselnahme

Niv Asraf, apologize. To everyone

(...) The day before Passover two buddies drive into the West Bank on an impulse to pray at the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron — the single-most volatile city in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They get a flat tire. Niv trots into the Palestinian town of Beit Anun, a Hamas stronghold, and doesn't return. (...) Within hours, roads were closed through the southern West Bank, thousands of soldiers (...) were searching house-to-house through Arab villages (...). All told, more than \$1 million spent scouring the territory for Niv, who was found hiding in a valley near Kiryat Arba. (...) Apologize. (...) Apologize to every soldier and police officer who had to go search for you instead of doing his or her other work. (...) Apologize to the residents of Beit Anun, who had the unexpected pleasure of a home visit from the entire Israeli Defense Forces while Moshe Nussbaum and military reporter Roni Daniel repeatedly told Israelis how "hostile" the residents of this particular village are. Well, just in case the folks in Beit Anun weren't hostile before — guess how they feel now. Apologize deeply to the families of Naftali Fraenkel, Gilad Shaer and Eyal Yifrah, who will never forget the moment they heard their sons were kidnapped and never fully recover from the moment they learned of their deaths, and who certainly didn't need the extra reminder as they headed into their first Pesach seder without their beloved children. And then apologize deeply again to the family of Mohammad Abu Khdeir, burned alive by Jewish fanatics in the wake of those kidnappings, who also had to ponder whether other Jews might be happy for an excuse to be fanatical. (...)

Miriam Herschlag, TOI, 05.04.15

The kidnapping that wasn't

(...) Looking back on Thursday night's pointless manhunt, it occurred to me that it's actually strange this doesn't happen more often. Any Israeli, including Asraf and Nagauker (arguably not the greatest minds of their generation), would know that reporting a kidnapping would almost surely result in a major search operation. Any prankster must know that for the most minimal investment – a simple phone call – they can put the entire country on a razor's edge within minutes. The fact that such hoaxes are all but unheard of perhaps shows that even for those with an antisocial bent, faking a kidnapping and playing on the country's greatest fears is simply a bridge too far. Asraf and Nagauker must be prosecuted to the full extent of the law, but no one should hold their breath expecting to see them do time, at least not a serious, deterrent prison sentence. (...) They will be fined, placed on probation, and will live on in the Israeli collective psyche as morons of historic proportions. Eventually they may meet their future partners and marry, possibly have children, and then probably realize the real fear that kidnappings have for the Israeli public. In the meantime, if this happens again, one can hope and probably expect the security services to respond in the same way. The wasted resources and hours burned (...) should not deter police and the security services from acting the way they did (...).

Ben Hartman, JPO,08.04.15

Olmert erneut schuldig gesprochen

Ehud Olmert's sad contribution to our festival of freedom

David Ben-Gurion, Moshe Sharett, Golda Meir, Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir (...) kept their offices in simple shacks, and they refused to accept generous offers from American millionaires. (...) But rubbing shoulders with American or European Jewish millionaires did appeal to other politicians and military men. (...) Rabin could whip out a thick wad of bills to pay for a meal at a fancy restaurant, while Benjamin Netanyahu used to smoke expensive Cuban cigars he received from Israeli film producer Arnon Milchan. Olmert, the darling of American millionaires, loved the good life. He had no problem flying in their private jets to watch a basketball game on the West Coast, or to ensure a reduced rate at a fancy hotel. He stayed in spacious suites and rode in limousines. He also arranged for a New York exhibition for his wife's paintings. I don't have to note that all were sold. The man who launched an anti-

corruption campaign with Minister Yossi Sarid ended up being super corrupt in the Holyland affair and the cash-envelopes scandal. As a prime minister who vowed to pursue peace, someone who according to foreign media reports ordered the destruction of Syria's nuclear reactor, someone who wanted to and was capable of reaching an agreement with the Palestinians, he proved that the sin of hubris is destructive in politics. It's a pity such a talented politician stumbled. (...)

Yoel Marcus, HAA, 03.04.15

Zur geplanten Streichung der Mehrwertsteuer bei Grundnahrungsmitteln

Netanyahu must buck the populist trend and keep VAT where it is

If this nonsense had come from Arye Dery, the leader of ultra-Orthodox party Shas, we could have dealt with it. But when the honorable prime minister supports zero value-added tax on basic goods, that's a bad sign. It's a sign that populism is winning. (...) If you really want to improve conditions for the bottom one-third, there's no reason to do away with the VAT that the top two-thirds pays (...). What's the point in subsidizing cheese and milk for tycoon Shari Arison when the goal is to help Mrs. Levy in Sderot? Also, zero VAT would take a great deal of money out of the government's coffers, and since neither Moshe Kahlon nor the prime minister are willing to raise taxes, the only solution is to cut back on education and welfare — and harm the lower classes. Those who want to help the lower classes need to do it directly by broadening negative-income-tax efforts and benefits for the elderly. They should increase the education budget in the country's outskirts and invest in public transportation and professional training. (...) VAT applied identically to every product and service is the most effective tax there is. It's easy to collect, doesn't require much bureaucracy, doesn't make people less willing to work and doesn't cause resources to be allocated incorrectly. (...) The buck stops with Netanyahu. After all, he was against zero VAT on apartments for young couples, so why is he now supporting an idea that's just as bad? Is there really no limit to populism?

Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA, 03.04.15

Kein öffentlicher Verkehr am Wochenende

Roads I Didn't Take (by bus on Shabbat)

(...) Earlier this holiday a Facebook protest encouraged users to complain on the page of the transpor-

tation minister Israel Katz and express their frustration at the fact there is no public transportation in Israel on Saturdays and holiday and in particular on the long second holiday this year. Omri Hazut a public transportation user reminded the minister that "The seventh day of Passover is on Thursday, and the last night is Friday. From Thursday afternoon until Saturday night, there will be no public transportation!" The Minister responded with the following outrageous argument: "Tell (Isaac) Buji Herzog to commit not to sit in a government that won't change the status quo. The display of hypocrisy by you and your friends on the left ... was proven in the last elections and got the appropriate response at the polls." (...) As we well know Buji was not elected to be our prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu was and it is the government's responsibility to take care of the people who depend on public transportation. In Haifa, people who use public transportation on Shabbat could do so because the "left" (...) always cared about the welfare of the residents and made sure that on their day of rest they could enjoy the city and get around (...). It's a shame that the "right" has no interest in doing the same. My guess is that Katz's own people never ride the bus.
Orna Raz, TOI, 07.04.14

HAA = Haaretz
JED = JediothAhronoth / Ynetnews
JPO = Jerusalem Post
IHY = Israel HaYom
TOI = Times of Israel
GLO = Globes

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