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1. Terror in Tel Aviv

Fast eine Woche lang dauerte die Jagd der israelischen Sicherheitsdienste auf den dreifachen Mörder Nashat Melhem. Ein von der Überwachungskamera eines kleinen Ladens aufgezeichnetes Video zeigt den 29jährigen israelischen Araber mit einer Sonnenbrille und Rucksack, wie er zuerst eine Tüte mit Nüssen füllt, um sie gleich wieder auszuschütten. Dann nimmt er seinen Rucksack vom Rücken, greift die Waffe und erschießt zwei Menschen in der an den Laden grenzenden Bar. Während der Flucht erschießt Melhem einen dritten Mann, den arabischer Fahrer des Taxis, mit dem Melhem vom Tatort flüchtet. Dieser dreifache Mord reiht sich in die Serie der politisch motivierten Attentate palästinensischer Einzeltäter. Dass der Täter diesmal zunächst entkommen konnte, warf zahlreiche Fragen auf. Außerdem belastet die Methode der Sippenhaft, die beim Kampf gegen Terror in Israel zur Routine gehört, und nun gegen die Familie Melhem angewandt wurde, das ohnehin schwierige Verhältnis von Juden und Arabern im Staat.

Manhunt shifts spotlight to gaps in system

(...) Past experience teaches us that the terrorist will eventually make a mistake leading to his capture. The desire is to catch him alive, to understand his course of action and whether he received help. (...) During their interrogations the terrorist's relatives

said he is psychologically unstable. An analysis of the attack raises doubts over such a claim. The planning, which included access and escape routes, the calmness with which the attack was carried out (...) point to an organized, calculated operation in which the terrorist also displayed a high level of expertise with his weapon. (...) In Israel there are hundreds of terrorists who have been released from prison, with Israeli identification cards, who are only minimally monitored (...). Some of them, it stands to reason, have access to weapons, legal or otherwise. (...) This needs to worry law enforcement agencies, and not just because such attacks can be far deadlier than a terrorist with a knife; the main problem is that they reverberate far beyond the attack itself -- affecting the economy, everyday life and overall morale. The Arab-Israeli leadership did well over the weekend to condemn the attack and emphasize its rejection of terrorism, and the government did well to expedite the transfer of funds to the Arab sector to make it clear that it wasn't seen as an enemy. (...) The main challenge appears to still be ahead: Considering the sense of systematic discrimination, Israeli society becoming more extreme, and the external influences of elements like ISIS, action must be taken to ensure that the attack in Tel Aviv remains anomalous, and not a dangerous benchmark for Jewish-Arab relations in Israel.

Joav Limor, IHY, 03.01.16

Do Israeli Arabs really want coexistence?

(...) in Israel's north, some in the media have deceptively tried to cast him as a renegade in an otherwise tolerant Arab society that seeks coexistence. (...) The vast majority of Israeli Arabs are indeed law-abiding citizens who consider themselves loyal Israelis. (...) But to better understand Israeli Arab society, we must look at the bigger picture. The national-Palestinian identity of a great number of Arab residents in that area, including prominent figures, is very much on display at Wadi Ara mosques and in various incitement-laden speeches. Those who reject Israel's right to exist have used the area as fertile ground to propagate their ideology since the state's founding. (...) Over the years, the area has produced several terrorist cells who targeted Jews in nearby localities. (...) On top of that, the Islamic State group is becoming increasingly popular there. Considering this reality, any attempt to describe Wadi Ara's Arabs as mostly peace-loving individuals who seek neighborly relations with the Jews is just a form of sugarcoating at best.

Daniel Siryoti, IHY, 04.01.16

Shooter does not represent Israel's Arabs

(...) I have been there, in Ar'ara and in Wadi Ara, dozens of times. (...) Attorney Sami Melhem, who represented the suspected murderer in the past, is a close friend. We have been engaging in a dialogue for years. A lot can be said about him and the family members. They were never among the radicals. (...) The suspected murderer (...) may have been affected by his cousin's killing. He may have also become enchanted by the Islamic State. If that's the case, it happens to one in thousands. The unequivocal condemnation of the family, of the surroundings, of all Arab Knesset members, is real. That is not always the case. (...) Israel's Arabs are dealing with a conflict between loyalty to the Palestinian people and loyalty to the State of Israel. It's not just the conflict which has been going on for 100 years now. There are problematic relations in Sweden and Germany too. The fact that only few of Israel's Arabs have turned to hostile activity, as opposed to expressions of protest, is a badge of honor for both the Arabs and the Jews. There is incitement. There are inciters. But the Melhem family, where the murderer came from, represents the majority of Israel's Arabs when it condemns and disagrees with the act. (...) Let's not link the despicable murder to all Israeli Arabs.

Ben-Dror Yemini, JED, 04.01.16

How did Tel Aviv shooter slip away?

(...) It's worth focusing on two problematic decisions made on the ground. The first, which was actually led by the Shin Bet, was to avoid publishing the picture of the shooter, Nashat Melhem (...) Professionals are in complete agreement that the pictures should have been spread as soon as possible and everywhere, so that hundreds of thousands of eyes would be exposed to the man and try to locate him. (...) Leaving the media arena in the hands of the district's spokeswoman and sending the district commander to calm the citizens down only three hours later points to a failed policy. What was suitable for the Shin Bet is not suitable for the police. (...) Police Commissioner Alsheikh is beginning to personally experience the difference between the world of shadows he grew up in until now and the police. (...) in order to succeed in his new position he must make much quicker adjustments - especially when it comes to dealing with the public and the media. Yossi Yehushua, JED, 03.01.16

Not all Arabs are to blame

We are hearing yet again that all Arabs are terrorists, that they are all against us, that they are the fifth column, and other gems from those who do not miss an opportunity to lash out against an entire community that makes up about a fifth of Israel's population. But Israeli Arabs are not all the same: They are not all the Tel Aviv shooting terrorist Nashat Millhem -- they are people with different opinions and different world views, just like Jews, Americans, Saudis or the Lebanese. They have a wide range of beliefs and political parties, and their common denominator is that they are all citizens of a country that has declared itself a Jewish and democratic state. (...) There is no doubt that we need to deal with the issue of radicalization. But first we need to provide opportunities for the normal development of Arab communities(...). Instead of expropriating land and labeling the green areas in Arab villages as nature reserves, while at the same time allowing Jewish towns to expand at the expense of their Arab neighbors, the state and its government should see the Arabs living here as equal citizens and should treat them in kind. (...) the country's leaders (...) should see the Arabs directly, without intermediaries or intelligence reports. They should meet them, walk around in Arab towns and villages, listen to the citizens, try to understand their distress and make an effort to fix the injustice done to such a large community, of which the vast majority wants simply to live in dignity in this state on the one hand,

and to preserve its beautiful culture on the other.
(...)
Majdi Halabi, IHY, 11.01.16

The scariest thing about the Tel Aviv terror attack

(...) He strode in, a bag on his shoulder. In his hand he held a plastic bag, into which he scooped some nuts and then emptied them back, as if deciding not to buy them. And then, after a few steps toward the exit, nonchalantly(...) in a flash he leaped outside, straight to the bar at his left – and to murder in broad daylight. All this on Dizengoff Street, in the very heart of the first Hebrew city. (...) Tel Aviv has suffered mass-casualty terror attacks before (...) And now, one man wreaked this kind of terror because of one attack. One terrorist, whose identity is known to the authorities, not to mention his customers from the produce stores. (...) But the one who really scared us was none other than Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who brought his official lectern with him and stood in front of images of the victims and the blood. He delivered a speech filled with incitement, which a casual observer described as an attempt to divert attention from his wife's questioning by police the previous day. (...) The Arabs aren't as stupid as the Greater Israel adherents think. They've been studying us inside and out for at least 70 years. Our interest is to strive for equal opportunities. (...) But Netanyahu is busy with incitement and games theory: He finds the time to warn the cabinet to prepare for the possible collapse of the Palestinian Authority. He proposes increasing funding for the country's Arab community as a gesture, but reneges and makes it a favor, contingent on "good behavior." As if he didn't know that walls are not built with threats and ultimatums. (...)

Yoel Marcus, HAA, 08.01.16

History's dire warnings on stigmatizing Israel's Arabs

(...) History has taught us that tolerance towards minorities is not an outstanding characteristic of modern states (...). Ethnically homogeneous countries have no need of nation-state labels. (...) Countries with large minorities with distinctive characteristics are the ones that make such demands. This is especially the case when the minorities in question are not newly arrived foreigners, such as, say, the Turks in Germany, but have been there more or less forever, certainly long before the nation state was born. (...) The political habits of the Zionist congresses, which were inherited by the Jewish state,

were acquired in the countries of origin of their delegates. The victim status of the Jews did not automatically make them liberal and tolerant towards other victims. (...) Who is to blame for the unraveling of the loose threads of co-existence in Israel? Those who criticize the prime minister's statements about the Arab population do not help co-existence if they ignore the part played by those who speak for the Arabs. In the latest generation, the loyalty of part of the Arab community towards the state and its institutions has been in constant decline (...). In this sense, each side has indeed found its match, and extremism on one side is fed by extremism on the other. But the need to balance the criticism does not absolve the prime minister of responsibility for the dangerous rhetorical escalation. (...) Leaders can slip up once, even twice. They may not intend, or not intend exactly, what they say. But when they become serial offenders, one suspects that the slip is not happenstance. (...)

Yoav Karny, GLO, 10.01.16

NIS 15 billion for Arab sector - on condition of good behavior

(...) If the government plan to invest NIS 15 billion in the Arab sector was put to a vote two days after the Dizengoff terror attack and not two days before it, it would not have passed. (...) The man who made the speech of hate and distrust against the Arab public the day after the attack could not have possibly approved this five-year plan. Netanyahu is always the last to recognize the hidden advantages of such plans for his government's image both in Israel and worldwide, and the terror attack once again got the "Bibi" out of him. The one who inflames, terrifies and riles up conflicts. (...) The Bibi who runs to scenes of terror attacks in order to fan the flames. (...) This time it wasn't against the Palestinian Authority, but against the citizens of his own country - Israeli Arabs. (...) It's doubtful the social equality minister (...) loved Netanyahu's decision to add to the professional teams two babysitters in the form of Elkin and Levin. She worked on the plan for seven months. (...) For her, the plan is no less than something that would completely change how things work, and help take Arab society dozens of years forward. (...)

Sima Kadmon, JED, 11.01.16

2. Jüdische Extremisten vor Gericht

Fünf Monate nach einem tödlichen Brandanschlag auf eine palästinensische Familie im Westjordanland sind in Israel zwei jüdische Tatverdächtige angeklagt

worden. Der 21-jährige Amiram Ben-Uliel muss sich wegen Mordes verantworten, ein minderjähriger weiterer Angeklagter wegen Beihilfe zum Mord. Der Brandanschlag forderte Ende Juli in dem palästinensischen Dorf Duma südöstlich von Nablus drei Todesopfer, darunter der 18 Monate alte Ali Dawabsheh. Die Generalstaatsanwaltschaft wirft den Angeklagten vor, sie hätten sich verschworen, um den Tod eines im Juni von Palästinensern erschossenen Israelis zu rächen. Dem Minderjährigen wird zudem vorgeworfen, im Mai 2014 an einem Brandanschlag auf die Dormitio-Abtei in Jerusalem beteiligt gewesen zu sein. Wegen dieses Anschlags sowie wegen eines Angriffs auf die Brotvermehrungskirche am See Genezareth im Juni wurden zwei weitere Israelis angeklagt.

Investigation into West Bank arson murders showcased a weak legal system

(...) A (...) said his arms were pulled until he felt like they were on fire and then lost feeling in them. He burst into tears several times while addressing the court (...) He had (...) broken and confessed to a series of arson attacks and to helping plan the murders in Duma. The torture ended because it was no longer necessary. (...) 120 court hearings have been held in the Duma case, and the bottom line raises unhappy questions about the role of judicial review in Israel. The campaign the right has been waging against the legal system for many years now has done its work: The judges are weak, tired and hesitant to confront strong agencies like the Shin Bet or the attorney general's office. Uttering the magic words "national security" is enough to get all judicial values and human rights thrown into the trash can. The Duma case eventually produced suitable indictments against some suspects, but other suspects who had been arrested were released. (...) Throughout the Duma investigation, orders were issued to bar suspects from meeting with their lawyers. In some cases, the Shin Bet prevented such meetings for the entire 21 days permitted by law. (...) the cumulative feeling left by this case is of a weak, frightened legal system – something that ought to worry every Israeli citizen.

Chaim Levinson, HAA, 05.01.16

Justice, justice will you pursue?

(...) One father quickly alerted police when he suspected his son's involvement, and publicly expressed deep regret over the incident, offering condolences to the victims and their families. (...) The other father insisted his son was innocent and that

his confession was tortured out of him. (...) He called the country's leader "the fuhrer." The father who called on his son to surrender is an Israeli Arab who has been a volunteer with the Israel Police for more than 30 years. The other father (...) is the ultra-Orthodox rabbi of the West Bank settlement of Karnei Zur. (...) A third father sought to take political advantage of the tragedies. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, noting that his sons were about the same age as the pub shooting victims, tried to spread the blame over all Israeli Arabs and exploit the tragedy for political gain. (...) He blamed the killings on "wild incitement of radical Islam," and (...) demanded all Arab Knesset members, "(...)...condemn the murder clearly and unequivocally." There was no such demand of Jewish MKs after the Duma murders. (...) Too often the settler movement simply turns a blind eye to the violent gangs like the Hilltop Youth and other extremists, brushing aside their actions as simple vandalism by "fringe groups" of impetuous youth angered by something the Palestinians have done. (...) At a time when the nation needs leadership and healing, this prime minister seems capable only of offering more incitement and racism, guaranteeing more violence and misery for Jews and Arabs alike.

Douglas Bloomfield, JPO, 06.01.16

Murder as a tool for redemption

(...) the brutal logic of murder and arson and the defiling of non-Jewish holy places is (...) part of a larger goal: to drive Arabs and other non-Jews from the Land of Israel and establish a halachic Jewish kingdom. (...) Some of the several dozen suspects detained by the Shin Bet allegedly told their interrogators that, in the future monarchy of Judea, all gentiles, "men, women, and children," who do not comply with the expulsion order, will have, as in the book of Joshua, "placed their blood on their heads" and forfeited their lives. This is apparently their ideology, and outrageous though it may sound, they are committed to it. (...) the notion of expulsion of Arabs from the Land of Israel, a central step on the path to the imagined kingdom, is part of a certain rabbinic discourse. (...) The suspected cells on the hilltops have taken this halachic stance and stripped it of those "universally accepted methods". They have a horrifying ideology and an anarchic methodology. And the state and the rabbis ought not to mistake it as a form of vigilante justice or do-it-yourself deterrence. (...)

Mitch Ginsburg, TOI, 04.01.16

Religious Zionism must disengage from zealots

(...) How did a group of criminals come out of this idealistic group - Religious Zionism - which is committed to the State of Israel? The truth is quite simple and even embarrassing. The chances of the Jewish settlement project in Judea and Samaria of succeeding were unclear from its very beginning, and there are different opinions about it internally and externally. (...) What exactly is the plan? The Israeli Left has a plan. (...) Religious Zionism has no plan. (...) The discourse it is holding is not with reality but with God and with the commitment to the Land of Israel. (...) we hear rabbis talking about the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria while using all kinds of halachic definitions which have nothing to do with a democratic regime, with the era we live in and with the civil principles guiding the State of Israel. The comprehensive policy towards the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria, which has been adopted by Religious Zionism since the start of the settlement, is to ignore their existence. (...) when the realpolitik is completely mixed with a biblical and halachic discourse alongside frustration over the fact that the State of Israel is not being run "according to the Torah" and does not determine its values, borders and agenda according to a biblical agenda, there is no wonder that the most frustrated people decide to act. (...)

Bambi Sheleg, JED, 07.01.16

3. Eklat mit Schweden

Nicht länger stillschweigend zusehen, wie auf Israels Straßen palästinensische Angreifer niedergeschossen werden, wollte Schwedens Außenministerin Margot Wallström. Für ihren Appell, die „außergerichtlichen Hinrichtungen“ zu untersuchen, musste sie nun eine schwere Rüge hinnehmen. Vizeaußenministerin Tsipi Chotoveli (Likud) hätte am liebsten komplett die diplomatischen Beziehungen zu den Schweden auf Eis gelegt, relativierte jedoch: Nur Wallström sei vorläufig in Israel unerwünscht. Das Außenministerium in Jerusalem berief zudem den schwedischen Botschafter, Carl Magnus Nesser, ein und brachte seine Empörung über die „unverantwortlichen und wahnhaften“ Äußerungen der schwedischen Außenministerin zum Ausdruck. Die Beziehungen zwischen Stockholm und Jerusalem sind indes nicht erst seit dieser Woche getrübt. Schweden gehört zu den schärfsten Kritikern von Israels Siedlungspolitik und erkannte Ende 2014 als einer der ersten westlichen EU-Staaten Palästina an.

Wallstrom's chutzpah

Palestinians have run over, stabbed, shot, stoned and firebombed scores of Israelis since Rosh Hashana. (...) All the attacks have targeted Jewish Israelis. (...) Throughout this period most European politicians have either remained silent about the violence or have attempted to portray both sides – Israeli and Palestinian – as equally to blame. But Sweden's Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom has outdone her fellow Europeans. (...) Not only did Wallstrom ignore Palestinian violence directed against innocent Israelis – she blamed the victim. (...) When a man or a woman pulls out a knife and begins stabbing people on a busy street or gets behind the wheel of a car and attempts to plow into pedestrians, there is no time to convene a court of justice and begin discussing the matter. There is time only to stop the assailant any way possible, often by overwhelming, deadly force. If this is extrajudicial killing, so be it. (...) The radicalization of Muslims in France, Sweden and other parts of Europe, claimed Wallstrom, was a product of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. (...) the tiny minority of Muslims who resort to terrorism does not need to cite the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to justify their heinous deeds. They have a long enough list of grievances against Europeans as it is. Indeed, Wallstrom should be focusing on problems closer to home. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 14.01.16

My word: The funny, the peculiar and the frightening

(...) Foreign Minister Margot Wallström is at it again: Like Iranians storming embassies and Saudis afflicting political and religious opponents, she just can't seem to stop herself from demonizing Israel. (...) She has apparently completely accepted the Palestinian narrative that Israeli police and security forces have decided to shoot-to-kill people waving guns, knives and other sharp objects, or ramming their cars into crowds of innocent bystanders (...), rather than exercise a wait-and-see policy: How many people have to die before shooting the attacker dead is considered a "proportional response"? I don't seem to recall her having a similar problem with the French police who shot and killed a man wielding a meat cleaver, carrying a copy of the Islamic State flag and yelling "Allahu akbar," as he tried to break into a Paris police station (...). Wallström doesn't seem to have realized that the hundreds of thousands of migrant-refugees pouring into Europe (...), but very few of them come from

either Israel or the Palestinian territories. (...) The Jews of Europe, on the other hand, are making the opposite journey: The Scandinavian Jewish community has dwindled to near disappearance due to anti-Semitism and fears that things will get worse with the greater influx of Muslim migrants (...) and the likely rise of the far Right in response Events this week seem to bear them out (...). Wallström, whose country hasn't been at war since a brief one with neighboring Norway in 1814, doesn't seem to realize that today's battles are taking place literally on her doorstep. (...)

Liat Collins, JPO, 14.01.16

Give Sweden the Nobel prize for hypocrisy

If they handed out a Nobel Prize for hypocrisy, wickedness and duplicitousness, Sweden would certainly win. The Swedish foreign minister, without pause and through twisted tongue, continues attacking the State of Israel and even linked the horrific terrorist attack in Paris to Israel's actions in the face of murderous terrorism. (...) Sweden has altered its character. (...) Muslim communities have formed in its cities and districts, and they have influence over the country's internal politics. (...) The Swedish foreign minister is willing to sell her moral values and integrity, just to scrounge up a few more Muslim votes in her country. (...) The time of Jews being the punching bag and scapegoat for every dictator and villain has passed. (...) Israel's leadership and the Foreign Ministry need to expose the lies and ceaseless efforts to delegitimize Israel's right to defend itself. The world today is more open than ever to understanding what Israel is saying and its position. (...) If Sweden continues down its contemptible path, it will be the first to pay for its malice. (...)

Haim Shine, IHY, 15.01.16

4. Medienquerschnitt

Autonomiebehörde möglicherweise vor dem Aus

Netanyahu fears Palestinian Authority collapse that he helped induce

(...) Created as part of the 1993 Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority (PA) was built upon a bargain. Israel would get a Palestinian leadership that recognized its right to exist and policed the West Bank so Israeli 19 year olds would no longer have to patrol every village and town. (...). In return, the Palestinians would get the embryo of a state. (...) To work, the bargain required that each side gain trust in the

other. The more security the PA provided Israel, the more Israelis would support transforming it into a state. The more Palestinians believed Israel would grant them statehood, the more willing they would be to police themselves on Israel's behalf. (...) the single biggest reason for the PA's legitimacy crisis is simple: Palestinians only supported it as a means towards statehood. (...) Now, having spent a career undermining the PA, Bibi wants to keep it afloat. (...) Why send Israelis to pick up the garbage and hunt for terrorists in Qalqilya if Palestinians will do it for you (...)? But they won't keep doing it. (...) the cost is starting to rise. It's rising as security in the West Bank breaks down, and Palestinians commit horrific, unjustifiable, acts of violence. (...) When the Palestinian Authority collapses entirely, and chaos grips the West Bank, the cost will rise even more, (...). Saving the PA, if it's even still possible, would require a profound shift in Israeli policy: a real settlement freeze, a two-state offer within the Clinton parameters, support for a Palestinian coalition government that can pave the way for Palestinian elections. (...).

Peter Beinart, HAA, 06.01.16

US-Geheimdienst lauschte Netanyahu

Spy lessons

(...) One would think that relations between the countries are good enough to allow for open communications and the sharing of the most intimate and classified information. Ultimately, the two countries share the same goals and values. It is impossible to imagine a scenario in which the two countries could possibly become enemies. (...) Also, spying on heads of state is quite different from the sort of spying on private individuals the US National Security Agency conducted in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. (...) This might explain the cavalier response in Jerusalem (...) What is troubling about the revelations regarding US eavesdropping on Netanyahu, however, is the fact that Obama explicitly promised in January 2014, shortly after the Merkel imbroglio, to stop snooping on the leaders of close US friends and allies. (...) Does this mean that Obama does not consider Israel a close friend or ally? Or does it mean that the US president's promises are sometimes not backed up with actions? (...)

Editorial, JPO, 03.01.16

Erziehungsministerium versus Liebesroman

Where the fear of sex between Jews and Arabs trumps normalcy

(...) the brouhaha over the novel "Borderlife" is exciting because it is made up of the most basic and primeval materials of human culture – sex and race. (...) how many euphemisms (...) does one need to hide the possibility that is both our great fear and therefore also our fantasy: sex between a Jewish woman and an Arab man? (...) The demonic story in which "they" take "our" girls unites all patriarchal cultures, which try to define themselves, sometimes in the absence of any other common assets of any value, by means of racial hierarchy and chauvinistic possession. Whites and blacks, Aryans and Jews. The irony is that sometimes you're on the "covetous," "dirty" side, and other times you're on the privileged side, which must preserve its assets – that is, its girls – for itself. The desire to rise above these primitive fairytales (...) in Israel in recent years, this desire has been increasingly crushed. (...) what's different this time is that not so long ago, there was at least a pretense of educating toward normalcy, and if not a pretense, then at least embarrassment at the idea of admitting to any other motivation. (...) Even if this move bought him a few more votes on the right (...) it's hard to ignore the fact that Bennett voluntarily kicked the bucket of statesmanship over. Both here and abroad – where copies of "Borderlife" are rapidly being printed alongside the headlines over the waning of Israeli democracy – people will always remember that he is the minister who disqualified a book because of sex between Jews and Arabs.

Ravit Hecht, HAA, 03.01.16

A wakeup call

(...) The Education Ministry's reasoning for the exclusion makes one want to cry. (...) Crying over the darkness that is slowly coming down upon our lives. Crying because of the slow-but-steady takeover of extremist, racist worldviews (...). Crying over the fact fundamentalists, no less, have taken over important issues, like the education of our children. Things that had we heard were happening elsewhere – we would have been shocked. (...) there are people here who hold the most important positions, who are trying to make us not think. To take over our collective consciousness. To fog up the reality of our lives. (...) What the ministry is telling us, without even masking its words too much, is that we need to teach our children that Jewish and Arab

blood must not be mixed. That the existing state must be followed. What are these if not racial laws. Of all the books in the world, which deal with complex subjects like murder, adultery, corruption, immorality – some of which our children read when studying for their matriculation exams – this book, which deals with love, in particular, was disqualified by the Education Ministry. (...) Sima Kadmon, JED, 04.01.16

Deri wieder Innenminister

Israel's ethical gatekeepers are asleep

(...) Our new interior minister, Aryeh Dery, is an ex-con, convicted of one of the most serious public service crimes on the books. Moreover, he had previously promised not to accept the role of interior minister, the scene of his crime, which turned out to be lie. (...) The gatekeepers are in retreat from the last bastion of the fight against governmental and establishment corruption in Israel. (...) The retreat is on all fronts, and not only in the fight against government corruption. The government's approval of the gas deal, despite objection by the previous anti-trust commissioner and the use of every possible bypass, reflects the government's surrender to the capitalists. (...) Dery is an ex-con who served his sentence and sat out the requisite period of political exile for a crime of moral turpitude. In a well-managed democracy, a minister or senior public official whose crimes border on moral turpitude retires forever. (...) Dery didn't retire. (...) And he probably didn't learn the moral about a public servant's proper behavior. Had he learned his lesson, he would have passed on the interior portfolio. (...) Olmert, who refuses to accept the court ruling that he took a bribe, is a pussycat compared to Dery's aggressiveness. (...) Dery played a fundamental role in the crisis of confidence among sizeable portions of Israeli society relative to the courts. (...) The politicians, who make sure to reinforce their power, strengthen their interests and provide benefits for their associates, are the ones who in large part control the public sphere. (...) The Israeli public is busy just surviving. Gatekeepers – now it's your turn.

Ido Baum, HAA, 14.01.16

Appell an Frankreichs Juden: Geht ohne Kippa

Get serious! Most French Jews have already dropped their kippa

(...) the truth is that many French Jews abandoned the kippa years ago. They wear them in synagogues and at home, but not on the streets, where they have traded them in for various hats. (...) Wearing a kippa, for those who don't have bodyguards, can be dangerous depending on the area. That's the reality for many Jews. But hearing Tzvi Amar, a community leader, saying that aloud is intolerable for some people. It's like conceding defeat. Admitting that people are scared and that the French authorities can't always protect them. (...) Since the Paris attacks, pupils have new orders to follow when they leave their Jewish schools: First they have to take off their kippas before they get out of the compound as well as their school uniform jackets that would identify them as Jewish pupils by the emblem on them. They also have to walk away from the area so they won't form groups and become targets. Buying a drink in a shop on the same street as their school is out of the question. But you can't say that openly. Non-Jews don't even know these rules exist. These days every Jew has to choose a strategy: wear a kippah, try to be invisible or leave the country. Hiding the fact that the skullcap is disappearing is part of a new policy or of a renewed policy of secrecy. Secrecy is a way to keep some illusion of power. (...) Often, reducing the risks means making concessions on freedom, dialogue, optimism, faith, values. (...)

Shirli Sitbon, HAA, 14.01.16

Unmut zwischen Teheran und Riad

Iran-Saudi clash turns regional

The severe diplomatic crisis between Iran and Saudi Arabia turned regional (...). Bahrain and Sudan fell in line with Saudi Arabia and cut diplomatic ties with Iran. The United Arab Emirates, for now, settled for recalling its ambassador from Tehran. This drastic falling out between the absolutist Sunni monarchy and the Shiite republic is causing a major headache for the West, which failed to take this scenario, which is highly detrimental to the war against the Islamic State group, into account. (...) It was naive to think that the nuclear deal with Iran would solve the region's problems. (...) This is a clash between two regional powers who both aspire for regional dominance. It is a head-on collision between Saudi Arabia and Iran, between Sunni and Shiites. It is also a clash between Arabs and Persians. In other words, all the elements of a conflagration are in place, which is precisely why we will likely see concerted diplomatic efforts in the coming days to lower

the temperature -- until the next encounter. Diplomats want to shoot this conflict with a tranquilizer dart, because it is entirely uncertain that a cure exists. (...)

Boaz Bismutz, IHY, 05.01.16

HAA = Haaretz

JED = JediothAhronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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