Aus IBA wird IBC

Another targeted assassination of Israeli media
(…) Some mistakenly think that things got out of control, but everything is under the control of one person, (…) Benjamin Netanyahu (…). Because the best way to scare the public is to show that the power structure not only beats up on the weak, it beats up on the strong as well. (…) The method is simple. A decision is made, protest arises, the protest is silenced by a meeting of protesters convened by the prime minister himself. The naïve protesters are convinced that the man who likened them to Hamas in his election propaganda is going to fight to the end to keep things as they are (…) – but only get the finger. Heads roll in basements, the spin job goes wild in the Whatsapp accounts of TV news editors, and just when things seem to be shaping up, the bad news is brought down like a sword. Half an hour before the IBA’s flagship program is aired, 49 years after it debuted, its staff gets half an hour to say goodbye, half an hour to find the words. The players are mostly exhausted, too frightened to make a sound, to protest or identify themselves. (…) This ends our broadcast. Another successful targeted assassination by the right-wing’s government.

Emilie Moatti, HAA, 11.05.17
The day the newscast died

(...) For many Israelis, Channel 1 was like army reserves duty: It was a necessary evil you were supposed to tolerate, something OK to hate. But secretly, you occasionally longed for it, the way you longed for the surprising joys of watery yogurt and hard-boiled eggs. (...) Channel 1’s talk shows treated poets like Yehuda Amichai and Natan Zach as celebrities and berated celebrities like Goldie Hawn for not coming to Israel more frequently. (...) And then there was Mabat. We mocked its anchors as remote and pompous, but goodness, they were Walter Cronkite-level reliable. They did not hold back in interviews and irked politicians of all stripes. (...) Mabat’s independence may have helped kill it. Netanyahu has never made precisely clear why he wanted the Israel Broadcasting Authority replaced, but for a politician who chafes at any critical coverage, critical coverage from a government-run broadcaster must have been especially galling. (...) Channel 1 was likely doomed (...) as ratings had been tanking for years. It ignored the very idea of competition. (...) a broadcaster that went virtually unchallenged for decades (...) shaped the country in profound ways. (...) The IBA sticks to us like dy-buks of our better selves. (...) May its memory be blessed.

Ron Kampeas, TOI, 11.05.17

A new and free IBC

(...) As Kan starts broadcasting, its journalists are in jeopardy of facing unprecedented government pressure. (...) it is worth recalling the results of a 2016 Media Intelligence Service study which found that countries with well-funded public broadcasting tend to have greater freedom of the press. More money in public broadcasting, the report found, correlates with greater freedom. Corruption, the report said, is more then under better control. (...) where there is more public broadcasting on television, right-wing extremism tends to be less popular and social cohesion tends to be greater. (...) Kan has a chance of encouraging those same qualities in Israel, but to do so it will need to remain independent and fight off government intervention. That will not be easy. (...) Kan will be at the mercy of the government. (...) From now on, the budget belongs solely to the government, which can easily change it at its discretion. If it is happy with the IBC, it will keep the budget as is; if it is unhappy with the coverage it gets, it has the ability to change it. That is a constant sword hanging over the IBC. (...) The IBC’s ultimate success though will come from the government under-standing that Kan is off limits. While the channel might be funded by the government, it belongs to Israel’s citizens who, after years of watching the IBA’s content decline in excellence and quantity, will finally have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of high-quality public broadcasting.

Editorial, JPO, 14.05.17

Umstrittenes Nationalstaatsgesetz


The nation-state bill is crucial

(...) Why do we need to legislate something already so obvious? (...) Israel’s Jewish character is clear. (...) As opposed to other national conflicts, in Israel, both peoples claim historical ownership of the entire country based on religious-national sources. The struggle over territory is an existential struggle for both national groups in the land of Israel, as one side’s grip on the land necessarily weakens the grip of the other. (...) There is a lot of overlap between the Arab aspects of the struggle and its Islamic aspects, just as there is overlap between the struggle against Zionism and the war against the Jews. In both cases, religion is used for national gain. Therefore, any attempt to alter the Jewish character of the state must be vehemently opposed, while simultaneously upholding the rights of Israel’s Arab citizens. (...) So far, Israeli governments have generally ignored this trend, as though it will disappear on its own. Israel needs to actively combat this nationalist activity that is taking place under the guise of religious work. (...) They are operating in international frameworks, engaging in massive field efforts, and, most importantly, educating future generations on
the idea of a valid Palestinian right of return, which they plan to exercise in the future.
Dr. Yechiel Shabi, IHY, 08.05.17

What would Herzl say about Nationality Bill?
(…) The Nationality Bill (…) is a direct continuation of the Muezzin Bill (…). On the declarative level, it’s about pushing the Arab minority to the margins of society. Simply telling us that Israel is first and foremost an ethnocracy, a state whose top priority is nationality rather than democratic values, which is why we are considered second-class citizens. On the practical level, the law cancels the status of Arabic as an official language in the State of Israel, enforces and expands the “admission committees law” and, most importantly, legally enforces Judaism over democracy, which will have a lot of ramifications on future rulings on discrimination issues. (…)
If the anthem and the flag included no Jewish characteristics, if Shabbat was not the official day of rest, and if a series of Basic Laws enforcing democracy in Israel—like a Basic Law on freedom of speech—overshadowed the state’s Jewishness. A foreign visitor would have likely thought that the Arab minority had gotten so strong, was serving in key positions throughout the country, and that the legislation was so liberal, that in order to keep just a little of the state’s Jewish characteristics there was a need to enact a law that would defend the Jewish majority from a takeover by the Arab minority. (…) The next time the Jewish public asks itself why we don’t feel part of the state, it should consider how we feel every time we are turned into a stationary target for politicians who wish to prove their patriotism at our expense, without any essential need. (…) what would Herzl think about the Nationality Bill? Israel’s leadership appears to have diverted from Herzl’s path. Instead of striving to create equality and a common ground, it is doing everything in its power to incite and divide, thinking it will gain a few more votes. (…) The important mission of Jews and Arabs from all ends of the political spectrum, who don’t wish to be part of the hatred campaign, is therefore to propose legislation that reflects equality, to get our children to study together and apart about each other’s culture in school, to meet and discuss the differences of opinion between us out of respect and, of course, to oppose divisive and discriminatory initiatives. Our mission is that every such law will lead to both a practical and electoral boomerang effect.
Nasreen Hadad Haj-Yahya, YED, 08.05.17

How Arabic became a foreign language in Israel
(…) Wake up and smell the black coffee. There is nothing new under the sun in one of the most problematic clauses of the Nationality Bill. I am referring to the clause which allegedly downgrades Arabic from an official language in Israel to a language with “a special status.” (…) Up until 20 years ago, signs in the Arabic language in Israel’s mixed cities were not a rare sight: The Arabic alphabet was present in signposts and in neighborhood stores. (…) And today? The Arabic language is disappearing from street signs (…). This is not a marginal issue. This is exactly how a language is concealed from the public landscape and turned into a foreign language. The less present Arabic is, the more it is perceived as threatening. (…) Arabic has undergone a process of backward evolution in Israel and is today a sign of primitivity, the signpost which terrifies the person who spots it while riding the bus, the monster under the common Israeli citizen’s bed. So instead of giving it a “special status,” the law should spare the citizens the euphemism and refer to Arabic as “a foreign language.” That is, in fact, what is happening to it. Arabic is becoming a foreign language, a refugee in Israel. (…)
Ayman Siksec, YED, 09.05.17

Pass the Jewish Nation-State Law
(…) The Jewish people’s right to live in its homeland like other nations should be obvious and self-evident. But today the State of Israel’s identification with Jewish nationhood is under attack from large parts of the international community, and from Israeli Arabs, Palestinians, post-Zionist Jews and anti-Jewish Jews. (…) Therefore, Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel and the Jewish character of Israel need to be enshrined in constitutional form (…). Israel’s Jewish character, unlike its liberal democratic character, is not anchored in any Basic Law (…). As for the objections heard in recent days to provisions of the bill, especially with regard to Arab rights and the status of Arabic in Israel, suffice it to say this: The bill is unremarkable compared to many European constitutions with similar, and stronger, national homeland provisions. (…) Even foreign leaders like former president Obama and secretary Kerry have justified their pressure on Israel by invoking the preservation of the State’s Jewish identity. (…)
David M. Weinberg, JPO, 11.05.17
Israel's nation-state bill stabilizes democracy

(…) nation-state clauses are an organic, understood and acceptable part of the constitutions of perfectly democratic countries. (…) The nation-state bill doesn't stipulate that Israel will have a national religion. (…) In France, the homeland of human rights, the constitution says there is one national language, French, despite the country's many minorities. (…) If democracy is harmed, this will (also) happen due to the lack of an unequivocal law that stipulates which nation this country belongs to. Anarchy and intolerance toward minorities develop in places where minorities challenge the majority's rule and the majority can't defend itself from the irredentism threatening it - also because in the absence of a law, the legal system prevents the majority from doing so. (…) Israel Harel, HAA, 12.05.17

Why a 'nationality law' is unnecessary

Israel is the Jewish people’s nation state which sustains, although not perfectly, equality of rights for all its citizens. (…) there is a broad agreement (…) about Israel’s definition as a Jewish state. But when controversial clauses are added, like on exclusive residential areas for Jews, it guarantees in advance that the law will only engender strife. That’s (…) unnecessary. The kibbutzim and the Arab communities never needed any law. Unnecessary legislation only strengthens the claims that a “Jewish state” is necessarily racist. (…) When it comes to such a fundamental basic law, a constitutional law, the most harmful thing that can be done is to take advantage of the coalition majority to pass it. (…) That’s not the way to strengthen the national agreement on a Jewish state. That’s the way to harm it. (…) Israel Harel, HAA, 12.05.17

Israel's Jewish nation-state bill is not just useless - it's harmful

(…) This bill is useless and harmful. (…) The Israeli flag is the Zionist flag; and the Israeli anthem is Hatikvah; Hebrew is the predominant language spoken in Israel; and the Law of Return, passed by the Knesset many years ago, is being implemented on a daily basis. There is no need for a declaration to affirm that in Israel the Jewish people are exercising their right to national self-determination, and that Israel remains committed to providing a haven for all Jews seeking such a haven. All of Israel’s citizens, Jews and Arabs, as well as the rest of the world, are fully aware of that. (…) But the problem is worse than that. Enacting this bill into law smacks of a total absence of sensitivity and empathy for our fellow Arab citizens (…), a minority entitled to full equality of rights and of opportunities. (…) That is of ultimate importance not only for Israel’s Arabs but for Israel’s Jewish citizens as well. (…) Failure to attain this goal could leave many of Israel’s Arab citizens with a feeling of alienation, possibly even hostility, toward Israel. From this perspective, the nation-state bill is a move in the wrong direction. (…) We are better off without it.

Moshe Arens, HAA, 14.05.17

Nationality Bill's only purpose: Showing Arabs who's boss

(…) On the surface, it seems that the entire purpose of the Nationality Bill is to show the Arabs, once and for all, who's boss here. A deeper, thorough look reveals that this is indeed its only purpose. (…) the Nationality Bill offers no dramatic changes. (…) Everything the Nationality Bill seeks to offer already exists in the State of Israel's different laws: The Israeli Flag, Emblem and Anthem Law; the Law of Return; the Independence Day Law; the Memorial Day Law; the Hours of Work and Rest Law; the Foundations of Law Act; the Protection of Holy Places Law. (…) The Knesset factions are like six blind men touching an elephant, and trying to explain what an elephant is. Each faction sees something different in the bill. (…) The bill's main goal—for the Jewish people to give the Arab people the finger—has already been achieved.

Sima Kadmon, YED, 15.05.17

Hungerstreik der Häftlinge

Entmutigen lassen sich die rund 880 palästinensischen Häftlinge, die seit dem 17. April im Hungerstreik sind, von der Nachricht, Marwan Barghouti hätte heimlich Nahrung zu sich genommen, vorläufig nicht. Ein über Youtube verbreitetes Video der Israelsischen Gefängnisbehörde (IPS) zeigt den 57jährigen Fatah-Politiker bei zwei Gelegenheiten zur Toilette in seiner Zelle gehen, wo er hinter vorgehaltener Hand ein paar Bissen zu sich nimmt. Laut IPS handelt es sich einmal um ein paar Kekse und beim zweiten Mal um einen Schokoladengehäkel.

Barghouti, der wegen Beteiligung an mehreren Terrorattentaten im Gefängnis sitzt, gilt als Sprecher der palästinensischen Häftlinge und Initiator des Streiks. Darüber, wie die Süßigkeiten in die Zelle Barghoutis kam, konnten, bewahrte die IPS Stillschweigen. Gewöhnlich durchsucht die Gefängnisbeamten die Zellen nach Nahrungsmitteln...
Barghouti betrayed the people who trusted him

(…) Sometimes a Tortit is only a Tortit, a chocolate-coated wafer bar, an object of desire—and sometimes it’s a twist of fate. In the case of Marwan Barghouti, it’s both. Anyone who has had a yen for something sweet during a serious attack of munchies, or after abstaining while on a diet, knows that eating in secret during a hunger strike is human, all too human. But that’s precisely the problem: A leader has to be more than human; he is a contemporary version of the mythological hero. (…) The Palestinian prisoners’ conditions are disgraceful. (…) What makes these restrictions intolerable is that they will continue for their entire lives. (…) That’s why their struggle for an improvement in conditions is just. (…) Barghouti eating a Tortit in secret is an image that arouses embarrassment and fury. We are witnessing the collapse of the spirit, the surrender to physical needs—a surrender that every human being is familiar with, but which a true leader must overcome. Barghouti betrayed the people who trusted him. His aspirations went beyond the desire to lead the prisoners in jail. Barghouti hoped that like Nelson Mandela he would lead them outside the gates, too, and bring them along a bumpy road, by diplomatic negotiations, to self-determination and the removal of the Israeli occupation and the apartheid regime in the territories. His surrender to the almond-flavored object of his desire arouses doubt as to whether he is made of the right stuff.

Iris Leal, HAA, 14.05.17

It’s Israel’s duty to expose Barghouti as a crook

(…) Every other prisoner tries to present himself as a freedom fighter, and every other prisoner is actually Nelson Mandela. It’s true that they murdered civilians and babies and women and elderly people. (…) But in the war on the collective consciousness, they are winning. (…) This war is being led by the most famous prisoner, Marwan Barghouti, who (…) isn’t fighting for a historic compromise. He is fighting for his place in the Palestinian leadership. (…) Exposing Barghouti as a crook—who sends other to starve while he eats behind their backs—is a legitimate move, because the purpose of the hunger strike is to create unrest in the territories. Unrest means riots and terrorism. Unrest means thwarting any White House initiative. Unrest also means bloodshed. Weakening Barghouti, therefore, under the current circumstances, is the most justified thing to do. (…) Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 09.05.17

Medienquerschnitt

Cyber-Angriff

An unprecedented global attack

One good thing came of this weekend’s unprecedented global cyberattack: Western countries agreed to establish a joint headquarters to fight cyberterrorism. (…) In Israel, the National Cyber Bureau responded quickly, the relevant bodies were apprised of the situation and a large number of information and cyber security experts helped these bodies prevent damage to critical computer sys-
tems. Technologies created by Israeli companies (…) identified and thwarted the attack. (…) The main problem (…) at the moment is the method of infection, which appears exceedingly sophisticated. It is possible of course that the attack and infection method were prepared well in advance and over a long period of time, only to be unleashed at the moment of the attackers' choosing. However, what we are seeing is the exploitation of a breach -- apparently developed by an intelligence agency with extraordinary capabilities -- and it is quite possible that a method of infection was employed in this case whereby advanced synchronization capabilities, seemingly automated to locate specific weaknesses and attack them, were brought to bear.
Rami Efrati, IHY, 14.05.17

Politischer Fussball

Let FIFA bring peace
(…) Israel is violating a clear-cut clause, which is simple and logical. Article 72.2 in FIFA’s statutes prohibits a member state from establishing a soccer team in the territory of another state which is a FIFA member. It cannot include such a team in its soccer leagues without the consent of the other state. The lower Israeli leagues have six teams from settlements in the West Bank. The West Bank is not recognized as part of Israel, not even by Israel itself. However, Palestine has been a FIFA member since 1998. (…) FIFA is an international organization with immense power. (…) in the Israeli-Palestinian context the advantage of FIFA is that it is impartial with regard to inter-state politics. (…) Palestine has been a full-fledged FIFA member with equal rights for two decades. As such, it has managed to exert real pressure on Israel, with a host of actions and threats, the latest one being the vote that was scheduled to take place this week. (…) the Palestinians chalked up a big achievement this week. They placed the occupation onto the international agenda, they made Israel sweat and they reiterated the impossibility of maintaining the occupation. They did so using diplomatic means, not through violence. Isn’t soccer a nice game?
Assaf Gavron, HAA, 14.05.17

Trumps Nahostoffensive

Peace, the ultimate Deal
Donald Trump is a man with an intergalactic ego, so it is perhaps no surprise that he believes he can boldly go where no United States president has gone before and reach the final frontier: peace between Israel and the Palestinians. (…) can he actually live up the hype and “get this done”? If he did, it really would be “huge.” (…) four previous US presidents who have tried to clinch a final-status deal have all failed. (…) while great leaders can certainly change history through the force of their personality, one thing they cannot change is circumstance, and it is extremely doubtful that at this low-point in Palestinian-Israeli relations the right circumstances exist to reach a final-status deal. (…) Netanyahu’s idea of a Palestinian state is more of a “state minus” with limited sovereignty and limited scale – an offer that would be certainly far less generous than those Abbas has already rejected. (…) Aiming for the big one could result in backfire. The situation on the ground is already volatile (…) Failure of a diplomatic process could result in a full-blown intifada led by a generation that no longer remembers the costs of the two previous intifadas – the second of them sparked by the failure of the Camp David process. Trump would do far better to aim for realistic interim goals that will improve conditions on the ground for Palestinians, enable economic growth and stabilize the situation. (…) Trump entered the ring like a neighing horse. (…) he spread in all directions something that this battered region has been lacking for years: Optimism and hope. (…) He didn’t say who were the good guys and who were the bad guys, he didn’t try to outline borders prematurely or divide Jerusalem before placing it on the negotiating table. He is doing it his way, as he used to do when he built skyscrapers: He is the ultimate ribbon cutter of successful deals, and now he has come to a tough neighborhood. (…) Unlike Trump, who kept all the cards close to his chest, Abbas put on the table—in front of the media—the only possible solution as far as he is concerned: Two states,
east Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, the 1967 borders, a solution to the refugee problem, and an Israeli recognition of the state of Palestine like the Palestinians recognize the State of Israel. If Trump only understood that this is the exact solution Prime Minister Netanyahu doesn't want and can't accept, he would've realized at this stage that it would be pointless to dip his toes into the Middle Eastern swamp. (…)  
Orly Azoulay, YED, 04.05.17

Israel wird 69

How an Israeli Arab marks Independence Day
What does the 20 percent do when the rest of the country celebrates the founding of the Jewish state? (…) the memory of the expulsion of my family from Kafr Ma'alul, and the expulsion of about 800,000 of my people. (…) I am supposed to dance with the national flag (…) And despite everything, to set aside the past and rejoice, I am supposed to do it by holding a barbecue, in the hope that reports of the hunger strike by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails doesn't ruin the appetite of our Jewish brothers. This is how a wall is built, not a nation. (…) In Israel, the ostensibly shared common denominator bypasses some 20 percent of the population, tramples on their tragedy and asks that they keep their memories to themselves, lest they disturb the joy of the victors outside. (…) there is not a single memorial site for any of the roughly 500 Arab villages wiped out in 1948? (…) when people are equal, they look alike. When they feel that they belong, they can create wonderful things.  
Odeh Bisharat, HAA, 02.05.

HAA = Haaretz  
YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews  
JPO = Jerusalem Post  
IHY = Israel HaYom  
TOI = Times of Israel  
GLO = Globes