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Trump in Jerusalem

Mit schwarzer Kipa auf dem Kopf und ernstem Gesicht schritt US-Präsident Donald Trump zur Klagemauer. Für ein-zwei Minuten hielt er am heiligen Gemäuer inne. Dann steckte er sorgsam einen Zettel mit seinem Wunsch an Gott zwischen die Ritzen. Zum ersten Mal, so betonte Israels Staatspräsident Reuven Rivlin schon während seiner Begrüßungsrede am Tel Aviver Ben-Gurion Flughafen, „besucht ein amtierender US-Präsident“ die heiligste jüdische Stätte. Ernüchternd für die Israelis war die Tatsache, dass Trump ohne offizielle Begleitung zur Klagemauer wollte. Er beharrte darauf, dass es sich hier um einen privaten Termin handelte. Im Verlauf seiner Reise nach Jerusalem und nach Bethlehem, wo er mit Palästinenserpräsident Mahmud Abbas zusammentraf, weckte Trump neue Hoffnungen. Wenn alle mit zupacken, habe „der Frieden in der Welt und sogar zwischen Israel und den Palästinensern“ eine Chance. Gerade jetzt sei eine „seltene Gelegenheit“ dafür. Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu beharrte darauf, dass „Israel als jüdischer Staat anerkannt wird“. Er signalisierte aber Bereitschaft zu konkreten Maßnahmen der Vertrauensbildung. Reiseerleichterungen und mehr Genehmigungen für palästinensische Bauprojekte im besetzten Gebiet sind offenbar im Gespräch. Netanyahu soll Trump ferner zugesagt haben, den Baubetrieb in israelischen Siedlungen zu drosseln.

No solution in sight

(...) a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is unfortunately not on the horizon (...). Why was it possible for Israel to make peace with Egypt and with Jordan (...) ? What makes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict so different? (...) Israel was prepared to meet Egypt's territorial demand on condition that Sinai would be demilitarized. The Egyptians were prepared to meet this Israeli condition, and a multi-national force was deployed in Sinai to assure that this was implemented. Thus Israel could feel secure after the withdrawal from Sinai. (...) With Jordan it was easier still. King Hussein had already dissociated himself from the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria as well as the territory Jordan annexed after its aggression against Israel in 1948. So there was no territorial dispute between Israel and Jordan. (...) With the Palestinians it is much more than just a dispute over a defined piece of territory. (...) Palestinians insist that all of Israel must eventually come under Palestinian sovereignty. In other words, the very existence of Israel is put into question. (...) At the moment there seems to be no solution to the conflict in sight.

Moshe Arens, HAA, 22.05.17

Harness Trump's determination to attain the ultimate Middle East deal

(...) the goal is ending the blood (...). The United States, Europe and others can and must push the

sides to reach a historic compromise. (...) even Trump has already realized that there is no solution but the two-state solution. Evidence of this is his demand from Israel to stop building settlements, and his recognition of the Palestinians' right to self-determination. (...) If the Israeli government truly seeks peace as it claims, it must harness Trump's determination in order to bravely draft its path to a diplomatic solution. The Israeli right is torn between the annexationist wing and the wing that believes the only solution is the division of the country one way or another. Those who oppose annexation, most of the nation, must take advantage of Trump's special temperament by joining together to say no to the annexationist right and opening a new chapter in the Middle East.

Editorial, HAA, 22.05.17

Trump's new deal

(...) Ahead of Trump's visit, (...) experts decided they would sing the same song they sang during the 1990s, using the same lyrics: "Palestinian state"; "ending the occupation is a prerequisite for ending Israel's state of despair." (...) It turned out that the president who visited Israel this week is the most pro-Israel we have seen in several decades. (...) He has promised to protect Israel and to eradicate terrorism, and on the way he said he was determined to make sure Iran would not obtain nuclear weapons and that he would not let anyone hurt Israel. During his visit here he has repeatedly called Netanyahu "my good friend," as if to make the point that he was not Obama. (...) Trump, it turns out, is not going to make the improvement of U.S.-Israel ties contingent on warmer relations between Israel and the Arabs. In his way, he apparently understands the Middle East better than most of the pundits analyzing him. He knows that in this part of the world, people respect you if you are strong; if you weaken your allies you are looked at with scorn. The players in the region respect his decision to stand by Israel -- because they know this means he will keep his promises to them as well. (...) Trump's new deal is actually going to be more pressure -- on the Palestinians.

Boaz Bismuth, IHY, 24.05.17

Trump triumphant

(...) Donald Trump's Middle East trip was far from the predicted disaster, but the focus must stay on confronting Iran. (...) Trump's visit to Riyadh was almost universally judged a success, with promises of cooperation to combat Iran, Islamic State, al-

Qaida and the other terrorist organizations all around, and large weapons orders from the Saudis. (...) Jerusalem was also a success. (...) In Israel he did not (...) mention a two-state solution, Palestinian sovereignty, or settlements, and his meetings in Riyadh showed that he has resisted diverting his attention from the much more important task of putting together a meaningful alliance of states to confront Iran and the terrorists and bring Israel into the alliance. (...) It used to be said that the Palestinians never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity. That maxim will be justly applied to the new administration if it allows itself to concentrate on Israel-Palestine rather than a regional alliance, and if that turns out to be the case, the administration will have ever-weaker protection against the jackals and hyenas circling it in Washington. If not, and if Trump succeeds in promoting the formation of a coalition including Israel to confront the Middle Eastern "axis of evil", he will indeed have forged a major strategic triumph. (...) for the moment, we can be unexpectedly (and cautiously) optimistic.

Dr. Norman Bailey, GLO, 25.05.17

Don't be the one who says no to Trump

(...) President Donald J. Trump barnstormed through the Middle East and proved that he knows a thing or two about leverage (...). His leverage derives from several factors: He is new, representing a fresh face following both sides' growing weary of President Obama, and they are eager to establish the best possible relationships with him. (...) He offered an exceptionally warm embrace of Israel, with an evocative visit to the Western Wall and a speech that touched on Zionist themes. But he also gave great respect and honor to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. (...) To the Israelis, he seems to be bringing tantalizing offers of normalization from the Saudis — overflights, communications links, and trade offices — while to the Palestinians, he may represent their last chance to achieve statehood before Abbas leaves the scene. (...) The sense one gets is that he just wants a deal, and he is not so particular about the details. (...) Trump's next move should be to put the tough decisions before both sides soon. Neither will want to get caught saying no to him. (...) Netanyahu may be asked to take steps — on a partial settlement freeze, future definition of borders, or extensive Palestinian development — that he could not get through his current government, especially with right-wing ministers who think Trump is on their side. But if the Saudi offers are real, there will also be

pressure within Israel for Netanyahu to respond in a way that brings them to life. (...) It remains an uphill climb. Mistrust runs deep. Netanyahu will be cautious, because promised gestures from Arab states have not materialized in the past. The Palestinians may not live up to their end. And Abbas will be equally wary of exposing himself and coming up empty-handed. (...)

Daniel Shapiro, HAA, 25.05.17

Donald Trump, the seller of dreams

(...) He didn't speak about two states for two people, didn't discuss the Palestinians' right to self-determination, avoided any mention of a territorial compromise and reiterated the American commitment (...) that Iran would not obtain a nuclear weapon. (...) On the other hand, there was no deep recognition of the Jewish people and State of Israel's historical connection to Jerusalem either. There was definitely no declaration of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, and mum's the word when it comes to the chance that Trump would move the US embassy to the capital. It's perfectly clear that storming the hills and building in all parts of Judea and Samaria is out of the question as far as the Trump administration is concerned. (...) Through his visit to the region, Trump dealt with the deep animosity in his political base in America towards Saudi Arabia and the Saudis. The Palestinians got the least, not even a right to self-determination. That's the way it is in business. They are the smallest and weakest creatures. But Trump is such a good salesman, that even they are satisfied. (...)

Nadav Eyal, YED, 27.05.17

Left in the provincial dust: A summary of Trump's visit to Israel

(...) Even those who talk about a successful visit, about a wonderful Zionist speech, about a president who is fantastic for Israel, are finding it difficult to see any achievements beyond the warm words, apart from vague promises about some peace process, without saying a single word about its essence: Neither the two-state vision nor the 1967 borders or the Palestinian right to self-determination. There was even no mention of Trump's election promise to move the US embassy to Jerusalem. From the Israeli side, the visit was an example of provincialism, of lack of class. It's enough to look at the English menu handed to the guests who attended at the festive meal at the prime minister's residence to feel embarrassed. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was given the title H.E.—His Excellency,

while the prime minister's wife was referred to as "First Lady," which is definitely not her official title. (...) So much ego, pursuit of honor, immodesty. (...) If all this was just to get a hug, to hear what we are so fond of hearing and to enjoy the empty compliments the American president generously showered us with—we got that. (...) According to Netanyahu's applause and body language, one might have thought that the State of Israel—the strongest power in the Middle East—had just been rescued from a nuclear disaster. (...) No one raised an eyebrow at the fact that the president arrived in Israel from Saudi Arabia, where he signed \$110 billion arms deals, and that he developed particularly warm relations with Saudi King Salman. And this is a country considered until recently, even by Trump, the No. 1 exporter of terrorism and the funder of the world's most radical mosque. One can only imagine what the Prime Minister's Office and the right-wing camp's speakers would have said had the deal with Saudi Arabia been signed by former US president Barack Obama. Look at how fast we have devoted ourselves to a man who until a few months ago we didn't believe would sit in the most important seat in the world, who apart from a variety of repulsive traits, is also known for his short temper, penchant changing his mind in an instant and a total lack of commitment.

Sima Kadmon, YED, 29.05.17

American plan is to deal with northern Samaria first

(...) The Trump administration has already marked northern Samaria as a possible area for an Israeli move, which would convey to the Arab world that Israel is committed to recognizing the two states. The move involves the transfer of lands that are under full Israeli sovereignty to partial – merely civil – Palestinian sovereignty. In more familiar words, transferring lands from Area C to Area B. The Americans see this move as a possible mission for the Israeli government, as part of the big package deal with the Arab world.(...) They are not talking about definition changes in large areas, but in small areas. Something symbolic that will indicate to the Arab world that Israel is willing to make progress towards the two-state solution not just through words, and that it has no intention to annex all the territories. (...) What the Americans are demanding from the Palestinians seems impossible at the moment too: To bring the security coordination with Israel to light, to stop handing out money to terrorists jailed in Israel, etc. From the Saudis, according to the Wall

Street Journal, the Americans demanded initial moves of normalization with Israel, like opening direct telephone lines between the two countries, allowing Israelis to do business in Saudi Arabia and letting Israeli planes fly over Saudi Arabia on their way to the Far East. Now each side must bring its part to the table. (...)

Alex Fishman, YED, 29.05.17

Yes to the initiative

Gulf states, led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (...) would agree to take steps toward normalization with Israel if Israel took steps toward the Palestinians like a partial construction freeze in settlements in certain parts of the West Bank and an easing of trade restrictions on Gaza. (...) The Arab states propose steps like establishing direct telecommunications between Israel and certain Arab countries, allowing Israeli airlines to fly through the Gulf states' airspace and eliminating trade restrictions with Israel. (...) This initiative fits well with the spirit of peace as a business that has emanated from Washington ever since the businessman Trump was elected president. (...) Netanyahu himself would have to pay a high price because announcing a settlement freeze could break up his governing coalition. But business is business: There's no profit without risk. Although the language is economic, the initiative might result in a historic breakthrough in the Middle East and provide infrastructure for a regional peace. (...) Netanyahu would be wise to accept this initiative and announce a construction freeze in the settlements. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 17.05.17

Jerusalem-Tag

„Operation blaues Schild“, nannte Israels Polizei die besonderen Sicherheitsmaßnahmen zum Jerusalem-Tag, an dem ein Sonderaufgebot von mehreren Tausend Polizisten im Einsatz war. In diesem Jahr stand der Feiertag im Zeichen des 50. Jubiläums der Einheit Jerusalems. Im Juni 1967 eroberten israelische Truppen Ostjerusalem und die Altstadt. Zum ersten Mal nach fast 20 Jahren konnten Juden damals wieder zur Klagemauer, ihrer wichtigsten Pilgerstätte. Zehntausende Israelis marschierten am diesjährigen Jerusalem-Tag vom Stadtzentrum in die Altstadt. Die Feierlichkeiten blieben nicht ohne Kritik. Rund 500 Demonstranten protestierten gegen „Rassismus, Hass und Gewalt“. Die linken Aktivisten riefen zu einer „neuen Agenda des Friedens und der Gleichberechtigung in Jerusalem“ auf.

The Jerusalem obsession

(...) Of all of Israel's whims, this is the craziest of all. A country trying look secular, Western and modern is going nuts over a wall. It's a fetish. You can live with it, of course, but like any obsession it can drive you insane. But the obsession with the Kotel is part of a wider syndrome, the Jerusalem obsession. There's no more divided city than united Jerusalem, and we've devised no greater self-deception than thinking there can be a solution without justice in Jerusalem. (...) a country that wakes up in terror because some American official avoided saying that the Kotel is part of Israel, proves not only that its discourse is delusional, but that it isn't at all sure that the Kotel really belongs to it, and how uncertain it is about its borders, sovereignty and justness. When it comes to talking about Jerusalem, it loses its moorings; when it comes to the Kotel, it loses consciousness. In both instances we're talking about detachment from reality. (...) The Jerusalem obsession in its current form is new. Israel lived fairly well with little Jerusalem. Mini Jerusalem was a much more pleasant, humane and Israeli place, but the monster has turned on its creator during the past 50 years. On the other hand, there is no subject on which the world is as united as on Jerusalem; no country recognizes Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem and there isn't a single embassy in western Jerusalem, either. (...) turning the question of Jerusalem into the cornerstone of any solution to the conflict is the product of 50 years of brainwashing and ritual, including all the odd initiation ceremonies at the Kotel. (...)

Gideon Levy, HAA, 18.05.17

Daughters of Jerusalem

(...) Jerusalem madness is spiking this week. Donald Trump's visit to the city is taking place precisely at the time that Israel is marking fifty years since the reunification of the city. (...) Jerusalem serves as a vivid microcosm of a progressively gangrenous asymmetrical confrontation which, for the sake of all its residents, cries out for a lasting accommodation. In this charged climate, the voices of half of the city's residents, its women, remain predictably muted. (...) Where messianic fanaticism and nationalist extremism intermingle, many women born and bred in various parts of the city are also its often invisible yet nevertheless vibrant adhesive. (...) Being a woman in this city is frequently all about learning how to celebrate one's own community while simultaneously challenging the narrow frontiers of daily existence, discovering what lies beyond their con-

finds and finding ways to connect to the possibilities they hold. (...) Haredi women are visible in secular surroundings, in workplaces outside their own neighborhoods. Palestinian women circumvent untold impediments to reach hospitals and schools, markets and welfare centers. Secular women can be seen in the alleys of the old city, just as women of all backgrounds frequent clubs and the city's many cafes. Restraints on mobility, however sophisticated, constantly defy female ingenuity. (...) In the 1990s, the Jerusalem Link (...) assembled women from all parts of the city (...) marched together (...) in an act of solidarity aimed at demonstrating the benefits of cohabitation even in an environment of increasing repression and domination. This spirit is now being revived by Women Wage Peace, a grassroots movement determined to end the political deadlock between Palestinians and Israelis. (...) For these women of all ages, being part of Jerusalem is not about control but about cultivation; it is not about mastery but about dignified existence; it is not about proclaimed love but about constant caring. In this way, these daughters of Jerusalem are trying to resurrect the true meaning of the Jerusalem legacy: a city of peace for all its many people. (...) Naomi Chazan, TOI, 22.05.17

Jerusalem: Capital of Jewish Deceit

(...) Never has a city been so reunited, yet few are the cities that are so torn apart. It's all because of the Jerusalem paradox. Jerusalem is the capital of Jewish deceit. (...) The city is the precise focal point at which all the diplomatic formulas that totally contradict each other collide, and move Israel firmly toward political destruction. (...) Whoever is committed to the two-state formula and truly accepts its practical application can't avoid the understanding that the capital of the second state – Palestine – will also be in Jerusalem. Because unfortunately for them, the Jews don't have a monopoly on the city's symbolism. (...) A peace agreement on sharing the territory will also apply to dividing Jerusalem as a split-shared area. (...) The immediate significance of "one city" is "one state": that is, a clear veto on any plan that would divide the land into two states. (...) The paralysis and fear of decision-making could lead to a solution that wouldn't be so bad: an urban confederation, a city of all its communities. It would be a city with an overall municipal authority and several sub-authorities. There would be no transportation on Shabbat within the ultra-Orthodox municipality; in the Muslim municipality, the muezzin would call the faithful to prayer five times a day; church

bells would ring out in the Christian municipality; and within the municipality for the secular remnants, commercial and entertainment venues would be open on Shabbat, and personal and public transportation would be available to everyone. And most importantly, the latter body will be responsible (...) for travel in the direction of Tel Aviv. (...) Avraham Burg, HAA, 25.05.17

Jerusalem at 50: A 2,000-year-old dream

(...) For me, to be a Jerusalemite is to march in the City of David where kings and prophets walked. To buy fruits and vegetables in the colorful Machane Yehuda market during the day and to enjoy the vibrant scene that comes to life there at night. To run the breathtaking Jerusalem Marathon alongside the walls of the Old City. To be with tens of thousands of fellow Jews at the Western Wall for the priestly blessing of the kohanim. (...) To work with Beit Hanina community leaders to build the neighborhood's future. These are unique Jerusalem experiences that cannot be found in any other place in the world. The heart of the city center is beating once again. Nature reserves and new parks have been opened. (...) At the entrance to the city, we are building the largest business district in the country, providing employment and livelihood for tens of thousands of people – and these are just glimpses into the revolution taking place in Jerusalem. Jerusalem, with its unique human mosaic, is the largest and most diverse city in Israel. It has a place for hi-tech entrepreneurs, innovative artists, groundbreaking educators and billions of people around the globe who look to Jerusalem as a center of creativity and inspiration. As a lifelong Jerusalemite, I have seen the city grow and prosper in the past fifty years. I have witnessed the rebirth of an ancient city, the heart and soul of the Jewish people. We are all shareholders of the city of Jerusalem, the capital of Israel. We are all shareholders in this renaissance. (...) Nir Barkat, TOI, 24.05.17

Center Field: Trump celebrated Jerusalem – will you?

Jerusalem Day celebrates Israel's survival. It celebrates restoring the Jewish people's heart – Jerusalem's Old City – to the Jewish body – the Land of Israel. It cost American taxpayers one hundred million dollars. Many of Jerusalem's 890,000 residents became shut-ins. Ten thousand security personnel mobilized. Yet, the significance of US President Donald Trump's visit may be reduced to the placement of one word and one significant gesture. To-

gether, both gave Israel a well-deserved present celebrating 50 years since Jerusalem's reunification. The word was "Israel," placed after the word "Jerusalem," on some White House-issued press releases. What should have been a routine act deviated from the longstanding American idiocy of treating Jerusalem as just "Jerusalem," seemingly a city without a country. Calling it "Jerusalem, Israel" recognizes Israeli sovereignty over the Jewish People's historic capital. The gesture was a sitting American president finally visiting the Western Wall. (...) While failing in their campaign to destroy the Jewish state, the Palestinians have ghettoized Israel, singling it out, preventing the same basic rules from applying to Israel that apply to other states. Other countries choose their own capitals – not Israel. Other countries keep land they win from neighbors in wars of self-defense without being demonized – not Israel. Other countries settle in territories belonging to their historic homeland without being called occupiers – not Israel. (...) A united Jewish people celebrating Yom Yerushalayim, Jerusalem Day, will reinforce his message legitimizing Jerusalem. (...) No Israel supporters should declare we "lost the Six Day War." Had Israel lost, we would have lost Israel. Jerusalem Day celebrates Israel's survival. It celebrates restoring the Jewish people's heart – Jerusalem's Old City – to the Jewish body – the Land of Israel. And the day celebrates the victory's many positive byproducts: from the Zionist inspiration it gave oppressed Russian Jews and assimilated American Jews, to the historic shift the victory triggered whereby much of the world and even many Palestinians started quarreling about settlements and territories – thus implicitly accepting Israel's existence. Without 1967, our enemies would be demanding Tel Aviv and west Jerusalem, not just Hebron and east Jerusalem. This celebration doesn't ignore the complexities – we have 364 other days a year to confront them. (...) Love him or hate him, America's president ultimately celebrated Jerusalem Day – shouldn't we?
 Gil Troy, JPO, 23.05.17

Neue Untersuchungen gegen Deri

Nicht weniger als elf Stunden dauerte das Verhör von Innenminister Aryeh Deri, dem erneut ein schwerer Korruptionsverdacht anhängt. Muss Deri, der wegen ähnlicher Vergehen in den 90er Jahren zwischen 2000 und 2002 schon einmal im Gefängnis saß, erneut hinter Gitter? Noch hält die Polizei die Untersuchungen weitgehend geheim. Zeitungsberichten zufolge, steht Deri unter dem Verdacht

des Vertrauensbruchs, des Steuerhinterzugs und Geldwäscherei. Außerdem soll er einen Diebstahl in Auftrag gegeben haben. Die Tageszeitung Haaretz nimmt den Fall zum Anlass, um das Interesse auf Regierungschef Netanyahu zu lenken, der ebenfalls der Korruption verdächtigt wird. Das Blatt beschuldigt Oberstaatsanwalt Avichai Mendelblit, Netanyahu zu bevorzugen. So habe Mendelblit im Korruptionsfall Deri darauf bestanden, dass die Eheleute Deri zeitgleich von der Polizei verhört werden, während die Netanyahus wiederholt an unterschiedlichen Terminen befragt wurden.

Bad Appointment

(...) it was a bad idea appointing Arye Deri as interior minister. This is not to say that Deri is without merit. Before he was imprisoned in 2000 for corruption, he built from scratch a political, social and religious movement that has transformed Israeli society and empowered Sephardi Jewry. (...) Shas's impact on Israel is undeniable. Unfortunately, Deri did much to discredit his own movement, which called for social equality and an end to the hegemony of secular Ashkenazi Israelis. It emerged that as Deri built up Shas's religious school system and social service network, he and his associates took advantage of Deri's position as public servant. (...) Deri and his wife, Yaffa, are under investigation in connection with a corruption probe. Fourteen other people have been arrested. Large sums of money were allegedly transferred by Deri's brother, attorney Shlomo "Momo" Deri, to Arye's account to buy property. (...) It could very well be that all the charges against the Deris will be dropped and no wrongdoing will be found. The Deris, after all, are innocent until proven guilty. Whether or not he is convicted, however, Deri should never have been allowed to return to the Interior Ministry. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 29.05.17

Deri has not changed

(...) The recent scandal surrounding the Shas chairman shows that Deri hasn't change. He is the same Deri with the jaw-dropping guilty verdict in his 1990s. His wife, who lied on his behalf, has not changed either. Deri's brother Shlomo, who (...) witnesses sign false affidavits, hasn't changed either. The three protagonists from this new scandal are the same protagonists from Deri's scandals in the 1990s. What the judges wrote about all three cannot be unwritten. Aryeh Deri's attempt to hand-pick his own interrogators in his previous affairs cannot be forgotten, nor can his alleged effort to

make an illicit deal in order to have the government appoint an attorney general to his liking in 1997. (...) this time around he has adopted a different strategy: instead of attacking law enforcement officials, he has shown respect. He has also tried to calm his supporters and has not incited against the police and the attorney general. But we must not be fooled: Deri can easily revert to his old strategy. He, his wife and his brother are in deep legal trouble. He is well aware of what investigators saw in his wife's organizations; he knows that this time around, the claim that he didn't know and that his wife kept him in the dark may not save him from prosecution. That is why he may end up rallying his troops. (...) Mordechai Gilat, IHY, 30.05.17

The Whitewasher

(...) Attorney General Avichai Mendelblit (...) is whitewashing the stains of Sara and Benjamin Netanyahu. (...) Every attorney general has his or her own priorities. Yehuda Weinstein, who felt for the suffering of animals, who cannot speak out for themselves, was a voice for their well-being. When it comes to Mendelblit, he is one to suffer, someone sensitive to any reporting that might damage his reputation and his lofty future. The unfortunate experience that has shaped him is the investigation against him in the so-called Harpaz case, the case involving an alleged forgery designed to influence the selection of a new army chief of staff. (...) When he was questioned (...), he fought to prevent "reporting of any material from the investigation material, including recordings, transcriptions and any reference to them relating to the exchange of words" between Mendelblit and Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi. (...) If leaks are such a great concern to Mendelblit, and if he wants to punish perpetrators and deter them and others, all he has to do, for decisive reasons of state that take precedence over politeness, is to reverse his predecessor's refusal to investigate the leak of a presentation of a proposed plan to reoccupy the Gaza Strip, during Israel's 2014 war against Hamas. (...) Mendelblit hasn't done that, however, lest suspicions focus on those very close to Netanyahu. Mendelblit's initiative to threaten the legal system with the prospect of the misfortune that would befall the leakers in its ranks is a gift to the prime minister and his wife. It's not a cigar or champagne but rather media silence, to repress of any memory of their slow-moving cases and to deflect the pressure on the attorney general to adopt the expected police recommendation, not for a cover-up, not yet, but just a whitewash.

Amir Oren, HAA, 28.05.17

Medienquerschnitt

Miri Regev's Kleid

Dress as performance art

(...) I looked at Regev's picture from the Cannes Film Festival: a beautiful woman wearing a stunning white and gold dress with a lovely image of Jerusalem on it. A demonstration like that requires a lot of courage, especially against a background of fine ball gowns. (...) Wearing it in a place which makes declarations about the quality of art turns the dress into a provocative statement that draws attention and sparks debate. Europe insists on erasing our ties to the city, and its anti-Semitic fixation should be challenged by little provocations. On the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem, an Israeli government minister is serving as a piece of performance art illustrating our bond with the eternal city. (...) It is an ancient Jewish custom for Jewish women to wear a diadem known as the "Jerusalem (or City) of Gold." After the Second Temple was destroyed, the jewelry took on an additional significance of keeping Jerusalem in our hearts at every time of celebration or sadness, and served as an oath of allegiance to it. (...) Printing is a kind of engraving. (...) Art does not need to be brokered by taste makers. Our opinions are as good as theirs. (...) The contempt for Regev has to do with the primeval (racist?) fear of associating her with the qualities we like to assign to cultural icons from the Left: subversion, criticism, political understanding, humor, irony. Really, what does someone like her understand, anyway?

Dror Eydar, IHY, 21.05.17

Hungerstreik der palästinensischen Häftlinge

Adding fuel to Palestinian prisoners' hunger strike

(...) The Shin Bet, in a planned move, hid a chocolate bar in the prison cell of the striking inmates' leader, Marwan Barghouti. Barghouti couldn't resist the temptation. He went into the bathroom and took a bite. (...) The hunger-striking prisoners include murderers and mass murderers. There is not a shred of sympathy in me towards them. Their nutrition habits don't concern me. What does concern me is the extent of cynicism and cowardice around the government table. (...) Some security officials

believed that the strike could be prevented. Some of the demands presented by the prisoners were reasonable. They demanded, for example, the installation of sprinklers on the prisons' rooftops to cool them off in the summer heat. This week, such sprinklers are being installed on the roof of the Gilboa Prison's security ward, and in the coming weeks they will be installed in additional prisons. The striking prisoners were not asked for anything in return. (...) Erdan's chocolate show (...) was justified: Barghouti, as the strike's leader, is a legitimate target. The question is what should be done with the video. One option that was raised was to approach Barghouti, show him the footage and suggest that the film be shelved in return for cooperation; another option was to make sure that the video reached Barghouti's enemies in the Palestinian Authority. They would have taken care of the rest. Erdan chose, as we know, the third option, which for a moment turned him into the Right's hero on social media and the envy of his fellow ministers. The IPS is not the only one adding fuel to the prisoners' strike. (...) The report about the plan to bring doctors from a foreign country to force-feed the striking prisoners. There is no such plan in the IPS, and in the meantime, there are no courts in Israel that will order force-feeding. Someone in the government thought this was the commander's spirit, and created a storm.

Nahum Barnea, YED, 16.05.17

Demokratisch oder jüdisch?

Battling over Equality

Israel's very legitimacy as a Jewish state is under attack. (...) 77% of Arabs do not agree that Israel should be defined as "the state of the Jewish people." (...) The State of Israel has an obligation to protect itself and its Jewish identity as long as it does so while creating full civic equality for the members of the state's Arab minority. The state, and the vast majority of its Jewish citizens, is willing to grant equality to Arabs in Israel. But equality means different things to the Jews and the Arabs. Jewish state officials talk about civic equality for Jews and Arabs on issues such as state funding and individual rights. The Arab minority's leaders demand equality at the national level, which would mean a fundamental change in Israel's character as a Jewish state. (...) The goal (...) is to transform Israel into a consociational democracy in which Jews and Arabs have equal rights in the decision-making mechanisms at the national level, as well as the allocation

of rights and resources. (...) The implications of Israeli Arabs seeing themselves as possessing rights as a native-born group are dramatic and could influence the day-to-day lives of all Israelis. (...) Arab political leaders and intellectuals are working to build a consciousness among Israel's Arabs as a distinct national group. (...) The State of Israel has a right and duty to protect its identity as a Jewish state, and defend itself against the trend among leaders and public figures of subverting Israel's existence as a Jewish and democratic state. Shuki Friedman, JPO, 18.05.17

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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Dr. Werner Puschra,

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Redaktion:

Susanne Knaul

Judith Stelmach

Homepage: www.fes.org.il

Email: fes@fes.org.il