



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 4/18
Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

15.-28. Februar

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1. Neue Vorwürfe gegen Netanyahu

Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu steht unter dem Verdacht, in einen weiteren Korruptionsfall verwickelt zu sein. Er soll versucht haben, das Nachrichtenportal Walla im Gegenzug zu rechtlichen und vor allem finanziellen Begünstigungen für eine positivere Berichterstattung über ihn selbst und seine Familie zu gewinnen. Netanyahu war zur fraglichen Zeit Kommunikationsminister. Hinter dem Nachrichtenportal steht Israels größtes Telekommunikationsunternehmen Bezeq. Der finanzielle Vorteil, den Bezeq erhielt, belaufe sich auf bis zu einer Milliarde Schekel. Die Polizei verhaftete in dem Zusammenhang den Medienunternehmer und Freund Netanyahus Shaul Elovitch, dessen Sohn Or und die Ehefrau Iris. Elovitch hält die Mehrheitsanteile an Bezeq. Desweiteren nahm die Polizei Nir Hefetz, Netanyahus PR-Berater, fest. Hefetz wird vorgeworfen, versucht zu haben, eine Richterin zu bestechen. Netanyahu droht bereits in zwei weiteren Korruptionsfällen die Anklage. Polizeiliche Ermittler gaben nach Abschluss der Untersuchungen eine entsprechende Empfehlung an den Generalstaatsanwalt ab. Es seien ausreichend Beweise für Bestechlichkeit, Betrug und Untreue in zwei Fällen gesammelt worden. Netanyahu wies die Vorwürfe als "absurd" zurück.

The graft that Netanyahu unwittingly admits to

(...) "I worked to close Channel 10, of which he [friend and benefactor Arnon Milchan] was an owner. If it weren't for the attorney general's instructions, the channel would have closed," Netanyahu said to defend himself against bribery allegations. (...) The prime minister's claim is both a gross lie and foolish. Milchan may have formally been a shareholder in Channel 10 during those years, but he had stopped investing money in the channel and himself was working to close it down, so Netanyahu wasn't working against him in this matter. On the contrary, their interests converged. (...) Netanyahu is admitting that he tried to close a media outlet (...), because the channel broadcast damaging investigative reports about him. (...) If a person who tried to close a media outlet out of personal interest isn't corrupt, then what's corruption?
Raviv Drucker, HAA, 18.02.18

This time, it's not just cigars or champagne

(...) it seems impossible that Netanyahu (...) isn't deeply involved in this affair. (...) The allegations aren't surprising. They all have to do with the apple of Netanyahu's eye—the media—and his need to control it, and with the apple of Sara Netanyahu's eye—the obsessive pursuit of positive coverage, including flattering photos, a report on every single event she attends and, most importantly, ensuring that her work as a psychologist in the public service

is mentioned every time. (...) There are articles and photos on the Walla! News website and, most importantly, testimonies of the website's editors about relentless pressure for positive coverage of the prime minister's family. And the return is clear: A gift worth millions. The police will have no trouble finding the golden piece of evidence here, the return. There is someone who gave a bribe and someone who took a bribe. It's all documented. (...) it's likely going to be the simplest case. (...) no one will claim that Netanyahu didn't know or didn't understand what was going on around him, and that so many people around him are being led to the interrogation room, while he is squeaky clean. It's time to wake up. The multiple cases, the growing number of interrogatees and the multiple circles closing in on the prime minister can no longer be ignored by senior members of his party and by his coalition partners. (...) Someone has to understand that this disgrace can no longer be taken.
Sima Kadmon, YED, 19.02.18

The assault on the rule of law

(...) the public chorus (...) provides politically biased information (...), and its message, the delegitimation of the competent authorities, is an educational catastrophe. If the attorney general decides to accept the police recommendations and indict the prime minister, the chorus on the Right will rhyme his name with the "New Israel Fund," the "Meretz Supreme Court" and all its other ostensible enemies of Israel. If he decides to drop the case, the chorus on the Left will accuse him of cowardice and betrayal of his sworn duties, in order to please the man who appointed him to his high position. (...) A reasonable person should reject the conspiracy theories of both sides. (...) Netanyahu's efforts to escape the clutches of the law have led him to blow an evil wind on embers that threaten to flame up and consume the public's confidence in the rule of law. When Netanyahu accuses the law enforcement agencies of fabricating a case against him he is putting his own interests ahead of what is good for the country. Inciting the public against the legitimacy of the law enforcement agencies is a much more serious matter than all the allegations in the police recommendations put together. (...)
Yedidia Stern, JPO, 20.02.18

Dysfunctional politics, disgraceful behavior

The criminal charges recommended by the Israel Police against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the politicians' and media's reactions amount to

perhaps the most scandalous political imbroglia in Israel's history. (...) The current effort orchestrated by the police and media is the culmination of decades of delegitimization directed against a prime minister who has proven outstanding diplomatic leadership and is largely responsible for transforming Israel into a financial and military superpower. Ever since he was elected to lead the Likud, the mainstream media (...) has ceaselessly sought to besmirch him. No other democratic leader has been so vilified. (...) The ultimate outrage was a TV interview with Police Commissioner Roni Alsheikh in the week prior to the release of the police recommendation. Alsheikh unleashed a tirade against the prime minister, predicting that he would soon be charged with two major acts of corruption. (...) Yet, when challenged, he was unable to produce any evidence substantiating these allegations. In any normal democracy, a police commissioner breaching his duties on any of these issues would be dismissed. In our dysfunctional system, Alsheikh carries on as usual. (...) In the absence of evidence of a crime, distaste for Netanyahu's hedonism is insufficient grounds for a breach-of-trust charge, let alone the more serious charges. The prime minister's future should depend only on the judgment of the voters. Most Israelis, whether they like or despise Netanyahu, recognize that replacing him now could have catastrophic consequences. At this critical period, with crucial threats looming, no one is capable of stepping into Prime Minister Netanyahu's shoes.
Isi Leibler, IHY, 20.02.18

We need a clear answer from Mandelblit

The question whether Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit was asked by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Nir Hefetz or anyone on behalf of the prime minister about the criminal investigation against Sara Netanyahu before being appointed attorney general is a fundamental and critical question in the current state of affairs. We must not let it get away without a clear and simple answer—yes or no? (...) In light of the vagueness surrounding the issue, the attorney general should summon himself to the police's Lahav 433 Unit immediately and ask to provide his own account on the matter so as not to leave even the slightest bit of doubt. (...) If Mandelblit—this time as the attorney general who handles cases related to the prime minister and his close associates—received such an appeal and hid it from the public and from the police before being appointed, he knows he must disqualify himself immediately from handling the investigations against

the prime minister and resign immediately for failing to report the appeal and then handling the Sara Netanyahu cases. In such an event, I believe Mandelblit should also lose his license to practice law. (...) The suspicions of serious governmental corruption, which are growing deeper every day, require an attorney general capable of handling the different affairs without any suspicion or prejudice. Otherwise, the public will completely lose its faith in Israel's legal system.

Yuval Diskin, YED, 27.02.18

Defending the rule of law

(...) Israel's democracy (...) is threatened as never before. (...) The situation today in which Netanyahu is being buried under an avalanche of legally spurious criminal probes is (...) dangerous to Israeli democracy (...) The probes Netanyahu is the subject of have little legal weight. (...) Netanyahu's opponents insist this isn't personal. (...) If he isn't forced from office, they say, the rule of law in Israel will be undermined and Israeli democracy will be dangerously weakened. His critics are right that these investigations endanger Israel's rule of law. (...) these probes are neither supported by sufficient evidence to bring a conviction, nor do they serve the public interest. These are the only two considerations that state prosecutors are supposed to be guided by when they decide whether or not to indict criminal suspects. (...)

Caroline B. Glick, JPO, 22.02.18

Public opinion and the bulldozer effect

(...) there is no doubt that someone made a conscious decision to leave no stone unturned until the jackpot is attained. (...) its goal is singular: to convince the Israeli public that the State of Israel is being run by a fundamentally corrupt prime minister. This conscious decision was clearly made by Israel Police Commissioner Insp. Gen. Roni Alsheikh on the day he appointed Lior Horev – known as one of Netanyahu's harshest and most vocal opponents – to serve as police legal adviser. (...) at the same time, a virtual tsunami of targeted media leaks began to swell, designed to do to Netanyahu what an early testimony did to disgraced former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert – bury him in the public's mind even before the trial begins. (...) we are witnessing painfully expensive foot-dragging, at the expense of the taxpayer of course. More than anything else, this foot-dragging reflects the police's selective enforcement, ignoring all the immediate suspects and focusing obsessively and exclusively on the prime

minister. (...) In a spectacular boomerang effect, the bulldozer turned up a judge who failed to report what she viewed as an offer of a bribe (...) detention conditions that would make the KGB proud; the demoralization of a senior police officer who alleged that a chief investigator sexually harassed her; a judge and an investigator who illicitly coordinated detentions, obviating the role of the defense, reducing suspects to sub-human status, and more. It appears that there is not a single clause in the human dignity and liberty law that the police failed to violate. And if this is how a prime minister is treated, how do they treat the average citizen? (...) It seems that the only watchdogs of Israeli democracy that remain are the citizens themselves (...).

Galit Distel Etebaryan, IHY, 28.02.18

The price of keeping Netanyahu in office

Binyamin Netanyahu is determined to fight to the bitter end. (...) In any other democratic country, the myriad of probes surrounding his conduct (...) would have compelled him to resign — or at least suspend himself temporarily. (...) no individual, however talented, can guide the affairs of state confidently and reasonably while much of his energy and time is taken up with clearing his name. (...) Israeli citizens of all persuasions and all walks of life will have to pay for Netanyahu's obduracy and for the cult of adulation he has nurtured and serves him so well. The question today is not whether he will remain in office for much longer (...), but what damage will be wrought in the interim while he clings to office for dear life in these circumstances. (...) Without a restraining hand at the helm, everybody in some position of power is taking advantage of the informal yet extensive free hand they have been given by Netanyahu to promote their own agenda. (...) Joint proposals by the Jewish Home party and the Likud are adopted in the Knesset almost daily. (...). If Binyamin Netanyahu really believes that his mission has always been to protect and develop Israel, his best contribution now to the Israeli public and to the country he holds dear would be to step down before he destroys everything he claims to have worked so hard to achieve.

Naomi Chazan, TOI, 28.02.18

2. Iranische Bedrohung

Die in Israel abgefangene iranische Drohne beschäftigt weiter Politiker und Analysten. Auf Spott stieß Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu mit seinem Auftritt bei der Münchner

Sicherheitskonferenz, als er ein Trümmerteil der iranischen Drohne präsentierte und damit eine offene Auseinandersetzung mit dem iranischen Außenminister provozierte. Mohammad Javad Zarif bezeichnete Netanyahus Auftritt später als einen "Zirkus" und warnte vor einer bewaffneten Auseinandersetzung, Israel falle täglich in den syrischen Luftraum ein, kritisierte der iranische Außenminister. Netanyahu hatte im Verlauf seiner Rede Parallelen zwischen dem Iran und Nazi-Deutschland gezogen. Der Iran habe öffentlich erklärt, Israel mit seinen sechs Millionen Juden auslöschen zu wollen. Bei einem Schlagabtausch Anfang Februar hatte die syrische Luftabwehr einen israelischen F17-Kampffluger beschossen, der im Norden Israels zum Absturz kam. In Jerusalem wächst die Sorge, dass sich Tausende schiitische Kämpfer aus dem Iran, aus Pakistan und Afghanistan dauerhaft in Syrien niederlassen und von dort aus jederzeit neue Provokationen gegen den Judenstaat lancieren könnten. Geplant ist offenbar die Errichtung einer Rüstungsfabrik sowie Luft- und Marinebasen.

Waking up to the Iranian threat

(...) it continually surprises me that public figures, visiting Israel from North America and Europe, are truly not aware of the scope of Iranian muckraking and troublemaking in the region. (...) they don't have a comprehensive picture of Iranian belligerence and ambition, or the transformative tectonic threat to regional stability posed by Iran. (...) The Islamic republic of Iran is on an aggressive march across the Middle East, presenting significant security challenges to Israel and to moderate Sunni Arab countries while also challenging Western interests. (...) Iran is establishing air and naval bases on the Mediterranean and Red seas, especially in Syria, in order to project regional power. It has also stepped up its harassment of international shipping and Western naval operations in the Persian Gulf. (...) Iran is sponsoring terrorism against Western, Israeli and Jewish targets around the world (...). With the weakening of ISIS, the growing strength of Russia in Syria, and the continuing retraction of American involvement in the region – Iran apparently feels emboldened enough to escalate its confrontation with Israel. (...)

David M. Weinberg, IHY, 16.02.18

When Israel strikes, the US benefits

(...) upon discovering that an Iranian drone had breached Israeli airspace, the Israeli Air Force

displayed exceptional skill in a great number of areas (...). The IDF is now drawing all the necessary conclusions from the incident (...). A large number of these lessons will be relayed to the U.S. – which manufactures most of Israel's military gear. (...) I heard an American fighter pilot say once that he derived particularly beneficial insights from training with Israeli pilots. (...) Last week's events on the Syrian border suggest that, contrary to conventional wisdom, Israel is not isolated. On the contrary, it only reinforced how crucial it is to the U.S. The action also proves that the fact that America supplies Israel with weapons and military gear is not really "foreign aid" but rather an investment in a country that yields fantastic dividends for the U.S. and improves American security and its economy to boot.

Yoram Ettinger, IHY, 19.02.18

Send a clear message to Iran, Hezbollah and Assad

(...) In a dangerous escalation, Iran tested Israel's red lines in preparation for a new war on Israel's northern front (...) a development which the Israeli government has repeatedly warned it will not tolerate. (...) The territorial expansion of Iran and its allies in the Middle East has brought the Islamic Republic closer to Israel's border than ever before. (...) the short-sighted policy of Western powers aided the mullah regime's grand plan of ascendancy. (...) Khamenei could not have hoped for a better outcome. Iranian-backed Hezbollah, the terrorist group in complete political and military control of Lebanon, has over 10,000 troops stationed in Syria. (...) Given the growing military capabilities and territorial expansion of these hostile elements, Israel and the United States, along with Europe and allied Arab states in the region, must together send a clear message to Iran, Hezbollah and Assad: any attack on Israel's sovereignty comes with a very heavy price. (...) The most effective way to prevent a future escalation with potentially catastrophic consequences for the region is to dismantle any Iranian presence along Israel's border altogether.

Joshua S. Block, JPO, 18.02.18

Netanyahu's show of weakness in Munich

Israel's prime minister stands before leaders and security experts from around the world and holds up a fragment of a drone, like an election propagandist trying to impress a sleepy audience by pulling doves out of his sleeve. Luckily, the people sitting in front of him at the Munich Security Conference were

polite people, so they didn't laugh out loud. But deep inside, they must have asked themselves: What is the meaning of this infantile performance? (...) After all, every expert knows Israel is the No. 2 world power in UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) abilities after the United States. (...) The king of words and intimidations also presented the Syrian missile that downed an Israeli jet last week as an almost existential threat. We are in a state of war, and Israel has fired into Syria hundreds of times in recent years. (...) An Israeli plane was downed. Does that change the situation in the Middle East? Does that make us miserable? No. It's the price of war. But someone wants to blow this incident out of proportion to foster the public's feelings of existential anxiety. (...) The army avoided thoroughly attacking the Syrian anti-aircraft systems which have been threatening Israel Air Force planes in the past two years, apart from a few insignificant strikes. The reason is simple: They were afraid the destroyed Syrian batteries would be replaced by more advanced batteries from the Russians. A week ago, we received proof that this was a strategic mistake. So what is the purpose of this show of miserableness? (...) A government and a prime minister should deal with the security threats—in Gaza, in Syria, in Iran and anywhere else—with determination, rather than whine and make a mockery of Israel by presenting it as a country haunted by fears.

Alex Fishman, YED, 20.02.18

Just another dangerous chapter in the ongoing Syrian tragedy

Many people had their hopes pinned on the eradication of the Islamic State (ISIS) in Syria, assuming that once the goal is reached, the war in the country would come to an end. But the Syrian reality points to an opposite trend: old rivalries between the players that enlisted to fight ISIS—the United States, Russia, Iran, the Assad regime, Turkey and the Kurds—are taking center stage again. (...) Developments are now on the regional and international levels. In the past month, countries and world powers have been going head-to-head, waging direct battles. So instead of the conflict dying down and being regulated, we are witnessing an escalation with the potential of expanding into a direct international conflict—rather than merely a proxy war—while igniting some old-new fronts (...). All the forces of power in Syria—both the internal and the external ones—have proved recently that they are willing to get to the verge and go way beyond it: To use military force, to ignore UN

resolutions and mediation and stabilization efforts and to keep trying to promote their interests. In a battle with so many players who are willing to act directly against their rivals, 2018 doesn't mark the end of the war in Syria. It's the beginning of another dangerous chapter in the tragedy taking place on our northern border.

Amos Yadlin, YED, 27.02.18

Iran is trying to avoid a clash but may surprise Israel

(...) Iran presents the most serious threat to Israel. This perception is based on a number of elements: Hezbollah and its huge missile system, Iran's large and improved missile system, and Tehran's policy of encircling Israel with radical Shi'ites, marked by the anti-Israel front in Syria and Lebanon. Clearly if Iran goes nuclear some day this threat will increase to an unprecedented level. But the balance of powers is more complex. The main tool used by the Israel Defense Forces in Syria is the air force, and Iran has no answer to it (...). In addition, Iran has to operate forces hundreds of kilometers from its borders without any real defense when they're subject to Israeli attacks and provocations by Sunni groups in Syria. (...) The United States also poses a threat to Iran. The Trump administration (...) hasn't yet taken any practical steps to stop the threat (...), but Iran isn't certain it won't, and the last thing Tehran wants is a confrontation with the United States. Meanwhile, the declaration by Washington that it will leave a military force in northern Syria for an indefinite period to check Iranian influence should worry Tehran. (...) Even when Iran challenged Israel in the most recent clash, it did so with a drone, not by opening fire. (...) Iran apparently doesn't seek a confrontation because its top priority is to stabilize the Assad regime and exploit its standing in Syria to strengthen its influence in Iraq and Lebanon. An entanglement with Israel could block these goals. (...) The bottom line is that Iran is trying to avoid a confrontation with Israel, but will find it hard to remain silent for long if Israel strikes Iranian targets. Thus, we must take into account that at some stage Iran will take a military action to deter Israel. Iran will want to surprise Israel – with the timing, weapons or method. For that purpose, it will prefer to activate Hezbollah and other Shi'ite militias so as not to get involved itself. (...)

Ephraim Kam, HAA, 28.02.18

3. Polnisches Holocaust-Gesetz tritt in Kraft

In Polen tritt ungeachtet der internationalen Kritik das Holocaust-Gesetz der nationalkonservativen Regierung in Kraft. Das Gesetz sieht Geld- und Haftstrafen bis zu drei Jahren vor, wenn jemand "öffentlich und entgegen den Fakten dem polnischen Volk oder Staat" eine Mitschuld an Verbrechen zuweist, die vom nationalsozialistischen Deutschland begangen wurden. Die Strafvorschrift soll noch vom Warschauer Verfassungsgericht geprüft werden. Ein Richterspruch wird in voraussichtlich zwei Monaten erwartet. Die Regierung in Warschau entsandte eine Delegation nach Israel, um den Streit um das umstrittene polnische Gesetz zu entschärfen. Ziel sei es, die Zweifel bezüglich des Gesetzes aufzuklären, so verlautete es aus Warschau. Etwaige Änderungen der Regelung stünden vorerst nicht zur Debatte. Noch vor Inkrafttreten des Gesetzes rief der Jüdische Weltkongress die Regierungen in Warschau und Jerusalem dazu auf, den Streit beizulegen.

A necessary discussion

(...) Do Israel and the Jewish people have an interest in entering a moral debate with Poland over the difference between the motives of non-Jewish Poles who collaborated with the Nazis and Polish Jews who collaborated with the Nazis? The non-Jews acted out of anti-Semitic hatred and opportunistic greed – and the Jews? Did they only act out of a desire to increase their chances of survival? (...) the Holocaust was not just a continuum of passivity on the part of the Jews. Of course, those of us who did not experience the horrors of the Holocaust cannot know what we would have done under those same horrific conditions. But does ignoring the existence of Jewish collaborators or treating them as victims not harm the memory of the victims? And in light of all that, does mentioning Christian collaborators with their Jewish counterparts in the same sentence constitute Holocaust denial? (...) The Polish government has shown great insensitivity to the Jewish people on this issue in recent weeks. (...) But does the Israeli reaction to the crisis with Poland not play into the hands of those Polish elements interested in rewriting history? (...) No doubt, the current crisis has let all the anti-Semitic genies, still so pervasive in Polish society, out of the bottle. And yet, among some Israelis, the crisis has also triggered reactions that serve to harm instead of honor the memory of the Holocaust. An open and factual discussion, and not theatrical gestures and statements, would have

done more to clarify the intentions of the Polish government (...).

Eldad Beck, IHY, 19.02.18

Holocaust diplomacy

Throughout the crisis with Poland's right-wing government, led by the nationalist Law and Justice Party, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has sought to maintain correct diplomatic relations. (...) Netanyahu's desire to cultivate ties with Poland is understandable. Poland has proven to be one of Israel's few EU-member allies in votes that pit Israel against the knee-jerk support enjoyed by the Palestinians in UN institutions. (...) Netanyahu, who has Israel's diplomatic and economic interests in mind, is rightly wary of allowing a controversy over Holocaust memory (...) to sabotage these interests. Yet, there are statements and acts made by Poland's prime minister that the prime minister of the world's only Jewish state simply cannot ignore. (...) Morawiecki drew a parallel between Polish perpetrators of the Holocaust and "Jewish perpetrators," as though Poles were no more likely than their Jewish fellow citizens to identify and collaborate with the Nazis' ideology and activity toward the Jews (...). While Netanyahu has an obligation to look out for the State of Israel's interests, as head of the Jewish state he has other obligations as well. One of them is using Israel's diplomatic voice and clout to battle all forms of Holocaust denial. (...) Israel, as the world's only Jewish state, also has an obligation to Holocaust survivors who suffered at the hands of Poles. (...) It is a matter of national pride that Israel defend the value of free and open Holocaust scholarship and call out those who attempt to distort the truth.

Editorial, JPO, 19.02.18

How Israel, the Diaspora and Poland can overcome Holocaust debate

(...) Instead of trying to discuss the issue and find a compromise, voices on both sides have purposely fanned the flames. This is particularly true on the Israeli and Diaspora side. Journalists have purposely used the term "Polish death camps" to offend Poles (...). Polish politicians and the press have dished it out as well. (...) The outpouring of anger at the law is out of all proportion to what the law says(...) It is more than the outpouring of anger against Iran's regime, which has pushed official Holocaust denial. Obviously the Jewish-Polish crisis then is not really about the law, it is about unresolved issues. There is a rawness to the anger and accusations that indicates a wound left

unhealed since 1945. The main road to healing the Polish-Jewish wound is to talk openly about history. (...) There is a tendency in Holocaust education to portray Nazi Germany as an aberration in an otherwise civilized record of German history. (...) actually, collaboration was the norm in Western Europe, whereas millions of men fought the Nazis in the east. (...) Once we understand that our notion of European history is skewed then we can begin to discuss the Polish-Jewish history. (...) The true history involves Jewish victims, Polish victims, Polish resistance, Germany Nazi occupiers, German perpetrators and some Polish perpetrators. (...) Israel and Poland can work together on issues related to the Holocaust. (...) Taking time to listen to Poles who agree and disagree with the current law would be a good first step as well.

Seth J. Frantzman, JPO, 27.02.18

The Poles who won't collude with Warsaw's deluded nationalist suppression of the Holocaust

(...) The new law (...) makes it a crime to use a sentence "Polish death camps". This element of the law is hard to argue with (...). What did create an outrage was the insertion of clause of up to three years' imprisonment for "public and contrary-to-fact conduct that attributes responsibility or co-responsibility for Nazi crimes committed by the Third German Reich to the Polish nation or the Polish state." Because the concept of "nation" is fuzzy and far from clear and very subjective (...) you may have thought about publishing a family memoir, including testimony from those who survived the war and who generalized about the guilt of Poles? In that case, too, the said prosecutor would need to decide whether the new law was broken (...). The law has rightly caused a massive international outrage. (...) It's sad to think that the Polish government is (...) perpetuating and entrenching a stereotype of Poles as essentially anti-Semitic by nature. This stereotype is not only intellectually wrong (...), it is ahistorical since it throws away almost a thousand years of Jews calling Poland their home, mutual intertwinement of both cultures and numerous forms of strong philo-Semitism among Poles. No intellectual can imagine Polish culture without its Jewish components. (...) This itself is part of why the Jewish community's emotional response has been so intense: After all, Jews did not expect much from their German murderers. It was from their Polish neighbors that they expected more humanity. (...) despite all its intentions, the Polish government has,

paradoxically, ensured that its decision to unearth more and more historical layers will most definitely result in more, not less scholarly spotlights exposing this dark side of Polish history.

Dr. Micha P. Garapich, HAA, 27.02.18

4. Medienquerschnitt

Ägypten kauft israelisches Gas

It's a gas!

Celebration is in order after Delek, Noble Energy and a number of other operators of the Tamar and Leviathan natural-gas fields off Israel's coast signed a \$15 billion deal with an Egyptian consortium called Dolphinus. (...) Skeptics warned that the Israeli and foreign business concerns that invested billions of dollars to get the gas out of the fields deep under the Mediterranean off Israel's shore and into the pipes that generate electricity, would never succeed in exporting in big quantities. (...) The Egyptian deal is proof the naysayers were wrong. (...) The deal (...) fortifies commercial ties with Egypt, a country that has maintained only a cold peace. The high-profile deal could help to further normalize relations as it would provide an example of how it is possible to do business with the Jewish state. Egyptians will, one hopes, grow accustomed to the idea. The deal is the second that Israel has signed with an Arab neighbor, the first being with the Jordan Electric Power Company back in 2016. Now two Arab countries that share borders with Israel are engaged in multi-billion-dollar deals with the Jewish state. (...) The more gas Israel has at its disposal, the less it will use of coal and other fuels that pollute. And this will have important health benefits for Israelis. The deal will also benefit Israel by providing Israeli citizens with additional tax revenues. (...) Once upon a time, Israel was known for its lack of natural resources. It was Israel that bought natural gas from Egypt. The old Jewish joke that Moses took a wrong turn and ended up in the only corner of the Middle East without oil still rang true. Today Israel is a natural gas power with enough for domestic needs and some left over to export. (...) The signing of the Egyptian deal is an occasion for celebration.

Editorial, JPO, 20.02.18

Protest der Kirchen

Church of Holy Sepulchre crisis: Israel burns its bridges with the Christian world

(...) The churches' action (...) shows that they are in an impossible situation, with pressure from all sides: Israel, their Palestinian faithful, church institutions, pilgrims and their sponsor countries (...). Decision makers continually ignore the political, religious and diplomatic sensitivities when they try to solve problems that concern the churches. According to the churches, the agreement that had allowed the churches not to pay municipal taxes existed since Ottoman times, and British, Jordanian and Israeli governments have all honored it. They say the move to collect the taxes is part of Barkat's fight against the national government and Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon over the city's budget. (...) Between the taxes and the legislation put forward by Azaria, it's the latter that has church leaders worried the most. (...) the government would be able to expropriate land that had been church-owned and was sold to private real estate companies. The law discriminates against the churches compared to other institutions or private citizens. (...) If the law passes, no one will want to do business with the churches, because who wants to buy land that can be expropriated tomorrow? Anyone dealing with this law (...) knows very well that it has no chance of passing at the Knesset in its present form. It violates so many constitutional principles that it is a perfect case for being annulled by the Supreme Court. The law is intended to be a threat for real estate developers and speculators, so they reach a deal with the government. But in the meantime, the question is whether this is the way Israel wants to communicate with the Christian world.

Nir Hasson, HAA, 27.02.18

Veröffentlicht im: März 2018

Verantwortlich:

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HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

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