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1. Netanyahu nimmt Koalitionsverhandlungen auf

Ausgerechnet Avigdor Liberman, der mit seinem Rücktritt als Verteidigungsminister im letzten Jahr mit für den vorgezogenen Termin der Parlamentswahlen sorgte, war Benjamin Netanyahus erster Ansprechpartner bei den Koalitionsverhandlungen. Staatspräsident Reuven Rivlin hatte zuvor den amtierenden Ministerpräsidenten erneut mit der Regierungsbildung beauftragt. Netanyahu hatte bei den Parlamentswahlen am 9. April mit 35 der 120 Abgeordnetensitze ein Unentschieden mit der oppositionellen Mittepartei Blau-Weiß unter dem Vorsitz von Ex-Generalstabschef Benny Gantz erreicht, galt jedoch stets als der Politiker mit den besseren Chancen für eine Mehrheitskoalition. Das Lager rechter und religiöser Parteien stellt eine klare Mehrheit in der Knesset. Schwierig dürfte für Netanyahu werden, die Forderungen der verschiedenen potenziellen Koalitionspartner unter einen Hut zu bringen. Liberman fordert die Rekrutierung der ultraorthodoxen Männer. Die strengreligiösen Parteien Shas und Vereinigtes Tora-Judentum lehnen die Wehrpflicht für alle jedoch entschieden ab. Grund für Libermans Rücktritt war auch Netanyahus Politik gegenüber der Hamas im Gazastreifen. Ginge es nach Liberman, müsse die Armee entschiedener gegen die palästinensischen Islamisten vorgehen. Der frühere Verteidigungsminister kritisierte zudem

die Finanzhilfen an die Hamas aus Katar, die Netanyahu zuließ.

Israel's election results show broad consensus on diplomatic and defense

(...) beyond the harsh rhetoric, one can discern a broad consensus in Israel for the outgoing government's actual diplomatic and defense policies. Both the Likud and Blue-White parties almost entirely ignored the broader Palestinian issue throughout the election campaign. (...) the lieutenant-generals in Blue-White (...) continually sought to prove that they were not "left wing," and were not contemplating any West Bank withdrawals. The Labor Party – still identified in the minds of many with the failed Oslo process – largely evaded the issue, too. (...) Nor did the anticipated launch in the coming weeks or months of "the deal of the century" by US President Donald Trump's team generate any real debate during the election campaign. (...) Israelis have no illusions about the Palestinian Authority. They are more or less in agreement with the policy practiced by Netanyahu and backed by the defense establishment: "conflict management." This approach seeks to limit the suffering on both sides of the current situation by employing "carrots and sticks" while avoiding dangerous diplomatic gambits. (...) A huge majority of Israelis approved of Trump's diplomatic gestures during the campaign – the recognition of Israel's

sovereignty over the Golan Heights (...) Netanyahu's diplomatic prowess in developing strong ties with Russia, India, Brazil and eastern Mediterranean countries, and his good standing in parts of the Arab world, were clearly among his most effective electoral draws. It is, however, clear that Netanyahu's closeness to Trump (...) is problematic for many American Jews, whose liberal inclinations are well known. With the elections behind him, Prime Minister Netanyahu should try to mend fences with centrist elements in American Jewry in order to shore-up bipartisan support for Israel and help stem a drift away from Israel among Democrats. National cohesion is a critical ingredient for Israel in successfully meeting the grave national security challenges ahead. Fortunately, this election shows that a healthy broad consensus pertains to defense and diplomatic matters. (...) it is simply wrong to portray Israel as a deeply divided nation on these matters.

Efraim Inbar, JPO, 16.04.19

Coalition government should include Labor

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu must make every effort to have the Labor party join his coalition, first and foremost in order to ensure a more stable government. (...) The battered Labor party has just experienced the greatest defeat in its history (...). If Labor remains in the opposition, it will disappear entirely. The Blue and White party (...) will leave no room for Amir Peretz, Shelly Yachimovich and their friends in Labor to maneuver. Labor's representatives will walk around the Knesset with sullen faces, disappointed at the election failure and lethargic. And it is unlikely any of its members will be made the head of any sort of Knesset committee. But were Labor to join the government, it would have influence over fundamental issues as well as diplomatic affairs (...). Although it seems unlikely now, if Netanyahu takes this path and succeeds in convincing representatives of Labor to join his government, they could be afforded at least two ministries, a deputy ministerial role and tasked with chairing a Knesset committee. As a result, the blood would once again pump through their veins. (...) Labor leader Avi Gabbay will likely soon be ousted as party chairman, which will make such a move easier to implement as although he has declared he would not join a Netanyahu government, his declaration does not obligate other party members. They could explain to their voters that at this point in time, they would be able to have much greater influence on the government as members of the

coalition than they would sitting it out in the opposition. Labor's leaders have forgotten what power tastes like. It's been six years since their representatives served in a government. By joining Netanyahu's fifth coalition government, they would exact some degree of revenge on Blue and White, which siphoned 18 Knesset seats from the party and battered its members at every opportunity. (...) Gideon Allon, IHY, 16.04.19

Bennett and Shaked might be down, but they are not out

The former darlings of the right made a costly mistake by splitting from their base to form a new party, and they paid the price, but they also know how to turn weakness into strength and are well-placed to stage an even more triumphant return. (...) Bennett and Shaked are now forced to maneuver in a tight spot, for even as Netanyahu ignores them, tries to diminish them and turn them into an irrelevance, letting him is not an option. Leading the religious Zionist camp and trying to appeal to the rightwing crowd means accepting Netanyahu's authority even when he pulls repeated knives on you. (...) One can say that Bennett is childish; one can criticize some of the moves he carried out with a recklessness that defines him for good and for ill, but the one thing one cannot take away from him is that he is driven by a real sense of mission - he believes in his way and he is committed to it. As for Shaked, who in a short time became one of the most popular politicians in Israel, who changed the discourse within and about the judicial system, who stood up to the attorney general and president of the Supreme Court when she believed it necessary, is unlikely to vanish anytime soon. The fact that she is being pursued from every possible direction is a phenomenon worth expanding on separately. She is a clear electoral asset in any situation. Nonetheless, the establishment of the New Right was a slapdash and disorganized adventure, born mainly of Bennett's daring and the belief that there should be a different kind of right-wing. It was a clumsy move that exacted a high price and proved that in politics, there is no such thing as magic. One can agree with their path or not - but one must admit that the duo was among the most dedicated politicians when it came to their public. (...) what comes out of their mouths is usually what is in their hearts. They brought religious Zionism to the forefront and to new heights and left their mark. (...).

Moran Azoulay, YED, 17.04.19

Acknowledge and move forward

(...) Israel's detractors (...) seized on the opportunity to point a finger at the alleged hypocrisy of Israeli democracy in which Israel "denies Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza the right to vote." This disingenuous attack is misleading because it completely ignores the existence of the Palestinian Authority (...) and discounts Israel's electoral history, the history of the conflict and the regional context. (...) In fact, since Israel's very first election in 1949, Arabs have voted and served as members in the Israeli parliament, the Knesset. (...) Another inconvenient truth for those who demonize Israel is that while Israel has maintained routine and inclusive democratic elections since its inception, their neighbors in Palestine have not. (...) Moreover, Arab disenfranchisement is not a phenomenon unique to Israel's next-door neighbors. (...) Despite varying outcomes of the Arab Spring, regular citizens made their voices clear: They want the democratic right to vote – a right that would not be denied to them were they citizens of Israel. Those who want to see real change in the region must reject the impulse to solely condemn Israel on these grounds, and instead lobby for Palestinian and Arab leaders to grant basic voting rights to their citizens. Pointing the finger at the Israeli electoral process and not at the historical disenfranchisement by tyrants is not only insincere, it will do nothing to bring voting rights to much of the Arab world.
Mihal Amazigh, JPO, 17.04.19

A national unity government will serve no purpose

(...) a national unity government won't save the rule of law (...). The desperate crawl towards a coalition, in the name of national responsibility of course, is not only terrible defeatism on the part of left-wingers. National responsibility doesn't mean letting a lunatic drive while you sit next to him – because if you don't, who knows what he'll do? The lunatic will drive in any case, you'll only be the one who shouts from the window: "It's all right, he has a license." (...) There were some who abandoned their parties and voted Kahol Lavan because the party promised to replace Netanyahu. In a properly run campaign, even a party whose candidates included plastic sandals and Turkish coffee would have achieved such a result. (...) Netanyahu called an election in order to avoid imprisonment; no party will change that from inside the coalition. If he wants Kahol Lavan, it will be only so that the party can provide a warm cloak of public consensus for his moves.

Kahol Lavan may not want to function as an opposition, they certainly aren't ready for that, but they will have to function as an opposition, and they had better excel in the role. (...) Israel is marching confidently down a dark path, and that must be stopped. It was done by the doctors who refused to force feed prisoners on a hunger strike - they set limits to a government that lacked limits and succeeded. In the face of a government that tailors basic laws to the measurements of its leaders, in the face of someone accused of bribery who plans to undermine the independence of the judicial system, in the face of the loud hallucinations on the right about annexation and turning us into an apartheid state - legal experts, educators, members of the military and the police force, academics and politicians, past and present, must arise and wave a black flag. We have power that we aren't using. (...) Zehava Galon, HAA, 18.04.19

Israel's center-left must ditch the costume and pivot to the Arabs

Labor Party leader Avi Gabbay has managed to make almost all the other party heads hate him. (...) Gabbay has made almost every possible mistake: He gave a long and boring victory speech after the primary, he wasted time, energy and political capital on changes to the party constitution (...) and he took part in worthless events, some of them even damaging. (...) The pathetic attempt by Gabbay to masquerade as a rightist didn't help him. Lapid worked for four years on the costume of a center-right politician (...). But when the moment of truth came, Netanyahu treated Lapid as a leftist and an electoral burden. Even if Gabbay and Lapid hadn't dressed up, the results wouldn't have been very different. Benny Gantz's entry into the arena would have left them in the dust either way. (...) If you compare the results to those of the 2015 election, you can see that the Zionist left (...) rose from 40 to 45 Knesset seats. (...) because of this achievement that we must draw the correct political conclusion. It's impossible to move any farther right than Gantz did. The only way it seems the center-left can change the government is to increase the voter turnout in the Arab community to that of the overall population – and give five more Knesset seats to parties that could then be able to establish a center-left governing coalition. The time has come to stop spending energy on the four or five Knesset seats of the supposedly "soft right," if they exist at all, and strive for another five to seven Knesset seats from the Arab community. This means a total change in

the way the leaders of the center-left are going about things.

Raviv Drucker, HAA, 22.04.19

The left is dying. Now what?

(...) The left not only in Israel but almost everywhere in the democratic world has in effect expired. Its influence is now nearly nonexistent. (...) there's no choice but to recognize the facts. (...) its remnants require some painful explanations of what happened and why, and (...) whether there's any future for the left at all. (...) activities ahead of U.S. elections in another year and a half provide us with a live laboratory, which makes it chillingly clear how the left in America is stricken with a suicidal syndrome, propelling it to jump straight to its death. Instead of pulling itself up by the bootstraps and reconnecting with reality, it worsens its enslavement to dialogue and slogans from an imaginary world, and scares away people who have to get up in the morning and feed their families. The Democratic Party is still very strong and has an excellent chance of coming back to power. But its takeover by extreme ideologues, with the help of media lacking any credibility and which is still under ultra-liberal influence, ensures that the left will be smashed and Donald Trump will win again, like what has happened in Israel. If there are still some people out there who believe in the ideology of the left, they should help prevent this destructive process from taking place. The (...) most important reason to clarify the political failure of the left in Israel and the rest of the world, lies in the need to decide what to do and where we go from here, after parties long considered to be on the left have collapsed, along with their ideologies. Here we must differentiate between what the opposition can do against Benjamin Netanyahu as an autocrat whose state systems are afraid of confronting him, and the need for the left to analyze itself. The first mission is mainly the job of Kahol Lavan, which won only one less Knesset seat than Likud, and accordingly it must directly face the attorney general and other state bodies with a demand to restore Israel to the channels of democracy. The second step is for the left to carry out, in its name and for its own sake. (...)

Tzvia Greenfield, HAA, 29.04.19

2. Trumps Jahrhundertplan für Frieden im Nahen Osten

Im Juni will US-Präsidentenberater Jared Kushner Trumps lang erwarteten Friedensplan für den Nahen

Osten vorlegen. Der Schwiegersohn von Präsident Donald Trump kündigte die Präsentation des sogenannten Jahrhundertplans gleich im Anschluss an den islamischen Fastenmonat Ramadan an. Kushner stellte einen „unkonventionellen Ansatz“ sowie einen „robusten Geschäftsplan“ für die Region in Aussicht. Zentral ginge es darum, durch Investitionen die Lebensbedingungen der Palästinenser zu verbessern. Ob der Jahrhundertplan die Gründung eines palästinensischen Staates beinhaltet, bleibt weiter offen. Unter den Palästinensern herrscht große Skepsis. Präsident Mahmud Abbas lehnt die USA als Vermittler im Friedensprozess ab, seit Trump im Dezember 2017 Jerusalem als Hauptstadt Israels anerkannte und später die Botschaft dorthin umziehen ließ. Die Palästinenser kritisieren die deutlich pro-israelische Haltung der US-Regierung.

Anticipating Trump's 'deal of the century'

U.S. President Donald Trump's peace plan (...) boils down to a grand exchange: The Arab states recognize Israel and Israel recognizes Palestine, both with capital cities in Jerusalem. (...) The capital is within or near Jerusalem's expansive municipal boundaries (...); An international body oversees a joint PA-Israeli administration governing Jerusalem's Holy Basin (...); A joint PA-Jordan body controls Jerusalem's Islamic sanctuaries; (...) Jewish residents in smaller West Bank towns are relocated (...) Washington organizes a gigantic economic aid package (...) for the PA; Palestinians enjoy temporary access to select Israeli seaports and airports until foreign funds build exclusive PA facilities. (...) despite the Palestinians gaining real and irreversible benefits (...), they (...) will continue their century-old pattern of rejecting Israel through campaigns of delegitimization and violence, (...) should Israelis complain to Trump about that delegitimization and violence, he will likely respond with annoyance: The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is now "off the table" and they should move on. Should they persist, his predictable rage will damage not just Israel but also the anti-Tehran campaign and anti-Islamist efforts in general. In short, the reported plan repeats the great miscalculation of traditional Palestinian-Israeli diplomacy by asking too little of Arabs and too much of Israelis. (...)

Daniel Pipes, IHY, 17.04.19

Trump now expects payback from Netanyahu. It could blow up the Middle East

(...) It is hard to remember a time when so many of the leaders of the world's most influential countries were so inept, corrupt, weak, malevolent or all of the above. (...) voters are responsible for the mess we are in, empowering bad men and encouraging them to be their worst selves. (...) Trump (...) has helped Bibi get re-elected and now he will expect Bibi to help him get re-elected. (...) Never mind that close to 80 percent of American Jews do not support Trump. This will be an early expectation. It won't, for reasons noted here, go well. So then, Trump will seek "victories." One of these is likely to be the long-promised, heretofore nonexistent Jared Kushner Peace Plan for the Middle East. Despite the fact that this plan has always been more fantasy than reality, due to the pressures of the upcoming U.S. election and the desire to distract from the 17 ongoing investigations into Trump's wrong-doing, something will have to be cobbled together and announced. And based on early signs, it is certain to be terrible. (...) the plan seems very likely to ignore the idea of a two-state solution or to punt it into the indefinite future. (...) Knowing Trump - and again, based on rumors - that, in all likelihood, means promising Palestinians the same kind of economic payday Trump has been offering North Korea. "Just go along with me and you'll all be rich," is his pitch. That is, of course, wildly unrealistic, because it is a plan that's trying to paper over much deeper problems by checks...unsecured checks, for that matter, that are likely to bounce. (...) the deal will have some lift because it may garner the support of some in the Arab world who are more or less happy to throw the Palestinians under the bus, like Mohamed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia. But he, too, is transactional and what he wants more than justice for Palestine is something else that both Bibi and Team Trump want: enhanced pressure on Iran. (...) this is where the bad Israeli-Palestinian deal is likely to be made much worse for the region, as ramping up tensions with Iran seems a sure thing prior to the U.S. 2020 elections - all the more so because Bibi is the devil on Trump's shoulder, whispering provocations into his ear. (...)

David Rothkopf, HAA, 18.04.19

Give the peace plan a chance

(...) Israelis and Palestinians alike are bracing themselves for the imminent publication of US President Donald Trump's peace plan, reportedly this coming June. (...) If the Palestinians are so con-

cerned that their interests won't be considered within the framework of the deal, how does boycotting the process further their cause? They should be fighting their way into getting as much as they can out of it, rather than pulling out of talks before they've begun. (...) It is also not a given that the Israelis will jump right in just because the Trump administration has seemingly been more favorable to Israel up until now. (...) While each side might not immediately agree with the plan's components, we have an obligation to listen. (...) Nobody is expecting an overnight solution, and it is exactly this kind of process that can allow each side - including international parties investing in it - to examine the viability of each stride taken. At the end of the day, sides cannot be forced into an agreement. (...) In conflict resolution, the theory of ripeness demands two things: a mutually hurting stalemate and a solution. What the Trump administration has recognized is that, while the first condition does not currently exist, it may be able to provide the second. That said, it might get a lot worse on this end of the world before it gets better, but what our friends in America are offering, is perhaps a way out.

Talia Dekel-Fleissig, JPO, 21.04.19

Main problem with Trump's peace plan

The upcoming publication of President Donald Trump's deal of the century is putting the region on edge. (...) The Palestinian Authority is anxious about the deal and even in Israel the details aren't met with much enthusiasm. Israel should (...) be celebrating. (...) it is already clear that it will be much better for Israel than any other deal proposed by a third party in recent decades. (...) Truthfully, the uncertainties stem not from the main contents of the deal' the main problem is with its very existence. Our painful experience as Israelis has taught us to always fear proposed peace deals because they tend to end in bloodshed. Everyone who lived in Israel in the mid-90s remembers the rivers of blood that drowned the Oslo Accords. (...) And a few years later, when the peace talks with the Palestinians at Camp David reached a dead end in July 2000, the result was the Second Intifada. (...) The knowledge that a political process and specifically its outcome is the trigger for bloodshed causes us to fear any such process. The deal of the century is no different. (...) we must caution against the danger of promoting it as the deal of the century. The thought of trumpeting the end of the conflict through some plan or another might well prove deadly to all sides.

Shlomo Pyuterkovsky, YED, 23.04.19

Deal of the century: From the Golan to Judea and Samaria

(...) While it might seek to meet the Palestinians' desires, the deal of the century is light years from the concessions that previous administrations, from Clinton to Obama, were willing to grant them. Trump's proposal makes no mention of the creation of a Palestinian state (...). Arab countries (...) will follow in the wake of the Palestinian rejection. (...) Israel, too, particularly its right-wing camp, has expressed trepidation over the deal, which could call on the Jewish state to concede significant portions of Judea and Samaria. (...) The script, therefore, is already written: The Americans will propose the plan, which will be rejected or squandered and it will be relegated to the dustbin of history as "another plan" in a long line of them throughout the 100 years of conflict that never amounted to peace. But it would be a mistake to think Trump's deal of the century will be completely inconsequential: It could have far-reaching implications on the future of Israeli-Palestinian relations and more importantly, on the future of Israel itself. First, the details of the plan will become the starting point for any future discussions about the conflict. (...) Second, the Trump proposal could pave a path to a solution by essentially removing several central issues from the agenda for both sides, chief among them the issue of Palestinian refugees. (...) And finally, the Trump plan could give the Israeli government an opportunity to advance its vision of applying Israeli law over swathes of Judea and Samaria, primarily the large settlement blocs with wall-to-wall consensus in Israel. (...) Israel will be able to claim (...) that it cannot wait for the Palestinian side any longer and wants to take unilateral steps in the spirit of the Trump plan – which the administration will presumably support. (...) 52 years after the Six-Day War in June of 1967, the deal of the century of June 2019 could bring tidings of change, even to the point of another revolution in the status of Judea and Samaria. (...)

Prof. Eyal Zisser, IHY, 23.04.19

3. Pessach 2019

Zeitgleich zum christlichen Osterfest erinnerten die Juden während der Pesach-Feiertage in diesem Jahr an den Auszug der Kinder Israels aus Ägypten und die Flucht aus der Sklaverei. Politisch brisant in Israel ist das Fest, da die religiösen Regeln eine Woche ohne Sauerteig vorschreiben, und in öffentlichen Instituten, darunter Krankenhäuser, auch an weltliche Juden, an Christen und Muslime kein Brot

ausgegeben wird. Die Feiertage boten den Kommentatoren Anlass, eine Verbindung herzustellen zwischen der Sklaverei vor Tausenden von Jahren in Ägypten und modernem Menschenhandel sowie der Ausbeutung von Arbeitnehmer_innen. Andere nutzten die Zeit zur Auseinandersetzung mit dem überlieferten Text der Haggadah.

The freedom to eat chametz

(...) the Health Ministry issued a notice to all hospital directors, stating that "hospitals will act to ensure kashrut over Pesach. ... They must adhere to the Chief Rabbinate's kashrut regulations." Israeli law does not compel anyone to observe the commandments. Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi David Lau said (...) that halakha (...) does not forbid seeing chametz in public during Pesach. That means that the obstinate struggle the Chief Rabbinate is conducting together with the state to purge all hospital areas of chametz is nothing but a rigorous interpretation of halakha, resulting in coercion. Hospitals are especially sensitive places, where people stay when in distress. Health institutions should enable those who want to preserve kashrut to do so, but it's unacceptable to make everyone around them pay the price. "Why not show respect?" asked Rabbi Lau yesterday. The same question should be directed back at those who, instead of looking away and going about their business, choose to impose their way of life on those around them.

Editorial, HAA, 19.04.19

Let's commit to eradicating modern slavery by the next Seder

(...) The concept of slavery is, for our community, one rich in ritual and metaphorical import. We are commanded to feel, over the course of our Seder, as if we, too, experienced the ravages of slavery and the redemptive power of liberation. The issue of slavery can sometimes feel remote, both temporally and geographically. Tragically, however, slavery not only persists but also has grown in scope to the extent that there are more people enslaved today (...) than at any other time in human history. Men, women, and children perform forced labor or are exploited and trafficked for sex. Much of this slavery takes place in regions with highly repressive regimes and armed conflict. But slavery also takes place in the US, in the shadows of the very communities where we live. We must commit, as Jews, to do everything in our power to eradicate the sin of slavery. (...) As we remember the mighty hand and outstretched arm that freed us long ago, we must

commit to taking action to release all others from the torture of bondage and slavery today. May we work together to create a world where all people know freedom, so that next year, when we sit down for our Seders, slavery truly will be a sin of the past.
Joshua Ratner, JPO, 25.04.19

With the end of Passover, set aside a matzah for missing Israeli soldiers

(...) Zachary's last letter to his parents was written during the war. He predicted that it would be a long time until he returned home. Never could he have imagined that it would be 37 years until he would be brought back – he would be carried in a coffin to be laid to rest in a funeral with full military honors. (...) Zachary's homecoming was bittersweet as it reminded us that our task is not yet complete. Missing in action with Zachary were Tzvi Feldman and Yehuda Katz. (...) We must continue this effort (...) For decades, too, we encouraged that a separate matzah be set aside on Passover, reciting a prayer on behalf of Israel's MIAs. As Passover ends this year, we should do the same for Tzvi, Yehuda, Hadar and Oron. Lifting a matza we should declare: "This is the matzah of oppression inflicted on Israeli MIAs and on the remains of those who have not been returned for burial. We hold them all dear and shall strive with all our might to find them, to give them the dignity and honor and respect they rightfully deserve. We pledge our utmost to bring them to the day of deliverance." (...)
Avi Weiss, JPO, 25.04.19

The Exodus is never over

The Haggadah says that we saw God's finger in the Exodus, and His hand at the Red Sea. (...) As we marched out of Egypt, we tasted God's intervention in history. We saw a glimpse, a finger, a partial fleeting sense of something greater still at work. We tasted it in our sudden freedom from toil, in our marching feet, in the absence of whips. Did it burn down our throats like intoxicating spirits? Did it induce us with elation? Did it awe us into fear? We marched. We felt. But could we truly understand the scope of what was happening? Could we truly grasp the magnitude of God's intentions, the way He introduced the possibility of freedom into the future minds of so many who will be, one day, oppressed? Perhaps it took hindsight to appreciate what He wrought for us. Perhaps it took standing by the Red Sea, watching the might of Egypt as it crumbled, as "the world turned upside down" (...), to see the completeness of the hand instead of just a finger.

(...) Passover is over, but its message permeates our life. And as we survey human history, we stand by our ancestors. We see some of what they could see, with the benefit of hindsight, as they surveyed their own redemption by the side of the Red Sea.
Rachel Sharansky Danziger, TOI, 27.04.19

4. Medienquerschnitt

Gefangenenaustausch mit Syrien

Syrian prisoner exchange: A worthy deal, but a crooked path

(...) Prisoner exchanges, including the retrieval of soldiers' and civilians' remains, are important humanitarian deeds. (...) The usual public controversy (...) depicts prisoner exchanges as a surrender to terrorism or to the demands of enemy nations. This makes for hollow background noise that turns the suffering of these families into political weaponry in the guise of nationalism, with each side trying to win something that isn't theirs. Israel has a commitment to return all prisoners of war and missing people, dead or alive, whether they are held by an enemy country or a terrorist organization. This is the responsibility of a country toward its soldiers and citizens. The question of the price is always subject to negotiations, but setting "red lines" that must not be crossed during such negotiations should be done flexibly enough to permit the government to carry out exchanges as a humanitarian act or as a part of diplomatic negotiations. (...) it seems that Netanyahu used his power and authority to present the deal in a way that would serve his political goals. (...) The differing versions of the deal emit a strong scent of election propaganda. (...) One must object to the way in which the decision was made and implemented. But the decision itself is (...) a humanitarian formula worthy of implementation on all fronts.
Editorial, HAA, 28.04.19

Wehrdienst für alle

The draft ball is in Lieberman's court

(...) Though it cannot happen overnight, the majority agrees, change is imperative. The ultra-Orthodox must share the load and serve in the military like everyone else. (...) But ultra-Orthodox politicians remain opposed to the bill. They are now in position to foil the formation of a new government, or bring it down. The election campaign provided more time to

legislate, but that will run out in July and if no bill is passed, there will be no exemption for Yeshiva students and they will all be required to serve. A violent minority leads the fight. They can wreak havoc in Jerusalem and elsewhere, clash with police, and block traffic. No threat of arrest will stop them and they will sweep their entire camp into the fight. Criminal prosecution of draft dodgers is unlikely and economic sanctions, though the only remaining option to coerce ultra-Orthodox to serve, will never pass. Avigdor Lieberman, who ran on equal draft laws for all, is left with the mission to force the change his voters and much of the public call for. The ball is in his court.

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 17.04.19

Krankes Gesundheitssystem

When the doctor is ill; Thoughts about Israel's health system

(...) Physicians often deal with life and death situations calling for quick qualified decisions made in crisis mode, compounding physical and mental stress. Many doctors, having invested years in specializing and perfecting their skills, push themselves to the limit to recoup some of the financial costs they have incurred over time. These doctors work both in the public health system and the private sector, to which they devote the latter part of their days. This stressful life-style impedes any attempts to rest and recuperate from one day to the next, with visible affect to their general and mental health. (...) Most doctors are unable to perceive themselves as being ill, and are diagnosed and treated when their illness is in an advanced stage giving them less chances for recovery. Anxiety, depression, suicide and substance abuse are common. (...) The fact doctors also work in the private sector, to increase their income, means that when a doctor is sick and needs to take time off to heal, his pay, is derived from his basic public sector salary only and that is often as little as a third of his usual income. This results in doctors staying on the job when they should be on sick leave. Doctors are not super-humans. When coming across one, in the crowded halls of public hospitals or institutions, it would be wise to remember how much pressure they are under and how prone they are, sometimes, even to lethal diseases.

Dr. Aharon Frimerman, YED, 22.04.19

Tod der Bauarbeiter

Israel's Shameful Record on Construction Fatalities

(...) Deaths of construction workers in Israel are a near-weekly occurrence, largely because of poorly enforced safety codes. (...) why isn't there more an uproar? Is it because most of the construction workers in the country are either Palestinians or foreign workers? (...) Clearly something can be done more than increasing regulations. (...) shoddy constructions standards which lead to multiple fatalities in the course of a year can be successfully addressed. A country that leads the world in technological development should be ashamed that this situation is allowed to continue. The only way that construction companies will begin to adhere to the law is if (a) there is strict enforcement, (b) there are large fines for non-observance of the law and (c) there is a "three strikes you're out" punishment philosophy. That is to say, if a company has been found guilty of three such violations its business license should be removed permanently, Too harsh you think? Tell that to the relatives of the 27 people killed herd so far this year or the relatives of the other 60-70 who will yet be killed before the end of the year if the statistics continue unabated. A country that officially worries more about who should marry whom than preserving the lives of its workers is guilty of warped values beyond the pale. (...)

Sherwin Pomerantz, TOI, 25.04.19

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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