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1. Schwierige Koalitionsverhandlungen im Schatten der Anhörung Netanyahus

Eine Große Koalition der beiden führenden Parteien in Israel Blau-Weiß und Likud wird es auf absehbare Zeit wohl nicht geben. Oppositionsführer Benny Gantz, Chef der Liste Blau-Weiß, lehnte Verhandlungen mit Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu vom Likud bislang ab, da dieser auf eine Koalition bestehe, die den gesamten Block der rechten Parteien, einschließlich die ultra-religiösen Parteien – im Parlament einschließe und somit den Weg zu einer liberalen Regierung verschließe. Möglicherweise könne ein Dialog jedoch zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt aufgenommen werden, hieß es aus den Reihen von Blau-Weiß, die bei den Parlamentswahlen Mitte September mit 33 Mandaten abgeschlossen hatte und damit einen Knesset-Sitz mehr als der Likud erreichte. Keines der beiden Lager verfügt über eine Mehrheit der insgesamt 120 Sitze. Staatspräsident Reuven Rivlin beauftragte zunächst Netanyahu mit der Regierungsbildung. Da es Netanyahu jedoch nicht gelang, eine mehrheitsfähige Koalition zustande zu bringen, soll nun Benny Gantz von Präsident Rivlin mit der Regierungsbildung beauftragt werden. Wegen der Korruptionsvorwürfe gegen Netanyahu fand unterdessen die Anhörung durch Generalstaatsanwalt Avichai Mendelblit statt. Netanjahu ließ sich von seinen Anwälten vertreten, die dafür plädierten, die Vorwürfe fallen zu lassen. Mendelblit vertrat bislang den

Standpunkt, dass Netanyahu wegen Bestechlichkeit, Betrugs und Untreue vor Gericht gehört. Eine endgültige Entscheidung Mendelblits, ob Anklage gegen Netanyahu erhoben werden soll, wird in den kommenden Wochen erwartet.

No third election

(...) the results of the second election were no more conclusive than the April 9 round. (...) unless there's a major change of heart by one of the primary players on the field, a third election is inevitable. The Likud refuses to separate itself from its religious-right bloc; Blue and White continues to stand by its pledge not to sit with a prime minister under indictment; and Yisrael Beytenu's Avigdor Liberman continues to insist that he'll only agree to a unity government between Likud and Blue and White, even if he's not part of it. In keeping to their stringent stances, the major parties are ignoring the will of the public. (...) The credibility of the country's governing institutions is in free fall and the public's willingness to endure another election is being overestimated by party leaders and members. (...) a third round could see voters rebel in anger or apathy and stay away from the polls in droves, setting Netanyahu's warning about Arab voters on its head. (...) Israel needs a stable government and a stable Knesset. Every attempt must be made to prevent the newly sworn-in Knesset from becoming the shortest Knesset in Israeli history. All parties should take the responsibil-

ity upon themselves as if they alone are charged with insuring that a third election is not called for. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 3.10.19

The unbearable cost of unity

Even seasoned observers are intoxicated by the appeal of a national unity government. But this is a recipe for paralysis at a time when bold changes are needed to relieve the heavy financial burden carried by working Israelis. (...) commentators and other members of the country's intelligentsia have drawn parallels between Israel circa 1984 and today. This is a false equivalence. When Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir and Labor's Shimon Peres agreed to share power, the Israeli economy was teetering on the verge of collapse, with inflation running rampant. Israel was also a country at war in 1984, the First Lebanon War. Fast-forward to the here and now. Israel's economy and security are relatively stable and have been that way for some time. Despite regular skirmishes with Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Israel Defense Forces aren't waging a ground war on enemy territory. (...) A national unity government would be a clunker for most Israelis because of the exploding cost of living here. (...) Daily life in Israel is grotesquely expensive. (...) What you won't hear advocates for a national unity government say is that history shows that such grand coalitions hit the pause button on the implementation of seriously needed policy changes. Neither Shamir nor Peres was able to advance any major issues during their national unity government because each of them was immediately scuttled by the other. Israel's next government will be tasked with an awesome responsibility: to develop and carry out policies that remove the disproportionately large financial burden being carried by Israel's working men and women. For millions of Israelis today a government of national paralysis is not a viable option. The cost of prolonged stagnation is simply too high.

Gidon Ben-Zvi, IHY, 03.10.19

Netanyahu is in no rush

(...) Benjamin Netanyahu is in no rush to return the mandate he has been given to form a new government. As long as there is no conflict between the legal and political timetables, he has no reason to hurry. The longer he holds on to the mandate, opting not to take advantage of the time he has been allotted to forge new alliances and shirk the old, the easier it will be for him to ensure both the haredim

and the Right stick by his side when Blue and White's Benny Gantz is tasked with the job. (...) all signs point to the current faltering coalition negotiations dragging on until the very last minute, when President Reuven Rivlin will no longer be able to task someone with forming a government. At that point in time, the mandate will go to the Knesset, where one lawmaker can be appointed prime minister should a minimum of 61 lawmakers throw their support behind him or her in the role. (...) This brings us to the hottest name in the Likud party outside of Netanyahu right now: MK Gideon Sa'ar. A short-lived initiative to hold primaries in the Likud party made clear Netanyahu's concerns Sa'ar would try to undermine him were not entirely unfounded. (...) Of course, one cannot completely rule out the possibility that in the end, when the threat of a third election becomes reality, redemption will come from, of all people, Avigdor Lieberman. The Yisrael Beytenu chairman, who appears to have already made the politically cynical move of the decade, might, as a result, be less enthusiastic about the prospect of another election. (...) Lieberman may prefer to be seen as the responsible adult in the room that spares the country another election and enters a right-wing-haredi government, the likes of which he has been party to so many times before.

Mati Tuchfeld, IHY, 06.10.19

With unity outline an apparent dud, elections loom ever closer

(...) an unprecedented third national election in a year looms. (...) Neither party has a large enough bloc to form a coalition in the 120-MK parliament after the September elections, which were pushed through by Likud when it became clear the prime minister could not put together a government following the April nationwide vote. Shortly after the outline was published, Likud issued a dismissive response, saying that "Lieberman hasn't brought anything new to the table". (...) Political sources believe that despite the proposal calling for pragmatism from both parties, nothing has changed in the relations between the parties. (...) Blue and White will not give up on its fundamental promise of not sitting in a coalition with Netanyahu while he faces multiple indictments for alleged corruption. (...)

Moran Azulay, YED, 10.10.19

Short and to the point, Attorney General Mendelblit

(...) Israel is in the midst of a prolonged crisis of government, the Knesset and cabinet are not func-

tioning (...). The prime minister's affairs keep him from being able to form a government and make him (...) vulnerable to extortion by his coalition partners, who can ask him for anything in exchange for advancing various laws aimed at allowing him to evade justice. The (...) entire political establishment will remain paralyzed until a decision is made regarding the future of the prime minister, who instead of vacating his office until he proves his innocence is holding the state that he leads hostage. (...) Netanyahu and his lawyers submitted, in preparation for the hearing, a one-page document void of any arguments and even tried to embarrass the attorney general with populist demands such as requesting that the hearing be broadcast live. The writing on the wall is clear: In light of his behavior up to now, Netanyahu and his attorneys are not treating the hearing in a manner demanded of every citizen in a country governed by laws. Rather, they intend to turn it into a political circus. Mendelblit must not surrender to the bullying of Netanyahu, who will accept nothing short of the closure of his cases for lack of guilt, even at the price of destroying Israeli democracy. The attorney general must publish his decision on the indictments shortly after the hearing, without delay.

Editorial, HAA, 02.10.19

In Netanyahu's corruption cases, it's the 'state' vs. the state

Benjamin Netanyahu is (for now?) the last link in a chain of Israeli-born leaders who've sinned. (...) In terms of his lust for the wealth and gifts of others, Netanyahu is no different from the prime ministers who preceded him. There is, however, an aggravating difference between the way the justice system is dealing with him and how they dealt with the others. His predecessors, who pursued the "correct" political agenda, like the Oslo process, the disengagement from Gaza, or "convergence" (...) were granted a complete erasure of their sins, or, in Olmert's case, rather forgiving charges (and verdicts). Netanyahu, who dared to challenge the way governmental powers are being usurped by promoters of the "rule of law," is being scraped with iron combs. (...) Netanyahu is being prosecuted (...) because (...) of his effort to restore to the government those governmental powers that judges and prosecutors have taken upon themselves. The proof, as noted, was the campaign of leaks conducted against him. This indeed harmed him, but it also caused irreparable harm to the separation of powers and to the agencies that were party to this campaign – the police,

the prosecution and the attorney general's office. Likud voters (...) are now convinced that Netanyahu's claims that these agencies are persecuting him for political reasons and hooked up with the left to remove him (and the right) from power, are correct. Netanyahu's opponents in these intertwined systems (...) have created such high expectations that he will be convicted that no human court could help but be influenced. This is a trap that won't be easy to escape. If Netanyahu is acquitted, there will be a public and media assault on those judges the likes of which we've never seen here. The judiciary here in general sees itself as representing the "enlightened public." They see their role as "saving the state" from the ignorant public, which includes Likud voters, the ultra-Orthodox and the settlers. (...) with the revolving sword of the media and those influenced by dangling above, the chance of the prime minister getting an unbiased legal process is almost nil.

Israel Harel, HAA, 04.10.19

Netanyahu's fate and the future of Israeli democracy

(...) The unseemly spectacle of a prime minister called on the carpet in this fashion has been widely depicted as being more about preventing Israeli democracy from being subverted by a criminal would-be tyrant than Netanyahu's fight for his freedom. However, even those who disagree strongly with the prime minister's policies should be opposed to the manner in which he may be taken down. Far from being a defense of Israeli democracy, the effort to destroy him via the legal system is actually a greater threat to the future of the Jewish state than anything the prime minister has allegedly done. (...) He is widely depicted as a cynical autocrat at war with the judiciary, the media, and democratic values. (...) Netanyahu's detractors want him to be labeled a felon, humiliated and marched to jail (...). Those who oppose him aren't so much convinced that he's a criminal as they are delighted that a way has been found to depose him by means other than defeating him at the ballot box. Netanyahu's critics act as if he has been caught in some act of egregious public corruption. And were that so, then the attempt to hound him from office as a criminal would be justified. (...) The (...) charges are (...) hazy. (...) By allowing this prosecution to go forward, Mendelblit is setting a precedent that would allow police or prosecutors with an existing agenda to knock off virtually anyone and effectively legitimize the criminalization of political differences. Israel might be better off if

Netanyahu were to step down, though his achievements in his decade in office provide him with a good argument for his continued tenure. Still, that decision should not be influenced by tissue-thin charges that should not be confused with actual corruption. (...) Israel's voters should determine Netanyahu's fate, not the attorney general. (...) Jonathan S. Tobin, IHY, 04.10.19

2. Antisemitischer Terror in Halle

Für Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu ist der Angriff auf eine Synagoge in Halle ein "weiterer Ausdruck für Antisemitismus in Europa". Netanyahu forderte die Bundesrepublik auf, „weiterhin entschlossen gegen das Phänomen des Antisemitismus vorzugehen“. Bei dem rassistisch motivierten Überfall waren zwei Menschen erschossen worden, zwei weitere trugen Verletzungen davon. "Im Namen des israelischen Volkes spreche ich den Familien der Opfer mein Beileid aus und wünsche den Verletzten eine rasche Genesung", schrieb Netanyahu. Der Attentäter legte unterdessen ein umfangreiches Geständnis ab und bestätigte sein antisemitisches Motiv. Die Polizei verhäng gegen den 27-jährigen Deutschen Haftbefehl wegen zweifachem Mord und siebenfachem Mordversuch. Nach Einschätzung der Ermittler wollte der Mann bei dem Anschlag ein Massaker anrichten und Nachahmer zu ähnlichen Taten anstiften. Er hatte zunächst versucht, sich mit Waffengewalt Zutritt zu einer Synagoge zu verschaffen. Als ihm dies nicht gelang, erschoss er eine Passantin und einen Mann in einem Döner-Imbiss. Nach Erkenntnissen der Sicherheitsbehörden hatte der Attentäter vier Schusswaffen und mehrere Sprengsätze bei sich. Gegenüber Reportern erklärte einer der Anwälte, die Tat sei aus Sicht seines Mandanten "schiefgegangen". Zielrichtung sei eine andere gewesen; die Opfer, die es gegeben habe, seien nicht geplant gewesen.

Merkel's shameless deflection

(...) this latest disturbing assault, which left two people dead and two others wounded, did not come as a complete surprise. (...) Israeli anchors stressed repeatedly that the perpetrator "is a native German, not an immigrant." In other words, the killer, since identified as 27-year-old Stephan Balliet, is a white, right-wing extremist/neo-Nazi, not one of the flood of Muslim migrants from the Middle East whom German Chancellor Angela Merkel has welcomed into her country. Such blatant reverse racism on the part of anchors, pundits and left-wing politicians in Israel

is no different from that expressed by their counterparts elsewhere. Its intent is clear: to make a political, and hence moral, distinction between two different forms of Jew-hatred. (...) Merkel's feeble reaction – meek mumbling about Israel's having a right to exist – makes sense in the context of her overall policy toward Iran. She wants desperately to retain the 2015 nuclear deal with the mullahs in Tehran, and the commerce that goes with it. She also refuses to ban the activity of key Iranian proxy Hezbollah within Germany's borders. This undoubtedly explains why she didn't respond to Salami's other appalling decree, about the "second step" of the 1979 revolution that ushered in the reign of the ayatollahs: the "global mobilization of Islam." (...) Ruthie Blum, JPO, 10.10.19

Germany, do more

The attacker who tried to break into the synagogue of the small Jewish community of Halle (...) took the lives of two people nearby. All the worshipers, however, were safe, and a tragedy on a much greater scale was averted. This isn't some kind of hassidic tale about a miracle – there was a clear, material reason the synagogue was left unscathed, and that is because it was protected. (...) Antisemitism continues to rear its head in Germany, a place where 74 years after the end of World War II, the government has a special responsibility to spare no expense to quash anti-Jewish trends and attacks. Yet many German Jews feel unsafe on the streets of their hometowns. (...) Felix Klein, a German federal official responsible for combating antisemitism, recommended that Jews not wear kippot everywhere in public. Some shrugged it off as practical advice; certainly many Jews around the world do not wear a kippa in public for their safety. But many pointed out that a German government official telling Jews to hide their identity, 75 years after the Holocaust, is a badge of shame. There seems to be a cultural shift on the fringes of German society that needs to be addressed. (...) the far-right has grown empowered in recent years with the rise of the AfD party and related trends throughout the Western world. The growing Muslim refugee population is also more likely to hold antisemitic views than others in Germany. This must be countered. As for physical protection and law enforcement, posting policemen outside Jewish institutions is not enough. (...) The attack in Halle (...) should be a wake-up call for German authorities to take more action to educate their population and to show them that antisemitism is unacceptable. Now is the time to take action be-

fore it's too late. Next time, the door might not stop the attacker.

Editorial, JPO, 10.10.19

Germany's Jews are once again easy prey

(...) Germany is once again a dangerous place for Jews. (...) Barely a week passes without violent assaults on Jews in the country. (...) The attack in Halle is the result of the failure of German authorities; it is the result of the incomprehensible forgiveness that the country's law enforcement chooses to show the perpetrators of attacks against Jews, which in recent years have been largely carried out by either members of Arab and Muslim immigrant communities. Although the perpetrator of the Halle attack was a member of the radical Right, the day-to-day physical threat to Jewish security in Germany is sacrificed at the altar of Germany's policy of appeasement toward Arab-Muslim anti-Semitism. (...) In today's Germany, the Jews are at the top of the list of victims. Following each attack, we hear from the country's "professional apologizers." But that is where it ends. There is no action. The authorities are surrendering to the violence. But after the Jews, the others' time will come.

Eldad Beck, IHY, 10.10.19

A neo-Nazi massacre of German Jews on Yom Kippur was averted – this time

For anyone paying attention to the Jewish community's situation in Germany, the attempted synagogue shooting in the East German city of Halle this Yom Kippur was barely a surprise. In fact, the community was already on high alert following an attempt by a knife-wielding attacker to enter a Berlin synagogue a few days before. (...) the community's anger and disappointment is intensifying. A heavily-armed man, with multiple automatic weapons, dressed in military gear, tried to force his way in to the synagogue, where 60 people had gathered for Yom Kippur prayers. He hurled a grenade into the adjoining cemetery, and shot at the door, but could not get in. (...) That fortified door prevented his (...). But the Jews inside the synagogue still had no armed or official back up. (...) The small community can't afford to hire 24-hour security. Its fortified door was paid for by the Jewish Agency, an Israel-based non-profit organization, not local authorities. The synagogue managed to install a security camera outside the building with its own funds and relies on volunteers to monitor its own security. (...) Anti-Semitic crimes in Germany rose 20 percent last year, and violent anti-Semitic crimes rose more than 80 percent. (...)

Following the deadly assault on the Halle synagogue, Germany's Jewish community is today mourning the senseless loss of life. But it is also asking questions about why Germany's government isn't doing more to educate its population against white supremacist ideology, to protect the Jewish community, and to stop the militarization of the far-right.

Robert Ogman, HAA, 10.10.19

How dead Jews became a valuable political commodity

(...) For Hitler, the Jews were a threat to the human race because they had brought to earth the notion that there was a way for humans to share the earth instead of killing each other for it. The Jews, according to Hitler, had imposed their values on the natural order and were a force working against humanity. (...) Hitler failed in removing this obstruction. But in murdering nearly six million Jews, he created a new political resource: Dead Jews. A valuable commodity. Mein Kampf is clearly referenced in the video manifesto of the 27 year-old German man who tried to enter the Humboldt Street synagogue in Halle on Yom Kippur (...) and murder the Jews praying inside. (...) "Feminism is the cause of declining birth rates in the West, which acts as a scapegoat for mass immigration, and the root of all these problems is the Jew," he declared, livestreaming himself before arriving at the synagogue. The chain-reaction leading from feminism, to dropping birth-rates and mass immigration to Germany, all originates from the Jew. And since mass immigration in today's Europe is a by-word for Muslims, then we are all in the firing-line together. (...) The updated version of Mein Kampf's natural order of races fighting each other, to the death, is today's "replacement theory," the conspiracy theory popular on the far-right with echoes on the less radical but more populist right-wing, which sees the hordes of Muslim immigrants invading western countries, depopulated by plummeting birth-rates, and replacing their white Christian majority. The liberal elites responsible for welcoming these immigrants have been contaminated by the Jews and their ideas. Unsurprisingly, not one of the mainstream Israeli politicians releasing statements at the end of Yom Kippur about the Halle shooting could bring themselves to call the hatred by its name. (...) Instead they spoke of the "new anti-Semitism," the code-word for anti-Semitism which comes in the form of hatred for Israel. So what if it the attack in Halle, as the other ones which are motivated by white supremacist hate has nothing to

do with Israel? Dead Jews are too good to waste. Even if in this case they survived. (...)
Anshel Pfeffer, HAA, 10.10.19

Even after Halle attack, defenders of the extreme right won't relent

(...) This is the fourth attack by an extreme right-winger against Jews in a synagogue or Muslims in a mosque in the last year. But these numbers, it turns out, are insufficient to silence the hacks, the ideological and political defenders of the extreme right. (...) From the depth of their bourgeois comfort zone, they blame political elites for the decline of America and Europe and for the woes of the lower classes. In the name of these classes they are furious for the "reckless" migration policies in Europe, inventing justifications for Trump's xenophobic hostility toward migrants. In Israel specifically, based on the same arguments, they wholeheartedly support neighborhood activist Sheffi Paz in her campaign to clear south Tel Aviv of asylum seekers. (...) One can assume that this time, too, the pens for hire will not learn their lesson and modestly bow their heads, but will continue to warn us about the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement on campuses, pointing to the role of progressive liberalism in the rise of nationalism and jihadi terror brought by Muslim migrants sweeping across Europe. (...)
Iris Leal, HAA, 12.10.19

For Israeli Jews, anti-Semitism is someone else's problem

Despite the terrible images emerging from Germany on Yom Kippur, the Israeli public is again not expected to engage too much in the ugly anti-Semitism that has long since lifted its monstrous head and stifled every good part of humanity and coexistence. Israelis have no real will to take an interest in the fate of Diaspora Jews. (...) Government ministers who are quick to parrot the line that European Jews must immigrate to Israel, are the same ministers who have done and said nothing to facilitate aliyah by European Jews or allow them to thrive once they arrive. Ask the Jews of France. They will tell you that the State of Israel under by Benjamin Netanyahu engaged in some nice rhetoric, but in practice did very little to allow thousands of educated Jewish French nationals to find a home in Israel. (...) Jews do not always feel secure enough to complain when something bad happens, either because of a lack of confidence in the authorities' willingness to tackle anti-Semitism, or because they fear that some of those who are supposed to uphold the law have a

tendency to hate Jews. One way or another, large numbers of anti-Semitic incidents go unreported and untreated. Many Jews are living with a sense of fear that permeates their everyday lives and harms their overall sense of security. (...) Yet it is hard to blame Israelis for ignoring the issue or being disinterested. (...) They see that those wishing to escape anti-Semitism can immigrate to Israel. (...) And if you choose to live in exile, don't come whining to us. Anti-Semitism is a way of life for others, not for Israelis.

Attila Somfalvi, YED, 13.10.19

In synagogue, listening for gunfire instead of God

(...) It's been a distressing year for Jews. Violent anti-Semitism, unseen in scale for generations, has made a comeback. In response (...) armed security (...) patrol the entrances to our spaces. (...) We welcome them all the more now, but the mere fact of their being there is a constant reminder of what sent them. They are physical testaments to our insecurity, serving both to protect and derange the prayer experience. It is obviously better to be guarded than vulnerable, but this weaponized antisemitism turns even our efforts at self-protection into a form of terror. (...) We live in a state of rising tensions without the arrival of full-fledged pogroms. But our very Judaism, the renewal of our covenant through solemn prayer, is being disrupted by hatred. (...) Those in Halle (...) were listening for gunfire, not for God. The rest of our shuls were thankfully undisturbed, but an attack on any part of that Jewish body is an attack on its whole (...) these shootings (...) attack our identity. They require us to turn synagogues into fortresses. They make presence before Torah life threatening. They corrupt our bonds to each other, making deep empathy for fellow Jews a source of panic (...) we become those in Pittsburgh, Poway and Halle, we become victimized. To change in response to terrorism is to announce defeat, to embolden its perpetrators. But we are changed. Synagogue is changed. And I'm incredibly angry – with the marchers in Charlottesville and the assailants in Paris and the vandals in Lakewood and these three shooters for spreading this poison, and with myself, for being susceptible to it.
Sean Goldman-Hunt, TOI, 13.10.19

3. Jom Kippur und Sukkot

Zehn Tage nach dem jüdischen Neujahrsfest Rosh Hashana begingen die Juden in Israel wie weltweit

den „Tag der Sühne“ – Jom Kippur. Der Verkehr stand an diesem höchsten Feiertag in weiten Teilen des Landes still, nur in den arabischen Ortschaften fuhren Autos und Busse. Tel Aviv war bei sommerlich heißen Temperaturen überfüllt mit jungen Leuten und Familien, die auf die Fahrt mit ihren Fahrrädern, Rollern, Inlinern und Skateboards auf den weitgehend autofreien Straßen genossen oder die arbeits- und fernsehfremde Zeit am Strand verbrachten. Leider forderte dieser Tag auch zwei Todesopfer: ein Achtjähriger und ein Zehnjähriger wurden respektive in Tel Aviv und in der Nähe der Stadt Lod von Autofahrern, die keine Rücksicht auf die besonderen Umstände dieses Tages nahmen, überfahren. Mit dem Erntedankfest Sukkot endet die intensive Zeit jüdischer Feiertage. Eine Woche lang nehmen religiöse Familien die Mahlzeiten in einer Laubhütte ein, manche Familien übernachteten sogar in der Hütte. Am achten Tag, der „Simchat Tora“ (die Freude der Tora) wird an das Geschenk der Tora erinnert und mit dem Lesen in der Tora wieder bei Buch Genesis, Kapitel 1 begonnen.

A timely celebration

(...) On Yom Kippur, everything comes to a standstill. On Sukkot, everything comes to life. (...) Many non-religious Jews build a temporary booth for the holiday, and tabernacles of various sizes and splendor can be found everywhere from private homes to restaurants, hotels, hospitals, work places and army bases. These booths are built as a reminder of the way the Children of Israel traveled the desert for 40 years after the Exodus from Egypt, and the origins of the holiday are found in the Book of Leviticus in the Bible. (...) celebrating Sukkot in Israel is part of the natural rhythm of life. Even the weather plays a role. At the end of the festival we recite the prayer for rain. (...) Sukkot is one of the three ancient “foot festivals,” when people would travel to Jerusalem to pray and give sacrifices in the Temple. (...) Particularly this year, in the wake of the increase of deadly antisemitic attacks on synagogues, Israelis are especially aware of the blessing of not needing extra security at their places of worship. While Jews in the Diaspora pray behind double-locked doors, Israelis sleep out in their tabernacles in open yards. The attack on Yom Kippur on the synagogue in Halle, Germany, is just the latest reminder of this. The security doors of the synagogue prevented the neo-Nazi murderer from entering the synagogue on the holiest day of the Jewish calendar and carrying out a massacre of the worshipers inside. Although Israel certainly suffers from its security challenges, there is

no place like it for Jews who want to feel free to celebrate their holidays in the open, proudly and unapologetically. Sukkot is a time of great joy, when welcoming guests to eat in the booths is part of the tradition. This year is a particularly good time to issue an invitation to come and experience the holiday in the place where it can be celebrated uninhibited. Come, not to escape antisemitism, but because this is the Jewish home.

Editorial, JPO, 12.10.19

Sukkot: A time for unity

(...) it's as if the intersection of the holidays and the period of wound licking that followed the election was planned. One of the best-known midrashim about the Four Species (...) talks about each one of the species having its own special quality. The citron (etrog) has taste and smell, the palm frond (lulav) is taken from a tree that gives fruit but has no scent, the myrtle branch (hadas) has a scent but no taste, and the willow branch (aravah) has neither taste nor scent. The midrashim draw a parallel between the Four Species and the different kinds of Jews – one who studies Torah and also does good deeds; one who knows the Torah but does not do good deeds; one who does good deeds but does not have the Torah in him; and one who has neither. The idea is that to discharge the obligation of blessing with the Four Species, you need to bundle them together. It's almost too easy to compare that to the daily reality of Israeli society but it's very important to emphasize the message. In the last election, the tribes within Israeli society were separated almost brutally – Russians, haredim, “messianics,” right-wingers and leftists. (...) It's good that following the election, we gather all the species and all the types in Israeli society, with all their different characteristics, good and bad, together. Only if all of us come together can we exist here. There is another lesson we can learn from during Sukkot. Sages always say that leaving a permanent home for the temporary one (the sukkah) for a week causes us to value our home. The one we've gotten used to, the one we take a bit for granted. When we leave it for a week to eat and sleep outside, we understand how important it is, how we must not take it for granted and how precious it is. Here, too, the parallel to life in Israel is almost too easy. The Land of Israel is our home. Anyone who leaves it for a week starts to miss it and understand how we must not take our presence here for granted.

Yehuda Shlezinger, IHY, 13.10.19

The Sukkah Paradox

Those of us who celebrate Sukkot in a real sukkah understand the paradox of enjoying a feeling of absolute security in a flimsy hut that is utterly vulnerable. Security is something other than safety. Security is an emotional sensibility. Safety is objective. A sukkah is not a 'safe' place. Wind, rain, raccoons, human predators can easily destroy a sukkah. (...) This annual vacation from the presumed safety of our homes is a reminder that our normative notions of safety and security are meaningless. That we do not own our possessions. Rather, it is our possessions that own us. Our homes need safes, multiple locks and burglar alarms – and even these are hardly foolproof. By contrast, our sukkah needs none of these, yet we feel liberated and secure in a way we never experience at home. (...) Sukkot is the time to reflect (...) a time to come to grips with historic imperative, to do what it takes not to be doomed to relive our history by forgetting our past. If we want security, assuming we are not smart enough to make Israel our home, we can find it only in the frail structure of a sukkah that by its very nature enhances and cements our connectivity to others. Safety will never be anything other than a temporary lull. And owning a thousand rental apartments, or a million feet of office space offers no safety at all.

J.J Gross, TOI, 15.10.19

4. Medienquerschnitt

Angriff der Türkei auf die Kurden

The Kurds are being massacred and the world is silent

(...) During the six years of fighting between the Kurds and Islamist factions in Syria, especially the Islamic State, the Americans assisted the Kurds with intelligence and air strikes.

The Americans hardly put any boots on the ground, and if so, they mainly served as consultants, far away from the battlefield and the casualty count is in accordance: American casualties stand at six soldiers and two civilians. The Kurds carried most of the burden - they fought on the ground and suffered 11,000 casualties. (...) The Kurds did the dirty work for themselves, but also for the free world. They established an autonomy called Rojava, which officially calls itself the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (NES).

Given the powers operating in the area, this autonomy is - or was should we say, a bit peculiar. It was characterized mainly by the principles of religious freedom, equality for women, direct democracy, and possibly even anti-capitalism. (...) The Kurds have a grim history. (...) The autonomy that emerged in northern Syria could have been partial compensation for an historical injustice. The demand for Kurdish independence also occasionally arises in Israel. There are those who compare them to the Palestinians, but this comparison is ludicrous. (...) The Palestinians, unlike the Kurds, have repeatedly been offered proposals for independence and the establishment of a separate state but they declined time and time again. The Kurds never received such an offer, but it did not stop the Palestinians from becoming the world's darling (...) now when it is the Kurds, again the Kurds, who are facing a new wave of war crimes, the world keeps silent.

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 15.10.19

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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