



**Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 18/19
Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen**

16.-31. Oktober

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1. Benny Gantz mit Regierungsbildung beauftragt

Nachdem Israels Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu die Koalitionsverhandlungen für gescheitert erklärte, ist es nun an Benny Gantz, dem Chef der Liste Blau-Weiß (Kachol-Lavan), Partner für eine Regierungsmehrheit zu finden. Bei der Parlamentswahl im September hatte Netanyahus Likud 32 Mandate erreicht, Blau-Weiß kam auf 33 Sitze. Netanyahu machte Gantz für das Scheitern der Koalitionsgespräche verantwortlich. Er habe große Anstrengungen unternommen, um den früheren Generalstabschef an den Verhandlungstisch zu bekommen und eine Regierung zu bilden. Gantz habe sich dem aber immer wieder verweigert. Der Streit darüber, wer an der Spitze der künftigen Regierung stehen soll, ist Hauptgrund dafür, dass Likud und Blau-Weiß nicht zueinander finden. Gantz schloss die Kooperation mit Netanyahu aus, solange dem Ministerpräsidenten eine Anklage wegen Bestechlichkeit, Betrugs und Vertrauensmissbrauch drohe. Erschwerend kam Netanyahus Festhalten an der Zusammenarbeit mit den ultraorthodoxen Parteien hinzu. Gantz hingegen strebt eine liberale Regierung ohne die Einbeziehung der religiösen Parteien an. Keiner der Blöcke hat eine Mehrheit, was auch an Avigdor Liberman liegt. Der Chef der nationalistischen Yisrael Beitenu ist weder bereit, mit den Ultraorthodoxen noch mit der antizionistisch-arabischen Vereinten Liste (Joint List) zu koalieren.

So dürfte auch Gantz große Schwierigkeiten haben, seine Mission zu erfüllen. Sollte er scheitern, kann binnen drei Wochen jede_r Abgeordnete versuchen, 61 Knesset-Mitglieder für eine Koalition zu gewinnen. Gelingt auch dies nicht, droht Israel die dritte Parlamentswahl binnen eines Jahres. Bereits bei der Wahl im April hatte es keinen klaren Sieger gegeben, was schließlich zu den Neuwahlen im September führte.

Netanyahu's era is over, Israel is on a new path
 (...) in the decade of Netanyahu's rule, his situation has never been worse (...) the latest elections were a heavy blow not just for Netanyahu, but for the whole of the Likud and the entire right-wing. (...) The right-wing is smaller than the central-left (...) The choices Netanyahu has made lately, including in the week before the elections, are the choices of a frightened and weak man, who's willing to do anything - including going to war against the advice of the entire Israeli security forces - to keep his seat and not face the wrath of the justice system. The election results are proof that the people are fed up with Netanyahu. Benny Gantz may not be viewed as the ultimate leader, but he is viewed as a viable alternative to Netanyahu, and an alternative is what Israel wants. (...) If there had been someone in the April elections who could have stepped forward and usurped the leadership, like Ariel Sharon once did to the Likud, Israel wouldn't have had to have a second

round of elections. (...) we're dependent on people who haven't shown a sliver of leadership skills, and it's hard to imagine any of them showing any today. But now, we have someone who stepped up, and he was the one who brought the revolution (...). Avigdor Liberman is not only the winner of these elections, he's also the one who gets to choose the identity of the next government. (...) the chairman of Yisrael Beytenu could very well change the face of the country. And now the Likud, whose members signed a declaration of eternal loyalty to Netanyahu, needs to act. It's not easy turning your back on a leader, especially in a party like the Likud, but it's inevitable. If the Likud doesn't pull itself together, we could find ourselves on a slippery slope to a third round of elections. (...)

Sima Kadmon, YED, 18.10.19

Majority now

(...) no one to the Left of Likud has full-throatedly denied or condemned a minority government depending on the Joint List (...) Gantz called three out of four Joint List leaders on Wednesday night – it should not be ruled out as a possible result of the current coalition talks. And that is unfortunate. (...) the Joint List (...) openly opposes the founding ethos and continuing character of Israel as the Jewish state, and has sided with some of Israel's enemies in word and, in some cases, deed. (...) Regardless of what one thinks on that topic, a minority government is a recipe for disaster for another reason. The Israeli political scene has been in turmoil for a year, ever since Liberman resigned as defense minister, throwing Israel into a pre-election frenzy. Then we had an election, Netanyahu's unprecedented failure to launch a government, his decision to call another election, and now his second failed attempt. This has a negative impact on our economy, our security, our international relations and in just about every area where the government needs to make decisions and cannot do much because it is an interim government. And socially, this has been a year of highlighting and deepening the schisms between different population groups. (...) What Israel needs now is a solid coalition, built on a majority of the Knesset's seats, so that it can last long enough to repair the damage of the last year's chaos. Gantz should keep this in mind and not be tempted to form a government that will barely be a reprieve from the country's stormy situation. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 24.10.19

Gantz must pick Netanyahu over Odeh

The question of whether Israel should have a coalition based on support from the Joint List, even if it is from outside the government, has been tying the heads of Blue and White party in knots in recent weeks. (...) Two surveys conducted this year both show that a clear majority of the Arab public supports some form partnership in an Israeli coalition government. The problem remains the colossal gap between the will of the Arab public and the will of its leadership. The heads of Blue and White are not the only ones being put to the test - Joint List Chairman Ayman Odeh and co. are also in the spotlight, with declarations from over the past decade showing that they are no coalition partners. (...) Almost every possible scenario for a future government is met by pundits saying - and rightly so - that the chances of it being formed are slim. (...) out of all the options, a minority government supported from outside by members of the Joint List, even if not all of them, is not the least likely scenario. But if all parties stick to their election pledges, the worst scenario will become a reality and Israel will undergo its third round of elections in less than a year. Therefore, Blue and White must sacrifice one of its two core principles in order to form a coalition – either team up with Netanyahu (...) or a partnership with the Joint List, despite promising it wouldn't happen. Blue and White acts under the banner of bringing back sanity into politics and reducing polarization in society, but establishing a government with the support of provocative lawmakers such as Joint List's Ofer Cassif would only make things worse and Israel would become even more polarized. (...) the choice must be a unity government. Netanyahu will get several additional months as prime minister, but it's less bad than a minority government, which itself is less horrible than another round of elections. (...)

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 24.10.19

Gantz, drive Netanyahu crazy and save the day

(...) the only pragmatic solution to ending the current stalemate and avoiding a third election, which has a good chance of leading us right back to where we started, but with a bigger mess (...) is a unity government of Likud and Benny Gantz's Kahol Lavan with Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu or the ultra-Orthodox, with Netanyahu apparently as prime minister. (...) To go for this painful compromise each side would have to sacrifice something: Netanyahu would have to agree at some point to give up what to him is his divine right – the premiership – and Kahol Lavan would have to sit in a government with

him despite its pledge to its voters. (...) Kahol Lavan, whose political acumen has proved pretty decent, has no mandate to enter a government with an achievement any less than the one mentioned above, and even that wouldn't pass muster with some of its voters. In this context, we should be fair and praise Labor-Gesher leaders Amir Peretz and Orli Levi-Abekasis, who, it was repeatedly said, would save the Netanyahu government in a secret deal. But they haven't gone offside. If they had, we'd now be in a bad and bitter place – with a terrible government bolstered by social democrats. Even though the right-wing bloc pledges loyalty oaths to Netanyahu morning, noon and night, Kahol Lavan is in a better bargaining position (...). For the first time in more than a decade, Netanyahu isn't in control, which is agonizing for a man afflicted by such a bad case of paranoia. This should be Gantz's strategy in the near future: Drive Netanyahu crazy, even if he's already crazy. (...) A government probably won't come out of this, but you have to enjoy life sometimes.

Ravit Hecht, HAA, 25.10.19

Electoral crisis causing Israel to miss major opportunities

(...) Benny Gantz's Blue and White party wasted everyone's time by refusing to sit in any coalition that included Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (...) while Gantz put his self-interest before that of the nation, Israel is missing out on major opportunities because we presently lack a governing coalition. For starters, US President Donald Trump's "deal of the century," arguably one of the most pro-Israel peace plans ever presented, was never able to see the light of day. (...) In Lebanon, the masses are protesting against corruption and poverty, and these protests can easily transform into anti-Hezbollah rallies. (...) As former Likud Minister Ayoub Kara noted (...) "Every day, the pro-Iranians have more and more power. The one thing that makes Hezbollah loses is if Iran loses. One thing that could give a chance for hope is that people agree in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, etc. that the ayatollahs are extremists and they do not value life and a good future, and they start to fight this fundamentalism." This is precisely why Israel should assist not only the Syrian Kurds but also the Iraqi and Lebanese protesters. If Iran is booted out of Lebanon and Iraq, it would lose its land corridor to the Mediterranean Sea. And if the Kurds could regain what they lost in Syrian Kurdistan, Iran would lose out even more. For this reason, Israel needs a proper govern-

ing coalition so that we can discuss what steps that we can take in order to fight against the Iranian menace and deal properly with other issues affecting our region. This is why Gantz's stalling tactics were a national disgrace. After all, religion and state discussions are non-issues compared to what we already lost by not having a proper government.

Rachel Avraham, IHY, 28.10.19

Who is afraid of Arabs in the coalition?

(...) While many Jews perhaps view this scenario as a bad dream, I would like to ask them to stop for a moment and try understanding how for many other Israelis – this is a good dream. More than a dream; it would be an important step toward realizing the desires of a sector that wants to see its representatives become partners in the decision-making processes that shape our shared future here. (...) the desire among many Arabs to integrate into daily life in Israel has steadily grown. The leaders are more attentive than ever to this aspiration, and the majority of the Arab public openly voices its wish to see its elected officials in the Knesset join a coalition and even sit in the government. Just as Arabs serve in important and influential positions in government ministries, banks, universities, politics, and the justice system. (...) there's no need to play dumb – a large part of Jewish-Arab relations is tied to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. And we can appreciate that Arab citizens have faced difficult dilemmas regarding the tensions between their Israeli citizenship and this conflict with the Palestinians. But it would be a missed opportunity on a historic scale to ignore the fact that in 2019, the Arab public is ready for its elected officials to join or support a coalition. The option currently on the table is support for a coalition headed by the Blue and White party (...). One thing bears noting: A huge taboo in Arab society about joining Israeli political institutions has been broken. We can insist on seeing this as a threat; or, conversely, we can choose to see it as pragmatism, maturation and yes, even rapprochement.

Jalal Bana, IHY, 29.10.19

2. Unruhen im Libanon

Unter dem Druck anhaltender Massenproteste gegen Korruption und Misswirtschaft trat der libanesischer Ministerpräsident Saad Hariri von seinem Amt zurück. Kritiker_innen werfen der Regierung vor, Reformen über Jahre verschleppt zu haben. Viele fordern nun eine Reform des politischen Systems, in dem die Spitzenposten nach konfessionellem Pro-

porz vergeben werden. Mitbedingt durch den Krieg im benachbarten Syrien, steckt der Libanon mit seinen rund sechs Millionen Menschen plus einer Millionen syrischer Flüchtlinge in einer tiefgreifenden Wirtschafts- und Finanzkrise. Der Kleinstaat ist massiv überschuldet und kämpft mit Problemen bei der Müllentsorgung sowie ständigen Stromausfällen. Vor allem die Armen und Arbeitssuchenden, für die teure Generatoren kaum bezahlbar sind, gingen auf die Straße. Zum ersten Mal seit dem Bürgerkrieg vor 30 Jahren setzt sich eine Mehrheit der Libanes_innen über ihre konfessionellen Grenzen hinweg. 15 Jahre lang bekämpften sich verschiedene Fraktionen im Bürgerkrieg, der das Land entlang der religiösen Trennlinien gespalten hat. Die rund zwei Wochen andauernden Proteste sind bislang weitgehend friedlich verlaufen, haben das öffentliche Leben in Beirut aber teils lahmgelegt. Banken, Schulen und Geschäfte blieben geschlossen. Präsident Michel Aoun rief zur Bildung eines Expertenkabinetts auf. Die Minister der künftigen Regierung sollten "nach ihren Kompetenzen und nicht nach ihren politischen Treueeiden ausgewählt" werden.

Israel, make peace with the region

The only official response to the enormous wave of demonstrations in Lebanon has come (...) from the army's chief of staff, Aviv Kochavi, who warned of the danger of conflict in both the north and the south of the country. (...) Hundreds of thousands are demonstrating in Lebanon and threatening the corrupt political order there, but in Israel, people have rushed to place themselves on the opposite side – that of the corrupt politicians. When the mighty human wave against Hosni Mubarak's dictatorship in Egypt burst forth, giving hope to the entire world, the Israeli establishment declared nationwide mourning, lest the Muslim Brotherhood take power and a war of Gog and Magog threaten Israel. (...) And if by any chance you've lost the Israeli establishment's phone number, don't worry. You'll find its members in the prestigious club of Enemies of Their Own People. (...) all Israel did – we'll ignore the Palestinian issue for now – was conduct an ongoing romance with their oppressors, both domestic and foreign. And now, the butcher of Riyadh, the Saudi crown prince, who is massacring children in Yemen and dismembering the bodies of his opponents, is the knight in shining armor who melts the hearts of senior Israeli officials. (...) it needs to understand that the Arabs no longer have any attention to spare for Israel; they aren't even interested in it. Look at the demonstrations in Lebanon, where there's been almost no

mention of Israel. The same was true of the Arab Spring in 2011. Israel simply isn't relevant to the Middle East. But instead of learning its lesson, it's doubling down: Sometimes it bombs Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. (...) It's truly discouraging that the army (...) is currently out of work, as it has no one to vanquish. On the other hand, and here we have some good news, even the most militant group in Israel has no plans for further occupations (...). Consequently, the Israeli defense establishment is probably suffering under a terrible nervous strain. All its enemies – Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon – have evaporated. They're all busy fighting their true battles, which are domestic ones. Kochavi's warnings spark pity. (...) If we don't change our mindset, Israel will continue to be a foreign implant. And even its empathy for the people of the Middle East will be greeted with suspicion and anger as long as it continues to imprison millions of Palestinians. Odeh Bisharat, HAA, 28.10.19

Hezbollah has become Lebanon's main problem

(...) Lebanon is in chaos. (...) In theory, Lebanon should be a template for a future peaceful Middle East. It is the only Middle East country which, by its very constitution, shares power equally between Sunni and Shiite Muslims and Christians. Theory, however, has had to bow to practical reality. Lebanon has been highly unstable for much of its existence, and its unique constitution has tended to exacerbate, rather than eliminate, sectarian conflict. (...) As regards the economy, Hezbollah has large investments in the Lebanese banking sector and in a wide range of businesses. On the political front, it is stronger than ever. (...) Many Lebanese, even those of Shiite persuasion, resent the fact that Hezbollah is, at the behest of Iran, fighting Muslims in a neighboring country – activities far from the purpose for which the organization was founded. They resent the mounting death toll of Lebanese fighters. Mass unrest has shaken Lebanon before – it had its share of "Arab Spring" upheavals in 2011 – but for the first time protests are just as evident in the south of Lebanon, an area tightly controlled politically by Hezbollah, as in the rest of the country. That Lebanon's masses may be rebelling against the stranglehold that Hezbollah has exerted on the country is, perhaps, the most hopeful aspect of the current situation.

Neville Teller, IHY, 29.19.19

The mask is off: Lebanon is Hezbollah

(...) there has been no state of Lebanon for some time now. The entity to the north of us is nothing but a mask covering up the bitter reality – the state is a state of Hezbollah, and its ruler is Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. Its agenda is dictated by Tehran, Hezbollah's army is stronger than the official Lebanese army, and the economy is designed to serve Nasrallah's goals. (...) The public is well aware of the situation and is furious about it. (...) The unifying slogan has been "Everyone – as in, everyone," meaning – get rid of all the ministers because they are all corrupt, including the ministers that Hezbollah has placed in the government.

Nasrallah and his Iranian sponsors are afraid that the mask will fall off, break, and expose the country's true face – which is the face of Hezbollah – to the world at large. If that happens, the world will stop selling weapons to the Lebanese army (...) and stop lending the country money that just goes to support the thieving regime Hezbollah has put in place. (...) Lebanese Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri resigned, along with the rest of the government, including Hezbollah ministers – meaning the demonstrators' first demand has been met. Their second demand is to appoint a government of non-party-affiliated experts to run the country. It appears that Nasrallah won't object to the idea, if only to keep his mask on. He will, however, make sure that the "experts" will do what he tells them to. That way, he can play for time, but the public could take to the streets again if they realize they were fooled. (...) The sense of togetherness that has blossomed in the nation's squares, the "festival" that has gone on for two weeks already, the major role the women of Lebanon are playing in the protests, and the national flags with their stylized cedar trees and the slogans being shouted are all signs that the genie is out of the bottle, and at this stage is refusing to go back in. If, heaven forbid, a few dozen of the protesters were killed, it might be the final nail in the coffin. Or it might not. Nasrallah is sweating bullets, that's for sure.

Dr. Mordechai Kedar, IHY, 30.10.19

Growing concern in Iran over Iraq, Lebanon demonstrations

There is growing concern in Iran over continued anti-government demonstrations in Iraq and in Lebanon. (...) Anti-government protests in Iraq have picked up momentum in recent days, with a reported 100 people killed and over 5,000 injured since Friday. The protests were sparked over deteriorating

living conditions, soaring unemployment and corruption. Demonstrations have occurred in Shiite-majority areas and have been directed at the Shiite-dominated government and political parties often supported by Iran. In Lebanon, Iranian backed Hezbollah has been unable to sway resigning Prime Minister Saad Hariri from his decision to step down. Hariri resigned amid growing protests against the rampant corruption of the political class that has collectively led Lebanon into a major economic crisis. Hariri's resignation has left a political vacuum, though the prime minister had agreed to Lebanese President Michel Aoun's request to stay at the helm of a caretaker government. On Wednesday, Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei blamed Saudi Arabia the United States and Israel for spreading "insecurity and turmoil". Iraqi and Lebanese protesters have been corresponding and supporting each other's causes over WhatsApp.

Smadar Perry, YED, 31.10.19

3. Meir Shamgar 1925-2019

Der frühere Präsident des Obersten Gerichtshofes in Jerusalem Meir Shamgar verstarb am 18. Oktober 2019 im Alter von 94 Jahren. Staatspräsident Reuven Rivlin trauerte um den „Gründervater der israelischen Rechtsordnung“. Zu den zahlreichen Positionen, die Shamgar im Verlauf seiner beruflichen Karriere innehatte, gehört der Posten des militärischen Generalstaatsanwalts. Er prägte den Begriff der „verwalteten Gebiete“, womit er den israelischen Standpunkt untermauerte, dass Judäa und Samaria sowie der Gazastreifen nicht als besetztes Territorium gesehen werden können, da sie bis zum Sechstagekrieg keinem international anerkannten Souverän unterstanden. Von diesem Standpunkt ausgehend sah er den Staat Israel als für die palästinensische Bevölkerung in diesen Gebieten verantwortlich und sorgte dafür, dass Palästinenser_innen vor dem Obersten Gerichtshof ihr Recht einklagen können. Shamgar war 1939 im Alter von 14 Jahren mit seiner Familie aus Polen ins damalige Palästina geflohen, wo er sich der revisionistischen, paramilitärischen Gruppe Irgun anschloss. Die britische Besatzungsmacht verurteilte den jungen Shamgar wegen anti-britischer Operationen zu vier Jahren in einem Haftlager in Eritrea, wo er sein Jura-Fernstudium aufnahm. Mit der Staatsgründung 1948 kehrte Shamgar nach Israel zurück

Justice Meir Shamgar's legacy

Former Supreme Court President Meir Shamgar (...) represented a complex worldview that incorporated the many tensions in Israeli society. He supported Israel as a Jewish state while also standing up for its liberal-democratic character. Shamgar had a commitment to Israel's security, but also to minority and human rights. He advocated a free economy, but not at the expense of looking after the common citizens and their well-being. (...) It's difficult to imagine a greater contrast between Shamgar's values and his legal outlook, and that of the anti-liberal government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu, which has turned its back on the legacy of Ze'ev Jabotinsky and Menachem Begin. As a practical matter, Shamgar made his special mark on all of the institutions that in recent years have been under unbridled attack by Netanyahu and his partners on the right wing: the Supreme Court, the military advocate general's office, the attorney general's office and the government's judicial branch. Shamgar understood well that a government drunk on its own power could become tyrannical. He therefore called for balancing government power to ensure human liberty, most importantly through an independent, apolitical court system. He understood that the rule of law was impossible without an attorney general whose position is both structurally and ideologically independent; and without a judicial system that is an independent and impartial bastion for every citizen. (...) There was no one who understood the danger inherent in a corrupt government conduct better than Shamgar. At the same time, one also cannot avoid noting Shamgar's contribution to the normalization of the Israeli occupation. In his various roles, he gave the stamp of approval to actions that enabled the state and the defense establishment to continue controlling the occupied Palestinian population and its land while depriving them of their basic rights, as individuals and as a people. But it is only through the civil rights that Shamgar enshrined in Israeli law that freedom of expression and freedom of the press (...) are ensured. The fight for the values expressed in Israel's Declaration of Independence, for Israel's liberal image and for the independence of the court is a fight for Shamgar's legacy.

Editorial, HAA, 20.10.19

Justice Meir Shamgar: A life dedicated to the rule of law

(...) For Justice Shamgar, the rule of law was a paramount value. Shamgar's worldview was largely a result of his personal story. Shamgar moved to

Palestine as a teenager in 1939. The Jewish settlement (...) was dominated by two streams of thought, the ruling Labor Zionists, who controlled the Jewish Agency (...) and the upstart Revisionists, who ultimately evolved into the Likud party (...). Shamgar chose to affiliate with the Revisionists, and joined their underground paramilitary organization, the Irgun Tzva Leumi, or "Etzel". (...) He was arrested and deported to a British internment camp in Eritrea, where he remained for four years. Upon his return to the newly-founded State of Israel in 1948, he joined the IDF to fight in the War of Independence, and then rejoined the military after completing his legal studies. His formal career in public service, from military attorney, to Chief Prosecutor of the IDF, to Attorney General of the State of Israel, Supreme Court Justice, and finally Chief Justice, lasted more than 40 years, ending with his mandatory retirement in 1995 upon turning 70. Even in retirement, however, Justice Shamgar headed numerous public commissions, and continued to have a major impact on public life in Israel. If there was one theme that was consistent across Justice Shamgar's many rulings and reports, it was respect for the rule of law, regardless of the political consequences. While serving as the IDF's chief legal officer in the years leading up to the Six-Day War of 1967, Shamgar laid out the blueprint for Israel's ultimate control of the West Bank. (...) Given Shamgar's own background in the Irgun, it's probably not hard to guess where his personal sympathies were, but this was totally irrelevant to his role in the military. His loyalty was owed solely to the rule of law and the principles of international law that Israel had taken upon itself. More than fifty years have passed since Shamgar's instructions were implemented in the West Bank, and the criticisms from right and left have not ceased. (...) There are always those who will claim, when it suits them politically, that the laws are being manipulated against them. For Chief Justice Shamgar, however, the rule of law was an intrinsic value, regardless of which way the political winds happened to be blowing at any particular time. (...)

Clifford M. J. Felig, TOI, 22.10.19

In memoriam: Meir Shamgar: 1925 – 2019

(...) Shamgar's qualities were recognized, not only by the military elite but also by the political elite: straight as a die; pedantic and thorough; hard working; decisive and fair; a centralist who takes responsibility; a person who does not cut corners and who speaks his mind; honest, measured, and focused; a trustworthy commander who leads by example. In

the ever-expanding army tasked to secure Israeli borders during turbulent times, Shamgar had the ability to identify loopholes and then devise mechanisms to close them. His criticisms were always constructive. For him, law was law even when it concerned generals. In 1963, Shamgar laid the groundwork for the legal infrastructure of Israel in the event that it would occupy the West Bank and Gaza. Some argue that this shows that Israel had long planned the occupation of these territories. (...) he denied that this was the case. He explained that as the head of the military legal apparatus, he made sure to prepare for any development. The documentation he prepared were "drawer plans," not operative plans; he wanted to ascertain that the military was prepared for any scenario that might develop. (...) Shamgar was particularly proud of his decision to give Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza the possibility to appeal directly to the Supreme Court when they had grievances against the state and the army. He saw this as a basic human right. Humans are humans regardless of where they reside. They are entitled to Israeli justice because they are governed by the State of Israel. (...) Shamgar's most important project in recent years was a constitution for Israel. (...) The idea, however, was not actualized (...). Shamgar was candid and helpful. He was always calm and calculated, measured in his speech, articulate and clear. (...) Shamgar was a noble man in his posture, walk and talk. Tall and impressive, measured and thoughtful, he made immense contributions to Israeli law and society. He represented much of what is good and valuable in Israeli society. He will be greatly missed by many who were fortunate to know him. His legacy, I trust, will live on for many generations to come.

Raphael Cohen-Almagor, JPO, 24.10.19

The pain of those who are about to die

When former Supreme Court President Aharon Barak described the character of his predecessor (...), Meir Shamgar (...), he mentioned the anguish he suffered in his final years in the face of the deteriorating status of the Supreme Court and the demise of putting the nation's interests before political and personal interests. Shamgar was not the only one who experienced frustration in his final days over the dismemberment of his life's work. He shared this angst with an entire generation of elderly Israelis who contributed – each one in their own way – to making Israel a country where it was good to live and respectable to be one of its residents. These involved Israelis, whose remaining time is

limited, now live in serious discomfort because of the change in direction their country has been taking. In the year that preceded his death, Haim Gouri described Israel as a country that was going through a "bad" period. Uri Avnery, supposedly the ultimate optimist, characterized the Israeli experience in his final months as "ugly." Yossi Sarid, who was 15 years younger than them, died of a broken heart (according to his family) because of the deterioration of the state of Israeli society. Amos Oz spoke in his last lecture about the "restoration disease," the fanatical messianism that threatens to become the center of the Israeli experience. (...) Tens of thousands of Israel's elderly are now spending their final years in a sense of despair, which reinforces from day to day their feeling that the world they are living in is shattering. This is neither about sobering up from a daydream nor about rejecting an unrealistic vision. Rather, it is a brutal, unexpected blow of reality for Israel's elders – who for most of their lives experienced a different Israel. Under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rule, these Israelis have despaired of hoping for change. There is nothing they can do but cry over the fact that they have been sentenced to carry their sense of frustration, pain and fury to their graves over those who ruined and destroyed the country. (...) The grief of the members of Shamgar's generation and his disciples is not just a bunch of retirees reminiscing about the old times, colored retrospectively in a flattering light, nor is it just an optical illusion that ignores the flaws of those times – and doesn't recognize the fact that every society matures and changes. Their sorrow is the grief of those who feel helpless in the face of the destructive forces that are shattering the foundations upon which Israeli society was built and conducted life and are smashing its hopes to see its rehabilitation.

Uzi Benziman, HAA, 25.10.19

4. Medienquerschnitt

25 Jahre Frieden mit Jordanien

After 25 years of peace, Israel-Jordan relations need a restart

Jordan will not celebrate this month's 25th anniversary of the festive signing of the historic peace agreement with Israel in Wadi Araba. The winds of reconciliation that blew at the time, the dreams, have long since dissipated. (...) The security aspects of the peace accord run smoothly, reflecting

the security-oriented approach of the outgoing government, an approach that prioritizes security relations over all other aspects, believing that no progress on them is possible, in any case. (...) Can a limited relationship that begins and ends with ties between defense officials carry the weight of the entire agreement for long? (...) The peace agreement with Egypt has also been emptied of real content, being largely limited to security cooperation – and normalization nowhere on the horizon. Many in Israel believe that given the opposition to normalization by many Jordanians and Egyptians, there is no choice but to make do with what is available – security cooperation that does, indeed, save lives and provides security and defense. (...) The Palestinian issue is central to Israeli-Jordanian relations. (...) For Netanyahu, the Palestinians are no longer relevant and Arab states have abandoned their cause. However (...) Jordan greatly fears escalation in the West Bank, and especially in Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque, and seeks better lines of communication with Israel. With a relatively modest investment and prioritization of the relationship with the Kingdom, Israel could save itself the repeated embarrassments it has recently experienced in relations with Jordan. (...) The peace agreement with Jordan, just like the Jordan River, tends to dry up over time unless efforts are made to nurture it. (...) Israel could win back Jordan with the right media coverage and attention, by revving up significant economic projects that would help resolve Jordan's water shortages and create jobs, with an effort to break through the deadlock in the Palestinian arena. In the final analysis, Jordan is right here, within touching distance and not in the dark beyond. Anyone who restores Jordan to the top of Israel's list of diplomatic priorities would do wonders for the relationship between us, benefiting all sides.

Ksenia Svetlova, JPO, 27.10.19

The slow death of a promising peace

(...) There is a new player on the field: Israel's attention is drawn towards Saudi Arabia, an adversary of Jordan. (...) King Abdullah uses the recent border disputes along the Jordan River with Israel as punishment, demanding certain Israeli enclaves in Jordan to return to full Jordanian control. (...) a worsening in the status quo is apparent: Israelis – only Jews, not Israeli Arabs – are forced to bribe cab and transport drivers to take them across the Jordanian border. (...) if you're in Amman, it's better for you to hide your Israeli identity and the prices for the short flights to Jordan have, for want of a better phrase,

skyrocketed. (...) Not all is lost. We can try to start cooperating in our various cyber technology companies and inventions. We are after all a world leader in the field and the young intelligent Jordanians are yearning jobs. So simple. (...) Israel is already very familiar with Jordan's problems, problems that have been aggravated by the arrival of about a million and a half refugees from Iraq and Syria. Added to this is Israel's decision to block the Jordanian intention to sell agricultural and consumer goods to the West Bank, a decision that has led to much frustration on their part. An agreement could have been reached on the subject, but who cares? (...) In December 2009, then-Jordanian King Hussein gave an historic and exclusive interview to Ynet's sister publication Yedioth Ahronoth. In that interview he said how devoted he was for peace and told of his willingness to shine a light on the usually clandestine relationship between the two countries. Today, when we read the interview, what is left but to cry?
Smadar Perry, YED, 27.10.19

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

Veröffentlicht im: November 2019

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