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**1. Grüner Pass für Geimpfte und von Covid-19 Genesene**

*Eine israelische Studie zur Wirksamkeit des Biontech/Pfizer-Impfstoffs zeigt eine hohe Wirksamkeit. Ebenso deutet eine noch inoffizielle Auswertung bisheriger Daten darauf, dass das Mittel zu fast 90 Prozent die Übertragung des Virus verhindert. Aufgrund dieser Erkenntnis gelten fortan für Geimpfte und von Covid-19 Genesene eine Reihe von Erleichterungen. Mit einem Grünen Pass dürfen sie unter anderem wieder Fitnessstudios, Hotels, Theater oder Sportereignisse besuchen. Vorrangiges Ziel sei, die Wirtschaft wieder anzukurbeln. «Der Grüne Pass öffnet das Land schrittweise wieder», sagte Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu. Ungeachtet der Tatsache, dass die Zahl der Corona-Neuinfektionen weiter auf hohem Niveau bleibt, hofft Israel, das weltweit den Impfrekord hält, nun bald wieder Normalität einkehren zu lassen. Im Rahmen eines zweiten Öffnungsschritts nach einem wochenlangen Lockdown wurden Einkaufszentren, Museen, Bibliotheken und Gebetshäuser für Nicht-Geimpfte geöffnet. Die Maskenpflicht und die Abstandsregeln gelten indes unverändert. Der Grüne Pass wird jeweils nach der zweiten Impfung ausgestellt und ist auch per App über das Handy abrufbar. Aus Sorge vor einer Fälschung der Impfpässe stellte das Gesundheitsministerium strenge Maßnahmen, hohe Bußgelder und sogar Haftstrafen für Fälscher in Aussicht.*

**Israel's coronavirus crisis is not over yet**

(...) there are indeed a few worrying signs that point to the battle against the pathogen being far from over. There's the South African variant, which has proven partially immune to the vaccines, as well as new, stronger variants that crop up on a daily basis. (...) we shouldn't act as if we are free from the yoke of the coronavirus and we must not let our guard down just yet. (...) while the success of Israel's vaccination drive provides us with a certain safety net, it is not nearly enough to protect us from another devastating outbreak of the pathogen. The decrease in daily coronavirus cases has given us a rare opportunity to act wiser and avoid the recurring pitfalls Israel has toppled into during the past year. The government must take action to prevent the entry of new virus mutations through Ben-Gurion Airport at all costs, while strengthening the country's exhausted health system. The government must also realize that opening the education system without obligating teaching staff to vaccinate and without performing extensive and routine tests to detect virus carriers among teachers and students present a real danger of another outbreak. (...) Most of all, we must remain vigilant to any spike in infections, as small as it may be, and act swiftly and resolutely to nip it in the bud to stop the next infection wave from overwhelming us.

Sarit Rosenblum, YED, 21.02.21

### **Israel's leaders must stop their coronavirus blame game**

(...) Full of righteous indignation, we were all quick to attack the designated scapegoats blamed for the spread of COVID-19. (...) that blame has migrated from the menacing Arab sector to the throngs of ultra-Orthodox, the unpatriotic left-wing or the upstart public servants who stood in the way of ministers. Even the judicial branch was to blame for derailing government policies. (...) The most recent culprits are the teachers who have not been vaccinated (...). They alone are preventing the government from eradicating the virus. It is never the government that is negligent. (...) These leaders, we are told, have made nothing but proper, transparent and apolitical decisions since the outbreak began. Their word is unquestionable, their personal examples impeccable and they have never, ever favored one sector over another. It's clearly all the teachers' fault. Let me be clear. (...) there is no doubt that better management of the crisis, guided by the advice of health professionals, would have mitigated some of that cost. Rather than Israelis of all stripes being told they are at fault and accepting the blame for the coronavirus pandemic, it is time that the country's leaders to own up to their own malfeasance and culpability, and some if not all of the responsibility.

Roni Harnik, YED, 23.02.21

### **Israel needs to clarify what's happening with the airport**

Israel's Ben-Gurion Airport is the country's main lifeline to the world. It is what connects the world's Jews. However, in recent weeks it has been closed, with no clarity from the government when it might reopen. The government is ostensibly concerned about different coronavirus variants, hoping to increase vaccinations and return to some semblance of a normal life. Lost in those discussions is a larger elephant: the lack of transparency and clarity on how travelers are quarantined, or what rules they must follow. (...) A jarring story this week of people forging documents to return to Israel, despite the closure, raises alarm bells. (...) Israel bills itself as the Start-Up Nation – but the country can't even affirm if a document is forged prior to boarding people on a plane? The country that supposedly has the best security against terrorism in the world can't spot a forged document? How can it be sure then that other people arriving are not forging their documents? Meanwhile, real Israelis with real-life problems are still stuck abroad without the option of

getting home. (...) There is no clear database of who arrived, and when and where they are quarantining. Some were sent to hotels others were sent home. (...) To get to Dubai people, had to have a PCR test 72 hours before arrival and then be tested again once they landed. Yet upon arriving in Israel there were no such rules. (...) That is not how to run a country. (...) The country needs clarity.  
Editorial, JPO, 25.02.21

### **Get vaccinated now, the Torah commands it**

(...) We have the incredible fortune afforded to us by God to have a vaccine, but many of us still contemplate the move despite the fact that Halacha mandates we inoculate against the virus. (...) the vaccine is the best answer to the virus. The risk of the virus is certain. (...) I wonder who gave certain individuals the courage to play with people's lives. How can irresponsible people try and undermine something that has been proven to save lives? (...) Those same people who work so hard to prevent people from getting the vaccine bear no responsibility for the public. While they say they want to preserve their rights, they are in fact harming their fellow man. Our obligation to be careful is not a choice. One cannot harm their own body or that of those around them. Those who do not get vaccinated are not just putting themselves at risk, but more importantly, they could cause harm to others. (...) The Torah's command that we take care includes the obligation for preventative medicine, and the existing vaccine helps with that. (...)

Rabbi David Lau, IHY, 25.02.21

### **Israel shouldn't force them, but those who choose not to get a COVID vaccine have a responsibility**

The roiling clash these days is between the vaccinated majority and the unvaccinated minority (...). The various laws the government is promoting, and even expediting, such as revealing the identity of the unvaccinated are bad laws that have no place in a democracy, even one fighting a pandemic. (...) neither are these laws expected to greatly slow the spread of the coronavirus. A democratic country doesn't force anyone to be inoculated, and even sanctions such as a ban on visiting certain places, including workplaces, will encounter resistance and protest. (...) Consider a teacher who doesn't want to be vaccinated but insists on coming to work and puts an entire class at risk. (...) Such opponents (...) put themselves and others in an unfair situation that the legislature can't resolve; only they can. Members

of the minority (...) must also be aware of the harm to the majority as a result of their choice. (...) Liberal democracy devotes a good deal of energy to setting up defenses for minorities so they aren't crushed by the majority. (...) if protection of the rights of the minority means dropping reasonable logic, such protection could bring down the entire liberal concept because in such cases it's perceived as bizarre and sometimes even cruel detachment from basic human experience. A scenario where a few dozen parents who have already been in long, exhausting lockdowns with their families risk illness and isolation because a teacher insists on working unvaccinated is illogical. It's not a matter for the legislature but for a basic consensus between individuals and the community. (...) People have the right not to be inoculated. They shouldn't be surveilled; no one should report them or shame them. But it's not their right to endanger others or impede their routine, and sometimes even their very lives. (...) the unvaccinated minority has the responsibility not to harm the vaccinated majority. It's not a question of the law, it's a question of healthy logic.

Ravit Hecht, HAA, 27.02.21

### **Crossing the border**

Israel has turned its back on its citizens. (...) in closing Ben-Gurion International Airport, which has been shut since January 26, a clear line has been crossed. One of the most basic rights in the relationship between a state and its citizens is the right to enter the country. (...) the government almost actively encouraged an aerial caravan to Dubai, overriding health care normalization agreement with the United Arab Emirates and translate it into political capital. But the combination of a rise in incidence of the coronavirus, public criticism and the embarrassing weakness of the gatekeepers led to a decision, with almost no warning, to close Israel's doors and abandon its citizens to their fate (...). It's unacceptable to make people who want to leave the country to care for a sick parent promise not to return for 60 days, thereby effectively preventing them from voting in next month's election. Indeed, it's unacceptable to prevent anyone who is eligible to vote from coming to Israel to exercise this right, even if they didn't leave recently. (...) The coronavirus must be fought by banning gatherings, enforcing the regulations equally on everyone, quarantining people when necessary and encouraging people to get vaccinated. But the most important thing of all is trust between citizens and their government. The terrible mistake of leaving Ben-Gurion Airport wide

open for such a long time cannot be rectified by the mistake of an almost hermetic closure governed by a political committee. (...)  
Editorial, HAA, 28.02.21

## **2. Countdown zu den Neuwahlen**

*Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu hält mit den näher rückenden vorgezogenen Parlamentswahlen einen großen Vorsprung vor den Gegner\_innen. Alles deutet darauf hin, dass Netanyahu seinen konservativen Likud mit Abstand als stärkste Fraktion in die Knesset führen wird. Problematisch für ihn ist allerdings, dass immer mehr Parteien schon im Vorfeld der Wahl ein Zusammengehen mit Netanyahu, der sich wegen Korruption vor Gericht verantworten muss, ausschließen. Netanyahu punktet aktuell mit der erfolgreichen Impfkampagne. Letztendlich ging die vorausschauende Impfstoff-Beschaffung auch auf sein Konto. Kritik muss der noch amtierende Regierungschef trotzdem einstecken. Neben der miserablen Lage auf dem Arbeitsmarkt wird ihm vor allem seine Nachgiebigkeit dem ultraorthodoxen Sektor gegenüber zum Vorwurf gemacht, wo die Lockdown-Maßnahmen massiv ignoriert werden. Schlagzeilen machte im Vorfeld der Wahlen Ibtisam Mara'ana, die auf Listenplatz 7 für die Arbeitspartei antritt. Israels Zentrale Wahlkommission disqualifizierte die israelisch-arabische Filmmacherin aufgrund mehrerer, weit in der Vergangenheit zurückliegender kritischer Äußerungen über Israel als jüdischen Staat. Der Oberste Gerichtshof revidierte die Disqualifizierung. Parteichefin Merav Michaeli kommentierte die Entscheidung erleichtert darüber, dass die Angelegenheit nun „hinter uns liegt“.*

### **Israel Elections: Michaeli the only true opposition to Netanyahu**

The (...) picture is clear. (...) Netanyahu heads the fascist right-wing (...) while those who are running against him are neither Left, center or moderate right-wing. (...) Yair Lapid (...) winks to the Left, smirks to the Right, and beams at the center. He's a little of everything, and that's a shame. (...) More than any of Bibi's other contenders over the past decade, Lapid has the best starting point from which to reach the finish line. (...) Lapid has a great springboard from which to leap on his way to the top. What's currently holding him back from closing this gap is his willingness to be almost, but not entirely himself. He needs to blatantly say all the things

he believes in, beware of the Right, since that's not who he is. He needs to stop pretending to be just a little bit Likud, since he's not, and this is not where he comes from. (...) And yet here in the midst of all this chaos there is one person who does not need to change a thing about herself. She is already showing her true persona and she has no intention of trying to please anyone else – not on the Left and not on the Right. She is consistent, sharp, acts without hesitation and is free of all pretense. (...) Merav Michaeli (...) is not yet a candidate for prime minister, but she has succeeded in lifting the Labor Party up out of the deep pit into which it had sunk. (...) The impressive path Michaeli is taking offers us hope for the near future. (...) Michaeli will lead Labor to impressive results compared with previous elections. (...) She's still the most honest, consistent and determined person who stands against Netanyahu. Ehud Olmert, JPO, 18.02.21

### **Disqualify Israel's Central Elections Committee**

The Central Elections Committee's decision Wednesday to disqualify the candidacy of Ibtisam Mara'ana, seventh on the Labor slate of candidates for the Knesset, could not have been more predictable. With the same degree of certainty, we can expect the Supreme Court to overturn the decision. This is how it works in the Middle East's only democracy: In each election campaign, the Central Elections Committee is asked to disqualify Arab candidates and parties and the Supreme Court then overturns the decision. The disqualification of Mara'ana, or of any other candidate or slate for the Knesset, is an infringement of the most basic right in a democracy: the right to vote and to be elected. In the case of Mara'ana, who was disqualified on the basis of a few statements, it is also an infringement of the right to freedom of expression. (...) Racism? Surely it can't be that. It's just a coincidence that the request to disqualify Mara'ana was submitted by the Otzma Yehudit party, the political home of Rabbi Kahane's disciple Itamar Ben-Gvir and his fellow Arab-haters. To them, this is just "democracy defending itself" against Arabs who threaten Israel's Jewish character. Only in Israel would a minority's struggle for full civil rights be perceived as a threat to democracy. (...) the Elections Committee is a political body (...) made up of party representatives who disqualify their political rivals. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 18.02.21

### **The Israeli left's test: Standing up for Arab Labor candidate**

(...) The challenge that Mara'ana has placed on the doorstep of the Zionist left is earth-shattering. It will be the test of this camp. Just as there is not and cannot be Arabs who observe the Sabbath, fast on Yom Kippur and wear a costume on Purim, there are not and cannot be Arabs who stand at attention on Memorial Day for IDF casualties, the soldiers who killed their people, conquered their land, expelled their forebears and who continue to abuse their brethren. An Arab who stands at attention for the siren lies in his soul and betrays his people. It's as simple as that. (...) The left must embrace Mara'ana and respect her opinions. She is married to a Jew, she joined a Zionist party – what more does Zionism expect of her? Other than collaborators, there are no Arabs who can feel any differently than she does. Neither is there a left wing except the kind that knows how to accommodate the positions of the members of the other people that lives here. Those who don't stand up for Mara'ana are not left wing. (...)

Gideon Levy, HAA, 20.02.21

### **No ifs, no buts, no ultra-Orthodox parties in government**

(...) the only way to save Israel from further division, injustice and ultimate suicide is if Israelis make it clear they will not tolerate ultra-Orthodox parties in government. (...) Despite the fact that the ultra-Orthodox make up just 12% of Israel's population, half of Israel's hospitalized Covid-19 patients during the first lockdown were ultra-Orthodox (...) we must draw a clear red line. (...) 61% of Israelis said they would prefer the next coalition government to exclude the ultra-Orthodox parties. In order to translate this preference into reality, these respondents need to decide that this is a top-priority issue and express it as such. (...) the UTJ and Shas must be turned into political pariahs. Other parties should (...) be falling over each other in rushing to condemn them and explicitly issue guarantees affirming that they will not partner with them in government. (...) Demand assurances that your party will not sit with Shas or the UTJ. (...) Ultra-Orthodox demographic growth is a ticking time bomb in which the communities' numbers double every 16 years. By the year 2064, the ultra-Orthodox are projected to make up one-third of Israeli society. The status quo is neither economically nor socially sustainable. The threat is existential. (...) This dreadful pandemic which has robbed families of loved ones and livelihoods (...)

has brought to the fore the price the country pays for ultra-Orthodox autonomy. Let us not squander the opportunity to consign Shas and the UTJ to the opposition and set about instigating the reforms we most desperately need if we want our beloved country to be united, governed fairly and, above all, survive. (...)

Yoel Collick, TOI, 21.02.21

### **How many are unemployed in Israel?**

Unemployment has never been higher in Israel as in the past year, amid the coronavirus crisis. (...) Just when we need to mobilize all available resources to help the jobless, the most acute failures preventing the state from dealing with the issue properly are coming to light. The first and foremost is the very possibility to obtain reliable, updated figures about the extent of unemployment. (...) Public attention wasn't directed at the way the agencies in charge of the employment market were operating and no effort was made to prepare for a rainy day. No agency or official studied the shortcomings in the labor market with a comprehensive view or tried to correct them. (...) The chaos in gathering unemployment data was compounded by the deficient handling of professional training and a lack of a policy for paying people on unpaid leave, which created a negative incentive that discouraged people from returning to work. Instead of submitting a strategic plan for the labor market, the politicians are preoccupied with struggles for survival and are offering plans intended merely to shell out more ineffective funds that won't help achieve economic recovery.

Editorial, HAA, 26.02.21

### **Netanyahu's biggest electoral threat is on the right**

(...) While Likud continues to lead, its center-right voter base overlaps with the New Hope and Yamina parties. New Hope leader and former Likud MK Saar has positioned himself as a right-wing and centrist alternative to Netanyahu. (...) By ruling out sitting in a government with Netanyahu, Saar could block the Likud from forming a government. The question is if Lapid and Saar could cobble together a coalition without Likud but instead with some combination that could include Yamina, Labor, Meretz, Blue and White, and Avigdor Liberman's Yisrael Beytenu. (...) While polls will continue to fluctuate ahead of the March elections, one clear trend is that most Israelis still view Netanyahu as the most qualified to lead the country. (...) However, Netanyahu could be facing his biggest challenge yet if Saar and Bennett refuse

to join a Likud-led government. (...) The main problem facing the anti-Netanyahu parties is that they are ideologically diverse, and therefore it will be more difficult for them to unite. But the increasing desire to remove Netanyahu is what unites them and could be enough this time around.

Ariel Ben Solomon, YED, 26.02.21

### **The Labor Party Is Back, Claims Its New Leader**

(...) Michaeli, Israel's only female party leader today (...), a social justice champion who supports women's and LGBT rights (...) is busy rebuilding the party's base. She has recruited two newcomers to run for election — Rabbi Gilad Kariv, the head of the Reform movement in Israel, and Ibtsam Mara'ana, a Muslim filmmaker from the Arab village of Fureidis, near Haifa, who is married to a Jew. (...) While she is adamant against forming an alliance with Netanyahu, she is open to cooperating with other parties, even those at ideological odds with the Labor Party. (...) An advocate of a two-state solution, Michaeli said that Israel must resolve its conflict with the Palestinians to assure its security, though it is not currently a pressing issue due to the coronavirus pandemic wreaking havoc on the country. (...)

Sheldon Kirshner, TOI, 28.02.21

### **3. Ölpest an den Stränden des Mittelmeers**

*Israels Regierung appellierte infolge einer schweren Ölverschmutzung an die Bevölkerung, sportliche Aktivitäten an den Mittelmeerstränden zu meiden. Tausende Freiwillige halfen dabei, die von Teer verdeckten Strände zu reinigen und Tiere zu retten. Von der Ölpest besonders betroffen sind Meereschildkröten. Über die Ursache der Katastrophe herrschte zunächst weitgehende Unklarheit. Inzwischen verneinen die israelischen Behörden, das für die Ölpest verantwortliche Schiff ausfindig gemacht zu haben. Weitere Details wurden allerdings noch nicht veröffentlicht. Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu kündigte an, Regierungsmittel zur raschen Säuberung der Strände bereitzustellen.*

### **Two urgent lessons from massive oil spill that engulfed Israel's coastline**

(...) It's highly likely that this spill originated beyond the country's territorial waters. Nevertheless, it should serve as a warning of the danger of using fossil fuels, including inside the country. The Energy Ministry continues to approve plans for oil exploration near the Israeli coast (...) this increases the risk of an accident on a much larger scale than the one

we saw (...). If the climate crisis hasn't yet persuaded the government, maybe the serious damage of the past few days will lead it to conclude that it ought to reduce and certainly not expand the use of polluting fuels as much as possible. The second main lesson that ought to be learned relates to how to cope with pollution if it can't be prevented, as in the case of a large oil spill beyond Israel's territorial waters. The Environmental Protection Ministry is supposed to be prepared for any such event. But being prepared means it must be given the appropriate resources. (...) Over the past several years, Israel has drafted a national policy for planning in maritime areas. It has also managed to develop its offshore natural gas reserves and turn them into an important economic resource. The sea and its coasts are in constant danger of being polluted, as proven by the tar now strewn across the country's beaches. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the country's preparedness to deal with the negative consequences of exploiting the sea, both within its borders and beyond.

Editorial, HAA, 21.02.21

### **Israel needs to be struck by ecological disaster to take action**

The image of a baby sea turtle covered in black tar has become the symbol of an ecological disaster that has struck Israel. (...) While the source of the pollution is not yet fully clear, it is most likely from a ship that either accidentally or purposely discharged large quantities of petroleum offshore which was then washed to the shores in last week's storms. (...) the tar, which has covered some unique coastal environmental habitats, will impact the entire food chain as well as the breeding habitats of certain species and could cling to the surfaces of rocks for years to come, particularly in the North. Much of the clean-up operation needs to be carried out by hand, a physically demanding task made more difficult by the fumes from the tar. Intensive efforts are also being made to save the animals which have been found on the beaches, including turtles and birds – blinded, unable to move their limbs and struggling to breathe. (...) It is sad that it takes a disaster to spur the government into action. (...) The dangers of such a maritime spill, or a leak in a pipeline or a similar source of pollution have been known for decades. The country was not prepared and accidents and incidents that happen out of sight at sea cannot be ignored. (...) Even when most of the tar has been removed from the sand and the sea seems to be clean, the ecological impact will be felt

for years. Israel cannot rely on dealing with emergencies after they happen. There must be more effort at prevention and immediate, organized response to try to limit the damage. The beaches blackened by the tar are a literal black stain.

Editorial, JPO, 21.02.21

### **A little black blob in the sand**

The first little black blob in the sand I saw was about the size of a shekel. I reached down to poke it to determine whether it was tar or just a rock. It was soft. Tar. Within a minute, the sticky residue that remained on my rubber-gloved index-finger spread to the adjoining fingers and palm of my hand. The image of the young, dead sea turtle we were shown by the clean-up organizers minutes earlier resonated. What a gruesome death it must have been — to be swimming across the open Mediterranean Sea, only to swim into successive floating globules of that black sticky gunk. Sticking to its fins, clogging its airway, burning its skin, and leaving it dead on beach, where sea birds risk facing a similar fate. Sea turtle conservation efforts have been set back years. (...) The source of this petroleum mess is (...) still undetermined, and several ships are being investigated. What is certain, however, is that our dependence on fossil fuels bears ultimate responsibility for this ecological disaster (...) Fossil fuel, whether it is coal, petroleum, or "natural" gas, has altered our climate cycles, bringing extreme heat and cold events to every corner of the planet, and is highly likely to be driving increased wildfire intensity and frequency and more deadly hurricanes. The same fossil fuels are the main contributors to urban air pollution, with all their health implications (...) the role of oil, coal, and gas in powering society should be nearing its end. (...) our environmental advances will continue to be fleeting, so long as we remain dependent on fossil fuels.

Daniel Orenstein, TOI, 21.02.21

### **Keeping the Israeli public in the dark, again**

Benjamin Netanyahu's government is showing a consistent and dangerous tendency to operate in the shadows, behind the public's back and with a dimming of the media. (...) a Magistrate Court in Haifa had imposed a gag order on the investigation of the tar pollution of the country's beaches. (...) The government's attempt to hide from the public the details of an ecological disaster and impose a gag order on the identity of the perpetrator is almost as serious as the pollution itself. The government is signatory to the request to conceal information, clearly acting

against the interest of its citizens and against its duty to expose the identity of the offenders to the public. The public is the victim of this transgression and it has the right not only to be informed about the investigation, but to learn why the state believes the public does not have the basic right to know the identity of the offender who acted against it. (...) Over the last year, the Netanyahu government has gone out of its way to conceal its operations from the public eye. It has insisted on concealing all the minutes of cabinet and committee meetings relating to the coronavirus for another 30 years, as if this were a defense-related event and not a global pandemic. Despite the differences between these cases, they share the stench of concealment. (...) the main goal is to keep the media and the public in the dark, with the government acting unhindered, without any transparency. (...) Editorial, HAA, 23.02.21

### **Lack of transparency about oil spill endangers public health**

(...) Although the occurrence of the oil spill was known since at least February 17, Israel's national and local authorities failed to adequately address the disastrous effects that the oil is causing. Most attention is – rightfully so – given to the enormous ecological effects. However, oil spills are also known to form a major public health concern. And these health risks are especially prevalent in individuals who help with the clean-up: a process that is almost always done manually. We have already seen some of these health effects appear in the volunteers: irritation to the nose, throat and lungs, accompanied by breathing problems and stress. (...) Other problems (...) may arise almost immediately after exposure include irritation of the skin and eyes, as well as neurological complaints and stress symptoms. (...) Previous research has linked exposure to oil spills, especially in cleaning workers, with a variety of dermal, hematological, respiratory, renal, endocrine, and neurological complaints [source] These effects are mainly caused by direct exposure to chemicals, such as polyphenols and hydrocarbons. (...) Crude oil also contains cadmium, mercury and nickel: heavy metals that are known to be carcinogenic in humans, potentially contributing to cancer and other degenerative diseases. Exposure to oil spills – either by breathing, swallowing or touching – could therefore result in substantial burdens of disease, even years after the initial exposure. (...) the Israeli government officially decided that any information about the oil spill that will emerge through

the initiated investigation is considered classified. Thus, making the public as well as environmental organizations blind to the source, characteristics and extent of the disaster. This obscuring of the data directly affects the ability to adequately assess health risks, especially for those on the front lines of the cleaning operations. (...) we need the Israeli government to be open, transparent, and extremely clear about the extent and potential risks, because it really may affect our health directly. Janne L. Hoogervorst, JPO, 24.02.21

### **Israel's oil spill disaster is merely a drop in the ocean**

(...) while the tar pollution is indeed one of the gravest ecological disasters Israel has ever seen, we need to remember that the Mediterranean, which of course connects to Israel's coastline, is suffering from a much more prevalent pollution problem. (...) Studies show that over half a million tons of plastic is dumped into the waters of the sea every year. This equates to throwing 33,800 plastic bottles into the water every single minute. (...) Over 700 marine species worldwide, including mammals and birds, are affected by plastic due to ingestion, entanglement, or habitat damage. This is not only disastrous, we actually don't fully know what effects it will have on the natural world.

So, what has caused the winds to change after years of government neglect? Criminal oversight. The tar disaster that is now upon us was a matter of time. A European satellite snapped the oil spot six days before it reached the shores of Israel, but no one acted. Why? Because the response plan for potential marine pollution, which was written in 2008 and costs only NIS 15 million a year, was never budgeted for at all. (...) all of this only the appetizer for the truly great catastrophe that is to come when the agreement between the Trans-Israel pipeline company and the UAE comes to fruition. Israel will become a major hub for the transmission of polluting fossil fuels from the Persian Gulf to Europe via an underwater pipe that could easily leak and create an unimaginable catastrophe. For now all we can do is hope that Israel's leaders will have the sense to think ahead. (...)

Elad Zeret, YED, 27.02.21



#### 4. Medienquerschnitt

##### Galia Oz klagt an

##### **Amos Oz, the ultimate allegory of the nation-state**

Any story that is too big, too pure, too polished, will at some point reveal fractures and the humanity in it; the finite nature, the animalism will come out. All glorification shatters in the end. That's the basic lesson from the responses to the book that Galia Oz wrote about herself and her father. Those who looked at Amos Oz during his lifetime and instead of a human being saw a "moral beacon," or "the secular equivalent of an admiral," or a "prophet," must begin their self-examination from that point. People will be people. Never more. As simple as that is, it is just as simply forgotten as the desire grows to hold onto something that will say what is important to do or to feel. (...) Not for nothing is the burial place of the founding father of the Jewish people, Moses, unknown and the king from which the messiah will come according to the Jewish story, David, is also a man of many sins. (...) People must not abandon their liberty, their freedom of thought, for any other person. And those who do, who give themselves over to a pure and sterile image, those who seek messiahs and hollow, magical solutions just to assuage their helplessness, will fall flat on their faces. (...) this story about the human being Amos Oz, the revelation of his imperfect humanity, the crack in his sterile image, is the ultimate allegory even for those for which the image "Amos Oz, the national author" was created for and sponsored by: the nation-state. That which sought for itself a pure and perfect image of the "rule of the people," of the ultimate social order, of God. The image of the state as a great father is crumbling these days in almost every facet of life. (...)

Yair Assulin, HAA, 25.02.21

##### **Iranischer Angriff**

##### **Iranian attack provides Israel leverage at a critical time**

The Revolutionary Guard's naval forces have proven their ability to carry out the kind of attack we witnessed on an Israeli-owned cargo ship sailing in the Gulf of Oman (...). That's why we can assume it was also responsible for this latest attack. While the attackers could have easily sunk the ship, it seems they acted to cause damage to the vessel without

incurring any casualties. (...) The attack didn't take Israeli officials by surprise. The ayatollah regime has suffered painful blows both across the Middle East and inside Iran in recent years and has been seeking revenge for quite some time. The attack on the Israeli-owned ship allows it to maintain a low profile without provoking too strong of a response. Although the Iranians opted for a civilian and not military target, it is doubtful Israel will act to change the status quo. Israel now has an opportunity to leverage the event in the diplomatic arena, in particular with US President Joe Biden's administration, which is now busy formulating its policy on Iran. (...) Israel's interest is first and foremost the Iranian nuclear program and a possible US return to the 2015 nuclear deal. (...) Israel is also interested in restricting Iran's activities in the region. (...) The name of the game in this effort is intelligence. Just like with the nuclear program, Israel needs to get to Washington, and other relevant capitals around the world, to present officials with facts and testimonies. (...) The attack appears to have provided Israel with a significant political opportunity. At any rate, the Iranian front has been consistently managed across a variety of sites and various means. Despite this most recent event, Israel is by far in the lead.

Yoav Limor, IHY, 28.02.21

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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