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1. Israel beginnt mit Drittimpfungen

Im Kampf gegen die Ausbreitung des Coronavirus prescht Israel weltweit erneut als erstes Land vor, in dem Auffrischungsimpfungen vorgenommen werden. Bürger_innen im Alter ab 60 Jahren sind aufgefordert, sich ein drittes Mal gegen das Virus impfen zu lassen, vorausgesetzt, die beiden ersten Impfungen liegen mehr als fünf Monate zurück. Gesundheitsminister Nitzan Horowitz (Meretz) erklärte, das Ziel der Kampagne ist, einen weiteren Lockdown zu verhindern. Die Zahl der Neuinfektionen stieg erneut auf weit über 2000 täglich. Allerdings zeigten rund die Hälfte der geimpften Infizierten keine Symptome. Die Zahl der Todesfälle sei „sehr gering“, verlautete aus dem Ministerium. Parallel zu den Drittimpfungen sind auch Impfungen von fünf- bis elfjährigen Kindern erlaubt, die ein erhöhtes Risiko haben, bei einer Infektion schwer zu erkranken oder zu sterben. Zudem gilt in Innenräumen erneut die Maskenpflicht und beim Besuch von Restaurants muss der Impfpass vorgelegt werden.

Corona-things unsaid. Paradox of Vaccination

More and more people are becoming vaccinated, which is a good thing, of course. But there are added factors that are being ignored. More and more people will be wandering around as silent spreaders. (...) we may come to a tipping point where we crash into the relatively unvaccinated populations, and there will be mayhem. (...) We have been all the

way along bluffing ourselves that we are fighting Corona to save lives. That is far from true we have been fighting Corona to prevent the health system from collapsing. If it were to collapse, then there would be more deaths. (...) We have a large population who are vaccinated, were never exposed to the virus. They are about to be exposed. We are reassuring ourselves that we will cope because of the vaccination, and in that respect, we are right. Nevertheless, we are setting up the ideal situation for breeding resistance to the vaccination virus. (...) Every other major epidemic took four years to pass. Corona looks the same. (...) We know that by exposing ourselves to infection, we are increasing both the likelihood of a breakthrough in the unvaccinated areas and, far more critical, developing a resistant virus. (...) we have to maintain social distancing and masking. (...) We need to realize that Corona and mankind will only reach a steady state in a year and eighteen months at least. Not enough of the undeveloped world has been vaccinated. (...) Michael Benjamin, TOI, 03.07.21

Fear must not take up the mantle against COVID-19

After over a year of uncertainty and major disruptions to daily life that included lockdowns and harsh restrictions, the last four months that preceded the current coronavirus outbreak have been a dream come true. (...) Israel's infection rates are climbing

once again, and while it is worrisome, its effects on all of our lives must change. We can go on about the horrible economical, mental and physical tolls of the pandemic until the cows come home. The people of Israel are well aware of the price they and their children had to pay over the last year. They have been left broken and tired, still licking the wounds left from previous outbreaks. We live in a reality where most Israelis have already been inoculated against the damnable coronavirus and everyone is well acquainted with social distancing protocols. That is why we must recalibrate our trajectory and prepare for the greatest challenge facing us yet — building our lives alongside the virus. (...) The people of Israel have fulfilled their part of the agreement with the government and got inoculated. Leaving a fringe minority of anti-vaxxers, we've all flocked in droves to vaccination centers and put our trust in the jab. Now it's time for the government to hold up its end of the deal. (...)

Adir Yanko, YED, 08.07.21

Spread joy, Bennett: Declare COVID-19 to be just another disease and free us from fear

(...) Bennett — as opposed to Netanyahu — is capable and needs to make businesslike, reasonable and fair decisions vis-a-vis the coronavirus. In managing the crisis, the only thing guiding him should be the public good. (...) The fear and uncertainty concerning the new school year are causing great harm to the mental health of parents and children. They are unnecessary. Bennett must declare that the school year will open and that regular activities face no danger, unless a meteor hits the Earth. The public deserves stability and logic. It deserves a reasonable reality. The talk of not opening schools on time is insanity — and Bennett must put an end to it. He must announce that Israel has decided to live alongside the coronavirus, not in its shadow — a move made possible by the vaccine. (...) Bennett must recognize that the quarantine rules are onerous for young children and their parents. To be locked up at home in the middle of the summer for a week and a half is too much. (...) Bennett, be a leader. (...) Save the Israeli public from this incessant fear, from the coronavirus neurosis, from the frightened wait for future sanctions. (...) There will be school, there will be work. There will be a routine. Spread joy, Bennett.

Rogel Alpher, HAA, 12.07.21

Covid-19 variants are here to stay, we must behave accordingly

The feeling in Israel that COVID-19 has made a mini-comeback is misleading. It never disappeared (...) not only governments (...) need to take action; citizens themselves can and must take responsibility for their actions. (...) the new Israeli government under Naftali Bennett (...) has reintroduced measures such as compulsory masks in closed spaces and other social-distancing steps. The reason for the return to tighter measures is clear. Coronavirus figures (...) reached more than 1,000 new positive cases a day (...) as the numbers of COVID-positive people rise, so will the numbers of the seriously ill. (...) Currently, some 60% of the patients in serious condition have been vaccinated, although most of those suffered from high-risk factors due to age and background medical issues. (...) Vaccinations have proven very effective so far but are losing some of their effectiveness (...) there are still one-and-a-half million Israelis who are eligible to be vaccinated who have chosen not to be inoculated. This is a pity. Vaccination cannot be made compulsory, but it should be encouraged. (...) Wearing a mask, washing hands and keeping a distance (...) still make sense and don't require much effort. We need to keep the economy open and no less importantly, we need to be able to keep psychologically healthy. Lockdowns are not healthy. (...) The government must enforce more testing and quarantine for those coming from abroad, and every Israeli should think twice about whether a trip abroad is really necessary and wise during the corona era. While there is no need to panic, neither can we afford to be complacent. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 15.07.21

Public trust is key to battle COVID

Public trust in the government and the healthcare system is an essential tool in curbing a pandemic, especially one as deadly as the coronavirus. Such trust is built when the public understands why guidelines and restrictions are needed and when it sees authorities act with transparency and do their utmost to minimize the damage caused by the virus. (...) the more the government tries to cover up its mistakes and conceal vital information about inoculations, the less the public will respond. It comes as no surprise then that after Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and the Health Ministry reinstated the mask mandate indoors, Israelis did not rush to don them. (...) Israelis have received fragmented pieces of data regarding the third booster shot, the new vaccine agreement with Pfizer and contradicting information by top health experts about the inoculations.

Israel is going through another spike in morbidity with hundreds of new cases every day. The spread of the highly contagious variant could potentially lead to a fourth wave of infections. The ministry must leave its old patterns of cover-ups behind, for otherwise, it puts people's lives at risk.

Ran Reznik, IHY, 13.07.21

The new government must now issue strong measures against corona

When PM Bennett was still in the opposition, we needed to hear from him every day how PM Netanyahu was negligent in stopping the pandemic from killing us. He had wonderful plans, selflessly created for all of us. Why would the PM not take up his 15-point plan to save us all? Now he's PM, he's preaching to the public, but again, we hear no preventative measures from our head of government. (...) he is dysfunctional (...). I want him to act. Measures to limit potential super spreader events, to mandate mask wearing, to up the frequency of buses, to subsidize Plexiglas dividers, etc. (...) Who needs anarchists with a government like this?

Moshe-Mordechai van Zuiden, TOI, 18.07.21

2. Israelische Spionagesoftware macht international Schlagzeilen

Das israelische IT-Unternehmen NSO sorgte weltweit für negative Schlagzeilen, als bekannt wurde, dass führende Politiker_innen sowie hunderte Journalist_innen Opfer der NSO-Spionagesoftware Pegasus geworden sind. Verteidigungsminister Benny Gantz versicherte bei einem Besuch in Frankreich, den Spionage-Vorwürfen durch die israelische Software nachzugehen. Auch Frankreichs Staatspräsident Emmanuel Macron soll Ziel des Spähprogramms gewesen sein. Im Gespräch mit seiner französischen Amtskollegin Florence Parly betonte Gantz, "dass der Staat Israel den Export von Cyber-Produkten ausschließlich an staatliche Stellen für den rechtmäßigen Gebrauch und nur zum Zweck der Verhinderung und Untersuchung von Verbrechen und der Terrorismusbekämpfung genehmigt". Die IT-Firma hatte sich mit dem Programm Sicherheitslücken in Smartphone-Software zu Nutzen gemacht, um Zugriff auf Daten zu erlangen. Ein internationales Journalist_innenkonsortium hatte zuletzt über einen Datensatz mit rund 50.000 Nummern berichtet, die von NSO-Kunden als potenzielle Ausspähziele ausgewählt worden sein sollen. Das Unternehmen wies die Vorwürfe zurück.

The NSO affair: An advanced system of demonizing Israel

The problem with NSO is that even in Israel, it doesn't have a great reputation. (...) They have links to the government through regulation and export permits. (...) Israel hasn't sold the final word on the intelligence and tracking programs. The fact is that the program can be turned off at the company's discretion, even when it is being operated by foreign governments. Ultimately, the world is in an era of tracking and oversight, and in the past decade, Israel has become a cyberpower. In fact, cyber is one of the factors that has made Israel into a power. (...) Hungary is a democracy under a nationalist leader whom the liberal-radical sector does not like. However, it's a legitimately democratic country. The reason Israel does business with these countries is well-known. Much has already been written about Saudi Arabia and Azerbaijan being vital to Israel's strategic arrangements on Iran. (...) Today, Israel is in the crosshairs. Different entities want to paint Israel as a country that helps evil regimes oppress their citizens. Someone is operating a system of targeted demonization of Israel. The problem is that in all these countries, including the American democracy – and maybe especially there – the government devotes a lot of effort in trying to control its citizens. (...) The truly important thing is that none of these surveillance and espionage methods be activated in Israel without close legal oversight.

Amnon Lord, IHY, 21.07.21

Israel's shame: NSO and Pegasus are a danger to democracy around the world

(...) Since 2017, when NSO's involvement in political persecution in Mexico was exposed, there has been a steady flow of investigations around the world into its other human rights violations, and every few months more findings have been published. And in Israel, there was, and is, general indifference, both in the public square and in the political sphere. (...) After 12 years of Benjamin Netanyahu's tenure as prime minister, in which human rights activists and Knesset members were smeared as supporters of terrorism, critical journalists deemed enemies of the people and left-wing voters as traitors, why would the Israeli public, which had grown accustomed to view dissident voices as enemies, care about what happens to journalists in Azerbaijan, India or Hungary? (...) Two petitions have been filed in the courts regarding NSO's export licenses. (...) Israel's judicial system has (...) serially missed opportunities to prevent NSO and Israel's

Ministry of Defense from becoming a real and present danger to democracy all over the world. (...)
Eitay Mack, HAA, 23.07.21

NSO Group affair is latest in Israel's long history of arming shady regimes

The alleged use of Israeli cyber-surveillance technology to track political dissidents and journalists around the world is the latest in the country's ignominious history of providing weapons to human rights violators around the world (...). It is a practice that stretches back decades and crosses political lines (...) Without genuine transparency, Israelis typically only hear of where their country's weapons have wound up from United Nations and non-government organization's reports — as is the case with the current NSO Group scandal, which came to light in large part due to the efforts of Amnesty International (...). Israel's current law on defense exports (...) does not expressly forbid arms sales to human rights violators. Only a United Nations Security Council arms embargo, which is exceedingly rare, can force the Defense Ministry to block a deal. In all other cases, political and diplomatic expediency can outweigh human rights concerns. (...) Despite the current controversy over the NSO Group, these defense exports to countries with poor human rights records are unlikely to end soon (...). Efforts to block defense exports through legal appeals have rarely succeeded. (...) The only potential for change now lies in legislation (...). Israel is ranked as one of the top ten weapons dealers in the world, and those arms sales represent a significant proportion of the country's total exports. (...) The fallout from the current NSO Group allegations could change the government's calculus on arms exports, but this would require a concerted, long-term effort to rewrite the laws overseeing weapons deals and giving the Defense Export Controls Agency far more power and interest in preventing sales to countries that may use Israeli technology nefariously.

Judah Ari Gross, TOI, 28.07.21

3. Kein Eis für Siedler innen

Mit heftiger Kritik reagierten Israels Regierung und Parlament auf die Ankündigung des Eiscremeherstellers Ben & Jerry's, den Verkauf in Siedlungen im besetzten Westjordanland und in Ost-Jerusalem einzustellen. 90 der insgesamt 120 Knesset-Abgeordneten unterzeichneten eine Aufforderung an das US-Unternehmen, den Boykott umgehend rückgängig zu machen. Die Entscheidung, Eiscreme nicht mehr in israelischen Siedlungen zu verkaufen,

sei "unmoralisch und bedauernswert". Sie werde Hunderten jüdischen und arabischen Arbeitern schaden. Sie verstoße gegen ein Gesetz, das Boykotte der Siedlungen verbiete. Außenminister Yair Lapid verurteilte den Schritt als „beschämende Kapitulation vor Antisemitismus und der BDS-Bewegung“, die eine grundsätzliche Kampagne zum Boykott gegen Israel führt. Lapid kündigte an, er werde die 35 US-Bundesstaaten, die Anti-BDS-Gesetze erlassen haben, dazu auffordern, diese Gesetze auf den Eiscremehersteller anzuwenden. Auch Oppositionsführer Benjamin Netanyahu gab seinem Unmut Ausdruck und twitterte: „Jetzt wissen wir Israelis, welche Eissorte wir nicht kaufen sollten.“

Ben & Jerry's handed a victory to the campaign of hate

Dear Ben & Jerry's directors, I do not like boycotts, for they are seldom justified. Nor am I a devout supporter of Israeli rule in Judea and Samaria. And although your ice cream has been my favorite until now, from this point on I intend to boycott it. In fact, anyone who opposes racism, lies, incitement, human rights abuses should boycott your ice cream. (...) your boycott is another success story for the racist and anti-Semitic campaign that opposes the very existence of just one state in the whole world: the Jewish state. (...) This campaign has no interest in peace nor in ending the occupation. (...) We need peace based on the compromises that have been proposed since the conflict began. (...) Israel is a vibrant democracy. Israel itself has a majority who support a historic compromise to end the conflict. There is also strong criticism among some members of the population, including some people who sit in Knesset, over the continuation of the settlement project. But the settlements were never the obstacle to peace. Remember the settlements in the Gaza Strip that were all evacuated by the Israeli government? (...) Anyone who supports a solution of two states for two peoples knows that Arabs will continue to live in Israel, where they comprise 20% of the population, and a small percentage of Jews will be able to keep living in the Palestinian state. (...)

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 20.07.21

Ice cream that leaves a bad taste in our mouths

Less than 24 hours after receiving the news that Ben & Jerry's announced they would not allow their ice cream to be sold in Judea & Samaria, what they called "occupied Palestinian territory," there has been a grassroots backlash against this company. (...) "You boycott us. We boycott you," is the new

Israeli motto. This ice cream company (...) succeeded in uniting Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu with his political rivals Naftali Bennett of Yamina and Yair Lapid of Yesh Atid in a coalition against this ice cream brand. (...) Ben & Jerry's announced that their political ban would start in another year and a half due to their signed commercial commitments. It is highly likely that, by that time, this company, headed by these two American Jews, will not find Israel a viable place to do business. Israelis like choice, but not one that leaves a nasty taste in their mouths. In Israel today, their ice cream should be confined to the trash can.

Barry Shaw, IHY, 21.07.21

Ben & Jerry's and 'terrorism'? Lapid and Herzog are embarrassing Israel

I supported Isaac Herzog for president (...) this week he spoke out about the Ben & Jerry's affair, saying: "The boycott of Israel is a new sort of terrorism, economic terrorism (...)." Terrorism, no less. (...) what did Ben & Jerry's do? It spoke the truth: The West Bank isn't part of Israel and the situation there is improper. There are two populations in the West Bank – one without civil rights and one that enjoys the protection and help of the state and even has the strongest political lobby in Israel. Each of these populations has a separate system of laws and courts. This is a state of occupation – some call it apartheid. Either way, it's an anomaly that a decent democratic country isn't supposed to be part of, certainly not for more than 50 years. (...) Herzog's comments and those of the head of the center-left bloc in the government, Yair Lapid, are simply preposterous. In a tweet, Lapid called the move by Ben & Jerry's a "shameful surrender to antisemitism (...)." Both Herzog and Lapid could have left the response on this issue to Bennett – not just "not to get involved" but to reflect their views in the most honest way. These are, to the best of my understanding: opposition to the control over another people and awareness of the heavy price of the occupation, even if this includes fears and doubts about the Palestinians' ability and desire to accept Israel's existence. (...)

Ravit Hecht, HAA, 23.07.21

No, Ben & Jerry's can't solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

(...) The logic of boycotting Israel (be it the West Bank or Israel proper) rests on a simple assumption: that blame for Palestinian suffering rests solely on Israel, an oppressive entity with little regard for hu-

man rights. (...) To paint Palestinians as innocent victims of Israeli aggression is to engage in a lazy reading of an immensely complex issue. In doing so, one not only ignores the various Israeli peace offers that Palestinian leadership has rejected over the years, but it requires the denial (...) of the vile anti-semitic rhetoric rife in Palestinian society. (...) By lending BDS this victory, the leadership at Ben & Jerry's and its parent company, Unilever, are unwittingly joining forces in a battle against Israel's very existence. What this boycott will achieve, however, is the strengthening of Palestinian extremists. (...) despite the Chinese-led genocide in Xinjiang and oppression in Hong Kong and Tibet, Syria's butchering of its own people, and the myriad other human-rights atrocities currently unfolding across the globe, Ben & Jerry's and Unilever identified Israel as the world's sole nation worthy of boycott. We need to be asking serious questions about their reasoning and intentions. (...)

Josh Feldman, JPO, 28.07.21

4. Regierung scheitert an erster Hürde im Parlament

Wenige Wochen nach ihrer Verteidigung musste Israels Koalition schon eine erste Niederlage einstecken. Mit einem Patt von 59 zu 59 Stimmen verhinderte die Opposition eine Mehrheit der Regierung und damit die Verlängerung des seit 2003 geltenden sogenannten Staatsbürgerschaftsgesetzes, das Palästinenser_innen den Zuzug verweigert, selbst wenn sie eine oder einen israelischen Ehepartner_in haben. Die acht sehr unterschiedliche Parteien umfassende Koalition scheiterte trotz widerwilliger Zustimmung der linken Meretz und zweier arabischer Koalitionsmitglieder an der Billigung des oft als rassistisch bezeichneten Gesetzes, das auf dem Höhepunkt der sogenannten Zweiten Intifada verabschiedet worden war und seither regelmäßig verlängert werden musste. Das zunächst aus Gründen der Sicherheit für Israels Bürger_innen initiierte Gesetz hatte auch zum Ziel, die jüdische Mehrheit innerhalb Israels zu bewahren. Paradoxalerweise hatte sich Oppositionsführer Benjamin Netanyahu gegen eine Verlängerung eingesetzt, obschon unter seiner zwölfjährigen Regierungszeit eine Verlängerung des Gesetzes als Fait accompli galt.

Expiry of Citizenship Law is a headache for Israel, not a disaster

(...) On a practical level, Israel's security is not threatened by the government failure (...) to extend the Citizenship Law barring permanent status for

Palestinians married to Israelis. The failure of the vote is merely a symbolic act that will lead to further bickering between the opposition and the coalition over who is more hawkish and more patriotic. It will not actually lead to Israel being flooded with requests by Palestinians married to Israelis. Instead it will primarily lead to an increase in family reunification requests filed with the Interior Ministry and the Shin Bet security service, with a similar rise in petitions to the High Court of Justice from those who will be refused. (...) The temporary law is considered problematic mainly due to the violation of the right of the married couple to maintain a regular family unit, as defined in the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty, which recognizes the right of every Israeli to establish a family as a fundamental right. (...) legislators feared that Palestinians would take advantage of marriage to Israeli Arabs to threaten the Jewish majority in the country. This created the situation in which the law completely prevented family reunification and eliminated the need to individually examine each couple who applied for official status in Israel. Now, without the law's renewal, Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked will become the official address for all these requests. The ministry will not have to look into every single request itself. Instead, Shaked will need the Shin Bet to prove that a person poses a security threat to the state. The security service can simply recommend that a request be denied without providing proper evidence to prove this claim. However both the Shin Bet and the Interior Ministry are still subject to High Court rulings. (...) Shaked, the Shin Bet and their clerks will have a hard time until the bill could be reintroduced to Knesset.

Tova Zimuky, YED, 06.07.21

Netanyahu cut off the country's nose to spite coalition's face

There is no validity to any of the reasons from the right-wing and Haredi opposition parties as to why they voted against the extension of the law denying permanent status to Palestinians married to Israelis. (...) Members of the coalition and the opposition can keep squabbling over irrelevant matters, but the important question is how Israel intends to safeguard its future as a Jewish and democratic state. The citizenship law has many faults that, compounded by a lack of enforcement by the Interior Ministry, resulted in the approval of more than half of all requests to allow West Bank Palestinians to reside in Israel with their Israeli spouses. The previous government should have approved no more than 15% of requests in order to prevent an increase

in the non-Jewish population. And the Knesset vote to reject an extension of the law will only result in more requests from Palestinians being approved. Right-wing opposition factions know full well that their proposed basic law on immigration will be struck down by the Supreme Court. (...) Netanyahu has shown repeatedly that he is unable to muster parliamentary support for a government with him at its helm, so he is trying to bring down the alternative coalition. He and his political allies insist on cutting off the country's nose to spite the coalition's face. Had the right-wing and religious parties succeeded in bringing down the coalition, Israel would have been faced with yet another election cycle (...). But if Netanyahu and his cohorts saw no merit to a law that they renewed every year when they were in power, thereby stating that Israel's security and its future as both Jewish and Democratic is unimportant, why would the Supreme Court uphold the spirit of the law in future appeals, and prevent the influx of more Palestinians into the country?

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 06.07.21

The citizenship law flop is just the beginning

(...) Following the failure to pass the citizenship law, the main question is whether, although painful and humiliating, the coalition will be able to overcome this blow or whether we have just witnessed a constitutive event marking the beginning of the end of the bizarre unity government of unlikely bedfellows signed into office just a short time ago. (...) Having attempted to place the blame on to the opposition – which it accused of being uncooperative and taking steps against the state, no less – senior government officials, Bennett and his fellow Yamina lawmaker Ayelet Shaked, in particular, realized a country cannot be run on tears and lamentation alone and began to try and enlist majority support among coalition members. This was the beginning of a shift in the right direction and the internalization of the magnitude of the responsibility on their shoulders. (...) Soon enough, we will begin to see the introduction of private legislation in what amounts to weekly bonanzas of dozens of laws the government will need to bat off if it hopes to avoid losing control of the government budget. Quite a few explosive laws will be buried in opposition members' list of private laws, and it may prove increasingly difficult to take them apart as the weeks go by. That is why Yamina members are in no rush to decide on MK Amichai Chikli's fate: They may still need him around, including to pass a state budget.

Mati Tuchfeld, IHY, 07.07.21

In Israel, the duty of leftists is sometimes carried out by rightists

Sometimes the work of leftists is done by rightists. (...) the amendment to the Citizenship and Entry to Israel Law expired, after the coalition failed (...) in its effort to obtain a majority for extending it. (...) Fifty-nine coalition members voted in favor – including all the Meretz lawmakers (...). But two UAL lawmakers abstained (...), which meant the bill did not pass. Thus, it was the right-wing opposition that brought about the change promised by the coalition. The expiration of the temporary amendment to the discriminatory law is a welcome result, and all lovers of democracy should be pleased. (...) the law made cynical state security excuses to prohibit West Bank residents who married Israeli citizens from obtaining Israeli ID cards for demographic reasons. (...) Although the opposition did not vote against the law for ideological reasons but out of pure political opportunism, the willingness of Meretz, Labor and UAL members to support such discriminatory legislation also stemmed from political opportunism. (...) The amendment to the Citizenship Law never should have been passed. But now that the temporary order has expired (...) the government should draw up reasonable procedures for approving requests for family unification. Every case should be judged on its own merits, as is the case when dealing with requests by Jewish citizens, and no case should be dismissed in advance, certainly not based on ethnic background.

Editorial, HAA, 07.07.21

Israel's irresponsible opposition leader

(...) Israel's former prime minister, is proving to be an irresponsible and reckless opposition leader who cares only for his own political interests. (...) More than 130,000 Palestinians from the occupied areas entered Israel between 1993 and 2003 after marrying Israeli Arabs, prompting concerns that some of them might engage in terrorism. And there were fears that a steady influx of Palestinians into Israel would be demographically disadvantageous in terms of maintaining a Jewish majority. (...) Netanyahu was familiar with the math (...). Yet he and his allies deliberately voted against its extension, so as to weaken and embarrass Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's government (...). Bennett correctly accused Netanyahu of playing "childish games" to score political points, all at the expense of Israel's security and its demographic wellbeing. (...) Netanyahu claims he will soon introduce a new citizenship law to permanently ban Palestinian naturalization

through marriage. But that is not the reason why he declined to extend the existing law. Netanyahu's goal is to topple the government and reclaim his old job. An apparent narcissist, he is convinced that no one else but him can competently govern the country. (...) As per usual, he was obviously thinking of himself and of his political survival. (...)

Sheldon Kirshner, TOI, 08.08.21

Opposition maneuvers represent nadir of Israeli politics

It was not a week for politicians to be proud of their chosen profession. By voting against extending the contentious citizenship law, as they had done for the last 18 years, opposition MKs preferred to put the country's citizens at risk and let the bill expire just to demonstrate how rickety the ragtag coalition is. (...) Like clockwork, regardless of who's been at the helm in Israel, the bill has been renewed, with the overarching consideration being that security is the number one priority. For the past 12 years, it has been Benjamin Netanyahu and the Likud who have pushed those considerations. At a Yamina faction meeting (...) ahead of the Knesset vote to once again extend the law, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett provided a Shin Bet assessment that the non-renewal of the bill would present a security risk. (...) is the law still required? Those that oppose it claim that it's totally discriminatory and simply a convenient crutch that keeps the number of non-Jewish residents of Israel down and maintains a Jewish demographic edge (...) putting that aside, the security aspect cannot be underestimated. Even one rotten apple who betrays the rights given to him by Israel and perpetrates a terror attack is justification to keep it in place (...). There are those, including the Arab parties, Meretz and humanitarian organizations, who consider it racist legislation targeting Palestinians and refer to it by its more accurate nickname – the "Family Separation Law" – because that is what it in essence does. There are those, like most members of the coalition, who consider it to be a necessary law, not only for security reasons but also for demographic measure, in order to ensure a Jewish majority in the country. And then there are those who don't really care about any of those issues, but are only concerned with regaining power and control of the government. If a few people happen to become victims of terror attacks as a result, it's the sacrifice that must be made. The opposition, led by the Likud, thought it would embarrass the coalition by defeating the citizenship bill this week.

In doing so, they only brought shame upon themselves.

David Brinn, JPO, 09.07.21

5. Medienquerschnitt

Herzog tritt Präsidentschaftsamt an

A president defined by his prime minister

(...) Rivlin's term was primarily colored by his contentious relationship with former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who failed to thwart his election by the Knesset in 2014. Despite being a lifelong rightist, Rivlin was popular among Netanyahu critics for his own distaste for the man who was prime minister during his entire term bar one month. His own camp branded him a traitor and accused him of favoring the warm embrace of the "leftist elite." (...) Beyond the constant mud-slinging between Rivlin and the former prime minister's inner circle, the president's clear reluctance to task Netanyahu with forming a government four times in two years, and his obvious discomfort when forced to be in his presence, there may not be much else that is memorable about his term. (...) Whether Rivlin is missed or his departure is welcomed, depending on one's political predisposition, his time in office will be viewed as irrelevant. Though he was a patron of the arts, a promoter of social advocacy and an accomplished emissary abroad, he left little impact on the country itself. Rivlin stuck to protocol and fulfilled the position according to legal and public expectations, despite being accused of undermining Netanyahu in an effort to see him removed from office. (...)

Einav Schiff, YED, 05.07.21

President Isaac Herzog's grand entrance

(...) Contrary to Rivlin, Herzog is a full-fledged Laborite who even headed the party from which he hails. Nevertheless, perhaps ironically, Netanyahu backed his appointment with gusto. Whether this is why "Bougie," as the new president is nicknamed, has appointed former Netanyahu spokesperson Naor Ithia to serve in that capacity for him in his new role is unclear. What has been established, though, is that the Left is miffed by the move – so much so that activists staged protests against it outside the Knesset during Herzog's inauguration. (...) In spite of the unpleasant incident surrounding Ithia's appointment, Herzog was received warmly and with great fanfare by the Knesset. (...) Herzog (...) couldn't avoid mentioning the "unprecedented political crisis" that sent Israelis to the ballot box four

times in two years, and paying what has become obligatory lip service to the "challenge of climate change," he delivered an uplifting message. Rather than reprimands, he offered alternatives, asking everyone to "lower the tone." (...) there was something in his approach that came across as more sincere than condescending. (...) if all Herzog does at this juncture is refrain from taking sides on the ideological and political battlefield, his contribution to "unity" will far outweigh that of his predecessor.

Ruthie Blum, YED, 08.07.21

Virtuelle Bedrohung und die Schulden-Bombe

Two silent but deadly global threats

Insufficient attention is being paid to cyber terrorism, and to the debt time-bomb that will not spare even the most thrifty country. (...) But I submit that there are two other looming threats, both of them encompassing not just Israel but the whole world, which don't receive nearly as much attention, public or governmental, that they ought to. The first (...) is symbolized by the simultaneous hacking of companies and organizations around the world (...). Cyber-terrorism and cyber-crime are growing by the day (...). The other looming disaster is (...) spending money (...). Even those few countries that avoided overspending, and they are very few indeed, will not escape unscathed because of the effects of the looming financial/monetary crisis on economic activity, including trade. There is no government in the world, very much including the US (...), that is doing anything at all to address this mega-threat (...). Cyber-threats are staged by criminals and terrorists. The debt bomb is being built and will be detonated by governments. Between the two groups there is little to choose. More and more the criminals/terrorists infiltrate governments, and more and more governments are acting like criminals and terrorists. Iran and the rest, sure they are dangerous. But around the corner there are dangers that equal or potentially greatly exceed them.

Norman Bailey, GLO, 07.07.21

Diskriminierende Sicherheitspraxis

Inaction on violence in Arab sector is issue for all Israelis

Since the beginning of the year, more than 50 Arab citizens of the State of Israel have been murdered. The wounded or the shootings that end without injury are no longer even counted. Over the past decade, Arab leaders and activists have warned on

every possible stage about the dangers of government and police mishandling of the situation, asked them to prosecute the criminals and begged the police to collect weapons and ammunition. But the government and police refused to listen. That all changed about a month ago during the demonstrations and terrible riots between Arabs and Jews in the mixed cities and other Arab localities, during protests over the attempted evictions in Sheikh Jarrah and the events at the al-Aqsa Mosque. For it was only after Jews were harmed did the police respond strongly. Suddenly they started talking about increased enforcement and collecting weapons and even announced the arrest of 1,500 young Arabs. (...) In 2019, a year in which 95 Arab civilians were murdered, only 5% of indictments were for the use of firearms. The comptroller's report notes that the police have not bothered to seize illegal weapons and in fact only came into possession of 19 weapons in 2019. (...) The report shows that the opening of the stations meant falling standards. In fact, the police took officers from existing stations in the same area to staff the new stations, leaving fewer police officers at each location. The State of Israel has never viewed its Arab citizens as equal. (...) Any sane person must ask themselves why so many civilians are being murdered and why no effort is made to find their killers. (...) We must work together to change the political reality that has us on a path to destruction.

Maisam Jaljuli, YED, 02.07.21

Gefährliche Arbeitsbedingungen

Who in Israel cares about workers dying?

Laborers in Israel keep dying. (...) In a properly run state, the carnage in the construction and manufacturing industries would shake the foundations. In the year to date, 36 people have died in work accidents, 20 of them in the construction industry. But in today's Israel, with its combination of ultranationalism, capitalism and greed, the death of laborers, nearly all of them non-Jews and therefore at the bottom of the ladder – Arab citizens of Israel, Palestinians from the territories, work migrants and asylum seekers – flies under the radar and is met by near-total apathy. Public indifference offers a favorable climate for negligence on the part of contractors and developers and for neglect on the part of the government and the authorities. (...) A lack of deterrence encourages negligence. (...) The only way to get contractors to respect the lives of the workers they employ is by raising the price they will be forced to

pay in the event of a death. Increasing the number of inspectors will not be effective as long as their findings do not result in indictments. Israel's new "change government" must go all out on fighting the issue. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 15.07.21

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