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1. Merkel nimmt Abschied von Israel

Eine ihrer letzten Auslandsreisen als Kanzlerin führte Angela Merkel nach Israel. Es war ihr achter Besuch in Jerusalem, wo sie stets als sehr willkommener Gast galt. Dabei stand es um die persönlichen Beziehungen zwischen der Kanzlerin und ihrem über 13 lange Jahre regierenden israelischen Amtskollegen gar nicht gut. Merkel gab sich wenig Mühe, ihren Unmut über Benjamin Netanyahus Siedlungspolitik zu verbergen. Er wiederum scheiterte daran, sie zu schärferen Bedingungen für einen Iran-Deal zu bewegen. Es sind Highlights, wie ihre Rede vor der Knesset im März 2008, die in Erinnerung bleiben, als sie die historische Verantwortung für die Sicherheit Israels als Teil der deutschen Staatsräson definierte. Auch bei ihrem Abschiedsbesuch hat Merkel noch einmal die deutsche Verantwortung für das Land betont. Es gehe darum, eine "klare Position zugunsten der Sicherheit von Israel" einzunehmen. Allerdings sei es falsch, wenn die Beziehungen nur auf diesen Aspekt beschränkt würden. "Weil Israel ein jüdisch-demokratischer Staat in einer Umgebung ist, in der es keine Demokratien in unserem Sinne gibt, ist es so wichtig, dass wir in der gesamten Breite unserer Tätigkeiten miteinander Beziehungen haben", betonte sie an der Seite von Israels Regierungschef Naftali Bennett.

How long will German-Israeli ties last without Angela Merkel?

(...) The cool wind blowing toward Netanyahu from Merkel intensified over the years, and it certainly didn't help matters that he embarrassed her by embroiling her government in the controversial submarine deal. But despite its displeasure with Israel's occupation and settlement policies, Germany under Merkel remained a loyal friend of Israel and a guardian of its vital interests. In that way, Merkel continued the German foreign policy tradition that's been (...) underlined by one principle: concern for Israel's security. The origins of this approach lie in guilty feelings over the Holocaust, an attitude shared by all German governments since the 1950s, whether headed by Social Democrats or Christian Democrats. This tilt toward Israel has united a majority of the political establishment. (...) Merkel's retirement after 16 years could mark the start of a shift. (...) Germany, which will apparently now have a "traffic light coalition" (...), is prioritizing issues like climate change, social justice and reduction of economic disparities. These issues are not and never have been of real interest to Israel's governments. (...) In Germany, the United States and elsewhere in the West, the young generation is beginning to be fed up with Israel. The memory of the Holocaust is fading. (...) Israel will be less important to the new government in Germany.

Yossi Melman, HAA, 05.10.21

Merkel, what about the submarines?

(...) At a time when the world is busy summing up the 16 years of rule of the most powerful woman in Europe, in Israel Merkel has another role: A key witness, whose version has never been heard in Case 3000, the submarine affair. The affair shook the faith that many in Israel had in government institutions and exposed how easy it is to bend the considerations of the system and harness them to serve private interests. It is Merkel's office that made a link between the deal for the sixth submarine and restarting the negotiations with the Palestinians at the beginning of former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's term. Years later Merkel was there when Netanyahu gave his secret and astonishing approval, behind the back of the entire Israeli defense establishment, to sell advanced submarines to Egypt. (...) The decisions on strategic defense procurement and international diplomatic steps were mixed with, and even tainted by, the commercial interests of those close to power. It is reasonable to assume that Merkel will not call an urgent press conference and will not lay out in front of the cameras in Israel the progression of the events that occurred in the back rooms. But national leaders have many and diverse ways of passing on information of public importance, and Merkel certainly knows them all. For many Israelis the submarine affair is a black hole, which casts a heavy shadow on all those involved. One can only hope that Merkel will find the way to shed light on aspects concerning Germany's part in the affair under her leadership.

Editorial, HAA, 11.10.21

Germany-Israel Relations after Merkel

After her 16-year term as chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel's farewell visit to Israel could mark a change in the friendly relationship between the two countries. Whether that change will be positive or negative depends solely on the Jewish nation. Our unity determines the state of the world, its fate, and the way we are treated by others.

(...) Through our unity, we allow unity in the world as we stream into it the positive uniting force it so desperately needs. Conversely, our separation denies humanity this power and invokes within it hatred toward Jews. (...) Today's hostility toward Jews must remind us of our task. Only if we rekindle the brotherly love we cultivated centuries ago and share the method for achieving this with all, will we be able to stop antisemitism. (...) neither Chancellor Angela Merkel nor her successor will determine the acceptance or rejection of the people of Israel. Neither

will any other determine whether, God forbid, Germany will eventually be governed by a tyrant like Hitler. No political figure can determine our fate. Everything depends on how we Jews behave toward one another, on our capacity to connect, thus unleashing the positive force of nature upon us and all humanity. Then we will fear nothing, no electoral outcome or other occurrence in any part of the world because hatred will be replaced by peace and quiet for everyone.

Michael Laitman, TOI, 11.10.21

Bennett, meet with Abbas

(...) Chancellor Angela Merkel (...) supported all our demands (...). For decades various experts had been warning: Okay, Chancellor Helmut Kohl was a real friend of Israel, but there are deep currents, and the young people no longer feel obligated. Wait and see what happens after him. In the case of Merkel that even served as Netanyahu's justification for his surprising haste to sign, already in early 2016, a memorandum for the purchase of three additional submarines. Merkel is getting weaker, said Netanyahu's people, explaining his decision after the fact. Who knows what the chancellor who follows her will decide. Well, Merkel survived for five-and-a-half years after that memo, but I doubt whether the next chancellor – whoever it is – will make decisions on these issues that differ significantly from those of Merkel. Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, for example, was not an outstanding friend of the Israeli government, and yet when it came to the important decisions he stood alongside the Jewish state in the end (...). Merkel had every reason to give Netanyahu the cold shoulder after one of their meetings, when Netanyahu told her he was launching a diplomatic initiative in which Germany would play a key role. (...) anyone who is dreaming of European pressure being brought to bear on Prime Minister Naftali Bennett when it comes to the Palestinian arena is invited to fantasize about the progressive wing of the Democratic Party in the United States. Bennett must meet with Abbas, not because of Merkel or French President Emmanuel Macron. He must meet with him because it's the correct and smart thing to do. (...) Israel can only dream of a successor to Abbas, who will fight terror for 17 years, will succeed most of the time in preventing major attacks, will speak against Hamas while Israel is bombing the Gaza Strip, and will declare that he is waiving his right to return to his home in Safed. A refusal to meet Abbas is like a refusal to meet any Palestinian leadership

whatsoever. (...) even the right thinks that it's necessary to talk to the leaders of the enemy. (...)
Raviv Drucker, HAA, 12.10.21

A message to Israelis, Palestinians, Germans about Palestinian statehood

(...) To Chancellor Merkel and to the German people (...): If you are serious about the two-state solution, and you are not just paying lip service to an idea that has been on the table for at least two decades, then the least that you can do is to recognize the State of Palestine. Merkel repeated at every possible opportunity the commitment of the German state and the German people to Israel's security. German history provides continued reminders of the debt that the German people owe to the Jewish people, and the German-Israeli relationship is crucial to Israel's security. But the German leader and the people of Germany also have to understand that the birth of Israel following the Holocaust led to the Nakba, and Palestinian collective memory cannot be detached from Jewish memory and German responsibility. (...) it is time to come to terms with the immorality of occupation. The ways that Israel treats the Palestinian people is unjust and immoral. There is no justification for the violence of the occupation, in all of its forms, the usurping of privately owned lands and resources, the limitations of freedoms, movement, access, water, and the constant limitations on the ability of millions of people to develop as a modern free nation. Whatever rights in the West Bank and east Jerusalem that Israeli Jews believe that they have, they must be met with morality and the appreciation of the existence of the same aspirations for freedom and liberation that the Palestinian people hold for themselves. (...)

Gershon Baskin, JPO, 13.10.21

2. Bennett enthüllt geheime Mossad-Mission

Israels Regierungschef Naftali Bennett überraschte, als er im Verlauf einer Rede vor der Knesset eine geheime Mission des Mossad ansprach. Dabei handelte es sich um den seit 35 Jahren vermissten Ron Arad, Navigator der israelischen Luftwaffe, über dessen Verbleib die Agent_innen nachforschen sollten. Details zu der Operation könne er nicht preisgeben, meinte Bennett. Doch offenbar blieb das Unternehmen ohne Ergebnis. Mehrere Abgeordnete, darunter vorrangig Oppositionelle vom Likud, kritisierten die Enthüllung scharf und nannten Bennett einen „Lügner“. Er habe eine heikle Operation politisch ausgenutzt, hieß es. Ron Arad geriet

im Oktober 1986 im Libanon in Gefangenschaft. Alle Verhandlungsversuche über eine Freilassung blieben erfolglos. Für viele Israelis ist Arads ungeklärtes Schicksal eine offene Wunde.

Ron Arad's fate

(...) Prime Minister Naftali Bennett dropped a bombshell. "Last month, Mossad agents (...) embarked on a complex, wide-ranging and daring operation to find the remains and whereabouts of Ron Arad," Bennett said at the opening of the Knesset's winter session. (...) Immediately, the announcement became the top story in Israel and led almost every news website and radio show, largely because Ron Arad is a story that has long captivated Israelis ever since he was captured in Lebanon after ejecting from his damaged Israel Air Force plane in 1986. (...) there have been a number of Israeli operations over the years to obtain information about his fate, including the capture of top Hezbollah members and an offer of a \$10 million reward. A joint report by the Mossad and the IDF determined in 2016 that Arad likely died in 1988. (...) Why did Bennett release this information about Arad and why did he not explain, in the beginning, what had been achieved. What was so valuable about it? Unfortunately, the way things seem now, the remarks were part of a political manipulation. A sitting prime minister was using his position to reveal classified intelligence in order to score political points.

(...) we have seen this done in the past. (...) Bennett owes the public some answers. This operation might have great significance in uncovering new information about the fate of Ron Arad or in achieving regional goals that Israel is seeking to advance. But since Bennett's announcement on Monday, we know very little about what happened.

If it's just another manipulation, then Bennett is not different from his predecessor. If it is valuable for the public to know, then the situation needs to be clarified. (...) When there's something to say, let the public know. Until then, we question the value of public disclosure.

Editorial, JPO, 05.10.21

Israel's mission to track down Ron Arad only endangers our security

(...) The constant bickering over political credit between the offices of Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Defense Minister Benny Gantz is a serious danger to Israel's security that results in unnecessary and mostly false information leaks that only exist to serve a specific narrative. In the middle of

this superfluous political feud is the latest revelation by the premier about a covert operation by the Mossad to track the remains of long-lost Israeli navigator. (...) it is highly doubtful whether Bennett had to expose it to everyone on the Knesset floor. (...) Bennett's announcement was meant to clarify to Iran it was not a retaliatory operation for their alleged assassination plots aimed against Israeli citizens in Cyprus and Colombia. This is a rather puzzling version of events since the Revolutionary Guards are not really interested in what motivated the Mossad to carry out a particular operation, one of which allegedly included the abduction of an Iranian general. (...) The Islamic Republic has over the past years greatly improved its nuclear program and decentralized it, by spreading out its development to as many locations as possible. An independent Israeli strike against these facilities, without the Americans (...), would be a massive and expansive undertaking that could cost billions of shekels, while chances of such operation being successful are slim to none.

Yossi Yehoshua, YED, 06.10.21

There was no reason to expose the mission

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett achieved nothing by exposing the Mossad operation to discover more about the fate of Ron Arad, because the mission achieved nothing.

(...) The Mossad has carried out endless missions over the years, some much more daring than this latest one, on the Arad matter. It never occurred to anyone to make them public, for two main reasons: they did not lead to anything that would shed light on Arad's fate, and the Mossad is supposed to operate in the shadows. Anything that exposes its activity does it harm. When new Mossad director Dadi Barnea took over four months ago, he (...) forbade Mossad employees and ex-employees from any contact with the media and made a commitment to putting the organization back under a veil of secrecy, which is what many of its personnel wanted to happen. (...) the Mossad heard and was furious (...) Bennett achieved nothing by exposing this mission, because the mission achieved nothing. (...) Israel captured an Iranian general from Syria, questioned him in Africa, ruled out the possibility he had any information about Arad (...), and let him go. The general returned to Iran and probably reported what happened. The Iranians decided to keep it to themselves, until the matter was made public this week. Now they have to respond. (...) This means a major rise in the risk of terrorist attacks targeting Israelis

abroad, especially individuals with ties to the defense and security establishment. (...) We need to admit it: The mystery of Arad's fate might never be solved. (...) Nevertheless, it's good that the government continues to do everything it can, even if it's clear it won't lead to anything concrete. Next week it will be 35 years since Ron Arad was taken captive. Rather than bragging about operations, it would be better for the country's leaders to bow their heads and ask the forgiveness of anyone it sent on a mission and has been unable to bring home.

Yoav Limor, IHY, 08.10.21

Israel's Government Should Appease Gantz to Prevent the Return of Netanyahu

The tense relations between Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Defense Minister Benny Gantz hit a new low this week, after Bennett revealed in a speech to the Knesset an operation to uncover more information about the fate of missing air force navigator Ron Arad. Bennett did not consult the defense minister before his address, and Gantz, in response, made sure the word got out that the operation was a failure (...). The constant friction between Bennett and Gantz is cause for concern, because the defense minister has already proved that he cannot be counted upon to resist the seductive powers of Benjamin Netanyahu. (...) it's impossible to dismiss the suspicion that Gantz still clings to his delusion of becoming prime minister. He also seems to hold a grudge against his colleagues in the center left who denied him the possibility of running the country. (...) The ideological tensions between its right and left wings, like the partnership with the United Arab List, pose difficult challenges that can only be expected to worsen in the event of a military confrontation. But there is an additional layer to the tension with Gantz, one that goes beyond this tension over ideology. The defense minister might well be tempted by yet another of the empty promises that Netanyahu is so skilled at issuing in order to obtain what he wants at any price. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 08.10.21

3. Gewalt in der arabischen Gesellschaft

Die Gewalt in der arabischen Gesellschaft reißt nicht ab. Die Liste der Opfer tödlicher Verbrechen wird wöchentlich länger, allein in diesem Jahr wurden bereits über 100 Menschen ermordet. Sehr häufig handelt es sich um organisierte Kriminalität, bei der auch Unbeteiligte zu Schaden kommen, und um häusliche Gewalt. Familienfehden können der

Hintergrund sein, Streitigkeiten um Landbesitz oder auch nur spontaner Zorn im Straßenverkehr. Der überragende Teil der Fälle wird niemals aufgeklärt. Die Unsicherheit wächst und das Gefühl, der Gewalt ausgeliefert zu sein. Das Vertrauen in die israelische Polizei ist deutlich geringer als in der jüdischen Bevölkerung. Studien deuten darauf, dass die Kriminalität auch aufgrund der höheren Armut und der Arbeitslosigkeit, die vor allem Jugendliche betrifft, zurückzuführen ist. Dazu komme der Wandel in der arabischen Gesellschaft von der Familie zu mehr Individualismus, die größer werdende sozioökonomische Schere zwischen Armen und gut situierten sowie die bislang völlig verfehlte Strategie der Polizei. Ein von der Regierung Bennett nun ins Leben gerufene interministerielle Expertenteam soll Abhilfe schaffen. Das Vorhaben der Regierung, den Geheimdienst verstärkt bei der Bekämpfung der Gewalt einzusetzen, stößt allerdings auf Kritik.

Arab sector has responsibility to stop sanctifying violence

(...) Many in the Arab sector, along with some Jewish activists, this month are marking 21 years since the October 2000 riots (...) 13 Arabs were killed in clashes with Israel's police forces, and all of them were proclaimed to be "Shahids" or "martyrs". Any death that was caused by the police is a death that should be regretted, and when circumstances require, there is a need for an investigation to draw conclusions. (...) those who die in violent riots are not saints. (...) without the police intervention, those riots would have probably ended with lynching attempts of both Arab and Jews. (...) in the hope that Israeli Arabs want to reduce the violence, and most of them do, the last thing they need to do is worship the rioters who were killed and call them martyrs. That's not how you deal with violence, that's how you give it legitimacy. (...) The main problem with the riots (...) was the incitement of masses by some Arab politicians, primarily Raed Salah - the leader of the outlawed Northern Branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel. (...) Those who incited against Jews made Arabs the victims. After all, the levels of violence in the Arab sector are only rising, and those who choose violence should know that they will pay a price. But somehow, conclusions are always drawn only against those who try to prevent the riots, while most of the rioters come away with a conclusion that they can go on, doing whatever they want. Israel needs a restart in the Jewish-Arab relations. The Knesset should anchor equality in the Basic Laws of Israel and the Arabs must take re-

sponsibility and realize that those who insist that rioters are martyrs only aggravate the situation. Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 05.10.21

No magic wand to stop Arab Israelis from killing each other

Arab Israelis are clamoring for police action to stop the wave of deadly crime in their cities and villages. They have a solid case. (...) about 100 Israeli Arabs have been murdered by fellow Arabs so far this year. That accounts for much more than half the murders in Israel, though Arabs make up only 20% of the population. (...) police solve more crimes against Jews than they solve crimes against Arabs. (...) if the police are to re-establish their presence in Arab cities and villages, they will need the cooperation of the people there. So it's a good sign that Arab Israeli leaders are clamoring for police presence, after two decades of rejecting it. (...) It's time for Arab Israeli leaders to project responsibility onto their own people, alongside justified complaints about inaction, inattention, and underfunding on the part of the government. Police are set to open new stations in Arab communities, and that means rebuilding their intelligence networks. That's a step toward bringing the crime wave under control. It's not enough for Arab citizens to sit back and wait for the police to act. They must make changes as well. (...) Arab criminal gangs do very good business in their own backyards. Arab Israelis have become used to hiring the violent gangs to settle disputes, collect bills, harass neighbors, whatever. That has to stop. Above all, we need to realize that it will be a long time – years – until visible progress is made, even if the police have help from the army and the Shin Bet. The criminal gangs are well entrenched, the police intelligence networks are decimated, and the people are afraid and complicit at the same time. An important first step has been taken – there's an Arab political party in Israel's coalition government. It's a way for their constituents to share responsibility for security (...).

Mark Lavie, YED, 08.10.21

If the Shin Bet can fight COVID, it can fight Arab crime

Anyone familiar with the Arab street in Israel knows that there is one scary word there, a word that those who use it are convinced that people connected to it are hiding around every corner: "Shin Bet." (...) The willingness of some of the Arab leadership and many in the Arab public to back bringing the Shin Bet into the war on crime that is rife in the sector is

testimony to how sick Arab Israelis are of organized crime and how willing they are to grab on to anything that will oust it from their lives. The Shin Bet was not designed to fight mafias in Arab communities, but it also wasn't established to fight COVID. If the government and the Knesset can use the Shin Bet to handle a specific issue, for a predetermined period of time, as happened with COVID, this could definitely be an option for fighting violence in the sector. (...)

Yossi Beilin, IHY, 08.10.21

The demographic obsession: Why Israel doesn't really want to stop Arab crime

(...) You don't have to be an Arab citizen of Israel to reach the conclusion, based on facts on the ground, that Israel doesn't genuinely care about crime in its Arab communities. And you don't have to be a great cynic to suspect that in fact, from Israel's perspective a situation in which Arabs are killing Arabs is desirable. It is the identity of the victim, not the identity of the perpetrator, that dictates Israel's attitude toward crime. If the victims of "violence in Arab society" were Jews, the phenomenon of violence in Arab society would be eradicated. The very phenomenon of Arab society would be in danger. (...) The money that successive governments have allocated for the development of the Arab community (...) should not be seen as contradicting the desire for the Arabs to kill each other or refuting the existence of a demographic struggle against them. On the contrary, Israel has an interest in strengthening the Arab middle class and encouraging the social revolution within the Arab population, in which the number of college graduates is rising and the education of women is flourishing. That's because one result of this process of "Westernization" is a decline in the Arab birthrate and its convergence with that of non-Haredi Jews. (...)

Carolina Landsmann, HAA, 09.10.21

4. Medienquerschnitt

Irische Autorin verweigert Übersetzung ins Hebräische

Sally Rooney should just mime her next novel

Sally Rooney no doubt thinks she's as refreshingly woke as a tub of Ben & Jerry's vegan-friendly ice cream. Not so. The popular Irish author is more broken than awoken. (...) The literary world will surely not wait long for this paragon of virtue to

cancel the translation of her novels into Mandarin, Russian, Turkish, Arabic and every other tongue spoken in states where free speech is punishable by imprisonment or death. (...) Reserving dubious ire for just one language out of the 46 her books are read in doesn't just defy morality but simple common sense. To be on entirely safe ground, Rooney should consider miming her next novel. It's been written before in these pages but bears repetition: Israeli society pays a heavy price for the status quo in the West Bank, where almost 500,000 settlers live in territory identified by countries, including the UK, for a future Palestinian state. A 2017 poll showed only 37 percent of Israelis support settlers. There are many reasons why settlers feel emboldened, not least the horse-trading of Israeli coalitions and inter-necine conflict and Iranian-sponsored terrorism at the heart of the Palestinian national movement. This frustratingly complex, heart-breaking stalemate is not helped – perhaps it's even made worse – by Rooney's senseless, selective indignation.

Richard Ferrer, TOI, 13.10.21

BDS again proves it's all about antisemitism

Irish novelist Sally Rooney thinks that she's an advocate for human rights and that prejudice and hate have nothing to do with her work or her various political stands. As far as Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield – the Ben and Jerry who founded the eponymous ice-cream brand – are concerned, they are among the nation's foremost progressives. (...) Rooney, Cohen and Greenfield are promoting hatred against Jews. What makes it so infuriating is that none of them (...) are honest enough to own up to the consequences of their actions. By refusing to acknowledge that backing a movement that seeks Israel's destruction is itself inherently anti-Semitic, they are not only in denial about what they are doing but demonstrating the way contemporary intellectual fashions on the left are enabling hatred that singles out Jews. (...) the goal of BDS isn't to adjust Israel's policies towards the West Bank and Hamas terrorist state in Gaza or to advocate for Palestinian independence as part of a two-state solution. Its aim is the eradication of Israel, the one Jewish state on the planet. (...) in order to comply with Rooney's definition of an Israeli company that distances itself from "apartheid," they would have to join that call for their nation's elimination. (...) It's no accident that Israel is the country that is always singled out by so-called human-rights advocates for its alleged crimes even though other nations, which are actually tyrannies, get ignored. Israel is the only nation in the world that

has spawned a worldwide movement that aims at its destruction. (...) the actions of people like Rooney and Ben & Jerry's rip the veil from this subterfuge. (...) they are complicit in a hate campaign with an anti-Semitic goal that essentially justifies terrorist violence. (...)

Jonathan S. Tobin, IHY, 13.10.21

Linke Abgeordnetendelegation trifft Abbas in Ramallah

Meretz's pilgrimage to Ramallah

If anything illustrates the farcical nature of the current makeup of the government in Jerusalem, it's the parley in Ramallah (...) between Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas and a delegation of Israel's Meretz Party, headed by Health Minister Nitzan Horowitz. (...) The fact that Abbas has never been interested in a two-state solution (...) either doesn't occur to Meretz or its members don't care. Their main objective, after all, is to place the blame for the plight of the Arabs ruled by Fatah in Judea and Samaria and by Hamas in Gaza on Israel. It's a false narrative that Abbas promotes on purpose, as it provides him relevance in the international arena – stature that he utterly lacks among his own people. (...) It seems that only the left in Israel and elsewhere in the West still buys the bull. The rest of the population in the Jewish state and abroad has grasped that until there is genuine internal change in Palestinian society and an end to backing by Iran, no peace of any kind is possible. (...) The good news is that Horowitz and his gang had zero effect on Abbas, other than to give him the opportunity to fabricate a call for talks with Israeli figures (...).

Ruthie Blum, IHY, 06.10.21

Israel's Left must accept Palestinian leader is not their friend

The meeting between President Mahmoud Abbas and Meretz ministers (...) was, as expected, met with outrage from Israel's right-wing. It also served as another opportunity for them to bash Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and other conservatives in his government (...). But if anything, maybe it is time for Israel's left-wing to start rethinking the traditional pilgrimage to the Mukataa. (...) It's an opportunity to show that the more moderate and left-leaning elements of the broad coalition government are still independent in their actions. Furthermore, these photo-ops masquerading as diplomatic summits also legitimize a very problematic regime under Abbas. It

is an administration with non-existent chances of reaching an agreement with Israel - even more so under the traditional idea of a two-state solution. Abbas is no longer the leader of the Palestinian people, let alone his autonomous government in the West Bank. (...) Is the two-state solution, which has been scrutinized and criticized more than ever over the past few years, even a viable option anymore? Is Abbas, an 85-year-old man with little care for human rights, able to bring the Palestinian people to the forefront of a new reality that examines basic concepts, and invents new ones? If the point of the meeting was more than just stirring up some good old Twitter beef, these questions need to trouble the Israeli Left. It would be more effective than just reporting on a "meeting in good spirits," accompanied by a photo-op no one wants to look at.

Einav Schiff, YED, 04.12.21

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