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**1. Internationale Gedenkveranstaltung zum 75. Jahrestag der Befreiung des Vernichtungslagers Auschwitz-Birkenau**

Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu nutzte die internationale Gedenkveranstaltung 75 Jahre an die Befreiung des Vernichtungslagers Auschwitz-Birkenau, um einen Appell an die Staatengemeinschaft zu richten, sich geschlossen dem Iran entgegenzustellen. Er forderte eine "gemeinsame und entschlossene Haltung gegen das anti-semitischste Regime der Welt, das Atomwaffen entwickeln und den einzigen jüdischen Staat zerstören will", so Netanyahu in der Holocaust-Gedenkstätte Yad Vashem. Der Iran unterdrücke sein eigenes Volk und bedrohe die Weltsicherheit. Israel werde alles tun, was nötig sei, um den „Staat und unser Volk zu verteidigen“. Staats- und Regierungschefs aus fast 50 Ländern erinnerten in Jerusalem an die Befreiung des Vernichtungslagers am 27. Januar 1945. Nach Angaben des israelischen Außenministeriums handelt es sich um das größte Staatsereignis seit Staatsgründung. Nach Schätzungen wurden in Auschwitz-Birkenau rund 1,3 Million Menschen ermordet, die meisten davon Juden. Netanyahu würdigte den Kampf der alliierten Mächte und deren Sieg über Nazideutschland. Sie hätten dafür einen immensen Preis zahlen müssen. "Aber gerade heute müssen wir sagen: Für sechs Millionen Juden, darunter 1,5 Millionen Kinder, wurden die Tore zur Hölle zu spät geschlossen." Auschwitz sei für die

Juden "das ultimative Symbol jüdischer Hilflosigkeit". Mit dem Staat Israel habe man dagegen heute "eine Stimme, ein Land und ein Schutzschild". Zu den aus aller Welt angereisten Rednern gehörte Bundespräsident Frank-Walter Steinmeier, der betonte, dass es keinen Schlussstrich unter das Erinnern geben dürfe. Deutschland müsse seiner historischen Verantwortung gerecht werden, sagte Steinmeier, der als erstes deutsches Staatsoberhaupt in der Holocaust-Gedenkstätte Yad Vashem sprach. Er versicherte: "Wir bekämpfen den Antisemitismus! Wir trotzen dem Gift des Nationalismus! Wir schützen jüdisches Leben! Wir stehen an der Seite Israels. Dieses Versprechen erneuere ich hier in Yad Vashem vor den Augen der Welt." Die Rede des deutschen Bundespräsidenten fand allgemein große Anerkennung in den israelischen Medien.

**Should liberation of Auschwitz be celebrated with luxe dinner parties?**

(...) seventy-five years after the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp, anti-Semitism has reared its ugly head once again, and world leaders who are set to gather in Jerusalem must make it clear: Never again! (...) unless bold statements are made during the event, the visit of world leaders this week will be nothing more than a public relations stunt, an insult to the memory of the victims and survivors of Auschwitz. (...) The liberation of Auschwitz was not a festive occasion for

anyone. The vast majority of Jews brought to that hellhole were not alive on the day of its liberation. (...) Having survived the camp and the hellish march, 30,000 of them were cast into yet another inferno – concentration camps inside Germany from which they were not liberated until the first week of May of that year. The Russian troops who liberated Auschwitz found survivors numbering anywhere between 2,000 and 7,600 people, depending on the source. They were left behind because they had not been able to walk. (...) Why is the government of Israel celebrating the liberation of these people with a luxe dinner party at the President's Residence in Jerusalem? An army of producers, chefs and some 200 waiters working to come up with updated dishes suitable for specific pallets. I read the reports in disbelief. Are you out of your minds? (...) No ceremony or presentation would be as clear and powerful a message as the attendance of those with numbers burned into their left arms as if calling out in a loud voice: We are here! (...)  
Shoshana Chen, YED, 22.01.20

### **Netanyahu exploits the Holocaust to brutalize the Palestinians**

Benjamin Netanyahu did not invent the idea of leveraging the Holocaust for political gain. Yet, like so much else in current Israeli politics, he is taking even that low to new depths. (...) Israel's prime minister intends to exploit the Fifth World Holocaust Forum (...) to call on world leaders to publicly back Israel's self-serving position that the International Criminal Court in The Hague has no jurisdiction in the occupied Palestinian territories. Netanyahu began this exercise barely 48 hours after ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda announced (...), that she is ready to open an investigation into potential war crimes in the West Bank and Gaza (...). Wasting no time, Netanyahu responded that "new edicts are being issued against the Jewish people - anti-Semitic edicts by the International Criminal Court." This cynical reframing is staggering, both intellectually and morally. The Palestinians who live under Israel's occupation are a people bereft of rights. (...) Israeli prosecutors and judges process Palestinians in the occupied territories through a "justice system" that delivers an almost 100 percent conviction rate. At the same time, this system works to ensure impunity for Israeli security forces who kill, abuse or torture them. For Palestinians, quite literally, the International Criminal Court is their court of last resort. Yet Netanyahu, backed by Israel's entire political leadership, is trying to quash even

this faint hope. How dehumanizing, to insist on denying a people's last recourse to even an uncertain, belated, modicum of justice. How degrading to do so while standing on the shoulders of Holocaust survivors, insisting that this is somehow being carried out in their name. (...) Shame on you, Prime Minister Netanyahu. Shame, also, on any world leader who goes along with the travesty of equating a people's attempt to achieve justice with anti-Semitism. Taking this cowardly position does not only betray the Palestinians' hope for freedom and dignity. It joins in the slow death of the lessons that have guided humanity for the past 75 years and are now drowning in the rising authoritarian tide around the world. This is not the world that humanity tried to build after World War II (...).

Hagai El-Ad, HAA, 23.01.20

### **Who is the Fifth World Holocaust Forum for?**

It's not for us. It's not for the Holocaust survivors, their children, or their children's children. (...) only 60 of the 780 places at the ceremony in Yad Vashem were allotted to survivors and their escorts. (...) The ceremony thus welcomed 47 world leaders to commemorate the liberation of Auschwitz, but it welcomed less than 47 survivors. (...) if it's not for us, who is it for? It is for future generations who will quickly forget, who want to forget, and who would deny the Holocaust. A ceremony before 47 world leaders speaking multiple languages may help in preserving the memories of the unspeakable horrors visited on our parents and our people – men, women, children, and infants. It may shed international light on the six million Jews, 1.5 million children – nearly all of them Jewish, of the 220,000-500,000 killed in the Romani Genocide, and of the 5,000-15,000 homosexuals killed by the Nazis. It may remind many of the dangers of rising anti-Semitism and racism; and it will hopefully remind attending world leaders of their responsibility to protect their citizens from this scourge. (...) the central (...) ceremony at Yad Vashem (...) was also for our prime minister. It was a reminder to him that more than 150,000 Holocaust survivors – nearly a third of those remaining in Israel – live under the poverty line. That under his watch (...) these Holocaust survivors cannot afford to heat their homes and many must decide whether to buy food or medications. (...)

Varda Spiegel, TOI, 23.01.20

### **Honoring Holocaust victims means fighting anti-Semitism**

(...) An event of this magnitude has never been held in Israel before to memorialize the six million members of our people (...) who were struck down by the most evil killing machine known to humankind. This impressive event reflects an international consensus regarding recognition of the dreadful uniqueness of the Holocaust of the Jewish people and the imperative to "Never Forget!" (...) The significant gathering of leaders at Yad Vashem (...) presents an opportunity to examine what has been accomplished (...) in the fight against antisemitism, racism, and Holocaust denial, as well as the work to preserve the memories of those who were lost. It is gratifying to note the many countries (...) preserve information for future generations and combat ignorance, indifference, and historical revisionism. At the same time, alarmingly, antisemitism is increasing significantly: data collected in a number of countries show a dramatic increase in antisemitic violence, including the murder of Jews in their homes, schools, and synagogues. The conference in Jerusalem must, therefore, establish strong momentum for a collaborative effort to reverse this trend. (...) we must be forward-thinking and focus on educating younger generations. (...) None of us are exempt from the obligation to instill in our young people a commitment to tolerance, diversity and understanding of the other. Seventy-five years after the liberation of Auschwitz, we must launch a widespread war on anti-Semitism and hatred wherever they rear their heads. Doing so will demonstrate true respect for those who perished and bring a comforting semblance of meaning to their sacrifice.

Isaac Herzog, IHY, 23.01.20

### **Zion, the guardian of memory**

(...) The memory of the Holocaust is not a currency (...). Israel invited the nations of the world to our memorial hall in the eternal city, to learn and teach. (...) Israel and the Jewish world do not need international memorial days to remember. We are a people that remembers every detail of its national life, even if it happened thousands of years ago. (...) From a historical perspective of the eternal people, the disgrace of Auschwitz took place merely an hour ago. (...) The lesson is that we cannot exist without a political and sovereign center in our ancient homeland. (...) the State of Israel is the insurance policy for all the Jews worldwide. By the virtue of its

existence they can hold their head up high in the countries in which they live, and if necessary, if things take a turn for the worse, they can always come home. (...) When the sun finally shone on our national renaissance, it found us beaten and bruised, limping like our ancestor Jacob after his struggle with the angel. The leaders of the world who came to Jerusalem also salute the miracle of our people's rebirth (...). Seventy-five years after (...) the memory of Auschwitz is no longer just ours, the descendants of those murdered – it belongs to all of humanity. The disgrace of Auschwitz should remain a warning sign for all nations for eternity.

Dror Eydar, IHY, 23.01.20

### **To remember, and not to sell**

If the reports are true that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu intends on expressing support for the campaign that Russian President Vladimir Putin is conducting against Poland over the past few months, then it is a bad joke at the expense of the victims of the Holocaust, and its survivors, in whose name world leaders are gathering (...) at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial center in Jerusalem. At the center of Putin's campaign is the accusation that Poland caused the outbreak of World War II, while minimizing the large role played by the Soviet Union. In 1939, the Soviet Union abandoned the Jews of Poland, and the rest of Europe, when it signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, a non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, which included dividing up Poland between them – which is in practice what led to the outbreak of World War II. A week after the pact was signed, Germany invaded Poland on its way to implementing the Final Solution and the extermination of the Jewish People. Is it possible that now, over 80 years later, Israel is ready to forget the part of the Soviet Union in starting the war? Just because of momentary interests and considerations, which do not fit the historical truth? Putin is coming to Yad Vashem as the head of a nation that defeated Hitler's murderous regime and liberated the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp the Germans built in Poland – but we must also not forget the less heroic chapters that preceded the victory over the Nazis. These include (...) the massacre the Soviets perpetrated against tens of thousands of innocent Poles in the Katyn Forest in 1940, a massacre they tried to cover up for decades. Polish President Andrzej Duda (...) is justified in his fears that Putin will exploit the stage he is given in Israel to give root to his deceptive narrative, and blur and distort parts of history that

are inconvenient for him. (...) The need to strengthen Israel's ties with Russia or the desire to free Naama Issachar must not be allowed to lead to Netanyahu to sign – with his hands or with his words – another anti-historical declaration. History in general, and all the more so Jewish history, is not Netanyahu's personal property and is not for sale.  
Editorial, HAA, 23.01.20

## 2. Israel auf dem Weg zur dritten Wahl

*Die dritte Wahl am 2. März innerhalb von 12 Monaten arrangiert sich Israels Bevölkerung mit der politischen Krise so gut sie kann, während die Parteien ihre Chancen mit neuen Bündnissen zu steigern versuchen. Die Siedlerpartei Habayit Hayahudi (Das jüdische Heim) kündigte ihr Bündnis mit der rechts-extremen Otzma Yehudit (Jüdische Kraft) auf und schloss sich stattdessen mit der HaJamin HeChadash (Neue Rechte) und der Ichud Leumi (Nationale Union) zusammen. Die drei Parteien waren bereits bei der vergangenen Wahl im September unter der Führung der früheren Justizministerin Ayelet Shaked gemeinsam angetreten, hatten das Bündnis nach der Wahl dann aber aufgelöst. Alle Parteien fordern eine Stärkung des jüdischen Charakters des Staates Israel. Die Gründung eines Palästinenserstaats Seite an Seite mit Israel lehnen sie ab. Auch das linke Lager rang sich schließlich zu einem Zusammenschluss von Avoda-Gesher und Meretz durch. Stav Shafir, noch beim letzten Wahlgang Nr. 2 auf der Liste der Demokratischen Camps (ein Zusammenschluss von Meretz, Ehud Baraks Demokratisches Israel und der Grünen), konnte sich diesmal keinen realen Platz auf der neuen Liste sichern und schied daher aus dem Wahlkampf aus. Nach Wahlen im April und September vergangenen Jahres war wegen einer Pattsituation zwischen dem rechts-religiösen und dem Mitte-Links-Lager keine Regierungsbildung zustande gekommen. Der rechtskonservative Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu (Likud) war zweimal bei dem Versuch gescheitert, eine Koalition zu schmieden. Der 70-Jährige ist politisch angeschlagen. Gegen ihn wurde vergangene Woche Anklage wegen Bestechung, Betrug und Untreue erhoben.*

### Israel's Kahanists and far-rightists. There is a difference

Former Meretz chief Zehava Galon (...) explained (...) that Ben-Gvir isn't a red flag for Bennett and his political partner, Ayelet Shaked; in the past they negotiated with him. "They should stop pretending

that they're any better than Ben-Gvir. They're exactly the same," she wrote. A day earlier in Haaretz's Hebrew edition, Rogel Alpher went even further and said that "Netanyahu is Ben-Gvir. Likud is Ben-Gvir ... Religious Zionism is Ben-Gvir. In short, the right is Ben-Gvir." It's easy to understand, and even sympathize with, Galon and Alpher's lack of tolerance for the nuances in the nationalist-right camp (...) How bad is it that we have to take pleasure in the existence of far-rightists who renounce Baruch Goldstein, or who oppose a population transfer, or who dream about annexation without granting Palestinians the right to vote and promise the most moral apartheid state in the world. But is there really no importance to Bennett's declaration that he's unwilling to cooperate with someone who idolizes Goldstein? Is there (...) no difference between Bennett and Ben-Gvir? (...) These questions are important in that there's always a more extreme perspective, one that will deny the differences between Ben-Gvir on one side and Galon and Alpher on the other, and will see each of them as one of the 50 shades of Zionism, with all its injustices. (...) the non-Zionist left in Israel refuses to recognize the differences between Benny Gantz and Benjamin Netanyahu. (...) we must resist this temptation because it will always serve the ideological rival whose camp will only expand with this act of political exile. And the right always welcomes new right-wingers with open arms. (...)  
Carolina Landsmann, HAA, 20.01.20

### Where have the parties gone?

Just recently, Israel's political parties presented their slate of candidates for the March elections. But do these political structures still matter? (...) the public has less trust in political parties than in the rest of the country's public institutions. Only 14 percent of Jewish Israelis and 20% of Arab Israelis say that they trust political parties. (...) how can it be that the Knesset, which is made up of representatives of the parties and itself ranks very low on the public trust scale, nevertheless has achieved a score twice that of the parties? One possible answer is that political parties today no longer fulfill the goals for which they were intended. They do not develop and refine an ideological agenda. Nor do they really cultivate new leadership and serve as a structure to choose and present candidates for the voters' approval. In practice, they have become technical structures that, in the best case, are focused only on the ranking of the candidates on their Knesset lists. (...) once upon a time Israel was a country where the

party was paramount. The parties had active local branches and many registered members. One's party affiliation was important in almost every context of life (...). The reinvention in recent years of parties as entities with no roots, (...), but only a star-studded Knesset list, has damaged the image of what is still called a 'political party.' (...) It has become almost impossible to rise through the ranks, because the list is either completely dictated by those at the top or highly controlled by them. Candidates flit in and out of the partisan structure on the basis of name recognition. (...) parties built around a single personality or a single idea (...) are doomed to vanish or be absorbed by other parties. On the other hand, the niche and sectoral parties which have an identity-based constituency, like the ultra-Orthodox, maintain their strength. (...) reforms to our electoral system could strongly affect how we govern political parties and what their institutional makeup will look like. One possibility is to institute a semi-open ballot on Election Day in which voters will not only choose a party, but also which candidates from that slate should represent them in the Knesset. This would create a real connection between voters and the party leaders who represent them thereby strengthening their ideological structures. (...) We are facing a great and important challenge and the structure of the parties must be modified to suit the new era. (...)

Yohanan Plesner, TOI, 26.01.20

### **Balad may be facing the end of the road**

Balad MK Heba Yazbak's political future is at stake and with it, potentially her party's. Yazbak, whose vocal support of terrorism has made her the subject of a disqualification petition to the Central Elections Committee, is already gearing to fight what pundits have said would be a sure ruling against her. Many in her party are calling on its heads to exit the Joint Arab List (...) and to drop out of the March 2 election race altogether in protest of Yazbak's "persecution." (...) Although all Joint Arab List lawmakers have publicly expressed solidarity with Yazbak, most will not shed a tear if the High Court of Justice approved her disqualification. The struggle between the parties making up the Joint Arab List is mostly hidden from the public eye, mainly because of the need to show unity and preserve what has proved to be a winning political formula, but many in the Arab sector have tired of Balad's defiance, which is often perceived as provocation for the sake of provocation. Between party founder Azmi Bishara's direct involvement with the Hezbollah terrorist group,

former MK Hanin Zoabi's participation in the Marmara flotilla had her constant suspensions from the Knesset over ethics violations, and the conviction of MK Basel Ghattas for smuggling cellphones to jailed terrorists, many in the Arab sector have had enough. (...) Balad may be preparing public opinion to the fact that Yazbak's removal from the 2020 Knesset race will be used by the party as a pretext to exit it altogether. This scenario would shake Arab politics in Israel to their core, and the fact that it is even being discussed signals potential winds of change. (...)

Jalal Bana, IHY, 26.01.20

### **First a government**

(...) This "Deal of the Century" should be welcomed, but it must be welcomed with a caveat: Israel first needs a government coalition before it can begin to implement it. (...) More than twenty-five years after the Oslo Accords – an agreement that Netanyahu criticized – the prime minister finally has a chance to work with a friendly White House to craft a concept that meets Israel's interests. However, Netanyahu must follow his own advice on this and make sure that Israel negotiates from a position of strength. The strong survive; weak, chaotic governments cannot make peace, and they are at the mercy of their adversaries and short-term politics. (...) Israel has viewed the Palestinians as largely a defeated force since the 2014 war in Gaza. Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah is aging, and he has been sidelined by some Sunni Arab countries that were previously his allies. Hamas in Gaza is also isolated even though it is working closely with Qatar and Turkey. A brief war with Palestinian Islamic Jihad in November harmed the Iranian-backed group and paved the way for the potential of longer-term quiet with Hamas in Gaza. But this is the peace of the status quo: one where each side doesn't attack the other, even if each side seeks the eventual elimination of the other. (...) Other concerns have emerged, such as Iran and ISIS, the latter of which has now said it will target Jews in its next campaign. More favorable conditions in the Gulf states point to a thaw or even détente with some countries there, emerging under a pro-American alliance of interests that sees Iran as the main threat. Gantz has rightly called for implementation of the Trump deal after elections and in collaboration with other regional players. Unfortunately, the Palestinian leadership, aging and out of touch, has called for days of rage and violence so that they can scuttle the future of their people once again. (...) The administration should

be praised for inviting Israel's leaders to Washington (...). Now it is Israel's turn to show unity and strength – with a new government that can put this deal into motion.

Editorial, JPO, 28.01.20

### **Netanyahu's bid for immortality not immorality**

(...) It would have been wonderful to revel in the knowledge that as of next week, Israel would be sovereign in the Jordan Valley, the northern part of the Dead Sea and the West Bank settlements, to be dazzled by the extremely pro-Israeli plan presented by the United States, because how do we not deserve all these gifts? (...) Even "Israel's best friend ever in the White House" cannot guarantee that there will be no eruption of violence, no third intifada. Trump has no way to assure Israel that its relations with Jordan will not be destroyed or that Arab countries will adopt this illegitimate brainchild that he and Netanyahu birthed. (...) this is a dream come true for Israel as far as plans go, but sadly there is no partner to agree on it with. (...)

Sima Kadmon, YED, 29.01.20

### **Where are you going, Benny Gantz?**

(...) The U.S. president in the throes of an impeachment trial has invited a prime minister facing three indictments to present him with a life raft – and Israel is overjoyed. Not because of the shady deal of the century nor Trump's blunt interference in our election, but because of Benny Gantz's success in extricating himself from the "Netanyahu trap" to snag a separate meeting with the U.S. president. The fact that the Israeli election has been moved to Washington, that the prime minister has turned annexing the Jordan Valley into a propaganda ploy, that his terrified competitor is supporting annexation with all his heart and soul, and that this political alternative is promising more of the same (...) doesn't ignite any public concern. The Israeli voter will continue to run around in the same trap while deciding between the two ideological allies whose differences have so been blurred that they've become a single two-headed entity. (...) Not that the United States wasn't involved in any past election campaigns or that it hasn't tried to impose its preferences on the Israeli public. But in the past this was done out of a concern or a vision of a peace process, for the sake of Israel's values, while today it is intervening to try to ensure the continued tenure of someone accused of criminal wrongdoing. Neither the peace process nor Israeli values are of any interest to Trump. If Netanyahu loses reelection,

Trump, after having placed all his bets on him, will see it as a personal affront. An investment that has gone down the tubes. (...) it's Gantz's turn to show where he's headed. He has already thrown in his dime by declaring he would do his all to ensure the success of Trump's plan, but now, let's be serious. Where is Gantz really headed? To annexation? To apply Israeli law to the West Bank? To tussle with the Palestinians and the international community, or to propose a policy based on common sense, free of fantasy?

Zvi Bar'el, HAA, 29.01.20

### **3. Umstrittener Friedensplan**

*US-Präsident Donald Trumps Friedensplan für den Nahen Osten stieß auf heftige Reaktionen weltweit. Einzig in Israel befürworteten Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu sowie Oppositionsführer Benny Gantz den von Trumps Schwiegersohn Jared Kushner und dem Nahost-Sondergesandten Jason Greenberg erarbeiteten Plan. Bei den Palästinensern, die nicht zur Verkündung nach Washington eingeladen waren, bei der Arabischen Liga und auch in der westlichen Welt überwog Entrüstung und Kritik an der deutlichen Bevorzugung Israels. Jerusalem bleibt laut Plan die ungeteilte Hauptstadt des jüdischen Staates, wobei auf dem Tempelberg der aktuelle Status quo erhalten bleibt und Muslime auf dem Plateau mit Al-Aksa-Moschee und Felsendom auch weiterhin beten können. Die Palästinenser sollen im östlichen Jerusalem, und zwar in jenen Randbezirken, die bereits jetzt durch die Trennmauer von Jerusalem separiert sind, nämlich Kafr Aqab, der östliche Teil von Shuafat und Abu Dis, ihre Hauptstadt bekommen, wenn sie dem Friedensplan zustimmen. Allein dieser Vorschlag ist für die Palästinenser eine schwere Demütigung und Grund genug, den Plan abzulehnen. Für Palästinenserpräsident Mahmud Abbas und die Autonomiebehörde kaum weniger schwierig dürfte die neue Aufteilung des Westjordanlandes sein. Trump akzeptiert vorbehaltlos die Souveränität Israels über das gesamte Jordantal als neue und sichere Ostgrenze Israels. Zwar versprach Trump den Palästinensern wirtschaftliche Unterstützung mit rund 50 Milliarden US-Dollar. Diese sind allerdings von der Erfüllung von Forderungen abhängig, wie zum Beispiel die Einstellung von Zahlungen der Palästinensischen Behörde an in Israel inhaftierte Terroristen und an Familien umgekommener Terroristen. Innerhalb von vier Jahren, in denen der jetzige Status unverändert bleiben soll, Israel also keine neuen Siedlungen*

*errichten dürfte, sollen Israelis und Palästinenser die Umsetzung des Friedensplans ausverhandeln.*

### **Trump and Netanyahu gain, Israel pays**

(...) Trump's plan gives Netanyahu's government the legitimacy it needs for a string of one-sided moves, such as the annexation of clusters of settlements in the West Bank, in addition to the Jordan Valley. Further down the line, the government is intent on annexing every isolated settlement, including any and all roads leading to them. On the ground, nothing will actually happen, not right away at least (...). Facts will be determined further down the line when they create a reality of two people living under two different legal systems in the same territory - one people living as the ruling class, the other as the conquered. This is also known as an apartheid state. (...) Trump's (...) plan goes above and beyond to guarantee both Israel's future safety and that of the settlers in the West Bank. Netanyahu managed to achieve together with his American partners what his predecessors never could, American recognition of Israel's sovereignty in East Jerusalem, recognition of Israel's control of security in the entirety of the West Bank, exchange of land on an unequal basis, and finally and most importantly, a series of prerequisite terms that no Palestinian leadership will ever agree to that makes the theoretical Palestinian state weak and divided. Netanyahu's ultimate achievement, with the help of Jared Kushner and David Friedman, is two-fold - the end of a Jewish democratic state and the end of Zionism. (...) Trump and Netanyahu's speeches were clearly aimed at the Evangelicals (...) you have to admire the man's persistence. If need be, Netanyahu will take his publicly funded private jet, fly all the way from Washington to Moscow and pick up jailed Israeli Naama Issachar himself. World leaders do a lot of weird things ahead of elections, but it this could be the first time a convicted felon (no matter how small the felony) has scored a free ride home in a prime minister's private jet.

Nahum Barnea, YED, 29.01.20

### **Trump's plan offers a demographic promise**

(...) Donald Trump's plan (...) offers a paradigm shift: Jerusalem will be kept by Israel almost entirely; its old city will remain under Israeli sovereignty; and the status quo on Temple Mount will remain in place, meaning Jews would continue to visit but won't be allowed to pray and Jordan will continue to have a role in administering the site. (...) If the plan will ever get implemented, it will have a major impact on the

demography in Jerusalem, a city that has seen its Jewish majority decline over the years. (...) about a third of the residents in east Jerusalem will no longer be considered Jerusalemites and will be under the jurisdiction of the new Palestinian capital. (...) The Trump plan would also mean that Arab residents in the city, who have long refused to accept Israeli citizenship, will finally be citizens of a country. (...) Once the plan is fully in place, all of the Arabs who remain in Israel will be able to get full-fledged Israeli citizenship or get Palestinian citizenship. (...) The bottom line is that Israel gets recognition for its sovereignty over almost all of Jerusalem. Now it faces the test of exercising that sovereignty. To do so it should build in areas that have been under a de facto freeze and invest heavily in Arab neighborhoods that have long suffered from unacceptable municipal neglect compared to Jewish areas.

Nadav Shragai, IHY, 29.01.20

### **True test for Trump's plan will be on the ground**

(...) The "deal of the century" is not just any old gift for Israel (...) but rather the unyielding support, stronger than ever before, of the United States in Israel and in its future as a Jewish state within secure borders. There is also at least one other happy tidings: After many long years, it has ushered the word "peace" back into the Israeli lexicon. (...) PA President Mahmoud Abbas may see this as a fitting end to his role in Palestinian history, but it could lead (...) to the collapse of the Palestinian Authority and to the rise of Hamas in its place. Israel must also avoid escalatory steps. (...) The IDF presented a broad spectrum of possibilities, ranging from complete apathy on the Palestinian street to a third Intifada. The professional experts made clear that unilateral Israeli measures would have a profound impact on the ground: The most immediate concern is that King Abdullah of Jordan will cancel or freeze the peace agreement in order to stay in power. In the interim, we are likely to see an increase in violence from the Palestinian street. The PA has an interest in this happening, in order to present a modicum of popular opposition to the plan, but it is unlikely that they want things to get out of hand at this point. (...) Gaza is expected to remain quiet for now. Hamas continues to push for an arrangement with Israel, and this week finally received the supply of medications it had been promised, and so will prefer that the struggle takes place in the West Bank. (...) The Palestinian would do wise not to throw the baby out with the bathwater

and destroy with their own hands any chance of realizing the dream of a Palestinian state. Israel would do wise to avoid steps that lead the other side to act this way.

Yoav Limor, IHY, 29.01.20

### **The Deal of the century was Crap of the century**

(...) According to Trump's plan Israel will be allowed to annex about a third of Area C, including the Jordan Valley and most settlements. But the backside is that the Palestinians who today has no control of Area C, will be granted a large area of it in order to connect it to Area A and B. This would be a tremendous improvement for the Palestinians, but they can't accept it for several reasons. In part because they have to recognize and legitimize the settlements. In part because it also gives Israel full responsibility for security on all Palestinian land. (...) Mahmoud Abbas (...) is hanging on a looser thread than ever, with no options and caught in a corner by Trump, Kushner, Bibi and Hamas – few Palestinians support him today. After three years of being subjected to bullying by Trump, the view on the US has changed dramatically on the West Bank. Who shall they turn to? (...) Will we ever see peace in the West Bank and Gaza? Only time will tell. But one thing is for sure, when two corrupt right-wing leaders unilaterally presents a "take it or leave it"-deal to a third corrupt leader – nothing will change. (...)

Jonas Amir Kadah, TOI, 29.01.20

### **Peace plan unveiling: A little like a Purim party**

The show that was put on this week at the White House, starring US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, reminded me a little bit of a Purim party, even though there are still a few weeks until the holiday. The whole world held its breath as Trump unveiled his long-awaited Middle East peace plan (...). The only people who were missing were the Palestinians, as if they had no connection to the plan. Evidently, this was our event, designed for us and only for our wellbeing. Designed to help an Israeli prime minister escape from his personal hardships – at least for a few moments – and to celebrate with his friend, the US president, the illusion that it is possible to end this historic conflict saturated with emotions, memories, the bloodshed of so many innocent victims – many from our side, but also many from the other side – in a media carnival of fireworks full of worn-out slogans and simplistic suggestions. Trump's "Deal of the Century" is not a (...) recipe for historical reconciliation between us and the Palestinians and it

is surely not a pathway that will lead to negotiations (...). Most importantly, the foundation on which the Israeli leadership's worldview has been based for many years has been focused on keeping us separate from the Palestinians. Living together in a single territorial framework would lead to constant friction, terrorist attacks that would impossible to thwart, and a bitterness that feeds hatred. Not only does Trump's plan prevent us from living separately from the Palestinians but it, in practice, creates an urban fabric that would make it exceedingly difficult to separate the Jews from the Palestinians. It's delusional to think that this will not change in the future – that settlers won't continue their relentless efforts to expand their settlements and encircle Palestinian population concentrations in the West Bank such that the two can no longer be easily separated. The Trump peace plan is a propaganda windfall and an impressive political achievement for Netanyahu. (...) Trump's plan is nothing short of revolutionary – but revolutionary in a negative, dangerous way. (...) The State of Israel – as a state that is Jewish, democratic, tolerant, self-respecting and respectful of others – will cease to exist. Israel will turn into an occupying, exploiting nation that enslaves people who do not wish to be a part of it. And in the end, Israel will cease to act in a democratic way toward its own citizens, because when you begin to slide down that slippery slope, it's extremely difficult to define limits, and we will be destined to end in self-destruction. (...)

Ehud Olmert, JPO, 31.01.20

### **Trump's 'Peace Plan' Is Very Bad. But It's Not Completely Terrible**

Trump's one-sided 'vision' to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a serenade to Evangelicals and the Adelsons, and ratifies America's withdrawal from the Middle East. But in it, there remains a thin thread of hope. (...) Donald Trump's reasons for his enthusiastic presentation of the plan have been much discussed, and each contains a measure of truth. The president was looking to divert attention from the impeachment spectacle, to win the support of Evangelicals and politically conservative Jews for his reelection campaign, and to cement the allegiance of his party's most generous donors, Sheldon and Miriam Adelson. In addition, of course, this is a president who loves grand, attention-grabbing gestures, especially unilateral ones that involve no American troops and no American money. The brochures were impressive and the maps detailed, but make no mistake. Trump's "deal" was not an act of



commitment to the Middle East but another act of withdrawal. And with the press conference over, the deal is mostly over for him as well. (...) The "Deal of the Century," therefore, is a perfect fit for his temperament: what he sees as a cost-free exercise that, apart from possible electoral impact, he does not care a whole lot about. And to his credit, Trump said as much at the press conference. Referring to the deal, his exact words were: "We'll see whether or not it catches hold. If it does, that would be great. And if it doesn't, we're going to have to live with that too." Not exactly a rousing endorsement of his own plan. (...) For two reasons, I insist on maintaining a thread of hope. First, as I have indicated, President Trump will quickly lose interest in Israel/Palestine and turn his attention to new press opportunities and other matters that will feed his ego and his Twitter feed. Israel and the countries on her borders will be mostly left alone to find solutions on their own, assuming that solutions of any sort are available. (...) Let him fade away, and perhaps Israel and her neighbors can stitch together the beginnings of some new understandings. Second, Israel's sensible centrists, to whom I turn for guidance, have all found value in the Trump plan. (...) Each of these leaders offered a somewhat different rationale, but the point is that all believe in a Jewish and democratic Israel, all despise Netanyahu's criminal corruption, all understand that Israel needs international support and the backing of Diaspora Jews, and all are political pragmatists who are skeptical of Palestinian intentions but open to Palestinian aspirations. And all believe that on balance, there are elements of the Trump plan that make it worthy of consideration, and despite all its flaws, the possible basis for a negotiated settlement. (...) Bottom line: I am hoping for a Gantz government that will take the Trump plan, build on its strengths, downplay its weaknesses, and move Israel in the direction of separation, democracy, a strong Jewish majority, and understandings - if not peace - with her neighbors. It is up to the voters of Israel, but it is my fervent wish that they will agree.

Eric H. Yoffie, HAA, 31.01.20

#### 4. Medienquerschnitt

##### Netanyahu auf Rettungsmission in Moskau

Naama Issachar — a story of bad decisions and consequences

First, the evil choice of a Russian dictator whose legacy is the preservation of the authoritarian oppression of his people, but without the ideology. (...) Secondly, the State of Israel, which rather than prove its commitment to its citizens by returning them from unfriendly hands with the release of Gilad Shalit (at the expense of many other citizens), has more often than not demonstrated its other priorities through the much longer list of citizens or their bodies left behind, and the return of all, which seems to have mysteriously left the agenda. The mistake is mixed messages in political rhetoric and state decisions. (...) We are so willing to engage, so desperate to change our global public perception, our increasingly populist politicians so willing to submit to mob rule in exchange for a few mandates that we make very bad decisions. (...) A self-respecting state wouldn't roll out the red carpet (...) for a man who is essentially keeping one of its citizens hostage for no apparent reason. This is yet another example of Israel's identity crisis- are we strong Jews or not? (...) most importantly, this is the story of a young woman who knowingly decided to smuggle drugs over international borders into an authoritarian state, putting her country in an extremely vulnerable and precarious position. (...) Is her punishment unfair? Undoubtedly. But these are the consequences for her actions.

Batya Brownstein, TOI, 24.01.20

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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