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1. Protest gegen Israels neue Regierung

Einige zigtausend Menschen zogen am 7. Januar in einer ersten Demonstration gegen die neue israelische Regierung unter Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu auf den Platz vor dem Habima-Theater in Tel Aviv. Auch in Jerusalem und in Haifa kam es zu Protesten. An den Demonstrationen am 14. Januar nahmen in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem und Haifa bereits rund 100.000 Menschen teil. Für die kommenden Wochen werden weitere große Demonstrationen erwartet. Zentral richtet sich die Kritik gegen die geplanten Reformen von Justizminister Yariv Levin, darunter die sogenannte Ausnahmeklausel, mit der eine einfache Mehrheit der Parlamentarier_innen in der Knesset Entscheidungen des Obersten Gerichts außer Kraft setzen könnte, und die Politisierung des Auswahlverfahrens von Richter_innen. Die am weitesten rechts- stehende Regierung seit Staatsgründung strebt damit eine Entmachtung und Unterordnung der Justiz an und letztendlich das Ende der Gewaltenteilung. Davon könnte auch Netanyahu selbst unmittelbar profitieren, wenn es darum geht, ihm als Regierungschef Immunität zu gewähren. Netanyahu muss sich wegen Korruption vor Gericht verantworten. Verbreitete Sorge bereitet auch die in den Regierungsleitlinien festgehaltene Absicht, den Siedlungsbau in den besetzten Gebieten voranzutreiben.

Netanyahu's assault on judicial system threatens Israel's democracy

(...) What we are observing is a shameless onslaught on the judicial system. Levin calls for a series of sweeping changes aimed at curbing the powers of the judiciary, including by allowing lawmakers to pass laws that the High Court has struck down and effectively deemed unconstitutional. (...) Levin is now set on destroying the court's ability to protect, not just the current opposition on the Left, but any opposition to the government in the future.
 (...) The current government is facing two real problems when it comes to the Israeli legal system, and both are personal, and not substantive. One is that Netanyahu is faced with serious criminal charges for corruption, and if convicted, could be sent to prison. That possible scenario has surely not escaped the prime minister's mind.
 The second is that legal precedent should prevent Arye Deri, a close Netanyahu political ally, from serving as minister - as he is set to do in the new coalition. Levin justified his assault on the courts as a need for governance, and his campaign preceded Netanyahu's indictment. Until he was charged, the prime minister had always resisted such initiatives and vehemently defended and protected the courts. But, only until the charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust, were brought.
 Nadav Eyal, YED, 06.01.23

Confronting the legal system is a dangerous game

(...) Any day now, the Supreme Court is expected to announce its decision regarding the appointment of the leader of the Sephardi ultra-Orthodox Shas faction, Aryeh Deri, to the role of interior minister despite a previous tax fraud conviction. Whichever way the ruling goes, the consequences will be earth-shattering. If the court decides in Deri's favor, the new government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu will lose the trust of the public, or at least those who see the judiciary as the last gatekeeper against the tyranny of the parliamentary majority.

If it rules against Deri, the courts will draw the ire of the coalition, Justice Minister Yair Levin, in particular. (...) Such confrontation of the judiciary is a dangerous game. (...) Levin seems to have set out on a personal crusade. Had he been open to examining alternatives – rather than rampaging – he could have gone down in history as the enlightened reformer of the judiciary. And as long as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu refrains from speaking out against the measures – or expressing any opinion at all – the reform threatens to break the main pillar that unites us – solidarity. (...) thousands of Israelis marched in Tel Aviv against the policies of the new government. Levin must understand that they are not the enemy. They simply want to live in a country that feels like home.

Nachama Duek, IHY, 08.01.23

Israel's new gov't must be careful with judicial reform

(...) judicial reform is not a bolt out of the blue. (...) Levin has been working on his ideas regarding the judiciary for years, and the Likud, which won the largest number of seats in the last elections, included judicial reform on its platform (...). The reforms were an integral part of the election (...) voting or not voting has consequences. In a democratic system, there are winners, and when those winners establish a government, they often gain the authority and ability to implement the changes they seek. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the government should simply dismiss what the opposition has to say. (...) it is important for the coalition to recognize that these judicial reforms are significant. They have the potential to change the character of the State of Israel and the balance of power between the state's different branches. This is why dialogue is needed between all the different stakeholders. Such significant, far-reaching change needs to be done while hearing everyone who might be affected,

ensuring that as few people are disenfranchised as possible. (...) The more the government engages with the public, the easier it will be to accept change. In addition, we call on the government to be open to modifying its plans. Rejecting one side is part of what brought Israel to this point. Let's learn from these lessons, hold a sincere dialogue and be open to learning from the other side. This is what being a democracy is really about.

Editorial, JPO, 09.01.23

Israel is going through volatile times of dangerous incitement

(...) If these were "normal" times, (...) calls by legislator Zvika Fogel, from Itamar Ben-Gvir's Otzma Yehudit faction to arrest former Prime Minister Yair Lapid and former Defense Minister Benny Gantz, would have been chalked up to sheer stupidity. (...) But, these are not normal times and Fogel is not some fringe commentator online, vying for likes on social media. He is a member of the coalition, tapped to head the Knesset Public Security Committee in one of the most volatile periods of our nation. To claim that Lapid, Gantz, former IDF chief Moshe Ya'alon and former Deputy Chief of Staff Yair Golan are dangerous, is not only stupid but can incite those on the extreme right to action. (...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu remained silent - in a move that has become his standard practice. He left Fogel's calls to arrest his political opponents without response or condemnation for hours on end. (...) The government was elected by a majority and only public protests, not of thousands but of hundreds of thousands, would be able to reign its extremists in. Israelis in the millions have never come out in protest. Perhaps only the real threat to our values, and the dissolution of the country as we know it, would compel them to come out of their homes.

Sima Kadmon, YED, 11.01.23

The first rule of avoiding civil war: Don't talk about a civil war

That escalated quickly. Israel, it turns out, is now in the phase where people warn that a civil war is brewing. (...) the rhetoric that calls for civil disobedience that has now become common parlance among Opposition members is drawing Israel to one direction: a clash between two segments of society. Call it what you want, but the bottom line is that we have a fierce conflict in the making, and its origins go way back and predate the recent controversy over judiciary reforms and even the swearing-in of the government. Ever since losing the Nov. 1 elec-

tion, the Left has been busy spreading doom and gloom and creating a feeling of emergency. "The end of democracy" has become an accepted description of the situation, and as far as the Opposition leaders are concerned, we are now well into the final chapter of our state's history. (...) The result of the irresponsible rhetoric was having people get into a civil war mindset. The feeling is that it is now ok to do away with the rules and perhaps there is even a moral calling to do so. Now everyone can feel that they are a hero in the local La Résistance. But the new government also shares part of the blame for this escalation. Perhaps it did not start the fire, but it has not extinguished it. (...) The government should respond to the protesters through the proper channels, not by adopting the lowly conduct of the rioters. (...)

Eithan Orkibi, IHY, 11.01.23

It's time for Israel's explosive politics to calm down

(...) One would have thought that the assassination of an Israeli prime minister and the incitement of words that preceded it would have taught us all a very costly lesson in how rhetoric, venom and ideology can manifest itself in unspeakable violence. But a look at what's been happening in the country over the last few days indicates that we're headed down the same chilling tracks that will lead to bloodshed between brothers. (...) Clearly, the pressure level all around is rising and the question only remains when it will overflow. (...) The test of any democracy is how it handles dissension among its citizens. The test for Israel has arrived.

Editorial, JPO, 12.01.23

A civil war is not a joke – Israelis need to wake up

(...) a former defense minister warned of a civil war, a former IDF deputy chief of staff threatened mass civil disobedience, the national security minister ordered the police to use force to stop protesters and a member of his party called to arrest leaders of the opposition, this is no longer funny. Something bad is happening in Israel (...). The thought that no more elections and the establishment of a stable government would simply put an end to Israel's problems was wrong. What people tend to forget is that five rounds of elections meant endless cycles of mudslinging and name-calling. It created a constant atmosphere in which people were placed in a state of opposition to the other. That does not just disappear overnight. It creates lasting tension. (...) Talk of

a civil war is dangerous. (...) Yes, the issues that are being brought up are significant, and the consequences are potentially dire. But we must not take this state for granted. We must protect it, and yes, we must also fight for it. (...) Political differences are fine and they will always exist as they should in a democracy. Protests are everyone's right and it should never be taken away. But let's not get carried away. The future of the country is not something to take lightly.

Jaakov Katz, JPO, 13.01.23

Israeli opposition protests must be kept civil

The right to protest is one of the pillars of democracy. A government needs to protect that right and enable citizens to exercise it. Preventing that right or threatening force, is anti-democratic and a stain on a country. At the same time, the right to protest does not mean breaking the law and moving beyond mere protesting into acts of violence. It is upon this social contract that both the government and its citizens engage in the important public debate that underpins our society. (...) Israel knows too well the threats that can tear apart a country. In the lead-up to the creation of the state and during the 1948 war, the country not only faced political divisions among the Jewish population, but also between Jews and Arabs. This led to political violence. We know how important our democracy is because of the long road we have traveled since that era through the 1990s when prime minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated. (...) Leaders of the protest movement against the government's judicial reform plans met with the police commissioner to try to come to an understanding. (...) We appear to be entering a time when some on the far right sense that power is tipping inexorably in their direction and they want to move against the basic freedoms we enjoy. When we hear talk of jailing opposition members for "sedition" we are reminded of how democracies can be eroded by extremism and head down the road of authoritarianism. Netanyahu is a keen student of history. He knows very well that extremist rhetoric undermines our country. On the other hand he leads a government that contains far-right voices. He must act to restrain these voices. The opposition must also tone down its rhetoric. We must unify in the center with the silent majority who want civil discourse and want to be a strong Israeli nation unified against our enemies, not divided internally. (...) Netanyahu and the opposition leaders can both play a key role in setting the rhetorical tone that can underpin this call for unity.

2. Itamar Ben-Gvir auf dem Tempelberg

Entrüstung im In- und Ausland löste Israels neuer Minister für Nationale Sicherheit, Itamar Ben-Gvir, aus, als er trotz Warnungen kurz nach seinem Amtsantritt den Tempelberg in Jerusalems Altstadt besuchte. Der frisch gebackene Minister zog mit einem Großaufgebot von Sicherheitskräften auf das Areal mit dem Felsendom und der Al-Aksa-Moschee. Er blieb dort zwar nur wenige Minuten, dennoch reichte die Zeit, um den Besuch bei Palästinenser_innen als Provokation ankommen zu lassen. Ben-Gvir hat in seiner Funktion als Minister für Nationale Sicherheit auch Kontrolle über die Polizei. Für die Sicherheitslage erschwerend kommt hinzu, dass der neue Finanzminister Bezaleel Smotrich Kontrolle über zivile Angelegenheiten im Westjordanland haben wird, die bisher im Verteidigungsministerium verortet waren. Bereits im Vorfeld von Ben-Gvirs Besuch auf dem Tempelberg hatte die Hamas vor einer gefährlichen Eskalation gewarnt. Der Tempelberg gilt im Islam als drittheiligste Stätte. Im September 2000 war der Besuch des damaligen Oppositionsführers Ariel Sharon Auslöser für die Zweite Intifada, nachdem die Friedensgespräche in Camp David gescheitert waren. Seit 1967 gilt auf dem Tempelberg die Regel, dass Juden und Jüdinnen das Areal zwar besuchen dürfen, nicht aber dort beten. Ben-Gvir nannte diese Vereinbarung „rassistisch“. Sein demonstrativer Besuch galt auch dem Protest gegen den Status quo.

Ben-Gvir should be allowed to visit the Jerusalem Temple Mount

(...) One of the greatest mistakes that Israel made was when it declared in 1967 that “The Temple Mount is in our hands” but then never took steps to make it true. It immediately backtracked, worried of the fallout with the Muslim world, the impact moves on the mount would have on Israel’s relations with Jordan and the possibility that anything that happens there could lead to widespread violence in the West Bank. (...) When Ariel Sharon visited the mount in 2000, it was widely viewed as a provocation by many Israelis and Western countries. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat used the visit as an excuse to launch a terrorist war against Israel, known as the Second Intifada. (...) The dilemma for the government is the following: If the Temple Mount belongs to Israel and is under Israeli sovereignty, then there should be no issue with any Israeli, espe-

cially an elected official, visiting the site. That it is such an issue shows the inherent problem. On the other hand, there is a true fear of violence, which Israel always wants to avoid. (...) The bottom line is that these are just excuses. (...) A terrorist group bent on Israel’s destruction does not need excuses to attack. (...)

Yaakov Katz, JPO,02.01.23

Ben-Gvir Is Leading Israel to Hell

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir (...) will be the one to bring down the Palestinian Authority once and for all and place Israel on an accelerated collision course with the Arab states that forged peace agreements with Israel, with Washington and with the Western countries in general. The script has been written, the stage is set, the motivation is burning, the force is yearning to burst ahead and the barriers have been tossed by the wayside. (...) Benjamin Netanyahu may be the one packing his suitcase for his state visit to the United Arab Emirates and afterwards will be keen to visit his friend, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sissi, as well. But Ben-Gvir is already the one dictating the agenda. (...) What will Netanyahu say to Sissi after Hamas fires dozens or hundreds of rockets at Israel and Egypt is asked “to calm the situation”? That Ben-Gvir is of no importance? That he controls him – when hundreds of Israeli families in the Gaza border communities, and in Ashkelon, Ashdod and Tel Aviv, are forced to cower in shelters? Right off the bat, Netanyahu began his new term as prime minister with an act of fraud and deception, pretending he’d convinced Ben-Gvir to postpone his visit to the Temple Mount. But this time it’s not just about cigars and champagne. In his behavior as prime minister, Netanyahu is directly endangering the lives of Israeli and Palestinian civilians, of police officers and soldiers, and Israel’s security.

Zvi Bar’el, HAA, 04.01.2

Ben-Gvir's Temple Mount visit is akin to taunting a bull

As of now, Hamas prefers to maintain calm with Israel, when in the past Ben-Gvir's visit could have been a good enough justification for war. Gaza may be quiet, but as we've learned from past experiences, this could be a misleading picture. (...) For Hamas' restraint, Netanyahu and Ben-Gvir may have to give credit to former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett. He changed Israel's long-time policies, and allowed 17,000 Gazans to receive Israeli work permits - bringing slow but detectable improvements to

Gaza's economy. (...) how long will the terror group continue to favor employment for their residents if actions, such as the one taken by Ben-Gvir, persist? (...) The prime minister attempted to calm the anger and insisted the status quo, agreed upon with the Jordanian administrators of the holy site after the Six Day War, would remain unchanged. He may be right when he said that Ben-Gvir was not the first minister to make such a visit. But, let us not be fooled. Ben-Gvir is an agent of chaos who incites violence against Palestinians, and his antics are seen as red flags being waved by him in front of Arabs. Regardless of whether his provocation (...) was agreed upon with Netanyahu, the new government needs a responsible caretaker to prevent this arsonist from burning down the country. (...)

Avi Issacharoff, YED. 04.01.23

Jews are the owners of the Temple Mount

(...) It goes without saying that security and diplomatic acumen are extremely important, but we cannot forget the basic facts. We Jews are not guests on the Temple Mount; we are its original owners. No other nation shares this history, no other nation has had the same capital for 3,000 years and has never had another one, and Jerusalem was never the capital of any other nation. The criticism aimed at Israel is ludicrous and outrageous. It ignores the 3,000-year connection between the people of Israel and Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. (...) The peace agreement between Israel and Jordan stipulates that Jordan has a "special role" at holy shrines in Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount. That's ridiculous. What is Jordan's connection to the Temple Mount? Does the fact that Jordan conquered east Jerusalem in the War of Independence, razed the Jewish Quarter along with its synagogues, and ruled over it for 19 years give it some sort of special privileges? Security cooperation between the two countries is important to Israel, but much more important to Jordan. (...) There is no reason that Jews, including members of Knesset and government ministers, should not enter the Temple Mount (...). Why should it be news at all? In a free country, anyone can go wherever they want.

Gilad Sharon, JPO, 09.01.23

Ben-Gvir visited Temple Mount? So what?

So Itamar Ben-Gvir, Israel's new national security minister, visited the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem. Everybody panic! Thousands of terrorist rockets are about to rain down! Israel faces invasions from all sides! The United States will abandon

the lone Jewish state! In short – Israel's been fun, but it's over. Allow me to offer advice that many men give their overwrought wives: "Calm down, honey." (...) Why? Because nothing happened.

There's a Yiddish expression, "oter gezukt," that roughly translates, "So he said it." In other words: So what? The extreme reactions to Ben-Gvir's short visit to the holy site fit that description. (...) This bust-up starts and stops with angry statements. That applies even to the U.S. government. Its denunciation of Ben-Gvir's visit was framed in the context of "harm to the two-state solution," Israel and a Palestinian state living side by side in peace. Since it's clear that the two-state solution is not relevant now after the Palestinians turned down multiple offers of a state, the U.S. condemnation can be seen in the Yiddish framework of "so he said it," or declarations as action.

The uninitiated would think that Jews never, ever enter the Temple Mount. Yet Ben-Gvir himself has visited the Temple Mount on numerous occasions over the years. Jews tour it almost every day. The only difference is that now Ben-Gvir is a cabinet minister in a far-right government. (...) Let's not get dragged into apoplectic and apocalyptic condemnation every time someone in the new Israeli government opens their mouth. Let's save that for when, if, they actually do something significant. (...)

Mark Lavie, YED, 14.01.23

3. Sorge vor religiöser Vormachtstellung

Avi Maoz, Chef der messianischen, rassistischen und homophoben Partei Noam, wird laut Koalitionsabkommen fortan die dem Bildungsministerium angeschlossene Abteilung „Externe Programme und Förderung von Partner-Kooperationen“ leiten. Protest aus den Reihen der Queer-Community, Frauenrechtsorganisationen aber auch Elternvertretungen schulpflichtiger Kinder ließ nicht auf sich warten. Maoz ist bekennender Homophob, und er zielt auf grundlegende gesellschaftliche Umwandlungen. Dazu gehört die strikte Einhaltung des Shabbat, auch in der Armee und in privaten Unternehmen. Einkaufs- und Unterhaltungsreinrichtungen sollen am Shabbat geschlossen bleiben, der öffentliche Personenverkehr stillstehen. Frauen sollen, ginge es nach ihm, keinen Wehrdienst mehr leisten, sondern heiraten und Familien gründen. Moderne, weltliche Lebensformen haben im Weltbild von Maoz keinen Platz.

A government that uses Torah as a spade to dig with

Why should an organization comprised of rabbis be alarmed about Israel's new government? No governing coalition has ever boasted so many advocates of Jewish piety. A test of Talmudic knowledge among the newly elected would probably yield impressive results. To judge from the coalition agreements recently signed (...), unprecedented funds will be directed to the inculcation of Torah values. Surely we should be celebrating this great victory for Judaism. But we are not. (...) If we take seriously the claims and comments of the new government, it is planning to change the rules of the game. (...) the overall impact of this government – judging by its own pronouncements – will be more intransigent than anything we have ever seen. The assault on decency being perpetrated by the new government is not a matter of party politics. It speaks to the essence of the project of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state (...) in the name of Jewish tradition. The assumption seems to be that anyone committed to Jewish creativity and Jewish continuity will be in favor of what this 37th government plans to do. The Torah is being used as a spade to dig with. The dismantling of Israel's noblest dreams is being wrapped in the tallit of Jewish values. (...) At this time in Israel's history, there is no time for point-scoring and squabbling. (...) when so much is at stake, we are not permitted to look away. When Israeli democracy is under assault in the name of Judaism, it is time to speak out, step up and lean in. Michael Marmor, TOI, 03.01.23

The Jewish path back to Israeli democracy

(...) The Netanyahu government is the most politically extreme, the most morally corrupt and the most contemptuous of good governance in Israel's history. (...) This government that speaks in the name of Torah desecrates the name of Judaism. This government that speaks in the name of the Jewish people risks tearing apart the Israeli-Diaspora relationship. (...) For the ultra-Orthodox, the state's legitimacy is measured solely by the extent of its support for their separatist state-within-a-state. (...) While a majority of Israeli Jews are committed to maintaining Israel as both a Jewish and democratic state, if forced to choose between them, most would almost certainly opt for its Jewish identity – because, more than its democratic identity, the survival of Israel depends on maintaining its Jewishness. (...) an Israel stripped of its Jewishness would lose its reason for being, its internal cohesion and the vitality

that has enabled it to survive against the odds. (...) This election exposed two opposing visions of a Jewish state. For the ultra-Orthodox and the ultra-nationalists, Israel is the state of Judaism – Orthodox Judaism. For classical Zionism, though, Israel was intended to be the state of the Jewish people, without imposing a uniform notion of "authentic" Jewish identity. The difference is crucial. A state of Judaism is bound by pre-modern norms defining membership in the Jewish people and upholds traditional standards for whom we as a people should be. The state of the Jewish people, on the other hand, accepts the Jews as they are. (...) The question the centrist camp must present to the Israeli public, then, is this: Should peoplehood or Halakhah define the Jewishness of the state? Framed that way, a decisive majority will side with the center. Yossi Klein Halevi, TOI, 05.01.23

Those who believe in the unifying power of education must uphold our State Education Law

(...) These days, a real concern arises about this collective glue that has always served as the backbone of our state education system. The Education Ministry has been stripped of major components. Basic Common Core studies have been tainted with sectionalist content, undermining the educational freedom and scholastic sovereignty of teachers. (...) even the grandchild clause in the Law of Return is in the crosshairs. Will we still be able to offer a safe haven to refugee children and youth afflicted by war and misfortune if they are not Jewish according to Halacha? (...) We do not have the privilege of giving up on education and on our educators' autonomy to be authentic. This is probably the last bastion of our civil society's ability to embrace diversity, as well as common values and common ground. We must not wreak havoc on our very foundations. (...) before the powers that be rush to legislate, amend and recodify the Education Ministry's departments, management and scope of authority, they would do well to pause and read the opening words of our State Education Law. (...) Education is first and foremost an individual endeavor and the collective endeavor of many individuals, driven by a sense of purpose and a passion to impact young lives. Anyone who has experienced teaching in a classroom will probably agree that educators not only face tremendous day-to-day challenges but also have the capacity and resilience to withstand impositions that contradict their innermost values. We will continue, against all odds, to sing together. Chaim Peri, JPO, 08.01.23

'A Jewish State in All Areas': What Netanyahu's Far-right, anti-LGBTQ Ally Really Believes

Avi Maoz, head of far-right anti-LGBTQ Noam party, wants to fundamentally change Israel's religious status quo. (...) While Israel's ultra-Orthodox parties have largely sought to strengthen their communities' budgets and autonomy, Maoz, as a representative of a messianic strain of religious Zionist Judaism, is much more interested in effecting wide-ranging social change and believes that the main thing is the transformation of the public sphere into a religious space (...). Maoz, a follower of Rabbi Zvi Tau who instructed him to establish Noam in 2019, explains that his party's rabbis "are also rousing us to fight the octopus arms of the postmodernist worldview," calling to "cleanse the public air of our country from foreign influences and add more and more Judaism and purity to the soul of our country." (...) The Noam party has striven to change the status quo also when it comes to observing the Sabbath, with Maoz announcing that "Shabbat will be observed in the state of Israel," including in the army, and, now that he is in government, Maoz is expected to oppose "private enterprises that encourage the desecration of Shabbat by the masses" as he put it, and in fact to any desecration of Shabbat on the streets of the cities, such as shops and shopping and entertainment centers, and of course also public transportation. (...) Maoz's party is also vehemently against women serving in the armed forces, especially in combat roles. In his interview with "Makor Rishon," Maoz stated that the biggest contribution women give "is that they will, god willing, get married and raise a magnificent family."

Mordy Miller, HAA, 12.01.23

Why Are Israel's Streets So Quiet in the Face of a Fascist Takeover?

(...) Bezalel Smotrich, Avi Maoz, Itamar Ben-Gvir and Orit Strock are officers in God's army. (...) Judaism is a religion of obedience, perhaps the one that demands of its followers the most total obedience to God. In the first pages of the Bible, we learn that the original (...) sin was that of disobedience. Adam and Eve are made homeless simply for having tasted a fruit. (...) Obeying first and understanding later cannot be the act of a free and rational creature. It extols the voluntary renunciation of the gift of reason. There can be no glory in praising obedience for its own sake. (...) Within Judaism we find very few models for civil disobedience. Zionism added key elements to the theological imperative of obedience to God: the centrality of the army, which is a power-

ful mechanism for imparting and imposing obedience; and also the idea that a break in collective solidarity threatens the survival of the nation. In this context, the basic human right to protest is easily interpreted as equivalent to sedition or betrayal of the people. It is the mixture of these mental structures that may explain the continuous silence of Israelis. Only a continuous, collective and unrelenting protest in the face of a regime of injustice and inhumanity can save them.

Eva Illouz, HAA, 13.01.23

4. Medienquerschnitt

Netanjahus Korruptionsverfahren

A Healthy Society Is Proud of Cleaning the Stables, but Israel Is Sick

(...) Convinced that he had to avoid an indictment and a trip through the "meat grinder," as he put it, Netanyahu outlined his strategy: Aggressively and systematically destroy the public's trust in law enforcement and the courts. (...) The police's major-crimes unit is paralyzed and doesn't touch corruption at the top. Job applications at the State Prosecutor's Office have dropped dramatically. On the stand, prosecution witnesses in Netanyahu's corruption trial show mistrust and disdain for the law enforcement system, and give in to the defense attorneys. Witnesses whose testimony implicates Netanyahu receive threats from his supporters that continue even after the state belatedly charges a handful of them. Meanwhile, prosecutors and journalists are told that they should be in prison, or dead, the chief prosecutor comes to court with a security detail and her son suffers threats and harassment. (...) The campaign's success demonstrates not only his skills but also the weakness of society's mechanisms. (...) A healthy society would be proud that it cleans the palace stables while never easing the trenchant criticism of the police's and prosecutors' violations of suspects' rights. But Israel is a sick place.

Gidi Weitz, HAA, 02.01.23

Israel und die Diaspora

Amichai Chikli must help Israelis understand Diaspora Jews

(...) It is an open secret that in recent years, support for Israel could no longer be taken for granted. The State of Israel has a duty to work on increasing its

responsibility to the Jewish people, wherever they live. This will probably be one of the most difficult and urgent challenges with which the new Diaspora Affairs Minister will have to contend. (...) In recent years, as the State of Israel has become stronger, and Jewish communities in the Diaspora have changed, we now need to work with an inverse paradigm. Israel needs to send people to get to know Diaspora Jews all over the world, and to learn about the challenges they face. (...) Listening and knowing the needs of Diaspora Jewry will improve the trust between both sides, thus bringing them closer to one another. (...) We must all remember that Chikli represents Israel to Jewish communities all over the world. Moreover, he will have to fight to protect these communities' rights in his own government. The State of Israel is the state of the Jewish nation. Now is the time to define what the State of Israel can do to promote Diaspora Jewry and how it can help them with the challenges they face.
Ilan Geal-Dor, JPO, 03.01.23

HAA = Haaretz
YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews
JPO = Jerusalem Post
IHY = Israel HaYom
TOI = Times of Israel
GLO = Globes

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