



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 6/24
Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen
16.-31. März

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1. Eiszeit zwischen Washington und Jerusalem

Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu bleibt auf Konfrontationskurs mit den USA. Nach Beratungen mit US-Außenminister Antony Blinken in Tel Aviv erklärte Netanyahu, dass er auch ohne die Unterstützung der USA an der geplanten Bodenoffensive in der Grenzstadt Rafah festhalten wolle. Blinken hatte ihn im Verlauf der Gespräche vor einer weiteren internationalen Isolierung Israels gewarnt. Auch über mögliche Nachkriegsperspektiven herrscht Unstimmigkeit zwischen Washington und Jerusalem. Die USA reichten schließlich einen Resolutionsentwurf beim Weltsicherheitsrat ein, um eine sofortige und dauerhafte Waffenruhe voranzutreiben sowie Hilfslieferungen für die Not leidende Bevölkerung im Gazastreifen. Allerdings legten China und Russland ihr Veto ein. Ein weiterer Entwurf mit ähnlicher Zielsetzung und unter der Federführung von Algerien wurde mit Enthaltung der USA angenommen. Die Regierung in Jerusalem machte die durch die Enthaltung der USA möglich gewordene Annahme der Resolution für die „völlig überzogenen Forderungen“ der Hamas bei den Verhandlungen über die Freilassung der israelischen Geiseln und einem Waffenstillstand verantwortlich.

Biden's Israel shift should have us worried

(...) The problematic US language, stemming apparently from domestic electoral concerns, is increasingly translating into actual policy (...). In the Security Council, the drafts put forth by the American delegation are getting worse every week that goes by. (...) On the battlefield in Gaza, the sense is that the assurances made by America – to always be by Israel – are increasingly eroding. Repeated leaks raise a real concern that weapons supplies will be slowed, conditioned, limited, or even halted altogether. (...) the real test of the relationship is in having both sides know that they can rely on each other in times of need. From an Israeli point of view, it appears that the US is not about to live up to its part of the bargain. For if at the outset of the war, we thought we could safely lean on Washington, as days go by, the doubts have only mounted. (...) The entire world sees how shaky America's support is, casting doubt on Washington's credibility. (...)
 Ariel Kahana, IHY, 18.03.24

Israel's Isolation Is Getting Deeper, and It Will Get Worse

(...) The collapse in Israel's standing must give every Israeli sleepless nights. (...) The growing despair with Israel among its friends indicates this dangerous isolation will only increase. The plain fact is that Israel under the leadership of Benjamin Netanyahu now has very few character witnesses, if any, and the trend is clear: The few will grow even fewer. (...) The leaders of the West did, after all,

make a pilgrimage to Israel as an act of solidarity when smoke was still rising from the Gaza border communities (...). However, the prolonging of the war along with Netanyahu's politics of survival have led to the current meltdown, a preview of the emerging result: diplomatic defeat in the all-out war with Hamas. (...) Israel's solitude is a direct result of the isolation Netanyahu has brought down upon it, fruit of the political curse that has condemned the Jewish state to more of the same again and again. Can Israel change this tragic trajectory and break the belt of isolation? The answer is to be found, apparently, in Jerusalem more than in Rafah. Until Israelis impel effective political change, the isolation will deepen, and the defeat will become more definitive and more absolute.

Sefy Hendler, HAA, 21.03.24

Gallant goes to Washington to buy time

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant (...) is perceived by the administration as a positive figure in the government, and as someone whom they can work with. Therefore, he will be welcomed in Washington with open arms, and it is likely that he will hold meetings that are not mentioned in the official itinerary. (...) Senior administration officials will certainly reiterate their demand that Israel refrain from operating in Rafah, following remarks made by Secretary of State Antony Blinken during his visit to the country. It is likely that they will hear from Gallant similar things to what Blinken heard in Israel: that this operation is essential to complete the defeat of Hamas forces and uproot its rule. However, in the more intimate parts of the discussions – in Israel and the US. – the parties are talking about different ways to carry out the operation so that both can live with it. (...) In recent weeks, calls have increased in the U.S. for the administration to limit arms transfers to Israel. (...) Gallant will seek assurances that aid will continue regardless of the political dispute between the countries, and even be increased if a broader campaign develops in the north. (...) Exactly one year has passed since Gallant's speech that led to his firing (which was rescinded) by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in which he warned that Israel was marching towards a security abyss (which did indeed materialize). Since then, the two have grown even further apart, and it seems that the only thing they share now is the intention to continue the war.

Yoav Limor, IHY, 24.03.24

Israel loses most valuable ally after months of war

(...) six months since the worst massacre in its history, which evoked extraordinary international support and empathy, Israel is now more isolated than it has ever been and is in direct conflict with the United States on a variety of tactical matters. (...) The Americans have lost faith in the organizational abilities of Netanyahu's government. If the Israelis are not able to ensure that there is no hunger in the areas under their military control in northern Gaza, how could they be trusted to evacuate over a million civilians away from harm's way in Rafah and avoid a humanitarian catastrophe? (...) The U.S. can delay arms shipments, limit the delivery of offensive weapons and can even remove their diplomatic defense of Israel - using their veto power, in the security council. (...) Netanyahu's repeated declarations serve his political campaign but not the objective of eliminating Hamas. By his own statements, he has made the question of Rafah into an international red-line that must not be crossed. (...) The White House provided Israel with the means to defeat Hamas, including everything from international backing to weapons, from empathy to sound advice, while Israel wages the longest war since the war of Independence. (...) all the U.S. had asked was concern for the civilian population and a clear plan for the day after the war, which Jerusalem refuses to consider, while the damaging images of destruction in the Strip are often posted on social media platforms by gleeful Israeli soldiers. Netanyahu appears to seek any opportunity for conflict with the White House. (...)

Nadav Eyal, YED, 25.03.24

Why is Netanyahu turning up the volume against Biden?

(...) Biden cannot win without Michigan, home to a large Palestinian American community that is made up of Hamas sympathizers. For them, stopping the war in Gaza is the number one consideration, and seems to be an imperative if he hopes to win the state. On the other hand, American centrist voters mostly support Israel (...) In short, Biden's dilemma is how to appease the Muslim pro-Palestinian voters without angering the Christian supporters of Israel. (...) Biden wants to keep the confrontation with Israel below the threshold of war: enough public blows to mobilize the base, but not an all-out confrontation that will seriously damage him in the eyes of the general American public. The conduct around Rafah is an excellent example. The administration will place obstacles, ask questions, demand explanations about an Israeli offensive in Rafah, but Is-

raeli officials vow that when the time comes, despite all of those efforts, an offensive in the southernmost city in the Gaza Strip will begin. (...) Those who analyze the situation with diplomatic glasses only, or worse, psychological ones, are ridiculous. Those who claim that Netanyahu insulted Biden or that this has to do with his "conduct" are not addressing the issue, as if anyone in an election year even bothers to be interested in table manners. As the Wall Street Journal put it this week, Biden wants a two-state solution: Michigan and Nevada.
Amit Segal, YED, 27.03.24

2. Krieg im Gazastreifen

Durch die heftigen Kämpfen um das Shifa-Krankenhaus in Gaza ist Israel weiter ins internationale Abseits geraten. Es seien „rund 200 Terroristen ausgeschaltet worden“, hieß es von Seiten der israelischen Armee. In den sozialen Medien kursieren Bilder von der Zerstörung, Berichte über getötetes Krankenhauspersonal und sogar Folter. Israels Armee beschrieb den Einsatz hingegen als präzise, man habe Patientinnen in alternative medizinische Einrichtungen verlegt. Das Krankenhaus sei von der Hamas für militärische Zwecke missbraucht worden, hieß es. Unterdessen dauern die Bemühungen um eine weitere Feuerpause und den Austausch israelischer Geiseln im Gegenzug für palästinensische Häftlingen an. Beide Konfliktparteien zeigen sich vorläufig wenig zuversichtlich. Regierungschef Netanyahu warf der Hamas vor, ihre Position verhärtet zu haben, während Israel Flexibilität gezeigt habe.

Entering the deal with eyes open

Does the elimination of Marwan Issa guarantee us that Israel's far reach will catch all the terrorists wherever they are, and therefore there is no fear of releasing any terrorist in exchange for the return of the hostages, even those whose hands are covered in blood? (...) the Schalit deal in which Saleh al-Aroui was released (...). When he became wanted by Israel, he fled to Turkey. He opened a headquarters there and managed the array of attacks from there. The most famous and cruel of them was the kidnapping of the three teens, Naftali Frankel, Gilad Shaer and Eyal Yifrah and their murders. As long as he was in Turkey, Israel refrained from killing him. (...) Yahya Sinwar was also released in the Schalit deal. (...) Sinwar does not take his nose out of the burrow and surrounds himself with hostages who serve as a human shield. When he'll leave Gaza as

a condition for the return of the hostages and hide in Qatar, Israel will not carry out an operation there to eliminate him for the same reasons as Turkey. (...) If we agree to release the senior terrorists and mass murderers in accordance with Hamas's demand – at least we will do so with our eyes open. We will know that we will not be able to revenge the perpetrators of the atrocity. (...)
Nitsana Darshan-Leitner, IHY, 18.03.24

After Hamas' Concessions, It Would Be a Crime for Israel to Throw a Hostage Deal in the Trash

(...) The issue is one of timing. (...) In the previous deal, 10 hostages were worth one day of cease-fire, now it's one day of cease-fire per hostage. But a truce now will not necessarily be to Israel's detriment. The military needs it in order to prepare for the next stages and to deal with the situation in the north. Israel can also live with the release of the number of prisoners that Hamas is demanding. Israel has detained about 4,000 Palestinians since October 7. The release of 800 to 900 (without the "heavy" prisoners) will help Itamar Ben-Gvir shrug off his great failure as the national security minister who cannot even see to sufficient incarceration facilities for everyone arrested by Israel. (...) Benjamin Netanyahu understands that he has limited room for maneuver. Statements to the media along the lines of "Hamas' demands are ludicrous" are a legitimate opening position for negotiations, but throwing the deal in the trash would be nothing less than a crime. (...) Hamas made a concession in its response to the Paris framework. It is no longer demanding a permanent cease-fire and a complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from the first day of the deal. Nevertheless, it included in its proposal elements by which the six-week truce could become a permanent cease-fire. Israel doesn't need to agree to this, but there is also no need to announce every day that the truce it is only temporary, even if it will reduce (...)

Raviv Drucker, HAA, 19.03.24

Netanyahu's secret plan for post-war Gaza

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (...) wants to see Gaza develop into an independent entity separated from Israel and the West Bank, its development funded by moderate Sunni nations, ultimately transforming it to a Middle Eastern Singapore. (...) In Netanyahu's vision, the demilitarized Gaza Strip would have an open path to the outside world via a land corridor in Egyptian territory, along the border with Gaza, and a sea corridor leading to Cyprus.

(...) Israel would maintain overall security control of the corridors to prevent weapons and the raw material to produce them from being smuggled into Gaza and enable the rebuilding of a terror infrastructure. The administration of Gaza, including law enforcement, public services and tax collection, would be in the hands of local residents under the supervision of a council or body set up with international consent. This body would be authorized by the UN Security Council or another regional authority recognized and approved by Israel. (...) Israel identified an interest in the UAE to play a significant role in the region, replacing Qatar as the predominate conduit to the Palestinians, in order to prove that the Abraham Accords signed with Israel are to the benefit of the entire Arab and Muslim world. The UAE also has the financial means to invest in the rebuilding of Gaza. (...) The UAE is also home to Mohammed Dahlan, the former Fatah representative in Gaza, originally from Gaza, who now serves as an advisor to Mohamed bin Zayed. He is welcomed in Cairo as well. (...)

Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 19.03.24

Israel's real problem is what comes after a Rafah offensive

(...) In Rafah, Hamas has regular battalions and the city's population is more aligned with local clans, including Bedouin families more involved in criminal activity and smuggling, which leads the military to expect less resistance than it had encountered in other places. But what then? The elimination of the military capabilities of Hamas would be complete after a Rafah offensive. The terror group would no longer have the battalions needed to fight the IDF. Israel will then have no clear military targets which would limit its operations to dealing with the random terrorist who would continue to appear through tunnel shafts and attempt to attack troops, while an alternative governing body to Hamas in Gaza, has not been established. Netanyahu's refusal to discuss the day after the war, could spell military and political trouble with the IDF stuck in the Gazan mud, without a way out. (...) the prime minister is leading Israel down a dead-end road, a wall that Israel will encounter, sooner or later. There will be no one to oversee the supply of electricity, water, sewage and social welfare of the two million residents of the Strip, and into that vacuum, Hamas or other extreme armed groups would surely step in bringing chaos. (...)

Avi Issacharoff, YED, 19.03.24

Every Person Killed in Gaza Has a Name

(...) Thirty-one thousand dead from the war in the statistics became 23 human stories. (...) As portraits of our hostages and our dead accompany us in the media, in social media, on the streets, as their stories are being told nonstop for about half a year now, it is necessary to have a look at the other, even darker side of the reality as well, the side we refuse to respect, to acknowledge, to feel or observe. Heba Jourany was a physiotherapist who dreamt of visiting Ireland. Youssef Salama had served as the minister of religious affairs in the Palestinian Authority. Jeries Sayegh belonged to the Greek Orthodox minority; decades ago he had worked as a bank accountant in Israel. (...) Sayel Al-Hinnawi, 22, was a law student who initiated a campaign with the slogan "We want to live," aimed against the Hamas regime in Gaza. Osama Al-Haddad raised pigeons and goats. Belal Abu Samaan was a gym teacher at the American International School in Gaza. Faida Al-Krunz had 15 grandchildren and was about to leave Gaza for the first time in her life for a visit to Turkey. She had already packed her suitcase and had tucked olive oil and za'atar into it. (...)

Gideon Levy, HAA, 20.03.24

Israel Can - and Must - Fight Hamas Without Starving Gazan Civilians to Death

(...) fighting will only stop when both sides agree to it, or Hamas is crushed, and neither is likely soon. Meanwhile nearly two million people are suffering hideously under the siege. Children are already dying of extreme malnutrition – starving to death, in other words. (...) Entire shipments have been turned back for containing "dual use" items such as kits for delivering babies, and small scissors. Only two crossings into Gaza are open for limited hours, and none to the north, where most of the starving people are. Aerial photos from late February show 2,000 trucks waiting to cross at Rafah. Most are still there now, containing enough food to feed everyone in Gaza, and some have been waiting for as long as 90 days. (...) What's happening is tantamount to torturing civilians. Though it is true that some of them support Hamas, it is both immoral and illegal to punish human beings for their opinions. (...) Instead of insisting that sufficient aid be allowed into the territory, the United States has begun dropping aid from planes, and U.S. President Joe Biden announced that the U.S. military will begin building a temporary port, to try to get aid in by sea. Both of these steps are tacit recognition that the current system is totally inadequate – and neither will com-

pensate for refusing to let enough trucks in by land. Airdrops are an inefficient, inadequate, costly, and even dangerous way of providing aid. The temporary port will not be ready for a month or two, and even then it will be difficult and unwieldy to transport food with it. Large numbers of people will sicken and die in the meantime, without better efforts to help them. (...)

Susan Benesch, HAA, 21.03.24

Israel's Responsibilities to Gaza's Children

(...) Israel has every right, and duty, to attack the perpetrators. It must fulfill its obligations to its citizens to safeguard their lives and their homes. But these truths do not mean that this war can be won the way it is currently being fought. (...) Israel can kill the majority of Hamas terrorists. It can destroy much of its weapons. It can cut off most of its supply routes, although to be honest only a small fraction of its tunnels. (...) It can perhaps make it impossible for Hamas to continue its rule over Gaza. But Israel cannot eradicate an ideology. For that it needs a political alternative. And the only alternative is some form of sovereignty and autonomy for Palestinians. (...) As Israel's justified war enters its sixth month, the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Gaza not only fuels the starvation of innocent children (...) but also strengthens the very ideology Israel seeks to destroy. All the children see are Israeli soldiers and bombs. All the children see is their destroyed homes and their dead relatives. All the children feel are their starving bellies. (...) While Israel is not at fault for starting this war it must assume responsibility for the current humanitarian crisis. (...) Blaming Hamas for starting the hostilities does not negate Israel's current responsibilities. (...)

Rabbi Steven Moskowitz, TOI, 21.03.24

Shifa's raid was symbolic of a new security protocol for the IDF

(...) the operation has been considered a success – IDF elite troops fighting alongside forces from the Shin Bet (...), surrounded the hospital, prevented terrorists from leaving, captured several hundred, and killed almost 100 more. It was the second operation that saw IDF soldiers enter Shifa, a place that before October 7 was described as a terrorist fortress that Israel would never be able to enter. The operation this week needs to be looked at in the context of what Israel wants the day after the Gaza war to be like. (...) if a year from now, Israel again sees terrorists hiding inside Shifa, it will need to go in and round them up. That is essentially what victo-

ry in this war will look like. It will not be a win by knockout as some people would like to see but it will be a process, one that takes time. Basically, this is not about the elimination of Hamas but about creating a new security reality in the Gaza Strip in which Israel can enter when it needs and wants and eliminates threats as they arise. That is a worthy goal of this war. (...)

Yaakov Katz, JPO, 22.03.24

Gaza is neither Lebanon nor Vietnam

(...) The war against Hamas brought significant achievements: The IDF now effectively controls most of the strip's territory and nothing happens without Israel's approval – no civilian movement, no transfer of equipment and food, and of course no rehabilitation activity. (...) Hamas, as an organized army (...) and as a governing body managing life in the strip – has been decisively defeated and toppled. (...) Gaza is a unique case because the strip does not provide depth for terror, unlike Lebanon for example, where Hezbollah can fight us while relying on the country's expanses, as well as in Syrian, Iraqi, and even Iranian territory. But the Gaza of post-Oct. 7 is similar, then, to the Judea and Samaria area which also lacks geographic depth for terror, and therefore poses an ongoing security challenge for us, but not a strategic threat. None of this has convinced the Americans. (...) one doesn't need to be a great expert to know that nothing will come of all the American plans, and they will end up being thrown into the dustbin of history, just like previous plans to resolve the conflict that Washington sought to advance. (...)

Eyal Zisser, IHY, 25.03.24

Thou Shalt Not Starve Thy Neighbor

The Israeli government, from its head to its most junior member, refuses to admit that many of those who live in Gaza are civilian noncombatants and that about half of the Strip's inhabitants are children. The public media debate in Israel also ignores this element of the situation in Gaza. (...) According to the United Nations, the entire population of the Gaza Strip, some 2.3 million people, is suffering from high levels of acute food insecurity, and about one in four is on the brink of famine. (...) The emerging data and the images that are beamed to the entire world of starving Gazan children, some of them massing at community kitchens for some hot soup for their family, are driving massive criticism of Israel from the international community. (...) Israel is the occupying power in Gaza; according to international law,

it must take care of the needs of the population under its control, including women, children, the elderly and the sick. (...)
Editorial, HAA, 31.03.24

3. Wehrpflicht für ultraorthodoxe Männer

Mit den bisherigen Ausnahmeregelungen für ultraorthodoxe Männer bei der Wehrpflicht ist es vorbei. Die Regierungskoalition scheiterte daran, ein neues Gesetz zu verabschieden, um Erleichterungen für den ultraorthodoxen Sektor festzulegen. Laut einer einstweiligen Anordnung des Obersten Gerichtshofs in Jerusalem sollen die staatlichen Subventionen für Männer im wehrpflichtigen Alter, die in Religionsschulen studieren, gestrichen werden. Zudem ist die Armee aufgefordert, Einberufungsbefehle an die jungen Ultraorthodoxen zu verschicken. Der seit Jahren schwelende Konflikt um die Wehrpflicht für ultraorthodoxe Männer hatte sich seit Beginn der Offensive im Gazastreifen noch zugespitzt. Nun könnte sie den Fortbestand von Benjamin Netanyahu's Koalition gefährden, an der ultraorthodoxe Parteien beteiligt sind.

IDF prepares for a potential Haredi recruitment

The new draft of the legislation exempting Haredi men from military service (...) fails to address the IDF's immediate needs, reportedly of 7,000 additional soldiers as soon as possible following the war in Gaza, and at least 7,500 more officers needed across the military. (...) Efforts have already been made to minimize social gaps between Israelis from different sectors of society. To do so, a new process was established from the ground up to find the best qualities of each conscript and place him or her in a unit where they would be most beneficial. (...) the IDF began training more male soldiers, aware that most of those working in the screening process today are female soldiers which might cause some discomfort among ultra-Orthodox inductees. (...) the chief of staff was reportedly willing to establish a Haredi yeshiva in the Jordan Valley. (...) From the IDF's perspective, these changes aren't taken for granted, and their purpose isn't only for the sake of reaching the full potential of Haredi enlistment but also to refute claims that the military was barring its doors to the ultra-Orthodox community. (...)

Yossi Yehoshua, YED, 25.03.24

Israel's ultra-Orthodox Won't Serve in the Army. U.S. Jews Need to Speak Up

(...) The question of who will be drafted into Israel's army and who will not be is a matter of enormous consequence, as important in many ways as every other issue on the agenda of American Jews who care about Israel. (...) the current draft system is also screamingly unfair (...). Still, it has not been a priority for American Jews, and not only because they don't serve in the IDF. The fact is, for me and many other American Jews, it has not always been easy to tell where exactly Israelis stand on this matter. (...) The assumption was that the army was doing just fine, and in some ways a smaller, highly educated, technologically advanced army was better than a larger, more inclusive one. And then came October 7, and all the old assumptions were thrown out the window. The army was not fine, rebuilding and reform were essential, and many, many more soldiers were needed. (...) The survival of Israel depends on the strength of its armed forces, and it is now clear to everyone but settler fanatics and Haredi draft-dodgers that Israel cannot sustain itself when so many of its young people refuse to fight. (...)

Eric H. Yoffie, HAA, 25.03.24

Israel Has More Full-time Torah Students Than Ever in Jewish History. That's Become Intolerable

(...) The current situation, in which more men are fulltime Torah students than ever in Israeli history, at a time when Israel needs more soldiers and more workers than ever, is intolerable. (...) there's a good chance Israeli society would agree to support them, just as it partially subsidizes some of the best university students in other fields through their taxes. Beyond that, the state would not provide any funding to the yeshivas themselves or to young ultra-Orthodox men, just as it doesn't support other young adults. Today the state incentivizes even mediocre students to stay in yeshiva, with discounts on their municipal property tax, daycare center tuition, and other services and of course military exemption. (...) Large sectors of society contribute, and do not receive. (...) The division of resources simply has to change in order to create a state that treats everyone fairly and integrates all sectors of society. (...) It is precisely because Torah study is so dear to me that I want to preserve it with a model that is logical and sustainable.

Rivka Neriya Ben-Shahar, HAA, 28.03.24

The Haredi Draft Law Crisis May Be the Start of Israel's Much-needed Reformation

(...) The current bill hasn't just sparked a political crisis; the judicial overhaul can also be added to its resume. The understanding that any unequal conscription law would be overturned by the Supreme Court is what made the judicial overhaul necessary. (...) That Hamas' attack and the subsequent war coincided with the expiration of the cabinet decision exempting the ultra-Orthodox from conscription is no accident. It's impossible to dismiss the connection between these events, or the key role the conscription law has played in all the events of the past few years. It's all connected. This is a reminder that returning to how it was before is impossible. Israel needs a major restructuring. All of us need to change – including the ultra-Orthodox. (...) Their society must adapt a bit more to the time, the place and the climate. If they completely reject any changes, history will force much bigger changes on them. (...) Everything needs a fundamental change – the relationships between religion and state, Jews and Arabs, and the nation-state law. Most urgently, we need an Israeli initiative to end our control over the Palestinians. Of course, the first step is ridding us of the man who destroyed the country's hopes.

Carolina Landsmann, HAA, 29.03.24

Haredim should think twice before toppling the coalition

(...) it is not the failures that led to the most Jews being slaughtered since the Holocaust that will bring down the government, but rather one of the age-old religion-state issues that have long plagued this country. Basically, no matter how hard consecutive governments tried to avoid this issue, it has always come back to haunt them. And the reason is simple – the situation in Israel is unsustainable. (...) The issue though is not only about the inequality in military service. It is also in the way certain rabbis, who receive salaries from the state or whose institutions receive millions of shekels in government funding, actively incite against the country. (...) the maximum the haredim are willing to give in the number of yeshiva students committed to drafting has never met the minimum of what the state or the courts can legally accept. (...) Both the haredim and Netanyahu know that this cannot continue. The question is whether they are willing to go all the way and break up the government over it. (...) while the haredim might have an interest in a new election thinking that it will suspend the new draft bill from advancing, they are aware that the next government might be even harder on them. (...) What they do is a gamble that will determine the political future of the country.

But there is a more important lesson from all of this: the haredi exemption has been an issue that Israel should have solved years ago. (...) issues like these which we turn a blind eye to, do not go away. They need to be dealt with.

Yaakov Katz, JPO, 29.03.24

One Haredi man's view on drafting yeshiva boys

(...) Haredim are not Zionists. (...) One direct consequence of this non-Zionist position is that Jewish sovereignty over any part of the biblical land of Israel (...) is certainly far below the level of putting a single Jewish life in danger in order to achieve it or maintain it. Not for the Kotel, not for Kever Rachel, and certainly not for any Jewish settlement over the Green Line. In principle, all of it should be traded away for the sake of keeping Jews safe from the threat of Arab terrorism – if this would be the predictable result. (...) We don't take any kind of national pride in having a flag flying at the U.N. (...), and having embassies around the world (...). The fact that Israeli companies are leading manufacturers of killer drones and surveillance technology is not a source of Jewish religious pride. Nor do we Haredim take any pride in (...) Israeli performers in Eurovision contests. (...) Existing with a perpetual threat of violence from Arabs and the need for a standing army to thwart it was a bargain the Zionists were willing to live with in exchange for Jewish sovereignty. But they didn't ask any of us non-Zionists if we agreed to that bargain. (...) the burden of maintaining Jewish sovereignty by dint of constant military preparedness shouldn't be put at the feet of those who never did, and never will, choose violence to achieve nationalistic aims. (...) One might argue that all this simply does not apply to the current situation where there is clearly an immediate existential threat to all Jews living in Israel – state or no state. (...) The blessed reality is that Hamas does not have (...) the capacity to pose a real existential threat to most of the Jews of Israel. (...) So we are back to the need for perpetual military preparedness to preserve Jewish sovereignty against the Arab threat of violent retribution for said Jewish sovereignty. A situation that Haredim never bargained for in the first place.

David Kornreich, TOI, 31.03.24

4. Weitere Themen

Sexualisierte Gewalt der Hamas

How much evidence do you need of Hamas sexual abuse?

(...) Be it the Russia-Ukraine War, the Vietnam War, or World War II, and dating much further back, sexual violence has been used to weaken and victimize civilians who have nothing to do with the military. On October 7, we saw Israelis join the list of victims of wartime sexual violence. (...) Slowly but surely, more and more stories came to light. (...) The footage of many of these attacks was paraded proudly online. Still, somehow, many around the world did not believe the Israeli victims. The leading voices of the #MeToo movement (...) were among those who turned a blind eye to the horrors experienced by these Israelis. (...) They looked away. (...) Slowly but surely, however, women are coming forward (...) publicly. (...) released hostage Amit Soussana gave her personal testimony of the sexual violence and physical abuse she endured in Hamas captivity in an eight-hour interview with The New York Times. (...) Now, do you believe us?
Editorial, JPO, 28.03.24

Feminist silence: Hamas' sexual violence

(...) The moral obligation of lovers of peace, and those who hold to the sanctity of human life, is to speak out against injustice. This is particularly so in crimes of violence against the defenseless. It is therefore fitting to expect women's rights groups to speak out on behalf of traumatized females of all ethnic and religious categories. (...) For two months after Oct. 7, representatives of the UN Women's Agency for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment refused to meet with an Israeli women's group (...) The United Kingdom's Sisters Uncut - claimed that allegations of sexual assault against Israeli women on Oct. 7 were "Islamophobic and a racist weaponization of sexual violence." The US National Women's Studies Association, while condemning gender violence in war generally, failed to mention the sexual assaults against Israeli women (...). It was only on March 4, 2024, some five months after Oct. 7, that the United Nations compiled a report acknowledging "clear and convincing information that sexual violence including rape, sexualized torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment," had been employed by Hamas. (...) In striving for purported social justice, contemporary radical feminists (...) themselves (...) are biased against Jews. Typical Marxist revolutionary policy dictates that the oppressed class, the "workers," should overthrow the masters, the "captains of industry" who control them. For feminists, the same

principles apply to issues of gender. (...) these feminists seem to favor the underdogs of society, which is probably how they view themselves. They extol victory over the oppressive establishment whether by Hamas or any other revolutionary group. (...) your silence shocks to the core all who actually do care about justice.

Nils A. Haug, IHY, 29.03.24

PURIM 2024

The dilemma of Israeli Purim

(...) Purim's central theme is the correlation between Jewish collective welfare and the whims of the local ruler. (...) For Israeli Jews (...) Purim (...) is to a great degree a celebration of the end to the circumstances that made the Purim story so reflective of Diaspora Jewish life. The ultimate triumph is that Jews no longer need to depend primarily on palace manipulations in order to overcome their adversaries. (...) this year's Purim celebration presents acute difficulties. On October 7th the IDF was caught unprepared. (...) Since that horrific moment, a remarkable generation of young people has stepped up, motivated to protect Israel's citizens. Yet so far that strength has not yielded the desired results. Until the hostages return safely and security is achieved (...) a fitting Israeli Purim will reassert a theme that was once more central to the Purim experience: the focus on hope for better times. We cannot celebrate our victory over our enemies because we have yet to achieve that goal. (...) An emphasis on hope rather than on a victory that is currently elusive is not only more in tune with the present atmosphere throughout the country, it signals our deep wishes for the fate of the hostages rather than standing in numb indifference or worse. (...)

Adam S. Ferziger, TOI, 21.03.24

A holiday about self-defense: The inconvenient Zionism of Purim

(...) Purim 2024 has seen Jews who have taken a more antagonistic position on Israel, creating content attacking the holiday, revising it, and even downplaying how we should perceive the enemies of the Jews. (...) In the Purim narrative, Persian vizier Haman hated prominent Jew Mordechai and his people because they did not bow before him (...). On October 7, backed by a Persian regime, Hamas launched a massive pogrom in Israel, murdering, raping, and torturing 1200 people, most of

them civilians. (...) In the articles, fringe elements of diaspora Jewry conflated both the Jewish military action against Haman and the one against Hamas forces as vengeance. (...) In the Purim story, the Persian Jews were still in danger after Haman's execution (...). It was fight or die. Since October 7, rockets have continued to fall on Israel, most captives have not been freed, and Hamas has repeatedly said that it would attempt to cast the lots for other "October 7s" in the future. The Israel-Hamas war, like Purim, is not about vengeance, but preventing impending attacks and justice. (...) Military action in the face of a genocidal force saved the Jewish people during the Purim story, and it is within Jewish tradition to follow accordingly. (...) Esther was not in favor of a ceasefire. (...) denying Israel the Jewish right of self-defense will only lead to self-inflicted tragedy. As Haman found out, it is easy to be hung by one's own gallows. (...) Anti-Zionist, radical left wing, and anti-Israel Jews in the United States would do well to heed the warnings that Mordechai gave to Esther about Haman's plot: "Do not imagine that you, of all the Jews, will escape with your life by being in the king's palace."

Michael Starr, JPO, 24.03.24

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

Veröffentlicht im: April 2024

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