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Die Themen dieser Ausgabe

1. Keine vorgezogenen Neuwahlen	1
2. Airbnb boykottiert Siedlungen	3
3. Subventionen für staatskritische Kultur	6
4. Medienquerschnitt	8

1. Keine vorgezogenen Neuwahlen

Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu kann aufatmen. Das tagelange Ringen um die Zukunft der Koalition endete mit der Kapitulation der Siedlerpartei Habayit Hayehudi. Parteichef Naftali Bennett, der nach dem Rücktritt von Verteidigungsminister Avigdor Liberman Netanyahu vor das Ultimatum stellte, entweder er selbst werde ins Verteidigungsministerium einziehen oder den Hut nehmen, gab am Ende überraschend klein bei. Obschon Netanyahu selbst Libermans Erbe antreten wird, will die Siedlerpartei in der Koalition bleiben und „Netanyahu den Rücken stärken“. Wie Liberman, der über den Waffenstillstand mit der Hamas, den er eine „Kapitulation vor dem Terror“ nannte, als Verteidigungsminister zurückgetreten war, hatte Bennett den Regierungschef dafür kritisiert, nicht massiver gegen die Islamisten vorgegangen zu sein. Trotzdem will er ihm noch eine Chance geben, sich als Sicherheitspolitiker unter Beweis zu stellen. Netanyahu hatte zuvor die israelische Öffentlichkeit dazu aufgefordert, ihm zu vertrauen. „Ich werde mich an die Arbeit machen“, versprach er und signalisierte, dass die Entscheidung für den Waffenstillstand auf geheime nachrichtendienstliche Informationen zurückginge. Bennett warnte: „Das Schiff von Israels Sicherheit schwimmt in keine gute Richtung.“ Es sei eine Illusion zu denken, es gäbe keine Lösung für den Terror. Aber Netanyahu habe versprochen, die Richtung zu ändern. Das müsse er nun beweisen.

Averting early elections may be impossible

(...) it seems the early election train is more than ready to leave the station. Netanyahu (...) is now fighting what appears to be the last political battle of his current term in office. The chances of stopping the early election train are slim to impossible, but Netanyahu is still trying. Calling an election against the backdrop of the Gaza fiasco puts a serious dent in the image of the ultimate leader that Netanyahu has spent years crafting, and this is exactly what he never wanted to see happen. (...) the heads of the coalition factions are increasingly warming up to the idea of early elections. (...) the first to jump on this train was Kulanu leader and Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon. (...) He knows the time of giving away state funds via generous programs are over. Israel's deficit is about to rear its head and he knows he is on the brink of turning from a finance minister touting a thriving economy to one imposing cuts and taxes. (...) Netanyahu is bound to keep fighting the notion of early elections until the very last minute. Ironically, his sharpest critic in the coalition may emerge as the one who can prolong the coalition's life. A government with Netanyahu as prime minister and Bennett as defense minister could project the necessary stability to get the Knesset to the natural end of its current term, in November 2019.

Mati Tuchfeld, IHY, 16.11.18

Responsible Politics

(...) Netanyahu is responsible for the slow erosion of his own coalition. (...) Liberman is the second defense minister to resign in this current government. Before him was Moshe Ya'alon (...) while Netanyahu might be legally allowed to hold the defense portfolio, we call on him to appoint a full-time defense minister. It would be reckless and irresponsible for the prime minister to serve in his current post of running the country while at the same time overseeing three different ministries, each of which requires a full-time minister. (...) While Netanyahu is undoubtedly one of Israel's most talented statesmen, it is impossible to serve as prime minister – a non-stop job on its own – while caring for the entire foreign service of this powerful country. The same would apply to the military. The minister of defense needs to oversee military operations, procurement, buildup, draft and weapons development. (...) The government seems like it is in its final days (...) let's not forget what is really important: the stability and success of the State of Israel and its people.

Editorial, JPO, 17.11.18

Security concerns

(...) Bennett appears to have taken the high road and acquiesced to Netanyahu's assertion that it is more important to have a stable government now. (...) The larger struggle Israel has been facing over the last year is the rise of Iranian threats in Syria and Iran's support for Hezbollah in Lebanon. (...) Iran's role requires Israel devote resources to confronting the octopus of threats that emerge from Tehran. (...) Israel's adversaries want to test the country and exploit its internal political divisions. (...) But Israel's enemies must understand that security is not a political issue for Jerusalem. Whoever is in office, whenever elections may come, Israeli security forces and Israel's allies will always be prepared for a harsh response against any threat. If Netanyahu and Bennett are being sincere (...), then they are putting the country's security ahead of their political ambitions or considerations. There are serious concerns about Netanyahu taking on the Defense portfolio in addition to his multitude of responsibilities, especially with all the security challenges Israel faces. But if he seeks wise counsel and listens to the military and intelligence echelon, Israel should not suffer for it in the short term. (...) At the same time, the residents of the South must have security. (...) The larger regional challenges do not mean that local people are less important.

Editorial, JPO, 19.11.18

Netanyahu feels he has Bennett boxed in

(...) Netanyahu has placed Bennett in a bind. Had he heeded his request and given him the defense portfolio, he would have used it for nonstop photo-ops with the troops, donning a military vest (...) and a helmet, while touring the Gaza Strip border or the north. This would have shored up Bennett's military credentials and improved his electoral prospects in the next elections. But now, had he resigned for having been denied this portfolio, Bennett would have been the punching bag in the campaign under the slogan "Don't vote for the person who toppled a right-wing government." But since he decided not to resign after a week of stressing that the government cannot survive without him as defense minister, he was humiliated like a player who is just standing underneath the hoop and trying hopelessly to reach it.

Yehuda Shlezinger, IHY, 19.11.8

Habayit Hayehudi's war

It looks like Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has put out the political fire that started when Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman announced his resignation. (...) Netanyahu trapped Education Minister Bennett (...), when he depicted the security situation as urgent. (...) He cited sensitive information that he couldn't share, adding that everyone would have to make sacrifices. (...) there's a strong suspicion that to prevent the toppling of the government, Netanyahu and Bennett will now try to "prove" to Israelis that Netanyahu's words on the security situation weren't empty and that Bennett was let in on the secret and therefore showed some responsibility. (...) the possibility that there's no urgent security danger, but rather the prime minister falsely depicted the situation so he could manipulate his ministers, is very small consolation for Israelis. The real danger lies in the possibility that Habayit Hayehudi's chiefs gave in on Netanyahu's political demands so that he would meet their military demands. (...) The political combination of events, which was meant to ensure the prime minister's survival, mustn't turn into an excuse for the next war – Habayit Hayehudi's war.

Editorial, HAA, 20.11.19

Netanyahu's challenges as defense minister and right-wing leader

(...) The defense minister's first task is to stabilize the situation on the Gaza border, and the decisions required to achieve this goal will not be to the liking

of the right wing. Netanyahu needs someone to separate between him and the decision-making. After keeping the defense portfolio to himself, during election time, there are two options left: either the required decision will not be taken, or the blame will be placed on the outgoing and incoming chief of staff's shoulders. Outgoing Chief of Staff Gadi Eisenkot has already been labeled as the nation's enemy. Sooner or later it will happen to incoming chief of staff Aviv Kochavi as well. (...) Eisenkot will conclude his tenure on December 31st. (...) As opposed to outgoing Police Commissioner Roni Alsheikh—who waged a desperate campaign to extend his tenure, as well as against his successor—Eisenkot asked to shorten his term rather than to prolong it. (...) it is safe to say that Eisenkot prevented three bloody military campaigns during his time as chief of staff—the first one being on the northern front, the second in the West Bank and the third in Gaza. He did it through an extensive and bold special forces' activity across the border and far-reaching reforms in the IDF. It is a shame that citations are not given for war prevention. Nahum Barnea, YED, 27.11.18

Law will protect the people's vote

It is hard to pass laws when an early election looms overhead. (...) Knesset members change their minds, faction heads scrutinize polls, and important legislation is stalled. This is what is happening now with bills on limits to freedom of expression, punishments for terrorists, and the issue of ultra-Orthodox military conscription, which has existed since the state was founded. (...) The democratic process assumes that the free will of the people is the supreme source of authority. (...) the head of a party is a major element in voters' considerations. Most voters identify parties with their leaders. (...) The Government contains a loophole that should be closed. The bill is not an attack on the president; it merely addresses the vital need to prevent the will of the electorate from being perverted. The current political situation allows for the president to make any Knesset member responsible for forming a coalition to govern the nation, even though, for as long as the nation has existed, presidents have always given that responsibility to the leader of the party that has won the most votes. The proposed amendment does not contain any dramatic innovation but merely seeks to ensure that the accepted practice does not change. It serves the will of voters on both the Left and the Right. In a functioning democracy like Israel, it is inconceivable that an ab-

sence of legal language allows the will of the voters to be manipulated.

Dr. Haim Shine, IHY, 28.11.18

2. Airbnb boykottiert Siedlungen

Die Entscheidung von Airbnb, Inserate israelischer Siedler im Westjordanland von der Webseite zu streichen, sorgte bei israelischen Politiker_innen für heftige Entrüstung. Tourismusminister Yariv Levin sprach von Diskriminierung und kündigte an, nun umgekehrt die Aktivitäten des US-Unternehmens in Israel einzuschränken. Auch Gilad Erdan, Minister für öffentliche Sicherheit, protestierte gegen den Schritt des Zimmervermittlers. Airbnb müsse den „Rassismus gegen israelische Bürger“ erklären, forderte Erdan. Die palästinensische Führung und die Boykottbewegung BDS hingegen lobten die Entscheidung. Airbnb habe lediglich die Position übernommen, die international ohnehin vertreten werde, nämlich zwischen dem Staatsgebiet Israels und den besetzten Gebieten zu unterscheiden. Saeb Erekat, Generalsekretär der Palästinensischen Befreiungsorganisation (PLO), nannte die Entscheidung von Airbnb einen „positiven ersten Schritt“, forderte das US-Unternehmen nun aber dazu auf, auch die Angebote von Siedlern in Ost-Jerusalem von der Webseite zu nehmen.

Boycott Airbnb, unless you're good with anti-Semitism

Are Israel and its supporters making too much of Airbnb's ban on listings in the West Bank? The home rental company's decision to single out the settlements provoked a furious (...) attack from Israel's government. Legal action against Airbnb is being threatened and Zionist activists are already urging Jews to boycott the company (...)

once you accept the principle that those who treat Israel differently from other countries can do so with impunity, you are treading on a dangerous path that ultimately legitimizes even more serious forms of discrimination against the Jewish state and Jews. (...) there is no question that settlements are connected to the conflict even if - contrary to the stance of many of Israel's critics - they are not the only or main obstacles to peace.

Palestinians believe the settlements cause suffering because ensuring the security of the Jews who live there creates problems for their neighbors. But that argument is undermined when you realize that the hassles for Palestinians are the result of terrorism, rooted in the fact that the presence of Jews in their

midst is viewed as an indignity that must not be tolerated and should be resisted by violence. As Airbnb's critics (...) have pointed out, singling out settlements for a ban when the company doesn't extend the same policy to other disputed territories employs a double standard that is a clear act of prejudice. Using the company's criteria, the only distinction between the settlements and Turkish-occupied Cyprus, Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara or Russian-occupied Crimea is that the only nation Airbnb saw fit to discard from its network is the only Jewish state on the planet. (...) To deny to Jews rights that you don't seek to deny to others is bias. And bias against Jews is anti-Semitism. (...) Regardless of where you stand on the issue of the future of the settlements, those companies that succumb to BDS campaigns are granting a legitimacy it doesn't deserve to a movement whose goal is antithetical to any hope for peace - as well as undermining the struggle against anti-Semitism. (...) Jonathan S. Tobin, HAA, 21.11.18

3,000+ Sign Airbnb Petition for Judea and Samaria

(...) a petition urging Airbnb to restore Judea and Samaria Jewish Listings on its site (...) has already surged past 3,000 signatures (...). We are in shock over Airbnb's decision to ban only Jewish owned listings from the disputed regions of Judea and Samaria (West Bank.) Meanwhile, the company has not removed the Arab-owned listings from the same areas, thus deepening the injustice and revealing a blatantly discriminatory policy. (...) the regions of Judea and Samaria (West Bank) are home to over 750,000 Jewish people spread out in 200 communities, including those located in the east side of Jerusalem, Israel's Eternal Capital City. We hope that Airbnb will leave politics in the hands of the politicians and continue to allow the law-abiding Jewish residents of Judea and Samaria region to take part in the wonderful project that is Airbnb. (...) Yosef Rabin, TOI, 21.11.18

How Airbnb's settlement ban could boost Israeli tourism

(...) to stop listing rental properties in unlawful settlements in the West Bank is good news not only for Palestinian landowners whose land has been stolen but potentially also for Israeli tourism. (...) The decision will remove around 200 rental properties in Jewish settlements which contribute to serious human rights violations. (...) The case against the settlements is strong. It is a war crime for the Israeli

authorities to transfer Israeli civilians into the West Bank. The authorities operate a two-tiered system there — one that discriminates against Palestinians, and another that benefits Israelis. They seize Palestinian land and give it to Jewish settlers; they set up checkpoints and roadblocks and issue military orders that restrict Palestinians' right to travel. They provide settlers with land, water, infrastructure and financial incentives, while forcibly displacing Palestinians and preventing them from building on 99 percent of the state land under Israeli administrative control. Global tourism companies like Airbnb and Booking.com, which earn revenue from listing homes in Israeli settlements, have contributed to making settlements economically viable. (...) Airbnb's decision will benefit Israeli tourism, unless Levin is foolish (...) enough to carry out his threat to retaliate against the company. Airbnb has been a boon for the industry, advertising thousands of rentals throughout the country (...) Yet Airbnb's listings in Israel are tainted by those in illegal settlements in occupied territory. Nearly half of the properties in settlement that were listed on Airbnb were falsely listed as being inside Israel. In other words, tourists wanting to stay in Israel could inadvertently find themselves in accommodations built on land that is stolen, off-limits to Palestinians and therefore inherently discriminatory. (...) The deliberate blurring of lines means that even some Airbnb hosts don't realize they live in settlements. That confusion is the product of decades of Israeli moves to extend Israeli law to the West Bank and to separate many Israeli settlements from the rest of the West Bank with fences and walls. (...) Airbnb made the right decision to stop contributing to settlement abuses. (...)

Sari Bashi, HAA, 22.11.18

Worthy reminder

The hysterical response of Israel's cabinet ministers to the announcement by Airbnb that it will remove rental listings in West Bank settlements is definitive proof that the settlement enterprise is at the top of the government's agenda. The right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is prepared to pay dearly in every possible area of life (...) in order to eliminate the distinction between sovereign Israel and the occupied territories. (...) Airbnb is boycotting not the state, but only just the settlements, which are built on occupied territory. (...) But this is precisely the distinction the annexationist right seeks to blur. (...) the Airbnb decision is another reminder that the distinction between sovereign

Israel and the occupied territories remains firm and valid. The position of the world is that the settlements are illegal. The world recognizes sovereign Israel and refuses to recognize the settlements. (...) Editorial, HAA, 22.11.18

Countering Airbnb

(...) While Erdan is clearly right in condemning Airbnb's decision as unfair and unjust, boycotting the boycotters is unlikely on its own to solve the problem. It would be much more effective for Israel to lobby governments around the world to stop the BDS movement's drive to harm not only the settlements but the Jewish state itself. (...) Looking at the big picture, Israel needs to crush the BDS lie that it is comparable to apartheid South Africa by showing that most Jews and Arabs live here peacefully (...) and that decisions such as Airbnb ultimately harm prospects for peace rather than encourage them. (...) We urge Airbnb to reconsider its decision to feed the monster that calls itself BDS, which not only undermines efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict peacefully but ultimately aims to see the end of Israel.

Editorial, JPO, 22.11.18

Airbnb falls for BDS's antisemitic trap

(...) The obvious question is why Israel? Why not any other conflict zone around the world, or the many dictatorships and closed regimes? (...) If they were honest, Airbnb's executives would admit that this change in policy targeting Jewish-owned homes in the West Bank followed a coordinated and well-financed campaign led by BDS NGOs. (...) There is no doubt that the company feared being included in the forthcoming UNHRC "blacklist" of companies doing business over the 1949 Armistice line, and other forms of negative publicity. (...) As Airbnb states, their "global platform" is offered in 191 countries and regions and in more than 81,000 cities. These include human rights violators on massive scales, such as China, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and even war-torn Yemen and Somalia. Airbnb listings can be found in the occupied Western Sahara, Nagorno-Karabakh and Northern Cyprus. There is even one listing for Russian-occupied Crimea.

State sponsors of terror are not being removed from Airbnb's platform, nor are countries where gender equality is nearly nonexistent. Only Jewish-owned properties in the West Bank have been the subject of an intensive NGO campaign. (...)

Becca Wertman, JPO, 22.11.18

Saeb Erekat, Airbnb and BDS

(...) PLO Secretary General Saeb Erekat (...) has been celebrating a decision by the "Airbnb" international home-renting company, to remove listings of vacation apartments in Israel's West Bank (...) settlements (...). The Airbnb decision is premised on a (...) letter sent by Erekat, in the name of "The State of Palestine," (...) condemning "illegal colonization of Palestine" (...). Erekat's oft-repeated and tedious propaganda in this, as well as other issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian relationship, is based on flawed, slanted and highly partisan determinations, exaggerations and lies. All these in fact belie his own deep involvement in negotiating the Oslo Accords with Israel. (...) in allowing itself to be manipulated by Erekat, Airbnb is prejudicing a large basis of customer support among Jews, Christians and Muslims all of whom work together in the very areas which Airbnb is now boycotting. In fact, the homes being used in the West Bank that are now being boycotted by Airbnb, are a subject for ongoing negotiation under the Oslo Agreements. (...) Despite the fact that Erekat represents himself in the name of the "State of Palestine," such a state does not exist and has never existed and is incompatible with the accepted international law requirements for statehood. (...) Since there exists no Palestinian state, then there is no "occupied Palestinian state," or "occupied Palestinian territory," as claimed by Erekat. (...) the malicious allegations by Erekat regarding "illegal colonization" (...) are totally incompatible with his own, and the Palestinian commitments in the Oslo Accords, as drafted by Erekat himself. (...) The fact that Airbnb has allowed itself to be manipulated and pressured into singling out Israel and joining a boycott of Israel's towns and villages in the West Bank is regrettable. (...)

Alan Baker, JPO, 22.11.18

Liberal Zionists faced a critical test with Airbnb. We flunked it

(...) settlements are (...) nearly globally viewed as a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Israel's (...) This insistence on erasing the Green Line, the 1967 borders, is hardly new. (...) for those who reject the international consensus on the illegality of the settlements, this could only be an act of anti-Semitism – for, in their eyes, it discriminates against Jews "for the sole reason that they are Jewish," an ironic statement considering the homes often sit on stolen land in all-Jewish communities that local Palestinians cannot enter, let alone rent in. The settlements are equated with Israel, and Israel with

the Jewish people. Ergo, opposing the settlements is anti-Semitism. (...) the majority of American Jewish liberal Zionists (...) seem to be in full support of the rightwing position, conflating boycott of the Jewish settlements with boycott of Israel itself. It's a telling conflation, but a dangerous one. (...) Airbnb actually does apply this ethos to other regions. (...) they have officially banned all listings in Russian-occupied Crimea for quite some time. (...) Their stated goal is not to shut down operations in every non-democratic country, or in every country that limits which nationalities may visit, but rather to avoid profiting from foreign occupation at the heart of larger regional disputes and so as not to "contribute to human suffering." (...) Airbnb – which two years ago waived its fees in Israel in order to alleviate the stress of those left homeless by devastating fires – has not boycotted Israel in retaliation for its government's commitment to the settlements. It still operates in Israel, including East Jerusalem and the Golan! (...)

Joshua Shanes, HAA, 26.11.18

Airbnb's action is immoral and illegal

(...) Airbnb has adopted a partisan approach, aligning itself with pro-Palestinian voices (...). The company's pretence of acting in a fair or neutral manner is therefore nothing but a sham. The wider issue is one of double standards. (...) Israeli Jews in this disputed territory are prevented from listing their homes for rent while Christians and Muslims are free to do so. (...) the world is plagued with territorial conflicts over disputed territory ranging from Turkey's control of Northern Cyprus to Morocco's occupation of Western Sahara, from China's annexation of Tibet and Armenian controlled Nagorno Karabach to Russian occupied South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Homes are available in all these places yet somehow Airbnb has forgotten its moral imperative to discontinue them. The double standard is glaring. (...) the policy is most likely illegal. American jurisdiction, specifically the Export Administration Act and the Tax Reform Act, both rule out a US 'person' from participating in boycotts at the request of a foreign government. (...) Quite rightly, Airbnb faces the threat of legal action following its decision. (...) The Jew among nations is being treated in a discriminatory and highhanded fashion. It is rank hypocrisy and, in effect, antisemitic. (...) Those who lead the campaign to boycott Israeli products and services do not seek two states for two peoples. (...) By delisting Jewish settlements, Airbnb has put itself on the wrong side of the debate.'

Jeremy Havardi, TOI, 27.11.18

3. Subventionen für staatskritische Kultur

Israels Kulturministerin Miri Regev ist mit ihrem umstrittenen Gesetzentwurf zur Kürzung staatlicher Fördergelder für „illoyale“ Künstler_innen vorerst gescheitert. Die Abstimmung über ihre Initiative ist auf unbestimmte Zeit verschoben worden. Aktuell besteht in der Knesset keine Mehrheit dafür. Die Reform sah vor, die Vergabe von Mitteln zur Kulturförderung an staatstreue Arbeit zu knüpfen. So sollte das Kulturministerium dazu befugt werden, öffentliche Gelder für Kultureinrichtungen zu kürzen, die die Existenz Israels als demokratischen und jüdischen Staat anzweifeln, zu Rassismus oder Gewalt aufrufen. Finanzminister Moshe Kahlon von der Mittepartei Kulanu, der bei der ersten Lesung für das Gesetz gestimmt hatte, kündigte nun an, seinen Abgeordneten Stimmfreiheit zu gewähren, womit die Mehrheit für den Gesetzentwurf nicht mehr gewährleistet ist.

Prevent last-minute legislation

(...) it's vital to prevent last-minute legislation and stop the long list of destructive flagship laws being pushed by Benjamin Netanyahu's governing coalition. (...) Culture Minister Miri Regev will try to drag the coalition into passing her pet project, the so-called "cultural loyalty" bill, which allows her to reduce state funding to certain cultural institutions or even stop it entirely. (...) The only place for this terrible bill – which essentially seeks to buy political bias in culture with cash – is in the garbage can. And this is especially true when the governing coalition promoting this bill is running on its last drop of gas. (...) the coalition also has a long list of other bad bills awaiting final approval, including one that would let the Knesset override Supreme Court rulings. Like the cultural loyalty bill, this legislation, too, ought to be shredded. (...) A proposed bill that makes it easier for ministers to appoint legal advisers who identify with their policies, castrates the gatekeepers and effectively violates the checks and balances of Israeli democracy is yet another piece of legislation that a Knesset whose days are numbered has no moral authority to pass. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 19.11.18

An infringement on freedom of expression

(...) The bill does (...) grant Culture and Sports Minister Miri Regev powers that were not vested in her predecessors (...). One can cautiously assume

that theater directors agree, in principle, that shows on their stage should not undermine state principles, but the power vested in the culture minister's hands raises concerns that she might take it upon herself to decide whether a certain show or event violates the law. (...) The bill does not seek to censor freedom of expression and creativity, provided that taxpayers' money does not finance the cultural body in question. That, however, is exactly what the heads of Israeli cultural institutions are worried about, the need to go through plays or scripts with a fine tooth comb for fear they would be denied funding, which could eventually amount to self-censorship for fear of violating the conditions that make them eligible for state funding. (...) In a free country (...) creators of political satire use state symbols such as the flag in their work (...) under the new law, the culture minister would have the power to deny them funding. This is a slippery slope that may place some cultural institutions at financial risk to the point of endangering its existence. Under these circumstances, the culture minister (...) becomes a censor of culture and her potential ability to exercise her authority using the treasury is a frightening prospect, as she may threaten the very existence of cultural institutions if she decides that the performances they present "undermine state principles." (...) Yaakov Ahimeir, IHY, 25.11.18

Tel-Hai's 'concept'

The nationalist zeitgeist of gagging others is penetrating every part of society. Government censorship, which grew stronger (...) with the advancement of the so-called "cultural loyalty" bill, is already being joined by another kind of censorship that's no less dangerous: self-censorship. (...) The plague of gagging has now spread to the last place one would have expected to find it – student unions. While in most countries, students are agents of change, subversive and sometimes even revolutionary, it has once again become clear that in Israel, nobody is more subservient and obedient than college students. The student union at Tel-Hai College (...) canceled a performance (...) by rapper Tamer Nafar as part of its Campus Carnival. (...) Nafar is a rapper, and rap is a form of political and social protest art. (...) An Arab protest artist from Lod is liable to spark controversy on the northern campus, and student union officials didn't want any controversy. This is a big victory for the government, and especially for Culture Minister Miri Regev. Soon there will be no need for laws. The campaign of intimidation will do its work, and educational and cultural institu-

tions will internalize the message even without legislation: At Israeli campuses, museums, theaters and concert halls, there's no longer any room for diverse voices, but only for art mobilized on the government's behalf, art that serves the one permitted narrative. All other voices will be silenced. (...) it's necessary to reiterate, once again, that artists must be free to express their opinions. There is no art without freedom. (...) Editorial, HAA, 26.11.18

No, democracies don't have 'cultural loyalty' laws

(...) In Israel, as in other countries, freedom of expression (...) is not absolute. The criminal code places limitations on freedom of expression when it is invoked in such a way as to pose a threat to the security of the state or of its citizens, or to other key values or interests. (...) Freedom of expression, including artistic freedom, plays an important role in affording individuals an opportunity for self-fulfillment and in facilitating open public discourse, the search for truth, criticism of the regime, and true democracy. All these demand that limitations on freedom of expression be cautious and measured, and imposed only by those entrusted with doing so, rather than by those who might seek to silence free expression because of other interests. (...) Israel's culture "scene" depends on public funding, as is the situation in other countries. Other democracies have developed systems of funding culture that create a healthy buffer between politics and cultural activity. (...) The guiding ethos (...) is to ensure that cultural activities are free from government interference, with funding decisions made independently of artistic content. (...) the primary goal of the bill was to undermine equality among artists and cultural consumers, to promote culture that passes the test of specific ideas and opinions, and to induce self-censorship by artists and cultural institutions, so as to fall in line with the "minister's wishes." The Minister of Culture has an important role in formulating culture policy and in setting priorities, such as investing budgets in the country's periphery or in certain artistic fields. But handing over to the minister the power to decide whether a work of art or a cultural production is "kosher," based on amorphous and ideological criteria would constitute a dangerous change (...). It would castrate the expression and creativity that are at the heart of culture and art, and of their contribution to society. (...) Edna Harel-Fisher, TOI, 27.11.18

4. Medienquerschnitt

Annäherung an arabische Welt

Arab world prefers stability in Israel

(...) we are in the midst of a golden age in terms of Israel's relations with the Arab world. (...) many in the Arab world (...) regard Israel (...) as a solid regional player – one they can cooperate with and even rely on when necessary. Gulf states (...) are concerned about the regional threats, primarily those posed by Iran, and know that Israel and the United States are collaborating on this issue. (...) the Arab world is up to its neck in domestic problems and most Arab countries have neither the energy nor the ability to deal with Israel's internal political strife. They have even lost all interest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and all they want to do now is remove this issue from the regional agenda and prevent it from becoming an obstacle to improving their relations with Israel. This is why they are willing to support efforts to promote a solution to the conflict that will be acceptable to Israel and to the Arabs, even if not necessarily to the Palestinian leadership. (...) Israeli democracy is admired by many in the Arab world, and it can contribute to bolstering Israel's regional image as a strong and stable country whose system of government should be emulated. Eyal Zisser, IHY, 19.11.18

Gewalt gegen Frauen

Violence against women

It's a scourge on the country that refuses to go away. Every time it happens, we're shocked anew as the news comes out about another murdered woman. (...) Part of the blame can be traced straight to the government. Last week, the coalition voted against a bill to set up a parliamentary committee of inquiry into the phenomenon of murder of women in Israel. (...) While it is too late for all the victims of violence, it's not too late for the government to begin acting in earnest against the phenomenon. The Knesset rejection of the parliamentary committee of inquiry points to a partisan aspect of an issue that should cut across all party and ideological affiliations. We agree with the words of Sara Netanyahu, who said on Sunday during the visit with her husband to the women's shelter for victims of domestic violence: "On this issue, there really should be no coalition and opposition. It's an issue we all share." Editorial, JPO, 27.11.18

Violence against women is the norm that needs to change

(...) Violent behavior stems from benighted, primitive, distorted and dangerous perception, according to which, men can and are entitled to control women as if they were a tradable object (...) we are still witnessing expressions of horrific violence towards women both in the Western world, and in the third-world, especially in countries where radical Islam is prevalent, the current era is the most enabling one for women throughout history. (...) our sisters in countries governed by patriarchal communities are slowly raising their heads in order to save themselves from their father, brother, and husband who decide everything for them. (...) In the 21st century's reality, a woman is as much of a hunter as a man—whether it is in the jungle called Tinder, or while performing their duties as heads of states, scientists, senior executives, or just women who provide for their families. (...) the understanding the masculine hegemony diminishes in our reality (...) is encouraging. The more the need for behavioral and cognitive changes is instilled in the young generation, the more we can be certain norms will change. Killing of women will become less and less frequent, which will prompt the economic, mental, sexual, physical and psychological violence to decrease as well. Anat Lev Adler, YED, 27.11.18

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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