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1. Wachsende internationale Kritik an Israels Annexionsplänen

Die Regierung unter Benjamin Netanyahu hat die ab dem 1. Juli gemäß dem Koalitionsabkommen mögliche Annexion von Teilen des besetzten Westjordanlandes aufgeschoben. Mit ausschlaggebend für diese Entscheidung dürfte die heftige Kritik aus der arabischen Welt und von EU-Staaten sein. Jordanien und der Libanon warnen ihren Nachbarn Israel vor dem unilateralen Schritt. Auch der Deutsche Bundestag rief die israelische Regierung dazu auf, von der Annexion palästinensischer Gebiete abzusehen, die "im Widerspruch zu internationalem Recht" stehe, wie es in einem gemeinsamen Antrag der Regierungsparteien heißt. Bundesaußenminister Heiko Maas (SPD) warnte in der Debatte, das israelische Vorhaben bedrohe die Stabilität der gesamten Nahost-Region: "Frieden lässt sich nicht durch einseitige Schritte erreichen." Maas war erst vor wenigen Wochen trotz Corona persönlich nach Jerusalem gereist, um den Standpunkt der deutschen Regierung der israelischen Regierung persönlich zu übermitteln.

Is annexation really good for the Jews?

When Benjamin Netanyahu first ran for prime minister in 1996, his campaign slogan was "Netanyahu is good for the Jews." Now, as he is set to embark on his unilateral annexation of parts of the West Bank, it seems an opportune moment to put the same

slogan to the test in order assess the costs and benefits of this plan. Is unilateral wide annexation good for the Jews? From my home in the settlement of Kfar Adumim, I can see the Judean Desert all the way to the Dead Sea and the road from Jerusalem to Jericho; I have a clear view of the area that separates between the Arab states east of the Jordan River and Jerusalem and Israel in the west. I live on the cusp of Wadi Qelt as it traverses the West Bank, separating Judea to the south from Samaria to the north. Indeed, Israeli limited annexation would somewhat diminish the risk that a Palestinian state, if established, could pose a security threat to Israel. However, the benefit from annexation is limited. On the one hand, Israel has had control of this land for more than 53 years without having annexed any of it. On the other hand, a one-sided move is no guarantee that future land negotiations will not include this part of the West Bank as well. (...) Israel's improving relations with Arab nations (...) could take a turn for the worse. The added potential benefit by annexing our already existing Jordan Valley security strip is not worth risking our relations with Jordan which serve as our much more significant security buffer. (...) And what of the impact of unilateral annexation on Israel's standing in the rest of the world? (...) Wouldn't it be advisable to listen as well to voices from Europe, the market for one third of Israel's exports, and to warnings of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the head of the only country that has sold Israel its much-needed submarines?

And this potential harm to Israel's foreign relations and security could be followed by economic damage as well. (...) Yet the major cost of a one-sided annexation of parts of the West Bank is in the long-term. Annexation that would prevent a future separation from the Palestinians would weigh heavily on Israel and could lead to its demise; Israel's Jewish and Democratic nature might be unsustainable when millions of Palestinians are counted among its residents. (...)

Sallai Meridor, YED, 17.06.20

Israel will annex nothing

(...) The use of the word "annexation" by the Israeli government is simply another indication of the fact that Israel never misses an opportunity to miss an opportunity to promote itself effectively. The use of the word by others is an indication of ignorance or hostility. The so-called West Bank was occupied, and in fact annexed, by Jordan (...). Israel drove the Jordanians out of Samaria and Judea (...), occupying territory assigned to the future Jewish state by international treaty, ratified by the League of Nations and confirmed in the charter of the United Nations. (...) The two-state concept, if ever implemented, would simply have involved Israel giving up, voluntarily, part of its territory. Whether that would have been wise or stupid is another question. Should Israel extend its civil administration to 30% of Samaria and Judea it would be implicitly declaring that it has no right to the other 70%. (...) Unfortunately, the whole thing was unnecessary. Under the terms of the Trump "deal", Israel could have said "OK, when we see progress in the Palestinian fulfillment of their requirements to qualify for sovereignty, we will apply our sovereignty to the rest", in the meantime maintaining the effective security arrangements as they were. (...)

Dr. Norman Bailey, GLO, 18.06.20

The importance of bipartisan support for annexation

Israel is on the verge of making history (...): Annexing Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria, making them finally a legal part of the State of Israel. (...) this would be one of the most important and courageous steps that Israel's leadership has ever taken. (...) over half of the 430,000 Israeli citizens living in the West Bank settlements reside in the large blocs (...) these settlers are not going anywhere, and there is no reason to evacuate them under any peace agreement. (...) For years, Israel has sought international support and recognition for

its claim to Judea and Samaria. (...) This time, Israel has the principal green light of its closest ally, the White House. (...) However, it seems that when it comes to the annexation of summer 2020, Israel has only half of the support from its ally overseas. (...) In fact, almost the entire Democratic Party expressed its discontent from the move. (...) This should be a warning to all of us. True, we should not allow our actions to be dictated for us by foreign forces, and should be free and independent to make our own choices regarding our country's future. But this move could have dramatic consequences for Israel (...). We cannot allow a scenario in which (...) a Democratic president enters the White House and reverses such a move. It would not only put Israel in an embarrassing position in front of the world, it would be a devastating blow. (...) When we hear such strong opposition from the international community – from Europe and the Arab world – we need to make sure annexation is being done right.

Editorial, JPO, 18.06.20

In annexation, it's maximum land, minimum Palestinians

For the time being, Israeli sovereignty should be extended to Jewish settlements or territory that is not populated by Palestinian residents. That would lessen the opposition to the planned unilateral annexation promised by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and would satisfy the demands of the settlers themselves because it would solve most of their daily problems. (...) However, Israel, as the civil administration of the area, must aggressively enforce regulations to stop illegal Palestinians construction. Because even if one day we will have a partner on the other side to talk to, there won't be much left to talk about. Ultimately, Israel should strive to hold on to maximum territory with the minimum number of Palestinians living there. The solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ultimately lies within the borders of three territorial principals: Israel must never leave the West Bank and the Jordan Valley (...); the Palestinian population living on territories set to be annex, must not become Israeli citizens (...) and finally, there must never be a sector or population living within our borders that does not enjoy equality in their civil right. With those three principles in mind, the room for political maneuver is limited but enough to get us to a better future. (...)

Gilad Sharon, JPO, 20.06.20

Let us nurture the EU-Israel relationship, not gamble it

For many of us in Europe, the relationship with Israel and Palestine is quite personal. (...) The EU and its member states have been consistently very active in supporting the two parties toward this goal. (...) We also understand Israeli concerns and are committed to Israel's security, which is non-negotiable for us. (...) For us in Europe, it is painful to see the prospect of the two-state solution, the only realistic and sustainable way to end this conflict, at risk. The project of annexation as announced by the government would mean the end of this solution. (...) Annexation affects people. It affects not only Palestinians, but also Israelis, the neighborhood and even us in Europe. Any violation of international law, particularly when involving the annexation of territories, has implications for the rules-based international order; it can therefore also affect negatively other conflict zones. Annexation is not the way to create peace with the Palestinians and to improve Israel's security. It will not strengthen the negotiations process as some have suggested. (...) Peace cannot be imposed, it has to be negotiated, regardless of how difficult this can be. (...) Josep Borrell, JPO, 30.06.20

2. Black lives matter – Diskurs auf Hebräisch

Der Tod des Afro-Amerikaners George Floyd, der bei der Festnahme während einer Demonstration in Minneapolis von einem Polizisten erstickt wurde, entfacht die Rassismus-Debatte in Israel neu. Im Zentrum steht der Umgang mit den diversen Minderheiten, darunter die ultraorthodoxe Bevölkerung, die Immigrant_innen aus Äthiopien und ihre Nachfahren sowie die arabischen Staatsbürger_innen. Auch der latente Streit zwischen den Bürger_innen, deren Vorfahren einst aus christlichen Ländern einwanderten, und den Misrachim, die ihre Wurzeln in überwiegend muslimischen Ländern in Nordafrika haben, kommt mit den Entwicklungen in den USA wieder in Schwung.

Why Israelis backed the Civil Rights Movement but fear Black Lives Matter

(...) Many Israelis (...) were outraged by the decision to suspend screenings of "Gone with the Wind," the resignation of a New York Times editor who published an op-ed calling on the army to disperse demonstrators by force (...) The objections were strongest on the Israeli right. Attacks on Jewish businesses in Los Angeles were cited as proof that

the protests were antisemitic (...) The protests, in general, were ascribed on the right to radical, anti-Zionist left-wing groups out to topple Israel's ally and savior, Donald Trump. Sixty years ago, when the Civil Rights Movement was fighting for equality, the Israeli reaction was markedly different. Israeli newspapers were full of articles supporting African Americans and identifying with their struggle. Prodded by American-raised Golda Meir, socialist Israel saw itself as a champion of awakening Africa and its sympathies extended to the continent's descendants in the U.S. (...) Israel, however, is a completely different country today, and its attitudes have changed accordingly. Expressions of anti-Zionism, antisemitism and support for Palestinians among Black protesters are magnified to stain the entire movement. Israeli propagandists and their allies in the U.S. Jewish establishment routinely targeted Black Lives Matter as inherently anti-Israeli, if not anti-Semitic. (...) Fifty-three years of occupation since the Six Day War have fundamentally changed Israel. After more than 40 years of right-wing rule, Israelis identify and are identified more with ruling whites than with oppressed Blacks. (...) Chemi Shalev, HAA, 16.06.20

A black and white Trojan horse

The local progressive tribe ignores all local context and embraces the international narrative of "racism" in its attempt to turn Israel into a state of all its citizens. (...) there is racism in Israel, both open and hidden, toward Ethiopians, Arabs, and Mizrahi Jews. It's a disgrace. However, anyone who espouses the "Racism, period!" doctrine is mistaken and misleading others. The root of the deception lies with a characteristic of all radical movements everywhere in the world: they blatantly ignore local realities, which naturally requires acts designed to dupe and engineer public thinking. (...) The parents and grandparents of the young Ethiopian-Israelis made aliyah in daring operations, at great danger to themselves: men and women died in the Sudanese desert, all for the sake of fulfilling the generations-long dream of reaching "Yerusalem." Of course, this is the total opposite of the story of African-Americans, which is rooted in a bitter history of slaves brought to America to be traded in iron chains. The difference is writ large, but the leaders of the progressive tribe don't care. (...) The Ethiopians in Israel are merely a local arm of the American reality, the same as cotton-pickers in Alabama, and Solomon Tekah is just a local version of George Floyd. Silence, erasure, and ignoring the preexisting background of the subject

and the community are telltale signs of what is defined in education as indoctrination. Brainwashing. (...)

Dr. Yitzhak Dahan, IHY, 24.06.20

Reconciliation starts with ending racism

During the campaigns (...) our politicians learned the art of how to drag the public discourse to its lowest point. (...) We also witnessed racism at its worst. (...) After the coronavirus pushed Likud and Blue and White into a unity government, it was decided in the coalition agreements that a "reconciliation cabinet" would be formed (...). The idea of forming such a cabinet seems groundbreaking; after years of division and hate between groups in Israeli society, finally, our representatives want to take responsibility and stop the hate. They want to act against it instead of creating it. (...) the prime minister's son, Yair Netanyahu, wrote on Twitter (...) referring to protests against construction over a Muslim cemetery in Jaffa: "The riots prove that there is no chance for coexistence in Tel Aviv-Jaffa, and all the minorities must leave the city." This was written by the son of Israel's prime minister, a prime minister who is meant to ensure that there is coexistence in Israel. If this is how his own son speaks, what can we expect of other people? The Western world is currently engaged in a battle against racism. We see that with the toppling of statues in the US, the United Kingdom and beyond. In Israel though, it seems sometimes that we are moving backwards. (...) How does the son of the prime minister have the guts to say that a minority, who are residents of a city just like the majority, must leave it? Forming a reconciliation cabinet is a blessed move. Jews and Arabs, Ashkenazim and Mizrachim, religious and secular, Left and Right all need to come together to find a way to unite and work to solve our nation's problems as one. (...) After all (...) it is time to reconcile.

Editorial, JPO, 27.06.20

The new blood libel

Roger Waters never stops. It was clear that any anti-Semitic statement, as far-fetched as it might seem when making its appearance on the fringes of the first act, would appear center stage for Waters' third act. "The murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis," Waters claimed in the week after his killing by a Minneapolis police officer, "was done with a technique invented by the IDF, by the occupation forces." From there he launched into vivid descriptions of "cutting off the blood supply of the carotid artery to the brain," a method, his addled brain insisted, was

created by "Israeli experts" who teach American law enforcement officers "how to murder the blacks." Well, for the information of all anti-Semites out there (...), it was actually the U.S. Supreme Court who permitted American policemen to use the "suffocation technique" after an event in 1976. (...) "[F]or many years," wrote Justice Thurgood Marshall - the first Black justice on the U.S. Supreme Court - in the minority position, "it has been the official policy of the city to permit police officers to employ chokeholds in a variety of situations where they face no threat of violence." The ruling was handed down in 1983. Marshall noted that from 1975 to 1980, the Los Angeles Police Department used chokeholds 975 times. Sixteen of those incidents ended in death, and 12 of the dead were Black. In other words, the claim that the Israeli police taught the "chokehold" method to the United States is so false and so abominable that only a fanatical anti-Semite could utter it. Enter Roger Waters, who is undoubtedly one. (...)

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 30.06.20

3. Weiterer Anstieg der Corona-Neuinfektionen

In Israels Krankenhäusern werden die Corona-Abteilungen wieder geöffnet. Sie waren erst vor einigen Wochen geschlossen worden, nachdem der Kampf gegen die Epidemie erfolgreich verlaufen war. Inzwischen stiegen die Neuinfektionen mit dem Coronavirus auf den neuen Höchstwert von 868 an einem Tag. Die Polizei riegelte Wohnviertel in den Städten Tiberias, Elad, Lod und Ashdod ab. Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu fährt seit Beginn der Krise einen Zickzackkurs. Im März mahnte er mit drastischen Worten, verglich den Coronavirus mit der Pest. Es ginge um Leben und Tod. Im Mai wurde er vorsichtig optimistisch, wandte sich lächelnd an die Bevölkerung und forderte sie auf, einen Kaffee oder ein Bier trinken zu gehen. Infolge der neuen Fallzahlen entschied nun die Regierung erneut über scharfe Maßnahmen, darunter die Verdopplung der Bußgelder für das Nichttragen von Mund-Nasen-Masken auf umgerechnet 130 Euro. Israel galt im weltweiten Vergleich als besonders erfolgreich im Kampf gegen die Pandemie. Der strenge Lockdown führte das Land indes auch in eine tiefe Rezession und ließ die Arbeitslosenzahlen in dramatische Höhen ansteigen.

Israel's class system in a coronavirus world

As far as the coronavirus is concerned, we live in a reality where there is a clear class system. Our leaders can do whatever they want: have their kids over for a holiday meal when the rest of us are forbidden from leaving the house, celebrating with the rich (...) while we must avoid gatherings (...). My children's high school was closed down last week after one girl tested positive for COVID-19; that was all it took to send five grades, hundreds of children and dozens of teachers home to quarantine. There was no discussion and no consultation with parents. (...) Hundreds of children were told to come to the local HMO branch (...) in order to be tested for the virus. (...) In the Knesset, however, at least two confirmed COVID-19 carriers walked the halls a couple of weeks ago. But unlike the girl who contracted the virus in our school, they came into contact with many people as part of their job. The Knesset, in case you were wondering, was not closed down, not for a moment. (...) Politicians don't even wear their face masks in the Knesset and can be seen at any given time, in the halls, or in committee rooms without them. (...) We the public must not ignore health guidelines, because they certainly protect us against infection. (...) We were all suckers during the first wave of the pandemic when we learned our leaders, from the president and the prime minister, had violated the curfew and allowed family members to join their holiday celebrations. We will be suckers again now as the second wave appears to be cresting, and the discrepancy between the leadership and we the people continues. We are all suckers when our kids are sent home and (...) when MKs call those who ask them to wear a mask a nag (...).

Amihai Attali, YED, 16.06.10

Alleviating corona's burden on Israel's poor

(...) Indeed, marginalized and underserved populations are often neglected even in the best of times, let alone in a time of crisis. The current coronavirus pandemic exacerbates the gap between the haves and have nots, in any society. This has been a tragic truism throughout the history of pandemics. (...) In Israel, underserved populations include Arab Israelis, transgender men and women, Ethiopians, asylum-seekers, Mizrahi Jews, and others. These demographic communities are routinely pushed to the margins of society and forgotten. (...) at the height of the coronavirus crisis, when most bank branches were closed to the public and many bus routes shut down, a vast majority of pensioners were unable to

withdraw the cash that was rightfully owed to them. Many of these pensioners don't have debit or credit cards or even cell phones and depend on regular access to banks in order to meet their basic needs. (...) while the government should be commended for injecting some 100 billion shekels (\$28.5 billion) to stimulate the economy, Israel lags behind other OECD countries when it comes to economic relief for laid-off workers. (...) As we welcome a new government after a year of political infighting, I urge Israel's new cabinet to take the time to determine how it will execute a long-term and comprehensive pandemic recovery plan for this nation. A 25-percent unemployment rate is more than shameful. Turning a blind eye to the millions who cannot feed their families is inhumane. (...)

Reut Cohen, IHY, 18.06.20

The coronavirus' social impact on Israeli Arabs

(...) The impact of the coronavirus is felt (...) in the health and economic sectors, but the social impact has also been tremendous. Ironically, it has taken this invisible enemy, the coronavirus (...) to unite the various sectors of Israeli society. The national struggle in Israel against the deadly enemy (...) has brought Israeli-Arabs closer to the society at large, it has brought about a feeling of belonging to the country (...). Corona has smacked us across the face to realize that our destinies are shared. (...) since the advent of the coronavirus in Israel, Israeli-Arabs feel more integrated and connected to the country than ever before. (...) In hospitals, Magen David Adom and numerous organizations, Israeli-Arabs combated the virus. They worked and volunteered alongside their Jewish compatriots against the coronavirus, a disease which does not differentiate between religion or nationality. (...) We need one another in order to build civic resilience. (...) there is one positive thing that has come to fruition, something that the passage of decades and efforts of leaders have been unable to achieve and that is bring Israeli-Arabs to integrate and participate in Israeli society as never before, to feel themselves to be an integral part of Israeli society. Now it is incumbent upon us as a society (...) to ensure that this continues well after the corona days, to a time when the virus is recorded as a chapter in history.

Yoseph Haddad, JPO, 24.06.20

Israel's failed pandemic government

The coronavirus crisis is looking more and more like coronavirus chaos. The number of infections is rising steadily and Israel seems to be gradually losing

control over the pandemic. (...) Nor is the economic prognosis promising. The financial crisis (...) is expected to be prolonged and to get worse. The unemployed rate is expected to rise further, and most of the reforms announced by the Finance Ministry are meaningless. The farce is only heightened by the news that the heads of the coronavirus government can't even agree on a national budget. (...) the prime minister failed to take advantage of the calm to ready for the next storm, a second outbreak. Netanyahu and the Health Ministry failed in managing the exit from the lockdown, which was spasmodic, disorderly and illogical, and went forward without making sure there was a functioning system of testing and epidemiological investigations that would cut the chains of infection. Moreover, the lack of economic support for many people who lost their main income source encourages flouting of the health guidelines, to which the state has responded with increased policing, fines and surveillance. (...) It would behoove this government to remember that it was formed primarily to battle the coronavirus. (...) Editorial, HAA, 30.06.20

4. Medienquerschnitt

Erstmals standesamtliche Eheschließungen im Rathaus von Tel Aviv

Cities can do what Israel's government can't or won't

(...) as we grapple with a huge economic crisis, and with the most bloated government Israel has ever known – there's a way to turn on a light: The light switch is situated in our public square. Government has de facto moved to the local level. (...) Tel Aviv municipality launched a successful pilot program for issuing civil union certificates. This is precisely the kind of facts-on-the-ground action we need now. (...) A little courage and creativity, and everything will turn simple: Is the Chief Rabbinate withholding a kashrut certificate from a falafel stand because its owner can't pay? The city will grant it a kashrut certificate of its own. Does the government enforce impossible regulations on businesses in a time of crisis? The municipality will instruct its inspectors to promote rules of caution but will not fine businesses until they have a proper safety net. (...) Imagine that while the government isn't lifting a finger in the face of the greatest crisis of our generation, the climate crisis, cities will provide solutions by giving incentives to people who use systems that save energy

and water, earmarking bicycle lanes and banning polluting vehicles from the city center to encourage public transportation. In the start-up nation, Israel's cities can make decisions in more progressive and democratic ways – for example letting its residents decide what purposes some of the municipal budget will be used for. That's the way real democracy works. (...) From within this failure of leadership, mayors must stand up and demonstrate leadership. These cities hold the key to Israel's future — if they choose to pave the way.

Stav Shaffir, HAA, 24.06.20

The State of Tel Aviv is founded

After setting independent policy on a number of issues such as businesses opening on Shabbat and asylum seekers, Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai announced this week that the city would recognize same-sex marriage. Tel Aviv wants autonomy, and we are here to help it make a proper declaration of the first extra-territory in Israel -- the State of Tel Aviv. "We, the residents of Tel Aviv, are tired of the state of Israel (...) which rather than being cool like Tel Aviv, has become conservative, traditional, overbearing, right-wing, and annoying. (...) The murder of Rabin, which took place over 20 years ago, stole our dream of peace. (...) The State of Tel Aviv will have ties to the State of Israel only when it suits it and will continue to receive funds from it. The rest of the time, it will make its own laws, values, and aspirations in the free spirit of its residents. (...) It will work to institute public transportation and business activity on Shabbat. It will even set up a registry for married couples and decide who can love whom, and how much. The State of Tel Aviv extends its hand to the greater Tel Aviv metropolitan area, but also to Jerusalem and the unenlightened periphery, and calls on them to adopt its ways, or at least come visit occasionally. (...)

Dr. Shuki Friedman, IHY, 24.06.20

Unruhen in Jaffa

The lie behind the Jaffa riots

The "al-Aqsa conspiracy" has been floating around the Muslim world for a century and has claimed hundreds of lives, perhaps even thousands. According to this tale, first told by the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Amin al-Husseini some 100 years ago, the Jews are intent on destroying the Temple Mount mosques. Now, we see a similar phenomenon in Jaffa, and once again, it's the mufti who is behind all

this (...). According to this latest plot, the Jews are planning to desecrate an ancient Muslim cemetery with their bulldozers and build a hostel for the homeless on top of it. (...) The thing is, the remains of this cemetery were relocated to the cemetery of the Arab village of Summayl back in 1915 (...). In 1934, Muslim leaders sought to move corporeal remains. (...) If there are, indeed, any human remains left there, they should be treated like they are in other similar cases. There is no Jewish plot and no one is desecrating any graves. But there are those who try to push this new conspiracy.

(...)

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 20.06.20

Nachruf auf den Historiker und Faschismusexperten Zeev Sternhell

Zeev Sternhell, the oracle of anti-fascism

Prof. Zeev Sternhell (...) dedicated most of his professional life to researching fascism and its injustices. (...) the importance of his warnings about the danger facing Israeli society (...) should not be ignored. The first component in Israel's descent into fascism is the war on democracy (...) which as Sternhell stressed means making the supremacy of the society and the interest of societal redemption a central value, at the expense of the individual and of equality among the participants in societal activity. Israel has long lacked true equality among those who comprise the collective society (...). A second important component is the interpretation of history (...). Jewish history, and Zionist history within it, Sternhell taught, are interpreted by the Israeli nation as a process of ethnic determinism. In other words, Israel is increasingly leaning toward determinist definitions of the ethnic groups comprising it. These definitions are expressed in the belief that not all ethnic groups are equal in their traits, talents and abilities, and therefore need not be equal in their rights. The third component (...) is the principle of the deification of the nation. The national Jewish revival, grounded in the desire of the Jews to control their own fate, has largely become over the years a kind of holy war, infused with many religious and messianic components. The desire to control the fate of the nation, which was persecuted by the nations among which it lived, developed into a bloody struggle against anyone who is perceived, justifiably or not, as an enemy of the people. The spirit of the nation (...) takes on in Israel political and psychological expressions that justify unjust acts

and injury to innocent persons. Sternhell sought to caution Israelis against trends that took hold in Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries. His legacy, then, is the ceaseless struggle to strengthen enlightenment in Israel, to see history in a rational, considered manner and to emphasize the place of the individual and the collective within the state.

Editorial, HAA, 22.06.20

LGBT in Jerusalem

Jerusalem, pride, and the struggle for acceptance

(...) Jerusalem is a city divided. It is a city too often ruled by the iron grip of religious ideology, by people who believe her status as Judaism's holiest city is threatened and tarnished by my community. According to them, we have no place here. (...) And every year in the month of June, the international month of Pride, this belief rears its ugly head even more prominently than usual. (...) the deputy mayor of Jerusalem ordered the removal of the pride flag hung outside the American Embassy. In his own words, the pride flag is impure, and there is no place for impurity in the city of Jerusalem. That is what they want us to believe, you see. (...) They would rather we left, rather we unhooked our rainbow flags from the sides of our apartment building windows and left to the wild wilderness of Tel Aviv or some other equally lawless place. We are not deserving of the holy city. We, with our desire to live and love freely, with our struggle to live a full and equal life, are not deserving of the ancient stone and rolling hills of Jerusalem. In a way maybe they are right. It would be easier for all of us to live in Tel Aviv, the queer capital of the Middle East. (...) if we don't stay, if we don't fight, we let them win. If we hide ourselves away and leave, if we fear to hold the hand of those we love in public, we let them win. (...) I cannot celebrate in Tel Aviv until I have protested in Jerusalem. (...) we are here, we are holy, and we are not going anywhere.

Shira Silkoff, TOI, 29.06.20

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