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Die Themen dieser Ausgabe

1. Ende der Iran-Sanktionen	1
2. Wachsender internationaler Druck auf Israel	3
3. Terroristen an der Haustür	4
4. Medienquerschnitt.....	5

1. Ende der Iran-Sanktionen

Eine Schlacht ist zwar verloren, trotzdem will Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu den Kampf noch nicht aufgeben. Ohne Israels „Maßnahmen für Sanktionen“, so kommentierte er, „wäre Iran schon lange eine Atommacht“. Auch nach Ablauf der Sanktionen, werde Israel weiterhin beobachten, ob Iran das Abkommen verletze. Israels Sorge vor dem erstarkenden Ayatollah-Regime gilt indes nicht nur der Möglichkeit eines atomaren Angriffs. „Es ist klar, dass Iran jetzt größere Ressourcen zur Verfügung stehen, um sie in Terror zu leiten“, warnte Netanyahu. Unter den Feinden Israels bezieht vor allem die libanesisch-schiitische Hisbollah Geld und Waffen von ihrem Mäzen Iran. Die Freistellung der eingefrorenen iranischen Gelder und die Aussicht auf die Einnahmen durch den Öllexport, der ab sofort wieder möglich ist, könnte die leeren iranischen Kassen füllen und in der Folge auch die der muslimischen Extremisten im Libanon und in Syrien. Solange die Verhandlungen andauerten, drängte Netanyahu stets darauf, Teheran eine offizielle Abkehr vom Terror und die Anerkennung Israels abzuverlangen. Sein Augenmerk richtet sich nun auf die Verhandlungen über ein auf erneut zehn Jahre angelegtes militärisches Hilfspaket aus den USA. Israel hofft auf höhere Zahlungen, auch um es besser mit „der iranischen Bedrohung“ aufnehmen zu können. Das derzeitige Memorandum umfasst jährlich rund 3 Mio. Dollar und läuft im kommenden Jahr aus.

Sanctions blues

(...) If Iran managed to wreak havoc while under crippling sanctions, imagine what it will do now that its economy is unshackled. Sunni states and Israel will face a triumphalist and fundamentalist Iranian regime driven by apocalyptic fears. (...) Iran will drive Sunni states like Saudi Arabia to take more aggressive – and potentially disastrous – actions that are likely to further destabilize the region. (...) the signing of the JCPOA creates a misleading impression, particularly among Sunni states, that Iran has the support of America in its quest for regional hegemony. And this could act as an important recruiting incentive for jihadist groups throughout the Sunni world. (...) It is of utmost importance that the US and the other signatories to the JCPOA take steps to curb Iran’s influence in the region. (...) In Syria, the US should openly support more moderate Sunni forces; in Iraq it must avoid supporting Shi’ite forces aligned with Iran. To prevent the Gulf states, Egypt, Israel and other American allies from taking matters into their own hands, the US must provide assurances – including more robust military cooperation – that communicate US commitment to countering Iranian aggression.(...)

Editorial, JPO, 17.01.16

As the cash flows to Iran’s regime, a dark day for the Middle East

Iran's (...) contribution to the relentlessly rising Syrian death toll cannot be ignored. (...) But if anyone in the Obama administration or the European leadership believes that the Syrian fighting is a case of "good guys" (...) against "bad guys" (...), they need to check the facts. (...) The removal of sanctions from Iran is (...) a grim day for the region, which will see billions flowing into the Iranian regime's coffers, part of which will lead to a great deal more weaponry, conflict, bloodshed, and death throughout this area. (...) those who are about to benefit from the lifting of sanctions on Iran include: Hezbollah, which already has some 150,000 rockets and missiles of various ranges and accuracy, and which is now set to receive much-increased financial assistance from Iran; the popular militias in Iraq; the Houthis in Yemen; and Hamas in Gaza (...). For relatively moderate Sunni states, this a grim day, indeed — a day on which Iran is welcomed back to the international community and is simultaneously assisted in deepening its capacity to back terrorist and destabilizing forces in those Sunni states and beyond. (...) the nuclear deal and the removal of sanctions will only exacerbate Shiite terrorism, and it won't do anything for the starving people of Madaya.

Avi Issacharoff, TOI, 17.01.16

The price of American weakness

(...) the U.S. is in denial, or, alternately, it has accepted Iran's growing power as a fait accompli. Washington now views Tehran as a necessary partner in the resolution of many regional problems, chiefly the future of Syria and Iraq and the battle against the Islamic State group. After all, U.S. President Barack Obama regards the nuclear agreement with Iran as the foreign policy crown jewel of his presidency and he is determined not to let anyone spoil his party. The problem is that U.S. eagerness to reconcile with Tehran has been hitting a wall of resistance and hostility (...). The Americans have now officially lifted the sanctions on Iran, and in return Iran conducted a ballistic missile test. Weakness does not pacify a bully, quite the opposite; it drives the bully to go even further to get what he wants. (...) Seemingly, the victory belongs to the Iranians, however the bottom line could be decided by the Saudis, if they continue to maintain the same conviction they have demonstrated toward Iran in recent weeks. (...) Washington has (...) to watch from the sidelines until it comes to its senses and reassumes its duties as a global superpower, as its friends and allies expect.

Eyal Zisser, IHY, 17.01.16

Living in a dream world: Obama's Hollywood vision of the Mideast

(...) the removal of sanctions from Iran is a ringing diplomatic failure. Israel could not convince the world, mostly the West, that Iran's potential threat to Israel and the stability of the Middle East consists of more than just its military nuclear program. (...) As far as Israel's national security perceptions go, Iran remains the number one threat – not ISIS or al-Qaeda. (...) Iran's (...) military industry invests \$2-3 billion every year (...). When the sanctions are lifted, that industry will multiply itself twice, maybe three times over, as part of a plan to reinvigorate the Iranian military. But the products of this industry will reach all parts of the Middle East: From the Houthis in Yemen, through Hezbollah in Lebanon, to Hamas in Gaza. The Americans have chosen to ignore the Iranian missile industry, which covers most of the Middle East and reaches Israel. (...) Israel will have to increase its investments in intelligence. The American government is in love with this deal: (...) They see a new Middle East of peace and fraternity. That's Obama's legacy, and after receiving a Nobel Prize for nothing, the Oscar is on its way too.

Alex Fishman, JED, 17.01.16

Obama's triumph: Iran nuclear deal comes gift-wrapped by prisoner release

(...) Although Iran remains a dangerous, aggressive, terror-supporting state, the positive conclusion of the secret negotiations on the prisoner release (...) enforce the perception that moderates are gaining strength in Tehran; that they are complying with their commitments (...) and that they wish to put Iran on a less belligerent course in the international arena. (...) Jerusalem tends to interpret any perceived softening in Iranian positions as camouflage for its malicious intentions. Sources in Washington have no expectation that the prisoner swap will be viewed any differently. The removal of sanctions, also announced Saturday, will likewise be seen as an almost mortal blow. (...) Among Israelis who are engaged in national security intelligence and assessments, there are many who discern a much more complex landscape than the black-and-white picture emanating from the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem. Their voices, however, grow steadily fainter, for fear of the harsh criticism repeatedly leveled at them by cabinet ministers and apprehension that their careers would suffer as a result. (...)

Chemi Shalev, HAA, 17.01.16

2. Wachsender internationaler Druck auf Israel

Mit dem fortdauernden Stillstand im Friedensprozess, dem Bau neuer Häuser für israelische Siedler im besetzten palästinensischen Gebiet, Messerüberfällen und der Tatsache, dass Angreifer oft am Tatort getötet werden, gerät die Regierung in Jerusalem weiter unter Beschuss internationaler Kritik. Schwedens Außenministerin Margot Wallström forderte eine Untersuchung der „außergerichtlichen Hinrichtungen“ auf Israels Straßen, und sogar US-Botschafter Dan Shapiro verurteilte das „zweierlei Maß“ bei der Rechtsprechung für Israelis und Palästinenser. Schließlich erzürnte UN-Generalsekretär Ban Ki-Moon die Gemüter in Israel, als er den palästinensischen Attentätern das Motiv Frustration zuschrieb. Regierungschef Netanyahu warf Ban Ki-Moon vor, mit solchen Aussagen den Terror zu ermutigen.

A message from the White House

US Ambassador Dan Shapiro's condemnation of the Israeli government on Monday was (...) no accident: He was working to the directions of his employers. (...) Behind Shapiro's criticism is the possibility that the White House is actually joining the European Union and is liable to take similar steps that differentiate between Israeli territories inside the Green Line and those that were conquered in 1967. It's no exaggeration to assume that Israel will no longer be able to rely on the US's veto at the UN or to enjoy the automatic support that we have been used to. (...) The Prime Minister's Office responded to Shapiro's comments with a statement that echoed Netanyahu's populist line, trying to draw a link between stabbing attacks like those in Otniel (...) and criticism of Israel's policy for tackling Palestinian terror. It points to hysteria and losing one's way. The day after the signing of the nuclear agreement with Iran, the US actually reminded us that the time had come to bring new ideas in order to reach a solution to the bloody conflict with the Palestinians. It is fair to request that the prime minister present a horizon with some kind of agreement. (...)

Shimon Shiffer, JED, 19.01.16

The real threat for Israel from EU's border-drawing resolution

(...) Europe is not boycotting the State of Israel within its recognized borders. EU members will continue to buy Israeli goods as long as they are manufactured within Israel proper, which means the economic damage will be limited. (...) But the Euro-

pean resolutions have much broader implications, which are likely to affect Israel's relations with its friends, including its most important friend, the United States. The resolutions seek to put an end to the blurring of the boundaries between Israel and the settlements that has been encouraged by all Israeli governments, but particularly by the right-wing ones(...), because the purpose of this blurring is to preclude the realization of the two-state principle that the entire world — including Israel — has adopted. (...) if the EU could accompany its resolutions with a realistic proposal, containing concrete measures for advancing the two-state solution, some practical benefit could result, beyond the declarative importance of the resolutions. (...) the EU's position expresses an increasing revulsion with Israeli policies and paves the way for other countries (...). This is the threat now facing the Israeli government and the country's citizens.

Editorial, HAA, 18.01.16

American ambassador condemns the wrong double standards

So according to the American ambassador to Israel, Dan Shapiro, Israel is employing double standards in its settlement policy in Judea and Samaria. (...). Whenever Israel demolishes illegal Jewish construction, it is praised by America and the world, but when it demolishes illegal Arab construction, it is quick to condemn it, such as last August when Israel demolished 40 Arab structures built without proper permits. (...) When a UN school was destroyed by Israel during Operation Protect Edge (...) the US State Department immediately condemned Israel's act as "appalling," (...). And yet in October last year when America destroyed a Medecins Sans Frontieres facility in Afghanistan killing 22 innocent people, it was unwilling to issue any statement of condemnation for itself. (...) Mr Shapiro says Israel must "develop stronger and more credible to questions about the rule of law" and yet just a few years ago, America decided to invade Iraq and Afghanistan and imprisoned thousands of people in the Guantanamo Bay detention camp without any trial. (...) The reality is, Mr Shapiro, that Israel prosecutes all criminal activity in Israel against all perpetrators. Unlike the Palestinian regime, Israel does not reward criminals and terrorists with pensions and does not honour them with the dedication of public monuments and squares. (...)

Justin Amler, TOI, 19.01.16

Lunch with Sweden's foreign minister, the woman Israel loves to hate

(...) The Swedish foreign minister (...) says the worst moment in her entire career was when she was accused of anti-Semitism, which she had been raised to combat from childhood.(...) Unlike most Israeli politicians, Wallström knows how to listen and is eager to learn. (...) When Wallström criticized the "medieval-style" penal code in Saudi Arabia last year and a few Arab states recalled their ambassadors in protest, it was said she was sabotaging her country's foreign relations. But only her criticism toward Israel can really endanger her impressive career. Jerusalem must itself ask if the bullying techniques practiced against public figures who dare criticize Israel actually work. In the short-term, using the ultimate weapon – accusations of anti-Semitism – may paralyze the Europeans, who are haunted by the shadow of the past. Israel is taking advantage of this with incredible cynicism. (...) The aggressiveness of Israel's representatives and the Jewish establishment – threatening politicians and journalists not to utter a word against Israel – will one day cause the pent-up objection and disgust to burst out in the form of steps against Israel's reckless behavior. (...) Wallström will continue in her own way, simply because she believes in it. (...) Gideon Levy, HAA, 30.01.16

Justifying terrorism

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has apparently revealed himself as a Palestinian partisan. (...) Ban said: "Palestinian frustration is growing (...). It is human nature to react to occupation, which often serves as a potent incubator of hate and extremism." Besides appearing to justify terrorism, the secretary-general equated its Jewish victims with those who were killed while trying to murder them. (...) Could he be suggesting in a subtle way that the many attacks on soldiers are justifiable, since they are agents of an occupying army? (...) There is no justification for terrorism. (...) Editorial, JPO, 30.01.16

Israel & America: Changing at the United Nations?

It wasn't too long ago when Israel had a reliable friend at the United Nations. (...) But that might not be the case today (...). The United Nations opposing Israel is not surprising – nor is the usual rancor in the hall of nations in which Israel is routinely vilified and sanctioned with more resolutions raised and passed than any other issue or nation. (...) The truth

falls on deaf ears and the damage they have done for years is having the impact they so desperately want. (...) The past several months have been difficult on Israeli citizens, as terrorists run amok stabbing and shooting people at random. Abbas calls these people "heroic," and Ban Ki-Moon suggests it is Israel's fault, while the leftist NGOs and their supporters continue to harangue Israel endlessly. (...)

Hank Sheinkopf, George Birnbaum, Ron Torossian, JPO, 28.01.16

Another UN disgrace

(...) In crazy days such as these, when Israeli civilians have been stabbed and murdered for four months on end in this most recent wave of terror, we can only wonder if it is also "U.N. nature" to grant Palestinian terrorists the legitimacy to kill. (...) Ban also condemned the acts of violence while mentioning Palestinian terror, but considering his outlandish declarations in support of terror, the only conclusion we can reach is that Ban essentially condemned and justified, justified and condemned, this terrorism. It is disgraceful, it is dangerous, it is uncouth -- but mostly it is also a testament to ignorance or hypocrisy, maybe both. (...) The international community and the person at the helm of the United Nations do not understand the "nature of the Middle East" or simply do not want to understand. (...) the Jewish state is the de facto punching bag, in the same week that International Holocaust Remembrance Day is being commemorated. What's new? From the perspective of French Nobel laureate Albert Camus, terror is terror, and it doesn't matter who is perpetrating it and where. It cannot be justified. (...)

Boaz Bismutz, IHY, 28.01.16

3. Terroristen an der Haustür

Der Mord an Dafna Meir aus der Siedlung Otniel erschütterte die israelische Gesellschaft stärker als viele der bisherigen Anschläge der aktuellen Terrorwelle. Meir war Mutter von vier eigenen und zwei Pflegekindern. Sie starb vor den Augen ihrer ältesten Tochter, als sie mit einem minderjährigen palästinensischen Angreifer rang, der mit einem Messer bewaffnet war. Als besonders erschreckend an dem Fall gilt die Tatsache, dass sich der junge Täter Zugang bis zum Familienhaus der Meirs schaffen konnte. Nur wenige Tage später starb die 23jährige Shlomit Krigman, als sie beim Einkauf in der Siedlung Beit Horon von einem Attentäter überfallen

wurde. Wieder nur einen Tag später gelang es einem Messerattentäter eine schwangere Frau in der Siedlung Tekoa zu verletzen.

We are all targets

(...) Every monotheistic religion adopted the Jewish idea that human beings are created in God's image. (...) Unfortunately, we have learned that this premise does not hold true when it comes to our savage enemies. (...) How evil and hate-filled must one be to repeatedly plunge a knife into the neck of an innocent woman at her home as her children look on? Among the Palestinians, whose leaders endlessly incite against the Jews, the murderer will be portrayed as a heroic martyr and his photo will be put up in schools. His friends will praise him (...) and his family will receive hefty support from the Palestinian Authority, which gives a preferential rate to the murderers of women and children. (...) The Europeans must know what their money is being used for -- the shedding of Jewish blood. (...) The despicable murderers do not distinguish between revelers at a pub in Tel Aviv and settlers in the South Hebron Hills region. Every Jew is a target. In the eyes of Palestinian terrorists, there is no difference between Otniel and Carmiel, or Kedumim and Ofakim. (...) Every Palestinian inciter and terrorist should understand one fundamental fact: We are here to stay forever. No brutal act of murder will loosen our grip on our homeland. We are holding firm to it, just as it has always held firm to us and will continue to for eternity.

Haim Shine, IHY, 18.01.16

Remembering Dafna Meir together

(...) Dafna Meir was many things for many people. She was a dedicated nurse. She taught women about fertility and contraception, sexuality and health, from a holistic point of view. (...) Many women consulted her, online and in real life. (...) Dafna was also a wife and a mother. She gave birth to four children and became a foster mother to two others as well. (...) When people argue that attacking settlers is a legitimate form of national resistance, I want them to think about the nurse who lived in a settlement, and approached all of her patients, regardless of their religion and nationality, with a smile on her face. (...) I want the people who call terrorists "freedom fighters" to think about Dafna, and her children, and the world of good she will no longer do.

Rachel Sharansky Danziger, TOI, 17.01.16

Terror knocking on your door

(...) Before the Henkins, it was 27-year-old Malachi Rosenfeld who was shot by a Palestinian terrorist in a drive-by attack. Several months later it was Yaakov and Netanel Litman who were murdered on the road. (...) Islamist terrorists armed with Nazi ideology have been invading our homes, backyards and even the local grocery store -- they are right at our doorstep. (...) Dafna Meir who was murdered in her home in Otniel last week, or the clothing store where Michal Froman was stabbed in Tekoa, and countless other examples of terrorists trying to infiltrate Jewish communities in recent weeks. Everywhere you look, boundaries are being breached. (...) After Dafna Meir's murder, while the mother of six was clutching the knife stuck in her body to stop her attacker from harming her children, there were those who tried to pin the blame on the absence of a physical security fence in Otniel. (...) Meanwhile, Beit Horon, the community where a young woman was killed in a terror attack Monday, is well fortified with a physical fence. (...) Fences will not deter terrorists. Only effective punitive measures can do that. (...)

Emily Amrousi, IHY, 26.01.16

4. Medienquerschnitt

Siedler besetzen Haus in Hebron

Hebron settlement's contribution to terrorism

(...) The tension between Muslims and Jews -- in Hebron in general, and around the Tomb of the Patriarchs in particular -- led to killing on both sides. (...) The settlers who lead invasions into Palestinians' homes and seize their lands will do anything to provoke the Palestinians and Israeli authorities, and foment unrest. The settlers' occupation of two empty buildings near the Tomb of the Patriarchs (...) was poking a finger in the eye of the Palestinians, the Israel Defense Forces -- which is the sovereign in the occupied territories -- and the government. (...) Jewish settlement in Hebron, including home invasions, has constituted a decisive contribution to terrorism. (...) Netanyahu, more than anyone else, keeps accusing the Palestinian Authority of incitement against Israel and responsibility for igniting the area. (...) The signs of the international front being formed against Israel are mounting (...). Instead of responding to these developments, Netanyahu is busy groveling to the settlers. The price for this will be paid by all Israelis.

Editorial, HAA, 23.01.16

Besatzung nicht für ewig

The Israeli occupation will end suddenly

One day the occupation will end. (...) And when it happens, it will suddenly emerge that everyone was against it. (...) regimes of this kind are not viable. They are bound to fall, because regimes of suppression, almost by definition, are unstable. (...) it's unlikely that we will establish truth and reconciliation committees, because we do not have a tradition of public contrition. After all, we come from a culture in which one apologizes and confesses only on one day a year, and even then it stays between us and the Lord. (...) These are trying times. The right wing is burning with the desire to bury any criticism of government policy, in order to ensure that the colonialist occupation becomes an irreversible fait accompli. (...) we must recognize that the brutal onslaught shows that the right wing apparently knows something that we do not know. That they have cause for worry from us. (...) The strength of both the organizations that are working to end the occupation and of their supporters is greater than we think. (...) The world is driven by diverse forces. (...) One of them is actually an idea: that all human beings are equal and that all deserve rights because they are human beings. That idea is responsible for the greatest and most important revolutions in history. (...) the struggle has not ended. Not the struggle to end the occupation and not the struggle for the character of Israeli society.

Michael Sfar, HAA, 23.01.16

Im Tirtzu attackiert Künstler

Restrain the street thugs

(...) The right-wing group Im Tirtzu, inspired by Culture and Sport Minister Miri Regev's attack on intellectuals, launched its own crude assault on a list of artists and others whose love of the country and concern for its future are indisputable. (...) We may have major disagreements with those artists and intellectuals, but these debates should never be personal. They should always be about substance. (...) The radicals on the Right (and on the Left) no longer have sound judgment. They let their hostility trump civility and common sense. Using threatening language is de facto incitement that could eventually combust into physical violence. (...) The street thugs must be restrained. If we let people cast others as "traitors" and "foreign agents," we will eventually see someone take action. Eventually people will hit others with clubs or go even further and use dag-

gers, like the Jewish Zealots in ancient times. (...) The campaign's targets put two leading names from my generation at the top of the list. The first is the world-renowned author Amos Oz (...). The other is A.B. Yehoshua (...). Both are the salt of the earth from Hebrew academia, one from Jerusalem and the other from a kibbutz. Those who have been depicting them as traitors are blind and drunk with power. (...) As I was reading the materials published by Im Tirtzu, I was gripped by jealousy. If such distinguished people are foreign agents, then add my name to the list of calumny by the Im Tirtzu tribunal. (...)

Dan Margalit, IHY, 29.01.16

Herzogs realistisches Streben

Herzog's new plan: A brave attempt to redefine Israel's peace camp

(...) Herzog is trying to redefine the peace concept, the peace process and the peace camp. (...) Not an ultimate final-status arrangement Begin-Sadat style, but gradual interim agreements Yitzhak Rabin-Sadat style. (...) Herzog started talking about dividing the land in another language. He returned to the sober realism of David Ben-Gurion and Rabin. He admitted the self-evident – there will be no final, utopian peace here in the next decade. He began to outline an alternative way – separating from the Palestinians, converging to our side of the separation line and creating a new reality while preserving the Jordan River as Israel's security border. For the first time in the current century, an incumbent Labor leader has broken away from the rhetoric of peace around the corner and tomorrow Abbas and the day after tomorrow hummus in Jenin. Herzog is separating from the approach of all or nothing (...). But Herzog (...) has difficulty using exclamation marks. Even when he does the right thing he doesn't know how to sharpen, intensify and inspire. So his immediate challenge is to turn his new message into a clear, seminal statement. To create a formative event that will do for him what the Bar-Ilan speech did for Benjamin Netanyahu. Not to make small gestures but take large steps. Not to be tactical and political, but to act strategically like a statesman.(...)

Ari Shavit, HAA, 28.01.16

Nationale Wirtschaftsstrategie nötig

Just don't think

(...) the Israeli government has no national strategy, and with this lack of strategy it infects not only the

political class, but how businesses operate. (...) More and more companies are adopting the government's basic attitude towards serious national problems, which can be summarized as "sit and do nothing." (...) This can be seen clearly in the rising trend of Israeli technology and information companies being bought by large foreign companies. Not by chance, such a sale is known as an "exit." (...) It frees the founder-owners from the need to come up with a long-term business strategy (...). Being in the political "center" in the 2016 version of Israel means being an idealess politician; no movement, no innovation, no initiative, and of course – no strategy for the future. At most, a sprinkle of tactical thinking. (...) Take a look at our senior statesmen: They've adopted the idea of "just don't think" and have carved it into a tool of survival. They may indeed be surviving, but what about us, the civilians?
Sever Plocker, JED, 24.01.16

Holocaust-Erziehung nicht nur in Polen

Why Auschwitz? Israeli students should go to where the Holocaust really began

(...) The March of the Living excursions and the regular trips by high-school students – an obligatory experience for virtually every young Israeli – go only to Poland. (...) Why Poland, or why only Poland, and why not Germany? (...) Dachau, in the Munich suburbs, was the first Nazi concentration camp, and served as an example for other camps. Masses of Jews and prisoners of war died there due to the horrific living conditions. (...) Dachau was established only a month and a half after Hitler's rise to power. Its existence proves that the actual root of the evil is racist thought. (...) In 1935 the racist Nuremberg Laws were passed there. The Final Solution grew on this foundation. (...) The Israeli teen trips' focus on Poland, the largest Jewish cemetery in the world, creates a historical distortion. Despicable Polish anti-Semitism played a role in the massive harm done to the Jews. But Auschwitz and Treblinka were not Polish camps, and the Warsaw Ghetto was not established and torched by Polish forces. (...) The time has passed when a trip to Poland was very inexpensive, compared to a trip to Germany. That can certainly no longer be a reason to maintain this format for the trips. Travel to Germany – to Dachau, to Nuremberg – and teach the root of the evil. Go down to the cellars: of the putsch in Munich and of the Gestapo in Berlin. (...)
Nitzan Horowitz, HAA, 26.01.16

Preis für Ariel Zilber

Creative dissonance

(...) Ariel Zilber was, in his youth, the bad boy of the budding Israeli popular music scene, just coming of age in the early seventies. (...) Zilber was a rebel with a broken smile, an anarchist with a deep soul, a symbol of the liberal, free-wheeling Tel Aviv spirit that sought to separate itself from the war stricken, traumatized national psyche. (...) Later in his life, Zilber embraced ultra-Orthodox Judaism (...). Zilber embraced radically racist views and expressed them in song. (...) Zilber has collaborated artistically with Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh, one of the most radically right-wing rabbis in the occupied territories. (...) Zilber has outwardly supported the murderer of Yitzchak Rabin, Yigal Amir (...). (...) February 17, 2016 will see Ariel Zilber being awarded a life time achievement prize by EMI, the Israeli Union of Performing Artists. (...) I wonder, if Yigal Amir, the murderer serving a life time sentence, began writing poetry tomorrow, even fine poetry, would he be awarded a prize? (...) It has always been my belief that artists should be leaders of society, not followers. They should bear the torch, and the cross, of humanity, freedom, equal rights, acceptance, open mindedness, dialogue and diversity. (...) I have raised my voice, once again: Jean D'Arc , as my father says, in a sad voice. The verbal filth and threats are all back, (...), and the feeling of cold isolation. (...) But this time, there is more than a trickle of support from simple folk, throughout the country (...). People who are appalled (...) by the "slippery slope" we are all on, who cannot believe how blind and numb our society has become. I am proud to be their voice. (...)

Achinoam Nini, TOI, 31.01.16

Kultur auf Bestellung

Fear them not: '1984' shall pass

(...) Israel, despite all the shortcomings and flaws, is still, from any angle you look at it, a precious asset. Freedom to create and freedom of expression are the jewel in the crown. The legal system is another treasure. (...) The culture minister did not hide her intention to ensure that Israel's writers and artists eventually have to think, write and create in the exact same way and with the same obedience as soldiers in military uniform. There were also unforgettable rehearsals, such as when the actress Orna Banai was fired because she questioned the justness of Operation Protective Edge. The outcry over

the al-Midan theater and the new Civics textbook were additional rehearsals. Orwell, Big Brother, "1984" – the novel depicting a regime that cannot exist without real or simulated war. In wartime, the downtrodden will not demand wage increases. In wartime, you don't dismantle a government. (...) They accuse us of serving as agents for enemies of the state. They accuse us of requesting donations for continuing our humane and patriotic activity. They stole the country's treasures and built an impossible empire on the neighbor's soil. The companies that service the rulers and that rule us in turn are emptying citizens' pockets. (...) Authors, poets, actors and artists, the helpless poor – fear them not. Sami Michael, JED, 29.01.16

Israel is so democratic it wants to cut funding for those claiming otherwise

(...) Anyone with some knowledge of art, culture and their history knows that the staging of plays, which requires a location, production resources, a cast of actors and a performance in front of an audience, comes with a price tag. (...) Rulers and kings understood this a long time ago, leading them to support ensembles that entertained them and annoyed their rivals. (...) With the transition from tyrannical or monarchic regimes to democracies, (...) among which Israel considers itself (...), took over the role of supporting the arts using public funds. (...) In many countries, mechanism were set up to create an "arm's-length" separation between the state and its cultural institutions, to ensure that through public funding artists will have complete artistic freedom to pursue their imagination.

The basis of such a relationship was the understanding that art deals in the imaginary and that events on stage do not necessarily reflect reality. (...) The nature of art is that it examines the limits of what its audience will tolerate. Cultural institutions need budgetary independence from the taste of their audience so that they can confront viewers with extreme situations, trying thereby to prevent these from materializing. (...) the state is not a "cash machine," as claimed by Minister Regev, but a dispenser of the small budget it allocates to supporting culture (...) according to criteria that only a well-versed accountant could figure out.

Minister Regev, as well as Naftali Bennett at the Education Ministry, is tirelessly striving to take over the means of production, using them to bend creative freedom to the dictates of the rulers. (...) Regev speaks of "cultural justice" without truly understanding what justice, democracy or culture mean. (...)

Michael Handalzalts, HAA, 27.01.16

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