



## Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 17/08

### Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

23. September - 4. Oktober 2008

#### 1. Anschlag auf Prof. Sternhell

*Polizei und Medien vermuten, dass jüdische Extremisten für einen Anschlag auf den international renommierten Faschismusforscher Professor Ze'ev Sternhell in Jerusalem verantwortlich sind. Der Historiker, der in diesem Jahr mit dem Israelpreis ausgezeichnet worden war, war bei der Explosion einer Rohrbombe in seinem Vorgarten leicht verletzt worden. In der Nähe fand die Polizei außerdem Flugblätter, auf denen für den Mord an einem Mitglied der Friedens- und Menschenrechtsorganisation Peace Now 1 Millionen NIS versprochen wurden.*

*Sternhell ist der israelischen Linken zuzuordnen und gehört zu den schärfsten Kritikern der jüdischen Besiedlung des Westjordanlandes. Insbesondere für einen Artikel aus dem Jahr 2001, in dem er den bewaffneten Widerstand in den besetzten Gebieten als „legitim“ bezeichnet hatte, war er von rechten Gruppierungen angegriffen worden.*

*Nach dem Anschlag beeilten sich israelische Politiker, die Tat zu verurteilen. In den letzten Wochen ist in den Medien jedoch vermehrt über die Gewaltbereitschaft der extremen Rechten berichtet worden. Diese richtet sich vor allem gegen Palästinenser und deren Eigentum, in letzter Zeit jedoch auch gegen linke Aktivisten sowie Angehörige der Sicherheitskräfte.*

#### Everyone is a target

“Sternhell doesn't go easy on anyone. [...] He does not go easy on the Israeli Right as well. His articles against the occupation, settlement enterprise, and settlers are direct, blatant, and uncompromising.

If we try to affiliate him with a political camp, we can say that he belongs to the old Left, the one that combined Zionist patriotism with humanistic values. [...] He cares about what goes on around here, painfully so for himself and those he criticizes. [...]

Sternhell does not evacuate outposts, he does not hand over territory to the Palestinians, and he does not put rightist offenders in jail. He merely expresses, in writing, views that are relatively prevalent among the Israeli public, including the top political leadership. If he is a target, almost anyone who does not think like the far right can become a target. Everyone is facing a threat.

[...] The [secret service] Shin Bet didn't know about it. The police didn't know about it. The Shin Bet is faltering when it comes to politically-motivated Jewish criminality. It's faltering even though anyone who deals with security in Israel knows that the rebellion among a certain strata in the settlements and their periphery has reached boiling point and is manifested daily through violent acts against Palestinians and soldiers.”

Nahum Barnea , JED 26.09.08

#### Alliance of zealots

“Well, Professor Sternhell, it appears that we disagree in respect to identifying the danger threatening the State of Israel. Your statements show that you view the settlements as the root of all evil in our country. I, on the other hand, believe that the eternal danger to our state and people comes in the form of well-known zealots. They are the ones who since early on in Jewish history made sure to ruin, time and again, any attempt to build a national autonomy; and you, Professor Sternhell, display obvious signs of belonging to this zealot genre. [...]

What exactly were you thinking when you said: ‘...There is no doubt in respect to the legitimacy of armed resistance in the territories themselves. Had the Palestinians possessed a little wisdom, they would focus their struggle on the settlements...’ (Haaretz, May 15, 2001.) How can these words of yours be interpreted in any other way except a call on Palestinian murderers (‘armed resistance in the territories,’ as you referred to it) to harm your political rivals across the Green Line? [...]

Isn't this zealotry? [...] He who wants tanks to move on a civilian community, or advises murderers to focus on a specific population comprising his rivals, and whose claim to fame is making his brethren 'see red' – is in my view a zealot who undermines the basis of our existence as a society."

Assaf Wohl, JED 29.09.08

### **Sternhell the Israeli**

"A man whose home was destroyed by European fascism was attacked at the entrance to his Israeli home by Israeli fascism. [...] An Israeli whose love for Israel has no limits was attacked by Israelis with no limits. Genuine traitors to the Israeli enterprise tried to murder one of its genuine adherents. [...]

Sternhell was marked because he told the violent post-Zionists on the hilltops the truth. He told them that they are not Zionism, but a mutation of Zionism. He told them that they are not Israeliness, but the brutalization of Israeliness. [...]

Israel must marginalize the marginal elements. It must outlaw the lawbreakers. It must return to the anti-chauvinistic nationalism of the great fighter against fascism. It must prove that it is the Israel of Sternhell, not the Israel of Yitzhar."

Ari Shavit, HAA 26.09.08

### **Signal to Livni**

"The worrisome question – beyond the identity of the attackers, which will apparently soon be clear – is why [did the attack happen] now. [...]

This may be an attempt to intimidate the government as Tzipi Livni replaces Ehud Olmert, for fear that the new premier will try to reach an agreement with the Palestinians quickly. Another explanation is the transformation the extreme right has undergone following the disengagement and the evacuation of Amona: It now has far fewer inhibitions about using violence."

Amos Harel, HAA 26.09.08.

### **Militias in the mirror**

"The bomb that just wounded leftist Prof. Ze'ev Sternhell, and the NIS 1.1 million reward for the murder of a Peace Now leader – whatever you want to call it, don't call it new. Right-wing extremists have been killing, trying to kill and threatening to kill leftists in this country for 30 years – longer, actually, but 30 years in the earnest."

Larry Derfner, JPO 02.10.08

### **Why violence has replaced democracy**

"There has been a spate of attacks by settlers on both soldiers and Palestinians recently. This is not random violence, but calculated policy: The goal, activists say, is to 'exact a price' whenever part of a settlement or outpost is dismantled, in the hope of persuading the authorities that dismantling settlements is not worth the cost.

While only a minority of settlers supports this tactic, the number is growing, and defense officials believe the violence will only escalate.

This is something no society can tolerate, and better law enforcement is clearly part of the necessary response. Yet law enforcement alone cannot solve the underlying problem – which is that growing numbers of settlers have justifiably concluded that democratic action is pointless, leaving violence as the only rational option.

[...] Consider the following: In 1993, the Knesset approved the Oslo Accords, even though Yitzhak Rabin won election promising no negotiations with the PLO. [...]

Fast forward to the 2003 election, when Labor championed a unilateral withdrawal from Gaza and the Likud's Ariel Sharon campaigned against this idea. Again, rightists did what good democrats are supposed to do: They threw themselves into electing Sharon. And they succeeded: The Likud won by a landslide. Yet 11 months later, Sharon U-turned and adopted Labor's platform. [...]

The lesson was clear: Playing by the democratic rules is pointless.

Leftists frequently charge that even if all the democratic rules were honored, settlers would not accept an adverse outcome. That may be true for a tiny minority, but certainly not for the vast majority – as was proven during Ehud Barak's premiership.

Barak won election in 1999 by promising a unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon and final-status negotiations with the Palestinians. [...]

Clearly, he had a democratic mandate for both withdrawal and negotiations. [...] And, miracle of miracles, there was virtually no violence, though rightists opposed both withdrawal and negotiations. [...]

Unfortunately, Barak's term was the exception. [...]

Thus growing numbers of settlers, especially the young, no longer believe in the democratic process – and with cause. What is the point of winning elections or referenda if the results will simply be ignored? [...] It is probably too late to change the minds of those fomenting the current violence. But if we do not want their ranks to keep swelling, we must restore the younger generation's faith in democracy."

## 2. Bildung einer neuen Regierung

*Nachdem Ehud Olmert von seinem Amt als Premierminister zurückgetreten ist, wurde Außenministerin Zippi Livni am 17. September zur Vorsitzenden der Regierungspartei Kadima gewählt. Daraufhin beauftragte Staatspräsident Peres Livni, eine Regierungskoalition zu bilden. Zunächst boten Livni und der Parteivorsitzende der Arbeitspartei, Ehud Barak, der Oppositionspartei Likud an, Teil einer Einheitsregierung zu werden. Nachdem der Likud-Vorsitzende Benjamin Netanjahu dies ablehnte, führt Livni nun Koalitionsgespräche mit den Parteien der alten Koalition. Außerdem könnte sich auch die Meretz-Partei der Koalition anschließen. Die Arbeitspartei und Shas, die beiden wichtigsten Koalitionspartner, wollen jedoch nicht ohne Zugeständnisse in der Regierung verbleiben. So fordert Shas die Aufstockung des Kindergeldes, während Barak, der auch Verteidigungsminister ist, eine ausgeweitete Rolle in den Verhandlungen mit Syrien und den Palästinensern verlangt. Sollte es Livni nicht gelingen, innerhalb einer Frist von sechs Wochen eine Regierung zu bilden, würden Neuwahlen stattfinden.*

### The national interest

"Livni is now hard at work trying to tie in the existing coalition, or adjust its membership, to ensure she can take over. Already, she has been deeply compromised. She managed to sustain the image of integrity despite having stuck with a premier she had said ought to have resigned. But she has emerged less pristine from the Kadima leadership battle, where her 431-vote margin of victory makes Binyamin Netanyahu's 29,457 prime ministerial margin over Shimon Peres in 1996 look like a landslide. [...]"

Meanwhile, her coalition partners, notably in Labor and Shas, have predictably been playing a little hard to get - calculating whether their interests are best served by crowning Livni as premier, or by cold-shouldering her and setting Israel on the road to general elections, with Olmert the caretaker leader en route.

Immune because of our electoral system from direct accountability to specific constituents, our politicians often seem to forget that they are elected not for their own convenience, but to do our will. What Israel's voters crave now is competent, stable gov-

ernment, focused on the national interest - as soon as possible.

That requires our politicians to put aside their narrow concerns and either, if they consider her capable of effectively leading this country, partnering the new head of Kadima in a solid coalition, or, if they do not, moving swiftly to general elections. [...]

Israel cannot afford further inexpert leadership, and dare not indulge in further political drift."

JPO 23.09.08

### Sie hat kein Mandat

"Die Fan-Polemik der Medien stellt eine Stimmung her, als ob Zippi Livni letzte Woche von der allgemeinen Öffentlichkeit zur Premierministerin gewählt worden wäre. Vielleicht muss man an die einfachen Fakten erinnern: Frau Livni wurde nicht zur PM gewählt, und sie stellte sich nicht der Öffentlichkeit zur Wahl. Die gesamte Zahl der registrierten Parteimitglieder von Kadima würde kaum die Sperrklausel für die Knessetwahlen überschreiten. [...]"

Tatsächlich braucht man dem trockenen Gesetze nach infolge von Olmerts Rücktritt keine Neuwahlen abhalten. Getreu diesem Gesetz hat der Staatspräsident Zippi Livni damit beauftragt, eine Regierung zu bilden. [...]"

Aber die Demokratie ist nicht nur eine Verordnung, sondern primär eine Idee. [...] Das Volk auf der Strasse sagt deutlich, dass die jetzige Knesset es nicht repräsentiert. [...]"

Wenn Livni wirklich eine ehrliche und saubere Frau ist, muss sie sich mit ihrer Partei dem Wähler stellen. Wenn sie diese Ehrlichkeit nicht besitzt, müssen ihre mögliche Partner sie zu Neuwahlen drängen."

Uri Elitzur, HZO 24.09.08

### A government now

"Two weeks after prime minister-designate Tzipi Livni's victory in the Kadima primary, and the outlines of the next government remain unknown. [...]"

Livni is moving ahead in talks with parties in the current coalition, reinforced perhaps by Meretz and United Torah Judaism. This is the right move to explore without delay under the circumstances, although another month or so remains of the six weeks President Shimon Peres gave Livni. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's government was established in the spring of 2006 based on the balance of power elected in the Knesset. Changes forced on this government were more personal than ideological. [...] Barak's entry to the cabinet a year ago, re-

placing Peretz, led to no great changes. This model should also be applied when Olmert passes the baton to Livni: minimal movement and a freezing of the situation. [...]

This is not to say that any of the partners' demands in a Livni government would be unjustified. [...]

[But] we need a government now. Improvements can wait a while."

HAA 02.10.08

### **The change we need**

"Ehud Barak is the playmaker who will decide [...] whether a Livni government will be established or whether elections will be held. The Labor Party chairman has no chance of being the next prime minister, but he will determine the nature of the next government. [...]

If he reinvents himself as an agent and a leader of change, he will give himself a new chance. [...] The situation that Barak must explain to the public is not complicated at all; rather, it is simple in its cruelty. In the next two years Israel will face critical challenges. [...] It is absolutely imperative that the next government not be a continuation of the Olmert government. What is needed is a government of change. If Livni intends to form a government of change, she must be supported at all costs. If Livni intends to form a government of continuity, she must be fought with all our might. [...]

One means of bringing about the change is through a national unity government. But if Netanyahu refuses to cooperate then Barak must propose a different way - a government of national excellence, in which Livni and Barak create around themselves a new type of Israeli leadership. A leadership of quality and values, of level-headedness and responsibility, of change. [...] A new leadership, a new political culture and a new form of governmental conduct will effect the change. Only they will make the Livni government a worthy government and Ehud Barak a worthy leader, a leader who might have a chance in the long run."

Ari Shavit, HAA 02.10.08

### **3. Jahresrückblicke**

*Rosh Hashana, das jüdische Neujahr, fiel in diesem Jahr auf den 1. Oktober. In den Medien wurde der Feiertag zum Anlass genommen, das vergangene Jahr 5768, in dem Israel seinen 60. Geburtstag feierte, Revue passieren zu lassen und einen Ausblick in die Zukunft zu wagen. Die meisten Rückblicke waren dabei eher von Pessimismus gezeichnet angesichts eines Jahres, das den Rücktritt von Präsidenten und Premierminister, Korruptionsvorwürfe gegen mehrere Politiker, keine Fortschritte im Friedensprozess und Angriffe durch Kassamraketen aus dem Gazastreifen sah.*

### **Making this a good year**

"This year, the Rosh Hashanah holiday [...] comes at a time of endings and beginnings both in Israel and worldwide, and with them, attempts at making amends and stocktaking. The bad taste left in Israel after Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's term in office - which, to put it mildly, ended without achievements - joins the bad taste left by the crisis in Western capital markets and the Bush administration. These and other disappointments have reined in our hopes and accustomed us to fear. In Israel, these hopes and fears are focused on Tzipi Livni, who is trying to form a new government for the new year.

In the decade since a prime minister-elect named Ehud Barak arrogantly promised the 'dawn of a new day,' which ended in bitter disappointment, Israelis have learned to lower their expectations of their leaders. [...]

As the years pass, Israel has indeed become stronger in certain areas, but it has also become weaker. Thus as we enter the new year, it would be a mistake to make do with hoping to 'get through the year in one piece.' The disappointments we have known have almost obliterated the fact that Israel was born with higher hopes than this. And as we start a new year, nothing is more worthy of being remembered and revived under new leadership than these hopes."

HAA 26.09.08

### **Not a year to remember**

"In national, public terms, it would perhaps have been appropriate for the past year to be erased from our collective memory: We had a president, prime minister, finance minister, and seven other government ministers who were politely asked to [...] listen

to statements such as 'you are being investigated under warning and anything you say may be used against you in court.'

[...] When it comes to the diplomatic front, we did not have too many moments of elation this past year. We saw no praiseworthy breakthroughs. [...] On the economic front we worked hard to survive and put enough money in our coffers for rainy days. [...]

Children were shaking, scared of a Qassam rocket explosion. Mothers cried at the IDF induction office. [...] Meanwhile, peace this year was a matter reserved to speakers and speeches. Israeli democracy, which we pride ourselves on, took yet another step forward towards the abyss.

We are told that on Rosh Hashana it is customary to express optimism and hope, and to see and want a better future for us and for our families. We wanted this, very much so, this time around. But it didn't work out."

Eitan Haber, JED 01.10.08

### **A most peculiar year**

"The Jewish year 5768, drawing to a close, was for better - and, unfortunately, for worse - a peculiarly Israeli year. [...] Israel celebrated its 60th anniversary in typically Israeli fashion - some cynicism and soul-searching with a dose of togetherness of the type you can't duplicate anywhere else in the world. [...]

This was the year in which the country agonized over the cost of a very different kind. The price of freeing POWs - dead or alive. Ultimately, in July, we did a deal with the devil (in the form of Hizbullah's Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah), handing over childkiller Samir Kuntar and four other terrorists along with the bodies of 200 more in return for the remains of Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser [...] There was no consolation, but closure. [...]

Kassams from Gaza continued to fall on Sderot and the surrounding area for much of the year. [...]

The most deadly attack was the one perpetrated in March by an Arab Jerusalemite who opened fire on pupils at Mercaz Harav Yeshiva, leaving eight students dead. [...]

There was also talk of peace. Lots of talk. [...]

So much happened, it's hard to recall it all.

[...And yet] there was much to celebrate: Just being here after 60 years is an achievement, let alone with an economy that seems to be surviving the current international crisis. Let's hope that the seeds that lay hidden in this year's untended fields will bloom next year."

Liat Collins, JPO 28.09.08

HAA = Haaretz  
HZO= Ha Tzofe  
IHY = Israeli HaYom  
JED = Jedioth Ahronoth  
JPO = Jerusalem Post  
MAA = Maariv

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Verantwortlich:

Dr. Ralf Hexel,  
Leiter der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Israel

Redaktion:

*Maike Ziesemer*

*Anita Haviv*

Homepage: [www.fes.org.il](http://www.fes.org.il)

Email: [fes@fes.org.il](mailto:fes@fes.org.il)