



## Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 19/08

### Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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#### 1. Präsident Obama und der Nahe Osten

*Auch in Israel wurden die Wahlen in den USA mit Spannung verfolgt. Noch bevor nach der Auszählung der am 4. November abgegebenen Stimmen feststand, dass Barack Obama der nächste amerikanische Präsident sein wird, wurde in den Medien darüber spekuliert, welche Auswirkungen die Wahergebnisse für Israel und den Nahen Osten haben würden.*

*Insbesondere über die Positionen von Obama wurde dabei ausführlich berichtet. Thematisiert wurden seine verhandlungsbereite Haltung gegenüber dem Iran, sowie sein Verhältnis zu den Palästinensern.*

*Auch das Wahlverhalten amerikanischer Juden wurde von den israelischen Medien untersucht. Berichten der Zeitung Haaretz zufolge entschieden sich etwa 77% der jüdischen Wähler für den Sieger Barack Obama. Ausführlich wurde außerdem über die Ernennung von Rahm Emanuel, der einen israelischen Vater hat, zu Obamas Stabschef im Weißen Haus berichtet.*

*Premierminister Olmert betonte, dass die Wahl Obamas das Verhältnis Israels zu den USA, das auf gemeinsamen Werten basiere, nicht verändern würde.*

#### From OJ to Barak

"Little more than a decade ago, when O.J. Simpson was found innocent of two murders, cameras recorded cheering blacks and morose whites, illustrating a split-screen America. On this extraordinary night of national reconciliation, the cameras showed blacks and whites crying together, laughing together [...].

Barack Obama's stance on Israel will be one of many test cases to see just what kind of president this eloquent, talented, but still untested and inexperienced young man will be. [...]

Fears that Barack Obama will sell Israel down the river in an expression of fealty to Rashid Khalidi or other Palestinians he befriended over the years are exaggerated. Obama has made too many strong, sincere, pro-Israel statements, and has too many pro-Israel supporters, donors, and aides for this to be a serious issue. [...] A more valid concern, especially for those from the center and right, is that Obama, like Bill Clinton, may risk killing Israel - or too many Israelis - with kindness. Obama may have a bit too much of a naïve, 'We are the world' view of foreign policy for the brutal, dishonest, realpolitik of the Middle East. [...]

Moreover, one of the demands Iran has made as a precondition for negotiations will be an abandonment of America's support for Israel. Whether this stiffens Obama's spine, as it should, or leads to a cooling toward the Jewish state, may be a first, relatively early test, of Obama's direction. Still, for now, all this is in the realm of speculation. [...]

For now, then, let us all join the great Barack Obama love-in. Let us celebrate the kind of country America is - a country that can correct its mistakes, heal its wounds, and elect a black man president."

Gil Troy, JPO 06.11.08

#### Next president won't fulfill Israel's fantasies

"It's the ultimate leftist fantasy. After being elected president of the United States on Tuesday, Barack Obama places the Palestinian-Israeli conflict at the top of his agenda. A senior presidential envoy, say, Vice President Joe Biden, is dispatched to the region and does not leave until both sides' leaders sign an agreement to divide the land and to form a Palestinian state. [...] Israel then returns to its 1967 borders, an independent Palestine consolidates its control next door and the right wing is forced to admit it was wrong.

The rightist fantasy would have John McCain elected. [...]

Neither fantasy will materialize. The new U.S. president will pay the required lip service - he will announce his support for the 'two-state solution' and criticize the Iranian nuclear drive. He will express his hopes that the tense quiet will continue in the Middle East, and that a new war will not break out. He will focus on his main task: reviving the American economy and rescuing the global economy from the crisis. [...]

But even if Obama does decide to step in, he will discover how difficult it is to reap quick rewards from the Palestinian negotiating table, because of the split between the West Bank and Gaza. [...] At any rate, it seems implausible for the new president to find the time to reach an agreement while tending to the financial issues at hand."

Aluf Benn, HAA 02.11.08

### **Why I voted for John McCain**

"In this election, Americans either chose to continue fighting those forces by voting for John McCain – a staunch patriot and war hero, or to give in and give up by choosing Barack Hussein Obama, a virtual unknown who wants to slash America's defenses, lose her war in Iraq, and start unconditional talks with homicidal maniacs that threaten us all with atomic war. [...]

Obama is also friends with Israel-hating Rashid Khalidi who had close ties with the PLO, and indicted Syrian-American slumlord Tony Rezko. Obama has often said that one of his first acts as president will be to remove US troops from Iraq and to hold unconditional talks with a terrorist like Ahmadinejad. [...]

The Democrats have run a very, very expensive campaign, financed by million of dollars of foreign donations (which are illegal,) including money from Arabs in Gaza, to hide these facts. [...]

I voted for John McCain, and so did every other American in Israel I know, Jew and gentile, religious and secular."

Naomi Ragen, JED 04.11.08

### **Obama better for Israel**

"While some presidents have displayed greater warmth toward Israel than others, real friendship ought to be measured not by what has been said, but by what has been done – particularly during times of need. [...] President Bush's oft-stated affinity for Israel has not been accompanied by actions that could have enhanced Israel's security. What Israel needs most from the United States

today is not empty expressions of solidarity, but active involvement in Arab-Israeli peacemaking. [...] Obama has pledged to 'take an active role and make a personal commitment to do all I can to advance the cause of peace from the start of my administration.' Obama's team of Mideast advisers includes former Mideast peace coordinator Dennis Ross, former Ambassador to Israel Dan Kurtzer, and Dan Shapiro, a former National Security Council official. These individuals have impeccable pro-Israel credentials, are longtime supporters of US engagement in Arab-Israeli peacemaking, and will likely have important roles in an Obama administration. [...]

With Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas committed to a negotiated peace agreement with Israel, [and] Syrian President Bashar Assad's strategic decision to do likewise [...] an important opportunity exists for drastically improving Israel's strategic position in the Middle East. Without an involved American President, however, any potential for a peace deal is doomed to fail. [...]

While McCain undoubtedly views himself as a stalwart supporter of Israel, Obama's stated agenda is likely to yield better results for the Jewish state.

Guy Ziv, JED 03.11.08

### **The end of the special relationship?**

"Obama's most fervent support has come from the university campuses and cultural elites - where attitudes tend most to resemble those of Western Europeans, and where scorn for those who 'cling to guns or religion' runs rampant. These campuses also happen to be the redoubts of the greatest hostility to Israel.

An America that more closely resembles Western Europe will not be good for Israel. Western Europeans consistently deem Israel the greatest threat to world peace. And they are remarkably cavalier about Israel's defense of its own existence. [...]

Western Europe's almost religious faith in international institutions of open membership, like the UN, and a declining concern with national sovereignty threaten Israel. [...]

Obama frequently demonstrates a similar reverence for the UN, and has a long list of international treaty obligations to which he is eager to submit the US. [...]

Europe has adopted a stance of appeasement toward both external threats and to Islamic minorities within. [...]

To the extent that Obama's likely election betokens a move toward a more European America, the special ties that have bound the people of America and Israel show signs of fraying."

Jonathan Rosenblum, JPO 30.10.08

### **Obama und Israel**

„Barack Obamas Sieg war zu erwarten. [...] Der gewählte Präsident wird seine politische Linie erst formulieren, nachdem er im Amt vereidigt wird, in der zweiten Januarhälfte 2009, nachdem alle Zeremonien abgeschlossen sind, die seinen Amtsantritt begleiten werden. Erst dann wird der Präsident das Ausmaß der Probleme erfahren, die in den USA an der Tagesordnung stehen und seine Politik formen.

In solch einer Zeit ist es Israel Pflicht, sich erneut zu wappnen, [...] um für das Wohl und die Sicherheit des Staates zu sorgen. Niemand sonst wird für unsere Sicherheit sorgen. [...] Das ist der Schluss, den man am Tag nach den Wahlen in den USA ziehen muss.“

Moshe Ishon, HZO 06.11.08

## **2. Vorbereitungen zu den Knessetwahlen**

*Nachdem die Vorsitzende der Regierungspartei Kadima, Zippi Livni, die Koalitionsverhandlungen zur Bildung einer neuen Regierung für gescheitert erklärt hat, positionieren die Parteien sich nun für die Knessetwahlen. Diese werden am 10. Februar 2009 stattfinden.*

*Während der Oppositionsführer und Likud-Vorsitzende Benjamin Netanjahu seinen Fokus auf das Thema Sicherheit setzte, gab Ehud Barak an, die wirtschaftliche Lage in das Zentrum des Wahlkampfes der Arbeitspartei stellen zu wollen. Die Kadima-Partei unter Führung Livnis bemüht sich indes um eine Position der Mitte.*

*Umfragen zufolge könnten Kadima und Likud etwa gleich viele Wählerstimmen erringen. Dem Likud könnte es jedoch leichter fallen, eine Koalition zu bilden, falls die rechten Parteien eine Mehrzahl der Knessetmandate erhalten würde. Prognosen zunach ist dieses Szenario durchaus denkbar.*

*Der Arbeitspartei werden verheerende Ergebnisse prophezeit, nach denen sie die Hälfte ihrer 20 Sitze verlieren könnte.*

*In Vorbereitung auf die Wahlen haben sich bereits einige Neubesetzungen angekündigt. Shaul Mofas, der nach seiner Niederlage im Kampf um den Vorsitz von Kadima zunächst seinen Rückzug*

*angedeutet hatte, besteht nun auf dem zweiten Platz auf der Liste seiner Partei. Effi Eitam, Abgeordneter der religiösen NRP, kündigte seinen Wechsel zum Likud an. Zum Likud kehrte ebenfalls Benny Begin, der Sohn der verstorbenen Premierminister, zurück.*

*In den kommenden Wochen werden Primaries in den wichtigsten Parteien über die Listenplätze der designierten Knessetabgeordneten entscheiden.*

### **Three-way suicide**

“There are quite a few people around here who still refuse to face up to reality: Israel's three leading political movements have gone bankrupt. They finished their role and are facing a liquidation sale. Kadima, Labor, and Likud no longer have something to sell. [...]

The Likud eyes the center of the political map, just like Kadima does, and Labor has been there for a while now. [...]

Uri Savir revealed a few days ago that Benjamin Netanyahu was willing to make far-reaching concessions as prime minister. Therefore, what's the difference between Bibi and leftist politicians like Haim Oron or Zahava Gal-On? Now it appears that everyone is in the middle, at the 'center.'

The best people, in terms of personal qualities, are in Kadima today. Leftovers of appropriate ideology can be found in Labor. Meanwhile, Likud has some good and hard-working field people. So what can be done? How do we leave behind the great confusion and embark on a new path? [...]

Had it been possible, for the next two years at least, to establish a national emergency government with Livni, Barak, and Netanyahu, the political establishment would calm down and seek solutions to the most severe diplomatic and security problems since Israel's inception. Perhaps, over time, we would also see new ideologies emerging in the old parties that could lead to the diplomatic solution so vital for our life here.

However, Kadima, Labor, and Likud decided to commit political suicide. And all of us are just standing there and applauding them. We always loved our bread and entertainment.”

Eitan Haber, JED 27.10.08

### **Begin again**

“Yesterday [...] Haaretz [...] reported that Begin was coming back, again. It proves that the most active recycling operation in Israel is not of paper, plastic or waste, but of politicians. [...]

It is impossible not to stand in awe of Netanyahu's marketing skills. On one side, Begin, an extreme right-winger [...], and on the other, Asaf Hefetz and Uzi Dazan, who are left of center. [...] Netanyahu brought them all to Likud. [...] He is riding a wave of popularity. In contrast to 2006, when even a stray dog would not have gone to Likud, this time the Likud seems to be a winning ticket. [...]

Now Kadima is stagnating, Labor is suffocating and the crowds are storming Likud. There's room for everyone, Netanyahu says. His problems with this ideological mix-and-match will start only the day after. [...]

Benny Begin, despite his extreme opinions [...] is a rare asset to Likud. He is Mr. Clean, an answer to Tzipi Livni in terms of integrity, and rehabilitates Netanyahu in the name of everyone who scattered in all directions from Likud in '98 and '99."

Yossi Verter, HAA 03.11.08

### **Barak, social democrat?**

"Kicking off the Labor Party's campaign for the 18th Knesset on Monday, party chair Ehud Barak denounced 'piggish capitalism.' [...] It's an approach that may not work now. [...] Labor aspires to represent the working man and woman; it maintains its membership in the Socialist International. Yet the party is so closely identified in the public mind with many of Israel's top entrepreneurs, industrialists and moguls as to make an anti-greed electoral strategy problematic. [...]

Polls show the party garnering 11 Knesset seats, compared to the 20 it holds now. The global economic crisis notwithstanding, voters are telling pollsters that security tops the economy as the issue that most animates their preferences. Assuming Shaul Mofaz plays a critical role in Kadima's campaign and Moshe Ya'alon - another general - runs with Likud, Barak's appeal to voters on security grounds is diminished.

The ethnic and working-class vote is likely to go to Shas; sincere neo-Marxists troubled by 'capitalistic greed' will probably be more comfortable voting Meretz. Thus Barak's 'capitalist greed' rhetoric is unlikely to be Labor's salvation. [...]

Should Kadima flourish under Tzipi Livni - championing, moreover, a centrist approach to negotiation with the Palestinian Arabs - many will wonder whether Labor, led by Ehud Barak, has any future at all."

JPO 28.10.08

### **Involve the Arabs**

"Of the 120 Knesset members, 10 belong to Arab factions [...]. When coalitions are formed, these groups are usually left outside the camp, and outside the political discourse. Prime ministerial candidates from the right loathe these factions, while those from the left fear being overly associated with them.

The result is identical: The Arab factions, whose representatives were democratically elected by wide swaths of the population, are shunned and turn into nearly illegitimate entities. [...]

Israeli Arabs feel subjected to discrimination, and understandably so. [...] Arab factions represent a vital, legitimate portion of the public that cannot be ignored. They can be partners in the government if they agree to the government's guidelines; they can support the government from the opposition; or they can oppose the government. But they must be treated exactly like the other factions in the legislature."

HAA 26.10.08

### **Not now, some other time**

"As Israel heads into yet another election, the failure belongs to the political system. And the real loser is the country. [...] Our system runs on bribery and blackmail, and a majority of Israelis believe it serves mainly politicians. [...] In fact, Shas and Labor are largely to blame. But they only exemplify real problems in our political culture. Large parties have lost their big constituencies, through poor leadership, policy failures and the perception of rampant corruption [...]. People thus turn to small or expedient protest parties like Shinui or the Pensioners which enter Knesset on a low threshold, ensuring that no faction is strong enough for easy coalition-building, which becomes a spectacle of squabbling. [...]

The leadership is always either recovering from, or preparing for elections; governments last two years on average, just half of their intended four. [...] The cynicism about politics is not just depressing, but has dire ramifications. The country has witnessed a massive drop in voter turnout. [...]

The country stagnates during the election obsession. By the end of the next coalition negotiations, the stagnation will have stretched from September to probably March; another half-year lost. [...] By plunging the country into elections, Shas and Labor have done the country a disservice. The grossly skewed blaming of Livni could cost the country a promising new leader.

Holding elections means that instead of stability, the country stagnates. And what stagnates, rots.”

Daliah Scheindlin, JPO 28.10.08

### 3. Yossi Beilin und Meretz

*Während sich die Parteien auf die anstehenden Wahlen vorbereiten, kündigte Knessetmitglied Yossi Beilin, der ehemalige Vorsitzende der Partei Meretz-Yachad, seinen Abschied von der Politik an.*

*Beilin, einer der Hauptarchitekten der Genfer Friedensinitiative, hatte seine politische Karriere vor mehr als zwanzig Jahren als Mitglied der Arbeitspartei begonnen, war jedoch 2003 Meretz beigetreten, und zu ihrem Vorsitzenden gewählt worden.*

*Wenige Tage nach Beilins Ankündigung machte ein weiteres Fraktionsmitglied, Ran Cohen, seinen Rücktritt bekannt.*

*Meretz, ein Zusammenschluss mehrerer linker Parteien, hatte bei den Wahlen im Jahr 2006 nur fünf Mandate erringen können – im erfolgreichsten Jahr ihres Bestehens hatte die Partei 1992 noch zwölf Abgeordnete in der Knesset.*

*Beilin kündigte an, in die Wirtschaft wechseln zu wollen. Medienberichten zufolge soll er jedoch Pläne haben, sein soziales Engagement fortzusetzen.*

#### The man who dared

“During his long years in politics, more than people loved him, they loved to hate him. Beilin the statesman knew how to annoy, taunt, and swim against the current. He pushed for dialogue with the Palestinians, worked out the Oslo agreements, called for unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon, and did not give up on the peace dream even for a moment. [...]

[But] Beilin found it difficult to shape the image of his small party, and had trouble redefining it in the wake of the big political bang that gave rise to Kadima and drew the Center to it. [...]

Despite this, Beilin shall not be remembered as a smalltime politician or as a failed party leader. He left his main mark in terms of Israel's political thinking. Beilin, more than many others in Israeli politics, dared. He dared to think, he dared to speak, and when he had the opportunity, he dared to act. [...]

And those who think that Yossi Beilin will give up on his lifelong struggle for peace better think again: Beilin may indeed be quitting politics, yet he is here in order to continue affecting Israel's future.

Attila Somfalvi, JED 29.10.08

#### Yossi Beilin's poodles

“After he announced that he was leaving politics, Beilin was lauded with many words of praise. The right also noted his intellectual honesty. This conception has to be opposed, absolutely. He [...] stood firm by Arafat and his people and ignored their proven involvement in the acts of mass murder. [...] By resigning themselves to the situation, they convinced the Palestinians that the more Jews they murdered, the more the conciliatory moves in their direction would be strengthened.

There was no other person who succeeded to such an extent in making structural, ideological and psychological, almost physiological, changes here. From a rational society with the healthy instincts required to know its surroundings and reality, we have become a public drawn to fantasies devoid of reality. We have become, even if we did not vote for his party, Beilin's poodles.

Beilin convinced us that the path of far-reaching concessions would appease the Palestinians [...]. He and no one else succeeded in getting us to follow the path that has cost the lives of thousands of dead (Jews and Arabs alike) and has distanced us from peace for generations, because of the total loss of trust between the sides after the destruction and ruin the Oslo Accords brought about. No one can deny him the medal he deserves for these achievements.”

Israel Harel, HAA 06.11.08

#### Meretz'a big chance

“The Meretz faction was one of the big disappointments of the 17th Knesset. [...] The faction was not outstanding, its message seemed lost and blurry, and there was a feeling of stagnation about it. [...] An abyss now yawns on the Zionist left of Israel's political map. [...]

The departure of two of the five Meretz MKs, senior as they are, creates an opportunity to infuse the movement with new blood, to cultivate a new and more electrifying leadership, and thus to strengthen the peace camp and the atrophied Israeli left. [...]

Meretz now has the task of drawing on [its] reservoir. Facing the party is its older sister, Labor, caught in the throes of the worst ideological and electoral struggle it has ever experienced. In this context, there is an even greater need for as large a Meretz as possible, with a diplomatic and social doctrine that is different and clear. [...]

The party's central committee, which is due to elect its slate soon, has the responsibility to choose a list

and a path that will meet the challenges it faces - before Meretz disappears entirely."

HAA 03.11.08

### **A place for Meretz**

"Meretz has been more influential than its numbers alone would suggest because its core ideas were echoed by elements in academia and the media. Its long-standing opposition to a Jewish presence in Judea and Samaria and its anti-settlement oratory have been at least partly mainstreamed. [...]

[Only] Meretz's inability to internalize the lessons of the second intifada sets it apart from the Zionist mainstream. [...]

We believe that Israel's body-politic would be best served with fewer, and less ideologically strident, parties. Were Meretz to join forces with Labor, the smaller party could reinvigorate the latter's social-democratic credentials while Labor could rein in Meretz's more immoderate security positions.

Together, they could present a center-Left alternative favoring religious tolerance, pluralism, civil liberties and a passionate concern for the downtrodden."

JPO 02.11.08

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

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