



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 04/09

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

9. – 20. Februar 2009

Das aktuelle Schlaglicht widmet sich ausschließlich den Wahlen zur 18. Knesset am 10. Februar 2009, deren Ergebnis in Israel anfangs Unklarheit und Verwirrung auslösten, da nach den ersten Auszählungen sowohl Tzipi Livni (Kadima) als auch Benjamin Netanyahu (Likud) beide ihren Sieg verkündeten. Während Kadima einen Sitz mehr erhielt als der Likud, ist der rechte-ultraorthodoxe Parteienblock stärker als der linke Block, was theoretisch die Koalitionsbildung für Netanyahu erleichtert. Es ist zu erwarten, dass die Koalitionsverhandlungen sich schwierig und langwierig gestalten werden.

Das endgültige Ergebnis lautet: Kadima 28 (2006: 29), Likud 27 (12), Yisrael Beiteinu 15 (11), Arbeitspartei 13 (19), Shas 11 (12), Vereinigtes Torah-Judentum 5 (6), Nationale Union 4 (9 – gemeinsam mit der heutigen Jüdische Heimat), Vereinigte Arabische Liste – Ta'al 4 (4), Hadash 4 (3), Meretz 3 (5), Balad 3 (3), Jüdische Heimat 3 (9 – gemeinsam mit Nationale Union).

1. Wähler und Wahlbeteiligung

Die Öffentlichkeit stand dem Wahlkampf, der von der Militäroperation im Gazastreifen unterbrochen wurde, mit einer gewissen Gleichgültigkeit gegenüber. Daher wurden die israelischen Bürger in allen Medien aufgerufen, zur Wahlurne zu gehen. Letztendlich fiel die Wahlbeteiligung - trotz des für israelische Verhältnisse harschen Wetters - nicht wie befürchtet auf ein Rekordtief, sondern stieg im Vergleich zu den vorherigen Wahlen (im März 2006) sogar leicht an und betrug 65,2%.

Election Day thoughts

“As opposed to the commentators who characterized this election campaign as ‘sleepy,’ it appears to me that this was one of the more fiery election campaigns we ever experienced. It was fiery mostly internally, because it raged mostly in the hearts and minds of the citizens of the State of Israel. [...] Our views shifted and changed like miserable waves at sea, because everyone agreed on one thing – these elections were forced on us all of the sudden, while there is no new and promising leader on the horizon.”

Shlomo Artzi, JED 10.2.2009

Bibi, und ab ins Bett

“Das Volk hat gesprochen, und wenn ich es richtig verstanden habe, dann sagte das Volk: ‚Ja, verdammt noch mal, wir haben keine Ahnung, wir haben keine Unterschiede zwischen den Kandidaten feststellen können, wir gehen shoppen, soll doch Shimon Peres entscheiden, wer die Regierung bilden soll, haltet uns auf dem Laufenden, was so beschlossen wird, ok?“

Raanan Shaked, JED 11.2.2009

Continue the turnout trend

“The close contest between Likud and Kadima in the final week of the campaign, which until then had been lethargic, contributed to the high turnout. Voters felt they had the ability to shape the new leadership, after the expectation of an easy and sweeping victory by Benjamin Netanyahu vanished. [...] However, we should not be too satisfied, even though a collapse in voter turnout was avoided. Until a decade ago, turnout in Israel was close to 80 percent and reflected a high level of legitimacy for the political system. We are now far from that record, which was high by the standards of any democratic system.”

Editorial, HAA 11.2.2009

Why I won't be voting

"Time after time [...] we went to vote. We considered our choices, debated, and invested thought based on a serious attitude to the issue, and to the elections and their implications. We, the voters, were serious. On the other hand, them, the elected officials, mostly betrayed our trust. [...] A low voter turnout rate deprives politicians of the legitimacy to rule. Moreover, it requires them to adopt fundamental changes in the political system, while turning it into a functioning democratic system, rather than a formal democracy devoid of any practical substance. Ervin Eran Shahar, JED 9.2.2009

Vote or shut up

"Although this may sound like a cliché, voting is not the 'democratic right' of citizens – it's their duty, on all its entails. [...] Beyond all the lofty ideals, those who fail to vote punish themselves first and foremost. Or if you will, the group they 'belong to'. We may see a situation whereby a certain group, doctrine, or social sector take a minor part in sharing the government pie or are not represented at all. They will likely feel alienated in the face of the decisions to be taken by the next Knesset, yet they would only have themselves to blame."

Guy Ronen, JED 10.2.2009

2. Zusammenbruch der israelischen Linken?

Dass der linke Parteienblock eine schwere Niederlage einstecken musste (die Arbeitspartei erhielt 13 Sitze, Meretz 3), wird im Allgemeinen auf den Versuch der linken Wähler zurückgeführt, einen Sieg Netanyahu zu verhindern, indem sie statt für eine linke Partei für Tzipi Livni stimmten. Livnis Partei Kadima hatte die Abwanderung durch den Wahlkampflogan der letzten Tage – „Tzipi oder Bibi“ – noch verstärkt. Auf der anderen Seite handelt es sich dabei um einen Trend, der schon seit Jahrzehnten anhält. Nicht einmal die Rückkehr des ehemaligen Generalstabschefs Barak an die Spitze der Arbeitspartei und die in Israel als Sieg empfundene Militäroperation im Gazastreifen noch die offene Unterstützung von Meretz durch zahlreiche Intellektuelle und der Zusammenschluss mit der „Neuen Bewegung“ konnten diesen Trend abwenden.

A late burial

"The Israeli left died in 2000. Since then its corpse has been lying around unburied until finally its death certificate was issued, signed, sealed and delivered

on Tuesday. The hangman of 2000 was also the gravedigger of 2009: Defense Minister Ehud Barak. [...] The Israeli left is dead. For the past nine years it took the name of the peace camp in vain. The Labor Party, Meretz and Kadima had pretensions of speaking in its name, but that was trickery and deceit. Labor and Kadima made two wars and continued to build Jewish settlements in the West Bank; Meretz supported both wars. Peace has been left an orphan."

Gideon Levy, HAA 12.2.2009

Left did not crumble

"Even at its worst moment, when it's beaten, eulogized, and devoid of fighting spirit, Israel's center-Left bloc still won more than 50 mandates. [...] This is an amazing phenomenon. Almost a decade after the Camp David tragedy and the Intifada, with Hamastan in Gaza and ceaseless Qassam attacks on the south, members of the moderate bloc refuse to give up the struggle for the country's helm."

Uri Misgav, JED 11.2.2009

Kadima hat das linke Lager 'umgebracht'

„Wie konnte es geschehen, dass ein politisches Lager sich fast in Luft auflöst? Es scheint, als wäre die Antwort auf diese Frage in die Erscheinung inbegriffen, sie ‚Kadima‘ heißt, und die ihr Unwesen in den ideologischen Gefilden von links und rechts treibt. So war es bei der vorigen Runde im Jahr 2006, als der Likud schrumpfte und nur 12 Mandate erhielt, und diesmal wiederholt es sich auf der linken Seite der politischen Landkarte. Wenn jemand eines Beweises bedurfte, um zu zeigen, dass Kadima keinen Weg hat, dann ist es dieser.“

Gilad Katz, HZO* 12.2.2009

Soul-searching on the left

"Both left-wing parties have suffered a crisis and their leaders – Ehud Barak and Haim Oron – failed to read the deep changes in the Israeli political map and lead their parties to a dead end. [...] Both parties failed to provide a convincing alternative [to Kadima and Likud]. They must rehabilitate and rebuild themselves in the opposition as a serious left alternative to the right-wing bloc that won the election. Their leaders are responsible for this failure – Barak and Oron must move aside."

Editorial, HAA 12.2.2009

It's all Labor's fault

Had Labor realized back in 1984 that being in the opposition is not about going to a barren land, but rather, it's a mission and there is no democracy in its

absence, perhaps we would have been in a different era by now. However, Labor always preferred the comforts of power, and by doing so consistently built up the strength of the Right, while eliminating itself. Meanwhile, no suitable ideological-political response to the rightist rule was created. Barak's refusal to quit is merely another testament to the declining norms, the lack of shame, and the grim public reality we are facing, whereby people no longer quit for any reason around here."

Dror Nissan, JED 13.2.2009

3. Koalitionsverhandlungen

Nachdem alle Stimmen gezählt wurden, hatte Tzipi Livni zwar ein Mandat mehr als Netanyahu, doch als Siegerin ging sie aus den Wahlen dennoch nicht hervor. Dies ist darauf zurückzuführen, dass der rechte-ultraorthodoxe Block (65 Sitze) trotz Livnis Sieg über mehr Sitze in der Knesset verfügt als der Block der Mitte/Linksparteien (55 Sitze).

Weder Bibi Netanyahu noch Tzipi Livni, hatte zunächst die nötige Anzahl von Stimmen zusammen, um von Präsident Shimon Peres den Auftrag zur Regierungsbildung zu erhalten.

Erst die Entscheidung Avigdor Liebermans, nach langen Verhandlungen und Verzögerungstaktiken, schließlich dem Likud seine Unterstützung zu verkünden, führte dazu, dass am vergangenen Donnerstag der Vorsitzende des Likud den Auftrag erhielt. Doch welchen Weg er einschlagen wird, ist noch unklar. Denkbar sind letztendlich mehrere Konstellationen, u.a. eine Regierung des rechten Lagers und eine Große Koalition in verschiedenen Ausführungen.

Sie Tzipi, er Bibi, und wir stecken fest

„Ein Blinder und ein Lahmer können sich zusammen tun, um gemeinsam das Ziel zu erreichen. Livni hat keine Mehrheit, Netanyahu hat keine Regierungsmacht. Es bietet sich förmlich an, eine Einheitsregierung zu bilden, aber beide verbarrikadieren sich hinter ihren Erfolgen. Und wir bleiben mit einem Blinden und einem Lahmen sitzen.“

Ofer Shelach, MAA* 13.2.2009

The R-word: Rotation

„Benjamin Netanyahu and Tzipi Livni are like two card players at the table, neither with a good hand, each staring the other down. They know that neither of them has good cards. But they have to keep playing because their egos hold sway, and because they are in no hurry. [...] Netanyahu can take comfort

only in the larger number of lawmakers recommending him over Livni, which does not ensure him a coalition. And if it does, it's the coalition of his nightmares: a dogmatic right-wing, ultra-Orthodox coalition, which exerts pressure, can be pressured and is hated by most of the public, including most Likud voters.“

Yossi Verter, HAA 16.2.2009

Gebt uns eine Regierung ohne Rassismus

„Die Verantwortung der beiden großen Parteien ist nun, Israel eine stabile Regierung ohne Rassismus und anti-demokratische Tendenzen zu geben. Eine solche Regierung kann auf einer Dreierbasis gegründet werden: Kadima, Likud, Avoda [Arbeitspartei]. Eine solche Regierung würde sich auf eine stabile Mehrheit von über 70 Mandaten stützen, die ihr auch eine volle Amtszeit garantieren könnte, unabhängig von den sektoralen Parteien, die für jede Regierung, die sich auf sie stützt, stets eine Bedrohung darstellen.“

Jehoshua Sobol, IHY* 11.2.2009

Out of deadlock, momentum

„Netanyahu's campaign pledge to seek a wide Zionist government was not empty rhetoric. [...] A government headed by a relative hawk and a relative dove will be far more credible in explaining why prospects for substantive progress in dealings with the Palestinian Authority are bleak [...]. A Likud-Kadima pairing might choose to bring Avigdor Lieberman's Israel Beiteinu into government, but would rule out discriminatory demands of Israeli Arabs.“

Editorial, JPO 12.2.2009

Herr Netanyahu und Frau Livni, das ist Ihr Augenblick

„Sie haben die historische Gelegenheit, eine Regierung der nationalen Verantwortung zu bilden. Eine Regierung, die all die Dinge tun wird, die eine Mehrheit in der Knesset haben, die aber stets wegen Erpressung von Seiten der Minderheit blockiert werden, die zum wahren Machthaber wurde. [...] Die Mehrheit will Stabilität. Die Mehrheit will eine breite Herrschaft. Keine Herrschaft der Minderheit.“

Ben-Dror Yemani, MAA 11.2.2009

Wovor haben sie Angst?

„Es ist an der Zeit, die Spielregeln des demokratischen Spiels zu respektieren: man muss die Meinung der Mehrheit respektieren, auch wenn es sich um eine Mehrheit handelt, die Rechts gewählt hat. Man muss den Siegern ermöglichen, eine Regie-

rung zu bilden – und den Staat auf ihre Weise zu führen.“

Moshe Ga'on, JED* 17.2.2009

In praise of rightist coalition

“[...] Netanyahu must not fear a narrow rightist government. The opposite is true – he should prefer it over a terrible and fragile coalition with two leftist parties. In such coalition, these two parties, Kadima and Labor, may constitute a government majority and neutralize the possibility of outlining the realistic policies desired by most voters. [...] There is no reason to fear a rightist government: it will not disconnect Israel from the Western World, but rather, constitute the frontal defense line of the entire West; a sober warning sign that will wake the West from its delusional dialogue with Iran and her terror emissaries – Syria, Hizbullah, and the Palestinians.”

Mor Altshuler, JED 12.2.2009

Go for it, Netanyahu

“Why isn't Benjamin Netanyahu setting up a right-wing government? [...] Why is he talking about a broad coalition, knowing it would force him to compromise his principles? Because he is afraid. Now, at the moment of truth, when he has the ability to implement his ideology, he has gotten cold feet and wants to dilute his government with components that are alien to his doctrine. [...] He wants Kadima and Labor in his government to hold him back, to prevent him from carrying out his doctrine. This is exactly why they must not join his coalition.”

Gideon Levy, HAA 19.2.2009

Unite or disappear

“One need not be a historian and political researcher [...] in order to characterize Kadima as a fleeting phenomenon. However, in light of the election results, and if Kadima wishes to stick around, it appears that it should find a way to unite with the Labor party. [...] If so many within Likud and Labor are willing to go for the diplomatic solution offered by Kadima – the two-state solution – then it is important and worthwhile for Labor, which also believes this is the right solution, to offer unity to Kadima. Had they acted this way this time, they would have 41 mandates now. This would have been the largest party by far, and it would have formed the government. [...] They will not have to wait long for the next elections; the summer of 2010 or something like that.”

Eitan Haber, JED 16.2.2009

Now is the time to merge

“The requisite conclusion drawn from the election results is that Kadima and Labor need to merge and act as a joint faction in the 18th Knesset. Such a merger has a double logic: It would place a bloc of 40 MKs at the center of the political system, effectively becoming the central axis in any coalition constellation. It would also restore some stability to the system, currently divided among midsize parties. There is no ideological difference between Labor and Kadima that could constitute an immovable obstacle to the parties' merger. [...] Israel needs a large center-left party.”

Aluf Benn, HAA 11.2.2009

4. Braucht Israel ein neues Wahl- und Regierungssystem?

Wie schon viele Wahlen zuvor, ließ auch die Wahl am 10. Februar die ehemals großen Parteien weiter schrumpfen, so dass die neue Knesset nurmehr aus 12 mittelgroßen und kleinen Parteien besteht. Dies stärkt die politische Position der Letzteren, deren Unterstützung der/die zukünftige Premierminister/in nun mit grossen Zugeständnissen erhalten wird. Nicht zuletzt deshalb wird auch dieses Mal wieder über eine Änderung des politischen Systems diskutiert. Zur Debatte stehen die Modifizierung des herrschenden parlamentarischen Systems (mit leichten bis drastischen Veränderungen im Wahlsystem), aber auch ein Wechsel zum präsidentiellen System. Dabei steht der Wunsch nach einem starken Premierminister und einer stabilen Regierung im Vordergrund. Doch viele Israelis haben den letzten Versuch einer Änderung (die Einführung der direkten Wahl des Premierministers) in den 90er Jahren, sowie deren Scheitern und die Rückkehr zum vorherigen System noch in schlechter Erinnerung.

A one-year coalition

“And the truth is that it really doesn't matter all that much who puts together the next government, Netanyahu or Livni. Either way, it won't last more than two years and won't accomplish much. This is our track record: 32 governments in 61 years.

The moment a prime minister takes over the job, he begins the countdown to the end. With our system of government, small parties determine the agenda. [...] The system is also terrible because it brings to the Knesset not the best and the brightest, but the biggest operators.”

Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA 13.2.2009

It's the system, stupid

"If there is one thing that the next government must implement, it is the adoption of a government system whose leader and whose Knesset members are personally elected to fixed terms of office. Enough with the system in which we choose between Netanyahu, Livni, Barak and Lieberman, and end up receiving a Pandora's box of MKs [...]. Enough with the system in which cabinet ministers know nothing about their ministry, but know very well that being a minister is a key vehicle on the road to removing the person who appointed them. Enough with the system in which the process of bringing about early elections begins the day after the previous elections."

Dan Ben-David, HAA 10.2.2009

Recipe for political disaster

"A new word entered our lexicon, governability – the ability to govern. Well, no government in the past years had the ability to govern, and the next government won't have it either. As long as the government system in Israel allows every bastard to be king and every prime minister is trampled over, there's no governability. We already tried out several government systems – perhaps the time has come to try out the presidential system of government?"

Eitan Haber, JED11.2.2009

Leave the system of government alone

"It's hard to shake the impression that one reason for the wave of proposals to change the system of government, specifically in light of the fact they come from the center and left, is that this time the public voted the wrong way – for the right. If you can't change the public, you try to change the system. The truth is, an objective look at the Israeli system reveals that it is a huge democratic success."

Shahar Ilan, HAA 16.2.2009

Establishment's new toy

"Changing the system' is from now on the establishment's new toy. The establishment shall amuse itself with it with great dedication and enthusiasm. We shall see supporters and rivals, many proposals and debates, and things will get interesting. As long as we don't need to get entangled with some kind of decision in respect to the future of the territories, the outline of a future agreement, the evacuation of settlements, the moral decline of religion, corruption, the spread of fascism, the fundamentalist takeover of the army and education system, and other bothersome trivialities of this sort."

B. Michael, JED 14.2.2009

Of punks and fools

"It's not the system that has to be changed, it's the fools. [...] Foolishness is not only limited to one side. Once someone thought that punks belonged only to the right; he was mistaken. They are found en masse on the left, too, but with diplomas."

Yossi Sarid, HAA 20.2.2009

Our broken system

"Israel's political system has been getting feedback that should have alerted it long ago that citizens are dissatisfied. [...] The signs of discontent are blatant: Though over 30 parties are competing in today's election, many voters are saying, 'there's no one to vote for.' [...] With many Israelis relating to today's election with a combination of lethargy and cynicism, something clearly needs to be done to fix our dysfunctional system. [...] And yet most of us intuitively realize that fixing the way we select our elected officials alone is not enough. That to return faith and legitimacy to our politics [...] Israel's political, judicial, media, business and spiritual elites need to come to their senses and start acting responsibly. They need to approach power not as an end in itself, but as a means of fulfilling their fiduciary duties to the people."

Editorial, JPO 9.2.2009

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

Die mit * gekennzeichneten Artikel wurden dem Medienspiegel der Deutschen Botschaft Israel entnommen.

Veröffentlicht am: 24. Februar 2009

Verantwortlich:

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

Redaktion:

Florentine Lempp

Anita Haviv

Homepage: www.fes.org.il

Email: fes@fes.org.il