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1. Demonstrationen der Ultraorthodoxen

In den letzten Wochen ist es wiederholt zu Ausschreitungen in den von ultraorthodoxen Juden („Haredim“) bewohnten Vierteln von Jerusalem gekommen. Demonstranten gingen teilweise gewalttätig gegen die Polizei vor, setzten Mülltonnen in Brand und beschädigten öffentliches Eigentum. Dafür gab es verschiedene Gründe, u.a. die Öffnung eines städtischen Parkplatzes am Sabbath, sowie jüngst die Verhaftung einer ultraorthodoxen Mutter, der – auch in den Schlagzeilen der Medien – vorgeworfen wurde, ihr Kind fast verhungert haben zu lassen. Die ultraorthodoxe Minderheit in Israel lebt – oft in großer Armut - zumeist streng getrennt von der säkularen Mehrheit, ihre Kinder besuchen religiöse Schulen und die jungen Männer dienen selten beim Militär. Einige Segmente verstehen sich als anti-zionistisch und distanzieren sich von staatlichen Institutionen.

When worlds collide

“The violence [...] had been sparked by a judge's decision to hold a pregnant haredi woman in custody after she was arrested on suspicion of systematically starving her three-year old child [...]. Rather than eschewing her for this vile desecration of human life and blasphemy of God's name, the community from whence she came was rallying around her, castigating the outside world for interfering in their own. There was no consideration here of right and wrong, only of us and them. [...]

This isn't merely a campaign of civil disobedience. When protesters declare they will continue their struggle to the bitter end, when they declare smugly that they do not accept the authority of the state, it is insurgency. Their taking to the streets is not about asserting their right to live the lifestyle of their choice; it is about their demand for insularity, a virtual secession from the Zionist state whose

protection, services and funds they continue to enjoy.“

David Breakstone, JPO 21.07.09

Heavy price to pray

„The struggles we see emerging between the two sides as of late – the parking lots in Jerusalem, the question of enlistment to the IDF, the economic policies dictated by Shas, the issue of conversion, and the question of core curriculum at schools all pertain to the following fundamental disagreement: In Herzl's and Ben-Gurion's view, the State is the tangible expression of Jewish independence. Yet in the eyes of the haredim, the State constitutes a foreign regime, and just like in the Diaspora they try to get as much as possible out of it, while at the same time viewing it as a despicable force, whose future and stability are not a Jewish concern.“

Gadi Taub, JED 16.07.09

A haredi consensus?

“If there is one thing [...] about which there is a nearly unanimous agreement across all sectors of the haredi community, it is condemnation of violent actions, such as throwing stones at police and burning garbage cans. From the beginning of the Shabbat demonstrations, after Mayor Nir Barkat's bombastic announcement of the opening of a municipal parking lot, as if he were the secular Saracen recapturing the city from the haredim, [Rabbi] Sternbuch [, the head of the Eda Haredit rabbinical court] has issued countless public proclamations stating clearly, ‘Anyone who commits acts of violence declares that he doesn't belong to our community.’ [...]

Jonathan Rosenblum, JPO 22.07.09

Burning down the house

“We see it happening every few months. An amazing Jerusalem ritual; glorious haredi pyromania – burning down the house. [...]

The Orthodox public – ‘a handful of radicals’ as some of their functionaries claim – is well practiced. Within minutes, all the garbage in the neighborhood is gathered for the sake of the cause. [...] As it turns out, there is no shortage of reasons. For seven years now, since 2002, they have been setting the streets on fire every summer, ahead of the Jerusalem Pride Parade and during the event. [...] They also fight anything they perceive as the violation of the status quo in the capital – the opening of a road (Bar-Ilan) or the opening of city parking lots on Shabbat [...]. When these pretexts run their course, they invent new ones. [...] They also block, with their flames, the way to other distressed individuals: Victims of domestic violence, incest, and sexual harassment. They set the streets on fire as if those things never happened, and if they did happen, well, it's as though they didn't.”
Ariella Ringel-Hoffman, JED 17.07.09

Black is (also) beautiful

“For a long time now, it's been the State of Israel vs. the Haredim. They're different, they're not like us and so they have no place among us. [...] Let's be really honest here: The biggest problem we have with the Haredim is their failure to serve in the IDF, because this is the real “test of admission” into Israeli society, and they don't pass it. Abusive parents, whether they live in Geula or Ramat Aviv Gimmel, need to be dealt with; demonstrators who sometimes turn violent must be subject to the law [...]. But we also need to be attentive to the waves of fury emanating from Mea Shearim these days. We might also open the door to these people and try to understand what has made them so angry, instead of letting the mounted police trample them.”
Gideon Levy, HAA 24.07.09

Gewalt!

“That the haredi world [...] finds it enormously difficult to grapple with child, sexual and spousal abuse comes to light when community members turn to the state for vital medical and social services. [...] There are dysfunctional families among all strata of Israeli society. But the only stratum that reacts with collective violence when abuse is exposed is the most insular subdivision of the haredi world.
Why is such antisocial behavior tacitly countenanced by the more conventional hassidim? Because they share values which hold that men should be gainfully unemployed, women socialized

to believe that the back of the bus is where God wants them, and youths reared to be clueless about the outside world. [...] Perhaps we need a state commission to tell us not only *why* a volatile minority of hassidic sects periodically runs amok - but also *how* to discourage the culture of extreme insularity that lies at the root of their self-perpetuated estrangement.”
JPO 16.07.09

“Anstatt zu betonen, dass es sich um einen Kranken Menschen handelt, haben die Medien das Thema zu einem Konflikt zwischen Ultraorthodoxen und Säkularen gemacht. [...] Leider hat auch die Polizei die Hetzerei unterstützt und die Gemüter weiter aufgeheizt, statt die Ordnung wieder herzustellen. [...] Diese Situation hätte verhindert werden können. [...] Das Problem ist, dass die Mutter bis heute in Haft sitzen würde, wenn die Demonstrationen und Ausschreitungen nicht gewesen wären. Schade, dass man manchmal Gewalt anwenden muss, um einem gerechten Ziel zu dienen.“
Moshe Ishon, HZO 21.07.09

Unacceptable collective punishment

“The protests deteriorated into open violence [...]. [Jerusalem Mayor Nir] Barkat responded by announcing a halt in the provision of municipal services to the two ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods where the riots took place [...]. But his hasty announcement was a mistake. Both neighborhoods are inhabited by tens of thousands of people, of which only a tiny minority participated in the violence. There is no reason to punish the many for the sins of the few. [...] For the municipality to declare war on an entire community will only further inflame passions and push Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox community into a ‘them or us’ stance toward the authorities. [...] It is supremely important to preserve Jerusalem's social and cultural pluralism, so Israel's capital will not turn into a sinkhole of poverty and provocations against the government and state. That is the mayor's job. But he must strive to be a unifier and conciliator, and remember that he also serves communities that did not vote for him and oppose his policies.”
HAA 17.07.09

2. Soldaten über den Krieg in Gaza

In einem Bericht über das Vorgehen der israelischen Armee im Krieg im Gazastreifen Anfang des Jahres veröffentlichte die Organisation "Breaking the Silence" die Aussagen von etwa 30 Soldaten, die an den Kämpfen teilgenommen hatten. Diese berichten über illegale Methoden, wie den Einsatz von palästinensischen Zivilisten als menschliche Schutzschilde, die Zerstörung privaten Eigentums, den Einsatz von weißem Phosphor in dicht besiedeltem Gebiet, und der Tötung von Zivilisten. Militärsprecher kritisierten, dass die Aussagen anonym gemacht wurden und bezeichneten sie als „Gerüchte“.

Our son's are lying again

„Over 100 pages of testimony about the extraordinary scale of destruction [...]; the vandalism [...]; the shoot-'em-up spirit [...]; the elastic definition of 'legitimate target' [...], the firing of napalm-like white phosphorous [...]; the killings of unarmed civilians [...]; the rabbis' anti-Arab pep talks; and much, much more. [...]

I don't know what depresses me more - these stories or the IDF's reaction to them. [...] 'How do you know it's true?' an IDF spokesman told me over the phone. [...]

Now, on top of the TV footage from Gaza, the word of Palestinian victims, journalists, human rights investigators and the Rabin academy soldiers, there are the war stories of 14 conscript and 12 reserve IDF veterans that we have to deny. [...]

It doesn't matter who tells us the truth about what we did in Gaza - we'll deny it. [...] Even if our own sons tell us it's true, we'll tell them they're lying.”

Larry Derfner, JPO 15.07.09

Don't escape reality

“The easiest thing is to claim that the testimonies [...] are based on rumors, represent 'rotten apples,' and were possibly even elicited from people posing as soldiers. [...]

Inspired by the army's spokesman, we tend to address anything that undermines the IDF ethos we were raised on with a dismissive hand gesture. [...]

The reality described in the testimonials presents more than one cause for concern. The fact that more horrific acts took place in Kosovo and Chechnya is not an excuse that should let us sleep well at night, because these are not the moral criteria we wanted to live by. [...]

When we send 18-year-old children to other worlds, we tend to think that there too they act in line with the rules we taught them; we hope that the hand that guides them is familiar with morality and limits, and is not merely concerned with keeping them alive. Therefore, we confidently declared, partly to the outside world and partly to ourselves, that the IDF is the most moral army in the world. [...]

Our silence in the face of these testimonials nurtures the moral decay and enables low-ranked and senior commanders to lead our soldiers into an abyss that offers no way back. The IDF was never the Chechen army, and it will never aspire to be like that. [...]

Dana Golan, JED 17.07.09

Breaking the rules

“It is clear from its latest report that the goal of Breaking the Silence is not to bring offending soldiers to justice or even to encourage reforms in IDF policy. If these were its goals, it would include names, ranks, facts, place names and dates; it would have released a detailed report to the authorities to encourage an investigation. Without this information, it is impossible to probe the veracity of the claims. [...]

Breaking the Silence is misleading in its name and its aim. There is no silence to break. Israel is an open and democratic society that regularly criticizes its own actions, but this one-sided and shoddy report fails to stress the context of the war - a battle against Hamas terrorists hiding behind civilians.”

Michael Dickson, JPO 19.07.09

The IDF price tag

“Something in the soldiers' testimonies published by the organization Breaking the Silence last week must be scaring the Israel Defense Forces. Otherwise, its battery of spokespeople - official and unofficial - would not be taking part in such a violent campaign to silence it. [...]

The mudslinging is the IDF's price tag [...]. The IDF is warning soldiers who have not yet defied the order to remain silent. [...]

The accumulating testimonies prove that it wasn't a matter of rotten apples but rather a conscious policy. Therefore the IDF and the government that sent it into action must prevent further such confirmations of the truth.”

Amira Hass, HAA 22.07.09

3. Kontroverse um Shepherd Hotel in Ost - Jerusalem

Nachdem das Verhältnis zwischen Israel und den USA bereits in den letzten Wochen von der Auseinandersetzung über jüdische Siedlungen überschattet worden war, wurde auch die Debatte über Ost-Jerusalem erneut entfacht. Die amerikanische Regierung hatte deutlich gemacht, dass sie keinen Unterschied zwischen besetztem Gebiet im Westjordanland und Ost-Jerusalem mache und forderte den Baustopp eines für das Viertel Sheikh Jarrah geplanten Hotels. Premierminister Netanjahu lehnte diese Forderung vehement ab und erklärte, die Souveränität Israels über ein „geeintes Jerusalem“ stehe nicht zur Debatte.

Playing with fire

“The timing of the decision to build dozens of housing units in the Shepherd Hotel complex, at the height of efforts to reach an agreement on limited construction in the settlements, casts doubt over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's willingness to enter serious negotiations on a final-status agreement. The support he granted the construction project yesterday, despite the vehement condemnations of America and Britain, show he is prepared to endanger Israel's most essential foreign relations for a provocative initiative. [...]

Particularly infuriating is the government's claim that Israel is allowing the Arabs of East Jerusalem to settle in Jewish neighborhoods. [...]

Palestinian residents look to the Jewish areas due to a lack of housing and public services in their own neighborhoods. Since 1967 Israel has expropriated 35 percent of East Jerusalem in order to construct 50,000 housing units in neighborhoods intended primarily for Jews. During the same period, fewer than 600 housing units were built for Palestinian residents with government support.”

HAA 20.07.09

A Jerusalem response to Obama

“In 2009, President Obama is exerting psychological pressure on Israel to repartition Jerusalem, which would rob the city of essential land reserves. This land constitutes the prerequisite for the dramatic enhancement of Jerusalem's transportation, residential and industrial infrastructures, which are critical for the transformation of Jerusalem from a city of net Jewish emigration to a city of net Jewish immigration. [...]

Jerusalem's growth requires [...] a defiance of the US Administration. On the other hand, succumbing to Obama's pressure would exacerbate Jewish emigration from Jerusalem, subjecting the Jewish capital to its worst security and demographic threats since 1967.”

Yoram Ettinger, JED 22.07.09

Weil er kann

„Es geht hier um Jerusalem. Es handelt sich nicht um staatlichen Grundbesitz [...] sondern um privaten Grundbesitz, der legal erworben worden ist. Woher kommt diese Forderung? Obama hat einfach das Gefühl, dass er sie sich erlauben kann. Er hat erkannt, dass Israel das schwache Glied im Nahen Osten ist, auf das man immer wieder und immer mehr Druck ausüben kann. Er weiß, dass es nur in Israel eine so von Hass auf Eretz Israel und die Siedler geblendete Opposition gibt, für die sogar die Forderung, privaten Bau in Jerusalem einzustellen, logisch klingt.

Nicht Obama ist schuld. Nur Israel selbst ist an dieser Lage schuld. [...] Im Nahen Osten – und das hat Obama blitzschnell gelernt – zahlt es sich aus, sich dem starken Lager anzuschließen. Israel gehört diesem Lager schon zu lange nicht mehr an.“

Ariel Schnabel, HZO 20.07.09

Oh, Jerusalem

“Israel's declaration of sovereignty over East Jerusalem has never been accepted by the world. In fact, the international community has not even officially recognized west Jerusalem as the capital. Not one government has its embassy in Jerusalem today. Netanyahu's statement of our sovereignty in Jerusalem not being challenged is at best wishful thinking.

Jerusalem is not a united, undivided city. It is, in fact, very divided. Jerusalem is almost two separate cities. Perhaps the division is not east and west [...]. The divide in Jerusalem is clearly on national-ethnic lines - there is an Israeli Jerusalem and there is a Palestinian Jerusalem. [...]

Netanyahu can declare from today till eternity that Jerusalem is the eternal undivided capital of Israel, but that will not make it so. Almost the entire world would like to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, but that will not happen until they also recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Palestine. Israel's sovereignty over all of Jerusalem is only unchallenged by the government of Israel, not by anyone else. “

Gershon Baskin, JPO 20.07.09

4. Medienquerschnitt

Die Vielfalt der in Israel relevanten Themen kann in einem Medienspiegel natürlich nicht umfassend wiedergegeben werden. Um den deutschen Leser/innen dennoch einen Einblick in das große Themenspektrum, das in den Medien behandelt wird, zu gewähren, veröffentlichen wir in dieser Schlaglichtausgabe wieder eine kleine Auswahl an weiteren Themen, die in den letzten Wochen die israelische Gesellschaft bewegten.

*Über **Flüchtlinge und ausländische Arbeiter** in Israel. Als eine ihrer ersten Aktionen hatte die neugegründete Immigrationsbehörde in Tel Aviv illegale Einwanderer verhaften lassen. Außerdem ist in der Knesset ein Gesetz in erster Lesung verabschiedet worden, dass es unter Verbot stellt, illegalen Immigranten zu helfen:*

Leave the refugees alone

"The Interior Ministry's newly created Immigration Authority is a vital mechanism. [...] Due to Israel's unemployment situation, illegal laborers who agree to work for a very low wage threaten the livelihood of Israeli workers. [...]"

[But] asylum seekers are a separate category, which must be handled with kid gloves. [...] The status of refugee entitles its holder to rights, mainly medical insurance and a work permit. The authorities' slow handling of the refugees' applications for this status is immoral in a country that was established by refugees."

HAA 23.07.09

Myths about migrant workers

"Deportation inspectors treat migrant workers as disposable tools. But migrant workers are human beings, and human beings aren't disposable. If they're necessary for our economy, then they deserve to reap what they sow. They deserve to work here long enough to repay their debts and make money, and the few who wish to do so deserve to integrate into our communities. If the country refuses to integrate them, it shouldn't invite them in the first place."

Roy Wagner, JPO 14.07.09

Helping the refugees

"In the years 2003-2006 [...] we rejected about 99% of all refugee applications. [...] As part of the justification for this conduct, we saw the emergence of the argument that Israel is a state of refugees,

with the refugees being the new olim we absorb. That is, the Jews for whom we keep a home in case their current place of residence becomes less welcoming are the refugees. [...] Again we are seeing this common phenomenon in our society: Recognizing human rights only if the person in question is Jewish."

Ilan Gal, JED 14.07.09

*Über das „**Shai Dromi**“- Gesetz, das es Bürgern erlaubt auch ohne Lebensgefährdung mit Waffengewalt gegen Eindringlinge auf ihrem Grundstück vorzugehen. Benannt ist das Gesetz nach einem Farmer, der einen Eindringling erschossen hatte, und kürzlich freigesprochen wurde:*

How to fight vigilantism

"A vigilante is one who enacts his own form of justice in response to insufficient or inept protection by authorities. Vigilantism grows in dark, seamy recesses where anarchy reigns. Like the Negev, where no farmer is exempt from the reign of terror imposed by Beduin gangs. [...]"

The crisis of confidence that results when citizens lose faith in their criminal justice system engenders widespread insecurity both inside the system and out. [...] Unavoidably, law enforcement's malfunction is bound to erode the established value system - as evinced in [...] Shai Dromi's ordeal.

This newspaper by no means justifies vigilantism. In fact, we emphatically and unequivocally oppose it. What we expect is law enforcement - on all levels."

JPO 18.07.09

Wild West paranoia

"We cannot cry foul at the judges. We can only cry bloody murder against legislators in the State of Israel, who drafted a law placing Israeli society under the same paranoia as the American Wild West, including the sanctification of private property at all costs."

Avirama Golan, HAA 16.07.09

Über eine von Netanjahu unterstützte

Gesetzesinitiative zur Privatisierung von

staatlichem Land. Die Initiative traf auch in der Regierungskoalition auf heftigen Widerstand.

Die Tatsache, dass der Premierminister zunächst keine Mehrheit zur Verabschiedung des Gesetzes erringen konnte, kann als eine politische Niederlage Netanjahus gewertet werden.

This land was made for you and me

“People around the world, desperately watching their homeland being parceled off, speak wistfully about the ancient, traditional ‘land ethic.’ For six decades, Israel was one of the few countries with the wisdom to integrate such an axiom into its modern real estate policies. Next week, the elected representatives of the Third Jewish Commonwealth will be asked to sell out. Ideologically the country will be poorer.”

Alon Tal, HAA 24. 07.09

It all depends on who is appointed

“This reform would benefit the people. It would remove barriers, cut bureaucracy, speed up the marketing of land and bring down apartment prices. But the extreme right has joined the Bolshevik left and together they have made the prime minister look ridiculous.”

Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA 24.07.09

PM’s coalition woes

“So how did it happen that precisely when it came to a vote on the most important bill for the prime minister – precisely in the critical moments of his ‘baby’ – everything fell apart?

The PM’s inability to read the political map and understand the needs of the people around him was also revealed [...]. Had he been more attentive and had he been surrounded by enough suitable people that can manage his political affairs, it is doubtful whether he would have brought the bill up for a vote. He could have easily spared the embarrassment, the humiliating threats against Knesset members and ministers, and the superb ammunition he provided the opposition with.”

Attila Somfalvi, JED 23.07.09

Land reform and national interest

“Netanyahu’s stated aim was to lower land values and thereby [...] bring down real estate prices. [...]

The notion of the Jewish people owning the land - the Jewish national legacy - was deeply ingrained into many generations here, Left and Right, throughout the 20th Century. No matter how sound Netanyahu’s business logic, it would necessitate an overhaul in the people’s mindset, which obviously had not occurred. [...]

Political intimidation is not the way to do it.”

JPO 25.07.09

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

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