



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 13/09

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

28. Juli – 10. August 2009

1. Neues Statut für die Arbeitspartei

Auf der Sitzung des Zentralkomitees der Arbeitspartei verabschiedeten die Mitglieder eine neue Verfassung, die die Kompetenzen des Parteivorsitzenden maßgeblich ausweitet. Diese Entscheidung kann als Triumph für Ehud Barak gewertet werden, der sich gegen vier parteiinterne Rebellen durchsetzen konnte. Barak wies die Vorwürfe, dass er an der sinkenden Popularität der Arbeitspartei Schuld sei, zurück und verwies stattdessen auf die internen Streitigkeiten, die das Vertrauen der Öffentlichkeit erschütterten. Der Parteitag sollte deswegen auch dazu dienen, neue Einigkeit zu schaffen. Während Barak die nächsten Wahlen zum Parteivorsitz zunächst auf 2014 hatte verschieben wollen, akzeptierte er schließlich einen Kompromiss, der die Wahlen für 2012 ansetzt. Barak takes over Labor

“One fact is difficult to contest at this time: Ehud Barak registered yet another significant victory in the inner party struggle against his rivals. The man who brought the party down to 13 Knesset seats, dragged it into the government in complete contradiction to his promises, and led it to an unprecedented ideological rift [...] completely overwhelmed his rivals; he was able to affirm a charter that reinforces his rule over the party until October 2012, with a large majority of Labor party members supporting him.

Suddenly, after endless talk about splits and rifts, the Labor party – or whatever is left of it – appears more united behind its leader than ever. [...] After long years where the Labor party conducted itself like an especially odd monster, which tends to cut

off its own head frequently, Barak’s fight for a new charter that reinforces the chairman’s position may not be so delusional. Past Labor chairmen were all victims of the sophisticate clauses characterizing the previous charter. Barak, like many others before him, was well familiar with his party’s highly developed suicidal urges and wanted to put an end to it. [...]

Now that the change had been made, we are left to see whether the extra power given to the chairman also guarantees more votes in the election.

Attila Somfalvi, JED 09.08.09

“Die neuen Statuten senden eine eindeutige Botschaft an diese und die nächste Generation von Rebellen: Ihr seid dagegen? Dann seid ihr draußen! Barak hätte sich gemäß der alten Statuten im Juni 2010 zur Wahl stellen müssen. Es ist ja nur logisch, dass ein Parteivorsitzender, der eine vernichtende Wahlniederlage erlitten hat, so schnell wie möglich zur Rechenschaft gezogen wird, damit er die Partei nicht in die nächste Niederlage führt. Baraks neue Statuten sehen vor, dass die nächsten Wahlen erst in drei Jahren, im Oktober 2012, stattfinden werden. [...]

Wer ab heute richtig gut schlafen kann, ist Premierminister Netanjahu, der eigentliche Gewinner des Parteitages der Arbeitspartei. Er hat Barak für die nächsten drei Jahre. Ihm geht es gut.“
Shalom Jerushalmi, MAA 06.08.09

Yes, dismantle it

“There is no more use for [the Labor party]; it is a broken vessel. As long as it occupies the left’s slot - though it cannot differentiate between its right and its left hand - there will be no resurrection for the labor movement. No entity will be created in its place until it is cleared from the junkyard.

Do we need this Labor in order to privatize state lands and pal around with business moguls? Do we need it to cast lead and strengthen settlements instead of evacuating them? Without it, will there be nobody to lie to America and deceive the world? [...] Even with a high-powered microscope, you cannot distinguish between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Likud and Defense Minister Ehud Barak of Labor. [...] If Netanyahu - a former concerned citizen - is causing us tremendous concern, Barak is destroying our hope as well.”
Yossi Sarid, HAA 07.08.09

Save the Labor party

“One does not need to be a member of Labor in order to appreciate and cherish the party’s role in establishing the state and shaping its character [...]. On Wednesday, the Labor party is holding a convention. It’s a sick party, emaciated, and suffering from high fever and vomiting. On the convention’s agenda we see several controversial clauses regarding the management of the party, while all the rivals fail to see that soon enough they will have nothing to manage. Anyone who brings such clauses up for discussion at this time is an idiot. [...]

On the convention’s agenda today should be only one clause: Self-inspection and reconciliation. [...]

Today, the Labor Party mostly needs to be saved from itself and its functionaries. Everyone is in dispute, and therefore there is almost no chance that anything good will come out of the current leadership. At this time, this leadership comprises people who are only interested in their personal wellbeing. [...]

If there is still some sense in the heads of the various party members, they need to issue an emergency call-up, today, and bring back past leaders. [...]

Instead of the nonsense this historic party is about to collapse over, the old-timers should rise up and extract the party from the ruins.”

Eitan Haber, JED 05.08.09

The next president

“As a politician, Barak has proven a failure. [...] Barak appears to be cut off from the issues that produce prime ministers in Israel. The Labor Party under his leadership is in a process of free fall. The most recent poll predicted that it would get just a little more than six seats! Nevertheless, Barak is demanding a party constitution and authority within the party as if he were David Ben-Gurion. His

support for the Israel Lands Administration reform was tantamount to a divorce from those who supported Labor’s original socialist ideology, i.e. from the party faithful. He has lost his ability to run for premier on Labor’s behalf. [...]

Thus it is possible that today [...] after seeing what Peres has made of the presidency and how he has extended its authority, Barak might surprise us by deciding in his heart of hearts that he would like to become the next president of Israel.”

Yoel Marcus, HAA 07.08.09

2. Anschlag auf Schwulen- und Lesbenzentrum

Am ersten August erschütterte ein Attentat auf ein Gemeindezentrum für junge Homosexuelle in Tel Aviv das Land. Der Anschlag, bei dem zwei Menschen ums Leben kamen und mehrere verletzt wurden, wurde von Politikern aller Parteien verurteilt, auch von Vertretern der orthodoxen Partei Shas, deren Abgeordnete in der Vergangenheit durch Hetzparolen gegen Schwule aufgefallen waren.

Obwohl die Identität des Attentäters bisher ungeklärt ist, wurde in den Medien und der Öffentlichkeit vermutet, dass das Verbrechen sich gezielt gegen Homosexuelle gerichtet hatte.

Wenige Tage nach dem Anschlag bekundeten 20 000 Israelis in Tel Aviv ihre Solidarität mit den Opfern und der Schwulen/Lesben-Community in einer Demonstration an der auch Präsident Peres und andere Politiker teilnahmen. Premierminister Netanjahu besuchte das Zentrum.

Bringing regret out of the closet

“[Religious and political leaders] vehemently condemned the criminal shooting [...]. Their condemnation of the attack [...] is appropriate and fitting, though it is sad that we could not have taken that reaction for granted in advance. Beyond that, a genuine expression of regret by the leaders of Shas - if it exists - remains deep in the closet. [...]

Those immediately responsible for this public atmosphere are rabbis and MKs from various religious parties, who have turned homophobia into the lowest common denominator for inciting the masses and thereby enlisting political support. [...] The fact that we have an increasing number of friends has caused us to forget that we still have

quite a few enemies, some of whom serve in the Knesset and the cabinet.

Yoav Sivan, HAA 07.08.09

Don't rush to blame

"Since the murder, the entire gay community has been protesting, waving its flags, and crying out: 'hate, hate' – I certainly feel their pain, and the shock they endured. However, the derogatory chants against the religious community are improper in my view and merely serve to fan the flames of brotherly hatred rising up from both sides. [...]"

I am not naive and I remember well the violence and stabbing attacks from the past, and the fury shown by the religious community towards homosexuals. Yet they direct the same fury at quite a few other elements, so what? So now they'll pick up a submachine gun, drive to stores open on Shabbat, and shoot the shoppers? [...] Even though the Torah includes statements regarding the death of homosexuals, there is a great distance from these written words to one squeezing the trigger indiscriminately and targeting a crowd whose only sin is to have a different sexual orientation than us."

Dror Michel, JED 03.08.09

Pride and Prejudice

"This shooting attack, should it turn out it was indeed directed at the homo-lesbian community, is not a unique event; it's merely an extreme one, but make no mistake about it, incidents like that take place on Tel Aviv's streets time and again with no interruption. [...] For those who arrive from the outside it sometimes appears as though the city is painted an especially bright shade of pink; here one can hold hands on Rothschild Boulevard, nonchalantly hop from one club to another, wed, adopt children, and run for city council. Yet for those who live here, the curses, hateful glares, spits, and hidden hostility are clearly felt. The double life: On the one hand one can feel open and safe, but on the other hand nothing is really safe here. [...] They are shooting at us. The loaded gun is aimed not only at gay and lesbian teenagers at a weekly meeting, and not only at the gay community, but rather, at all those who fear the next time, and it shall come. Make no mistake about it, this despicable act will grant many others the opportunity to swear and threaten and beat up and stab."

Shlomi Laufer, JED 02.08.09

Wild weed

"Some in the media and in the political establishment have jumped to the conclusion that the rampage was motivated by homophobia. [...] Granted, there is prejudice against gays in Israel. Yet gay activists readily grant that Israel is one of the world's most progressive countries in terms of equality for sexual minorities, and in some respects - military service, for instance - far more advanced than many other Western societies. [...]"

Even the ultra-Orthodox Sephardi, Shas Knesset faction - some of whose members have been vitriolic against gays - issued a statement condemning the violence and calling for the capture and prosecution of the attacker. [...]"

It is important to maintain perspective. Whoever did it - gay or straight, observant or secular - was a wild weed and not indicative of their community."

JPO 02.08.09

A black day for Israel's gay community

"This is a dark day, not just for the homosexual, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community but for the whole of Israeli society. The murderer's burst of bullets set us back years to when homosexuality was considered a crime and an aberration as defined by law. [...] Over the last few years, the most inflammatory statements imaginable against my community have come from the Knesset podium. Those same ministers and MKs who denigrated the community must account for the young people's blood spilled on Saturday night. [...] The person who did this has made each and every one of us a walking target on the streets of Tel Aviv. We must act and fight together to prevent such things from happening in Israeli society."

Ilan Sheinfeld, JPO 02.08.09

The normalcy test

"It is not just gays and lesbians who need to come out of the closet. Society's demand in Israel 'to be like everyone' is draconian. [...] In Israel, there is great apprehension over 'being different.' And there is a belief that if we just abide by the rules of the mainstream, life will sail smoothly along without pain or trouble. [...] All forms of differentness - including homosexuality, bachelorhood, declaring one's piety or renouncing that piety - are viewed as flaws, a handicap. [...] The establishment also does not recognize those who are different or their rights. And if they do have rights, they are separate, peripheral rights. [...] The time has come to acknowledge that it

is impossible to hide from being different and that there are no insurance policies against it. [...]

The responsibility for such a change rests on all our shoulders. [...] We must come out of the closet and oppose all repression, no matter how normal it seems.”

Merav Michaeli, HAA 04.08.09

Let's hate them

“There's something odd about the fact that only a killing spree at the homo-lesbian center in Tel Aviv introduced the term 'hate crime' into Israeli jargon.

As if what we've seen thus far were loving and compassionate terror attacks. As if the entire range of Israeli violence – Palestinian terror, Yigal Amir, Baruch Goldstein, or any of your favorite terrorists – did not stem from personal hatred towards an entire community. [...] The murder at the gay youth center can be seen as an escalation in the popular Israeli hobby of 'hating the other.' In the framework of the 'Israel despises' campaign, we have seen in recent years increasing variety of hatred for others – homosexuals, haredim, Russian women, spinsters, Arabs, and foreigners.

This is because in Israel hatred is not a human weakness that must be fought, but rather, a banner to rally around. After all, we are being told, everyone around us hates us – so let's hate them back. Hatred is the natural choice and a cause for pride. Those who don't hate are suckers and naïve bleeding hearts.”

Asaf Gefen, JED 08.08.09

3. Das “Mofaz-Gesetz”

Nach mehreren Verzögerungen und mit gehörigem Druck von Premierminister Netanjahu wurde das sogenannte „Mofaz-Gesetz“, das die Teilung von Knessetfraktionen erleichtert, verabschiedet. War bisher ein Drittel der Abgeordneten einer Partei in der Knesset notwendig gewesen, um eine neue Fraktion zu gründen oder sich einer anderen Partei anzuschließen, reichen nun sieben Mitglieder, um eine Abspaltung herbeizuführen. Shaul Mofaz' Namen trägt das Gesetz, da sich Vertreter des Likuds einen Übertritt von Zippi Livnis ärgstem Rivalen und anderen Kadima-Mitgliedern erhofft hatten. Mofaz lehnte dies jedoch vehement ab und kritisierte das Gesetz scharf.

Dennoch wird die Verabschiedung als Sieg Netanjahus gewertet, da er seine Koalition trotz des Widerstandes einiger Mitglieder dazu bewegen

konnte, mit großer Mehrheit für das Gesetz zu stimmen.

The Knesset bypassing the Knesset

‘Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wants to ‘own’ the Knesset and get laws hastily and obediently passed by a legislature that simply tells him ‘we will do and we will obey.’ He won't keep quiet until his ‘vision’ is realized in the plenum today with the passage of the so-called Mofaz bill, a recipe for splitting Knesset factions and damaging the parliamentary rules of the game. [...]

Hasty legislation on such a significant and complicated subject turns the Knesset from a legislative institution into one that simply gives its stamp of approval, that says amen to government initiatives without determining the content of the ‘preliminary’ arrangements.”

Ze'ev Segal, HAA 03.08.09

Lousy laws

“The giveaway is the number seven. It exposes the underlying aim: to lure away Kadima leader Tzipi Livni's opponents. Seven Kadima MKs - presumably spearheaded by former chief of General Staff, defense minister and narrowly defeated Kadima leadership candidate Shaul Mofaz - are considered likely at some point to jump ship. But the hullabaloo has embarrassed Mofaz sufficiently for him to publicly dissociate himself from Netanyahu's maneuver.

Netanyahu nevertheless wants the potential for a split in Kadima to remain viable. Had seven not been the magic number, the bill might have stipulated a quarter of a faction, which is what the seven constitute in Kadima. A quarter, however, endangers Labor, which Netanyahu has no interest in harming. [...]

Such custom-tailored legislation is hardly unique in the Knesset's annals, nor any more transparent in its unabashed championing of specific individuals' vested interests. [...] It is sad and frustrating to see the amount of parliamentary time accorded such untoward schemes, especially when set against the dearth of attention for serious proposals.

These bills are patently undemocratic because only public figures of considerable influence can benefit from them. The blatant focus on select, vested interests only further erodes the public's confidence in its lawmakers.”

JPO 01.08.09

Count to seven

“Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday laid a solid foundation for a possible split in his own faction. One need only count to seven. [...]

The prime minister may find that his victory was pyrrhic, if he tries, for example, to implement some sort of agreement with the Palestinians in Jerusalem or with Syria in the Golan, or in some other territory under Israeli rule. All future Likud rebels can register a victory. [...]

The law, which should really be named after Netanyahu, creates instability and is a recipe for the splitting of Knesset factions. It bypasses the parliamentary rules of the game while the game itself is under way. It's a superfluous, divisive bill, and some of those who voted for it did so only because they are ministers or coalition members.”

Ze'ev Segal, HAA 28.07.09

Why Netanyahu wants to pass the Mofaz bill

“So why is Netanyahu still so gung-ho for the bill?

The answer lies in all the problems he has had over the past week in passing other key electoral and land reforms that he initiated. [...]

Once the Mofaz bill becomes law, every party in the coalition and every rebellious MK becomes expendable. Netanyahu can always claim he has seven MKs ready to pounce into the coalition and replace the rebels.”

Gil Hoffman, JPO 29.07.09

Das Goldfarb-Gesetz

“Shaul Mofaz war sehr unzufrieden mit der Tatsache, dass jemand dem Gesetz seinen Namen angehängt hat [...]. Aber um ehrlich zu sein ist es eher ein Goldfarb- als ein Mofaz-Gesetz. Diejenigen, die in Zukunft davon Gebrauch machen werden, gehören nicht wie Mofaz einer Parteispitze an, sondern es sind Abgeordnete auf den hinteren Bänken, solche, die von nirgendwo her in die Knesset gelangt sind, einem politischen Unfall gleich, und deren Chancen auf eine zweite Amtszeit in der Knesset gleich Null sind.“

Uri Elitzur, HZO 29.07.09

4. Parteikongress der Fatah

In Betlehem fand zum ersten Mal seit 20 Jahren ein Kongress der Fatah, der Partei des Palästinenserpräsidenten Mahmoud Abbas, statt. An dem Treffen nahmen auch viele Abgeordnete

aus arabischen Ländern teil, denen Israel erstmals seit Jahrzehnten die Einreise erlaubt hatte. Rund 400 Fatah-Mitgliedern aus dem Gazastreifen verweigerte Hamas jedoch die Ausreise.

In seiner Eröffnungsrede warb Abbas für Friedensgespräche, betonte jedoch auch „das Recht auf Widerstand“, sollten diese scheitern.

Während Abbas – ohne Gegenkandidaten – die Wiederwahl zum Vorsitzenden gewann, gingen die meisten der 18 Sitze des Zentralkomitees an Mitglieder der jüngeren Generation, u.a. an den in Israel inhaftierte Marwan Barghouti.

Israel does have a Palestinian partner

“Fatah's new platform, and chairman Mahmoud Abbas' speech, won sweeping support from the more than 2,200 delegates who came from throughout the Palestinian Diaspora. From Bethlehem, they sent Jerusalem an unequivocal message: The Palestinian national movement's strategic choice is still two states for two peoples. Although Fatah's first convention in 20 years was held in the shadow of the Israeli occupation and an impasse in the peace process, the movement committed itself to the diplomatic option and the principles of the Arab peace initiative. Fatah formally distinguished itself from Hamas and joined the Arab and international consensus on a political solution. [...]

The Palestinian public's avid interest in the convention, and the delegates' impressive attendance, testify that despite the numerous crises Fatah has undergone, it is still the leading popular political movement in the West Bank. The Israeli public and Israeli decision makers would do well to study the Bethlehem meeting's resolutions seriously. It is only natural for Israel not to accept Fatah's platform, just as the Palestinian leadership objects to Likud's platform. But Fatah's approach to the peace process refutes the right-wing argument that 'there is no Palestinian peace partner.’

HAA 07.08.09

No moderate Palestinians

“On Tuesday we saw the opening of Fatah's sixth convention. With the kind assistance of Israel, which as always believes that Palestinian moderates are good for it, thereby granting Abbas' request to allow the entry of representatives from Lebanon and Syria. [...]

The fact that the draft decision to be submitted to the convention calls for objection to defining Israel as a Jewish State, the opening of a strategic

channel vis-à-vis Iran, a tougher struggle against the settlements, the security fence, and the Judaization of Jerusalem – through limited violent means – and the implementation of the right of return is apparently not supposed to weaken the resolve of those who work day and night to secure an agreement with the Palestinians. [...]

The Palestinian demands remained the same as during [Arafat's] era. [...]

So now, upon the opening of the new Fatah convention, with the organization's most moderate figures such as Mohammad Dahlan admitting that 'the Fatah Movement never recognized Israel,' and with the basic demands of most of its members being impossible even for many within Israel's leftist camp – we would do well to ask whether it isn't better to reconcile ourselves already to the shattered peace dream, instead of yet again subjugating ourselves to its unattainable mirages."

Shaul Rosenfeld, JED 04.08.09

Fatah's goals

"There's nothing all Israelis - no matter what their political inclinations - would like better than to receive a genuine message of reconciliation and accommodation from Fatah's sixth General Assembly, which opened in Bethlehem yesterday. [...] But thus far, the signals from Bethlehem are not the sort to bolster hope. Fatah - widely seen as the more moderate force in Palestinian society, certainly when compared to Hamas - is hardly in good shape. Its deep-seated malaise may indeed be the underlying reason for PA President Mahmoud Abbas's decision to call the gathering in the first place. Fatah has not only lost Gaza to Hamas, but fears losing further support in the West Bank. [...]

The Fatah conference represents an opportunity for Abbas and his colleagues to assure the watching world, and emphasize to their own constituency, that their goal is real peace - that they are committed to the path of viable reconciliation with Israel. Sadly and counterproductively for all sides, the indications thus far are quite different. "

JPO 04.08.09

The stratagem behind the convention

"Why is the government even allowing the thousands of Fatah members to come to Bethlehem? After all, the result will be a crude anti-Israel extravaganza. [...]

Benjamin Netanyahu deliberately allowed the thousands of delegates to flock to the Fatah convention. But he was not trying to achieve a

reputation for openness and meeting the enemy halfway: His main goal was to extract proof from the Palestinians - proof that would convince Israeli public opinion in particular - on whether we are really dealing with 'moderates' here.

Therefore, he ordered that they be allowed to gather and bare their teeth: The dynamic of rhetoric and competition over leadership jobs would do the rest."

Israel Harel, HAA 06.08.09

The shattered illusion

"The Right saw the Congress as further reinforcement for the perpetual conclusion that there is nobody to talk to, and therefore we should continue to settle everywhere. The Left, meanwhile, attempted to convince us that an in-depth analysis of the Fatah text shows that 'it isn't so bad.'

Both sides are wrong. There is no practical significance to the substance of the words or decisions uttered and taken at the Congress, yet the clear and disappointing conclusion emerging from them is that such leadership cannot boldly and honestly face its people, as required in order to conclude a final-status agreement with Israel."

Dov Weissglass, JED 08.10.09

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

Die Artikel aus HZO und MAA wurden dem Medienspiegel der Deutschen Botschaft Israel entnommen.

Veröffentlicht im: August 2009

Verantwortlich:

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

Redaktion:

Maike Harel

Anita Haviv

Homepage: www.fes.org.il

Email: fes@fes.org.il