



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 14/09

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

10. – 29. August 2009

1. Kontroverse um schwedischen Artikel

Seit Mitte August sorgt ein Artikel, der in der schwedischen Boulevardzeitung Aftonbladet erschienen ist, in Israel für Empörung. Darin hatte der Journalist Donald Boström behauptet, israelische Soldaten hätten Palästinenser getötet, um Handel mit deren Organen zu betreiben.

Der israelische Außenminister Avigdor Lieberman kritisierte die schwedische Regierung scharf und verlangte eine öffentliche Verurteilung des Artikels. Stattdessen distanzierte sie sich von einem Brief der schwedischen Botschafterin in Israel, in dem diese den Artikel verurteilt hatte. Außenminister Bildt berief sich auf die Pressefreiheit und wies darauf hin, dass es nicht Sache der Regierung sei, diese zu beschränken.

In Israel wurde indes in Erwägung gezogen, Reportern des Blattes die Akkreditierung zu verweigern und den geplanten Israelbesuch Bildts zu verschieben.

In Sweden, silence is golden

“The article’s author Donald Boström freely admits that he has no evidence of any of his allegations but says it is up to Jews and Israelis to prove themselves innocent. An interesting if not entirely original twist - Jews are guilty until they prove themselves innocent. The basic tenets of democracy do not appear to be familiar to either Boström or Aftonbladet. [...]

This is no one-off phenomenon. [...] The results of media distortion and constant demonizing of Jews and Israelis are felt in Sweden all the time [...].

Other aspects of Swedish silence that are equally worrying [...]. Sweden is one of the world’s largest per capita donors to Palestinian Arab welfare. This funding comes in the form of tax revenues paid dutifully by hard-working Swedes. [...]

[Swedish Foreign Minister Carl] Bildt has every reason to be tight-lipped. Talking would put Sweden’s decades-old policy of selective silence in jeopardy. There’s too much at stake if people start asking questions. Swedes might start demanding that some of their tax money be spent on their own welfare rather than on Palestinians.”

Ilya Meyer, JPO 23.08.09

How childish are we?

“The so-called ‘investigative report’ published by the Swedish Aftonbladet was, needless to say, ridiculously false. Anyone with the intelligence of a child recognized this immediately, including many Swedish newspaper editors and reporters, who have denounced Aftonbladet for printing such unfounded nonsense.

So why is Israel reacting like this? Left unheeded, the ‘report’ would have withered and passed silently away. [...]

In demanding that Swedish officials comment on the report, we are not only insulting their intelligence by asking them to stoop to the level of a tabloid; we are also insulting their values while implying anti-Semitic motives are at play - similarly to the tabloid publication itself, this is totally unfounded. [...]

The most Israel can do now is to collectively drop the matter and issue a statement recognizing the Swedish government as friendly and devoid of anti-Semitism. Yes, Israel will be admitting to a mistake, which is ultimately the adult thing to do.”

Adi Dvir, JED 24.08.09

Swedish blood libel

“Initially, I thought this was an old ‘investigative report’ sent to Nazi newspaper Der Sturmer that mistakenly made its way to Stockholm. Perhaps, I thought, it was the work of one of the thousands of ‘neutral’ [Swedes] who volunteered to serve in the SS. [...]

More than anything [...] I find it difficult to grasp how an article that does not meet any journalistic standard gets published in a major newspaper in a democratic and 'neutral' country like Sweden. [...]

[F]reedom of speech does not constitute the freedom to lie and incite. [...]

I do not believe the hateful report stemmed from professional negligence. [...] It was prompted by anti-Semitism. Sorry, I meant to say 'criticism of the State of Israel.' [...] This is no more than a substitute for anti-Semitism. A pathetic imitation injected by addicts to Jew-hatred. [...]

I'm hopeful that Israel's Education Ministry will make use of this blood libel. It's an excellent opportunity to explain 'modern-day anti-Semitism' to the young generation that did not experience the Holocaust. From now on, this story will be part of the list of classic blood libels such as the one about 'Christian blood for Passover' – what great honor for Sweden's freedom of speech."

Assaf Wohl, JED 24.08.09

Grund zur Sorge

"Holocaustleugner – out. Antisemiten – in. [...]

Der Antisemitismus ist wie eine geistige Schweinegrippe. Es lassen sich immer welche finden, die an Ritualmordvorwürfe gegen Juden glauben. Eine solch große schwedische Zeitung hätte nicht gewagt, eine derartige Lüge zu publizieren, wenn die Öffentlichkeit in Schweden nicht bereit wäre, sie zu akzeptieren. [...]

Noch erscheint diese Hetze nebensächlich, unwichtig, unglaublich. Wie die Holocaustleugnung, als sie begann, die dann zu einem ernststen Problem wurde. Es gibt Grund zur Sorge."

Dan Margalit, IHY 19.08.09

Ausverkauft

"Die Zeitung, für die die Bezeichnung 'Boulevardblatt' noch schmeichelhaft ist, wurde nun durch Sensationsmache zum Tagesgespräch. Und das war ihr Ziel. Israel hätte also gut daran getan, sachlich zu bleiben. Eine kurze, wenn auch bestimmte Reaktion des Außenministeriums hätte genügt. [...] Die Geschichte hätte schon am nächsten Tag das öffentliche Interesse verloren, anstatt zu einer diplomatischen Krise auszuarten, aus der niemand mit Ausnahme von Aftonbladet etwas gewinnt."

Liran Luttker, MAA 24.08.09

Pulp journalism

"Lieberman should have sent a big bouquet to Donald Bostrom, the Swedish photographer and journalist who wrote the article [...]. It has been a long time since such a propaganda asset has fallen into the hands of the friends of the occupation. It has been a long time since such damage has been caused to people seriously attempting to document its horrors. [...]

Like the perverse comparison to the Nazis, any exaggeration in describing the occupation's cruelty will ultimately damage the struggle against it. It's easy to prove that Israel did not traffic in Palestinian organs, as it's easy to prove that Israeli soldiers do not act like Nazis or that Israel is not committing genocide. That doesn't mean the occupation is not evil, criminal and brutal. The false stories serve Israeli propaganda: Look, we've issued a denial, we've proved that the occupation is not as cruel as they say, and we've cast doubt on all other, serious and well-founded testimony. [...]

Now all serious researchers, journalists and human rights groups have to prove the accuracy of their findings. The truth is that the occupation is very evil, even if not in the way Aftonbladet presented it."

Gideon Levy, HAA 22.08.09

2. Ya'alons Attacke auf die Linke

Wiederholt sorgte der stellvertretende Premierminister und Minister für strategische Angelegenheiten Moshe „Bogi“ Ya'alon mit seinen Auftritten in Foren der extremen Rechten und Angriffen auf die israelische Linke für Kontroversen. So forderte er u.a. die Wiedererrichtung der evakuierten Siedlung Homesh und bezeichnete die Friedensorganisation „Peace Now“ als Virus.

Obwohl er als enger Vertrauter Netanjahus gilt, distanzierte er sich damit deutlich von den Positionen des Premiers und erweckte so einmal mehr den Eindruck, dass Netanjahu sein Kabinett nicht immer unter Kontrolle hat.

Verbal rioting

"Ya'alon's statements at the conference of the Jewish Leadership Movement can only be described as verbal rioting, extremist and intimidating in their essence. No apology, explanation or clarification will blur their severe significance. [...]

With his conceited and unrestrained mouth, Ya'alon exposed the revolting pillars of his worldview, which welcomes anyone who holds the same opinion as

he and the more radical settlers, while delegitimizing anyone who disagrees with them. [...]

This rudeness is the embodiment of a disturbing anti-democratic attitude that classifies anyone with a different point of view as a virus that should be destroyed. [...] Such views usually find a voice in leaflets of extremist synagogues or in reckless sermons by religious-national rabbis and speakers [...]. The right wing usually writes them off as 'weeds' with little clout. [...] But Ya'alon, a former chief of staff who has been parachuted into the top political echelon, is no weed. He is deputy prime minister. His decision to adopt the tired attack on the 'elites' is ridiculous and repugnant."

HAA 21.08.09

What was he thinking?

"What was the deputy prime minister thinking when he attended earlier this week a meeting organized by the Feiglins; yes, the Jewish Leadership faction which Netanyahu made every effort in the last two years to push out of Likud.

Yet our Bogi, the man and the legend, stood up there next to Moshe Feiglin, Netanyahu's nemesis, while uttering remarks that wholly contradict the prime minister's position and gravely undermine Netanyahu's status, not only vis-à-vis the Israeli political establishment and public, but mostly vis-à-vis the Americans. [...] We are dealing with the prime minister's closest associate; the man who sits in the most influential six-member forum in the government. [...]

In one week the former army chief managed to call for the re-establishment of the settlement of Homesh, which was evacuated by law, declare that the State Prosecutor's Office does not represent the government's position on the issue of outposts, and be the Feiglins' guest. What can we say, the man really outdid himself.

[...] Instead of trying to find different interpretations and hidden motives let's finally call a spade a spade: The man is simply not too smart."

Sima Kadmon, JED 20.08.09

Ya'alon's missteps

"The tone of what Ya'alon said was also off-putting. [...] We've criticized the organization too for taking money from foreign powers and foundations intent on swaying Israeli public opinion and government policies. Yet we have never questioned the motives of grassroots Israelis who earnestly identify with Peace Now. And we think Ya'alon's intolerant characterization of the organization as an elitist

'virus' further demeans the level of political discourse in this country.

Ya'alon's venue was also peculiar. Netanyahu opposes any role for Feiglin within the party. [...] But in aligning himself so publicly with Netanyahu's nemesis, Ya'alon has demonstrated a remarkable lack of loyalty to the man who so recently ushered him into politics.

The Ya'alon affair exposes yet again why the Israeli political system is dysfunctional. There is something awfully wrong when a number two feels no compunction about turning against his chief after only five months in office. "

JPO 20.08.09

The virus threatening Bibi

"In the [...] commentary surrounding [...] Ya'alon's appearance at a Jewish Leadership Movement meeting, one of the most important dimensions has been lost: Ya'alon and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu unknowingly marked the boundaries of what is allowed in 2009 Israeli discourse. The political fashion police have determined unequivocally that this season, one may not insult the left or the elites, which in an archaic lexicon are still synonymous. [...]

One must be held accountable for insulting the elites' - if anyone can still define this amorphous entity. Not because the honor of this group has been maligned, but because of Netanyahu's complex relationship with it. [...]

Netanyahu has learned a lesson. He realized the elites' importance not only to his image, but also to his survival. This is one of his main conclusions following his previous term in office; the virus Ya'alon described to Feiglin's people threatens first and foremost the prime minister."

Lily Galili, HAA 26.08.09

Much ado about nothing

"When Ya'alon declares that Jews have a right to settle in all the Land of Israel, he is voicing an opinion shared by the vast majority of Likud supporters, and probably by many other Israelis who are not Likud voters. [...]

Whereas many people may not have liked Ya'alon's characterization of Peace Now, it should come as no surprise that this movement is opposed by Likud and its leadership, just as it itself opposes Likud. Moreover, its tactics of spying on the settlement movement and passing information it garners to friends and foes abroad are downright distasteful.

[...] So don't be surprised if Likud members think Peace Now does not serve Israel's best interests. Last, but not least, we should all remember that Moshe Ya'alon was the chief of staff who led the IDF to a brilliant victory over Palestinian terrorism [...]. It was a victory that many claimed was unachievable [...]. So a little respect, please!"
Moshe Arens, HAA 25.08.09

3. Gewaltwelle und Kriminalität

In den Sommermonaten erschütterte eine Reihe von Gewaltverbrechen - u.a. ein Attentat auf ein Zentrum für Homosexuelle und mehrere besonders brutale Morde - die israelische Öffentlichkeit. Die Medien interpretierten diese Vorfälle als eine eskalierende Welle der Gewalt.

Polizeipräsident David Cohen forderte die Regierung auf, die Bekämpfung der Kriminalität zu einer ihrer zentralen Prioritäten zu erklären. Als Probleme wurden sowohl der Mangel an Polizeibeamten und an finanziellen Mitteln sowie die Belastung der Gerichte genannt.

Cry, the violent country

"The ordinary citizen's safety [...] has been forsaken. Nothing is more appalling than thugs who beat senior citizens to death [...]. Nothing is more frightening than a teen or an adult encountering a gang of drunks and ending up battered and bleeding in the hospital. [...] Still, the police are doing their best. But the problem this column is targeting is public safety and law enforcement in Israel. [...] We are told euphemistically that we have a 'law enforcement problem.' In reality, there are not enough skilled policemen where they are needed. [...]"

In this state of emergency, we need to temporarily transfer border policemen to ordinary police work, as deterrents. [...] The police commissioner [...] would do better to warn that at the next violent demonstration in the capital, he will not hesitate to fire rubber bullets."

Yoel Marcus, HAA 18.08.09

Giving them a taste of the wrong medicine

"In response to the current wave of publicity about violent crimes, the public is calling for harsher criminal sentences. [...] These critics are wrong and would, with their suggested reforms, give the wrong medicine to the criminal justice system.

[...] Harsher sentences rarely translate into more effective deterrence of crime. [...]"

As the probability of getting caught goes up, so does the power of deterrence. The straightforward way of translating this principle into better crime control is to increase the ability of police to identify criminals and to bring them to court. This means that we need more police on the streets, better surveillance and intelligence services and more efficient use of courts."

Kenneth Mann, JPO 23.08.09

Eye for an eye

"A person who was not educated to respect the value of life walks around freely on the street. He is drunk, unrestrained, and blood-thirsty. Who will stop him now? A police officer. But we pay our police officers NIS 5,000 a month (roughly \$1,250). What's their motivation? And even if they really want to do something, how many police officers do we have out there? Can we post a policeman at every street corner? So if we don't have the education or the police, only one element can curb the killer. Deterrence. [...] What kind of legislation will stop the psychopath who in a moment will hurl a suitcase with his daughter in it into a river? You guessed right: The death penalty. [...] It won't do any harm if once in a while people who dismember bodies will find themselves en route to the guillotine. Not out of a sense of revenge [...]. Rather, in order to prevent the next murder."

Assaf Wohl, JED 23.08.09

Crime and values

"One way to re-instill decency and civility as requisite values of Israeli society is for mukhtars, business leaders, politicians, rabbis, media personalities and other elites themselves to behave as if the children of this country are watching. Because they are."

JPO 17.08.09

Our violent swamp

"The entire crime wave [...] did not land here from another planet. We live in a place with a history of violence, violent current affairs, and a violent discourse.

The charged Israeli reality provides one with many reasons to wake up in the morning and lose it: We're an immigrant state with social gaps, a bleeding nationalist conflict, and a dominant army. [...]"

Unsurprisingly, most of the ideas we heard last week called for curbing the violence through a

forceful response; eliminate the violence with more violence. [...]

[But] without clearing our violent swamp – reducing social gaps, giving marginal groups a sense of hope, educating people to resolve conflicts in ways that do not include force – it won't end."

Asaf Gefen, JED 25.08.09

They just want revenge

"The recent spate of murders has been defined, without much hesitation, as 'the summer murder wave.' [...] Not only is there no connection between any of these incidents, but Israel is also light-years away from the top of the list of the most violent, murder-prone countries. [...]

But the winds blowing today cry out for vengeance. And because Israeli politicians do everything in their power to court the public's favor, the result has been a rash of populist proposals. Some are stupid, others are problematic, and a few are downright dangerous."

Avirama Golan, HAA 26.08.09

4. Medienquerschnitt

Die Vielfalt der in Israel relevanten Themen kann in einem Medienspiegel natürlich nicht umfassend wiedergegeben werden. Um den deutschen LeserInnen 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 die **Ernennung drei neuer Richter für den Obersten Gerichtshof**, die aus einem Kompromiss zwischen Gerichtspräsidentin Beinisch und Justizminister Neeman hervorgegangen ist. Neu dabei ist, dass die Richter keine Probezeit mehr bestehen müssen, die der Präsidentin zuvor ein effektives Veto in die Hand gegeben hatte:

Worthy choices

"In the committee's discussions, [Justice Minister] Neeman proved his well-known ability to cobble together compromises and bridge opposing positions. [...] He managed to unite the committee members around a worthy decision, one that set aside partisan considerations and preferred the selection of professional, non politicized justices. Thus, at least for now the concern has been lifted

that was raised when politicians from the extreme right became members of the committee." HAA 25.08.09

The Supreme Court is no social club

"The appointments bring hope and disappointment: Hope, because two new faces have joined the court, and disappointment, because the 'friend brings a friend' practice has continued. [...]

Indeed, judicial rulings are a function of one's worldview, and ultimately, the judgments concerning issues of constitutionality [...] are value judgments rather than legal decisions per se. [...] Those with different philosophical views yet the same level of legal expertise will reach different conclusions. Thus it is important for the Supreme Court to maintain its sense of proportion and ensure that its left leg is no longer than its right

It is perfectly all right to appoint people with extreme left-wing opinions to the Supreme Court. The problem begins when people with such views occupy most of the bench. [...]

Yet, the system by which judges appoint judges has turned the Supreme Court into an exclusive social club. [...] The appointment of close confidants undermines confidence in the professionalism of the Supreme Court."

Yitzhak Bam, HAA 24.08.09

Über die **Diskriminierung äthiopischer Einwanderer/innen**. Wie in Vorjahren hatten sich mehrere private Schulen entgegen Weisungen des Bildungsministeriums zu Beginn des Schuljahres geweigert, äthiopische Kinder aufzunehmen. Diese Entscheidung wurde sowohl in den Medien als auch von Politiker/innen des gesamten politischen Spektrum und nicht zuletzt von Präsident Peres scharf verurteilt.

Rescuing 'Ethiopian Jews'

"Unfortunately, Ethiopians remain the victims of those who imagine themselves racially superior. [...] It is, however, not racism when schools in socio-economically deprived areas decide to limit the enrollment of Ethiopian children, fearing that a demographic 'tipping point' might force the exodus of other youngsters. In any case, Ethiopian students bunched together in poorly performing schools would be unlikely to achieve success. [...] One solution might be for schools in more affluent areas to set aside scholarships for Ethiopian students."

JPO 13.08.09

Dangerous discrimination

“The deplorable discrimination against Ethiopian students has become a kind of ritual before the start of every school year. The Bass committee already rejected last year the excuse offered by schools in Petah Tikva - which argued that the immigrant students are not suited to the high level of their current students - and determined this was a matter of discrimination in every respect. [...]

The affair poses a challenge to Education Minister Gideon Sa'ar. [...] He must make it clear that he will take harsh measures against all discriminatory schools that fall in the gray area between public and private [...]. Should this be warranted, he must revoke the license of any school that discriminates and close it down.”

HAA 26.08.09

Über den Besuch des ägyptischen Präsidenten

Hosni Mubarak in Washington:

Mubarak in Washington

“Washington-Cairo relations are again on track; US pressure for reform is less heavy-handed and less public. [...]. Cairo views the visit as an opportunity to reclaim its place as America's key ally in the Arab world. [...] Mubarak will be pushing Obama to present yet another international plan to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict and echoing with gusto the Obama administration's call for a construction freeze over the Green Line. Of course, it would be far more helpful were Cairo - and Washington - to urge Mahmoud Abbas's Palestinian Authority to return to the bargaining table and respond constructively to Binyamin Netanyahu's seminal Bar-Ilan address of two months ago.”

JPO 17.08.09

Obama's main man in the Middle East?

“Obama's Middle Eastern strategy isn't working, but his meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Tuesday was unlikely to help him understand why and what was needed to be done to achieve better results. [...] Mubarak carefully rescheduled his visit to Washington in mid-August when Congress is in recess. He probably wanted to avoid sensitive questions about the internal conditions in Egypt, primarily the succession issue and human rights. [...]

The two presidents emphasized the need to resolve the Arab-Palestinian-Israeli conflict [...] [but] conveniently ignored one of the most serious obstacles to resolving the conflict: Hamas. The

challenge is how to ensure that a Palestinian state in the West Bank will not be ruled by an Iranian extremist and fundamentalist terror proxy.”

Eytan Gilboa, JPO 18.08.09

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

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