



## Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 15/09

### Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

30. August – 10. September 2009

#### 1. Gilad Shalit

Nachdem der israelische Soldat Gilad Shalit seit mehr als drei Jahren im Gazastreifen festgehalten wird, berichteten die Medien über Fortschritte in den Verhandlungen um den Gefangenenaustausch zwischen der Hamas und Israel. Bekannt wurde, dass Vertreter der Hamas nach Ägypten gereist waren, um die Verhandlungen voranzutreiben. Auch ein deutscher Vermittler ist involviert. Nach wenigen Tagen wiesen jedoch sowohl die Hamas als auch Israel Gerüchte um eine baldige Freilassung von Shalit und mehreren hundert palästinensischen Gefangen zurück.

Verteidigungsminister Barak sagte indes in einem Gespräch mit Schülern, deren Einberufung kurz bevorsteht, der Staat könne nicht das Leben eines jeden Soldaten garantieren und verbat sich darüber zu „jammern“, einer Wortwahl die stark kritisiert wurde.

#### Don't capitulate this time

“As opposed to Prime Minister Netanyahu’s well-known and logical formula – they’ll get something if they give something – it appears that at this time he leans towards a dangerous formula: They’ll get something if they kidnap someone.

Israel always possessed great sensitivity for the fate of captives and abductees. The result: An unbalanced formula whereby hundreds and thousands of people are freed in exchange for a few, and at times even in exchange for bodies or signs of life. This sensitivity boosted the price required of Israel. [...] The prices Israel is willing to pay include humiliating the Israeli legal system, by pardoning convicted murderers. In fact, they know

this in advance, even before committing their murders. [...]

All of the above requires Israel to modify the manner in which it handles abductions and abductors. It’s unthinkable that terrorists in Israel jails enjoy resort-like conditions, studies, family visits, phones, and other terms that are deprived from our captives; there is no conditioning or reciprocity on this front whatsoever. There is no sense in granting such imprisonment conditions to convicted terrorists. And so, for example, family and Red Cross visits at Israeli jails must be curbed at once.”

Ron Breiman, JED 31.08.09

#### Not at any price

“Shalit should have been released at any price, but the struggle for his release does not have to be conducted at any price. Last week the leaders of the campaign to free him faltered. The demonstration at the Megiddo prison that prevented visits by prisoners’ families was in poor taste. [...] They should have called for visits for everyone: to Shalit and to the thousands of Palestinian prisoners. Under no circumstances should it have been the reverse. Israel cannot behave like Hamas. It is not only a matter of patently ineffective measures – the siege and prevention of visits will not bring Shalit’s release – but also immoral acts..”

Gideon Levy, HAA 30.08.09

#### Time to close the deal

“The people who need to make the decision on a swap with Hamas are, first and foremost, politicians who wish to be re-elected time and again. They are intimately familiar with the deceptive Israeli electorate – those people who wish to see Gilad

Shalit home 'at any price,' but a day after the release will be bitterly slamming the release of hundreds of arch-terrorists and murderers. [...] The time has come to tell the leaders: You already said all there is to say, gentlemen. Our entire emotional country already knows about the hesitations, your suffering, and the terrible price we shall be paying, and everyone – or almost everyone – is ready for that wonderful and terrible moment to arrive. [...] At this point we should not worry about the released terrorists going back to acts of terror and murder. Findings from the previous swaps show that only a few go back to terrorism.”  
Eitan Haber, JED 29.08.09

### **Netanyahu, it's time for a change of track**

“Why have our leaders failed to free Shalit? [...] The release of mass murderers in return for Shalit's freedom poses an irrefutable risk. Yet for three years it has been touted as the single option available. [...] No other avenue of rescue has ever been shown, let alone rumored, to be on the cards. Not even the massive Operation Cast Lead produced evidence of any rescue attempt. [...] The only pressure exerted on [Hamas] has been to delete several prisoners from its list and to approve the exile of several others after release. [...] Our politicians have been doggedly laying on the hard-sell rhetoric to convince us that the only choice is releasing mass murderers or losing Shalit. [...] It is time Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu abandoned Ehud Olmert's misguided lead. Alternative strategies should at long last be resolutely pursued. Shalit must be freed now. Cold-blooded mass murderers - never. “  
Frimet Roth, JPO 06.09.09

### **A deal that is a defeat**

“The deal that Benjamin Netanyahu's government is now contemplating approving will be one of the greatest defeats ever inflicted on this country. [...] The very existence of the deal would be an unambiguous victory for Hamas, and for the concept of violent, open-ended resistance that, even if it takes a long time, will ultimately force the Zionist enemy to bow to its Islamist will. [...] The negotiations for Shalit's release would have been justified only as part of a broader deal that would include a halt to terror and to Hamas' rearmament.”  
Amir Oren, HAA 31.08.09

### **Barak deserves praise**

“ Defense Minister Barak did well to avoid a populist move and promise the high schools students he met that the State of Israel will do everything it can, at any price, to bring every soldier back home safely.

A soldier is one who is willing to renounce his freedom, leave his home, dedicate his time, and even sacrifice his life for the sake of carrying missions that are worthy and required in order to defend his (or her) state. [...]

A state whose soldiers are 'children who must be returned at any price' is a state without an army. A military is a means that acts for the sake of civilians, and a state is sovereign as long as it can invest what it has, including its soldiers in battle, so that its citizens will not be harmed by enemies.”

Udi Label, JED 02.09.09

### **Diesmal hat er Recht**

“Ehud Barak hat Recht. [...] Die öffentliche Gehirn-wäsche in Sachen Gilad Shalit hat meiner Meinung nach seit langem alle Grenzen überschritten. Natürlich muss Israel alles tun, um in Gefangenschaft geratene Soldaten nach Hause zu bringen. Aber die israelische Regierung hat auch die Pflicht, an weitere Entführungen zu denken, und daran, dass der Preis für die Freilassung und die Erpressbarkeit Israels immer größer werden. [...]

Ich hoffe und bete, dass Gilad Shalit bald nach Hause kommen wird. Aber ein Volk und eine Gesellschaft dürfen monumentaler Erpressung nicht nachgeben.“

Uzi Baram, IHY 02.09.09

### **That nuisance, Shalit**

„Barak is joining a long list of leaders in the region [...] in which an abducted soldier is nothing but a nuisance. Gilad Shalit also knew that he could die in battle. But he did not know that were he to remain alive and be captured and tortured, he would become a huge problem in the eyes of Barak, the leader of a public chorus of whining, responsible for crushing the proud backbone of the Jewish nation. [...] 'Gilad's army of friends' is not a public relations gimmick. It is an expression of the outcry of a public that knows the government cannot guarantee the lives of all its soldiers or citizens. Yet the public is not ready to sit idly by as a living soldier waits for three years while the tender issued on his life reaches 'the worthy price'.”  
Zvi Bar'el, HAA 06.09.09

## 2. Baustopp der Siedlungen?

Nachdem die amerikanische Regierung seit Wochen einen Baustopp der jüdischen Siedlungen im Westjordanland fordert, wird erwartet, dass Premierminister Netanyahu einer halbjährigen „Einfrigung“ der Bautätigkeiten zustimmen wird – allerdings unter Ausnahme von 455 neuen Wohneinheiten und 2500 Wohnungen, die sich bereits im Bau befinden. Netanyahus Schritt wird als Versuch gewertet, sowohl Washington als auch Mitglieder seiner Partei und die Siedlungsbewegung zu befriedigen.

Während der Protest aus Washington schwach ausfiel, ist jedoch zweifelhaft ob Netanyahus Taktik aufgehen wird: Für die israelische Rechte ist jeder Baustopp zu viel, doch die internationale Gemeinschaft und insbesondere die palästinensische Führung wird jedes weitere Haus als Hindernis für eine Wiederaufnahme von Friedensgesprächen empfinden.

### **Bibi yes / no**

“The announcement by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that hundreds of new housing units will be built in the settlements, a moment before the ‘temporary hiatus’ in issuing new building permits, appears to be a crude attempt to satisfy both the Obama administration, which is demanding Netanyahu freeze construction, and the settlers’ lobby and Likud supporters, who are threatening to undermine the prime minister’s hold on power. [...]”

The result is troubling. [...] Netanyahu is once more suffering from the same weak leadership that he exhibited during his previous tenure as prime minister. Once more he is proving to be ‘Bibi yes/no,’ who supports one thing but also the opposite. [...]

Hundreds of new housing units, which will be added to 2,500 such units already in construction, will undermine the credibility of his government in the eyes of the international community, but will not satisfy the settlers’ appetite.

Further construction will [...] only disrupt efforts to achieve the key goal he has set - establishing a demilitarized Palestinian state next to Israel - and may make the prime minister appear to be a weak leader, susceptible to pressure and duplicitous.”

HAA 09.09.09

### **Plain speaking**

“Harry S Truman said: ‘If you can’t convince them, confuse them.’ This seems to be the political line

taken by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu on the settlement issue. [...]

The policy of pressing ahead with settlement construction while planning to announce a temporary building freeze may seem disingenuous. On the other hand, the Arab-Israel conflict has not proven itself conducive to Truman-like plain speaking.

Europe, and increasingly Washington too, prefer the comfort of self-delusion about why this conflict is so hard to resolve. In the Orwellian world of peace-processing, those who adhere to the view that settlements are not the main obstacle to peace are committing thought crime. [...]

Washington wants Israelis to know that as reward for a settlement freeze, President Barack Obama will be less icy toward Netanyahu, and that Arab states on the margins of the conflict may reopen interest sections (that they should never have closed in the first place). [...] Given such inducements, Netanyahu has decided to allow building now in progress to proceed on 2,500 units in Judea and Samaria; announce approval for the construction of hundreds of new units within existing settlements, or in areas immediately adjacent to settlement blocs. [...]

Supposedly, the White House has come to realize [...] that a total freeze is impractical; that the previous administration really did tell Israel that certain construction would be tolerated; that the US insistence on a freeze has frozen only the negotiations; and, finally, that Saudi Arabia will make no gestures to Israel that might contribute to creating a better environment for peacemaking.

Time will tell if the Israelis are right about having changed American minds.”

JPO 06.09.09

### **Put an end to confusion**

“When one expresses willingness to freeze construction, it is clear to the whole world that one admits that construction in Judea and Samaria is illegal [...]; it’s perceived as though the ongoing construction of the security fence and homes in the settlements robs Palestinian land and violates international law.

Hence, if the PM is interested in sticking to his views and minimizing the damage caused by Peace Now’s representatives in the American Administration, he cannot make do with what he said in the Bar-Ilan speech. He also needs to add the following statement: Settlement activity in regions of our homeland constitutes the realization of the Jewish

people's historic right in its land. He must make it clear that construction permits are granted by law, not as a favor.

Netanyahu's job is to make clear that Israel is not the occupier in Judea and Samaria and does not violate international law, which ever since the Balfour declaration and the League of Nations' decision in 1922 to establish a Jewish home in the land of Israel recognizes the Jewish people's right for sovereignty in its country; a right that was never repudiated and never will be."

Adi Mintz, JED 07.09.09

### **Die wahre Kontroverse**

"Netanjahu muss schon jetzt klar stellen, noch bevor er sich zu einem Einfrieren des Baus verpflichtet, dass Israel nicht plant, aus den Gebieten abzuziehen. Er muss erklären, dass die USA nicht berechtigt sind, eine Liquidation der Ortschaften zu verlangen. [...] Wir stehen vor einer sehr wesentlichen Diskussion, die die zukünftigen Grenzen Israels betrifft und bei der es mit einem halbjährigen Baustopp nicht getan ist."

Moshe Ishon, HZO 07.09.09

### **In Olmert's footsteps**

„Unlimited construction in Jerusalem, controlled construction in the settlement blocs, and a few months' halt in construction starts outside of them, except for public buildings; and a vague promise to evacuate the outposts. The talk about evacuating the outposts will go on, mostly in order to give political cover to Labor for staying in the coalition. But like Sharon and Olmert before them, Netanyahu and Ehud Barak will explain that what is important is focusing on the peace talks and not taking a chance on a domestic confrontation for something trivial.

Like Netanyahu, the Obama administration is behaving like its predecessor. The Israeli announcements on new construction in East Jerusalem and in the settlement blocs were met with weak American condemnation. [...]

Obama wants to renew the peace process, as he had promised, and is willing to pay with what appears to be limited Israeli construction beyond the Green Line. Netanyahu needs U.S. support in general and especially against Iran, and is willing to pay for it by freezing construction of housing in settlements beyond the security barrier, and in places where there is no real demand."

Aluf Benn, HAA 09.09.09

### **The real threat to the settlements**

"If the news to the effect that the prime minister is about to agree to a temporary freeze of the settlements is true, that is because he has become convinced that at present there is nothing more damaging to Israel, its international standing and its diplomatic goals than the settlements. [...]

The opposition to the settlements is a direct result of the anarchy, the culture of winking and deception and the atmosphere of lawlessness that have all prevailed for decades in the West Bank. [...] The State of Israel is seen as being unable or unwilling to impose its authority on these extremists. [...]

The real danger to this important enterprise and the main threat to its future is [...] the far right in the guise of Women in Green or the hilltop youth and their ilk. [...]

The Israeli government must announce a one-year freeze on the settlements outside Jerusalem, and during this period must impose order in the West Bank once and for all. This is vital for the settlement movement."

Yehuda Ben-Meir, HAA 07.07.09

## **3. Anklage gegen Olmert**

Nach lang andauernden Untersuchungen, die Ehud Olmert zum Rücktritt zwangen, hat die Staatsanwaltschaft nun Anklage gegen den ehemaligen Premierminister erhoben. Olmert werden drei Fälle von Korruption sowie Betrug, Veruntreuung und die Verbergung von Einkommensquellen vorgeworfen. Olmert, der jegliche Schuld abstreitet, ist damit der erste israelische Premierminister, der sich wegen krimineller Delikte vor Gericht verantworten muss.

### **Yes to outrage**

„You know what's really distressing about Sunday's indictment of former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert on graft charges? It's that the news was anti-climatic. That Israeli society has reached the point where one mass-circulation tabloid devoted more front page coverage to Madonna's visit to the Western Wall than to the historic indictment of an ex-premier.

Israelis were not shaken. We did not feel betrayed. And therein lies the heartbreak. [...] No prime minister or ex-premier has ever before been indicted on criminal charges in Israel's history. [...]

We are left feeling that hubris more than ethical standards guide the behavior of too many of our politicians. Sixty years after the establishment of the state, the sense that certain things are just not done remains undeveloped. [...] The charges,

circumstances, and personalities may vary but the lingering impression is that those who ought to be paragons of probity too often treat the law with contempt. Their greatest offense is making the rest of us cynical about our country.”

JPO 31.08.09

#### **A prime minister stands accused**

“A grave indictment against a prime minister [...], the ultimate decision-maker on matters that determine the country's fate.

Even a public that has already become inured to ministers as suspects, as defendants and even as prisoners [...] is not immune from a feeling of revulsion at Olmert's indictment. Emerging from it is the sorry picture of someone who appears to have had his hand in the public till via various strange arrangements, and who maintained improper ties with friends and supporters, which culminated in charges of aggravated fraud, breach of trust and many other offenses.

Public apathy is partially responsible for a political system that lacks meticulous oversight.”

HAA 02.09.09

#### **Innocent until proven guilty**

“The atmosphere is the problematic issue here in respect to the indictment against former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. The atmosphere of hunting. [...] We are seeing a sort of joy, coupled with ostentatious declarations: Here is the former prime minister, and here, right next to his photo, is the long list of affairs he is being indicted over. [...]

Superlatives are being hurled in all directions, [...] but [...] so far we know only one thing with certainty: [...] He was the prime minister of Israel, he reached the zenith, and next he was dismissed and went back home; he left everything behind because he is facing suspicious. He paid the heavy price in full, while in fact, by law, he is completely innocent, as he was not found guilty yet.

Hanoch Daum, JED 04.09.09

## **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 den **Beginn des Zweiten Weltkrieges** am 01. September 1939 und das Gedenken 70 Jahre danach:

#### **70 years later**

“70 years is a long time ago. Today, a quarter of Germans, according to Stern magazine, believe there were positive aspects to Nazi rule. And as The Associated Press recently reported from Gaza, a Hamas spiritual leader considers it a war crime to teach Palestinian pupils that the Nazis murdered 6 million Jews. [...] As the world marks the anniversary of the outbreak of WWII this week, and with the Iranian leader set to address the United Nations next month, those who make fateful decisions for the international community need to draw the appropriate lessons from history. [...] When a tyrant prophesies a world without Jews (or Israel), he is revealing his intentions. [...] History does not repeat itself. But people have been known to make the same mistake twice.“

JPO 01.09.09

“Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel bekannte sich zwar zu der deutschen Schuld am Zweiten Weltkrieg und gab Bedauern und Reue zum Ausdruck, sagte jedoch auch, die Vertreibung von 12 Millionen Deutschen [...] sei böse und ungerecht gewesen. Es wird angenommen, dass Merkel dies sagte, da ihre Partei bei den Kommunalwahlen Anfang der Woche einige Verluste hinnehmen musste. [...] Diese ‘revisionistische’ Linie ist in den letzten Jahren in Deutschland recht beliebt.

Inmitten all der historischen Abrechnungen ging der Holocaust am jüdischen Volk fast völlig unter. Putin erinnerte erst gar nicht daran, die Kanzlerin begnügte sich mit einer kurzen Erwähnung.“

Rami Tal, JED 04.09.09

Über das **Geschenk der Bild Zeitung, Baupläne von Auschwitz**, die Netanyahu bei seinem Deutschlandbesuch übergeben wurden:

#### **Bibi, blueprints and Berlin**

“What is the symbolism here? Why would an Israeli prime minister link himself and thus his country so demonstratively to Auschwitz? [...] It would have been wiser to let Yad Vashem's chairman take possession of the documents [...].

Netanyahu has played into the hands of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his comrades-in-hate. Their line is: No Holocaust, no Israel. Hence it is perfectly logical for them to deny the cause (the Shoah) to delegitimize the effect (Israel). But by accepting the Auschwitz blueprints as an almost sacred gift, and doing so as the head of government, Netanyahu has actually scored one for Israel's sworn enemies. He has walked into the Holocaust-equals-Israel trap, as if the state were indeed a posthumous gift of Adolf Hitler."

Josef Joffe, HAA 30.08.09

Über den Vorschlag des Justizministers, das **Amt des Generalstaatsanwalts** nach Ende der Amtszeit von Menachem Mazuz aufzusplitten:

### **Hands off the attorney general**

"The two main hats worn by the attorney general, that of the head of the prosecution and that of the legal advisor to the government, do not preclude each other but rather complement each other and ensure comprehensive defense of the rule of law in Israel. Behind Justice Minister Yaakov Neeman's assertion that combining the two functions leads to conflict of interests is the assumption that the government is corrupt and cabinet ministers are criminals. Otherwise, why would ministers have to face the attorney general as head of the prosecution? [...]

Instead of dealing with governmental corruption, the supporters of the split are proposing weakening the official who is supposed to deal with it. [...]

Splitting the functions is the first step on the way to achieving two improper goals:

weakening the attorney general so that his interpretation of the law will not be binding on government ministers, and a political takeover of the prosecution by appointing a prosecutor general who is 'one of us' and will refrain from bringing criminal cabinet ministers to justice."

HAA 09.09.09

### **After Mazuz**

"There is a great deal of support today for splitting the attorney-general's job. These supporters raise two main arguments. One is that for a democratic system of government, too much power is concentrated in the hands of a single, nonelected official.

Secondly, the roles of chief prosecutor and adviser to the government clash when the attorney-general

is faced with the dilemma of indicting a cabinet minister. [...]

According to [former Justice Minister] Friedmann's bill, the government would decide itself how to choose the legal adviser [...]. The second serious problem with the proposal was that it would have given the government the authority to ignore the legal adviser's opinion, so that even if the legal adviser asserted that a government bill or action was illegal, the government could discount it. [...]

Those who believe that there is a need to separate the functions of chief prosecutor and adviser to the government must make sure that the proposal does not weaken either one of them, particularly that of the legal adviser to the government, as Friedmann would have had it."

JPO 07.09.09

HAA = Haaretz

HZO= Ha Tzofe

IHY = Israeli HaYom

JED = Jedioth Ahronoth

JPO = Jerusalem Post

MAA = Maariv

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