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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

13. – 25. Juli 2010

1. Die Zukunft des Friedensprozesses

Der Friedensprozess zwischen Palästinensern und Israelis scheint festgefahren. Der Präsident der palästinensischen Autonomiebehörde Mahmoud Abbas lehnt direkte Gespräche derzeit ab. Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu hatte seinerseits mehrmals zu direkten Verhandlungen aufgerufen, die palästinensische Führung kritisierte jedoch, er zeige keine Bereitschaft, die zentralen Punkte eines endgültigen Friedensabkommens zu diskutieren. Der US-Nahostgesandte George Mitchell versucht seit Mai zwischen den Parteien zu vermitteln, erzielte jedoch bisher keine Fortschritte. Angesichts dieser Pattsituation werden in den israelischen Medien verschiedene Szenarien diskutiert, wie der Friedensprozess angekurbelt und eine Lösung des Konflikts gefunden werden könnte.

The missing link in the peace process: Trust

“About the only thing Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas have in common these days is a conviction that the other is bluffing when he says he is ready to make peace. [...]

Abbas seems to change his conditions for moving to direct talks almost daily. [...] It's easy to get the impression that he wants to stall long enough for the Obama administration to get frustrated enough to step in with an American peace plan that it will impose on Israel [...].

Netanyahu has never had much enthusiasm for the peace process and only under great pressure and begrudgingly was he compelled to endorse the two-state solution [...]

Like Abbas, he also hopes the Americans will grow frustrated with the stalled process, but instead of stepping in he wants Washington to walk away from a situation it deems hopeless.”

D. Bloomfield, JPO 21.07.10

A true peace from true leaders

“There is not, and cannot be, any alternative to a sincere peace initiative stemming from the hearts of the region's peoples and orchestrated by true leaders. External pressure might also be needed, but without an internal revolution that will lead to a peace agreement - one that will restore Israel to its original borders, voluntarily and out of respect for democracy - nothing will stabilize in the Middle East. The alternative into which Israel is now being dragged [...] is both clear and imminent: The two worlds of radicalism, one Jewish and one Islamic, will keep egging each other on and proving to each other that ‘only force can win.’ Each side will make concessions only when force is applied. [...] In this poisoned, aggressive atmosphere, even a forced decolonization would not prevent a further round of messianic violence .”

Sefi Rachlevsky, HAA 14.07.10

A midsummer night's dream?

“The formal excuse for the current situation is the refusal of the Palestinian leadership to enter into direct talks with Israel. [...]

But for now Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas [...] and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad can show considerable achievements in actively promoting peace. [...]

The wall of hatred between the two peoples has become shorter; today there is no reason not to sit and talk to each other. [...] We must strengthen Fayyad and Abu Mazen, encourage direct talks in exchange for a continuation of the freeze beyond the scheduled date - perhaps not a total freeze, but a kind of consensual freeze in the territories.”

Yoel Marcus, HAA 23.07.10

One-state or two-state solution

“It appears increasingly likely that all might boil down to a single resolution enacted by the UN Security Council.

When in August 2009, Palestinian Authority Prime

Minister Salam Fayyad laid out his design for perfecting the infrastructure and institutions necessary to support statehood and slapped a two-year time frame on the plan, few realized the speed and intensity with which it would resonate throughout the world. [...] Fayyad's start of the 'countdown clock to statehood' is allowing Western leaders to support the Palestinian cause with greater zeal and less personal/political risk. [...]

The Fayyad plan and the apparition of a UN resolution establishing the state of Palestine loom large in catalyzing Israelis to take a position before one is imposed upon them. [...]

Although timing and details are not yet clear, the parties should neither underestimate the movement at hand nor be surprised when the announcement from the UN fills the headlines."

Felice Friedson, JPO 21.07.10

Thinking outside the box about Hamas

"Israel's [...] policies are characterized by a great lack of strategic vision and creative thinking, particularly with respect to how to deal with Hamas. [...] Talking to Hamas makes sense for Israel if there are good reasons to believe that in the long run the organization will take the course of the ANC and IRA and move from terror tactics to becoming a legitimate player in the political arena. [...]

There is something Israel can do to influence Hamas' state of mind: engaging on the Arab League's peace initiative, which offers recognition of Israel and normal relations in exchange for a return to the 1967 borders and the establishment of a Palestinian state. Once this process starts, Hamas would soon find itself without any strategic depth. Such a peace process would of course include Syria, and Hamas' politburo [...] would be left without a home base. If it were to realize that the whole Arab world is about to move toward normalization with Israel, Hamas wouldn't have much of a choice but to renounce terror, accept Israel's legitimacy and move toward peace."

Carlo Strenger, HAA 18.07.10

Bring Jordan into the equation

"How many Palestinian states do we need? [...] 80% of Jordan's citizens are Palestinian. [...] Jordan demands the establishment of a Palestinian state at Israel's expense yet is unwilling to contribute in any way to resolving the Palestinian problem. [...] A tiny Palestinian fragment in Judea and Samaria would end up exploding, at Jordan's expense too – such a tiny Palestinian state would not be viable. [...]

The time has come to refresh the not-too-distant past. From now on, in any negotiations, Israel must demand that the East Bank too – that is, Jordan – constitute part of the solution. [...]

The tiny and crowded Israel can no longer agree to see a solution at its own expense only. [...] The time has come to remind Jordan, Israel's leaders, and in fact the whole world that Jordan too plays a role in the Palestinian problem – a role that is much greater, deeper, and historic than that played by the State of Israel."

Guy Bechor, JED 15.07.10

Jordan, Dr. Peace and Mr. Apartheid

"Jordan is a country with a Palestinian majority which allows them little or no involvement in any political or executive bodies or parliament. [...]

The fact that East Bankers have done very well under the current situation provides motive for Jordanian officials to maintain the status quo and work on extending it; especially as the helpless Palestinian majority has no say and very little it can do against such conditions. [...]

Since 2008, East Bankers have been embracing hostility toward Israel with dedication to 'liberating Palestine' as an excuse to further exclude the Jordanians of Palestinian heritage with calls for a universal denaturalization to put pressure on Israel. [...] Jordan cannot maintain its apartheid policies. The international community must make it clear to Jordan that both peace and integration of its own citizens are not privileges it is giving away to Israel or any other country."

Mudar Zahran, JPO 24.07.10

2. Konversion zum Judentum

Ein Gesetzesvorschlag zur Reform der Konversion zum Judentum, eingereicht von MK David Rotem (Israel Beitenu), hat heftige Proteste von Vertretern des Konservativen- und Reformjudentums in den USA und von liberalen Strömungen in Israel ausgelöst.

In Israel leben hunderttausende Einwanderer, die zwar aufgrund jüdischer Vorfahren die israelische Staatsbürgerschaft erlangen konnten, aber nach jüdischem Gesetz (Halacha) keine Juden sind. Um diesen Menschen die Konversion zu erleichtern, wird schon lange angestrebt, den langwierigen Prozess zu vereinfachen. Dazu sollen nun Rabbiner auf kommunaler Ebene dazu berechtigt werden Konversionen durchzuführen. Gleichzeitig soll das Oberste Rabbinat jedoch die Amtsgewalt über alle

Konversionen behalten. Da dieses von Ultra-Orthodoxen dominiert wird, befürchten die Vertreter liberalerer Strömungen nun, das Recht auf eigene Konversionen zu verlieren.

Kritiker mahnen zudem an, dass eine Verabschiedung des Gesetzes Juden in der Diaspora befremden könnte, weil dort nicht-orthodoxe Juden den Großteil der Gemeinden ausmachen. Angesichts dieser Tatsache hat Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu nun über ein sechsmonatiges Moratorium verfügt, um einen Kompromissvorschlag ausarbeiten zu lassen.

A call for state-sanctioned religious tolerance

“The proposed Rotem conversion bill that would have granted a[n ultra-orthodox] Chief Rabbinate exclusive oversight over all conversion matters ha[s] left hundreds of thousands of Jews with feelings of sorrow and anger. [...]

The outrage of passionate Diaspora Zionists as well as the vast majority of Israelis themselves who refuse to surrender to fundamentalist control over the Jewish State has awakened the leaders of Israel to the potentially destructive impact this bill would have on the fate of the Jewish people. [...]

For Jews in both the Diaspora and in Israel who are committed to Israel as both a democratic and a Jewish state, these episodes call into question whether the state itself actually possesses those commitments.”

David Ellenson, JPO 21.07.10

A divisive blow to Judaism

“Israel today is a diverse society. Religious and non-religious Jews are often at odds with each other. The feelings of the non-Orthodox toward the Orthodox are especially bitter. This discord can often be traced to negative feelings regarding the Chief Rabbinate, which is seen by many (especially the non-religious) as the symbol of a monopolizing Orthodoxy in Israel and throughout the world.

What Israelis find intolerable is a rabbinate that is religiously coercive. Coercion turns people off Judaism. [...]

The Chief Rabbinate is of the opinion that coercion is a necessary means to maintain the Jewish character of the state. The reality, however, is that any form of coercion is a turn-off to the majority of Jews in Israel and around the world [...]. It alienates them and drives them away. [...]

The pathway to religious commitment and spiritual striving is through choosing to grow and commit, not through force and coercion.”

Avraham Weiss, HAA 23.07.10

Make conversion easier

“Entrusting the conversion of these hundreds of thousands of people, who express their wish to join the Jewish people through their actions, in the hands of a Chief Rabbinate that increasingly shuns Zionism and moves closer to the [ultra-orthodox] world, as well as the latter’s demand that converts adopt an Orthodox lifestyle, conveys a message to these people of being second-class citizens and third-class Jews. [...]

Simplifying the conversion process must leave it up to the convert to decide which stream of Judaism he or she wishes to join. This principle is important both for the convert and for the quality of ties between the Jewish people in Israel and their brothers in the Diaspora.”

Ron Breiman, JED 16.07.10

Converging on conversion

“Along with legitimate concerns raised by the Jewish organizations, the disagreement was accompanied by wild speculation and misinformation from less-informed sources. [...]

The bill did have some ambiguity built in to make it more digestible, but it had not yet passed a first reading. It is only after a bill is sent to committee after a first reading that it is fleshed out and clarified. It is a shame that this could not happen. MK Rotem had promised the Jewish organizations that they would be able to take part in deciding the exact language before the bill was brought for a final vote, but now the practical discussion of the issues of conversion in the Knesset will not occur. [...]

We must redouble the efforts to work with this bill outside the Knesset and come to an understanding with all of the interested parties. I think that a compromise language will be easy to achieve, with the forethought that conversion reform is needed to help real people and help them really soon.”

Danny Hershtal, JPO 24.07.10

Conversion law threatens us

“It appears that every few years we see the submission of some kind of bill pertaining to Jewish identity that regrettably does not take into account its implications on Diaspora Jews. [...] This bill would greatly undermine Jewish unity. The result of granting chief rabbis the responsibility to appoint conversion court officials can be predicted now already – these courts will become Orthodox and

restore the problematic policy, thereby hurting world Jewry where most conversions are not Orthodox. [...]

Initiating this confrontation with Diaspora Jews, who constitute our most important support and foreign affairs base in the world, serves no purpose. The relationship with world Jewry cannot be maintained via aggressive parliamentary tricks, but rather, only on the basis of ongoing dialogue.”

Edward Retting, JED 13.07.10

Are you Jewish enough?

“Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has said the bill will not come up for a final vote, but that could change in the face of pressure from its two principle backers, Israel Beitenu and Shas, who have the power to bring down his government if they don't get their way. The two made a deal: The hard-line Israel Beiteinu, whose constituency is largely Russian and secular [...], wanted a law permitting civil marriage, and [...] traded that for the conversion issue. [...]

Religious extremists are taking greater and greater control of Israeli life. [...] This conversion bill is the latest example of an anti-democratic religious establishment run amok thanks to politicians who are willing to buy their votes at any cost.”

Douglas Bloomfield, JPO 15.07.10

Conversion as a strategic goal

“There is more than a little ignorance of the bill's purpose among the Reform and Conservative Jews who are threatening to stop the flow of donations from Jewish communities abroad to Israel [...].

The fact that [Israel Beitenu] proposed the bill should reassure rather than rile up Reform and Conservative Jews. Is it logical for a party so dependent on the votes of immigrants who are not Jewish in accordance with religious law to be behind a bill that seeks to make the conversion process more difficult? [...]

The purpose of the Conversion Bill is to increase the number of Jews, and as such it must be supported on principle. It is a strategic goal, a matter of survival for our people, whose ranks are dwindling exponentially. [...]

The bill's opponents are concealing the fact that it would not revoke Israel's recognition of Reform and Conservative conversions performed abroad. The only split in the Jewish people is thus the one carried out daily by those who split off from it.”

Israel Harel, HAA 22.07.10

Who is a citizen?

“The only way of making any headway is to finally address the much wider issue of citizenship. Most politicians are afraid of touching that because they fear that any tampering with the Law of Return will open up a wider debate on the identity of the Jewish state and its increasingly problematic relationship with its non-Jewish citizens. [...]

If the Jewish American leadership is really interested in making a change [...] they should devote the considerable resources they invest in lobbying and advocacy in Israel toward a radical redrafting of the citizenship laws. This does not have to mean a dilution of Israel's Jewish identity. In the clear guidelines of who is eligible to become a citizen, affinity to the Jewish people will be a major factor. Many countries in the West have similar laws designed to give an advantage to immigrants who have some historical or cultural connection to their prospective country.”

Anshel Pfeffer, HAA 23.07.10

3. Einschränkungen für MK Hanin Zuabi

Sechs Wochen nach der Konfrontation der israelischen Armee mit Aktivisten auf einem Schiffskonvoi mit Hilfsgütern für Gaza, bei der neun türkische Aktivisten getötet worden waren, beschränkte die Knesset die Parlamentsprivilegien der arabischen Abgeordneten Hanin Zuabi. Zuabi, die der arabischen Partei Balad angehört, war an Bord der Mavi Marmara gewesen, um den Konvoi nach Gaza zu begleiten. Nun wurde ein Gesetz verabschiedet, dass ihr wegen der Teilnahme an dem Versuch, die Blockade des Gazastreifens zu durchbrechen, drei der Privilegien entzieht, die ihr als Knessetmitglied zustehen. So muss sie nun auf einen diplomatischen Pass und Finanzhilfen im Falle einer Anklage verzichten und darf keine Staaten besuchen, mit denen Israel keine diplomatischen Beziehungen unterhält. Der Gesetzesvorschlag war von Michael Ben Ari von der rechts-nationalistischen Partei National Union eingereicht worden und hatte breite Unterstützung in der Regierungskoalition erhalten. An der Abstimmung beteiligte sich jedoch weniger als die Hälfte der Abgeordneten.

Endangering democracy

“Tuesday's Knesset decision to revoke three key parliamentary privileges from Balad MK Hanin Zuabi is cause for concern. [...]

It seems elected officials no longer understand the meaning of freedom of expression. If they believe Zuabi broke the law, the Knesset's legal adviser is supposed to handle the matter. If this is not the case, even if her opinions are considered offensive, her colleagues must resolutely support her right to have them heard. [...]

It's a shame Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin, who [...] sharply criticized the decision against Zuabi, ultimately abstained from the vote, thereby turning his protest into empty words. All of these developments symbolize the moral weakness of the 18th Knesset, the damage it is inflicting on freedom of speech and the danger it poses to democracy in Israel."

HAA 15.07.10 Editorial

Knesset hurting itself

"I was horrified by [the Knesset's] decision to punish MK Hanin Zoabi, even though I greatly disagree with her ideology and actions. [...]

The trouble is that sometimes we see elected officials who never seriously looked into the meaning of democracy, or alternately, they have studied it so well that they are determined to destroy it with their own hands. This is what was done at the Knesset the other day. [...] What's terrible is the very process whereby the Knesset punishes an MK who performs her role as best as she understands it, representing her voters without actually harming national security or existence.

'Eroding the essence of democracy' is not an empty slogan. The erosion happens where the tyranny of the majority gives expression to its fury or frustration to the point of undermining the essence of the Knesset's work – that is, the rights and duties of its members to express and promote their views in every possible public way."

Ran Cohen, JED 15.07.10

It's coming to you

"There are many people here who know the history, who understand democracy, who should be terrified by what is going on. Terrified? That's exactly the point: They're not. They hear what happened to MK Hanin Zuabi, and are silent. [...]

From history they have learned that regimes that begin to act this way are doomed, that Israel is on a slippery slope, mainly because its control mechanisms have all been rendered impotent, and yet they do not protest. [...]

They think that to be a good citizen it's enough to support Gilad Shalit. If some Jewish community

abroad were under siege they would put together a solidarity flotilla, but when Zuabi is punished for performing a simple act of identification with her people, they do not care."

Gideon Levy, HAA 18.07.10

4. Medienquerschnitt

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

*Über einen Gesetzesvorschlag, der den Erhalt der israelischen Staatsbürgerschaft an einen **Loyalitätsschwur** auf den "jüdischen und demokratischen Staat" binden würde:*

A substantive oath of allegiance

"The ministerial team [...] proposed that the text include a pledge of allegiance to the State of Israel 'as a Jewish and democratic state.' Since most of those to whom this may apply will be immigrants from the territories or Arab states wishing to marry Israeli Arabs, the matter is clearly sensitive. [...]

Should candidates for naturalization be required to make a pledge with substantive content beyond a general pledge of allegiance to the laws of Israel? [...] What happens in other democratic countries? [...] It turns out it is precisely democratic countries that are open to immigration that require candidates for naturalization to make pledges that deal with values and political principles these nations see as central to their worldview. [...]

The question that remains is whether the expression 'Jewish and democratic state' is the right formula. [...] [Instead,] we proposed a formula that requires acceptance of 'the legitimacy of the State of Israel,' since that is precisely what Israel's enemies wish to deny it. [...]

What's more, anyone who opposes such a formula [...] will thus prove that he is not interested in civil rights but the denial of Israel's legitimacy. The demand for a pledge of allegiance with substantive content is therefore acceptable and justified, but it is not too late to choose language that is both more substantive and less vulnerable to criticism."

Shlomo Avineri, HAA 25.07.10

Jewish and democratic?

“The gist of the Citizenship Law amendment, which will entrench the ban on family unification between Arab-Israelis and Palestinians, through a demand to pledge allegiance to a ‘Jewish, democratic state,’ is discrimination against these citizens. After all, they would not be able to make such pledge, and in fact I too would not be able to do it, because a Jewish state cannot be democratic.”

Shulamit Aloni, JED 19.07.10

*Über das neuentwickelte **Raketenabwehrsystem “Iron Dome”**, das die grenznahen Gemeinden vor Raketen aus dem Libanon (Hizbollah) und Gaza (Hamas) schützen soll:*

Putting Iron Dome into perspective

“Nobody promises that the Iron Dome will offer absolute protection. Even what is touted may well be beyond the system’s practical capabilities. [...]”

Unless every inch of the western Negev is covered 24/7, it’s unrealistic to expect even an 80% success rate. [...] Adding to the complexity is the fact that some of the communities under Kassam threat are too close to the borderline for sufficient warning time. [...] Last but not least, there’s the sticky issue of footing the bill. [...] One single Iron Dome anti-missile missile costs \$100,000. [...]

It is imperative that Israelis are keenly aware of all of the above, in order to shatter the dangerous delusion that a magical, defensive panacea exists to the Kassam and mortar threat from Gaza. [...] The Iron Dome [...] cannot replace traditional battlefield offensives to take out terror bases across the lines.”

JPO 21.07.10 Editorial

From television to reality

“Some defensive capability is better than total helplessness. Israel was slow to comprehend the potential for damage of rockets fired from Lebanon and Gaza. [...]

In developing ‘Iron Dome’ [...] Israeli governments acknowledged that they had been mistaken in setting priorities and earmarking resources for the defense establishment. [...]

Despite the completion of development and the announcement that the system is operational, there is still no intention to deploy the first two batteries, which will be ready in the fall, to protect Sderot and other communities in the south. [...] This decision is baffling. It broadcasts doubt [...] that ‘Iron Dome’ can actually move from television to the gritty reality

of clashes with Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad.”

HAA 21.07.10 Editorial

*Über den erfolgreichen **Kampf von Umweltaktivisten**, den Bau einer Hotelanlage am Palmahim Strand südlich von Tel Aviv zu verhindern:*

People power on Palmahim beach

“Last week the battle waged by [the activists] finally paid off. The cabinet voted to freeze the project and ordered the regional council to review the vacation village project in light of the shore preservation law and the public’s increased sensitivity in recent years to environmental issues. [...] The successful campaign against the vacation village sends out a clear message against apathy and indifference and in favor of civic responsibility and the empowerment of the ‘little guy’ that is the foundation of a healthy democracy. [...] Contractors can no longer be sure that their ‘approved’ building project will not be blocked due to a successful campaign led by a charismatic activist.”

JPO 19.07.10 Editorial

HAA = Haaretz

HZO= Ha Tzofe

IHY = Israeli HaYom

JED = Jedioth Ahronoth

JPO = Jerusalem Post

MAA = Maariv

GLO = Globes

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