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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

26. Oktober - 07. November 2010

1. Die amerikanischen Midterm-Wahlen

Aus den Kongresswahlen in den USA sind die Demokraten geschwächt hervorgegangen. Die Republikaner erlangten die Mehrheit im Repräsentantenhaus, im Senat halten die Demokraten nur noch eine knappe Mehrheit.

In den israelischen Medien wurde vor allem diskutiert, was diese Niederlage für US-Präsident Barack Obama bedeutet und wie sie sich auf seine Nahostpolitik auswirken könnte. In den letzten Wochen hatte sich die amerikanische Regierung auf den Wahlkampf konzentriert und keine Fortschritte mehr im Friedensprozess erzielt. Im Repräsentantenhaus sitzen nun eine ganze Reihe von Abgeordneten, die für ihre pro-israelische Haltung bekannt sind, darunter Eric Cantor, der neue Mehrheitsführer der Republikaner und damit das höchstrangige jüdische Mitglied des Kongresses. Umfragen zufolge stimmten 66% der jüdischen Wähler in den USA für die Demokraten.

Obama must now play hardball

"What does this election mean for American efforts to promote Israeli-Palestinian peace? It depends mainly on President Obama. [...] The next Congress will have no shortage of members [...] trying to outdo each other with statements and legislative initiatives designed to demonstrate 'pro-Israel' bona fides. Thoughtful discussion of what is actually good for Israel will be pushed to the sidelines. [...]"

But it is the president, not Congress, who is in charge of conducting U.S. foreign policy. [...] And this president has a decision to make. [...] If President Obama is ready to back his commitment to Middle East peace with the kind of real investment necessary to make the parties play ball, though, a breakthrough is still possible, regardless of any pushback from Congress."

Lara Friedman, HAA 05.11.10

The party's over

"After the Republican upheaval in Tuesday's congressional elections, the chances that America will make the Netanyahu government do something it really doesn't want to do – like fulfill a fraction of 1 percent of the conditions necessary for the creation of a Palestinian state – are gone. [...]"

Whatever the Obama administration may say, it is through with Middle East peacemaking, at least for this term. It has zero leverage over Israel's right-wing government because the roaring Republicans love this government and especially its prime minister. The Republicans love the settlements, love Israeli rule over the West Bank, love the blockade of Gaza and, no less important, hate Palestinians and the rest of the Muslim world.

These are the political forces that have Obama in check."

Larry Derfner, JPO 03.11.10

Obama's peace

"If anyone in Jerusalem had hoped the Tea Party would save the settlers' party, they were seriously mistaken. The 2010 midterm election time out is over. Today is the day after the elections, after the holidays, after the foreplay.

The real game begins now and the name of the game is Palestine. The endgame: establishing a viable Palestinian state within a year. [...] Only a Palestinian state would justify the Nobel Peace prize he received, only it can give Obama the international legacy he craves, only it can lift the spirit of Obama's self-defined liberal camp. So in 2011 Palestine will be to the resolute president what health care reform was to him in 2009."

Ari Shavit, HAA 04.11.10

Good news for Israel

"The president was being portrayed as a wounded, vengeful animal, and woe is us if we infuriate it now with a stupid smile. The truth is that [...] Obama

abused Israel, he now sustained a serious political blow, and this is good for us. [...] In any case, our fate always depends more on us than on the American voter's caprices. [...]

Obama's defeat last week removed any desire he may have still had to anger Jewish voters again. We can assume that he will also fear the reaction of Congress. For the next two years at least, Prime Minister Netanyahu will be able to quarrel with him and survive."

Hagai Segal, JED 07.11.10

Don't write Obama off

"The last thing Israel needs is to show delight at the American president's downfall. Indeed, it is no secret that in respect to foreign policy, it's good that the president and Congress are not from the same party. When Congress opposes the president, we have more room for maneuver on the diplomatic front.

[...]. Israel completely depends on the United States, and a weak president is not a good thing – it's not good for Israel, it's not good for the Jews, and it's not good for America.

However, there is something here that is even more important: Obama is not that weak. He sustained a painful blow, yet he still has two full years left at the White House."

Sima Kadmon, Jed 06.11.10

Bibi's likely miscalculation

"Netanyahu [...] would like to see nothing more than a weakened President Barack Obama [...]. His calculation is a simple one: A weakened American president will have less flexibility when it comes to applying pressure on Israel. [...]

It's not clear, however, that this calculation is correct. [...]

Obama might come to the conclusion that he is likely to be a one-term president and, having already been awarded (and mistakenly accepted) a Nobel Peace Prize, the determination he showed at the beginning of his term to produce an Israeli-Palestinian agreement might be redoubled. With the Republican Party looking inward, Obama could trade its support for an Israeli-Palestinian deal in return for a compromise on domestic issues."

Jeff Barak, JPO 31.10.10

Weak Obama bad for Israel

"Should a bruised, hurting president think for a moment that his actions on the Mideastern front undermined him and prompted his defeat (which

isn't true,) he may tell himself and his advisors what many in America have been saying – I'm fed up with the Israelis, with the Arabs, and with the conflict. [...] The results may be disastrous for us.

[...] All the State of Israel's power in this world, in the past and at present, stems from its position as the 51st US state, a satellite and protectorate, even without an official defense pact. [...] A wounded American president means, for us, a weakened global status for Israel among the family of nations. [...] We tend to put our trust in US Jews; they will save us from any harm. Yet those who feel that way should realize that the power exerted by the Jewish lobby in Washington is smaller than it used to be. What's worse, many US Jews, too many, are becoming detached from Israel. They've grown tired of us. Indeed, for us, with the exception of a defeated, humiliated president, this is the most urgent problem."

Eitan Haber, JED 29.10.10

A year of decision for Barack and Bibi

"Obama has one year until he embarks on a new election campaign or decides not to run and make do with a single term in office. During that time Obama will hope to advance the establishment of Palestine and usher it into the family of nations, as he promised in his address at the UN General Assembly. [...]

Netanyahu's political timetable is a lot less clear than Obama's. [...] His term in office is closing in on its halfway point, and in line with tradition, signs of disquiet are increasing in the coalition. [...]

The U.S. elections are bringing him closer to a decision: to respond to U.S. pressure and freeze settlements once more or say no to Obama and huddle behind a right-wing coalition and its Republican supporters in Congress to 'preserve the Land of Israel' and carry on with the settlements."

Aluf Benn, HAA 02.10.10

2. Stipendien für Ultra-Orthodoxe

Israels Staatshaushalt sieht für die kommenden zwei Jahre 111 Millionen Shekel für Stipendien für ultra-orthodoxe Männer vor, die an Religionsschulen (Yeshivas) lernen. Diese Tatsache sorgte für Empörung, insbesondere weil der Oberste Gerichtshof diese Art von Stipendien erst im Juni für gesetzeswidrig erklärt hatte, da Studenten an normalen Universitäten nicht davon profitieren können. Der Gesetzesvorschlag, der von einem Abgeordneten der ultra-orthodoxen (haredi) Partei United Torah

Judaism eingreicht wurde, unterstützt nicht arbeitende, verheiratete Männer mit drei Kindern, ein Kriterium, dass hauptsächlich auf Ultra-orthodoxe(Haredim) zutrifft. Nachdem der Staatshaushalt in erster Lesung verabschiedet wurde, gingen Tausenden von Studenten auf die Straße, um gegen die Yeshiva-Stipendien zu protestieren.

No to the yeshiva stipend bill

"The state will allocate NIS 111 million a year to stipends for married, full-time yeshiva students. The line item circumvents a June ruling by the High Court of Justice, according to which these stipends must be halted on the grounds of inequality: They are given to yeshiva students, while university and college students get nothing. [...]

In addition, yeshiva students receive state stipends, while most university students must get help from their parents or even work in order to support themselves. The absurd thing is that if the yeshiva students commit the crime of working, they are ineligible for the stipends. In this way, Shas and United Torah Judaism consecrate the value of not working. [...]

We can only hope that this time Benjamin Netanyahu will withstand the pressure and not permit the yeshiva students law to pass."

HAA 28.10.10 Editorial

A slap in our face

"In deciding whether to accept or reject the proposal, the government will be deciding whether it is democratic, and respects the law, or whether it tramples it brutally. It will decide whether it is a government that represents all citizens, or whether it is a sectarian government captive to narrow interests. [...]

Notably, the objective of university students in Israel is not to come out against yeshiva students, but rather, to call for equality. Hence, if the government seeks to support yeshiva boys via stipends, university students who need such help should also receive it. [...]

The haredi parties, as they always do, demand that the prime minister pay them a political bribe, in cash, over the table. Beyond the extortion and trampling of the value of equality, the move constitutes a slap in the face for students."

Itzik Shmuli, JED 26.10.10

Changing the unsustainable

"Unperturbed by the High Court ruling or by the public outcry against their move, UTJ and Shas are

now insisting that unless the present government ratifies their law [...] they will quit the coalition. [...] Netanyahu was probably tempted to cave in to haredi demands for the sake of political stability. [...] Zionist leaders, no matter how secular they were, had always recognized the centrality of Jewish tradition to the creation of the modern Jewish nation. Nothing else could explain the Jewish people's unique connection to the Land of Israel; nothing else could unite such diverse Jewish communities around a collective goal.

But [...] haredim must also recognize that the present situation is 'unsustainable,' endangering economic stability. [...]

The state of Israel can no longer sustain such a large population that relies so heavily on stipends and other welfare benefits. [...] Instead of offering incentives to remain unemployed, the state should think of ways to encourage haredi men to gradually integrate into the job market."

JPO 25.10.10

Haredim under attack

"The all-out assault against the haredi community in wake of the income supplement law for yeshiva students crossed every red line. [...] A foreigner who would have landed here could think that all the State's maladies start and end with young men who study the Torah; the one that gives us the right to live in the Land of Israel. [...] The fact we are dealing with small sums of money here, did not stop any member of the orchestrated campaign who sought to slam, hurt, and de-legitimize students of the Torah.

We are talking about some NIS 1,000 (roughly \$300) per month for a yeshiva student with three children. Will this sum of money prevent him from going to work?"

Menachem Gsheid, JED 01.11.10

Haredi sea of mediocrity

"The income supplement law is bad for the haredim as well: It simultaneously encourages laziness and mediocrity. [...]

The scholarly haredi community is a society where those who wish to make a living by working are condemned for not being a part of the collective project, that is, endless, Sisyphean study of the Torah. [...]

Studying complex texts such as the Talmud is not for everyone. It is no wonder that the haredi scholarly community has produced very few valuable texts, despite the massive investment in

studying. [...] Yet if these yeshivas do not produce important spiritual insights, what do these intellectual printing machines, which keep printing more and more bills of decreasing value, produce? They produce compliance. They create a community where those in power – a dangerous alliance of rabbis and functionaries – force their will upon everyone else. [...]

The vast majority has deteriorated into a forced situation of ongoing childhood – economic, social, and spiritual dependence on the spiritual leaders.

The result of this kind of dependence cannot be creativity and vitality.."

Aviad Kleinberg, JED 27.10.10

Lucky us, we have yeshiva students

"It turns out that our university students oppose granting state scholarships to married yeshiva students with children. Over two days, for a few hours, a total of almost 3,000 university students went out to demonstrate. [...]

A solution was quickly found in the current yeshiva student problem. The university students will not demand cancellation of tuition, and they won't demand the construction of dormitories. Instead, the students' struggle was shifted from 'We want money' to 'Why are they giving them money?' [...]

Dear students, next time, if you want the fart to be at least a bark, think carefully about what you are seeking."

Yitzhak Laor, HAA 07.10.10

The students are right

"While Torah study is presented in the political debate as a supreme value over which governments rise and fall, academic studies have become an economic privilege because of the distorted priorities of all of Israel's governments. [...] Israeli students are compelled to deal with a complicated economic reality. High tuition, exorbitant rental prices and a lack of dormitory space force them to work. [...]

Higher education is not merchandise in the political bazaar. It is a universal right and a valuable national asset that should be promoted, without giving preference to the yeshivas."

HAA 03.11.10 Editorial

3. Rassismus und Diskriminierung

Am 27. Oktober verabschiedete das Knesset-Komitee für Verfassung, Gesetz und Justiz einen Gesetzesentwurf, der dem Parlament nun zur zweiten und dritten Lesung vorgelegt werden wird.

Der Entwurf sieht vor, dass kleine Gemeinden Personen, die ein Haus kaufen wollen, unter bestimmten Kriterien ablehnen dürfen. Kritiker sehen darin einen Versuch, arabischen Israelis und anderen Minderheiten den Zugang zu diesen Ortschaften zu verwehren. Obwohl das Gesetz einen Ausschluss aufgrund von "Rasse, Religion, Geschlecht, Nationalität oder Behinderung" verbietet, erlaubt es doch, Kandidaten, die nicht zur "Grundanschauung" und der "sozialen und kulturellen Struktur" der Gemeinde passen, abzulehnen. Dass das Zusammenleben von Juden und Arabern auch ohne entsprechende Gesetzgebung von Persönlichkeiten des öffentlichen Lebens erschwert wird, zeigte sich Anfang Oktober in der Stadt Safed. Dort hatte der Oberste Rabbiner Shmuel Eliyahu, die jüdischen Bürger der Stadt dazu aufgerufen, keine Wohnungen an Araber zu vermieten oder zu verkaufen.

With the law on their side

"Under the guise of the deceptively mundane name 'Amendment to the Cooperative Associations Bill,' the Knesset's Constitution, Law and Justice Committee this week finalized a bill intended to bypass previous rulings of the High Court of Justice. If indeed this legislation is approved by the Knesset plenum, it will not be possible to describe it as anything other than an apartheid law.

Ten years ago, the High Court of Justice ordered the town of Katzir to accept the family of Adel and Iman Kaadan, Arab citizens of Israel, as members of the community. [...] Now, however, the legislature has come up with a proper 'Zionist' response to the justices: If it becomes law, the amendment will give acceptance committees of communal villages the authority to limit residence in their towns exclusively to Jews. [...]

Segregation of Jews and Arabs in Israel of 2010 is almost absolute. [...] In many senses, this is the way members of both groups want things to be, but such separation only contributes to the growing mutual alienation of Jews and Arabs."

Amnon Be'eri-Sulizeanu, HAA 29.10.10

Equitable housing plans for Jews and Arabs

"Do the residents of a small town (500 families or less) have the right to shape for themselves a homogeneous community that excludes certain segments of the population, including Arabs?

Few would deny communities of religious Jews the right to ensure public adherence to Shabbat by keeping out secular candidates. [...] The desires of

Arab, Druse and Circassian communities ought to be respected as well. In short, not every arrangement that separates communities is racist and unjustified. [...]

The optimal, fairest solution is to provide a comprehensive, nationwide housing plan that offers varied and satisfactory solutions for both Jews and Arabs – including Jews and Arabs interested in living together in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic environment."

JPO 28.10.10 Editorial

Discriminatory and unnecessary

"In its 2003 ruling, the High Court deemed the absorption committees' classifications of candidates 'a grave blow to equality;' yet since then, the communities, whose well-to-do residents are eager only to admit 'people like us,' have persisted with their admission policies.

Single mothers, physically challenged persons and others who deviate from the communities' conservative norms are rejected on sophistic pretenses. Arab candidates are categorically rejected on the hazy grounds of 'unsuitability.' [...] Now MKs [...] want to enshrine this blatant discrimination in Israeli law. [...]

It is hard to resist the conclusion that the aim of the proposed law is to preserve the communities' 'Jewish purity' [...] by means of willful exclusion that traduces Israel's Basic Laws."

HAA 27.10.10 Editorial

South Africa is already here

"Hundreds of thousands in Israel are pleased [...] that the bill will, when it passes - and it will pass - allow discrimination against Arabs who will want to buy a home in a Jewish community. [...]

Israel's apartheid movement is coming out of the woodwork and is taking on a formal, legal shape. It is moving from voluntary apartheid, which hides its ugliness through justifications of 'cultural differences' and 'historic neglect' which only requires a little funding and a couple of more sewage pipes to make everything right - to a purposeful, open, obligatory apartheid, which no longer requires any justification."

Zvi Bar'el, HAA 31.10.10

The reality whose name we do not speak

"Following tensions in Safed between Arab students and the Jewish community [...] and an op-ed by Zvi Bar'el that claims 'South Africa is already here,' it seems relevant to discuss racism in Israeli society.

[...] The truth whose name is silent is the reality of Arab racism against the Jewish community, one that is greatly responsible not only for the supposed segregation but also for widespread violence. The absence of discussion about Arab racism is a phenomenon of the old Western postcolonial view that only the minority suffers racism while the majority is always the perpetrator. [...]

Until we address the truth rather than covering it over with semantics and 'coexistence' initiatives, the racism will only grow."

Seth J. Frantzman, JPO 02.11.10

The rotting Safed cheese

"Think of a [...] ancient major district town, with a college situated in the middle of it, whose students include quite a few Jews. The town priest calls [...] for a ban on renting apartments to Jewish students. [...] If this took place in France, and even more so in Germany, it sounds quite bad. But this all happened in Safed - and against Arabs. [...]

That is what happens when we stay silent and forgiving. [...]

Safed can continue to rot in its racism; it is not the main problem. Many countries have such centers of malignancy. The problem lies in the response from society and the government. The Arabs do not have an 'anti-defamation league,' and people are not buying the fight against anti-Arab racism like they do warnings against anti-Semitism, which cause hearts worldwide to tremble."

Gideon Levy, HAA 28.10.10

Racism in the name of religion

"No response was heard from the government, while both the (secular) mayor of the city and the (religious) president of the Safed college refused to condemn the statements, other than to say that they would not have said such things. Their lack of public condemnation made them accomplices. No excuses, or claims that Arab students change the nature of the city and its Jewish spirituality, especially on Shabbat, or that they smoke nargilas in areas where this was not the custom, could disguise the blatant racism. [...] As long as we allow the racist comments of Eliahu and others like him to go unanswered, we are betraying the tenets on which this state was established."

David Newman, JPO 02.11.10

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 die **israelische Linke** und die Führungskrise in der Arbeitspartei:*

Dying and in ferment

"The initiative to appoint Benjamin Ben-Eliezer as temporary chairman of the Labor Party, as a result of the ferment in the party, was published [today]. [...] This is the first time, if I'm not mistaken, that a dying party is described as being in ferment. It's cynical, pathetic and sad, but true. The Israeli left is in big trouble. Barak (by his resignation that will not be forthcoming) and Ben-Eliezer will not rescue it from the pit that they themselves dug for it and their party. [...] In the last election campaign the Labor Party didn't even bother to discuss 'two states for two peoples' and continued negotiations with the Palestinians. [...] Then came Operation Cast Lead and the shower of seats rained down on Kadima and Likud. The disintegration of the left turned into a collapse. [...]

Why am I bringing up the past? Mainly because of the future. The present is clear. We're dying and in ferment. What has to happen so that the left will become rehabilitated, recover and pick itself up, if at all? [...]

The left remains without leadership, and the leadership of what used to be the left remains without support. Leadership and support. That's what the left needs. With less than that there will be no left in Israel."

Niva Lanir, HAA 02.11.10

*Über palästinensische Pläne, einen **palästinensischen Staat unilateral** auszurufen:*

The old/new unilateral threat

"Now, with talks deadlocked practically before they had a chance to begin, we are witnessing this new spate of threats to act independently, through enlisting the UN Security Council, the Americans and Europeans in an attempt to bypass Israel and impose a settlement based on the '1967 borders.' There are several legal and practical flaws in these

threats. Any unilateral declaration of a state outside the agreed upon negotiating process would undermine the very basis of the Oslo Accords and the framework established by them. [...]

Voiding the Oslo Accords would bring about a legal vacuum that could result in considerable chaos, throwing the area into immense instability and threatening to cast it into uncontrolled violence. [...] Determining borders is an essential component in interstate relations. The principles of peaceful coexistence [...] determine the necessity for mutual recognition of a common border."

James Barker, JPO 26.10.10

Another unilateral disaster?

"Abbas is considering asking the United Nations to recognize an independent State of Palestine if Palestinians forgo current peace talks. Based upon past unilateral actions, Abbas may want to reconsider.

There has yet to be a successful unilateral declaration in the Arab Israeli conflict that has resulted in a peaceful outcome. [...]

If President Abbas wants a future Palestinian state to succeed and live in peace with its neighbors, he would be better off using the 1979 Israel-Egyptian peace treaty or the 1994 peace deal between Israel and Jordan as his model. As these past examples have shown, the only way to achieve a lasting and sustainable peace is to have an accompanying political agreement between the parties in conflict."

Sara Reef, JED 28.10.10

HAA = Haaretz
JED = Jedioth Ahronoth
JPO = Jerusalem Post
GLO = Globes

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