



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 23/10

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

07. – 20. Dezember 2010

1. Erneuter Stillstand des Friedensprozesses?

Drei Monate nach offiziellem Ende des Baustopps in den jüdischen Siedlungen im Westjordanland hat die amerikanische Regierung den Versuch aufgegeben, den israelischen Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu zu einer Verlängerung zu bewegen. Zehn Monate lang waren Bautätigkeiten in den meisten Siedlungen eingestellt worden, um Friedensverhandlungen zu ermöglichen. Dabei waren jedoch keine nennenswerten Fortschritte erreicht worden.

Am 07. Dezember verkündigte die amerikanische Regierung nun, dass ein erneuter Baustopp keine Grundlage für eine Wiederaufnahme direkter Gespräche böten. Allerdings halten die USA an ihrem Engagement für den Friedensprozess fest. In einer Rede in Washington deutete Außenministerin Hillary Clinton an, dass der Druck auf Netanyahu nun erhöht werde.

In den kommenden Wochen sollen indirekte Gespräche mit Hilfe des Nahostsondergesandten George Mitchell fortgesetzt werden. In einem ersten Treffen erklärte Netanyahu sich dazu bereit, alle Grundprobleme des Konflikts zu diskutieren.

Stop the peace talks drought

“Very belatedly, the U.S. administration announced the failure of its efforts to persuade Israel to reinstate the freeze on building in the settlements. In doing so, U.S. President Barack Obama saved Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from having to put up a political deposit and demonstrate his willingness to pay the balance of the political price that a two-state solution would extract. [...]”

Instead of celebrating his victory, the prime minister would do well to take seriously Clinton's announcement that Washington will demand that both sides show more flexibility on the core issues of the

conflict [...]. If Netanyahu seeks to hold on to the remaining trust of the Israeli public and the international community in his ‘Bar-Ilan vision,’ he should stop playing hide-and-seek, and during the upcoming shuttle-diplomacy trip of U.S. envoy George Mitchell, he should present his proposal for a final-status arrangement.”

HAA 12.12.10 Editorial

No substitute for dialogue

“As expected, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has welcomed the US's decision to drop its demand for a moratorium on new building in Judea and Samaria as a precondition for direct talks. This cornerstone of US Mideast policy since President Barack Obama took office in 2009 has done more harm than good by encouraging Palestinian intransigence. [...] Now, the abrupt change in policy has created a diplomatic vacuum. [...]”

Only through dialogue can we and the Palestinians hope to reach a lasting peace based on mutual respect and recognition. And it is not enough for Israel to be willing to make painful compromises, as it has shown itself to be time and again in recent years. The Palestinians, too, must be forthcoming. [...] A 10-month building freeze all too evidently did not generate a change in the Palestinian stance. And the US apparently concluded that an additional three-month freeze would yield no dramatic shift, either.”

JPO 14.12.10 Editorial

Rest in peace

“Peace may be a dream - but it is not our dream. The time has come to recognize the fact that Israel uses the rhetoric of peace, but does very little on the practical level toward achieving it. [...]”

That efforts to renew direct negotiations failed, less than six months after being launched in Washington,

is direct proof. [...] This country deserves most of the blame: History will not forgive those who considered the issue of extending the construction moratorium in the settlements, even for three months, more important than continuing the talks and reaching a diplomatic solution. [...]

History teaches that no peace, or even a framework for negotiations, has ever succeeded unless the warring parties were actually ready for genuine dialogue. [...] Thus it is the rival sides who bear the blame, but not equally. There is no doubt that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his cabinet are largely responsible for the latest failure.”

Elie Podeh, HAA 16.12.10

Back to square one

“There is no deal with the Americans, there is no freeze, and there are no negotiations with the Palestinians. We’re back to square one. [...]

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict will now go into a waiting period while seeking renewed dialogue via secret channels. Whatever is exposed to daylight gets burned.

As to the political implications expected in the wake of the declaration of the failure of the contacts, Netanyahu can relax. I count on Defense Minister Barak and his Labor Party colleagues to come up with reasons to stay in the government. The settlers will continue to do their thing, and Shas will declare that it’s in favor of peace, but not at any price – it depends how many yeshiva students Netanyahu agrees to pay for.”

Shimon Shiffer, JED 08.12.10

No miracle for us

“After more than four futile decades of unnecessary pressure on Israel, the Americans should revolutionize their approach and concentrate their efforts on those who hold the key to peace: the Palestinians. [...]

The essence is this: As a first step, the Arabs must be brought to recognize Israel as a Jewish state and as the national home of the Jewish people, in a public and binding way. As part of a peace agreement they must declare [...] a complete relinquishment of the right of return. [...]

For the Palestinians to accede to the American demand, there must be a revolutionary change of approach in the Israeli ‘peace camp’ as well. As long as the Palestinians know that this camp, which has great media impact in the world, automatically supports them, they will remain entrenched in their refusal.”

Israel Harel, HAA 09.12.10

A dismal failure of leadership all round

“Netanyahu has shown not only a lack of ability to lead, but has been systematically engaged in deceiving the Americans and the Palestinians, while misleading his own people. Using his right-wing government as an excuse for his inability to engage the Palestinians in earnest is nothing short of demagoguery. He knows that he could have made basic – and inevitable – concessions to lure the Palestinians to the negotiating table. He could have also changed the composition of the government by dumping Shas and Israel Beiteinu and inviting Kadima to join him. [...]

Just as tragically, the Palestinian leadership does not fare any better. [...] Surely [Mahmoud Abbas] has internal and external constraints, but that does not explain his failure to demonstrate leadership and rise above past prejudices and skepticism. No leader can claim to want peace but then allow certain preconditions – the settlement freeze – to stop him from entering into serious negotiations. [...] Finally, the US should take a much harder look at its initial failure to mediate peace. Whereas the Obama administration received high marks for starting the peace process in the first days of assuming power, it must now accept the deserved blame for failing to properly assess the political and physical realities on the ground. It is time for it to realize that neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians will forge peace without forceful American diplomacy.”

Alon Ben-Meir, JPO 17.12.10

Clinton a danger to Israel

“Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s address to the Saban Forum should leave little doubt that she is a danger to the State of Israel and, thereby, to the Jewish people. [...] Not once did she mention official PA support, directly and indirectly, for incitement and terrorism. [...] She ignored the recent statement of Fatah, the PA’s ruling party in the West Bank: ‘No to Israel as a Jewish state, no to interim borders, no to land swaps.’ [...]

Clinton waves at ‘fundamental compromises,’ but given her pro-Palestinian agenda, and her ‘two-state’ axiom, this means Israel’s capitulation and surrender. Although she refers to ‘security arrangements’ to prevent terrorism, she never spells out how that is possible; her vagueness is either lack of understanding, or ignorance.”

Moshe Dann, JED 18.12.10

Thank you, Tom Friedman

"As the United States currently has to deal with massive socioeconomic problems of its own, Friedman is of the opinion that America should not be wasting its time trying to force peace upon parties that obviously are not interested in achieving peace. [...]

To this suggestion, I fully agree. Do what you must to salvage the teetering American empire and allow us to deal with our own local problems.

For years, America and the rest of the world have been unsuccessfully trying to ram the two-state solution down our throats. However, rather than honestly admitting that this proposed solution is in fact full of holes like a slice of Swiss cheese, they repeatedly try to force a square peg into a round hole. [...] Enough already! Twenty years of these regurgitated 'peace talks' are a joke. [...] Leave us alone and let us take care of our own problems and, if necessary, suffer the consequences."

Yoel Meltzer, JED 13.12.10

2. Kontroverse zu araberfeindlichem Rabbiner-Brief

Nachdem der Oberrabbiner der Stadt Safed im November dazu aufgerufen hatte, keine Wohnungen an Araber zu vermieten, haben 39 vom Staat angestellte Rabbis nun eine Schrift veröffentlicht, in der sie darlegen, dass das jüdische Religionsgesetz („Halacha“) das Vermieten an Nicht-Juden verbietet. Die Schrift wurde von Politikern, darunter Premierminister Netanyahu, und einigen religiösen Führern scharf verurteilt.

Intellektuelle forderten den Generalstaatsanwalt dazu auf, eine Untersuchung gegen die Rabbis einzuleiten. Dass die Schrift wenigstens bei Einigen Anklang fand, bewies jedoch in dieser Woche eine Demonstration von etwa 150 Bewohnern der Stadt Bat Yam gegen den angeblichen Zuzug von Arabern protestierten.

The fire is still burning: Racism is spreading

"If we allow these declarations to pass with no comment, there goes Judaism. If the true voice of Judaism is one which provides a mandate for bigotry and a license for racism, then our crisis is of epic proportions. [...]

My heart goes out to every non-Jewish citizen of this country whenever they are the victims of inequity. But it is for Judaism that my heart bleeds; if it cannot show the kind of moral focus and conceptual suppleness needed to face up to the challenges of the day. Bigotry makes us stupid, and it puts the

success of our enterprise at risk. A Judaism which enjoins me to deny the civil rights and human dignity of any person does not deserve the monopoly on the brand name, nor is it worthy of state funding."

Michael Marmur, JPO 07.12.10

Say no to Jewish ghetto

"While instinctively rejecting the racist immorality of these few rabbis, the Israeli attitude toward non-Jews often reflects that of the shtetl. Despite our power we feel threatened and endangered by the Arab population in Israel and around us. That is not to say that many of these feelings are not without cause.

However, one of the greatest challenges facing modern Israel is not to allow the Middle East conflict to transform Israel into the largest ghetto in Jewish history. We cannot allow the fostering of a Judaism which aspires to further alienate us from our neighbors and which permits racist and separatist ideologies."

Donniel Hartman, JED 15.12.10

Jewish and pure

"Dismissing the authority of the state is a not new thing for these rabbis. After all, the definition of a democratic state is not something that preoccupies them; their role is to guard the walls which shield the Jewish state from democracy and liberal values. [...]

The attorney general made them laugh when, after a prolonged delay, he decided to look into the 'criminal aspects' of their letter. So expressing views and 'answering halakhic questions' is now off limits? [...] And who is this attorney general who dares dispute the word of the Lord and his laws? [...]

A state that in one of its more sane moments passed laws against racial incitement and now does not know what to do with them. Because it may be possible to put a rabbi who is a civil servant on trial, but it is not possible to put on trial a worldview and all its supporters."

Zvi Bar'el, HAA 12.12.10

Israel is not a halachic state

"The rabbis' initiative, it is claimed, was born of the need to prevent Arabs from taking over houses and lands out of nationalist motives and with funding from outside parties. There are indeed Arabs who say explicitly that what they lost through force must be regained through money and demography. And purchases really are being made for this purpose, mostly through Jewish front men.

But the competition between our two nations over this land will not be solved by discriminating against

Arab students who wish to rent an apartment in Safed. We can only prevail by remaining determined to win - while also taking care not to deviate from proper norms of interpersonal behavior.”

Israel Harel, HAA 17.12.10

Let the rabbis go

“It is not at all clear whether the attorney-general could obtain a conviction. To do so, state prosecutors would have to prove in a court of law that the rabbis’ statements had a reasonable chance of leading to violence and that they intended to bring about such violence. [...]

But at the same time, city rabbis, as well as neighborhood rabbis, should not receive a salary from the State of Israel for expressing their opinions on a wide range of issues. Nor should they be permitted to exploit the powers and prestige given to them by virtue of their status as public servants to leverage their influence over public opinion. [...] The state’s employment of hundreds of city and neighborhood rabbis who express racist, xenophobic opinions upsets the delicate balance that must be maintained between Israel’s Jewish and democratic dimensions. [...]

If rabbis wish to express their opinions, let them do so as individuals, not as representatives of the State of Israel.”

JPO 09.12.10 Editorial

Racism at the public’s expense

“The [...] rabbis [...] are above all public servants who took advantage of their position to incite, in blatant violation of the law. [...]

Religious Services Minister Yaakov Margi must now bring disciplinary measures against the instigating rabbis as the first step in their dismissal. Only firing them from public office will deter other rabbis from such callous racism. It’s highly doubtful that the minister, who belongs to the ultra-Orthodox Shas party, will do so; the attorney general must therefore instruct him to act in this spirit.”

HAA 09.12.10 Editorial

The Jewish anti-Semitism

“This statement is a spit in the face of the legal system, and mostly a spit in the face of Jewish history, where Jews in Europe were victimized by bans, boycotts, and racism of this type. Yet these victims had disappeared since then, and now they found a new victim – the victim’s victim. How cruel and how painful that is.

Today, they preach for the same kind of hatred against others – against Arabs. [...]

How can we complain about the rabbis, who saw fit to compete with the new racists at the Knesset who reached new heights this year with a barrage of zealous, racist laws while being part of the government? Speaking at the Knesset podium, Minister Eli Yishai went out of his way to defend the rabbis who signed the petition. [...]

They will be handed over to another regime. [...] The words of the rabbis are dangerous, yet the government’s policy is much more dangerous.”

Ahmad Tibi, JED 09.12.10

No more racist than you and me

“Virtually no one has pointed out that the choice isn’t a simply one between racism and human rights. It’s more complicated. [...] Our society, though largely Jewish now, could easily become something very different with time. If that is what these rabbis meant to say, they were right.

Apply the ethnicity-blind standards of American life here, and in a generation or two, Israel’s Jewish quality might be gone.

Obviously, wanton discrimination in housing ought to have no place here. But if we had rabbinic leadership that had been educated differently, that had read more widely, that knew how to think and write with nuance, these rabbis [...] might have served an important social cause by expressing an important warning in a more palatable, less hateful way.”

Daniel Gordis, JPO 17.12.10

Falsifying Jewish law

“It is [...] important to make it clear that we are dealing with a document replete with distortions and demagoguery that has nothing to do with Jewish law.

What we have is a political pamphlet whose creators showed false judgment. They enlisted for their cause [religious] sources via distorted interpretation, and precisely for that reason their declaration is highly damaging and highly flawed. [...] Jewish law recognizes the complexity of reality. Hence, rulings are supposed to be based on broad vision rather than a simplistic picture. [...] According to such simplistic interpretation, we should also be beating wives who misbehave, placing non-believing Jews in a pit, banning women from Torah studies, and possibly even adhering to the ‘eye for an eye’ rule. Yet the art of interpreting Jewish law is the combination of original sources and application under changing circumstances. Those who fail to understand it have no idea what Jewish law means.”

Michael Abraham, JED 13.12.10

3. Unilaterale Ausrufung eines palästinensischen Staates?

Angesichts des festgefrorenen Friedensprozesses zwischen Palästinensern und Israel mehren sich die Anzeichen, das die palästinensische Führung auf eine unilaterale Unabhängigkeitserklärung abzielt. Während Premierminister Salam Fayyad darauf hinwies, das Yassir Arafat Palästina bereits 1988 ausgerufen habe, bemüht er sich seit Monaten, die Institutionen für einen funktionierenden Staat aufzubauen. Dass er bei diesem Vorhaben von vielen Ländern unterstützt wird, bewiesen unlängst mehrere südamerikanische Staaten, die einen „palästinensischen Staat in den Grenzen von 1967“ auf Bitten von Präsident Mahmoud Abbas anerkannten. Auch eine Gruppe von 26 ehemaligen Staatsmännern aus Europa sprach sich für die unilaterale Staatsgründung aus. Die USA lehnen dies ab, betonten jedoch auch, dass Israel mit den Palästinensern auf die Gründung hinarbeiten müsse.

Don't cry for me Argentina

“The Palestinians will certainly have a majority in the UN General Assembly soon and will ask for recognition - taking a page from the Zionist movement, which achieved the same on November 29, 1947. Is this bad for the Jews? I don't think so, even though it would be vastly preferable for Israel to strive actively toward the implementation of the two-state solution, rather than being dragged into it kicking, screaming. [...]

The real reason for insisting on the two-state solution is that we want this state to have a Jewish character. And by Jewish we don't mean that it should be a theocracy, or that it should give Jews more rights than Arabs. We mean that the State of Israel must finally learn the lesson of the history of persecution Jews have endured for two millennia. [...] It is therefore a pity if Israel will have to be dragged into the two-state solution by international pressure, rather than on its own initiative.”

Carlo Strenger, HAA 10.12.10

Unilateral escapism

“A collective state of misjudgment has swept across Latin America. [...] Argentina [...] followed Brazil's lead, with President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner confirming in a phone call to Abbas Sunday that her country, too, would acquiesce to his request and recognize an independent Palestine within '1967 borders.' [...]

In acceding to the PA's request, those who prematurely recognize 'Palestine' encourage the Palestinian leadership to continue to eschew substantive efforts to resolve key areas of dispute with Israel. Thus they actually push off the date when a genuine Palestine, on the ground rather than in the realm of diplomatic exchanges of letters, can be established at peace with Israel, having compromised on its current leadership's maximalist demands.

Indeed, simply by recognizing a Palestinian state at this stage, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay are undermining the very process they claim to wish to advance – the promotion of Israeli-Palestinian peace via direct negotiation.”

JPO 08.12.10 Editorial

Forget the negotiation table

“Given the current impasse and the lack of sufficient historical evidence that ethno-political rivals can resolve core issues at the negotiating table, particularly when neither side faces military catastrophe, there is no reason to conclude that a negotiated Palestinian state is inevitable. Rather, the most likely way that a such a state will emerge will be through unilateral declaration of statehood, followed by international recognition. [...] The conflict will remain, but as long as the Palestinians respect the borders, it will eventually become abeyant.

At this point, Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence provides the only conceivable precedent. It is far from ideal, but if Clinton wants to see the birth of a Palestinian state on her watch, her best odds lie with rallying the international community behind recognizing unilateral independence.”

Steven Klein, HAA 17.12.10

The Palestine question

“The Palestinian end-run around Israel and the US to gain recognition as an independent, sovereign state was predictable. They realized that whatever Israel and the US put on the table was, for them, insufficient. That explains why they refused to renew negotiations more than a year ago, after Israel agreed to freeze Jewish building in Judea, Samaria and even Jerusalem. [...]

The Palestinians are not now and never have been interested in a 'peace process' that would deny them their basic goal – Israel's destruction.

Palestinian actions are not the result of a lack of US involvement, but because misguided, biased US

intervention raised false hopes and illusions that Israel could be subdued.

President Obama's policies brought the realization of this dream closer, gathering world opinion against Israel and delegitimizing the Jewish state. Anyone who is surprised by Palestinian steps towards statehood is in denial; those who support it have lost touch with reality, or worse, don't care. This fire has been burning and out of control for some time."

Moshe Dann, JED 10.12.10

Peace talks are dead. It's time for Plan B

„What the Obama administration must understand is that unilateralism should not be perceived solely as a route taken out of frustration from the failure of peace talks. It is a solution, a route that will be taken to set into play a new dynamic – and a new set of international laws that will begin to be applied to an independent Palestine. [...]

No, of course a state won't be ready. But that's not the issue. The issue is about shifting the problem from 'should there be a Palestinian state' to 'how do we get this state to work properly and give it full sovereignty over its territory.' [...] Going back to the negotiation table would be a big mistake."

Ami Kaufman, JPO 08.12.10

South American absurdity

"The main problem with the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state is that it fails to resolve all those critical issues that have caused the peace process to bomb until now.

Indeed, to a large extent, the Palestinians have already set up an independent state. Two, in fact: one in the West Bank – which is beginning to thrive now that the PA has reined in terror there – and the other in Gaza, from which Israelis unilaterally pulled out five years ago, only to be followed by Kassams and Grads. [...]

The pity is, there are a lot of people in Israel who, like me, would ultimately like to see an independent Palestinian state. And a successful one at that. For that does seem the only way to ensure at least a certain level of peace and security for all. But despite the support and goodwill of Brazil et al., I can't see Hamas permitting a Rio-style carnival on Gaza's beautiful coast any time soon."

Liat Collins, JPO 12.12.10

4. Untersuchungskommission zum Carmel-Waldbrand

Anfang Dezember verwüstete der größte Waldbrand in Israels Geschichte einen Teil der Wälder des Carmel Gebirges.. Wenige Tage später veröffentlichte der State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss einen Bericht, demzufolge sich die israelische Feuerwehr in einem katastrophalen Zustand befindet und in den letzten drei Jahren sogar verschlechtert hat. Nun wird diskutiert, ob der Brand und die Löscharbeiten von einer staatlichen Untersuchungskommission untersucht werden sollen. Während Innenminister Eli Yishai für eine Kommission plädierte, sprachen sich Netanyahu und ein Großteil der Regierungs-koalition jedoch dagegen aus.

Defense isn't everything

„We must candidly admit that in its 63rd year, the time has come to manage and most of all invest in the State of Israel domestically, and not only on the outside. For generations now, Israeli governments had been elected on the basis of the foreign and defense policies they present. [...]

And so, the prime minister – any prime minister since the state's inception – has been devoting some 90% of his or her time to foreign affairs and defense issues, and another 10% to political survival. [...] The time has come for an intellectual and policy change; alongside the preoccupation with foreign affairs and defense issues, we must urgently place civil affairs at the top of the public agenda, designate proper resources to them, and invest in them before we face the need for yet another commission of inquiry."

Silvan Shalom, JED 16.12.10

Bibi the fireman

"While Netanyahu thought that it was the Carmel that was on fire, and that the flames had to be put out, the public's perception was that nobody's in charge, and that an entire government had collapsed before its eyes. Bibi [...] forgot that he had been elected to run a country, not see to it that there was a modern fire truck in Isfiya. [...]

It is not groundless to assume that the failure on the Carmel is Netanyahu's Second Lebanon War. Ehud Olmert was also encouraged by popularity in the polls, which rose sky-high at the start of the campaign. Netanyahu will also enjoy public support, but not for long. [...]

When the state comptroller's report is published and

describes how the firefighting and rescue system was left in tatters, [...] that will be the moment when the citizens of Israel will realize that this government must go home.”

Eldad Yaniv, HAA 08.12.10

We need a commission of inquiry

“Actually, in the country's history, it's hard to find such a great disaster that was not investigated by a commission of inquiry, or at least a lower-level investigative committee. [...]

What we really need is a proper analysis of authority and to draft reforms for the fire services. A serious commission, headed by a retired senior judge, whose other members will be respected experts, will be able to write a report in a few months.”

Ze'ev Segal, HAA 13.12.10

Obsession with guilt

“We're a country that likes to see heads roll. We look for guilty parties with some kind of psychotic craving. [...]

Instead of learning a lesson in modesty and realizing that at times the forces of nature are greater than what we expected, we want to know here and now why Israel never bought four giant firefighting aircraft. [...]

A state cannot be 100% ready to face any disastrous scenario, and the force of the fire that spread through the Carmel was something that one could not prepare for. [...] This does not mean that our firefighting services were not neglected, humiliated, and mismanaged. It's important that we draw the conclusions and quickly implement the recommendations of the state comptroller's report. [...] But is the past really so acute right now? What's this obsession with commissions of inquiry?”

Hanoch Daum, JED 11.12.10

Empower the comptroller

“Mount Carmel was still smoldering when the hunt began kilometers south, in Jerusalem, for the ostensible really guilty parties. [...]

Interior Minister Eli Yishai, finding himself in the front line of criticism, was among the first to demand [an inquiry commission], insisting it would demonstrate he was anything but the most culpable player. Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu threw the weight of the rest of the coalition against the proposal. [...]

Israel has seen a glut of probes and commissions in the past few years. [...]

Such commissions sometimes take up to six years

to deliver their conclusions. The Carmel blaze, the worst in Israeli history, underlines that the improvement of our rescue services can tolerate no such delay.

What Israel's civilian rescue services need are urgent, practical reforms to ensure that if another major forest fire – or similar disaster – strikes in the coming months or years, we will be prepared. What is least needed is a politically motivated sideshow.”

JPO 16.12.10 Editorial

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

Veröffentlicht am: 21. Dezember 2010

Verantwortlich:

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

Redaktion:

*Maike Harel
Anita Haviv*

Homepage: www.fes.org.il

Email: fes@fes.org.il