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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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1. Ehud Barak verlässt Arbeitspartei

Der Vorsitzende der Arbeitspartei und Verteidigungsminister Ehud Barak verkündet am 17. Januar seinen Austritt aus der Arbeitspartei. Gemeinsam mit vier weiteren Labor-Abgeordneten gründete er eine neue Fraktion mit dem Namen "Atzmaut" ("Unabhängigkeit"), die weiterhin an der Regierung beteiligt sein wird. Die übrigen acht Abgeordneten der Arbeitspartei, darunter Sozialminister Isaac Herzog und Minderheitenminister Avishai Braverman, schlossen sich der Opposition an. Die Regierung verfügt damit jetzt über eine Mehrheit von 66 Abgeordneten.

Barak hatte angegeben, die Arbeitspartei sei zu weit nach links gerückt. Tatsächlich war in der Partei schon seit Monaten diskutiert worden, die Regierung aufgrund des stagnierenden Friedensprozesses mit den Palästinensern zu verlassen. Barak hatte dies jedoch abgelehnt.

Labor in pieces

Ehud Barak's announcement [...] strengthened Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's hand – by eliminating fears that all of Labor's 13 MKs would leave the coalition in protest against the lack of headway being made in talks with the Palestinians – though the coalition, reduced to 66 members, is now unprecedentedly vulnerable to potential extortion by one or other of its constituent parties. [...] Barak and the quartet who followed him may ultimately join the Likud. They may honor Barak's pledge to form yet another centrist party. They may simply disappear in the next elections. [...]

Barak's defection is a hammer blow, but it is also emblematic of a deeper ideological crisis on the Left."

JPO 17.01.10 Editorial

A separation and an opportunity

"The split in Labor, including the departure of eight Labor MKs from the coalition, holds a big opportunity for the left wing, which until yesterday was hardly represented in the Knesset. A bloc will now form around three banners - social justice, advancing peace and saving democracy. Such a bloc will provide an alternative to the ideology of hatred. Its very existence will force opposition party Kadima, too, to take a firmer position against Netanyahu and his government, and present an alternative to Netanyahu and Barak's policy of entrenchment and stagnation."

HAA 18.01.11 Editorial

Barak saved Netanyahu

"Ehud Barak's departure from Labor signifies more than revulsion with fellow faction members, but rather, was meant to assist Benjamin Netanyahu vis-à-vis Lieberman and his rightist colleagues, who are steering the government too far to the Right. [...] The Barak faction will be a sort of 'leftist faction' of Likud. [...]

Barak may even end up bringing Aryeh Deri, who wishes to return to politics, into his faction, without Deri's radical associates and without Shas. Possibly some Kadima members too, who are more Likudnik than Barak and Bibi, will join forces with the faction, which together with Netanyahu will rule Israel."

Yoram Kaniuk, JED 17.01.11

New era for Israel's Left

"Everyone recites the agreed-upon PR message, 'we boosted the coalition.' What nonsense! [...] After all, Netanyahu's stability hinges on Lieberman and on nobody else. [...] This threat had been reinforced by the latest move. Now, the prime minister's sensitive organs are being held much more tightly in

Mr. Lieberman's clenched fist. [...] The time has come to establish a real alternative featuring an incisive, precise, and bold Left."
Avraham Burg, JED 18.01.11

Ehud Barak ran away

"Barak [...] chose a thuggish political ploy over the good of the state and the public. [...]
Barak, who used to be the great hope of Israel's politics, bid the Labor Party farewell Monday, but he also did the same to the voters. The thing is that the State of Israel can no longer afford such flops. Amid the leadership vacuum taking over here, it's too much of a luxury to easily lose anyone who has the potential to change something around here. [...] It's of course possible that now that they are no longer terrified by Herzog and Braverman, Bibi and Barak will be able to bring peace to the country and the world. Assuming the chances of this are similar to the likelihood that Barak's new faction will actually run in the next elections [...] what we got Monday morning was mostly the dawn of a sad, ridiculous day."
Emmanuel Rosen, JED 18.01.11

Barak the gravedigger

"At best, Netanyahu has bought time. He gains a stable government until the elections, a center-right government. Barak gains a job. The bottom line is that both have gained a little longer in office. [...]
In this story, everyone has got what he deserves. The Labor Party and the Herzog camp who held onto office and didn't have the wit to leave the government have run the party into the buffers, leaving it incapable of influencing the peace process. Barak has the Labor Party's demise to his name. And Bibi? He got Barak."
Lilach Weissman, GLO 17.01.11

Rebuilding the Labor Party

"What should have happened many months ago, the decision by Labor Ministers Isaac Herzog and Avishay Braverman to resign from the right-wing government of Binyamin Netanyahu, has finally happened. [...]
Braverman and Herzog have been doing the rounds of the Labor Party branches over the past year, preparing themselves for the election of a new party leader when that time arrives. [...]
There are other skilled potential Labor Party leaders among those who remained true to their beliefs and refused to be part of the Netanyahu government. Not least are Shelly Yacimovich [...] and Ophir Paz-

Pines [...]. The four of them could, if they were to reach a miraculous agreement, collectively create a new leadership which could potentially kick start a comeback from the almost total oblivion in which the party has been existing for the past few years.
What the party does not need is another ex-army commander to be imposed upon it as its latest savior. Labor has a rich recent history of false messiahs, from Amram Mitzna to Ami Ayalon and, for all too long, Ehud Barak."
David Newman, JPO 17.01.11

Dayan II

"The defense minister is no fool. Certainly he believes that what will justify his commando raid on the rear of Labor will be a major historic gain: war or peace. [...] He hopes that if he makes peace, like Dayan, history will forgive him. [...]
The Netanyahu-Barak government's loss of legitimacy does not allow it to strike Iran. We must not go to war. On the other hand, if the Bibi-Barak alliance becomes one of peace, the picture may change. If the prime minister and defense minister surprise us during the diplomatic lull, maybe they can cause a new bang. The Barak of war cannot last. The Barak of peace may have one last chance."
Ari Shavit, HAA 18.01.11

The saboteur

"A saboteur sits in Israel's Defense Ministry. [...] Like a computer virus, he has for 15 years penetrated Israel's left wing, and started to destroy it from the inside. [...] He officially turned Israel into the only state in the West, not counting the United States, that lacks a Labor party, a Socio-Democrat party or a left wing. [...] The man who sits in the Defense Ministry is also corrupt and a corrupting influence, and yesterday he brought Israeli politics to a new low. [...]
[But] the moves yesterday produced one big collective yawn → politics cause nothing but fatigue and depression."
Gideon Levy, HAA 18.01.11

2. Knesset-Ausschuss zur Untersuchung von NGOs

Am 5. Januar stimmte eine Mehrheit der Knesset-Abgeordneten für die Einrichtung eines Untersuchungsausschusses, der NGOs befragen soll, die die israelische Armee "delegitimieren" würden. Insbesondere geht es dabei um deren

finanzielle Unterstützung durch ausländische Geldgeber. Besonders gemeint sind israelische Menschenrechtsorganisationen wie Betselem, Breaking the Silence u.ä., die das Vorgehen der Armee in den palästinensischen Gebieten untersuchen und kritisieren. Die Initiative ging von Abgeordneten des Likud und von Yisrael Beitenu aus. Inzwischen formt sich jedoch Opposition gegen den Ausschuss, über dessen genaues Mandat noch abgestimmt werden muss. So gingen in Tel Aviv tausende Demonstranten auf die Straße. Sechzig prominente Juristen sprachen sich in einer Petition gegen den Ausschuss aus. Auch hochrangige Politiker wie Präsident Shimon Peres erklärten, eine Untersuchung von Menschenrechtsorganisationen könne Israels Demokratie verletzen und sei nicht Aufgabe von Parlamentariern.

Israel's delegitimization from within

"The delegitimization of Israel reached a new peak last week with continued attacks on its democracy. [...] This time the worsening of its reputation as a state which values democracy and freedom of speech was caused directly by members of the Knesset. [...]

Their most recent decision to set up a committee to investigate NGOs which have different political opinions than their own which promote human rights, Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and freedom of speech, has become the single most serious threat facing the country as a true member of the family of democratic nations. [...]

McCarthyism is taking hold in public discourse, and it is not being combatted – not on the street and not in the Knesset."

David Newman, JPO 10.01.11

The right to resist

"The campaign of intimidation being waged by the right against left-wing organizations [...] has one clear objective: to identify opposition to the government and its policies with rejecting the legitimacy of the state. [...]

It is a national duty to recite and teach that not every Knesset decision is legitimate. In a democracy, restrictions must be imposed on legislation, because the purpose of a liberal democratic regime is to protect human and civil rights and ensure equality. When the legislature ignores these basic duties, it undermines the very reason for democracy's existence. [...]

Those who collaborate with this creeping Lieberman-ism, whether actively or passively, will bear responsibility for the real delegitimization of

Israel worldwide. [...] In these difficult times, it is only the human rights organizations that are saving Israel's honor."

Zeev Sternhell, HAA 14.01.11

On voluntary and involuntary silence

"The Knesset must come to its senses and end its efforts to silence criticism. At the same time, the human rights groups should do some moral stock-taking. Their critical agenda focuses on a single, albeit very important, aspect of Israeli life. If they seek to protect all people, how can they choose to remain silent when the rights that are being violated are those of Jews? [...]

Why haven't the human rights organizations challenged the state's ongoing mistreatment of the Gaza Strip evacuees? [...] The scope of the human rights groups should be expanded, and they should be given their rightful place in Israeli society. The Knesset must prevent their silencing; the organizations must avoid silence."

Avi Sagi/Yedidia Stern, HAA 16.01.11

Ideology bought with Euros

"They call themselves the guardians of human rights as a way to ease their conscience. But some extreme left-wing organizations are financially supported by foreign governments that are clearly anti-Israel. Fifth column [...] is the appropriate name for those who work nonstop to weaken the very state they live and work in. [...]

They delegitimize the state, attempt to limit our options and deter us from defending ourselves. [...] It is inconceivable that any sovereign, enlightened state would allow foreign elements to influence the internal workings of its society. It is further unimaginable that rational and fair leaders would not work diligently to uproot such behavior. We should not be embarrassed, but rather proud to state that it is our responsibility as leaders to do the right thing for our country."

Danny Danon, JPO 10.01.11

Spare us your criticism

"With no connection to current events, fatalities and threats, far Left groups mark the IDF as the ultimate guilty party. [...] In a democratic state criticism is an important thing, yet the radical Left's automatic condemnation of everything the IDF represents or claims is demagoguery and a cheap substitute for honest criticism.

[...] The IDF must fight because 'good neighbors' filled with good will are still nurturing their dream to harm Israel. [...]

There is no perfect army, and Israeli soldiers are no angels. Mistakes have happened and will happen – this is the nature of war. [...] And when leftist groups make their charges, we must remember that what we have here is not a trigger-happy army, but rather, people who too happily fire off their words."

Yoaz Hendel, JED 11.01.11

Then they went for the NGOs

"The IDF's own military advocate general, Avichai Mendelblit, praised B'Tselem, one of the NGOs now slated for investigation, for its contribution to uncovering military misdeeds. [...]

The NGOs that Yisrael Beitenu wants to undermine through the new parliamentary committee are the very organizations that are fighting to make sure that the IDF lives up to its own standards. [...] In any democracy, the greatest patriots are the few who dare speak truth to power. [...]

While Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman works to silence dissent, rights organizations fight to create a serious and open discourse about the future of this country."

Don Futterman, HAA 07.01.11

Lieberman is wrong, Lieberman is right

"It is difficult to understand the strong opposition of leftist organizations and their supporters in the media and Likud to a parliamentary committee of inquiry. Strategic thinking, rather than the conditioned reflex with which they responded, would have taught them that such a committee would raise their status at home and abroad, and would only increase donations from governments and organizations abroad. [...]

What Israel needs [...] is a 'transparency law,' which requires any body assisted by contributions from foreign organizations and governments to annually declare the source of those contributions, their purpose and beneficiaries. [...] Those who work within the law have nothing to worry about the inquiry."

Israel Harel, HAA 13.01.11

Our comically insecure – even hysterical – establishment

"It is yet another demonstration of the fear that grips our elites. [...]

The most frequently cited concern is the prosecution of IDF officers abroad, and the most popular targets are human rights organizations which, their detractors claim, distribute damaging and misleading information to foreign countries. [...]

So why are our elites so afraid? Although they will

true concern is about internal strength rather than its standing abroad. Israeli society has been demobilizing for decades now. Its formerly Spartan ethos has been almost completely reversed, creating soaring socioeconomic gaps. Cohesion now has to be maintained by constantly fomenting nationalist paranoia."

Roi Maor, JPO 09.01.11

3. Ende der libanesischen Regierung

Die libanesische Regierung ist am 12. Januar auseinandergebrochen, nachdem alle elf Hisbollah-Minister zurückgetreten waren. Auslöser sind die Aktivitäten des UN-Tribunals, das die Ermordung des ehemaligen Premierministers Rafik Hariri, Vater des amtierenden Premierministers Saad Hariri, untersucht. Hisbollah-Generalsekretär Hassan Nasrallah hatte Hariri den Rücktritt der Minister angedroht, sollte dieser sich nicht schon vor Veröffentlichung der Untersuchungsergebnisse von dem Tribunal distanzieren und die libanesischen Finanzierung streichen.

Am 17. Januar reichte der zuständige Staatsanwalt nun seine Anklageschrift ein, deren Inhalt nicht bekannt wurde. Es wird jedoch vermutet, dass hochrangige Hisbollah-Mitglieder der Mittäterschaft angeklagt werden. Details werden frühestens in sechs Wochen veröffentlicht, wenn ein Richter entscheiden muss, ob die vorgelegten Beweise für eine Fortsetzung des Verfahrens ausreichen.

Can Lebanon find the courage to be free?

"Hizbullah has toppled Lebanon's government, headed by Hariri's son Saad, in an attempt to bully it into denouncing the tribunal before it announces its verdict. [...]

A UN tribunal indictment for the murder of a popular Sunni politician would make it much harder for Hizbullah to straddle the Sunni-Shi'ite divide. [...] Getting the Lebanese government to discredit the tribunal would mitigate much of the political damage that would be caused to Hizbullah by the the public punishment of its operatives.

Under this state of affairs, it is absolutely essential that America, France [...] and other Western countries and moderate Arab nations [...] continue to provide Lebanon's prime minister with full support. [...]

Caving in to Hizbullah might enable transient short-term stability, but a state of lawlessness will ultimately only lead to more violence."

JPO 01.13.11 Editorial

Israel keeps eye on Beirut, but no risk of imminent conflict

"No escalation is expected in Lebanon in the coming days. Nasrallah engineered the crisis and his men appear to be responsible for the murder of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri six years ago. He seems to think that the mere memory of the last conflict instigated by his movement - in which Hezbollah forces surrounded government ministries in Beirut two years ago - would be enough to make the Lebanese surrender to his demands. [...]

Nasrallah is in no hurry to spark a civil war. Nasrallah too knows that [...] the achievements of the Lebanese economy may be lost if he takes the risk and drags his country once more into a war. [...] But Israel remains keenly aware of Hezbollah's growing strength and its preparations for a potential military conflict with Israel."

Avi Issacharoff/ Amos Harel, HAA 14.01.11

Stay out of Lebanon

"Nasrallah might well literally deflect the fire from himself toward Israel. Yet this is precisely the time when the wise should fall silent, follow events from the outside and maintain readiness, but keep the weapons' safety catches locked.

That is the challenge for Israel's government [...] to exercise restraint and not to be dragged into another entanglement in Lebanon."

HAA 14.01.11 Editorial

Hezbollah's strategic skills

"The latest political crisis in Lebanon does not threaten to spill over into Israel for the time being. Chances are that this crisis will also prevent violence within Lebanon, and this is the reason why Hezbollah quit the government. The group wants Lebanese public opinion to be preoccupied with the task of forming a new government, thereby diverting its attention from the conclusions of the special UN tribunal [...]. It's hard not to be impressed by Hezbollah's strategic skill. [...]

Once Hezbollah made its announcement, the Hariri government turned into a transition government, so even if it wishes to take steps against the culprits involved in the Hariri killing, Hezbollah would be able to argue that as a transition government it cannot do so."

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 13.01.11

Revolutions, walkouts and fatwas

"In Lebanon, Hizbullah ministers walked out of the government, bringing it down. Why? They didn't have to do it since they have veto power and would have prevented the government from endorsing the

international tribunal investigation [...] Hizbullah doesn't just want the government just to be silent on the tribunal, but to condemn the investigation explicitly. It wants to renegotiate the coalition agreement to give itself more power. [...]

Finally, it is a message to America and the world: We – Iran, Syria and Hizbullah – are in control of Lebanon now, not you. There is no question that this assertion is true, yet US and Western policy is simply not adjusting to meet this situation."

Barry Rubin, JPO 16.01.11

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 den **Tod der Palästinenserin Jawaher Abu Rahma**, die bei einer Demonstration in Bilin Tränengas einatmete:*

Officers and gentlemen

"The death last weekend of Jawaher Abu Rahmah is a puzzling tragedy. The IDF, however, has turned it into an example of how the occupation brings out this country's ugly side. [...]

In its response, the IDF could have raised reasonable, legitimate doubts about whether tear gas inhalation was solely responsible for her death. [...] But instead of presenting reasonable doubts, IDF 'senior officers' are suggesting that this woman wasn't even at the demonstration. They're suggesting she was never taken to the hospital at all, that she might have died at home, and of leukemia. They're suggesting that a Ramallah hospital and Red Crescent ambulance wrote up a bunch of false documents [...] and that her family [...] are just plain lying. [...]

Enough of this garbage. The IDF is feeding the worst kind of Israeli callousness and smugness – the kind that comes from accepting anything that's said against any Arab as God's truth, while dismissing anything that's said in any Arab's defense as the Big Lie."

Larry Derfner, JPO 05.01.11

How did Abu-Rahma die?

"Ever since the Palestinian Authority decided to designate Abu-Rahma as a martyr, Israeli leftist groups adopted the Palestinian version as if it was the absolute truth. The skepticism and criticism, which are holy in the eyes of the average democrat, were only directed at IDF soldiers and the army's version.

However, the findings received in the days since Abu-Rahma's death require us to ask questions and raise doubts. [...] The Palestinians have already exploited human tragedies in the past in order to fabricate harm to residents supposedly done by Israel."

Yoaz Hendel, JED 04.01.11

*Über ein YouTube-Video, in dem zum **Mord am stellvertretenden Generalstaatsanwalt Shai Nitzan** aufgerufen wurde:*

It will end in murder

"It represented a new nadir in an ongoing trend of vicious incitement against civil servants who do their jobs professionally and properly. And indeed, calling for the murder of a lawman who decided to try to stop the incitement against Israel's Arab citizens violently crosses the line that separates freedom of expression from freedom of incitement. [...]

But it's hard to find the difference between these inflammatory statements and those of Yisrael Beiteinu chairman Avigdor Lieberman, who accused organizations that defend human and civil rights of abetting terror and undermining the Israel Defense Forces. [...] At the very least, the prime minister, like the justice minister and the attorney general, must denounce his inflammatory statements loudly and clearly."

HAA 12.01.11 Editorial

*Über Spekulationen neuer Aktivitäten im Verhältnis Israels zu **Syrien**:*

Focusing on Syria

"When Bibi says 'I'll surprise you yet,' some people hope he intends to focus on the option of a diplomatic agreement with Syria. The price is known and it requires Israel to make a major sacrifice. But what we receive in return would be of dramatic value to Israel's welfare and security. Syria is the only country in the neighborhood that is a secular Arab state. It has the ability to soften the hostility of Hezbollah and Hamas; it has an interest in receiving American support and joining the 'good Arabs' in the

region. Such a treaty would spur the Palestinians to be more flexible."

Yoel Marcus, HAA 14.01.11

Where's that reset button?

"With the peace process returning to a deep freeze, the Obama administration is eyeing an opportunity to make headway with Syria. [...]

The reality is that Syria will simply use the opportunity to play all sides against each other and pocket concessions, while preserving the very status quo that Washington seeks to alter. [...]

The pattern is already familiar. Damascus makes tactical choices for diplomatic engagement without making the strategic decision to change its worldview in a manner consistent with a state seeking either peace or a regional realignment. By engaging with Syria now, the US not only ensures that Damascus will not be held to account, but it rewards its rogue behavior and emboldens America's enemies."

M. Brodsky, JPO 01.05.11

HAA = Haaretz

JED = Jedioth Ahronoth

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