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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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1. Der "Hüttenkäse-Boycott"

In den letzten Jahren sind Nahrungsmittelpreise in Israel stark angestiegen. Dies betrifft unter anderem den beliebten Hüttenkäse, eine typische Frühstücksidee, dessen Preis laut dem Geschäftsführer des Milchproduktherstellers Tnuva seit 2007 um 40% gestiegen ist.

Nun wehrt sich die israelische Öffentlichkeit. Auf einer eigens eingerichteten Facebook-Seite ruft der Israeli Itzik Alrov seit Mitte Juni zum Boycott von Hüttenkäse und anderen Produkten auf – mit Erfolg. Der Seite haben sich mehr als 100,000 Bürger angeschlossen und Verkaufszahlen des Frischkäses sind um 35% zurückgegangen – obwohl mehrere Supermarktketten bereits mit Preissenkungen reagiert haben.

Auch die Politik zeigt sich aktiv. Während Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu sich dafür aussprach, Milchprodukte aus dem Ausland einzuführen, empfohlen Beamte des Landwirtschaftsministeriums Preise wieder zu regulieren. In der Knesset setzte sich der Wirtschaftsausschuss mit Lebensmittelpreisen auseinander und empfahl die Gründung einer Untersuchungskommission.

In den Medien werden die hohen Preise von Milchprodukten insbesondere mit der kartellartigen Struktur der Milchindustrie – Tnuva hält 70% des Marktes, der Rest ist in der Hand der Unternehmen Strauss und Tara – in Verbindung gebracht.

The cottage cheese uprising

"As individuals, Israeli consumers love to grumble, but as a collective we are rarely proactive. This, habitual gripes notwithstanding, attests to a passive mindset and manifestly undercuts our bargaining power. Consequently consumers are taken for granted and exploited by greedy manufacturers and retailers.

But change may be around the corner, heralded by that humble Israeli breakfast component – cottage

cheese – and galvanized, in our dairy version of the Arab Spring, by social media. [...]

Groceries were 5 percent more expensive this past [May] than a year ago. Wages had not increased commensurately. This means that our buying power is gradually eroded.

[...] It isn't for nothing that our economy relies on individual's bank overdrafts.

We can only hope that the cottage cheese insurrection will be revolutionary indeed, and will mark the end of our resigned submission to whatever is exorbitantly inflicted upon us by the arbitrary whims of boardroom opportunists."

JPO 15.06.11 Editorial

Follow Haredi example

"People increasingly understand that the price hikes we've experienced recently show arrogance and detachment from the people. [...]

The public understands that time is critical. [...] They will be offered very cheap cottage cheese as part of a special sale, just so this struggle fails. Yet the people already recognize gimmicks. This time, we really want a change, and this change is possible and easier to achieve than ever.

Don't buy cottage cheese, because we want a real change and not discounts. The cottage boycott is merely the opening shot. Once we experience the sweet taste of victory in this oh-so-just struggle, we will understand that we too advanced to the 2011 era, and that we too know how to prompt change. We would then be able to bring food prices down considerably and know that we restored our lost dignity as consumers."

Itzik Elrov, JED 21.06.11

The steak tax and the fish levy

"The dairy industry [...] is but one example of many in the economy's distorted structure. [...]

In banking there are only two or three major competitors, and so service charges are sky-high. In the

capital market we pay the highest management costs in the world for trust funds that deal in stocks. The same is true of cell phones, fuel, and marketing chains. The cement monopoly bars competitive imports, and flight services are very expensive because of the monopoly of the Airports Authority. [...] There are high duties on numerous food products. [...] Is it any wonder prices are so high if competitive imports are blocked? Let's not forget to add the cost of kashrut, which makes everything more expensive, high taxes, the murderous property tax for businesses, and the general uncertainty, which also contributes to high prices.

Not only cottage cheese is to blame. Everyone is making a laughing stock of the Israeli consumer."
Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA 24.06.11

We're over paying for more than cottage cheese

"The situation is not black and white: many countries pay more than we do for fuel, for higher education, as well as other items. From research studies, electric rates in Israel emerge time and again as the lowest in the world.

However, if you take into account the average salary of an Israeli compared with those who live across the ocean, the picture is bleak. Data [...] shows that the average salary in [...] Germany [is] about NIS 12,000. Here, the average salary is only NIS 9,000. The difficulty in making ends meet is felt heavily in all aspects of the family budget."
Efrat Aharoni, GLO 20.06.11

For real competition

"Deregulation was supposed to spur competition, which was supposed to lower prices. Instead, the precise opposite has occurred. [...] No improved competition took place. This points to the probability of price-fixing and similar cartel-type machinations. [...]

It's time bureaucratic snarls were undone to facilitate deterrent antitrust enforcement. As things operate here – and as they have for decades – we enact laws that prohibit price-fixing but these are rarely implemented vis-à-vis the most egregious conglomerates, whose movers and shakers often closely collude with political power-players.

Turning the spotlight on actual cartels or quasi-cartels is a strategy that demands extraordinary political courage given our specific circumstances. But this is what must be done. It's not prices that need to be regulated but anti-competitive conduct."
JPO 23.06.11 Editorial

Bibi's cheesy past

"Bibi behaved in similar circumstances when he was Finance Minister. It was in 2003 when the budgets' department presented him with an overall program for dealing with the milk cartel. The plan called for gradual reduction [...] of the high tariffs imposed on imported dairy products, in order to allow the import of cheeses, yogurt, butter, powder milk, and thus create competition for Tnuva, Strauss and Tara. The program also concluded that there must be an end to quotas [...] and to the organization of dairy farms into cartels. [...] The agricultural lobby [...] was shocked: How can they undermine the most profitable branch of agriculture? Immediately MKs from all parties rallied against the reform. [...]

Netanyahu could not stand his ground, and in December 2003 he shelved the reform plan.

Today there is no chance that Netanyahu would even dream of raising it for discussion."

Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA 21.06.11

Israelis, welcome to the 3rd world

"So you thought we're a high-tech state? You were wrong: What we care about here in 2011 is food, freedom and housing. Welcome to the Third World. [...]

We are looking with a sense of satisfaction at the masses pouring into city squares in Arab states, while failing to understand that their protest is the same as ours. So our ruler has another name, and he is not necessarily one man with a moustache and palace, yet we are no less subjugated and oppressed than the people hungry for food and democracy beyond our borders.

If we only remove the rosy glasses [...] we would see that the fury over cottage cheese prices is just, genuine and burning – but is being directed at the wrong target.

We don't need violence; all we need is to understand that someone gains from the current situation, and it's not us."

Ivy Lerer, JED 17.06.11

Let them eat cheese

"Why cottage cheese? [...] Perhaps the answer to this question lies in the simple fact - like the cheese itself, the cause is bland. No one need fear a backlash from either Left or Right, there are no religious consequences, [...] there are very few political consequences - everyone can support this cause, even politicians. They can even find a target at which to point the finger of blame - Israel's dairy industry. [...]

Consumer boycotts are essential and should garner public support but a truly democratic society cannot survive on cottage cheese alone. At some point the controversial issues need to be addressed [...]. Israelis must make a concerted effort to once again become the public willing to face down contention and remember that protesting is not only our right, sometimes it is our sacred duty."
Noa Rubinstein, JED 16.06.11

The Cottage Cheese Spring

"Unlike all of our neighbors our state is normal. And normal people have time and energy to devote to normal, everyday factors in life such as the inordinately high price of cottage cheese.

Faced continuously with existential threats and unbridled violence and hatred, the people living in Israel have striven to create a normal life and atmosphere for themselves in freedom and prosperity. [...]

We all know that we here in Israel face grave threats and difficult decisions. Yet our strength and greatness lies in continuing to live normal lives – worrying about cottage cheese, if you will. [...] The average citizen does not feel that there is much he or she can do about Iran and its nuclear program. His or her voice is rarely if ever heard in the halls of the decision makers on other vital matters. But he or she can influence the price of cottage cheese."

Berel Wein, AS 20.06.11

Caricature of a revolution

"The cottage cheese revolution' even lacks the potency of the revolutions in the Arab world. This is a caricature of active politics. [...]

Even though the 'protest' of the Facebook responders is perhaps sincere, it does not commit them to any action.

Precisely a trivial issue, like a battle over the price of cheese, exemplifies the unripeness of virtual politics. It is doubtful that any of the hundreds of thousands of Israeli Facebook users [...] care enough to create a more general protest concerning the economic and social processes that have led to the increased prices.

To create such a protest, there is a need to agree on an agenda, obtain reliable and complex information, gather under a single umbrella and, above all, propose a new order. In looking for such a new order in the Facebook revolution, our gaze gets lost among the billions of statuses, family photos and 'likes.'"

Ushi Shoham-Krausz, HAA 20.06.11

2. Wahlen in der Türkei und das Verhältnis zu Israel

Am 12. Juni wurde der türkische Premierminister Recep Tayyip Erdogan wiedergewählt. Der israelische Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu reagierte darauf mit einem Gratulationsbrief, in dem er seinen Wunsch für eine Erneuerung der Freundschaft zwischen beiden Ländern betonte – die erste Kommunikation zwischen den Regierungschefs seit sechs Monaten.

Die Beziehungen zwischen Israel und der Türkei liegen seit Mai letzten Jahres auf Eis, seitdem die israelische Armee bei der Erstürmung der Mavi Marmara, die mit anderen Schiffen die Seeblockade um den Gazastreifen brechen sollte, neun türkische Staatsbürger tötete.

Nun mehren sich jedoch die Zeichen einer Annäherung. Diplomaten halten seit einiger Zeit Geheimgespräche. Zu einem Gelingen der Gespräche trägt bei, dass die Situation in Syrien sowohl die Türkei als auch Israel besorgt. Außerdem hat die türkische Regierung Aktivisten der Organisation IHH, die im letzten Jahr die Mavi Mamara gechartert hatte, dazu angehalten, nicht an einer weiteren – für Juli geplanten – "Gazaflotille" teilzunehmen.

Nun verhandeln Diplomaten beider Länder über die Version eines UN-Berichts zur "Gazaflotille", der in Kürze veröffentlicht werden soll. Sollten beide Seiten sich auf eine Version einigen können, könnte dies das Ende der Krise einleiten.

Stealth Islamism in Turkey

"Turkey is set on a path that is ending the republic established by Kemal Ataturk in the 1920s. [...] The Turkey that belongs to an alliance of radical Islamists abroad and at home has been launched. [...]

Most of the people who back the party don't want an Islamist regime, and don't think of the AKP in those terms. It rather seems to them to be a strong nationalist party respecting religious tradition that is making Turkey an important international power and is doing a good job on the economy. [...]

The AKP has become famous for the subtlety of its Islamism, disguising itself as a 'center-right' reform party. [...] Yet as the Islamist party gains more and more power and support – Turkey has demonstrated this – it becomes more ambitious, daring and extreme. [...]

From an Israeli perspective, Turkey's government is now on the side of our enemies."

Barry Rubin, JPO 13.06.11

Islamists, Erdogan and Ataturk

"So, what sort of damage can AK Party do between now and the next election? Depending on whom you ask, quite a bit. Middle East historian and political commentator Daniel Pipes predicted [...] that the elections 'are likely to be the last fair and free ones in Turkey.' [...]

The history of the modern Republic of Turkey is fraught with internal conflict. The Turkish government has been overthrown by its own military no fewer than three times in its history.

[...] Basically, whenever pro-Islamist elements in the civilian government were deemed too powerful, the military, those defenders of the Kemalist political legacy, would step in. [...]

It's all rather counterintuitive: A democracy established by a despot (albeit an enlightened one), a republic built from the top down rather than the ground up, a military overthrowing a government to prevent the rise of a dictatorship, all of these things seem completely backwards to our western sensibilities. But in a country created from what was previously the heart of an Islamic empire, it may be the only way that democracy could ever have taken root.

The important thing is that, at least up until now, it worked."

Daniel Perez, AS 15.06.11

Turkey on the edge of autocracy

"The only good thing to be said of the pro-Islamist Justice and Development Party's victory in Turkey's parliamentary elections Sunday is that it was not complete. The AKP [...] did not manage to clinch two-thirds of the seats in the parliament, which would have empowered it to revamp Turkey's constitution singlehandedly in a decidedly pro-Islamist manner and create a presidential style of government that would enable to Erdogan to remain in power beyond his three terms as prime minister. [...] Likely, however, the AKP will forgo compromise and opt to close deals with a few willing parliamentarians from other parties to obtain the five additional votes needed for submitting an AKP-authored constitution to a referendum. [...]

Unsurprisingly, Turkey's increasingly anti-democratic, pro-Islamist policies, both domestically and internationally, have included expressions of anti-Semitism and baseless attacks on Israel. [...]

Erdogan's anti-Israel rhetoric cannot be seen in isolation from his oppressive policies at home and his pursuit of Islamist allies abroad. It is almost axiomatic that Turkey's relations with the Middle East's only

democracy suffer as Erdogan moves his country away from democracy toward an Islamic-inspired autocracy."

JPO 13.06.11 Editorial

The region's strongest leader

"Erdogan is still the happiest leader in the Muslim world. After this week's elections, he is the sole leader in the area who knows, with near certainty, that he will be in power for another four years. [...]

In the short term, the thousands of refugees who fled Syria in the past week created a logistic and humanitarian headache for Ankara [...]. However, they are providing Erdogan with an opportunity to determine the fate of Syria. [...] The refugee camps on Turkish soil will serve as a breeding ground for the new Syrian opposition; only factions friendly to Ankara will be permitted to grow. If that happens as expected, the new Syria will be a vassal state of Turkey. [...]

If the Turkish prime minister really is our sworn enemy, Israel can expect a problematic period in terms of politics and security. But there is also a positive opportunity. [...]

Israel can take out one insurance policy to protect itself from the effects of the Arab revolution - a sharp and swift improvement in relations with Ankara."

Anshel Pfeffer, HAA 16.06.11

If Erdogan wants to be a leader

"Erdogan's new term in office will begin with his Middle East policy in disarray, with the brewing crisis across the border in Syria, the threat of instability spreading to Lebanon, and sinking credibility among the Palestinians, whom he used often as a rhetorical tool during the election campaign but whose long-term prosperity he had done almost nothing tangible to advance during his eight years in office. [...]

Erdogan's grandstanding in support of Hamas has isolated Turkey from Ramallah's halls of power. [...] And although Israel certainly deserves its share of the blame for the rapid deterioration in relations between Jerusalem and Ankara, there is no question that, without Israel, Turkey will not be able to make any real progress on the Palestinian front, let alone on larger regional questions."

Louis Fishman, HAA 17.06.11

Back to Ankara, and fast

"In the past year, and with greater intensity in recent weeks, people of goodwill from Israel and Turkey have been trying to rehabilitate relations between the two countries. The events in Syria have helped

them out, significantly cooling relations between Turkey and Syria and sparking a reappraisal [...] of Turkey's policy in the region. Turkey took another significant step when it 'recommended' to the IHH [...] that it cancel its participation in the new aid flotilla to Gaza [...]

Turkey is quickly discovering that its desire to implement a policy of 'zero problems' with its neighbors has failed. [...]

This is exactly the right time to initiate a move [...] vis-a-vis Turkey, and to pick up the shards. It would not be disastrous for Israel to apologize for killing Turkish citizens."

Zvi Bar'el, HAA 26.06.11

3. 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 **Zukunft des syrischen Regimes** von Bashar Assad:

Like father, like son

"Does Bashar Assad seriously expect anyone to believe his promise [...] to reform? [...] Here's what we know about this devil: He has so little regard for the lives of his own people that he sends tanks [...] and soldiers to massacre unarmed women and children, kills his own soldiers as an excuse to blame demonstrators, sends thousands into exile [...].

We may not know what will replace him, but we know that the longer Assad stays, the better for Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas and their henchmen – and the worse it is for the United States, Israel, Lebanon and the Syrian people. [...]

By failing to apply maximum pressure and the presidential bully pulpit – and we haven't seen that yet – the US is abetting not only Assad, but also his sponsors in Iran and their terrorist clients."

Douglas Bloomfield, JPO 22.06.11

Topple Assad and secure North

"Israel should help the people of Syria realise their

aspirations for freedom and this is in the interests of both nations. [...]

First, Israel should openly call for the removal of Assad [...] and should commence Arabic broadcasts to the region that detail the multiple crimes against humanity occurring now in Syria;

Secondly, Israel should send aid to the people rebelling against the dictatorship and [...] prepare a limited military intervention force ready to assist regime change and help the country rebuild in the transitional period. [...]

The fall of Assad will inevitably lead to the collapse of the Hizbullah led axis in Lebanon. The new governments in both lands will be at peace with Israel and this would usher in an era of quiet and prosperity in Israel's North for the first time ever."

David Shalom, AS 21.06.11

Über **Jonathan Pollard**, der seit 25 Jahren in den USA als Spion für Israel inhaftiert ist, und seine Bitte an der Beerdigung seines Vaters teilnehmen zu dürfen:

Let Pollard honor his father

"Pollard's request should be granted not because [...] he was acting out of solely altruistic motives when he spied for Israel (he was not) or even because it would improve the Obama administration's relations with Israel (it might, perhaps more than a little). Rather, Obama should allow Pollard leave to attend the funeral simply because it is the right and moral thing to do. [...]

The severity of Pollard's crime need not be minimized. [...] Perhaps, as some have conjectured, some of this secret information ended up in the hands of America's enemies, even if this was not Pollard's intention. [...]

Yet [...] his life sentence seems to be a cruel and unusual punishment, especially considering the fact that he spied for Israel, a US ally. [...]

In addition, [...] Lawrence Korb, assistant secretary of defense at the time of Pollard's indictment, wrote Obama hinting that the stringent sentence, handed down after Pollard agreed to a plea bargain, might have been motivated by anti-Semitism."

JPO 19.06.11 Editorial

Boycott 4th of July party

"America's insistence to go hard on Pollard more than on any other prisoner prompts the most basic questions: Where is justice? And if justice has evaporated, where's the heart? [...] We should [...] laud members of high society - ranging from influential

politicians to a fashion model – who will make their feelings known by boycotting the Fourth of July party. There is no reason to uncork a champagne bottle yet. Let there be a reason, soon."

Samadar Shir, JED 24.06.11

Don't boycott America

"I'm so upset over the foolish idea of boycotting the Fourth of July party at the US ambassador's home. [...] My heart is with Pollard, just like with any political prisoner. I wish to see him released from jail already. I despise the American penal system where a person is buried in his jail cell forever – but declaring war on the US? [...]"

Our Knesset and politics have become replete with mad bills filled with hatred for gentiles; foolish ideas that will lead to our quick demise.

We lost the support of most of the world thanks to our madmen, so why not advice the US to go to hell too? We'll remain all alone."

Yigal Sarna, JED 24.06.11

Über Antisemitismus in der deutschen Partei Die Linke:

Passionate about Jew-hate

"The Left Party remains in denial about anti-Semitism in its ranks. According to a German study, 'A power has established itself within the parliamentary spectrum of the Left Party, which tolerates anti-Semitic positions.' [...]"

The group's local branches in the German cities of Duisburg and Bremen called for boycotts of the Jewish state. [...]. The party's foreign policy spokesman, MP Wolfgang Gehrcke, has participated in demonstrations in support of the terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah. [...] In May 2010, two Left Party parliamentarians, Inge Höger and Annette Groth, joined a group of radical Turkish Islamists aboard the Mavi Marmara vessel [...]. When they returned [...] Left Party leaders gave them a hero's welcome in Berlin. [...]"

Unfortunately, top Left Party officials [...] have made no efforts to expel Left Party politicians [...] who have called for violent Palestinian resistance against Israel. Sadly, the list of Left Party politicians who fan the flames of anti-Semitic anti-Israelism goes on. [...]"

If the Left Party is truly serious about improving its reputation, it should expel members whose vitriolic hatred of Israel overwhelms every other position they take."

Benjamin Weinthal, JED 25.06.11

Über einen Übungsalarm, der die Bereitschaft der Heimatfront testen soll:

A turning point for home front defense

"Getting the population and the various authorities prepared was diagnosed as a key issue in home front readiness for extensive hostilities in which [...] scores of missiles and rockets would fall on population centers. [...] The threat scenario presented by the IDF is grave. There is no doubt that drilling the public and the responsible institutions is essential and proper. [...]"

[But] much of what has been done thus far [...] is being done tardily and hesitantly and usually in the wake of pressure from below. The picture is emerging as quite a random collection of moves.

The problem stems from a lack of any authorized governmental body clearly and legally in charge of civil defense readiness [...]. Establishing a ministry of civil defense could serve as a very important opportunity for fundamental change in this troubling situation."

Meir Elran, HAA 20.06.11

GLO = Globes

HAA = Haaretz

JED = Jedioth Ahronoth

JPO = Jerusalem Post

AS = Arutz Sheva

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