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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

26. September – 10. Oktober 2011

1. Der Trajtenberg-Bericht

Am 9. Oktober nahm die Regierung die Empfehlungen des "Trajtenberg-Berichts" an, den Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu als Reaktion auf die Sozialproteste im Sommer in Auftrag gegeben hatte. Der Bericht des Wirtschaftswissenschaftlers sieht unter anderem steuerfreie Importe, Preissenkungen für Gas und Wasser, Mietzuschüsse für Bedürftige, gebührenfreie Bildung für Kinder ab 3 Jahren, eine Reichensteuer sowie Maßnahmen gegen Monopole vor. Eine Woche zuvor hatte Netanyahu die Abstimmung in seinem Kabinett jedoch verschoben, da sich abzeichnete, dass nicht genügend Minister dafür stimmen würden. Nun konnte der Bericht verabschiedet werden, nachdem Netanyahu dem Koalitionspartner Yisrael Beiteanu eine Reihe von Zugeständnissen gemacht hatte. Acht Regierungsglieder stimmten gegen die Umsetzung der Empfehlungen. Während sich die Minister von Atzmaut und Likud gegen die geplanten Streichungen im Rüstungsbudget aussprachen, monierten die Shas-Minister, dass die Empfehlungen die schwächsten Segmente der Bevölkerung nicht genug berücksichtigten.

Trajtenberg and fiscal responsibility

"Histadrut Labor Federation Chairman Ofer Eini, [...] called on the government to bankroll greater welfare benefits by adding at least NIS 20 billion annually to government expenditures.

Thankfully, Trajtenberg Committee members have ignored irresponsible figures [...] on the economic Left who have failed to internalize the lessons of the Israeli economy's short history. [...]

Trajtenberg and his fellows also recall how in the mid-1990s, an abandonment of fiscal discipline [...] led to doubledigit inflation and economic instability. [...] Countries that pursued a less responsible fiscal policy, such as Greece [...], are now endangering the stability [...] of the entire European Union. [...]

Activists on the economic Left are correct when they declare that the Trajtenberg Committee's recommendations are not revolutionary – that is precisely what makes them so laudable."

JPO 27.09.11 Editorial

Netanyahu's test

"The Trajtenberg Committee [...] managed to achieve the impossible. It kept its promises and issued a lengthy and impressive report that deals with many issues, within a mere 50 business days. [...]

Despite heavy pressure [...], the budget was not breached and the deficit was not increased. [...]

The committee also succeeded in convincing the prime minister of the need to slash the defense budget in order to have money to transfer to education and employment. [...] Changes will also be made in import bans [...] in order to facilitate competition.

It is clear therefore that the committee's recommendations will encounter strong objections from numerous directions. [...] So everything depends on the prime minister. Benjamin Netanyahu must withstand all the pressures and get the Trajtenberg recommendations passed [...]. This will be his test."

HAA 27.09.11 Editorial

Protecting Trajtenberg

"The quicker the Trajtenberg recommendations can be passed in the cabinet, the better. Unfortunately, narrow political interests and pointless wrangling forced Netanyahu to delay the cabinet vote, further pushing off much-needed economic reforms.

Apparently [...] Shas leader Eli Yishai attempted to turn the cabinet vote into an opportunity to present his party as the champion of the poor. [...] By rejecting the Trajtenberg recommendations, Yishai no doubt sensed he would be appealing to the tens of thousands of disgruntled Israelis who are understandably fed up with [...] the widening gap between the rich and the poor [...]. But delaying the passage

of the Trajtenberg recommendations only exacerbates the situation. [...]

Meanwhile, Israel Beiteinu's ministers seemed motivated [...] by a desire to show Netanyahu [...] that they were not [...] 'pawns' in the hands of Netanyahu. And Defense Minister Ehud Barak is battling against the [proposed] cuts in the security budget. None of the ministers offered criticism with real substance that justified a delay in passing the Trajtenberg recommendations."

JPO 05.10.11 Editorial

No real tidings

"We are forced to give the report a grade of 'insufficient.' [...]

Looking at the overall picture in the Trajtenberg report, we ask ourselves a simple question: Is this how the Israel we want to live in really looks? Honestly, this is just a small step on a long way and it is not enough. There are whole categories that did not so much as get a look, such as health care reform, changes in the public sector and significant reduction of socio-economic gaps.

It is not enough because it lacks any true remedy for the housing issue, especially public housing. [...] It is not enough because the report reflects political concessions from the outset, rather than tenacity and professional ideals. It is not enough because it does not allow for the expansion of the national budget at all in the next five years in any way that can actually deal with society's ills."

Ofir Raviv, IHY 27.09.11

He's no Che Guevara

"Even before they studied the conclusions, the tent protest people announced that the Trajtenberg Committee had disappointed them. [...]

But [...] Trajtenberg is not Che Guevara. [...] He believes in a market economy (luckily for us), but wants corrections to reduce gaps and poverty. [...] Someone should explain to the tent protesters that we have security problems that no other country has, as well as a large non-working population. Therefore, we will never be Sweden. That might be disappointing, but it is the truth. [...]

Having pledged to accept the recommendations, [...] Netanyahu will have to swallow his pride and accept a move he heartily opposes - raising taxes. The proposal is not extreme: raising marginal tax by 3 percent; a surtax of 2 percent on the rich; an increase in corporate taxes of 2 percent; and a capital gains tax hike of 5 percent. Some taxes will go down. [...]

In other words - more direct tax and less indirect tax; exactly what the protesters wanted. But they are not satisfied."

Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA 27.09.11

The Netanyahu disgrace

"On Sunday, Netanyahu announced that there will be a debate, but no vote. Monday morning, when he realized this is also a leadership test for him, he changed his mind. [...]

It turned out that the PM has no majority not only because his three coalition partners object, but also because three Likud ministers object [...].

The result: Netanyahu was forced to capitulate. [...]

So what is the meaning of the disgrace that took place Monday? [...] This attests to nearing elections. If all the coalition parties do not endorse such major moves, but rather, flex their muscles, this is a first indication that they are hearing the ground shaking. [...]

Yet the conduct of three Likud ministers, who took the liberty to disgrace the prime minister, is even more meaningful. [...] This shows that the internal Likud theater is heating up as well."

Sima Kadmon, JED 04.10.11

This isn't change, it's a disaster

"The Trajtenberg Committee found itself promoting solutions that put Israel's ability to defend itself [...] in question. The committee wanted to please [...] so much that it looked for the most convenient solutions and found the site on which every Finance Ministry bureaucrat trains his eyes -- the defense budget.

[...] Has the committee acknowledged the fact that once its report is adopted, army training [...] will see a return to pre-Second Lebanon War levels? [...] Are we [...] willing to forego the development of our intelligence capabilities, which we need to expose what is taking place in Iran and Syria and inside terrorist organizations? [...]

The committee refused to take aim at bloated government ministries which employ thousands of redundant bureaucrats; [...] and did not try to curtail cheap labor by halting the flow of foreign workers. What we get in the committee findings reflects a reality in which a Filipino caregiver is valued more than a combat officer."

Zwicka Fogel, IHY 27.09.11

To cut or not to cut – yes

"We are being told that we cannot cut [the defense budget] without significantly undermining our ability to safeguard national security. [...] Defend us

against whom? Jordan's immense army? The crumbling Syria? [...] After all, the chances of an old-style war breaking out in our region are almost nil. [...] Technology made combat cheaper and more lethal. [...]

However, the establishment [...] is fighting for its existence, assets and resources. When facing the political establishment, the military gets carried away with describing the existential threats hanging over our heads. [...] We must keep in mind that the money to be cut from the defense budget won't go to waste: It's needed like oxygen for the education, welfare and health budgets."

Yakir Elkariv, JED 27.09.11

2. "Price Tag"- Anschläge in Israel

Nachdem es im Westjordanland in den letzten Monaten immer wieder zu Anschlägen durch jüdische Extremisten gekommen war, kam es nun zu mehreren Vorfällen innerhalb Israels. Nach Demolierung illegaler Siedlungen rächen sich Extremisten mit den sogenannten "Price Tag"-Attacken an unbeteiligten Palästinensern oder israelischen Sicherheitskräften. Der Inlandsgeheimdienst Shin Bet wies in diesem Zusammenhang auf eine Radikalisierung hin und warnte vor weiteren Gewaltakten.

Am 3. Oktober war eine Moschee in Nordisrael in Brand gesteckt worden. Dorfbewohner versammelten sich daraufhin zu einer Demonstration, die von der Polizei mit Tränengas aufgelöst wurde – und damit den Eindruck ungerechter Behandlung israelischer Araber noch verstärkte. Vier Tage später wurden muslimische und christliche Friedhöfe in Yaffo geschändet. Daraufhin wurde ein Molotov-Cocktail in eine nahe Synagoge geworfen.

Politiker und religiöse Führer verurteilten die Anschläge. Dennoch tragen solche Gewalttaten maßgeblich dazu bei, dass das ohnehin schwierige Verhältnis zwischen Arabern und Juden in Israel weiter gefährdet wird.

The high price of 'price tags'

"The willingness on the part of the youngsters to carry out the provocations, knowing they will pay a heavy price if caught, can only exist with the direct or indirect backing of a religious, social, or political leadership. [...] It may be difficult to catch those who committed the crimes, but their leaders who hold aloft their ideological flags are well-known. [...]

Anyone who dreams of separating the Jews and Arabs living here is living an illusion. [...] Both sides

must recognize this simple fact: fate has brought us to this land in which we must both learn to coexist."

Haim Shine, IHY 09.10.11

When the Shin Bet really doesn't want to

"The Shin Bet has again and again managed to foil acts of terrorism [...] that were committed by Palestinians [...]. It has repeatedly failed, however, in doing the same when it comes to [...] terror attacks by Jews. [...] The repeated Shin Bet failures [...] are both disturbing and endanger the fabric of Israeli democracy. [...]

Those committing pogroms benefit from the lenience of judges, who more than once have made light of such deeds and released the perpetrators or imposed light sentences. Suspects have also benefited from incompetence that appears to have been deliberate on the part of the police and the army. [...]

The Jewish Israeli press also plays a role in that it adopts the euphemisms of the settlers, who call the offenses 'price tag' incidents [...]. The truth has to be stated. What the settlers are doing to their Palestinian neighbors is terrorism in every sense of the word."

Yossi Melman, HAA 10.10.11

Senseless Jewish thugs

"The fire at the mosque represents [...] a small, thuggish and childish group. [...]

People who are in touch with reality should have guessed that immediately after word of the arson got out we will hear frank cries of wall-to-wall condemnation around here.

Arab Israelis would be wise if they make do with this all-out condemnation and go back to routine. They must know that there is no basis to hints from the Left that the police and Shin Bet do not invest a genuine effort in capturing the arsonists. There is no doubt that the Price Tag gang, on both sides of the Green Line, is now a major challenge for our law enforcement agencies."

Hagai Segal, JED 04.10.11

'Price tag' terror is not the Jewish way

"Harsh statements are fine, strong reactions are acceptable, but villainous acts by 'price-tag' activists are absolutely beyond the pale.

The blind choice of a random mosque in a random village is reminiscent of the behavior of the ugliest and worst of our foes throughout history. These are pogrom tactics. Such burning hatred toward all non-Jews is unacceptable in our community.

I condemn this act and not just on my own behalf. The entire national-religious sector stands behind me."

Uri Ariel, IHY 04.10

Story of Jewish terror

"The criminals hoped [...], to reignite the fire between the Palestinians in Israel and the establishment, which is quick to pull the trigger when dealing with Arabs.

The arson is a direct result of the reckless campaign of incitement against the Palestinian residents of Israel, with the government's active participation. The Jewish State's law book has turned into one of the darkest books, as in the current Knesset we've seen the Netanyahu-Lieberman government endorsing a great number of racist laws meant to limit Arabs in the country. [...]

The atmosphere between Jews and Arabs is poisoned, and the rabbis play a significant role in it. Indeed, it is difficult to fathom how rabbis legitimize anti-Arab acts and distribute books that sanction the murder of Arabs. [...]

These messages, which seemingly do not include a call for violence, are translated by radicals into the language of despicable acts."

Zohir Andreus, JED 05.10.11

From anti-Zionism to 'price tag'

"'Price tag,' [...] is just one part of a wider phenomenon, as part of which large segments of the population are convinced that the state and its laws are irrelevant and they can take the law into their own hands. [...] [It] expresses, above all, the desperation and loss of faith in Israeli democracy, as a result of losing hope in the ability to influence. [...] Anti-Zionist elites have hegemony over the media, academia, culture and the legal system and influence government policy [...], whereas ordinary citizens vote once every few years and their wishes are ignored. Furthermore, the anti-Zionist left rejects the idea of consensus because it denies the right of the Zionists to govern. [...]

In order to restore the rule of law, [...] this group must stop forcibly imposing its agenda. [...] Only if citizens have an influence on government policy, and only if minorities honor the will of the majority, can Israeli democracy recover."

Ronen Shoval, HAA 09.10.11

3. Siedlungsbau in Ostjerusalem

Nur wenige Tage nachdem das Nahost-Quartett Israelis und Palästinenser zu erneuten Friedensverhandlungen aufrief und die Parteien dazu aufforderte, Provokationen zu vermeiden, wurde in Jerusalem der Bau von 1100 neuen Wohneinheiten im Stadtviertel Gilo, das in Ostjerusalem liegt, angekündigt. Dies führte nach Berichten der Presse zu einem Eklat zwischen Benjamin Netanyahu und Angela Merkel. Die Bundesrepublik hatte sich zuvor gegen die Anerkennung des palästinensischen Staates durch die UN ausgesprochen. Außerdem hatte Merkel den palästinensischen Präsidenten Mahmud Abbas zu Verhandlungen gedrängt. Dieser erwiderte, Voraussetzung dafür sei ein Baustopp in allen Siedlungen. Nur einen Tag, nachdem diese Botschaft an Netanyahu weitergegeben worden war, erfuhr Merkel von dem Bauvorhaben in Gilo. Sie führte daraufhin ein angespanntes Telefongespräch mit dem israelischen Premier. Auch die USA bezeichneten die israelischen Pläne als "kontraproduktiv".

Sidestepping Gilo

"Of course Israel has every right to build in Gilo. But perhaps [Netanyahu] should have quietly postponed approval of the Gilo project.

[...] If he had postponed Gilo, claiming technical difficulties or some other non-political explanation, the Palestinians would have had no excuse for avoiding direct talks as recommended by the Quartet.

Delaying Gilo would have also made it easier for the US and Germany [...] to back Israel's demand to resume talks without any preconditions and would have sent out a message that we are appreciative for their support in the UN against the Palestinian bid for statehood. [...]

Doing so would have shifted international pressure and attention from Jerusalem to Ramallah and demonstrated that Palestinian intransigence – not the apartment buildings in Gilo – is the real obstacle to peace."

JPO 03.10.11 Editorial

An unwanted unilateral act

"The issue of construction in the settlements continues to be a major obstacle in the peace process. [...]

As far as the Palestinians are concerned, the issue of sovereignty in East Jerusalem is to be clarified in permanent-status talks. The international communi-

ty, including the United States, does not recognize the application of Israeli law and administration to East Jerusalem. [...]

A series of international agreements to which Israel is a signatory obliges the government to avoid unilateral steps on matters to be decided in final-status talks. The government must remember that this obligation also applies to East Jerusalem. Breaching it harms our credibility, undermines the prime minister's call for a renewal of talks and may prove disastrous in the long term."

HAA 02.10.11 Editorial

Crumbling assumptions underlie Gilo fracas

"The fact that the international community was prepared to accept Israeli construction [...] up until the current government took power is a reflection on two things: the success of [...] successive Israeli governments [...], and the way those past achievements are now being jeopardized by the Netanyahu government. [...]

Why [...] was there an international outcry against the decision [...] to build 1,100 new housing units in Gilo, a Jewish neighborhood that every peace proposal since president Clinton's parameters [...] has envisioned as being part of Israel [...]?

International support is clearly contingent upon [...] the actual attainment of a final status arrangement. [...]

The condemnation over Gilo was the international community's way of signaling [...] once again that its provisional support was contingent upon the Israeli government making a firm commitment to withdraw from much of the rest of the territories."

Jonathan Rosen, JPO 02.10.11

To save Jerusalem, build

"If Israel does not move ahead with construction for Jews in east Jerusalem, [...] we will lose Jerusalem. Large numbers of Jews are leaving the city each year, and this is already contributing to Jerusalem's demise. Each year, 18,000 Jewish residents move away because there isn't enough housing. Arabs, on the other hand, have been flocking to Jerusalem to maintain their rights as residents of the city.

This is the story in a nutshell. First, we as Jews must understand this story. Then Merkel must understand it as well."

Nadav Shragai, IHY 03.10.11

Obama's Jew-free policy

"By seeking to force Israel to cease building houses in Jewish neighborhoods of Jerusalem, Barack Ob-

ama is legitimizing the Islamist zeal for the eviction of 300,000 Jews who live in parts of Jerusalem that were illegally occupied by Jordan between 1948 and 1967. [...] For 19 horrible years, Jordanians and Palestinians controlled the neighborhoods now under Obama's attack. Jews were summarily expelled. [...]

Obama's de-legitimization of Jerusalem's post-1967 neighborhoods is nothing less than a renewed 'Judenrein' [...] policy. [...]

Today, Gilo is a strategic neighborhood for the security of the entire State of Israel: Not building there means accepting a Palestinian belt around the capital of Israel."

Giulio Meotti, JED 29.09.11

When the moderates wither

"The U.S. government has issued a stammering and muffled condemnation of the approval of 1,110 apartments on Mount Gilo. [...]

But they immediately impose sanctions on the Palestinian request of the United Nations. [...]

That is how the United States seeks a responsible and balance position and the status of an 'honest broker in the region.'

Yossi Sarid, HAA 02.10.11

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 Schriftsteller Yoram Kaniuk, der vor Gericht erkämpfte, im Melderegister als ohne Religion statt jüdisch geführt zu werden:

In the name of the grandson

"On the face of it, Kaniuk simply wanted to be declared as having no religion just like his grandson [...]. The reason the court ruling is reverberating the way it is among so many people has actually nothing to do with whether they are having problems registering their nationality, or with the connection they may or may not feel with Jewish tradition. [...]

First of all, because elimination of such a definition advances the fulfillment of the dream of separation

of religion and state. Secondly, because in the hands of right-wing politicians, [...] Judaism has become racism in the simplest sense of the word. [...]

And what would happen if hundreds of thousands [...] of citizens really did rush to the Interior Ministry to register as without religion? Will we become a state without a religion instead of a Jewish state? A secular state like those enlightened countries in which everyone, without regard for religion or nationality, is equal? The only real danger lurking in this initiative is the intolerable lines at the Interior Ministry."

Neri Livneh, HAA 03.10.11

Judaism minus religion?

"The High Court ruling has ramifications in the judicial-bureaucratic sphere. The ruling was fair and is in line with freedom of expression. [...]

But, on the other hand, no government should use its judicial system [...] to define identities and national belonging. [...] Jewish identity is the sole business of the person himself. [...] To be a Jew means to maintain a complex linkage between the Jewish past, present and future. For many, their Jewish bond has taken on the form of cultural ties, as opposed to religious ties. [...]

The High Court ruling [...] opens the matter to an even freer discussion on Jewish identity. If only we knew how to take advantage of this."

Avi Sagi, IHY 09.10.11

*Über den **Nobelpreis der Chemie**, der letzte Woche an den israelischen Wissenschaftler Dan Shechtman ging:*

A moment of exaltation

"The awarding of the Nobel Prize in chemistry to Prof. Dan Shechtman - the sixth Israeli in a decade to win the Nobel for scientific research - is a moment of national exaltation. [...]

Nevertheless, the celebrations are diluted by concern that these prizes are the fruits of past greatness, of the years when Israel's educational system was an outstanding one. [...] The past two decades have seen a deterioration in our education system: Israel now ranks 40th in the world on international achievement tests. [...]

Fortunately, Israel's embarrassing international showing has spurred the government to act. [...]

The reform of higher education is meant to give a much-needed boost to academic research in Israel, after years of eroding budgets and brain drain. It's

too early to tell, of course, if these various reforms will be enough to restore Israeli research to its former glory. But at least there is reason to hope that the phenomenon of Israeli Nobel Prize winners will not become a thing of the past."

HAA 06.10.11 Editorial

Israel, invest in brain power

"Brain power is the secret of the State of Israel's existence. If we fail to be at the top of global science, we won't be a state that is permitted on strong pillars. [...]

Thanks to science we have an army that possesses technological capabilities which deter every enemy and high-technology exports that bring \$25 billion into the State's coffers every year. [...]

Hundreds of thousands of Israelis can afford flights abroad, cars, and better homes thanks to the scientific infrastructure built here 20-30 years ago.

With science being Israel's most important and vital asset [...], we can assert that higher education budget cuts in the years 2003-2010 constituted a national crime. [...] A scheme that Trajtenberg would surely support as well: Earmarking another half a billion shekels a year to research universities starting this school year. This would be the proper Zionist response to the Nobel Prize."

Sever Plocker, JED 10.06.11

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