



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 01/12

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

26. Dezember 2011 – 08. Januar 2012

1. Diskussion um Ultra-Orthodoxe

In Israel wächst die Kritik an ultra-orthodoxen Juden. Diese Gruppe macht etwa 10% der Bevölkerung aus und wächst stetig. Ultra-orthodoxe Männer, die an einer Religionsschule lernen, müssen keinen Militärdienst leisten, und der Großteil der Kinder geht auf ultra-orthodoxe Schulen, die nicht an den Lehrplan staatlicher Schulen gebunden sind.

Die wachsende religiöse Einflussnahme der Ultra-Orthodoxen ("Haredim"), die im Parlament oftmals das Zünglein an der Waage darstellen und deswegen als Koalitionspartner umworben werden, wird nun von der säkularen Mehrheit als zunehmend bedrohlich empfunden.

Im Zentrum der Kontroverse steht dabei zurzeit die Ausgrenzung von Frauen bzw. die Geschlechtertrennung. Nachdem in der Stadt Beit Shemesh kleine Mädchen aufgrund ihrer Kleidung, die angeblich nicht sittsam genug war, von Ultra-orthodoxen beschimpft und bespuckt worden waren, protestierten dort 10.000 Israelis gegen religiösen Extremismus. Im Gegenzug demonstrierten in Jerusalem etwa 1.000 Haredim gegen die Diskriminierung von Ultra-orthodoxen. Dass sie dabei KZ-Uniformen und Judensterne trugen, löste jedoch nur noch mehr Kritik aus.

Fear of Haredim

"The real [problem] is political: [...] Netanyahu's clear choice of an extreme-right, religious-Haredi coalition [...] is one reason for the current unrest. [...] Those who strengthen the hand of the Haredi religious-Zionist rabbis, giving them senior positions in the education system, and who are lenient with mosque-burning criminals, reap the whirlwind. [...] The public is fully aware that [...] the reason 'the Haredim' don't work or serve in the army, and their children go to separate schools, is entirely political, and that it harms the Haredim themselves. But it is easier to hate a faceless collective so long as one

does not risk a political statement that ascribes the weakening of Israeli democracy to a comprehensive process of domestic and foreign policy."

Aviram Golan, HAA 28.12.11

Change the system but stop Haredi-bashing

"We are obliged to respect their right to practice their rituals or customs. [...]"

The problem we face today is not the haredi lifestyle. It is their increasing effort to control all religious issues [...]. The critical areas affecting the general population are conversion and marriage. [...]"

The other crucial issue [...] is the ever-increasing proportion of Israeli schoolchildren attending state-financed haredi schools. By excluding all secular subjects from their curricula, these institutions guarantee that increasing numbers of Israelis will not be prepared for gainful employment and will thus remain dependent on state welfare all their lives.

[...] Over 90 percent of haredim remain exempted from any form of national service. [...] It is these issues, rather than the obsession with degenerate zealots, that represent the crucial challenges of the demographically expanding haredi population and that we are obliged to resolve now."

Isi Leibler, JPO 04.01.12

Fed up

"The majority in Israel is fed up and the usual haredi whine that 'the public is being incited against us' isn't working anymore.

I too used to subscribe to the comforting idea that it was only a small number of haredi extremists involved in the bullying and abuse of women, the silent majority disapproving from afar, cowed into silence.

I'm no longer comfortable with that idea. [...]"

If there really is a silent majority of haredim who disapprove of spitting on little girls who wear sandals

without stockings [...], then let's see them open their mouths and say so for once."
Naomi Ragen, JPO 30.12.11

No need for civil war

"Someone went out of their way to find a mentally unstable member of some weird extreme ultra-Orthodox sect and from there arrived at the conclusion that we live in a fundamentalist country. Criminals should be punished, but we must avoid inciting a civil war against the ultra-Orthodox. [...] Picking on the ultra-Orthodox has become the new national pastime, replacing the social justice protest, which was abandoned the minute it became clear to power grubbers that the protests would not topple the government."
Yulia Shamalov-Berkovich, IHY 27.12.11

The Haredi State

"The issue surrounding the exclusion of women by the ultra-Orthodox should not be reduced to strong condemnations and local enforcement of the law, as the government wishes. It's an opportunity to hold a frank and honest debate about money, power and exemptions handed out by all Israeli governments to the Haredi public in exchange for political support, a deal with a high price for many Israelis. This was one of the main causes of the social unrest last summer. Israel should avoid this debate only if it wishes to commit suicide."
Aner Shalev, HAA 04.01.12

Israel's suicidal secular population

"The disease is ultra-Orthodox education. It's an education that puts young Haredim through a thorough brainwashing. [...] Young Haredim are educated to totally despise the values of the secular state. [...] Their leaders have a clear goal: To provide the community with good living conditions at the expense of the secular donkey. [...] The part that is particularly [...] absurd is that the secular majority is financing this destructive process. It gives huge budgets to the independent Haredi educational system. [...] It's time to [...] force every child in Israel to study the same general curriculum. [...] The support given to [Torah schools] from the state budget should be totally stopped, which will force the Haredim to go to work."
Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA 03.01.11

An orgy of hatred

"Perhaps we failed in understanding the other? [...] Somewhere in my head I'm not certain that the core curriculum is truly important for the life meant for a haredi child. [...] In my view when a civilized liberal looks at someone who is different, this should be done with the required modesty. [...] We need a new social covenant: [...] Life in the country will be secular in every way. [...] On the other hand, the secular majority would allow the haredim to have full cultural autonomy within their neighborhoods. This means letting go of the need to education them and allowing them to live their life as they see fit. And yes, this means segregated buses in haredi population centers and tolerance to haredi education."
Amnon Levy, JED 03.01.12

Divide Beit Shemesh

"The principle that guides the multicultural adage 'live and let live' does not guide the extremists. [...] To them 'different' is 'infidel', and they cannot accept infidels. Therefore, any effort to impose unity on them will not succeed – the only way for them to maintain their way of life is in the ghetto. From this we can conclude that separation is necessary, and will diminish their ability to impose their way of life on the uninterested."
Yossi Beilin, IHY 01.01.12

Integrate the Ultra-Orthodox

"[We] must also rely on a coordinated government policy that aims to increasingly incorporate the ultra-Orthodox into the education system, public service sector and workforce. Only real integration can temper this radicalization and provide a tailwind to moderate leaders within the ultra-Orthodox community. But in Israel's current political reality, an orderly agenda to have them join the workforce is nowhere to be found."
Yochanan Plessner, IHY 27.12.11

Haredim also have rights

"Does Israeli society hold a deep desire to make this odd community disappear and turn the haredim into people that conduct themselves just like everyone else? Maybe deep inside, without being consciously aware of it, we also hold patronizing aspirations to prompt them to 'regain their senses' and live like us. [...]"

Israel's majority must remind itself all the time that not only women have rights. The haredi minority has rights too."

Hanoch Daum, JED 01.01.12

2. Erneute Verhandlungen mit den Palästinensern?

Im Rahmen einer Initiative des jordanischen Königs Abdallah hat der israelische Chefunterhändler Yitzhak Molcho seinen palästinensischen Gegenpart Saeb Erekat Anfang Januar nach einer Pause von mehr als einem Jahr erstmals in Amman getroffen, um über die Wiederaufnahme von Friedensgesprächen zu verhandeln. Schon im Vorfeld machten beide Seiten jedoch deutlich, dass sie sich nicht viel von dem Treffen versprechen. Während die Palästinenser auf einem Siedlungsbaustopp bestehen, wollen die Israelis sich nur auf Verhandlungen ohne Vorbedingungen einlassen. Allerdings hatte die palästinensische Führung im Dezember angeboten, im Austausch für die Freilassung von 100 palästinensischen Gefangenen auf diese Bedingung zu verzichten.

Molcho kündigte nach dem Treffen an, Israel werde die palästinensischen Vorschläge zu Grenzen und einem Endabkommen studieren. Schon in der darauffolgenden Woche kam es zu einem weiteren Treffen, bei dem jedoch keine Fortschritte erzielt wurden. Ein weiteres Gespräch ist vor Ende des Monats anberaumt.

Gleichzeitig verhandeln Hamas und Fatah über eine palästinensische Einheitsregierung. Während es zunächst so aussah, als würde die Hamas der PLO beitreten, scheinen die Gespräche zwischen den beiden Parteien jedoch wieder ins Stocken geraten zu sein. Laut palästinensischen Stellen hatte Hamas-Chef Khaled Meshal Ende Dezember eine zeitweilige Einstellung des bewaffneten Kampfes gegen Israel angekündigt, um eine Einheitsregierung zu ermöglichen.

No news from Amman

"No real progress will be made as long as the Palestinians refuse to return to negotiations without preconditions. [...]"

As opposed to the Palestinians, Israel welcomed the Quartet's framework in its entirety, and accepted King Abdullah of Jordan's initiative while not harboring too many illusions. [...]"

The Europeans, meanwhile, have continued to express vocal opposition to Israeli construction beyond the Green Line. [...] By doing so the Europeans

reinforce the Palestinians' refusal to negotiate a lasting peace. Their objections are also frequently accompanied by the misguided notion that Israeli construction is an obstacle to the creation of a Palestinian state [...]. Yet a persuasive answer to this claim came from none other than Saeb Erekat, who confirmed [...] that Israeli construction in the 'settlements,' including in parts of Jerusalem, covers no more than 1.1 percent of territory in the 'West Bank.'"

Zalman Shoval, IHY 05.01.11

Israel has a partner

"Abbas represents a reasonable chance for dialogue on some kind of agreement. [...] He instructs his security forces to take determined action against terror masterminds. [...] We would do well to agree amongst ourselves that the Palestinian side does not have to renounce what is known as its 'narrative'; viewing itself as a victim, [...] the uprooting experience, the 'Nakba,' or any other expression that has maintained this bloody conflict for the past 100 years.

At the same time, I would advise Abbas to renounce the preconditions he set for renewing negotiations with Netanyahu. [...] An Israeli leader would not be able to renounce the demographic realities that emerged in the West Bank in the wake of the Six-Day War."

Shimon Shiffer, JED 28.12.11

The Palestinian deception

"It seems justifiable to reach the conclusion that there will be no final-status agreement that will solve the Arab Israeli conflict in the foreseeable future.

The recent reconciliation between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas [...] is further evidence that Mahmoud Abbas was never sincere in pursuing a peace agreement with Israel.

[...] The Palestinian leadership has deceived Israel and the international community by speaking the language of 'peace' to Western English-speaking audiences, while continually preaching hate and war to their own people in Arabic."

Yochanan Visser, JED 28.12.11

Listen to Hamas

"The Hamas leader declared this week that his movement is switching over from the armed struggle to a popular struggle. [...]"

But instead of encouraging Hamas' new direction, expressing the hope that it will turn into a legitimate political party and supporting the establishment of a

Palestinian unity government, Israel offered its routine response - silence and apathy toward the declarations and a threat of a military operation. [...]

In the very near future, Palestine will be able to show the world a unified government that controls both parts of Palestine and is based on an agreed-on platform, which the Quartet countries won't be able to reject. Israel, it can be assumed, will boycott that government and ensconce itself in its foxhole to evade the political process."

HAA 29.12.11 Editorial

PLO pessimism

" Hamas [...] will not undergo a process of moderation as a result of being incorporated in the PLO. It is much more likely that the changes the PLO underwent to shed its terrorist organization status and garner international recognition will be rolled back by Hamas.

PA President Mahmoud Abbas's support for bringing Hamas into the PLO raises serious questions about his intentions.

Under the circumstances, how can we not be pessimistic about the prospects for a negotiated peace any time soon?"

JPO 26.12.11 Editorial

Hamas is changing

"Joining the PLO would mean sticking to the driving principles of the organization and accepting the three following conditions: recognizing Israel, recognizing past agreements and renouncing violence.

[...] Arab uprisings, growing pressure from the Palestinian street to reconcile with enemy factions, increasing isolation of the group's main backers, Iran and Syria, and financial difficulties are all practical factors explaining Hamas' new stance.

[...] And if a group as extreme as Hamas is ready to compromise on the ideology it was founded on, maybe it is worth reconsidering our strategy towards the group. [...]

Instead of trying to discourage Palestinian unity, Israel should welcome it and shape it to fit its interests. In Israel's discourse, 'by embracing Hamas, Abbas is walking away from peace' should become 'by embracing Abbas, Hamas must walk away from violence.'"

Raphael Mimoun, JED 27.12.11

What would a Hamas-Fatah deal mean?

"A unity agreement would bring Hamas into the PLO and thereby compromise the PA's and PLO's com-

mitment to fight terrorism and seek a Palestinian state without violence. [...]

How could there possibly be a peace negotiation if half of the PA government is committed to the Haniyeh view?

[...] Peace negotiations cannot occur until we know [...] the identity and intentions of those who may be governing the West Bank and sitting across the table should talks resume."

Elliott Abrams, IHY 29.12.11

Don't let them shut down discussion

"[There is] opposition from both Israeli and Palestinian elements to joint Israeli-Palestinian activities. [...]

The Fatah leadership had decided to halt all unofficial Palestinian-Israeli meetings due to the lack of negotiations between the sides [because] Israel exploits such meetings in order to tell the world that a dialogue is taking place between the two peoples, and that it is only the Palestinian Authority that refuses to sit down at the negotiating table. This seems like a parallel to the familiar criticism of such meetings by right-wing Israelis, who accuse Israeli participants of being concerned only about Palestinian rights, as opposed to Israeli security needs. [...]

Today it appears that Israeli and Palestinian civil society activists and leaders need to sit together to discuss the most appropriate and effective formulas for the continuation of joint activity. [...]

With the total breakdown in talks at the governmental level, the continued settlement activities and the apparent inability of the international community to jump-start meaningful negotiations, the window of opportunity for a viable two-state solution is rapidly closing."

Hillel Schenker, HAA 30.12.11

3. Iran

Nach Angaben der Internationalen Atombehörde hat der Iran sein Nuklearprogramm beschleunigt und mit Urananreicherungen begonnen, welche das Land dem Besitz von kernwaffenfähigem Material näher bringen als bisherige Versuche. Diese Entwicklung folgte auf den amerikanischen Beschluss, schärfere Sanktionen gegen den iranischen Finanzsektor zu verhängen. Auch die EU plant weitere Maßnahmen, darunter ein Ölembargo. Zuvor hatte Teheran bereits mit der Schließung der für die Seefahrt wichtigen Straße von Hormus gedroht, sollten weitere Sanktionen beschlossen werden.

Während ein Angriff auf den Iran von israelischen Politikern weiterhin nicht ausgeschlossen wird,

warnte Mossad-Chef Tamir Pardo davor, Iran als "existentielle Bedrohung" für Israel darzustellen.

Israel's 2012 security outlook

"We can see some positive developments. Despite scientific progress, Iran has not yet decided to produce nuclear weapons. The main reasons for this are the concerns about political survival in the face of paralyzing sanctions and the fear of a military strike. [...]"

Experts and intelligence officials note that the sanctions already imposed on Iran affect the regime and force it to adopt austerity measures. Hence, in the next year or two it would be deterred from taking drastic steps and especially the decision to produce a bomb."

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 05.01.12

Prepare for interesting times

"This will be the year when either Iran gets its nuclear weapons or is stopped. As nobody really expects the sanctions regime to compel Iran to forgo its military nuclear program, the only recourse will be military action and its uncalculated consequences. [...]"

Israel cannot [...] influence [this] development, other than by unilaterally attacking Iran. All can end up very badly. At best we can hope and [...] pray that it will be a good and safe new year."

Amiel Ungar, 30.12.12

Is Iran rational?

"One of the most difficult questions that the West needs to answer in the year ahead is whether Iranian behavior will be influenced mostly by rational considerations or by ideological beliefs. [...]"

Since 2005, with the election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, there has been a great deal of speculation about the religious factor in Iranian decision-making. Ahmadinejad, who came to power with the full backing of the Revolutionary Guard, has spoken regularly about the imminent arrival of the Mahdi, which he has explained can be accelerated by conditions of global chaos. Should these views be taken seriously? [...]"

The rationality of Iranian leaders is still an open question. It would be an error to just assume that they will adopt the deterrence doctrines of the West should they cross the nuclear threshold."

Dore Gold, IHY 30.12.11

Time to break the silence

"A distinction must be made between the nuclear issue and the racist rhetoric of the president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who denies the Holocaust and calls for the destruction of Israel. The response to the nuclear issue [...] is at the center of the international agenda and seems to have picked up momentum recently. The same cannot be said of the second issue. [...]"

It is not too late. There is no reason why the EU should not declare Ahmadinejad persona non grata in its region. While the Iranian president is not keen to take a trip around the Continent, denouncing him as someone who is not wanted there would send an important message to the Iranian people. Sanctions must be imposed only on the Iranian president and not on the state. It is intolerable that such a step has not yet been taken. [...]"

There are issues about which one must not remain silent [...]. One of those is the denial of the Holocaust by the leader of a country and his declared intention to destroy another country."

Shlomo Avineri, HAA 02.01.12

Iran can be cowed

"In the past, revolutionary fervor was offset by the national interest, which resulted in a fairly pragmatic policy. But it seems that the regime is now fighting for its life, and the national interest is secondary to the existential interest of the regime's survival. [...]"

[But] comparing Iran to Nazi Germany and [...] Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Adolf Hitler does more harm than good. It minimizes the historical significance of the Holocaust and does not deter the Iranian president. In fact, through repeated declarations we unnecessarily took on the problem as our own, and other designated us as the one who should provide the solution."

David Menashri, GLO 04.01.12

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 einen **saudi-arabischen Hacker**, der die Kreditkarteninformationen von mehreren Tausend Israelis veröffentlichte:

The shape of things to come

"The Saudi electronic terrorist attack [...] is a warning sign and harbinger of things we can come to expect. The attack did us a great service by opening our eyes and alerting all of us to the dangers posed by the Internet. Meanwhile, the attack clarified the new risk everyone is talking about – cyberterrorism. [...]"

In the future it [...] may be turned toward [Israel's] critical national infrastructure, causing considerably greater harm and damage than what we experienced this week. [...] Therefore, the threat must be addressed at the national level.

[...] We must realize that the virtual world is a part of our daily lives, and just as the defense establishment is entrusted with ensuring our safety on a daily and hourly basis, so must the state ensure our virtual safety."

Alon Mantsur, IHY 06.01.12

Welcome to cyber war

"Only one definition fits a hacker like [this] – a terrorist. The fact that his hands were not tainted by blood does not make him a less dangerous or less violent criminal who has one objective in mind – producing harm and damage.

[...] A technological attack is no different than a missile strike. Leaking credit card information is no different than leaking radioactive materials. [...]"

Because today it's our credit cards, tomorrow it will be our Israeli ID numbers and other personal details, and the day after it could get even worse.

Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon was right to speak of a 'declaration of war.'"

Smadar Shir, JED 08.01.12

HAA = Haaretz
JED = Jedioth Ahronoth
JPO = Jerusalem Post
IHY = Israel HaYom
GLO = Globes

Veröffentlicht: 10. Januar 2012

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