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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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1. Prominente wechseln in die Politik

In den letzten Wochen haben mehrere israelische Prominente ihren Wechsel in die Politik angekündigt. Darunter sind Noam Shalit, der Vater des für fünf Jahre im Gazastreifen festgehaltenen Soldaten Gilad Shalit, der durch die weltweite Kampagne für die Freilassung seines Sohnes bekannt geworden war, sowie Karnit Goldwasser, die Witwe eines im Libanon gefallenen Soldaten. Außerdem kündigte der populäre Journalist, Autor und Medienstar Yair Lapid die Gründung einer neuen Partei an. Dieser Schritt folgte auf eine Gesetzesinitiative in der Knesset, die Medienvertretern eine mehrmonatige Pause vor einem Wechsel in die Politik auferlegen würde. Lapid gilt als "Mann der Mitte", der sich für soziale Reformen zugunsten der Mittelschicht einsetzt. Während Shalit für die Arbeitspartei in den Wahlkampf ziehen will, schloss sich Goldwasser dem Team um Lapid an.

The braggart and the introvert

"In light of the dissatisfaction with politicians, a knight on a white horse has arrived to save Israel from itself. [...] But he [...] talks about everything in the world but has never said anything interesting or original. [...] One must ask what Lapid brings to politics that gives him the skills to make decisions about the country's fate. [...] Lapid has [...] never said what he thinks about any of the burning questions Israel must decide on - negotiations with the Palestinians, the fate of the settlers, dealing with Europe and the Arab world, relations with the United States, the Iranian threat, and Israel's economic and social structure." Shlomo Avineri, HAA 11.01.12

Lapid making a mistake

"Our political system is in dire need of fresh faces and new ideas. Lapid's apparent decision to run at the head of a new party, however, will only serve to further entrench the current political reality in Israel. [...]

What is needed instead is for talented people, like Lapid, to strengthen the existing parties.

The only coalition that will be able to reach a new 'grand bargain' in Israeli society and implement real long-term change is one that is based on Labor, Kadima, and the Likud. [...]

If Lapid were to join any of these existing parties, it is likely that they would be significantly strengthened, allowing a more stable central block to take shape in the Knesset. This would much more accurately reflect the wishes of Israeli society than the reality that exists in our parliament today."

Elie Bennett, JED 12.01.12

Kadima's fate lies in Lapid's hands

"His rumored plans [are] to establish a new centrist political party that seeks to change the electoral system and get the ultra-Orthodox sector into the workforce.

If Lapid chooses to follow this path and lead his own party, polls show that rather than hurting [...] Netanyahu's Right-religious bloc – the very bloc Lapid aspires to defeat - it will propel the Right to another firm victory in the Knesset.

A new Lapid party would only add to the muddle of parties on the Left, further splitting the Center-Left bloc, and enabling the Likud to become the strongest force by far in the Knesset. [...] He will bring about many medium-sized parties – everyone will have 15 mandates ... these parties will face a large Likud party with Lieberman, which will always win."

Michal Toiba, IHY 15.01.12

Israel's new political reality

"Anyone who sees the welfare of the country before him must be happy that a person like Yair Lapid is willing to enter a theater that is almost impossible to negotiate without emerging out of it battered, bleeding, smeared and badmouthed. [...]

It should not be taken for granted that a man [...] with a high salary and huge popularity, would give it all up because of a frank desire to bring change. This may not be enough to succeed in politics, but it merits appreciation and support. [...]

His move into politics threatens not only centrist parties like Kadima and Labor. He may also take away Knesset seats from Likud and even from Yisrael Beiteinu. It is no wonder that Knesset members from across the political spectrum enlisted to the cause of stopping him.

Israeli politics will look different as of this morning. An important, central element entered the ring; an element that cannot be ignored and that may have a dramatic effect on the face of the country."

Sima Kadmon, JED 09.01.12

The Lapid effect

"Thankfully, now that Lapid has committed himself, the so-called 'Lapid Bill,' which would require a cooling off period of six months to a year for journalists interested in entering politics, will probably not pass. Though concern for the blurring of lines between politics and journalism is understandable, it is the responsibility of newspaper editors and TV and radio producers – not lawmakers – to ensure the professionalism and objectivity of reporters. [...]

And Lapid's decision has rejuvenated the political scene. [...] Robust competition, whether it be among businesses producing consumer goods or politicians offering new ideas and policies, brings out the best in human endeavor."

JPO 09.01.12 Editorial

Likud and the boutique parties

"A day after Yair Lapid commanded the headlines, it was Shelly Yachimovich's turn on Monday to reveal a hidden ace. There's no telling how long she's had Noam Shalit up her sleeve, but the Labor Party boss definitely played him well. Shalit shoved Lapid off the headlines for a full 12 hours, putting Labor and its head back in the media spotlight.

Shalit is [...] well liked; he evokes warm emotions and a sense of solidarity. [...] What else does he have? Time will tell, but it's already clear that we misread him. [...] We thought he would want only

peace and quiet after Gilad's return, but on Monday we learned that he has other plans."

Yossi Verter, HAA 10.01.12

Noam Shalit has come out of the closet

"Noam Shalit [...] has betrayed the trust and the immense good-will generated during the campaign to release Gilad.

[...] Noam Shalit's decision to use for his own political ambition the wave of public recognition that he gained by leading an apolitical campaign to release Gilad, resulting in a controversial political agreement that brought to the release of 1,027 terrorists, makes him personally and morally responsible should these terrorists strike again."

Ron Jager, AS 13.01.12

Shalit welcome to run

"Anyone [...] who is not a habitual criminal can join the political race and run for the Knesset. This is one of democracy's cornerstones. [...] This is true for Noam Shalit, and of course for Karnit Goldwasser.

However, the above statement says nothing about the abilities of these two figures, their suitability for the post, or even their electoral appeal. [...]

The voters will decide whether the familiar face from television, or the impression created by the struggle to return their loved ones home are enough to vote for Shalit and Goldwasser."

Ariela Ringel-Hoffman, JED 12.01.12

Our winter of emptiness

"A new political species has arrived in Israel, the celebrity-politician, and this is bad news. [...]

There is no greater proof of the emptiness of the public discourse and the shallowness of Israeli politics - the hope for change and the desire for salvation by a celebrity."

Gideon Levy, HAA 12.01.12

2. Gerichtsbeschluss zum Staatsbürgerschaftsgesetz

Seit 2002 verhindert Israel den Zuzug und die Einbürgerung palästinensischer Ehepartner israelischer Staatsbürger (die zumeist israelische Araber sind). Bei dem "Staatsbürgerschaftsgesetz" handelt es sich um eine temporäre Bestimmung, die jedoch bereits zweimal verlängert worden ist. Nun hat der Oberste Gerichtshof nach einer Klage mehrerer Menschenrechtsorganisationen mit 6 zu 5 Stimmen entschieden, dass das Gesetz verfassungsmäßig

und aufrecht zu erhalten sei. Zwar erkannten die Richter ein Recht auf Familienleben an, schränkten aber ein, dass dieses nicht in Israel stattfinden müsse.

Während das Gesetz 2002 aus Sicherheitserwägungen heraus verabschiedet wurde, sind sich nun die meisten Kommentatoren einig, dass es darauf abzielt, die "demografische Bedrohung" durch die Palästinenser einzuschränken.

Ending the Palestinian "Right of Return"

"137,000 residents of the Palestinian Authority (PA) moved to Israel in 1994-2002, some of them engaged in either sham or polygamous marriages.

Israel has two major reasons to fear this uncontrolled immigration. First, it presents a security danger. Of 225 Israeli Arabs involved in terror against Israel, 25 of them, or 11 percent, had legally entered Israel through the family unification provision. They went on to kill 19 Israelis and wound 83. [...]

Second, it serves as a stealth form of the Palestinian 'right of return,' thereby undermining the Jewish nature of Israel. [...]

Last week, Israel's Supreme Court, by a 6-5 vote, upheld this landmark law, making it permanent. [...]

The closing of the back-door 'right of return' secures Israel's Zionist identity and future."

Daniel Pipes, IHY 19.01.11

Arabs have never been equal before the law

"Last week's decision by the High Court of Justice [...] has closed a chapter in the life of Israeli democracy. The Supreme Court no longer wants to protect Israel's Arab citizens. [...]

The looming expulsion of thousands will be carried out with the silent agreement of enlightened members of society. [...] Its cause is that maintaining a Jewish majority is an ideological common denominator for the overwhelming majority of Israelis, and this ruling is a symptom of the demographic arguments made on their behalf.."

Yitzhak Laor, HAA 17.01.12

Rights first, then security

"Why do we feel the need to conceal the essence of the matter, which is the demographic aspect that is critical to preserving Israel as a Jewish state? It is not inconceivable that Justice Edmund Levy, who penned a minority position, would have ruled in favor of the Citizenship Law if the main argument proffered would have stressed the Jewish character of the state and the regulations governing immigration to Israel. [...]

Every Israeli leader and diplomat needs to make clear [...] that the Jews are entitled to exercise their fundamental right to their land, a right that is anchored in law, history, morality, and jurisprudence."

Dror Eydar, IHY 20.01.11

Citizenship law – a necessary evil

"It is [...] something that looks [...] like a well-planned invasion. A Bedouin man in the Negev imports wife after wife from Gaza, then abandons each one of them, and these women then qualify for welfare and housing. Where does it end? [...]

How is it that those who seek to grant Palestinians citizenship [...] also want to absorb illegal migrant workers and foreign contract workers, and rapidly destroy the Jews' legal right to define themselves? [...]

Those who support a two-state solution – myself included – want to ensure sovereignty and dignity for both Jews and Palestinians. As opposed to the rightists and leftists who want to see a bi-national state, we want to employ the old adage that good fences make good neighbors. But when you allow a flood of Palestinians to invade Israel in such a one-sided manner, what justification remains for dividing the land? It becomes unnecessary."

Dan Margalit, IHY 13.01.12

Protecting Israel

"While the vast majority of Palestinians married to Israeli Arabs are not terrorists, it is eminently reasonable to assume that members of a people with which Israel is in a state of conflict, if not war, present a high risk. [...]

Many Western countries simply do not recognize their citizens' right to establish a family with anyone they choose.

In times of war this is all the more true. [...]

The High Court should be praised for making a tough but necessary decision that strikes the proper balance between recognition of personal liberty and maintaining the integrity and security of the world's only Jewish state."

JPO 12.01.12 Editorial

What are we defending?

"A court that vets this nationalistic and racist amendment, [...] which makes false use of security to try to cover up its racism - is an institution that must no longer be defended. [...]

It is better to tell the truth: [The Supreme Court] is not the guardian of the seal of democracy and human rights in Israel. [...]

High Court President Dorit Beinisch [...] voted against the shameful ruling. But she drew out the process until an initial justice on the case who opposed the law, Ayala Proccacia, retired and was replaced by a justice who would say yes to the law. Beinisch wanted to have her cake and eat it too - to seem enlightened while not further kindling the anger of the right against her court. [...]

Well, Madame President, [...] a court that neutralizes itself with its own hands and abuses its office out of fear of its enemies is not a court."

Gideon Levy, HAA 15.01.12

Debate over Citizenship Law is muddied by inaccuracies

"While reasonable people can disagree about this law, a constructive debate should be based on facts. The law [...] allows for a case-by-case examination of whether a family member who resides in Gaza or the West Bank can live in Israel as a temporary resident or receive citizenship. The law [...] restrict[s] applicants to women over 25 and men over 35. [...]

The majority of the High Court carefully sought to balance the ideals of an open society with the very real security needs of its citizenry. For this reason too, the law can change if the need for security declines."

Jason Edelstein, JPO 22.01.12

3. Diskriminierung äthiopischer Israelis

In Israel leben etwa 120.000 äthiopische Juden, die seit den 80er Jahren eingewandert sind. Nachdem nun in einem Fernsehbericht die Vereinbarung eines Gemeinderates in der süd israelischen Stadt Kiryat Malachi aufgedeckt wurde, der zufolge in bestimmten Wohnvierteln keine Wohnungen an Äthiopier vermietet oder verkauft werden sollen, ist Diskriminierung zu einem prominenten Thema in der öffentlichen Diskussion geworden. In Kiryat Malachi demonstrierten 2.000 Menschen, überwiegend äthiopische Einwanderer, und eine polizeiliche Untersuchung des Vorfalls ist eingeleitet worden.

In der Knesset wurde eine Krisensitzung des Ausschusses für Immigration, Integration und Diasporaangelegenheiten einberufen. Während der Sitzung sagte Integrationsministerin Sofa Landver (Yisrael Beitenu) jedoch, die äthiopischen Einwanderer sollten dankbarer für das sein, was der Staat für sie getan habe. Derweil nutzten junge äthiopische Aktivistinnen das Medieninteresse, um weitere Aufmerk-

samkeit auf Rassismus in Israel zu lenken. So marschierte der 26-jährige Mulet Araro in drei Tagen von Kiryat Malachi nach Jerusalem. Dort demonstrierten etwa 5.000 Menschen gegen Rassismus und Diskriminierung.

Halting discrimination

"It would be unfair to claim that Israel and Diaspora Jewry have ignored the plight of the Ethiopian community [...].

In 2005, the Knesset passed an amendment to the Civil Service Law that obligates government offices to hire Ethiopians in accordance with their representation in the general population (1.5 percent). In March 2011, the law was expanded to include state-owned companies and municipalities. However, while there appears to be a lot of goodwill on the part of Diaspora Jewry and consecutive governments, implementation on the ground has been lacking [...].

Most problematic [...] is a counter-productive government policy of providing generous housing grants to Ethiopians on condition apartments are purchased in designated neighborhoods. As a result, Ethiopian ghettos have been created. [...] It is abundantly clear that the endeavor of fully integrating Ethiopians is a work in process. Combating the debilitating effects of Ethiopian ghettos is the first order of business."

JPO 19.01.12 Editorial

Defend Israel's Ethiopians

"In recent days Israeli media has been railing against the racism directed at Ethiopian Jews as if it were news and not an ongoing phenomenon. [...]

We, Ethiopian Jews, have done everything to please veteran Israeli society. We have changed our identities and our given birth names, we have stopped speaking our mother tongue [...].

We wanted to be Israelis and in turn we gave up our own Jewish traditions, including authentic dress and customs. [...] Now, after erasing traditional elements from our rich and splendid identity and heritage, it turns out Israeli society is not satisfied with these drastic changes. We are still unfit because of the color of our skin.

[...] I feel that the people who should have come out to protest the racist policies of schools in Kiryat Malachi are you, the veteran Israelis who take great pride in Israeli solidarity."

Ayanawo Fareda Senbatu, IHY 12.01.12

An inconvenient truth

"Discrimination of Israeli-Ethiopians has no political or national basis. It can stem only from racist feelings. And since almost none of us do anything about this, we are all at least tainted by racism. [...]"

The indifference of ordinary Israelis to this situation may not make them racists themselves. But by hiding our heads in the utopian sand, we are willing accomplices to racism."

Anshel Pfeffer, HAA 20.01.12

A national outrage

"Every wave of immigration was subject to discrimination. [...] The wave of immigration from Morocco was certainly discriminated against. [...]"

No one talks about ethnic discrimination anymore, until these terrible acts rear their ugly heads at ultra-Orthodox educational institutions or when boycotts are imposed on renting apartments to Ethiopian immigrants. It is so infuriating that the outcry against these acts should not be left to the immigrants [...]. We need a new protest movement that will unite the entire public. It is only right that the Ethiopians, who have a personal interest in seeing discrimination eradicated, are the last of the protesters. It is the moral duty of the rest of us, all of us, to be outraged."

Dan Margalit, IHY 11.01.12

Stop patronizing Ethiopians

"The notion that Ethiopian olim should thank the government is a patronizing attitude [...]. It also took the minister of absorption about a week to officially condemn the racism exposed in Kiryat Malachi. [...]"

Just look at the official guidelines adapted solely for Ethiopian immigrants, whereby government housing grants are permitted to Ethiopian Israelis only on condition that their apartments are purchased on designated, predetermined streets and addresses (in impoverished and weak neighborhoods, thereby perpetuating the cycle of poverty.) [...]"

In light of the above, the minister of absorption can't possibly faithfully represent Ethiopian Israeli immigrants whom she is supposed to serve."

Efrat Yerday, JED 18.01.12

An upswing in Israeli racism

"Many Ethiopian immigrants were appalled by [...] Landver's (Yisrael Beiteinu) criticism that Ethiopian immigrants are not sufficiently grateful to Israel. [...]"

Landver did not deny that discrimination against Ethiopians [...] is an unbearable manifestation of racism. But she resented a suggestion by Ethiopian

community activists that her ministry was somehow to blame for the phenomenon. [...]"

Landver, who is trying to deal with the many problems connected with the Ethiopian immigrants [...] to the best of her ability, was justifiably insulted by such accusations. However, as the saying goes, she should have chosen to be wise, not technically correct, and [...] should have avoided the condescending remarks.

One cannot label the State of Israel as an outright racist state, but it would certainly benefit from a little less prejudice and a little more tolerance."

Susan Hattis Rolef, JPO 18.01.12

Our virulent school system

"What makes the existence of these phenomena possible is the education that children receive in many parts of Israel [...]. This education teaches them that 'not all human beings are equal,' that there is a substantive distinction [...] between Jews and non-Jews, between women and men, between Jews of Mizrahi descent and Ashkenazim, and between blacks and whites. [...]"

That is the education given by many streams in Israeli society, while the state turns a blind eye and in many cases even pays for it. There is a reason why a child who studied in the religious Zionist stream's schools in Kiryat Malachi is prepared to sign a racist agreement that excludes people of Ethiopian origin from living in the building where he lives [...]. He grew up with the distinction."

Yuval Albashan, HAA15.01.12

Not a question of black or white

"Most people were convinced that it wasn't their fault. [...] 'We' aren't the ones who are racist; it's a Russian minister, who we immediately denounce, or a 'racist' driver whose life we ruin. [...]"

Though the summer's protests against the high cost of living may seem to have ended without making an impact, there has actually been continued social awareness. [...]"

[But] our leaders, in response, are meticulous in decimating the chance of solidarity among us. [...] With one hand they are sponsoring heavy-handed legislation against various minorities; and with the other, they are pitting one segment of the population against the other, so that we fight each other while they laugh [...] – or [shore] up the occupation and [prepare] to bomb Iran."

Merav Michaeli, HAA 23.01.12

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 eine **Anschlagsserie gegen iranische Nuklearwissenschaftler** und Israels vermeintliche Verwicklung darin:

Killing the brains

"The killing of nuclear scientist Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan [...] joins a series of assassinations that left five Iranian scientists and experts dead in the past two years. These were central 'knowledge bases' in the Islamic republic's military nuclear program and their assassination disrupted the quest for an Iranian bomb. [...]"

The most curious question in the face of these incidents is why Iran [...] has failed to retaliate for the painful blows to its nuclear and missile program? [...]"

The reason is apparently Iran's fear of Western retaliation. Any terror attack against Israel or another Western target [...] may prompt a Western response. Under such circumstances, Israel or a Western coalition [...] will have an excellent pretext to strike and destroy Iran's nuclear and missile sites. [...]"

Khamenei and Ahmadinejad are apparently showing restraint and sustaining the assassinations and explosions with clenched teeth [...] so that the retaliatory means remain intact and are available once the major confrontation takes place."

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 12.01.12

What if the Iranians start killing scientists

"The Israeli public did not question the wisdom of assassinating the Iranian scientists. In Israeli culture, which sanctifies security, such questions are seen as treason. [...]"

Not only will killing individuals fail to significantly delay the project, [...] it will almost certainly have the opposite effect: It will only add to Iran's determination to carry on. [...]"

Anyone who legitimizes the assassination of scientists in Tehran jeopardizes the personal security of

scientists on the other side. The next phase of the assassination war is liable to turn international scientific conferences into arenas of assassination. It is entirely possible that the damage caused by the assassinations far outweigh the benefits they bring." Avner Cohen, HAA 16.01.12

Über das kürzlich verabschiedete "**Gesetz gegen Infiltration**", das es erlaubt, Asylbewerber ohne Gerichtsverfahren drei Jahre lang zu inhaftieren:

Don't be a refugee

"Under the 1951 Refugee Convention, someone who flees his country due to a well-founded fear of persecution cannot be deported from the country to which he flees. [...] But [...] attitudes have hardened in the early 21st century: Refugees are increasingly viewed as enemy 'infiltrators.'"

The law the Knesset passed Monday night is an extreme expression of this trend. Essentially, it turns the asylum-seeker into a criminal. [...] But unlike other criminals, whose crimes must be proved in court, the new law states that [...] any asylum seeker can be imprisoned for up to three years - or sometimes even longer, if [...] he comes from a place considered a source of anti-Israel terror. [...] The law not only violates the Refugee Convention and international human rights law, but also the right to liberty enshrined in Israel's Basic Law on Human Dignity and Freedom. Therefore, it must be hoped that the High Court will declare it unconstitutional."

Aeyal Gross, HAA 11.01.12

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