



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 12/12

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

01. – 14. Juli 2012

1. Wehrpflicht für ultra-Orthodoxe?

Im Februar 2012 erklärte der Oberste Gerichtshof das sogenannte Tal-Gesetz, das ultra-orthodoxe Männer („Haredim“) vom Wehrdienst befreit, für ungültig. Nun muss die Regierung bis August eine neue Lösung finden oder ca. 60.000 Yeshiva-Studenten einberufen. Nachdem Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu einen damit befassten Untersuchungsausschuss zunächst auf Druck der ultra-orthodoxen Koalitionspartner auflöste, änderte er nach einer Großdemonstrationen gegen Wehrdienstverweigerer seinen Kurs und versprach ein Gesetz, das mehr ultra-Orthodoxe zum Wehr- oder Zivildienst bringen soll.

Auch der Koalitionspartner Israel Beitenu drohte zwischenzeitlich mit einem Regierungsaustritt, sollten arabische Bürger nicht zu einem obligatorischen nationalen Dienst verpflichtet werden. Ein Großteil der israelischen Araber ist aufgrund der historischen Konfliktsituation vom Armeedienst befreit.

National service is a win-win compromise

"It seems that the most sensitive solution involves finding a compromise between the conflicting positions. [...]"

One practical solution is to expand national service. [...] Volunteers would integrate into an environment suitable for them. [...]"

The success of haredi integration into national service depends on our ability to meet their unique needs and fully adjust programs to their way of life. [...] No one is threatening the vocation of those men who devote their lives to Torah study [...]. Torah study is the foundation of the Jewish people's existence, and these people preserve the spiritual power of the Torah. At the same time, anyone who does not choose this path can perform national service and share in society's burden."

Lea Nass, IHY 05.07.12

From now on, we're just suckers

"A democratic country cannot grant more privileges – such as exemption from various civil duties – to one specific sector of society and deny other sectors the same rights. [...]"

Sovereign Israel can impose sanctions on haredi draft-dodgers if it wishes to do so.

The government and the prime minister who heads it are willing to miss a historic opportunity to create a new, more equal society in Israel – just to avoid a rift with their 'natural partners' in the coalition. [...]"

Universal service for all 18-year-olds. The voting public will not accept anything less."

Yoav Kish, JED 03.07.12

It's time to really stop being suckers

"The committee's proposals are [...] an expansion of the inequality. How can you compare someone who spends three years [...] on a missile boat with someone who, at 23, spends a few hours a day doing 'civilian service in the community' [...]? [...]"

The most important difference between military and civilian service is the risk of being wounded or killed.

[...] Only when Haredim, too, are fighting at the front and, heaven forbid, being wounded or killed, will the Shas party's leaders really understand the horrors of war. We'll see them suddenly toning down their calls for war - a vocation at which party chairman Eli Yishai excels."

Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA 10.07.12

Historic Opportunity

"Before the committee was dismissed, several of its members seemed bent on presenting suggestions that included various means of coercion which would have only exacerbated the already tense situation. [...]"

The facts are undeniable. In 2002 just 36 percent of the haredi population was employed; by 2010, 46% were. [...] As of May 2012, some 10,000 haredi had served in the IDF. [...]"

Nothing would be more counterproductive to the positive trends already taking place than to transform the issue of the draft into a holy war for the haredi populace.”

JPO 02.07.12 Editorial

Netanyahu and the Haredim

“The imperative to change the system extends far beyond the need to defuse the rage at 60,000 haredi draft evaders [...]. The fundamental issue to be resolved is the ever-growing number of youngsters driven by anti-Zionist rabbis into believing that they should engage in a lifetime of full-time Torah study, reject earning a livelihood and subsist on state welfare.”

Isi Leibler, JPO 10.07.12

Let the IDF choose its soldiers

“Instead of becoming a country with a draft police, we could become a country that fosters, empowers, and pampers those who serve. [...] All servicemen and women will receive a full salary based on the average national salary every month throughout their military service. [...] All the others [...] will get no benefits. None. No housing or mortgage benefits, no subsidies for studies, no income support payments [...]. No more gifts, no more transfer payments, no more grants, and benefits.”

Stella Korin-Lieber, GLO 08.07.12

A rally of incitement against those who are different

“The reservists protest rally [...] was a demonstration of incitement against the minorities in Israeli society – the ultra-Orthodox and the Arabs. Those yelling ‘I’m not a sucker’ don’t really want to integrate these minorities, alleviate the antagonisms between different groups and save the Israeli economy from collapse. They just want the ‘others’ to suffer too, and be punished for being different.”

Aluf Benn, HAA 08.07.12

Military service: Duty, privilege, opportunity

“Service [...] has brought together young people from all walks of life: Jews and Druze, Circassians and Bedouin, and formed a brotherhood of arms, a nation. [...] Those ultra-Orthodox rabbis and Arab politicians who object to compulsory military service for their young people are actually pursuing the very same aim: keeping their young people from integrating into Israeli society. They know that service in the IDF will accomplish that aim.”

Moshe Arens, HAA 10.07.12

No excuse for evasion

“It is impossible to ignore that the political reality and the national history create a difficult dilemma for the Arabs. This was understood by past governments and they refrained from forcing Arab citizens to enlist. This understanding is even more essential for a government that continues to treat the Arab minority with suspicion.

At the same time, it is impossible not to demand of Arab citizens that they share the burden - whether inside their own community or outside of it. Shirking this duty actually increases the Arab population's dependence on the state and gives the state another pretext for continuing to deprive the Arabs, and at the same time it pushes them to the margins of Israeli public life.”

HAA 03.07.12 Editorial

2. Der Levy-Report über den Status der Westbank

Vor sieben Jahren erschien in Israel der von der Sharon-Regierung in Auftrag gegebene Sasson-Bericht, in dem die Evakuierung aller Siedlungsaußenposten im Westjordanland empfohlen wurde. Ein von Premier Netanyahu eingesetzter Untersuchungsausschuss ist nun zu einem gänzlich anderen Urteil gekommen. Der nach dem Ausschussvorsitzenden Edmund Levy – einem ehemaligen Richter am Obersten Gericht – benannte Bericht war auf Druck von Siedlerführern zu Stande gekommen, um einen Weg zu finden, die Evakuierung von Außenposten zu verhindern.

Die drei beteiligten Juristen argumentieren darin, dass alle Siedlungen legal seien, da das Westjordanland gar kein besetztes Gebiet sei. Dafür hätte dieses von einem souveränen Staat erobert werden müssen, Jordanien habe aber nie die legale Hoheit über die palästinensischen Gebiete besessen. Netanyahu hat sich zu diesem Ergebnis bisher bedeckt gehalten. Der Generalstaatsanwalt soll den Bericht nun überprüfen.

Bury the report

“The committee, in effect, annexed the territories to the State of Israel, when it recommended that all Israeli outposts be sanctioned. [...]

In the Camp David Accords [...] Israel itself recognized the special status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as the legitimate rights of their inhabitants. [...]

The Attorney General [...] has a responsibility to explain to [...] Netanyahu the profound international

law implications of adopting the report's recommendations. Netanyahu must shelve the report and insist that the executive branch of his government enforce, without delay, the judicial orders regarding all of the outposts, starting with those built on private land."

HAA 10.07.12 Editorial

Understanding the Levy Report: US protests, but agrees

"The existence of the report will take the wind out of the sails of the US and the EU as they try to damn the settlements and Israel's actions. The US will have to acknowledge that since President Reagan, it has considered the settlements to be 'not illegal' but only, 'ill-advised'. [...]

The international community [...] will no longer be able to claim with a straight face that the lands are 'occupied Palestinian lands' [...]. Congress will no doubt strongly endorse the Report. [...]

The upshot of all this can be that Israel will end the de facto building freeze and start construction of settlements in earnest. It will also signal the end of the pursuit by Israel of the two-state solution. The Israeli center will no longer believe that Israel is an occupier and instead will believe that the land is theirs, which it is."

Ted Belman, AS 11.07.12

The occupation cannot be erased

"One cannot curb millions of Palestinians' demands for freedom via legal reports.. [...]

At most, the report proves the theory of legal realism, whereby two jurists can reach the opposite legal conclusions just because the positions they hold are different.

The report is an unusual example of the shortcomings of the system, which insists on translating moral and political questions into a legal conflict. Asking whether the territories are occupied according to international law is twisted question and misses the essence. The question should not focus on the territories, but rather, on the people who live there. These people are subjected to an occupation regime, live under military rule, are tried at military courts, face limitations on movement, work and education, and most of all lack human rights, liberty, and the freedom to shape their own future. Have you ever heard of liberated territory with occupied residents?"

Boaz Okon, JED 11.07.12

Netanyahu wants low profile for political dynamite

"It's not at all clear Netanyahu would have appointed the committee [...] had he known what it would say. [...] His staff [...] immediately understood it was political dynamite. If it isn't implemented, the settlers and right-wing politicians will declare war on Netanyahu. But if it is implemented, he will be the target of international excoriation. [...] Netanyahu knows the settlements are Israel's diplomatic Achilles' heel. Not one country in the world supports Israel on this issue. [...] Adopting the Levy report would thus drive away Israel's last remaining friends. [...]

There is no guarantee the West Bank will remain quiet if the diplomatic process stays stalled. [...] In a worst-case scenario, adoption of the Levy report could result in a third Intifada."

Barak Ravid, HAA 10.07.12

Why Netanyahu won't endorse the Levy Report

"Even Israel's staunchest friends refuse to accept the legality of its settlement of the West Bank. Needless to say, the Levy Committee report is not going to change that.

[...] In order to placate the settlers, the Sharon government invented the outpost system, which allowed settlers to expand to dozens of new points across the West Bank, while formally distancing the government from that settlement activity and absolving it of any legal responsibility.

[...] But legalizing the outposts would put an end to that façade and would be a slap in the face of the international community, including Israel's friends and allies, producing dire political repercussions. That is why Netanyahu shot down the legalization bill last month, and that is why he will almost certainly not endorse the Levy report."

Jonathan Rosen, JPO 11.07.12

Poof! The occupation has vanished!

"No one is fooled. Not in the world, and not here.

Is it a problem that, deep down, Israelis know that this situation is not only immoral, but also unsustainable? [...] For all that it draws on distinguished legal scholarship and voluminous research, the take-home message of the Levy Commission report boils down to something very close to this:

In Israel, ending the occupation is as easy as closing your eyes."

Bradley Burston, HAA 11.07.12

3. Partieller Freispruch für Ehud Olmert

Im Prozess gegen den ehemaligen Premierminister Ehud Olmert ist nun ein Urteil gesprochen worden. Der frühere Kadima-Vorsitzende musste 2008 wegen der Anklage in mehreren Fällen von Korruption von allen Ämtern zurücktreten. Nun ist er – als erster Regierungschef in Israels Geschichte – wegen der Annahme von Schmiergeldern verurteilt worden. In zwei anderen Anklagepunkten, die ursprünglich zu seinem Rücktritt führten, ist er jedoch freigesprochen worden. Ein weiterer Prozess läuft noch.

Olmert: Not exactly innocent

"Beyond the media spin, it is important to note that the court ruled [...] that Olmert was guilty of a significant, even severe conflicts of interest. On this basis he was convicted of breach of trust. In more enlightened countries, such a conviction would immediately end a politician's career. In terms of the other charges against Olmert, the court essentially ruled that there is a very thin line between deceptive conduct and criminal behavior. The verdict determined that Olmert had not crossed that line. But there is a huge difference between that and the notion that Olmert was proven innocent."

Haim Shine, IHY 07.11.12

It's time to take stock

"The court did not criticize the prosecutors' handling of the case. [...] Even with respect to the charges on which Olmert was acquitted due to lack of proof beyond a reasonable doubt, the court was critical of his conduct from an ethical and disciplinary standpoint. [...]"

Furthermore, a conviction for breach of trust is not the trivial matter that Olmert and his lawyers made it out to be on Tuesday, as it involves the violation of a law designed to maintain the public's trust in government. [...]"

The success Olmert's lawyers had in raising reasonable doubt over the two main sets of allegations in the case does not mean that he should not have been indicted."

HAA 11.07.12 Editorial

Olmert deserves 2nd chance

"Prosecution officials should be bowing their heads today. The same is true for the police. The desire to hang Olmert at town square pushed them beyond the red lines acceptable in a democratic state.

Prosecution officials charged forward, did not think twice about the grave implications of the words used in the indictment. [...] This dark desire to eliminate Olmert changed the way things work around here and made a senior public official disappear from the legitimate public sphere. [...]"

Olmert [...] has been acquitted by the court, and as one who was forced to quit Israel's top political post he is now entitled for another chance."

Attila Somfalvi, JED 11.07.12

Olmert fell because he failed

"His loyalists and cronies are trying to create the impression that Olmert's acquittals will pave his way back to the top. This is a tall tale. [...] The judges' decision [...] had absolutely no effect on the contempt the public feels for the man who reigned as one of Israel's weakest prime ministers. [...]"

Olmert was one of the most reviled prime ministers in Israel's history [...]. He won this status [...] through the violent evacuation of Amona, the delusional 'convergence plan' (a unilateral withdrawal from the West Bank), and culminating in the dangerous and failed handling of the Second Lebanon War. [...] Olmert's true corruption is the fact that he didn't care about the public."

Mati Tuchfeld, IHY 11.07.12

Say no to forced resignation

"The necessary change is to the rules of the game: an end to the protocol under which a member of the government must resign immediately in the event of their criminal indictment. [...] The Olmert trial has highlighted the power that this mandatory resignation places in the hands of a single official: The state prosecutor has the ability to bring about the immediate and automatic ouster of a cabinet minister or prime minister. That is unreasonable force."

Uri Misgav, HAA 12.07.12

What if his name was Bibi?

"I couldn't help rubbing my eyes in disbelief at the joyful celebrations which greeted former premier Ehud Olmert's acquittal in two corruption cases and the simultaneous belittling of his conviction on a third. [...]"

In Olmert's cases, the judges don't dispute that money changed hands between American businessman Morris Talansky and Olmert or that he double-billed charities on his air journeys. [...] However, they didn't ascribe to him 'criminal intent,' even if illicit ties and illicit practices existed. Here we

willy-nilly enter the realm of psychoanalysis rather than legal reasoning. [...]

If [...] we acquiesce to paint Olmert as a latter-day Dreyfus, then we foolhardily regress into the bad old days when higher-ups behaved badly while pretending not to see, know or comprehend."

Sarah Honig, JPO 12.07.12

Sorry is the hardest word

"Two crucial, sensational acquittals, albeit due to doubt, and one secondary conviction – and it's as though nothing had happened. As far as the opponents of Israel's 12th prime minister are concerned, Olmert was convicted, even if proved otherwise. [...]

Those who exalt the law-enforcing system ignore its verdict the moment it does not please them and fails to fulfill their expectations. [...] Olmert has been [...] tarred and feathered even before the first suspicion was raised. [...] Some [...] believed Olmert's corruption was indeed profound; others had political and personal accounts to settle with the man and his way. [...]

The verdict does not leave Olmert pure as snow. [...] But I doubt it is graver than the conduct of some other politicians, who have never been indicted. [...] Olmert deserves a loud, clear word of apology, despite everything."

Gideon Levy, HAA 15.07.12

An astonishing verdict

"This verdict, if it is upheld, changes the rules of the game. It appears to open the door wide to governmental corruption [...], and takes us back to those dark days we thought we had managed to escape. For years, legislators, prosecutors and judges have worked to instill better norms among public servants, and along comes a verdict that appears to revoke all their efforts."

Mordechai Gilad, IHY 11.07.12

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.

Zum Tode des ehemaligen israelischen Präsidenten Yitzhak Shamir:

The legacy of despair

"Shamir's admirers [...] remember favorably his commitment to the idea of a 'Greater Land of Israel' and the settlements he established everywhere. [...] But the truth is that Shamir turned lack of diplomatic activity into a policy and preserving the freeze into a goal. These led to, among other things, the eruption of the first intifada.

Shamir accepted the [...] invitation to participate in the regional peace conference in Madrid. Later he admitted that he had responded to the American initiative against his will, [...] and that he planned to drag his feet endlessly in the depths of the diplomatic process. [...]

Benjamin Netanyahu is, unfortunately, Shamir's heir. [...] Thus Shamir's policies - to stave off an agreement with the Palestinians and the chance of peace with the Arab states - are also the policies of our current prime minister, his loyal student."

HAA 02.07.12

Shamir – Israel's least appreciated prime minister

"Shamir certainly was Israel's least appreciated prime minister, amid presiding over some of the state's greatest achievements.

And what was that principal achievement? He kept the people safe. Few died under his watch. He resisted international pressure for Israel to make concessions that would have led directly to buses blowing up. [...]

He would make no territorial compromises that would endanger Israel's security. He would sign no Oslo agreements where the Jewish state would agree to arm some of its most lethal enemies."

Shmuley Boteach, JPO 02.07.12

Über das deutsche Gerichtsurteil, das die religiöse Beschneidung (Brit Mila) von minderjährigen Jungen als verbotene Körperverletzung wertete:

The European's skewed view of circumcision

"It is hard to think of a more appalling decision. Did the court know that circumcision is the most ancient ritual in the history of Judaism [...]? Did it know that banning mila was the route chosen by two of the worst enemies the Jewish people ever had, the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV and the Roman emperor Hadrian? [...]

There are judges in Germany quite willing to say to religious Jews, in effect, 'If you don't like it, leave.' [...]

Teaching children to speak German, sending them to school and vaccinating them against illness are all [...] done without consent. The court's judgment was tendentious, foolish and has set a dangerous precedent."

Jonathan Sacks, JPO 05.07.12

The sacred brit and other myths

"In a democracy, people should be allowed to observe their traditions without politicians or courts intervening. [...] Except for the fact that it's not my life. None of my four sons were asked in advance when [...] intense, intimate pain was inflicted upon them, and their private parts irrevocably changed. Hardly a democratic act. [...]

We have to be clear that these are religious rituals which are often hard to defend, and to do so, we have to take all these concerns into consideration, not simply as lip service. [...]

I want circumcision [...] to be carried out utilizing all the benefits of modern medicine and technology and I want the government to have the power and political willpower to act against those who use unhygienic and dangerous methods. [...]

Only if this is done seriously, will the majority of Jews feel they can continue supporting these practices in the future."

Anshel Pfeffer, HAA 13.07.12

*Über einen Bericht von Al Jazeera, dem zufolge Palästinenserpräsident **Yassir Arafat** an einer **Poloniumvergiftung** gestorben sei:*

Rewriting the Arafat story

"The fact that Arafat left the stage while afflicted with a disease that one does not speak about openly, far away from his people, at a French hospital, is incommensurate with the national ethos. [...]

There is no doubt that it's much more dignified to arrange a heroic 'martyr's death' for the father of the nation, preferably at the hands of Mossad [...].

Israeli officials in fact liked the version whereby Israel's long intelligence arms are omnipotent and killed Arafat, and thereby made do with winks and smiles [...]. [But] on the eve of his death, Arafat was perceived by Israel's defense establishment as a first-rate public relations asset: He was unstable, confused, isolated in his headquarters and not functioning well. At that point, Israel had no interest in assassinating him."

Alex Fishman, JED 05.07.12

Arafat is still dead and we know who took him in
"Western societies today are obsessed with searching everywhere for racism and hate speech. Well, the idea that the Jews murdered Arafat [...] falls into that category.

[...] First of all, anyone who saw Arafat during the last year of his life knew he was seriously ill and steadily worsening. [...]

The history of this myth shows that it is the Palestinian leadership, not Israel, that has something to hide, that has kept everything secret. I suspect the secret is the incompetence of his own doctors."

Barry Rubin, IHY 08.07.12

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

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Verantwortlich:

Dr. Ralf Hexel,
Leiter der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Israel

Redaktion:

Maike Harel
Anita Haviv

Homepage: www.fes.org.il

Email: fes@fes.org.il