



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 18/12

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

03. – 15. Oktober 2012

1. Neuwahlen am 22. Januar 2013

Das israelische Parlament hat sich am 15. Oktober aufgelöst und damit den Weg für vorgezogene Neuwahlen am 22. Januar 2013 frei gemacht. Premier Netanyahu hatte den Termin zuvor mit diversen Fraktionen abgestimmt, so dass die Entscheidung einstimmig fiel. Ursprünglich sollten die Wahlen erst im Oktober 2013 abgehalten werden. Begründet hat Netanyahu diesen Zug mit Schwierigkeiten, den Staatshaushalt für 2013 zu verabschieden.

Beobachter gehen jedoch davon aus, dass es sich bei den Wahlen um ein politisches Manöver handelt. Es soll verhindern, dass Netanyahu nach einem Kampf um den Haushalt geschwächt antreten könnte. Auch würde ein neues Mandat ihm eine stärkere Position gegenüber dem amerikanischen Präsidenten verschaffen. Dies würde ins Gewicht fallen, wenn sich etwa Barack Obama in einer zweiten Amtszeit stärker des israelisch-palästinensischen Konflikts annehmen würde.

Umfragen prognostizieren derzeit einen komfortablen Vorsprung für Netanyahus Rechtskoalition vor dem Mitte-Links-Block. Der Zeitung Haaretz zufolge könnte das „nationale Lager“ von derzeit 66 auf 68 Mandate im Parlament zulegen und insgesamt 66% der Stimmen auf sich vereinen. Bei den persönlichen Sympathiewerten liegt Netanyahu ebenfalls mit 57% unangefochten an der Spitze.

Election fever

“It makes good sense to hold elections before the budget is passed. This would enable the public to debate burning economic issues. It would also give political parties an opportunity to articulate their economic visions. The government elected after this process takes place would be better positioned to pass the 2013 budget. [...]

Rushing to pass a budget before November, [...] increases the chances that the government could cave in to populist demands. And lack of fiscal disci-

pline at such a critical time could have adverse affects, including the lowering of Israel's credit rating.”

JPO 02.10.12 Editorial

Early elections unnecessary

“Regardless of who wins the upcoming early elections, the next government will be forced to approve a cruel budget cut at its first celebratory meeting. [...] If the elections were to be held on schedule, the economic measures would take effect on March 31 instead of December 31. [...]

So why call early elections? For no reason at all. The past few months have not seen any significant change that warrants an early vote. [...] The very thought that this time we will go to the polls on schedule unnerved certain bored elements that simply cannot do without early elections. They are in love with the bickering between the parties and the artificial disputes. They don't care how much money it is going to cost, or if it is really needed.”

Hagai Segal, JED 09.10.12

61 seats –mission possible

“No right-wing or religious party will let the non-right-wing bloc set up a government if it doesn't have a majority of its own. [...]

This time the non-right-wing bloc needs an additional six seats to gain a 61 majority. This is a mission possible. Since 1999, one-sixth of the people who used to vote have stayed away from the polls - they account for around 20 seats. Most of them are non-right-wing voters. The huge tent-city social protests, [...] the fear of religious extremism, the anxiety about a war with Iran without American backing - all this has the potential to bring the masses back to the polls to keep alive their hopes for their country. To increase the non-right turnout, public figures and various movements must get into politics.”

Sefi Rachlevsky, HAA 10.10.12

Elections will strengthen right-wing bloc

“Right now, we can say that the election campaign has begun with a sense that nothing will change, except an exchange of Knesset seats between Kadima and Yair Lapid’s Yesh Atid (There is a Future) party. The right-wing bloc looks like it will be strengthened, but this does not mean the prime minister will prefer a coalition with it rather than forming a national unity government. Moreover, Labor party leaders are not ruling out such a possibility in advance.”

Dan Margalit, IHY 12.10.12

The recidivist Israeli voter

“The coming elections will not focus on the question of Bibi (Netanyahu) or Shelly (Yacimovich); it’s more likely that we’ll get both.[...] To Yacimovich’s credit it should be said that she does not hide the possibility of joining Netanyahu’s government. [...] Why do masses of Israelis, who wouldn’t dream of giving their vote to Likud, support its satellite parties? Why are Labor, Kadima and Yesh Atid, which are also announcing the possibility that they will support Netanyahu, the default choices of realistic men and women [...]?”

Meretz is the only Zionist party that has never joined a ‘national unity government’ and its voters can rest assured that their votes will not find their way to one of the dry fig leaves lining the Netanyahu government. [...]

Tossing Meretz to the sidelines is another sign that our society has lost its way.”

Akiva Eldar, HAA 05.10.12

The game of thrones

“The Center: Everybody wants to crowd into the Center. But the Center is no more than an imaginary destination. Israeli voters have solid opinions on just about every subject. This ‘Center’ is neither here nor there, neither ‘radical’ like the Left nor ‘nationalist’ like the Right [...]. The truth is that the Center is a disguise the Israeli Left uses to steal votes from the conservative and right-wing camps. That was how they sold Rabin in 1992 – a man devoted to security, not really a leftist – and we ended up with Arafat and Oslo.”

Dror Eydar, IHY 12.10.12

A chance to right things

“After the last elections, Netanyahu’s forging of a broad coalition including the Labor Party stirred the hope that he would replace the conservative Revisionist worldview [...] with a pragmatic and forward-looking policy. [...]

But to our great disappointment the prime minister devoted his best efforts to expanding the settlements and nurturing the illegal outposts. [...]

Hopefully the left and center parties will have the wisdom to put at the top of the election agenda the choice between a policy that helps ensure Israel’s democratic identity and a policy that ensures a further entrenchment of the occupation and a perpetuation of the conflict.”

HAA 11.10.12 Editorial

A captive budget

“Netanyahu [...] knew the 2013 budget was liable to be one of the most difficult budgets ever submitted. He knew the budget would have to include deep cuts, to the tune of NIS 12-15 billion. He knew it wouldn’t be easy to run for reelection after passing such a budget. [...] His equivocation is, in the final analysis, entirely political. Calling early elections won’t change the budgetary situation. [...] Early elections merely postpone the inevitable. [...]

The fact that a prime minister’s own political interests, rather than the good of the economy, is the determining factor in such a critical decision is liable to prove costly to Israeli citizens.”

HAA 03.10.12 Editorial

Economy & elections

“Issues such as poverty, high consumer prices and income inequality must not be ignored. During the election campaign candidates must be forced by the voting public to articulate coherent economic policy solutions such as increasing competition to bring down the prices of consumer goods; finding ways of getting more ultra-Orthodox into the labor market; and improving our educational systems so that more young people receive the education they need to find higher-paying jobs as adults.

These are necessary conditions for the health and strength of Israel no less than protecting our citizens from terrorism and military threats.”

JPO 11.10.12 Editorial

Someone to run against

“The assumption that there is no alternative to Netanyahu is false. [...]

Over the past few days Kadima MKs, businessmen, public opinion leaders and regular citizens have been pressuring former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to join the race. [...] His return to the political arena would shake up the elections. [...]

After four years in which the center-left bloc was missing a dominant leader, Olmert can change the situation entirely. Amid the stalemate in the peace talks with the Palestinians, the shaky relations with western countries, the fear of a brutal war with Iran

and the sense that there is no hope for a better future - Olmert can present himself as an alternative. After being acquitted of the key charges that forced him out of office, it is clear that Olmert deserves another chance.”

Attila Somfalvi, JED 10.10.12

There seems to be a glitch

“The leftist and centrist parties [...] have failed for years to formulate a clear agenda or to unite behind an agreed-upon leader. [...] Begrudgingly, the leftist and centrist parties are looking for a savior to gather the party fragments and unite. [...] They came up with a new hope: Mr. Ehud Olmert, a former prime minister, a convicted criminal, who was given a suspended sentence of one year in prison for breach of trust and is currently facing bribery charges [...]. It is true that legally there is nothing preventing Olmert from being elected prime minister, but [...] beyond the law there are values. [...]

It is the duty of the citizens of Israel to prevent individuals convicted of crimes involving immoral behavior from returning to public office. All the parties should be in perfect agreement on this. This is a matter of national unity, the only way to effect positive change in the conduct of public figures in the State of Israel.”

Haim Shine, IHY 12.10.12

2. Zerwürfnis zwischen Netanyahu und Barak

Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu und Verteidigungsminister Ehud Barak, bisher enge Koalitionspartner, haben sich über Baraks Kontakte in die USA zerworfen. Barak hatte die US-Regierung kontaktiert, ohne dies mit dem Regierungschef zu koordinieren. Netanyahu warf Barak laut Medienberichten vor, die Beziehungen zwischen Israel und den USA durcheinander zu bringen und die Spannungen zwischen ihm und Obama zu erhöhen. Finanzminister Steinitz warnte Netanyahu zudem, dass Barak den Staatshaushalt für 2013 torpedieren würde. Seitens der Medien wird spekuliert, dass Barak den Konflikt provoziert hatte, um sein Profil vor den Neuwahlen zu schärfen.

A time to choose

“A clear manifestation of the low to which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government has sunk is the tale of the relations between him and Defense Minister Ehud Barak.

The two men, the pilot and the navigator who were about to take off to bomb Iran, have become embroiled in an embarrassing altercation full of reciproc-

cal snipes, threats, reprimands, arrogant counter-statements, a near dismissal and finally a summit meeting culminating in a diplomatically formulated joint statement that pretends to iron out their differences but in reality shows how severe they are.”

HAA 09.10.12 Editorial

Meet the new dove

“Maybe [Netanyahu and Barak] are reading the headlines about the ‘crisis’ between them and doubling over with laughter. [...]

All this to distinguish Barak from his twin-in-power, portray him as a moderate leader, get his breakaway party Atzmaut into the Knesset in the next elections and keep him at the Defense Ministry.

The clue indicating that we're dealing with a conspiracy [...] is hiding in Barak's holiday interview with Israel Hayom. [...] Barak called on Israel to ‘continue strengthening’ Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. [...] Barak denies that the timing of the interview has anything to do with the tolling of the election bells. [...]

For three years Barak [...] saw from up close how Netanyahu worked to delegitimize Abbas [...] and kept his mouth shut. And now, quite by chance, when the danger of a conflict with Iran has given way to the danger of early elections, Barak has pulled ‘a new diplomatic plan’ out of his holster. [...] All of a sudden Abbas is a partner we have to strengthen. [...] Just as Barak could have expected, Likud rushed to depict him as a fifth column.”

Akiva Eldar, HAA 10.10.12

Netanyahu's anger at Barak is real

“Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu does not forgive subversiveness. [...]

Now his tough words are directed at Defense Minister Ehud Barak. [...] Barak's political influence has plummeted to a point where it is non-existent. Netanyahu has no political reason to orchestrate a feud with Barak. The dispute may be good for Barak, but it is not for Netanyahu. The anger is real.”

Mati Tuchfeld, IHY 04.10.12

The I-word

“Likud has an interest in turning Ehud Barak into a punching bag to increase support from the right wing. Meanwhile, the defense minister has to distinguish himself from his partner if he hopes to bring back enough votes from the left and center to make it into the Knesset.

The pair might return to sparring – on the freeze of the Palestinian issue, on the relationship with the settlers, and mainly on the question of drafting the

ultra-orthodox, since a military strike, as long as it is limited, can help them both electorally.”

Amos Harel, HAA 10.10.12

The end of the affair

“The political establishment [...] has entered advanced stages of madness. [...]

The music of political collapse is all around us, but the loudest noise is the collapse of what used to be the most impenetrable wall of all — the close relationship between Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak. After Netanyahu's attack on Barak [...] it is clear that things cannot go on as they were. [...] Many people warned Netanyahu of Barak's penchant for betrayal. [...] Barak has understood from Netanyahu that he cannot be assured of serving as defense minister in the next government, a fact that forces him to run alone in the next elections. This is why he needed to distance himself from Netanyahu and move out from under the prime minister's shade. Netanyahu saw this as crossing a red line.”

Mati Tuchfeld, IHY 03.10.12

Time for Barak to bolt

“‘Barak’ means ‘lightning’ in Hebrew. Ehud Barak, in any known language, usually means trouble. [...]

From staunch allies that allowed Barak to stay in government though bereft of any political backing, he and Netanyahu are now stabbing each other in the back [...].

As if there were no ayatollahs in Iran bent on Israel's destruction; [...] no serious social problems in this country that need to be synchronized with Israel's real defense needs. [...]

The defense minister has long overstayed his welcome. Instead of watching the enemy, he is now playing the enemy with the prime minister, irresponsibly using Israel's relations with the United States as the ball, and causing serious strategic damage along the way. [...]

As a politician [...] he has been nothing but a disaster.

We all know this is happening because elections are in the air. Unless Barak can close a deal with Netanyahu before the voters have their say, and while his five-member party is still relevant to the coalition's survival, he may have no political future. Creating this now public row with the prime minister, however, should be giving Netanyahu every incentive not to make a deal. It is time for Barak to leave the stage.”

Hirsh Goodman, JPO 05.10.12

He started it!

“The row between [...] Netanyahu and [...] Barak jeopardizes Israel's security. [...] Why did Finance

Minister Steinitz warn Netanyahu that Barak will try to trick him on the budget issue? Could it be that Steinitz does not differentiate between a minister's legitimate campaign to prevent a budget cut in his office and what he referred to as ‘a sting’? Could it be that Netanyahu, an expert in setting ‘red lines,’ does not know how much a war costs? [...] Is it possible that Netanyahu and Barak, who have above average intelligence, will mess things up because no one around them is trained in the treatment of irritated egos?”

Ariella Ringel-Hoffman, JED 09.10.12

3. Spannungen zwischen Türkei und Syrien

Die Spannungen zwischen der Türkei und Syrien haben sich in Folge des anhaltenden syrischen Bürgerkriegs deutlich verschärft. Die Türkei unterstützt die Rebellen gegen das Assad-Regime und hat etwa 100.000 syrische Flüchtlinge aufgenommen. Seitdem auch im syrisch-türkischen Grenzgebiet gekämpft wird, ist mehrmals auch türkisches Gebiet beschossen worden. Dabei wurden Anfang Oktober fünf türkische Zivilisten getötet. Die Türkei griff daraufhin Ziele in Syrien an und tötete mehrere syrische Soldaten, obwohl unklar war, ob es sich bei dem Beschuss um einen absichtlichen Angriff handelte. Zudem autorisierte das türkische Parlament weitere Militärationen gegen Syrien.

Weitere türkische Einsätze fanden bisher jedoch nicht statt. Allerdings zwang die Luftwaffe ein syrisches Passagierflugzeug aus Moskau kommend über türkischem Gebiet zur Landung. Der Regierung zufolge hatte die Maschine Waffen aus Russland geladen.

Turkey and Syria

“Under Erdogan's leadership, Ankara has been providing support to the Syrian opposition forces almost from the very beginning of the uprising against Assad [...]. Turkey has emerged as a regional hub of anti-Assad activity. [...]

There are a number of reasons for Ankara's decision to turn against the Assad regime. [...] Ankara's turn against Damascus has more to do with Iran than with Syria. [...] Replacing Assad with a Sunni regime in Damascus would help counter Iran's Shi'ite expansionism in the region. [...] Assad has also been increasing his support for the PKK, a terrorist organization fighting Turkey for an autonomous Kurdistan that would be carved out of Turkish territory. Finally, Turkey would like to see a quick end to the civil war in Syria in order to prevent a major refugee crisis. [...]

From Israel's point of view, regime change in Syria and a warming of ties with Turkey would be welcome developments."
JPO 04.10.12 Editorial

The changing Mideast power structure

"In the last two weeks there have been a number of reminders of how the configuration of the Middle East is in the process of dramatically changing. Over the last 10 days, in particular, Turkish artillery has been firing into northern Syria. [...] Syrian spokesmen sought to stress that Turkish power was looming over the Arab states as a whole from the north. [...] Syria is not alone in looking suspiciously upon the reassertion of Turkish power. [...]

Thus, evidence is growing of the increasing military encroachments of both Turkey and Iran in the heartland of the Arab world.

This change amounts to a new reconfiguration of the politics of the Middle East. [...] Rather than the Arab world being left to itself, it is discovering that it will have to face the very two hegemonic powers that dominated the area for centuries before Napoleon's armies arrived: Iran and Turkey."

Dore Gold, IHY 12.10.12

Will Erdogan get tough?

"Turkey has not launched [...] an operation on its own because as much as Erdogan wants Assad to disappear, he is not interested in a direct all-out war against a desperate Syrian army. Many predict that such a war would lead to Assad's downfall and to the rise to power of Sunni elements at the expense of the Shiite Alawites. Turkey would benefit from Iran's weakening grip in the Middle East and become more influential in the region, but the economic price of such a war would be heavy [...].

Should Turkey withdraw from Syria after such a war, the Syrian Kurds would most likely establish an independent state and encourage their brothers in Turkey to do the same. [...]

These considerations have so far prevented Turkey from following through on its threats, but this situation may change in light of the killing of Turkish civilians."

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 05.10.12

If only we were Turks

"When it's properly motivated, the UN can react with lightning speed. [...]

Gazan missiles fired for many years – and very intentionally so – at Israel's entire South don't upset [UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon]. [...] But in the case of Islamist-led Turkey, Ban's concern took on a resolute proactive expression.

One Syrian mortar shell that hit just inside Turkish territory last Sunday made headlines worldwide. Over 55 shells and rockets that barraged Israel that same night went largely unmentioned. Israeli pain is clearly not worth wasting airtime for. [...] If only we were Turks!"

Sarah Honig, JPO 11.10.12

Waiting for Turkey's apology

"Turkish government's forceful response to the killing of five of its citizens [...] is understandable. [...]

In the wake of this attack and the swift response, surely the Turkish government [...] will understand and support the Israeli response to far more violent attacks on its civilian population. [...]

In retrospect, perhaps Erdogan and other Turkish leaders will realize that their venomous attacks on Israel during and after the anti-terror operation in Gaza that began at the end of December 2008 were wrong. [...] In this context, instead of demanding an apology from Israel for the unfortunate events related to the 2010 'Free Gaza' flotilla, Prime Minister Erdogan might consider apologizing to Israel for his unjustified and vitriolic attacks. [...]

In light of the Turkish government's efforts to defend the nation and its citizens against Syrian attacks, the Israeli response in 2010 turns out to have been entirely consistent with Turkish policies. Erdogan needs to acknowledge this in order to avoid the appearance of double standards, in which one set of morals is seen to apply to Turkey, while entirely different requirements are demanded of Israel."

Gerald Steinberg, TOI 04.10.12

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 den Friedensnobelpreis für die EU:

Nobel Prize for irony and bad taste

"Immediately after the announcement of the winner in Oslo, expressions of internal European hatred blasted the television news channels as cameras turned to Athens, where Greeks demonstrated against German Chancellor Angela Merkel's upcoming visit. [...] This is one of the EU's problems: the tension between the relatively rich countries, such

as Germany, and those which require overwhelming financial assistance. [...] The situation calls for correction, for reforms and not a prize.

[...] This same Nobel Prize recipient, the EU, has also spent years stonewalling and shrugging off Turkey's repeated requests to join the union. Is this reconciliation? Does this type of 'unity' deserve a Nobel Prize? [...]

Maybe someone from the Norwegian parliament needs to initiate an investigation: Who is really responsible for the Nobel Peace Prize committee's ridiculous decision?"

Yaakov Ahimeir, IHY 14.10.12

Time for a global Nobel?

"This continent that during the last century bled like no other continent bled before [...], became, despite the difficulties, a peaceful continent. [...]

You are now a Noble Peace Prize Laureate – the honor comes with expectations. One of these is that you become more involved in the Middle East, whose dangers threaten you as well."

Gideon Levy, HAA 14.10.12

Über die Kennzeichnung von Produkten aus jüdischen Westbanksiedlungen in der EU:

The problem with boycotts

"An initiative of the European Union was recently announced which will require commercial chains and stores to clearly mark products made in Israeli settlements. In addition, the EU is considering completely boycotting products made in the settlements. But if such a move were made, would it be legal? I doubt it.

Israel and the EU have a free-trade agreement that stipulates preferential tariffs on goods produced in Israel or Europe. [...] The countries of the EU, as well as Israel, are all members of the World Trade Organization. The various WTO agreements set a precedent prohibiting discrimination [...]. According to this principle, each WTO member state must give equal treatment to goods from other countries in the group without discrimination. [...] The EU, at least as far as Israel's knowledge goes, is not boycotting goods from other countries who have territorial disputes, such as the Falkland Islands, a British overseas territory. The EU also doesn't prohibit the entry of Palestinian-made goods, for example, from the Gaza Strip or areas in Judea and Samaria."

Gil Nadal, IHY 10.10.12

Ginger from Tekoa

"Israel should actually welcome this step. If it is so convinced that the settlement enterprise is justified, why complain about marking the products it produc-

es? [...] Being angry might still hint that Israel is ashamed of its settlements. [...] Israel and the settlers know that this is a problematic enterprise [...] and this is why they are so determined to hide the source of products from the occupation. By revealing this Israeli embarrassment, Europe has already achieved something important. But this achievement is not sufficient. [...]

There is no longer any point to marking products that come from the territories; all of Israel gives them its backing, whether by agreement or by remaining silent. [...] If you want to try to influence Israel, to put pressure on it to end the occupation, boycott all of its produce."

Gideon Levy, HAA 07.10.12

HAA = Haaretz; JED = Jedioth Ahronoth; JPO = Jerusalem Post; IHY = Israel HaYom, TOI = Times of Israel

Veröffentlicht am: 18. Oktober 2012

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