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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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1. Yair Lapid und die Kürzung des Staatshaushalts

Israel hatte das Jahr 2013 ohne einen neuen Staatshaushalt begonnen. Mit Blick auf die Wahlen zur Knesset im Januar 2013 hatte die damalige Netanyahu-Regierung notwendige schmerzhaft Anpassungen nicht durchgeführt, Staatsausgaben erhöht und letztlich die Haushaltsverabschiedung auf nach den Wahlen verschoben.

Dadurch steht der neue Finanzminister Yair Lapid vor schwierigen Aufgaben: Zum einem muss er den derzeitigen Behelfsetat in einen geordneten Haushalt 2013-14 umwandeln und zum anderen muss er das Budget um 30 Milliarden NIS (etwa 6 Milliarden Euro) kürzen. Dabei ist eines seiner zentralen Wahlkampfversprechen, die Situation der Mittelklasse, die mit stagnierenden Löhnen und hohen Lebenshaltungskosten zu kämpfen hat, zu verbessern.

Für Diskussionen sorgte nun ein Facebook-Kommentar von Lapid. Darin stellte er die fiktive "Riki Cohen aus Hadera" als typische Vertreterin der Mittelklasse dar, die gemeinsam mit ihrem Mann ein Monatseinkommen von 20.000 NIS habe, alle zwei Jahre in den Urlaub fahre, aber ihre Kinder nicht beim Kauf einer Wohnung unterstützen könne. Kritisiert wurde dieser Kommentar, weil viele Familien der Mittelklasse ein sehr viel geringeres Einkommen haben.

Haushaltskürzungen sind insbesondere in den Bereichen Verteidigung, Infrastruktur, Löhne im öffentlichen Dienst und Kindergeld vorgesehen. Laut jüngsten Berichten versucht Lapid jedoch, eine Minderung der Kürzungen auf 18 Milliarden NIS durchzusetzen. Stanley Fischer, Gouverneur der israelischen Zentralbank, als auch Beamte des Finanzministerium kritisierten daraufhin diesen Plan, der zu einem weiteren Anwachsen des Defizits führen würde.

Lapid, Mrs. Cohen and illusions

"Lapid — the spokesperson for this disgruntled upper middle class — must adhere to his constituents. They want the finance minister to lower taxes, lower living expenses, housing costs, and flights abroad. [...] Their hopes are legitimate. Who wouldn't sign off on lower living costs? The question is: Who will pay the price, and where will the money come from? [...] There are some extremely wealthy people living in Israel. Most of them are unknown and they go out of their way to hide from the media. [...] For more than 60 years, the tax authority has failed to tax these people justly."

Haim Shine, IHY 03.04.13

Don't blame Yair Lapid or Mrs. Cohen

"[Lapid] was talking about the young generation of workers and educated people who [...] abstain from pleasures [...], only to be left without financial security. These are the workers whose tax payments are needed to fulfill the socially-just vision of helping the weak who need food and housing. [...] Israel's job market [...] is the problem. The salary paid there doesn't match the cost of living. [...] It's a sickness that must be treated so every working person, including those with low salaries, can support themselves respectably. [...] To help the weakest the less weak must be strengthened at the expense of the strong."

Ravit Hecht, HAA 03.04.13

The new contract with Riki

"Lapid cannot help Riki Cohen without Israel becoming Greece at the same time. In the short term, it simply isn't possible. [...] He must set aside his promises to Riki Cohen and first make all the cuts necessary to keep Israel from exceeding a 3 percent deficit this year. A larger deficit will lead to a loss of faith, a rise in interest rates, a fall in Israel's credit

rating, less growth and more unemployment. And Riki Cohen will eventually pay the price."
Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA 05.04.13

Hat tip to Lapid!

"The hard truth is that Lapid will probably not be able to do much to help Ricki Cohen over the next few years. The major problem facing the middle-classes, according to Lapid, is their inability to help their children buy houses due to the country's exceedingly high price of real estate, but this is not a problem a finance minister can solve. Until the Israeli Lands Authority frees up more land for construction and the process for planning approvals is speeded up – neither of which elements are under Treasury control – little will happen to bring prices down to a more realistic and affordable level."

Jeff Barak, JPO 07.04.13

Lapid should keep quiet and learn

"It's the job of the government, the Ministry of Finance, and of the Ministry of Housing and Construction to supply enough land for residential construction based on the economy's annual need, to eliminate the bureaucratic obstacles which squeeze the soul out of every square meter, and to make possible, through reasonable and real legislation, the construction of homes at reasonable prices. Beyond that - no benefits. The middle class is strong and smart enough to plan its own lives; just don't get in the way."

Stella Korin-Lieber GLO 02.04.13

What about the poor?

"Policymakers should try to lower the cost of living by bolstering competition. [...] Increasing competition by cutting red tape and subjecting monopolies to more oversight should be the overarching objective of any elected government."

Hezi Sternlicht, IHY 03.04.13

Lapid can get the job done

"If Lapid succeeds in making the budget transparent, this feat alone would be considered a complete success. Afterwards, the light of day will cleanse it of all the corruption. [...] Lapid is also the right person to demand that the public make cuts before imposing additional taxes. [...] And why do tax-paying citizens need to finance 250 local authorities, mayors, deputy mayors, spokespeople, and state-sanctioned rabbis? Aren't 100 local authorities enough for eight million citizens? [...] The Israeli

public establishment is saturated with unnecessary organizations, superfluous officials and redundant activity.

Only a finance minister like Lapid can cut down on all of this excess before deciding to raise taxes."

Ron Tira, JPO 03.04.13

The money is in the occupation, Lapid

"Lapid [...] is searching for the magical compound to seal the gaping hole in the budget. He should allow the budget division in his ministry to ask just one question: Exactly how much would we save by ending the occupation? He should instruct his officials to set up a website called costofoccupation.co.il where the shekels will run at a terrifying speed. There he will also find the solution to the plight of Riki Cohen."

Zvi Bar'el, HAA 10.04.13

2. John Kerrys Friedensplan

Der US-amerikanische Außenminister John Kerry hat es sich zum Ziel gemacht, Israelis und Palästinenser zurück an den Verhandlungstisch zu bringen. Er kündigte an, innerhalb von zwei Monaten zwischen den Konfliktparteien „pendeln“ zu wollen, um die Voraussetzungen für eine Wiederaufnahme von Friedensgesprächen zu erreichen. Laut Kerry soll es bei diesen Gesprächen zunächst um die Grenzen eines palästinensischen Staates und Sicherheitsgarantien für Israel gehen. Weitere Details könnten später verhandelt werden. Israelische Kommentatoren zeigten sich angesichts Kerrys Besuchen bei Premier Netanyahu und dem palästinensischen Präsidenten Abbas jedoch skeptisch, ob die neue Initiative Früchte tragen könne. Abbas hatte sich bereit erklärt, für zwei Monate auf unilaterale Schritte bei UN-Institutionen zu verzichten, um Kerrys Bemühungen eine Chance zu geben. Netanyahu stimmte einer Ausweitung von palästinensischen wirtschaftlichen Projekten in den von Israel kontrollierten Gebieten zu. Zu konkreteren Fortschritten ist es bisher aber nicht gekommen.

Putting peace on the map

"Abbas is ready to give the U.S. arbitration a two- to three-month chance before turning to international bodies. Meanwhile, violent confrontations in the West Bank are mounting and threaten to turn into an all-out clash. The opportunity and the threat mean that Israel's government must take advantage of the short time frame to present clear stances, to dispel the convenient vagueness behind which it is

hiding its lack of policy, and turn the phrase 'two states for two peoples' into practice."
HAA 07.04.13 Editorial

Our 'peace letter' and why we said it

"The eventual implementation of the two-state solution is simply too important to Israel's long-term security and future [...] for Israel to sit by idly, passively looking on as the prospects for establishing two states slip away. Instead, Israel should capitalize on its extraordinary economic, political and military advantages over the Palestinians to take the lead where the PA falls short. [...] The most effective way for [Netanyahu] to do so would be to join forces with Secretary of State Kerry [...] to devise 'confidence building steps' that would reaffirm Israel's genuine and steadfast commitment to the two-state solution. Taking this pro-active approach would not only offer a chance to reverse the negative trend in Israeli-Palestinian relations, it would also place the blame for any continued stalemate squarely on the PA's shoulders."

Peter Joseph, David Halperin, JPO 10.04.13

Undercutting U.S. peace plan

"Kerry's shuttle diplomacy [...] has so far led to worrying disappointment. The impression created is that Israel is insisting on preventing any progress. [...] Israel is insisting on negotiating on all the core issues, while the Palestinians want to discuss at the first stage only the framework of borders and security issues. [...] It is impossible to understand this Israeli position [...]. These two important issues are the basis for progress. [...] Israeli's rejectionism is also revealed in its insistence on not making any good will gestures to the Palestinians [...]. If the new government continues to stick to these policies and tactics it cannot claim to have washed its hands of responsibility, mostly toward the Israeli public, but also toward the U.S. administration.

"HAA 12.04.13 Editorial

Kerry's quest: Who really wants peace?"Kerry would reportedly like to revive and revise the 2002 Arab peace initiative, which Israel rejected at the time and the Arabs did nothing serious to convince them otherwise. Much has changed in the region over the past decade, and Kerry's challenge will be to convince all sides they will need to show much greater. [...] The big question is whether the United States is the only one that wants peace badly enough to devote more than empty rhetoric to the cause. Despite the flurry of diplomacy [...], it's far

from clear whether the Israelis and Palestinians themselves are ready to work with the new secretary of state."

Douglas Bloomfield, JPO 10.04.13

John Kerry's plan: Still missing a peace

"The Saudi Plan [...] purports to offer normal diplomatic and political relations between Israel and the entire Islamic world if Israel goes back to its 1948 borders and accepts the principle of repatriation of the Palestinian refugees. [...] To its credit, the Saudi plan when put forth, implicitly recognized that the conflict is not between Israel and the Palestinians, but the entire Islamic world. [...] The plan contains no commitment to ending state sponsored incitement and hate language. [...] The Arab regimes [...] seem neither able nor willing to curb this toxic incitement in their media, mosques, school texts and Internet – a precondition for preparing their publics for a new era of mutual respect, tolerance and dignity. [...]

This means [also] respecting the sacrosanct status of Israel's existence and security. [...] Secretary Kerry, your first mission is to work to eradicate the state sponsored incitement and hate language pandemic in the Islamic world. Israelis expect respect for human life and dignity, not dhimmitude.

Elihu Richter, TOI 08.04.13

Obama's obsession

"Let us pretend that North Korea is not threatening to launch the first nuclear attack since World War II; let us pretend that the rival camps in Syria are not using chemical weapons [...]. Let us all focus on the 'Palestinians.' As far as Secretary of State Kerry is concerned, that is probably the most important thing. Where does this obsession come from? From the inability to admit the collapse of the thesis that Israel and the Palestinian are at the heart of the conflict in the Middle East, and perhaps even in the entire world. [...] According to this strange perception [...] if the Palestinian solution is 'solved,' planet Earth will be covered with cosmic tranquility. [...] It's time for a slightly more realistic American policy. [...] It's time to let go and deal with your burning and pressing problems and the world's; there is really no need to come here every two weeks."

Guy Bechor, JED 12.04.13

The Obama and Kerry map

"Obama has attempted to simplify the complexities of the Israel-Palestine conflict; in advance of Secretary of State John Kerry's visit to Israel this week, he has urged both sides to guarantee the single most

important objective for the other. An independent state with clearly defined borders for the Palestinians, physical security and safety for Israel. [...] Obama and Kerry have their hearts in the right place but they make an extremely complex situation sound too simplistic. They are concerned for both Israel's security and for Palestinians' right to independence. But unless there is a clear acceptance from both sides – especially Israel – as to what this entails it, like all previous attempts at reaching a solution, will come to nought."

David Newman, JPO 08.04.13

Kerry's pointless frequent flier miles

"The reason for Kerry's country-hopping is to reignite peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. To this end, first he flew to Istanbul on Sunday, where he made an appeal to the Turkish government to 'play a role' in pushing the process forward. To say that this is delusional would be to diminish the depth of its derangement. Turkey has been making overtures to Hamas in Gaza and remains hostile to Israel. [...]

This proves what we already know about Kerry: He is not going to let facts get in the way of his foreign policy."

Ruthie Blum, IHY 09.04.13

A flight to nowhere

"Why should Kerry waste his precious time? [...] There is no formula that can make peace between us and them – there isn't even a formula for a short-term interim agreement.

The leadership in Ramallah has already proven on two or three separate occasions that even far-reaching concessions on our part will not cause them to lay down their arms. [...] The permanent arrangement the Palestinians seek is a permanent arrangement without us. [...] Kerry's energies should be directed towards other conflict regions in the world; the Far East, for example. He has a better chance of turning Pyongyang into London than of making peace in our horribly polarized region."

Hagai Segal, JED 06.04.13

3. Yom HaShoa - Holocaust-Gedenktag

Jedes Jahr im jüdischen Monat Nisan wird in Israel der Yom HaShoa, der Holocaustgedenktag, der dieses Jahr auf den 8. April fiel, begangen. Um 10 Uhr gibt es eine durch eine Sirene markierte

Schweigeminute, bei der das Land zum Stillstand kommt. Außerdem wird eine Staatszeremonie in Yad Vashem, der zentralen Holocaustgedenkstätte, abgehalten, an der unter anderem hochrangige Politiker, Holocaustüberlebende und Diplomaten teilnehmen.

In seiner Ansprache zum diesjährigen Yom HaShoa sagte Premier Benjamin Netanyahu, das jüdische Volk dürfe sein Schicksal niemals mehr anderen anvertrauen. Der mörderische Hass gegen Juden habe sich umgewandelt in mörderischen Hass gegen den jüdischen Staat, fügte er hinzu und verwies auf den Iran. Allerdings könne Israel sich heute verteidigen.

In einer Umfrage, die kurz vor dem Gedenktag veröffentlicht wurde, hatten 92% aller in Israel lebenden Holocaustüberlebenden beklagt, dass der Staat nicht genügend Mittel für sie bereitstelle.

Jews, come home

"The lesson of the Holocaust isn't just to defend our citizens. The lesson of the Holocaust has been screaming out for the past 70 years that Jews have no other land but Israel. [...] Over the last year, the Jewish community in France experienced a 30 percent increase in anti-Semitic incidents. The Jews of Europe are still fighting for their right to live Jewish lives on the very continent that pursued and ravaged their ancestors for some 1,000 years [...]. The Jews of Europe, it seems, are refusing to see that reality. [...] Our dear brothers and sisters, what are you still doing there? Haven't we learned enough? Come home. Israel needs you, and you need Israel."

Dror Eydar, IHY 08.04.13

Diplomatic independence

"The world stood by [...] even as the contours of the Nazi extermination regime against Jews became apparent. [...] Today too, the international community has largely done nothing to halt the Iranian and Islamic campaign of delegitimization and defamation of Israel. [...] So diplomatically, the Jewish people and the State of Israel owe the world nothing. Broadly speaking, the nations of the world have no right, no moral basis, to tell us what to do, how to conduct our politics, where to erect our security fences, how to conduct our military campaigns, what ancestral lands to hand away to the Palestinians, or where draw our borders."

David Weinberg, IHY 08.04.13

Amusing ourselves to death

"The vogue in our brave new world is to cease perceiving the Holocaust and our subsequent Jewish sovereignty through Jewish eyes. [...] The decedents of Nazis, of Nazi-collaborators and of all the multitudes who expediently opted to see nothing, prefer that the mass-slaughter on Europe's soil be watered down with universalist-humanist banalities. Generalized platitudes quasi-absolve Germany. They imply that any nation anywhere and anytime might succumb to Nazi-like excesses, given sufficient socioeconomic and political provocation. [...] It was just prosaic coincidence that the roles weren't reversed. The Jews, argue moral-relativists, could just as credibly have become Nazis. [...] Germans like to depict themselves as yet another European occupied population, as having been conquered by a space alien called Hitler and his unpleasant cohorts. Hence modern Germany emphasizes the 'good Germans' – chiefly those who banded together in the failed attempt to assassinate Hitler."

Sarah Honig, JPO 11.04.13

Better late than never

"The news that Germany's legal authorities have decided to try to prosecute about 50 SS men who served as guards in Auschwitz reached me [...]. For some 60 years, Germany's legal authorities failed to take action against criminals from the Third Reich era – and if they did, in most cases the punishments were quite absurd.

Still, it should be said that it's better late than never. The important point in the current decision is not punishing those old men, but the principle. In other words, the new Germany is finally admitting that for decades it was wrong in showing great and even criminal forgiveness toward many of the executors of the Holocaust acts."

Noah Klieger, JED 07.04.13

Hunting Nazis is still relevant

"No doubt, there will be those who are skeptical of the continued pursuit of Nazi war criminals, now all elderly. [...] The truth remains, however, that the passage of time does not, in any way, diminish the guilt of the murderers, nor should old age afford protection to those who committed such heinous crimes. And regardless of the arguments raised by the skeptics, our generation still has an obligation to the Nazis' victims to make a serious effort to find and punish those who turned them – innocent men, women, and children – into victims. [...]

Yom Hashoa is a good time to remember not only the victims, but also those who murdered them and remain alive and can be brought to justice."

Efraim Zuroff, TOI 05.04.13

Don't let racism win

"From the terrible events, we learned that we have no choice but to take care of ourselves [...]. But the memory of the Holocaust, which taught us to beware of external threats, failed to protect us from the internal threat which is increasingly marking us as a society intolerant towards those living within it. Although the events of the Holocaust are deeply engraved in our collective memory, we failed to elevate the educational potential embodied in them. We were not wise enough to develop a wide anti-racist consciousness, which rises above the victim's point of view and fights all levels of racism. [...]

A nation which has had a firsthand experience with the most destructive form of racism has the duty to fight it with excessive strength."

Ophir Pines-Paz, JED 08.04.13

Auschwitz and the defense budget

"Before we talk seriously about defense budget cuts, there will be a need to downsize the sanctity of national security, to cut the Gordian knot between the IDF and the Holocaust. [...] The defense budget has continuously grown despite the internal collapse of our enemies and the disappearance of ground threats to Israel from front after front. The Israeli public agrees to this ongoing madness because the defense budget is determined in proportion to Auschwitz and not in regard to anything else."

Uri Misgav, HAA 09.04.13

Today we wore red because of the fires

"In kindergarten they learn about Janusz Korczak, the Polish-Jewish Pediatrician and renowned children's book author who ran an orphanage in Warsaw. He was offered freedom when his orphans were collected for the train ride to Treblinka but he opted instead to stay with and comfort them along the journey. That's where the story ends for the kindergartners. They don't learn about how those 192 children, some as young as three years old, boarded a train in 1942 holding their teddy bears and were never seen again. They will learn eventually. [...] Eventually they'll see all of the pictures of the SS officers marching. They'll see the cattle cars used for transport and learn how many people were shoved inside. [...] They will learn about the mass graves and the starvation and the 'medical re-

search.' [...] They'll learn about the gas chambers and the ovens. They will learn enough for six million lifetimes. [...] And then they will be defined in some way, large or small, by the Holocaust. And another generation of Jews will share the burden of our collective consciousness."
Susie Lubell, TOI 08.04.13

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 die verstorbene ehemalige britische Premierministerin Margaret Thatcher:

Remembering Margaret Thatcher

"While the late Margaret Thatcher earned a reputation as the most 'philosemitic' British leader of recent times, it has frequently been suggested that her support for Jewish causes had more to do with the demographics of her Finchley constituency (where Jews comprised about 20 percent of the electorate) than an inherent sympathy with the issues themselves. [...]

But it [...] derived, in the main, from her deep Methodistical affinity with what she saw as traditional Jewish values such as ambition, assiduousness and enterprise. [...] Thatcher's admiration for the Jewish tradition meant that she was instinctively well-disposed toward Israel [...].

But as prime minister, Thatcher proved herself to be far more 'evenhanded' than many had expected. [...] And, while she never compromised on her commitment to Israel's security, she strongly supported the Palestinian cause, arguing that Israel would 'only find peace and security... by recognising the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.' [...] Thatcher laid major blame for the impasse in Middle East peacemaking at the door of the Likud which led government for all but two of her 11 years in power. [...]

But despite these difficulties, Thatcher was esteemed by most Israelis. [...]

Her horror at the depravity of the Holocaust, deepened by a visit to Babi Yar in June 1990, lay behind

her determination to force her War Crimes Bill, which proposed the prosecution in Britain of suspected Nazi war criminals, through a reluctant House of Lords. [...]

The Jewish state has lost a staunch supporter, the Jewish people a faithful friend."

Sean Gannon, JPO 09.04.13

The Thatcher model of female leadership

"Thatcher was not only the first female leader of a Western democracy, she was one of the toughest and most contentious of them. [...]

Women learn that to move ahead they must suppress manifestations of emotion [...] to the point that they negate for themselves the right to feel so as not to be seen as 'hysterical' and lacking in managerial and leadership capabilities.

This is a societal distortion that creates a false pretense of nascent equality and presents to women a choice that [...] pushes them to one extreme or the other - bellicosity, insensitivity and ambitiousness, or weakness and victimhood. Most women, who cannot or do not want to be Margaret Thatcher, are forced to choose weakness and in the end do not demand their legitimate rights from their employer, such as equal pay.

As long as this is the situation, the distance to true equality between men and women is still very great, even as Margaret Thatcher, who loved her nickname 'the iron lady,' is about to be given a royal, heroic funeral."

Ravit Hecht, HAA 10.04.13

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