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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

15. – 29. April 2013

1. Yair Lapid Auseinandersetzung mit den Ultra-Orthodoxen

In seiner Antrittsansprache vor der 19. Knesset kritisierte der neue Finanzminister Yair Lapid die ultra-orthodoxe Führung heftig und kündigte Haushaltskürzungen an, die u.a. die ultra-orthodoxe Bevölkerung ("Haredim") besonders betreffen. Damit trat der Vorsitzende der neuen Partei Yesh Atid, die sich eine ehrlichere Politik und das Wohl der Mittelklasse auf die Fahnen geschrieben hat, eine Mediendebatte los.

In seiner Rede stellte Lapid den Staatshaushalt 2013-14 vor, in dem die Einschnitte rund 3,6 Milliarden betragen sollen, inklusive Steuererhöhungen von etwa 1,6 Milliarden Euro. Neben Kürzungen im Verteidigungsbudget und bei Infrastrukturprojekten werden insbesondere Ultra-orthodoxe Familien von Kürzungen des Kindergeldes betroffen sein, da sie sehr hohe Geburtenraten aufweisen. Während seiner Ansprache wurde Lapid wiederholt von ultra-orthodoxen Abgeordneten unterbrochen. Lapid reagierte auf eine der Unterbrechungen mit den Worten: "Wir haben genug von Euren Befehlen. Israel gehört Euch nicht."

Schon im Wahlkampf hatte die Debatte um die Haredim, die zu der ärmsten Bevölkerungsschicht in Israel gehören, aber größtenteils keinen Wehrdienst leisten und nicht ausreichend in den Arbeitsmarkt integriert sind, einen zentralen Platz eingenommen.

Haredim have been stealing for years

"[Yair Lapid's] maiden speech was undoubtedly the best show in town, and the silent majority, comprised mainly of the middle class and the poor – cheered him on from home. [...]"

The Haredim always knew how to take advantage of their political power and laughed at us all the way to the Finance Committee. [...] They have never shouldered their share of the burden (military service, work and taxes), and what caused the greatest

antagonism among the average citizens was the fact that a minority was determining the majority's lifestyle. [...]

Millions of shekels are transferred each year to the Haredi education system [...], hundreds of millions more are transferred to religious councils and public institutions. Did these funds not contribute to the deficit?"

Arik Henig, JED 24.04.13

Budget woes

"Members of the rapidly growing Haredi community, [...] must realize that they cannot continue to be a drain on the economy. Society pays a high price for a Haredi ideology that shuns gainful employment in the name of Torah scholarship.

More than the welfare and yeshiva budgets paid by tax payers, the real cost to society is the lost potential: the innovations that are never developed, the entrepreneurial spirit that is never given expression, the production potential that is never realized.

Eventually, [...] the Haredi population will gradually integrate into the labor force.

These trends cannot be stopped. The question is whether leaders in the [...] Haredi community will be facilitators or obstacles in the Israeli economy's inevitable transformation."

JPO 23.04.13 Editorial

A government of, by and for tycoons

"In the 2013 election and the subsequent process of forming a government, the tycoons won big: They set up a government in their own image. They succeeded in transforming a wave of popular protest with a social democratic hue into a rightist, bourgeois government. [...]"

Two things that happened this week underscore what has occurred here: the unveiling of Lapid's neoliberal budget and his anti-Haredi speech. [...]"

Israel's top one percent has succeeded in gaining control of the protest dragon and diverting its fire

from the wealthy town of Herzliya Pituach to the Haredi one of Bnei Brak. It has turned the new Israeli government into a government that uses persecution of the Haredim to protect the interests of the tycoons, from whose ranks it comes and which it seeks to advance."

Ari Shavit, HAA 26.04.13

Lapid's all-stick, no-carrot policy on Haredim won't work

"It seems that the victorious members of Yesh Atid are intent on punishing an entire community for the excesses of its leaders, there doesn't seem to be a plan to provide any positive incentives to integrate the community into the workforce. [...]

An entire generation of young Haredi [...] men and women want to come in from the cold and enjoy the prosperity that wider Israeli society enjoys – and they are prepared to work for it. Instead of antagonizing them, any sensible finance minister would be drafting a national plan to integrate them into the economy, with vocational training, incentives and tax breaks for employers."

Anshel Pfeffer, HAA 26.04.13

The danger of calling haredim 'parasites'

"The average Israeli now truly believes that the haredim are to blame. For what? For everything. The stereotypes suggesting that haredim don't pay taxes, don't work, don't serve in the army, control the budget, hog government funding, and whatever else, have entrenched themselves [...] deeply in Israeli public discourse. [...]

Haredim are never given the opportunity to respond. When all anyone ever reads about a certain population is negative, it is no wonder that a deputy finance minister, a respectable, worthy man, suddenly blurts out [...] a hurtful and terrible word to describe a community of hundreds of thousands of people."

Yerach Tucker, IHY 25.04.13

The real parasites are the politicians

"The haredim, as individuals and as a collective, are not exempt from doing their own soul searching. [...] For a long time now, there has been a phenomenon in Israel that disrespects taxpayers' hard labor and enslaves the public to various pressure groups [...]. Today, the public's attention is focused on the haredi sector, but it is not alone. Let us recall the kibbutzim, which, back in the day, received an irresponsible amount of government funding [...]. The government [...] recently forgave a six billion shekel

debt owed the state by the Israel Electric Corporation [...].

There isn't enough time in the world to list the many aspects of the political extortion and general parasitism in Israel. Anyone familiar with Israel's economic conduct knows that the state is not very thrifty with taxpayers' money. [...]

The real change will come when we recognize that the true parasites are the politicians, who have expanded the concept of redistribution of property in Israel to the point that most of every taxpayer's income gets redistributed in accordance with the will of those same politicians."

Boaz Arad, IHY 25.04.13

A time for haredim, seculars to be united, not divided

"[Lapid's] comments [...] against haredim and their children are both vexing and outrageous. Right now, as the government is getting ready to impose harsh economic policy, social cohesion is of the utmost importance. [...]

The political leadership's fiery rhetoric over the haredi public is stirring hysteria. [...] The ultra-Orthodox community has already accepted that those haredim who have not made Torah their trade in the fullest sense of the word will have to integrate into the national fabric and join the workforce. That will be a huge contribution both to society, and to the haredi community at large."

Haim Shine, IHY 24.04.13

2. Open-Skies-Abkommen zwischen Israel und der EU

Am 21. April hat die israelische Regierung ein Open-Skies-Abkommen mit der EU unterzeichnet. Das Abkommen wird den israelischen Flugverkehr reformieren und die Zahl der Zielorte und Flüge von und nach Israel erhöhen. Befürworter des Abkommens versprechen sich von dem verbesserten Wettbewerb sinkende Flugpreise und ein größere Effizienz bei den drei israelischen Fluggesellschaften El Al, Arkia und Israir. Seitens der Fluggesellschaften wurde der Vertrag heftig kritisiert. Das Abkommen benachteiligt die israelischen Anbieter, da sie Zusatzkosten durch besondere Sicherheitsvorkehrungen zu tragen hätten und viele arabische Länder nicht überfliegen könnten. Die Gewerkschaften forderten Garantien für lokale Arbeitsplätze, da durch das Abkommen tausende Arbeitsplätze in Israels Luftfahrtindustrie verloren gehen könnten.

In einem Kompromis willigte die Regierung ein, 97% der Sicherheitskosten zu übernehmen. Zwischenzeitlich war es zu einem Streik der Angestellten der Fluggesellschaften gekommen wie der Androhung eines Generalstreikes. Das Kabinett stimmte dem Abkommen mit nur drei Gegenstimmen zu. Es wird über die nächsten fünf Jahre graduell eingeführt.

Do it for the passengers

Opposition to Open Skies reflects at most the narrow interest of a specific sector. [...] Competition will also bring efficiency, forcing the Israeli companies to improve their management – a field in which they do not excel. However, even if [...] the agreement is bad for the airlines, [...] for the state of Israel and its people, this is a good agreement. [...]

From the viewpoint of the entire Israeli economy, more flights mean more tourists, more overnight hotel stays, more restaurant meals, more trips in taxis, more organized tours. [...]

For the sake of the passenger, the skies should be opened as widely as possible."

HAA 21.04.13 Editorial

The price and value of openness

"Bringing down the price of tickets is not exactly a means of helping those most in need. [...] I appreciate, too, the added expense of security incurred by Israeli airlines and the burden of being unable to fly over many enemy countries, which would cut the time and cost on the flights to the Far East, for example.

El Al can be relied on to maintain service when foreign airlines, like the tourists, stay away in [...] times of war. It has also mobilized to help bring immigrants in times of need in a way that other airlines won't understand, let alone agree to." Liat Collins, JPO 25.04.13

Paying protection to Israeli airlines

"The price paid by the government to Israeli airlines to help cover their security costs is just a small fraction of the full price that is paid to support these companies. [...] It is the wider public that pays this price, the price levied through a lack of competition. [...]

The fact that many flight routes to Israel are flown by just two airlines [...] leads to weak competition and high prices on these routes. [...]

Since the tourism industry generates a sizable number of jobs for those with low levels of education, it is actually the workers from the weakest socioeconomic groups who pay the highest price. [...]

Who benefits from the lack-of-competition tax? Just a handful of Israeli airlines' employees, most of who come from a relatively strong socioeconomic background."

Meirav Arlosoroff, HAA 24.04.13

Open the skies, but help El Al

"The 'Open Skies' policy serves our national economy in many ways, though not without exacting a price. On the one hand, Israel has no choice but to adopt this policy. [...]

Nevertheless, the transportation minister must listen attentively to the real grievances of Israeli air carriers, which bear extra costs for being who they are. These include extra-high security costs as well as an inability to form partnerships with other airlines that have Arab ties.

El Al has for too long worn a flak jacket of government protectionism. If the government removes this economic flak jacket, it must still move to offset the company's economic weaknesses, derived from its being [Israeli]. El Al deserves some sort of compensation. I want open skies, and even more I want to continue flying El Al."

Dan Margalit, IHY 22.04.13

Open the skies

"The new cabinet [...] had the courage to stand up to the bullying tactics of the striking airline unions and make the right decision. [...] The negative effects of fairer competition will, unfortunately, include waves of layoffs or salary cuts, as well as the fostering of a working environment that is more profit oriented. Assuming he or she remains employed, the average Israeli airline worker will soon earn less. What is the alternative? Caving in to the union sets a bad precedent. While industries from hi-tech and textiles to food production and telecommunications are exposed to robust free market forces [...] employees of El Al, Arkia and Israir remain exempt simply because they have the power to make the lives of thousands of fliers miserable. Open Skies, if implemented, can be a boon to the economy."

JPO 21.04.13 Editorial

El Al brought open skies down on itself

"Could El Al [...] collapse? Yes, but open skies won't be the reason, but an excuse. El Al had years to improve its competitiveness. [...] The airline is still managed as if it were a monopoly, and even though open skies was a looming storm cloud for years, it never attempted to create other commercial plat-

forms or to adapt to the changes in the global aviation industry. [...]

Keeping traditions has resulted in El Al having surplus manpower. An internal report states that 2,200 of its 6,300 employees are redundant. The cut that nobody dares to speak about - one-third of the workforce - would save \$100 million a year. [...]

Every government ministry has failed to deal with El Al's problematic conduct."

Stella Korin-Lieber, GLO 21.04.13

Open Skies will open new horizons

"The fact is that without deep and perhaps revolutionary reform within the companies, they will indeed, not be able to survive the anticipated changes brought upon by the agreement. [...]

The size of El Al's current market is limited – there are only a given number of people flying to and from Israel. The answer is clearly to compete for a much larger market. [...] Israel is well-placed geographically to function as a hub for flights between Africa, Europe and Asia, despite the Arab denial of overflying rights. What many don't seem to grasp is that airlines in the world today don't just sell a transport solution from point A to point B. [...]

Today the three Israeli airlines fear change and they fight to preserve their fleshpot as it is. It is unfortunate that the management and unions are not more imaginative and creative. [...] As the cliché goes – 'change brings opportunity,' and if done correctly, Israeli civil aviation could be at the threshold of a new golden age."

Gideon Afek, TOI 19.04.13

Don't ground competition

"Competition is a healthy phenomenon. [...] It's a matter of supply and demand. [...] Cabinet ministers are convinced that increasing the number of seats will cause a commensurate rise in the number of tourists, not just vice versa. That's a possibility, but Israel also needs to focus on continuing to develop its own tourism infrastructure. [...] Most importantly, Israel needs calm. Operation Pillar of Defense caused a drop in tourism at the end of 2012. A peaceful atmosphere would draw back tourists who, today, stay away from the Middle East altogether."

Ilan Gattegno, IHY 22.04.13

Send Ofer Eini a thank-you card

"Politically, [...] Netanyahu, Finance Minister Yair Lapid and Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz needed this struggle like they need oxygen. It establishes them as brave leaders who are not afraid to

confront Histadrut labor federation chairman Ofer Eini. [...] In any case, immediately after the strike ends they should send a greeting card to Eini. He turned them, unintentionally, into real leaders."

Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA 23.04.13

3. Boston-Marathon-Anschlag

Der Anschlag auf den Marathon in Boston erhielt auch in Israel viel Medienaufmerksamkeit. Bei dem Anschlag hatten zwei aus Tschetschenien stammende Brüder, die seit langem in den USA lebten, am 15. April mit zwei Bomben drei Personen getötet. Wie bei jedem von islamistischen Extremisten verübten Anschlag in der westlichen Welt wurden auch in diesem Fall in den israelischen Medien Parallelen zu der Situation in Israel gezogen. Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu drückte sein Mitgefühl mit den Angehörigen der Opfer aus und sagte, Israel stehe "Schulter an Schulter mit dem amerikanischen Volk".

Obama's tough week

"The traumatic events of the past week [...] exposed the weaknesses of U.S. President Barack Obama's attitude toward the threat of terror. [...]

Obama's approach [...] has been based on his assessment that the threat of global terror has subsided over the years since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. [...] So Obama strove to shift the focus onto other issues and challenges.

But then the events of the past week came and reshuffled the deck [...]. In regard to the war on terror, the Boston attack demonstrated that it is impossible to separate the domestic from the foreign when it comes to the origins of terror, because you can't put a border around ideologies, extremist outlooks, or delusional and militant ideas. [...]

Obama's desire to break away from Bush's legacy prompt[ed] all his men to ignore the imminent danger at the gates."

Abraham Ben-Zvi, IHY 22.04.13

America: Heart of lightness

"For years, burnt body parts have been flying through the air in the non-Western world. [...] The American occupation of Iraq alone caused tens of thousands of casualties. Hordes of non-Western fatalities flash across TV screens – if they are noticed at all. [...]

When 'we' are hit, it's major news. When others are harmed, it's a trivial event – even when unmanned

drones kill hundreds of innocent people in Pakistan. [...]

Think of how many terrorists are born [...] as they watch the whole world glued to the calamity that befalls Boston, so unlike the total indifference shown to any event beyond the horizons of Western interest. [...]

Nevertheless, to keep things in proportion for Israelis who loathe the 'bad guys, look at those nice students in Boston who, upon seeing a bleeding 19-year-old immigrant, cannot but yell: U.S.A.! U.S.A.!' Yitzhak Laor, HAA 22.04.13

Responding to terror

"Attacks such as the Boston Marathon bombings help us appreciate all the more lives free from terrorism and fear while emphasizing the fragility of our peaceful existence. At the same time, Americans' refusal to cave in to fear and despair is truly inspirational.

Love of freedom is seen by terrorists as a weakness because fear of losing this freedom can be exploited. It is also much easier to carry out terrorist attacks in an open society. But terrorists fail to see that it is precisely this freedom which makes America – and Israel – so great and so resilient to the threat of terrorism."

JPO 18.04.13 Editorial

Boston's naïve triumphalism

"Instead of this being the end of the threat to their society, the actions of the Tsarnaev brothers [...] should be a clear alarm call that this is just the tip of the iceberg and there are plenty of other would-be terrorists 'sleeping' across the length and breadth of the country. [...]

Israelis know that each instance of a foiled terrorist attack is just another battle in the war against those seeking to undermine their society. It is not a cause for celebration, more a pause to draw breath, to reconsider, and to learn a little more about the enemy.

The relief of Bostonians in being able to return to normal everyday life is understandable, but their collective experience should surely make them pause to think hard about the safety of their society and maybe appreciate a little more the tribulations of far away Israel, where such threats and occurrences are, sadly, all too familiar."

Paul Alster, TOI 22.04.13

As if they caught another bin Laden

"The terror attack [...] did not, after all, signal the launch of a global terror attack on America or a horrifying repeat of the attack on the World Trade Center. [...] The manhunt for the two brothers appears to have been a classic case of overkill. Life in Boston and its suburbs was completely shut down. Some 7,000 soldiers, police officers and undercover federal agents surrounded one suspect. [...]

What was exposed here is the acute vulnerability of Western society to any intentional disruption of its daily life. [...]

There is a dangerous message here to every tormented teenager who is gathering information from the Internet on how to assemble bombs [...]. The road to fame is short, and it does not take too much effort. You just need to pick the right event."

Nahum Barnea, JED 21.04.13

And hate the sinner, too

"The reason that tragedies, like the outrageous terrorist bombing in Boston this week, continue to take place is not because the world lacks love but rather because it doesn't have enough hate. Living in a Christian world that teaches us to 'love the sinner,' we find excuses for evil and refuse to dedicate ourselves fully to its destruction. [...]

In my book *Kosher Jesus* I explain that Jesus said to love your enemies – not God's enemies. The former are those who steal your parking space. The latter are those engaged in genocide. [...] Of the terrorists who bombed innocent runners in Boston I say we have an obligation to destroy them before they destroy us.

Amid my deep respect for the Christian faith, I state unequivocally that to love the terrorist who bombs a marathon [...] is not merely stupid, it is deeply sinful. To love evil is itself evil and constitutes a passive form of complicity. [...]

I am waiting for an American political leader of either party, in the wake of a tragedy like Boston, to stand up and say, 'America hates terrorists and will pursue them to the corners of the globe to purge them from the earth.'"

Shmuley Boteach, IHY 22.04.13

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 Themen-

spektrum, 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 **Rücktritt des palästinensischen Premierministers** Salaam Fayyad:

Fayyad's resignation

"Fayyad [...] rejected the Oslo Accords' 'top-down' legacy of negotiations between political leaders, and various forms of resistance to the 'occupation' [...]. Instead, Fayyad proposed a 'bottom-up' strategy. [...] The PA would work toward creating an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank within two years (by August 2011): Institutions would be built; foreign investment would be encouraged; infrastructure would be put in place [...]; the education system would be revamped [...].

Yet, from the beginning there were ominous signs that Fayyad's pragmatic approach to state-building would fail. [...] Fayyad lacks any real political clout. [...] Despite his impeccable integrity, Fayyad failed to gain the trust and backing of the Palestinian populace in the West Bank that he was supposedly leading. [...]

Fayyad's departure from Palestinian politics is significant not just because it ends hopes, at least for the time being, of an alternative approach to resolving the Israeli- Palestinian conflict. The incident also reveals the unsettling reality that to truly succeed in Palestinian politics it is not enough to work for the betterment of the Palestinian people, one must be a devoted and preferably violent enemy of Israel."

JPO 16.04.13

Fayyad resignation bad for us

"In his roles as finance minister and prime minister, Fayyad created a revolution in the Palestinian lifestyle and in Israel-PA relations. The security forces were reorganized: The 'Intifada generation' was replaced with worthy people, who were trained to do their jobs; the armed gangs dominating the streets were driven away and crime was terminated; the terrorism [...] came to an almost complete halt; [...] the "family" monopolies controlling imports and trade were dissolved. For all this, and more than once, Fayyad nearly paid with his life. [...]

The security, the calm, the stability and the disappearance of terror and crime revived the Palestinian economy. [...]

Fayyad's retirement from Palestinian national life is bad for the PA and bad for Israel. The PA without him, and likely soon without Abbas either, will be different. The Israeli stance that 'there is no one to talk to' may turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy." Dov Weisglass, JED 17.04.13

Über den möglichen Einsatz von **Chemiewaffen durch Syrien**:

Letting the genie out of the bottle

"The U.S. administration previously stated that the use of chemical weapons by Syrian President Bashar Assad would 'cross a red line' and could lead to American intervention in the Syrian civil war. Brig. Gen. Itai Brun's public announcement – that the Syrians used lethal chemical ordnance on a number of occasions – could be perceived as a blunt Israeli challenge to the U.S. president: You declared that the U.S. would take action if Assad crossed that line, and we are presenting you with evidence that he did. What are you going to do about it?"

The Obama administration clearly understands that Israel is presenting it with a challenge, and that Obama's conduct on this issue will indicate his determination to abide by the commitment he also made to act with regard to the Iranian nuclear program. [...]

If the U.S. fails to act, it will be hard for Israel to believe that it will follow through on its commitment to thwart Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Taking action in Syria is much simpler and less dangerous than preventing Iran from going nuclear."

Reuven Pedatzur, HAA 26.04.13

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

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