



## Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 16/13

### Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

08. – 20. Oktober 2013

#### 1. Zum Tod von Rabbi Ovadia Yosef

*Ovadia Yosef, ehemaliger sephardischer Oberrabbiner von Israel und spirituelles Oberhaupt der ultra-orthodoxen Partei Shas, ist im Alter von 93 Jahren gestorben.*

*Die von Yosef gegründete Shas-Partei, die auch von vielen nicht-religiösen Wählern favorisiert wird, setzte sich für die Rechte der Mizrahim, der aus den arabischen Ländern stammenden Juden, ein. Sie war jedoch auch immer wieder durch Korruptions-skandale in die Schlagzeilen gekommen.*

*Yosef galt außerdem als einer der wichtigsten Torahgelehrten seiner Generation. Er stach dabei insbesondere durch seine liberalen Interpretationen der jüdischen Gesetze hervor. So urteilte er, dass Israel Land für Frieden aufgeben dürfe. Er entschied außerdem, dass äthiopische Einwanderer als Juden anerkannt werden sollten.*

*Andererseits war Yosef auch für Hasstiraden gegen nicht-religiöse Juden, Andersdenkende, Homosexuelle und Araber bekannt.*

*Seiner Beerdigung wohnten Hunderttausende Menschen bei.*

#### **A central link in the chain**

"Contrary to the exclusively sectarian appearance lent to the funeral by certain politicians, the event was actually spontaneous and national. [...]"

Rabbi Yosef's political associations will not stand the test of time. What will remain is his stature as the central link in the chain of Jewish law in the 20th century [...].

Even in another 500 years, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef will be remembered as a man who, over an extended blip in Jewish history, for more than two generations, served as a conduit for Oral Torah, passing this huge tradition on to future generations."

Dror Eydar, IHY 08.10.13

#### **It's the Torah, stupid!**

"Put simply, the funeral turnout was all about Ovadia Yosef, the prominent rabbi and Torah sage, not the founder of a political party. [...]"

This event provided a glimpse of what makes the Jewish people truly unique.

For throngs of citizens filled the streets of Jerusalem not to mourn a popular sports figure or rock star, but to pay tribute to a scholar and the Torah that he taught.

And that perhaps is Rabbi Yosef's greatest legacy, and ours as well."

Michael Freund, JPO 09.10.13

#### **Isn't idolatry forbidden?**

"The behavior of the crowds that came to part with their beloved Rav Ovadia [...] exceeded all expectations. [...] The trouble is that its flavor was absolutely antithetical to the religion it was supposedly representing. [...] His worshipers' [...] attitude towards the man throughout his life and at its end has been nothing short of idolatry -- one of the biggest prohibitions in Judaism. [...]"

My advice to all the tearful Jews who are fainting in despair right now is that they take a break from their swaying and praying to go back and read what Ovadia and previous Jewish sages have to say about bowing down before idols. It is forbidden, people. Period."

Ruthie Blum, IHY 08.10.13

#### **Rabbi Ovadia's legacy**

"Along with his virtues and achievements, Yosef will also be remembered as a man who contributed a great deal to the polarization and division of Israeli society, particularly between secular and religious, with scathing remarks like 'secular teachers are donkeys.' He undermined the legitimacy of the courts when he claimed that 'they are unworthy of judging Jews.' [...] Yosef also represented a racist version of Judaism, claiming that non-Jews were born only 'to serve us.' [...] Shas under his leader-

ship discriminated against women, forbidding them to run for office under its auspices. [...]

Perhaps the greatest damage of Yosef's legacy is that Shas, under his leadership, nurtured a large and growing group of citizens who did not work for a living or serve in the army, but instead subsisted on government allowances and charity."

HAA 08.10.13

### **Who was that rabbi?**

"One of the principal pathways Yosef adopted in his approach to Jewish law was leniency [...]. He noted in particular that in the modern generation, ruling stringently could have the effect of discouraging any compliance with Jewish law, and that lenient rulings were therefore advisable. [...]

To some in Jewish religious circles, Yosef's relatively liberal positions were almost as much a heresy as Reform Judaism.

Yet this should surprise no one because through the ages, Sephardi Orthodoxy has been much more accommodating to its surroundings than has its Ashkenazi counterpart, which to this day remains much more closed-minded to many aspects of modern life."

Lawrence Rifkin, JPO 10.10.13

### **Rav Ovadia: Good and bad**

"He was good for Judaism. He was bad for the Jews. [...]

It started going wrong when he allowed his followers to elevate him to a demi-god and to try to prove that their interpretations were right and the Ashkenazi interpretations were wrong — instead of equally valid. [...]

The increased ethnic conflict is the fault of Rav Ovadia."

Mark Lavie, TOI 14.10.13

### **Dr. Ovadia and Rabbi Yosef**

"Yosef was indeed the 'spiritual leader' of Shas, and whoever launches a party, makes political decisions and appoints the party chairman, is a political figure. [...]

One could have expected Shas to offer a new model for the [ultra-orthodox] party, advocating moderate positions in the spirit of Yosef's bold rulings. But instead Shas aligned with the extremist. [...]

Additionally, we cannot forget that Shas [...] was one of the most corrupt parties in Israeli political history."

Uri Heitner, IHY 13.10.13

## **2. Diskussion um Emigration aus Israel**

*In Israel ist eine Debatte über die hohe Zahl von israelischen Emigranten entbrannt. Ausgelöst wurde die Diskussion durch einen Kommentar von Finanzminister Yair Lapid, in dem er an den Holocaust erinnerte und sagte, er sei intolerant gegenüber Israelis, die gewillt seien "den einzigen Staat der Juden auf den Müll zu werfen, weil Berlin komfortabler ist". Medienangaben zufolge sollen in Berlin etwa 15,000 Israelis leben.*

*In Israel wird die Emigration, die auch als "Yerida" ("Abstieg") bezeichnet wird, traditionell kritisch betrachtet, da sie in manchen Kreisen als Bedrohung für das zionistische Projekt eines jüdischen Nationalstaates verstanden wird.*

*Angefacht wurde die Debatte weiter durch die Ehrung der Chemiker Arieh Warshel und Michael Levitt mit dem Nobelpreis. Beide sind israelische Staatsbürger, die jedoch bereits seit Jahrzehnten in den USA leben. Als Gründe für die verstärkte Emigration werden vor allem die schlechten sozio-ökonomischen Bedingungen in Israel sowie mangelnde Ressourcen für Bildung und Forschung genannt.*

### **Meat pots instead of falafel**

"It is a matter of education, values and a sense of shame. [...] The State of Israel's job is to remind people that the Zionist vision is the establishment of a national home in the Land of Israel. Those who leave are abandoning the Zionist vision. It may sound outdated and hurtful at times, but the words must be said. Israel is obligated to do at least one thing for those who abandon it – tell them the truth." Yoaz Hendel, JED 12.10.13

### **The story isn't those who leave, but those who can't**

"Pointing out the alternative to emigration (improving the quality of life in Israel) is important, because it directs attention to the real casualties of the socio-economic situation in Israel: those who really cannot leave, the weakest in the labor market, those let down by the education system, victims of privatization, [...] the populations of the poverty stricken neighborhoods in the big cities. For all these people, emigration is not an option, and they will continue to be the cannon fodder of the Israeli economy."

Avi Temkin, GLO 09.10.13

## Israel's generation gap stems from economic angst

"Lapid [...] treat[s] Israel as the solution for existential anxiety, so [he] play[s] down other difficulties people have.

But young people want no part of this anxiety; they don't understand why their lives have to be different from their German, Dutch or Canadian Facebook friends. Their fear isn't that they'll be beaten up for being Jewish, [...] but that they'll reach the point of Moshe Silman, the activist who immolated himself during last year's round of the social protests. [...]

Young people can choose to shun this existential anxiety, because [...] they've never lived in the shadow of an existential disaster. [...] The frequent use of the Holocaust to justify life in Israel doesn't scare them; it seems to them manipulation by a salesman who knows that his wares are substandard."

Ravit Hecht, HAA 09.10.13

## Stop the brain drain!

"We must wake up and realize the major risks the [emigration] trend poses to Israeli society. It is no exaggeration to say the brain drain is jeopardizing everything Israelis have worked so hard to achieve. [...]

In practical terms what we need is specific action at the government level. While Israel's research universities are incredibly productive, we urgently need the government to fund more positions for researchers and build advanced facilities [...].

In conversations with our best and brightest, I have found that many will forgo greater pay in order to take part in the great Israeli success story – if we can provide them with appropriate jobs and workplaces."

Menahem Ben-Sasson, JPO 11.10.13

## No brain drain despite Nobel emigrants

"What people call the 'brain drain' is nothing more than the natural development of an academic career. [...] It is natural that researchers with lofty goals will seek to achieve them in the most valued and best-networked places with the biggest budgets. The fact that Israeli universities have succeeded in retaining five Nobel laureates is proof of the opposite of a brain drain. [...]

It should not be forgotten that Israel attracts brains. Nobel Prize in Economics Laureate Robert Aumann was a German and an American before settling in Israel. Nobel Prize in Chemistry Laureate Avram Hershko was born in Hungary. [...]

6.7% of those who had spent more than three years abroad in 2010 returned by 2011."

Gali Weinreb, GLO 10.10.13

## Israeliness alive in Berlin

"The truth is that not all of us left for reasons of stinginess and disloyalty. [...]

I got a fantastic job offer from a Berlin-based international company, and in life one must know how to take advantage of opportunities. [...]

In general, the Holocaust is mentioned and Berlin immediately becomes a taboo. Anyone who ever visited Berlin knows that this city is like one big monument commemorating the Holocaust. [...] Being in Berlin educates Israelis about the Holocaust and reminds them what Jewish identity is all about. [...]

The Israelis in Berlin are our ambassadors abroad, and so far they seem to be doing quite a good job." Lish Lee Avner, JED 17.10.13

## 3. Zukunft des Friedensprozesses

*Aufgrund einer Reihe von gewaltsamen Vorfällen im Westjordanland sprechen israelische Politiker und der Inlandsgeheimdienst Shin Bet von einer "Zunahme von terroristischen Angriffen". In den Medien wurde dies zum Anlass genommen, über den möglichen Ausbruch einer neuen Intifada zu diskutieren. So waren innerhalb weniger Wochen durch palästinensische Täter zwei israelische Soldaten und ein Zivilist getötet, sowie ein Kind in einer jüdischen Siedlung verletzt worden. Allerdings bleibt unklar, inwiefern kriminelle Motive eine Rolle gespielt haben könnten. Der Generalstabschef Benny Gantz sagte auch, es handele sich um isolierte Vorfälle, die keine organisierte Eskalation reflektierten. Gleichzeitig wurde am Gazastreifen ein Tunnel entdeckt, mit dem die dort regierende Hamas einen Angriff auf Israel geplant haben soll.*

*Diese Entwicklungen haben bisher keine Auswirkungen auf die Verhandlungen gehabt, die zurzeit zwischen Israelis und Palästinensern stattfinden, und die sich laut Angaben von US-Außenminister John Kerry jüngst "intensiviert" haben. Obwohl einige Mitglieder seiner Koalition Druck ausüben, plant Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu an einer Freilassung von palästinensischen Gefangenen im Rahmen der Verhandlungen Ende Oktober festzuhalten.*

*In einer Ansprache an der Bar-Ilan Universität hatte Netanyahu jedoch nichts Positives zum Stand der Friedensgespräche zu berichten. Stattdessen bestand er auf einer Anerkennung Israels als "jüdischen Staat" durch die Palästinenser, bevor es zu einem Abkommen kommen könne.*

### **A freeze for a freeze**

"There is no need for a crystal ball to see what the future may bring in Israel-Palestine in the next year. [...] Sooner or later, it seems the process will reach a dead end. [...] The expected result is a serious crisis. The probability that in another year former senator Kerry will be the new winner of the Nobel Peace Prize is quite low. [...] Someone who came to save the two-state solution may very well become the grave-digger for the two-state solution. [...]"

True, surprises are always possible. Maybe at the last minute Kerry will recover and switch the utopian diplomatic framework for a realistic one. [...] But as of now, Israel is [...] being lead to the Palestinian slaughterhouse."

Ari Shavit, HAA 17.10.13

### **Secret negotiations, increasing the chances of success**

"The majority (perhaps all) of the ministers in the Israeli [and Palestinian] government are in the dark – they do not know what is going on behind the closed doors of the negotiations. [...]"

There is no other way to conduct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations given the present political constellations on both sides in the public eye. Neither Netanyahu nor Abbas could carry on any serious negotiations with the other side if they were transparent. They would be spending all of their time negotiating with their own political parties.

If and when they reach an agreement, they will both go back to their constituencies to gain their vote of confidence – either through referenda, votes in the governments or parliaments or even new elections."

Gershon Baskin, JPO 16.10.13

### **A leadership of gloom and doom**

"Netanyahu returned to Bar-Ilan University this week to update the speech he gave there four and a half years ago, in which he for the first time voiced support for a Palestinian state. This time, he presented not only Iran, but also the Palestinians as Nazis. [...] One can understand Netanyahu's political motives. His support [...] for a Palestinian state stemmed at the time from his desire to please U.S. President Barack Obama, and it was presented as a down payment on a future American operation against Iran's nuclear facilities. Now that Netanyahu has understood Obama isn't going to act against Iran, he is repaying him by retreating from the two-state solution. He is destroying the basis for negotiations with [...] Abbas and painting Tzipi Livni, the minister in charge of the talks, as someone who is stubbornly

insisting on remaining in the government and conducting pointless negotiations."

HAA 09.10.13 Editorial

### **Futile negotiations**

"It was enough to listen to [...] Netanyahu's speech at Bar-Ilan University, during which he said an agreement could not be reached as long as the Palestinians do not recognize Israel as a Jewish state; and to Abbas, who during a meeting with Israelis in Ramallah rejected the possibility of a long-term interim deal. The talks must lead only to a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, the Palestinian leader clarified.

You do not have to be a fly on the wall in the room where the negotiation teams [...] are sitting to reach the conclusion that the gaps between them cannot be bridged. [...]"

Netanyahu did what he does best: He loaded the 'two states' cart with irrational conditions, knowing the other side would reject them. [...]"

If Netanyahu were a leader and not just someone who delivers speeches and preaches morality to the other side, he would have suggested a bold alternative. [...] A new formula is needed if the Israeli and Palestinian entities are to exist alongside one another; a formula that will preserve Israel as a democratic state one the hand, and secure basic rights for the Palestinians on the other."

Shimon Shiffer, JED 15.10.13

### **Bibi on the tree**

"In his speech at Bar-Ilan University this week Netanyahu repeated his favorite claim – the occupation is not the root cause of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. [...]"

Indeed, the conflict between the Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel and the Arabs did not begin in 1967. [...] The roots of the conflict lie in the fact that the Arabs [...] are part of a national movement, and these two national movements, the Jewish and Palestinian, demand sovereignty over the same territory. [...]"

Netanyahu's deterministic perspective breeds diplomatic blindness. [...]"

Most of those who oppose the occupation do not believe that the problem was the conquest of the territories during the Six Day War. The problem was the undeclared decision to annex these territories to Israel without granting civil rights to their non-Jewish residents. [...]"

The occupation does not explain everything, and the end of the occupation will not solve everything, but it will advance us toward a solution. Root canal is not

always necessary. Sometimes it is enough to climb down from the tree."

Aviad Kleinberg, JED 10.10.13

### **Dangerous slope in West Bank**

"The level of unrest in the territories has grown, as well as the motivation to kill a Jew [...]. Are the Palestinian people slowly dragging us down a dangerous slope towards a third intifada? [...]"

There is no doubt that some of the unrest in the West Bank is the result of the distress currently being experienced by the Hamas movement in Gaza, but also in the West Bank. The first issue worrying Hamas are the political negotiations under way between the State of Israel and the people of Abbas. As with the Israeli right, there also prevails among the Hamas an uncertainty regarding the possible results of the negotiations [...].

In addition, Hamas has major trouble in Gaza. Hamas lost the sponsorship of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and the Egyptian army is closing tunnels. [...]

To all of these must be added the fact that the Palestinian security apparatuses operate erratically and at varying levels of effectiveness against terrorism, and, with this is the fact that while the PA does not incite the masses to attack, it also does not condemn the attacks or murders.

The picture emerging from these is that while we are not in the midst of an intifada anymore, the ground conditions are still ripe for a major eruption of popular terrorism and mass disturbances, which, as we know, have their own dynamics."

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 11.10.13

### **Hamas has a right to dig tunnels**

"Our control over the Palestinians aside, Israel and Hamas are grotesque mirror images of each other. The similarity ought to be reassuring. Spurred by Israel's closure policy, Hamas is building its religious emirate in the Gaza Strip. [...]"

In contrast, in the West Bank it's much more difficult to control [...]. Israelis are repeating their Oslo mistake when they delude themselves into thinking that the current futile negotiations are buying quiet, and that this quiet is evidence of public support for [...]. Abbas. To Israel's satisfaction, the PLO chairman's security apparatus is carrying out waves of arrests in Jenin and Hebron. [...]"

But when unrest erupts again [...] the Palestinian forces will be forced to choose between loyalty to security cooperation and its American sponsor and their Palestinian identity. However they choose, we Israelis will continue to be periodically reminded that

our ongoing dictatorship over the Palestinians is not normal and not viable."

Amira Hass, HAA 17.10.13

### **Hamas' sacrificial feast**

"The terror tunnel that was discovered inside Israeli territory [...] is a hateful declaration of renewed hostility against us.

[...] The sanctions imposed by the Egyptian military against Hamas' tunnels [...] have strangled the organization militarily and economically. [...] The tunnel infrastructure, which mainly benefited close associates of the leadership, has been destroyed. Distribution of gasoline, medicine and other products has flagged. As prices skyrocket, the Gazan public is growing increasingly agitated. [...]"

Rumor has it that mass protests are scheduled for Nov. 11 to try to oust Hamas. [...] The expected Israeli response to the tunnel operation was meant to stymie the likelihood of such events from occurring. [...]"

It appears that Hamas -- an expert in digging tunnels around Rafah -- decided it was worthwhile to invest millions in new terror tunnels penetrating Israel in return for lucrative political benefits."

Reuven Berko, IHY 15.10.13

## **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 Berichte, denen zufolge die **türkische Regierung israelische Spione im Iran verraten hat:***

### **Erdogan's backstabbing continues**

"According to [...] The Washington Post, Turkey last year purposefully blew the cover of an Israeli spy network in Iran. [...] The Turkish action was a 'significant' loss of intelligence to Israel, and 'an effort to slap the Israelis.' Unfortunately, this is no surprise. [...] Erdogan has led a major reorientation in Turkish foreign policy away from the West and towards the West's worst enemies, including Iran, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Hamas in Gaza, and Hezbollah in Lebanon. [...] Erdogan hardly lets a week pass without disparaging or criticizing Israel or the Jews. [...]"

Turkey is an important country whose foreign policy reorientation changes the balance of power in the Middle East in favor of the radical Islamist forces. It is negatively affecting the pro-Western orientation of the Central Asian republics. It is considerably weakening the Western strategic alliance, and working assiduously to undermine Israel's safety and security. Now it is literally handing Israeli agents over to the Iranians.

Still, President Barack Obama continues to coddle Erdogan, and Israel's leaders bow their heads in submission."

David Weinberg, IHY 17.10.13

### **Respond to betrayal**

"It is obvious that Israel must freeze its official relations with Turkey. A country that respects itself cannot let the actions and betrayals of the regime in Ankara pass. Israel must respond with the means at its disposal and sever ties with a country that intentionally caused it damage and in the most dangerous way. [...]

We have already apologized for the 'Marmara' affair, even though we were not at fault. [...]

As long as Turkey is ruled by Erdogan, the radical Muslim who essentially turned the country into a dictatorship and is trampling the basic rights in a democratic regime [...] there is no chance of maintaining proper relations with Turkey.

Therefore, Israel must wait for Erdogan's reign to end. Only then will we be able to restore the close relations which had existed between Israel and Turkey for years."

Noah Klieger, JED 20.10.13

### **Über Anti-Semitismus in Europa:**

#### **Europe, Priebke and Jews**

"A number of recent events have proven once again that Europe is still struggling with its past, a violent past whose legacies are closely linked with the renewal of anti-Semitic tendencies. [...]

The continent has repeatedly failed to fully process the horrors of the Second World War and of the Shoah. [...] This has been once again verified in Italy, as the country faced major internal issues due to the crisis sparked by the death of the SS captain Erich Priebke, who commanded the massacre of more than 300 civilians. While neither Italy nor Germany wanted to have to deal with the matter, the governments' inability to promptly resolve a problem linked to the horrors of the Second World War have once again shown that the official policy is based on half-hearted ceremonies through which leaders hope to numb their citizens' spirit into a vague feel-

ing of remorse and political dullness. However, the Priebke issue has clearly showed that those willing to stage pro-Nazi ceremonies and express their support to the killers that burnt Europe in the 1940s are still strong and ready to act.[...]

In France, as for the rest of Western Europe, opposition to Zionist policies has increasingly become a way to support and promote anti-Jewish slogans. [...] The step between democratically opposing Israeli policies and calling all Jews descendants of apes and pigs is a small one [...].

The European slow drive toward a rise of anti-Semitic feelings must be considered a problem by all people living in the continent regardless of their faith as it represents a renewed abandon of critical thinking in favor of irrational hate filled ideologies."

Riccardo Dugulin, JED 20.10.13

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Verantwortlich:

*Dr. Werner Puschra,  
Leiter der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Israel*

Redaktion:

*Maike Harel  
Judith Stelmach*

Homepage: [www.fes.org.il](http://www.fes.org.il)

Email: [fes@fes.org.il](mailto:fes@fes.org.il)