



## Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 18/13

### Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

05. – 18. November 2013

#### 1. Freispruch für Avigdor Lieberman

*Nachdem Avigdor Lieberman, Parteivorsitzender von Israel Beitenu, am 6. November vor Gericht von dem Vorwurf des Betrugs und des Vertrauensbruchs freigesprochen worden war, wurde er einige Tage später erneut als Außenminister vereidigt. Er hatte dieses Amt im Dezember 2012 aufgrund der Anklageerhebung niedergelegt.*

*Lieberman war vorgeworfen worden, einen Diplomaten befördert zu haben, der ihm Informationen über Korruptionsermittlungen gegen ihn zugespielt hatte. In ihrem Urteil werteten die Richter, Lieberman habe "unangemessen, aber nicht illegal" gehandelt.*

*In den israelischen Medien wurde der Oberstaatsanwalt Yehuda Weinstein kritisiert. Er habe Anklage in einem Fall erhoben, der nicht zu gewinnen gewesen sei, jedoch schwerwiegendere Korruptionsvorwürfe fallengelassen. Gegen Liebermann war seit Jahren ermittelt worden.*

#### Weinstein go home

"Never, it seems, has an attorney general received such a well-prepared case, of such supreme importance, one that could set new public norms and serve as a clear warning to every public figure. But it appears that prosecutors, unnerved by the mountain of documents and other evidence, decided to turn it into a molehill rather than exploring and conquering it. [...]"

Do we know more now about the convoluted shell companies, the hidden accounts, the mysterious consulting fees and what befell the witnesses – who died, committed suicide or lost their memory? [...]"

If that is the outcome of long, futile years of investigatory efforts and obstruction, then the attorney general has no choice but to resign."

HAA 07.11.13 Editorial

#### The greatest threat to Israeli democracy

"From the outset, legal experts raised doubts about whether Lieberman's alleged actions were even a criminal offense. Lieberman's acquittal puts 17 years of defamatory leaks by state prosecutors in stark, frightening perspective. It was a legal witch-hunt. [...]"

The legal fraternity's use of selective prosecution of political and other national leaders has brought about a situation where people the legal fraternity consider threats to their unchecked powers find themselves under a cloud of criminal suspicion, and often removed from office and in the dock."

Caroline Glick, JPO 07.11.13

#### Lieberman 1, Israel 0

"Both the decision to drop the charges in the far more serious case and to pursue the much lesser case empowered Lieberman and the values he represents, while diminishing the legal system and the values it is meant to represent. [...]"

During the period when Menachem Mazuz was attorney general and David Cohen was police commissioner, there was a powerful struggle launched against public sector corruption and organized crime. [...] By contrast, under Weinstein and Police Commissioner Yohanan Danino, the rule of law has turned listless. It doesn't dare confront those with real power or the true centers of power. [...]"

The attorney general's disgraceful failure in the Lieberman case casts a huge pall over Israeli democracy. Today we know that Israel has no serious system of laws, norms, or values."

Ari Shavit, HAA 07.11.13

#### When a minister becomes sinister

"The old-new foreign minister must have a lot of chutzpah pretending nothing happened. [...]"

The judges said it was not their job to punish public officials for shirking their duties and violating basic

norms unless they clearly break the law. The court's job was to apply a narrow interpretation of the law because the presumption of innocence trumped the likelihood of guilt; but it is up to society to enforce its ethical code of conduct.

Unfortunately, though, in Israel, if a state court says your conduct as a public official was faulty and doubts your fitness for office, what do you do? Declare victory and get your old job back as if this was some minor misunderstanding. [...]

The Knesset should approve a law mandating that a public servant who was on trial must go through a vetting process upon returning to high office."

Erez Linn, IHY 15.11.13

### **The organized loathing of Yvett**

"This time, left-wingers direct their sneers at Attorney-General Yehuda Weinstein. [...]

Nowhere is there a shadow of acknowledgement that the only impetus for the prosecution to pursue the so-called minor case was fear of a leftist backlash. Abandoning the full set of increasingly dubious charges against Liberman was sure to unleash a merciless onslaught by the remorseless and vindictive Left-dominated press. [...]

The victim wasn't just Liberman individually but our entire society. Our shared agenda was hijacked and held hostage by self-appointed guardians of our collective conscience who openly bayed for the blood of a political rival."

Sarah Honig, JPO 14.11.13

### **The Liberman lesson**

"The public's trust in our state prosecution system has been seriously undermined. Dragging out a case for so long is itself a transgression. [...]

When the suspect whose case is delayed for so long happens to be a public figure and political leader, the damage caused is not just to the individual but to the wider public. Voters had a right to a speedy legal process so that Liberman's innocence, or guilt, could be determined and an educated decision could be made on whether to vote for him."

JPO 07.11.13 Editorial

### **Quiet in the coalition, for now**

"Lieberman will once again become foreign minister. [...] And already for quite some time, he has not hidden his true goal: to become the leader of the Right. [...]

Lieberman needs time to re-establish himself. [...] His immediate interest is to return to a key leadership position [...] and act responsibly and moderate-

ly, like he did during his previous term as foreign minister. [...]

It was interesting to see top Likud minister's welcoming Lieberman's acquittal on Wednesday. The acquittal was a fatal blow to their plans to run for leadership of the right-wing camp after Netanyahu leaves politics. The moment after blessing Lieberman, these well-wishers probably began working diligently to defeat him."

Mati Tuchfeld, IHY 07.11.13

### **The next prime minister**

"Israel deserves Lieberman as prime minister, and he deserves to lead its government. [...] His acquittal demonstrates the corruption running rampant in Israeli society, where an elected official can make millions through his daughter and chauffeur, avoid being put on trial, and not even have to forfeit his political career. A society that accepts Lieberman, acquitted or not, is a corrupt society."

Gideon Levy, HAA 07.11.13

### **Because he's different**

"The real story of the Lieberman affair is the story of the premise we had here, that Lieberman is a sophisticated criminal, a Russian mobster, a blood-thirsty racist. [...]

Is there a person who deserves this iniquity? Is there an honest person who can say now that the investigation Lieberman went through does not border on persecution? [...]

Lieberman emerged innocent [...], but the law enforcement system emerged guilty of one of the most serious, prolonged and cruel delays of justice this State has ever seen. [...]

And together with the legal system, we should remember that all of us are largely to blame for our inability to accept the other."

Hanoch Daum, JED 07.11.13

## **2. Verhandlungen um das iranische Atomprogramm**

*Anfang November ist Bewegung in die Verhandlungen um das iranische Atomprogramm gekommen. Da hochrangige Vertreter der beteiligten Staaten, darunter US-Außenminister John Kerry und sein iranischer Amtskollege, an den Unterredungen teilnahmen, schien ein Abkommen in greifbare Nähe zu rücken. Letztlich kam es in dieser Verhandlungsrunde jedoch nicht so weit. Laut westlichen Diplomaten hatte der Iran nicht genügend konkrete Zusicherungen gegeben. Medienberichten zufolge hatte Frank-*

*reich außerdem auf strengeren Auflagen als die anderen Länder bestanden, unter anderem auf einem Baustopp des Arak-Reaktors.*

*Der israelische Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu betrieb indes weiter Lobbyarbeit gegen ein Abkommen, das keinen vollständigen Stopp der Urananreicherung vorsieht. Bei einem Treffen mit Kerry sagte er sogar, Israel würde sich einem solchen Abkommen nicht verpflichtet fühlen. Einen Kompromiss hielt er für einen "historischen Fehler". Netanyahus Bemühungen stießen in den USA auf nur wenig Verständnis und führten zu erheblichen Spannungen zwischen den beiden Staaten.*

### **First we'll take Washington**

"Israel [...] was correct in presenting the Iranian threat as a threat against the whole world and not just against Israel. If it had not been for the rhetoric of violence and the threat of an attack on Iran, it's possible the sanctions that were imposed on Tehran would have stalled rather than reached their current level. [...]"

Netanyahu's success made him believe he could continue dictating the international approach, decide the nature of the sanctions on Iran, and even force an international consensus behind the military option as a live one. [...]"

But the resolution of the crisis has passed into the hands of the major powers, and Israel is not one of them. The prior consensus behind a punitive approach is waning while the new consensus, the diplomatic one, is taking its place. Netanyahu's ranting is making Israel irrelevant, an insufferable nuisance, and it is causing a fissure in relations with its greatest friend."

Zvi Bar'el, HAA 13.11.13

### **The French connection**

"France remains Israel's last hope for an acceptable deal. Jerusalem understands that, at the end of the day, France still wants to sign a deal [...] where diplomacy trumps the military option. [...]"

So, even if they haven't admitted it yet, officials in Jerusalem have been hard at work with France and other partners to minimize damage in the next round, especially if the sides come close to inking a deal. The most important thing to Israel now is securing a deal that is slightly less bad. [...]"

We can see four likely French conditions for signing off on a deal with the Iranian negotiators in Geneva. First, Iran must transparently prove that its nuclear program is not for military purposes. [...] Second, there must be international inspectors monitoring

Iran's nuclear sites. Third, Iran must stop enriching uranium to 20 percent [...]. And fourth, Iran must stop building the reactor in Arak. [...]"

The Iranians have no choice but to capitulate because they so badly want a deal."

Boaz Bismuth, IHY 18.11.13

### **Time to squeeze Iran**

"To truly freeze its nuclear program, Iran would have to not only halt construction of the heavy-water plutonium production reactor and stop installing new centrifuges, but it would also have to cease all uranium enrichment activities, which is something that it has refused to do. Under any deal that permits Iran to continue enriching materials for nuclear weapons while negotiations continue, Iran's nuclear program would not really be frozen. [...]"

If Iran is already today refusing to dismantle its centrifuges and plutonium reactor or halt its enrichment activities, why would it agree to do so after the pressure on it is eased? [...]"

This is, in fact, just the time to squeeze Iran. If the P5+1 nations do this, it would lead to an agreement that would peacefully put a final end to Iran's nuclear program. This would keep Iran from becoming a nuclear threshold state and among those who would have to be thanked would be Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, for his vigilance and alertness."

Gilad Erdan, IHY 17.11.13

### **Let's deal with the reality**

"As United States negotiators have made clear [...] any potential economic relief for Iran should be limited, reversible and come only after real and verifiable initial concessions by Iran on the most concerning aspects of its nuclear program.

No one inside [...] the administration, is arguing to reduce sanctions in exchange for a mere change in direction of the negotiations. [...] There should be no mistake: Legislating new sanctions at this time would undermine President Rohani's standing and leeway vis-a-vis hardliners in Iran. [...]"

With the precise contours, terms and mechanisms of a first step agreement impossible to know—because it does not yet exist— [...] opponents of the administration's efforts conveniently assert that they will be unacceptable."

Dylan Williams, HAA 17.11.13

### **Iran, at high noon**

"The problem is that Netanyahu is unable to focus on one conflict. Every declaration he and his ministers make about settlement construction sabotages

his ability to convince foreign leaders to toughen up on Iran."

Nahum Barnea, JED 16.11.13

### **US is sick of us**

"The deal between the P5+1 [...] and Iran is important because of the existence of a channel of negotiations. The precise formula is less important – after all, the moment that formula is reached, Netanyahu will warn of deception and breach of trust by the devious Iranians.

The American voters, who have had it with wars in the Middle East, are prepared to give diplomatic dialogue a chance. And if Netanyahu insists on standing in the way of the steamroller, he will find himself underneath it."

Amir Oren, HAA 17.11.13

### **US-Israel feud helps Iran**

"Netanyahu's failure to understand that Washington has other vital strategic interests – and a political interest in avoiding yet another war the American people don't want and can't afford – could open the biggest rift in decades between the two allies. [...]

He is about to squander his achievement by an ill-advised, near-hysterical confrontation with Israel's most important ally and the only leader of the international campaign to keep Iran out of the nuclear club. [...]

He seems intent on increasing Israel's isolation. Relations with Washington can be patched up in time, but it won't be so easy with the Europeans.

If Netanyahu is seen there as the major obstacle to any deal with Iran, European support for the sanctions could quickly erode and other nations could soon follow, giving Tehran the relief it seeks without having to curtail its nuclear program."

Douglas Bloomfield, JPO 13.11.13

### **Vive la France!**

"The French are to be praised for demonstrating leadership. [...] Netanyahu's harsh criticism of the purported deal turned out not to be a lone voice. [...] America seems to be less than willing to maintain pressure on Iran. [...]

It is in this geopolitical context that Paris has stepped in to ensure that a serious deal is offered the Iranians. A number of motivations might be behind the French decision. France, as one of the few nations with nuclear weapons, wants to retain its exclusive status and tactical advantage via anti-proliferation policies. [...] As part of a larger strategy to increase its influence at a time when the US is

wavering, the French might be interested in strengthening relations with Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations in the Persian Gulf that face big security threats if Iran goes nuclear. [...]

Whatever the motivation, the French were right on target."

JPO 17.11.13 Editorial

### **Netanyahu's miscalculations**

"Netanyahu [sees] the Iranian nuclear drive as the prime threat to Israel, thus focusing the country's partners' attention almost solely on it. [...] [But] Iran may limit its drive toward nuclear weapons while tacitly gaining a free hand in its subversive operations worldwide. [...]

Netanyahu may have miscalculated Iran's willingness to address the nuclear topic and by doing so he provided Israel's partners with an easy way out of action.

Should Iran engage in any kind of long-term talk, Europeans and American leaders would find an excuse to limit their efforts in regard to the threat posed by Tehran policies. For this, Israel should engage in a renewed communication effort which sets Iran's expansionist policy and Hezbollah's terrorist networks as global threats both to Israel's security and to Western states."

Riccardo Dugulin, JED 06.11.13

## **3. Organisierte Kriminalität**

*Innerhalb von zwei Wochen ist es zwischen Ende Oktober und Anfang November zu drei Bombenattentaten gekommen, die rivalisierenden kriminellen Gruppen zugeschrieben werden. Im letzten Fall richtete sich der Anschlag gegen das Auto eines Staatsanwalts, der in die Gerichtsverfahren gegen mehrere Mafiatiguren involviert war.*

*Als Reaktion auf die steigende Gewaltbereitschaft in der organisierten Kriminalität kündigte der Minister für Öffentliche Sicherheit, Yitzhak Aharonovitch, Maßnahmen an. So will er ein Gesetz einreichen, dass es ermöglichen soll, Mafiamitglieder in Administrativhaft zu nehmen – also ohne Gerichtsverfahren ins Gefängnis zu bringen.*

### **Organized crime equals terror**

"Terror is raging these days across Israel. Criminal organizations are intimidating innocent citizens who happen to run across mutual assassinations. The assassinations – executed in broad daylight without any fear of the police forces – are turning the lives of many of us into a nightmare. [...]

[...] The steep escalation in the daring and sophistication levels of the criminal organizations obliges lawmakers and courts to [...] enact laws [...] which will enable law enforcement authorities to do their job efficiently, swiftly and with maximum ingenuity against the terror organizations. [...]

Finally, and most importantly, the Israel Police must focus their efforts on the investigation of crimes which lead to casualties, instead of allotting huge resources to the investigation of corruption cases which fail to yield a conviction at the end of the day." Ilan Bombach, JED 12.11.13

### **The police vs. human rights**

"Administrative detention, the arrest and detention of individuals without trial, is meant to be used in extreme emergencies, when the subject poses a clear and immediate danger to state security or public safety.

It must be used sparingly and as a last resort because it entails a fundamental breach of civil rights. [...] But civil rights don't interest Public Security Minister Yitzhak Aharonovitch, whose purview includes the Israel Police. [...]

He and Police Commissioner Yohanan Danino are advancing a number of bills [...]. The most prominent would allow members of criminal organizations to be placed in administrative detention. [...] Criminal rings must be dealt with firmly, but administrative detention is not the answer. Casting off the rule of law is more dangerous than the crime organizations themselves."

HAA 14.11.13 Editorial

### **Police impotent as organized crime rules**

"The police are the ones who are supposed to fight crime organizations [...]. But our police force is too ailing and limited to fight criminal organizations, which operate professionally and methodically. [...]

The police force's diminished power to enforce public order in entire regions signals not only an erosion of its ability to enforce the law of the land, but also the transfer of power to the hands of the criminal organizations. If they so desire, they will aim their explosives at one another. If they so desire, they will aim them at mayors and council members, judges in small towns, and helpless police officers. The road from here to anarchy seems frightfully short. And who among us will say that there are no signs of this already today? [...]

There are no easy solutions. There is only the need to do a better job."

Yuval Azulai, GLO 04.11.13

### **Fighting organized crime**

"Experts agree that the rise of the Israeli brand of organized crime is the nearly inevitable result of Israel's burgeoning economy. [...]

Like all sectors of Israel's economy, organized crime, too, has enjoyed a major boom. And with the increased level of revenues and potential for riches, competition has become fiercer than ever as has the violence.

In Israel more than in other places, the extent to which military-issued arms and explosives are available to be stolen seems to make the police's job even harder. And with Israel devoting so many resources to the fight against terrorism, police can easily be overlooked and under-funded. [...]

Considering Israel's objective limitations and unique challenges, it is difficult to imagine organized crime disappearing any time soon. The best to be hoped for is more stringent enforcement that will curtail the phenomenon and make our streets a little safer."

JPO 05.11.13 Editorial

### **Organized crime won't go away on its own**

"The government has been neglecting the police for years. While the military has an outrageously large budget, the police barely receives enough to cover its salaries. [...] There are not enough policemen, not enough police cars, which means that at the end of the day there is little deterrence. [...] Only recently have the government and the police begun treating the mob assassinations as terrorist attacks on civilians. [...]

[But] as intelligence that is gathered needs to be admissible in court, the police fails to gather enough information to back up its cases. [...]

To overcome these issues, a dedicated police system needs to be established to deal with country-wide criminal terror. This system needs proper legal support and access to relevant intelligence and technological capabilities."

Lior Akerman, JPO 07.11.13

### **War can be good**

"What is wrong with the current wave of assassinations among crime families? Why should the police try to step in and stop it? What's so bad about this war?

On the contrary. The police should actually give all sides more guns and help the henchmen. [...] All this on condition, of course, that they kill only each other, without, heaven forbid, harming innocent civilians. If they abide by this one condition, the police should not get in their way. Because, with all

due respect to the Israel Police, the organized crime families are doing what the police have so far failed to do -- get rid of organized crime. [...]  
It is a lot like the civil war in Syria: Let them kill each other, and the more they kill the better."  
Gonen Ginat, IHY 08.11.13

#### 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 Antisemitismus in Deutschland:*

##### **The truth about anti-Semitism in Germany**

"Two weeks ago German public television broadcast a film titled Anti-Semitism today [...]. The film revealed some shocking details about German society that should indeed have raised a discussion. Anti-Semitism, it showed, is by no means only a problem among poorly educated, socially disadvantaged right-wing extremists in East Germany. Anti-Semitism, as sad as it sounds, is fairly common and widely accepted in many parts of German society. [...] A new survey conducted among Jews of nine European countries has just found that one in five Jewish citizens experienced an anti-Semitic attack in the past 12 months. 29 percent have already considered emigrating due to increasing hostility. So, deductively one could say that the situation in France, the UK and other EU countries is not much better than in Germany. Hatred is hatred, prejudice is prejudice. Anti-Semitism is anti-Semitism, regardless of the country. But still, in Germany, it hurts a bit more."  
Stephanie Bilges, JPO 11.11.13

*Über die festgefahrenen Verhandlungen zwischen Israel und den Palästinensern:*

##### **Kerry, give it a rest**

"If an intifada breaks out, it won't happen because the current round of talks between Israel and the Palestinians fails. The level of expectations from these talks is so low on both sides, that freezing

them will not leave any traumatic scars on either side. [...]

For Netanyahu, the talks are a paradise of buying time. Tzipi Livni is busy. The Israeli demand to continue construction has received American-Palestinian approval. Despite the protests, with each stage Israel announces further construction. Habayit Hayehudi is happy, Lieberman is happy, the coalition is kicking, and Bibi receives a decoration of valor for both talking about peace and building."  
Alex Fishman, JED 10.11.13

##### **What if the talks fail?**

"Palestinian demands for independence and freedom will not disappear. Israel's need for real security will not be answered by the absence of an agreement. Most likely Palestinian nationalistic demands will increase, as will Israeli security needs. [...]

So everything must be done to mitigate violence. [...]

For one, we must ensure that the Palestinian economy will not collapse. [...] It is important not to misread this – Palestinians are not interested in a better, more prosperous occupation. [...]

The conflict is not going anywhere – neither are the Israelis nor the Palestinians.

The solution that answers the national interests of both sides and their aspirations will remain the two-states for two-peoples solution – that will also not change – it will only become more difficult to achieve."

Gershon Baskin, JPO 18.11.13

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