



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 02/14

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

08. – 20. Januar 2014

1. Zum Tode Ariel Sharons

Am 11. Januar ist der ehemalige israelische Premierminister Ariel Sharon im Alter von 85 Jahren verstorben. Er hatte seit 2006 im Koma gelegen.

Sharon hatte zunächst Karriere bei der Armee gemacht, wo er sich als gewiefter und rücksichtsloser Militärführer einen Namen machte. Nach dem Yom Kippur-Krieg 1973 wandte er sich der Politik zu und zog als Abgeordneter des neugegründeten Likud-Blocks ins Parlament ein. 1981 wurde er Verteidigungsminister in der Regierung von Menachem Begin. In dieser Rolle trug er maßgebliche Verantwortung für den Libanon-Krieg im Juni 1982, der zu einer 18 Jahre dauernden Präsenz des israelischen Militärs im Südlibanon, zu hunderten Toten unter den israelischen Soldaten und zur Gründung der Hisbollah führte. Nachdem im September 1982 phalangistische Freischärler ein Massaker mit hunderten von zivilen Toten in den palästinensischen Flüchtlingslagern Sabra und Shatila in Beirut verübten, wurden in Israel Rufe nach Sharons Rücktritt laut. Eine israelische Untersuchungskommission wies Sharon "indirekte Verantwortung" für das Massaker zu, und Sharon wurde als Verteidigungsminister entlassen.

Er blieb jedoch politisch aktiv und machte 2001 ein spektakuläres Comeback. Nach dem Zusammenbruch der Friedensgespräche und dem Ausbruch der zweiten Intifada wählte ihn eine Mehrheit der Israelis, die sich von ihm eine harte Hand gegen den Terrorismus versprochen, zum Premierminister. 2005 brach Sharon mit seinem eigenen politischen Lager und gründete eine neue Partei, Kadima, um einen Rückzug aller israelischer Truppen und Siedlungen aus dem Gazastreifen zu ermöglichen.

Never a dull moment

"Those who loved and admired him over the years, hated him during his final years as prime minister.

Those who despised him and called him 'murderer' became enthusiastic supporters and cherished his name. [...] Absolute, loyal, and extreme in everything he was and everything he did, and in all the upheavals of his life. There was nothing middling, conventional, ordinary, or boring about this man, who was and remains much more than just one person."

Stella Korin-Lieber, GLO 12.01.14

Why Ariel Sharon was my hero

"For much of his career, Sharon was a wild man, an original in the wrong way, unconstrained by normal concerns of morality and good sense. Yet after becoming Prime Minister, he got most everything right. [...]

Sharon said 'no' to the settler movement. He stood up to the fanatics and said that they would not determine Israel's destiny. He proclaimed that permanent occupation was unacceptable and believed, rightly, that if he made the case, the citizens of Israel would follow him. [...]

He let it be known that the future of the Jewish state and the well-being of the Jewish people will not be in the settlers' hand. No one before him - since the Six Day War - has had the courage to do this, and no one has had the courage since."

Eric Yoffie, HAA 14.01.14

Sharon's legacy

"Despite – or because of – that change in his belief of how to safeguard the country, Israelis supported Sharon in his last years. They voted for him in 2001 and 2003, and were about to vote for him in large numbers in 2006. Israelis sensed that Sharon really had their interests at heart and that he had the ability to act to protect those interests.

Sharon's legacy, then, is to be found in his fervent Zionism, his ferocious loyalty to the Jewish people, and his unique ability to shape reality in a way which

he believed would protect and promote Israel's interests. Today, the day of his funeral, we should all join together as a nation to bow our heads and salute a great Israeli leader."

JPO 12.01.14 Editorial

Arik the recalcitrant and brutal

"Sharon represents all that is most painful about Israel's history, all that went badly wrong. [...]

He lied to his government and his people to launch a grisly and criminally wasteful war [in Lebanon], ultimately getting away with that, too. He provoked and exploited Palestinian violence in 2000, and then when elected Prime Minister, cracked down with the same ruthlessness he'd always brought to the conflict. [...]

As a leftist I was supposed to be thrilled by the Gaza withdrawal, but I couldn't believe it was the brave move people wanted it to be. [...] His refusal to negotiate even security arrangements with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas belies the notion that he was seeking a path to conciliation – and not incidentally, that refusal allowed Hamas to claim credit for Israel's retreat, contributing significantly to its later electoral success."

Emily Hauser, HAA 14.01.14

Sharon's biggest error

"His worst political decision – unilaterally withdrawal from Gaza. [...]

For Sharon, Arafat was certainly not a partner and he felt that he had to take the future of Israel into his own hands. [...] But on November 11, 2004, Arafat died.

Abbas immediately stepped in [...]. He openly stated that he was opposed to terrorism and to all violence, and promised to take control of the security forces, to fight terrorism, to implement the Road Map and to restore the peace process. [...]

Over the next six months, Israel had the opportunity to turn the Gaza disengagement into the first step of building the peaceful Palestinian state through cooperation between the sides. [...]

Imagine what could have happened if the Palestinian people, the Arab street and the rest of the world would have seen the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza as a success of diplomacy, negotiations and moderation. Instead, it was clear [...] that Israel left Gaza because it was forced out by Palestinian 'resistance,' or what we call Palestinian terrorism and violence. [...]

The end result was the Hamas victory, which I believe would not have happened without Sharon's

stubbornness in not transforming the historic decision to leave Gaza into a diplomatic victory."

Gershon Baskin, JPO 15.01.14

Sharon's way: Force and deceit

"His entire life, Sharon had one major rule that he applied and adapted to changing circumstances: Most people are spineless cowards, so they can be subdued. Unlimited force can be used against them, unless a superior force arises. The conclusion: There are no illegitimate means, only ineffective ones. [...]

Sharon's biggest transgression was his patronage of the golem that was the Jewish settlement movement. He directed the occupation using deceit, fraud and theft. As a result, he played a decisive role in creating the culture of violence and lies that controls our relations with the Palestinians to this day. [...]

Sharon taught everyone how to smile and wink, especially at Washington, while misleading others, stealing land and funneling people and tremendous resources to the territories."

Zeev Sternhell, HAA 17.01.14

The mistakes behind the myth

"Sharon's [...] colossal mistake was the 2005 disengagement from Gaza Strip -- a decision whose bitter results we are still dealing with today. [...]

He cynically ridiculed all the pessimists who predicted terror tunnels or rocket salvos -- which are now a reality. [...]

Hamas has taken over the Gaza Strip, and the rockets possessed by terror groups can cripple half the country. The threats against Israel have grown significantly and terrorism has reared its head. [...]

The way in which the disengagement was executed was undemocratic and outrageous."

Nadav Shragai, IHY 14.01.14

The Left's adopted darling

"One could honestly say that Sharon was merely interested in the retreat from Gaza, but that the media detractors who became his champions were interested in the destruction of Jewish communities, the 'settlements.' [...]

With all due respect to the pain involved, Sharon and his lifelong contributions to Israel's security and to the settlement enterprise cannot strictly be seen through the prism of the disengagement. The appropriate historical distance is required in order to distill the important from the unimportant."

Dror Eydar, IHY 12.01.14

How will Sharon be remembered?

"There are quite a few people among us who feel they are victims of his lack of restraint, of his destructiveness, of his ambitions. They include bereaved families whose sons were led by Sharon to the first Lebanon War, the biggest wound – not to mention the stain – in his remarkable career, which he only managed to blur in his last years.

But alongside the criticism, one has to mention the charisma, the capabilities, the magnetism, the ability to make fun of himself. [...] Sharon also knew how to charm people [...].

A warm person towards his lovers, and a cruel person like no other towards his rivals. [...] A person who did not believe Arabs for a single minute in his life, but realized the need to disengage from them. A person who built an entire career on lack of discipline and obedience to orders, and today we all miss his responsibility and discretion."

Sima Kadmon, JED 13.01.14

Ariel Sharon's bad legacy

He was one of the more controversial military leaders in the history of a young nation which sanctified and glorified its military leaders, but also their duty to obey the political echelon – and did not know how to obey. Cunningly, he waged a war not only on enemies but also on his commanders, and we should remember both his courage and his dangerousness. [...]

The person who motivated soldiers as defense minister in the first Lebanon War, [...] who fed a sick prime minister with lies, who was deemed unfit to serve as prime minister, dreamed of crowning a king in Lebanon. Too many young men are buried in orderly rows in the name of that dream. In real time they knew they were going to war for him, and not in order to secure the peaceful existence of the state they are serving."

Adriana Melamed, JED

Sharon realized the limits to force

"He was certainly Israel's most courageous politician. He was also its cruelest. He was the leader who used brute force more than anyone to achieve his policies. But he was also one of the few to recognize the limits of force. [...]

[He] understood that the military power underpinning Israel could no longer guarantee its future. Israel couldn't live by the sword forever. [...]

He may have needed a few more years at the helm to consolidate his new ideas, which possibly peaked with the Gaza pullout. When Sharon sank into a

coma, so did Israel. It returned to the path of the earlier Sharon – brutal, cruel and martial."

Gideon Levy, HAA 12.01.14

2. Israelischer Verteidigungsminister verursacht Krise zwischen USA und Israel

Kommentare des israelischen Verteidigungsministers Moshe Ya'alon haben zu einem Tief in den israelisch-amerikanischen Beziehungen geführt. Laut einem Bericht der Tageszeitung Yedioth Ahronot hatte Ya'alon in einem privaten Gespräch gesagt, US-Außenminister John Kerry, der seit Monaten bemüht ist, die Friedensgespräche zwischen Palästinensern und Israelis wieder in Gang zu bringen, sei "messianisch" und "besessen". Er solle einen "Friedensnobelpreis bekommen und uns in Ruhe lassen". Er sagte außerdem, die von den USA vorgeschlagenen Sicherheitsarrangements seien "nicht das Papier wert, auf dem sie geschrieben stehen.

Die USA reagierten verärgert und verlangten von Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu, sich von den Kommentaren zu distanzieren. Amerikanische Stellen wiesen darauf hin, dass Ya'alons Aussagen insbesondere angesichts der amerikanischen Sicherheitshilfen für Israel "beleidigend" und "unangebracht" seien.

Auf Druck der Amerikaner veröffentlichte Ya'alon schließlich eine Entschuldigung. Sogar Außenminister Avigdor Lieberman, sonst eher nicht für seinen diplomatischen Ton bekannt, kritisierte Ya'alon für den persönlichen Angriff auf Kerry.

Ya'alon's apology

"Ya'alon's criticism was blown up into a major diplomatic confrontation. [...]

The notion that breaches of courtesy are insupportable in international relations is disingenuous at the very least. Otherwise, why would the Obama administration adopt so lenient an attitude toward Iran, where America is daily denigrated as 'the Big Satan?' [...] Moreover, the topmost American movers and shakers have not been excessively gracious toward their Israeli counterparts. [...]

It is the nature of antipathies that they eventually rise to the surface. [...]

When a great fuss is kicked up over private pronouncements, we must ask ourselves why. Diplomacy is not about sensibilities but about interests.

It is the duty of Israeli leaders to make sure that the existential interests of this country, as they perceive

them, are not compromised. Israelis too are entitled to hold views and to express them."

JPO 15.01.14 Editorial

Netanyahu, speak up

"Above and beyond the clear damage Ya'alon caused with his statements to the relations between the two countries, his comments also reveal an extreme position being held by a senior, significant official in the Israeli government concerning the peace process. The contemptuous, vehement rhetoric from Ya'alon [...] raises the possibility that he is actually expressing the position of [...] Netanyahu. [...]

The need to mollify Israel's most faithful ally is secondary to the main question: What does Netanyahu want? Ya'alon's remarks require the prime minister to clarify to the people of Israel, the Palestinians and the Americans whether he intends to seriously try and end the conflict, or whether he stands behind the content of what his defense minister said - because if the latter is the case, there is no purpose to negotiating at all."

HAA 16.01.14 Editorial

Speaking the truth

"The vast majority of Israelis believe that Ya'alon [...] spoke the truth. [...]

Ya'alon was never great at civil talk or clean speech. [...] He said what was on his mind without sanctimony. [...] We aren't used to a politician who speaks the truth. [...]

If we all agree that the prime minister cannot say in public what the majority of us are thinking about Kerry's aloof endeavors, maybe it's fitting that somebody else took it upon him or herself to explain to the Americans that their conduct is questionable. [...]

Each and every recent poll has shown that the majority of Israelis have no faith in the peace negotiations. That's our crowd wisdom. We have no faith in Abbas, and we don't believe that peace is just around the corner."

Gonen Ginat, IHY 15.01.13

What Ya'alon doesn't understand

"The defense minister's statements reveal that he has not understood the nature of the main threat facing the State of Israel today. [...]

Most of the Arab armies have become only a shadow of themselves. [...] In the military dimension, our situation has never been so good. [...]

But here is the bad news. [...] Hezbollah in Lebanon, Al-Qaida in Syria, Hamas in Gaza and the global jihad groups are likely to challenge Israel in difficult, asymmetrical conflicts. Technological superiority grants Israel military might that can stand up to these dangers. But Israel can only use its technological military strength if the country is seen to be justifiably defending itself in a moral fashion. [...]

In the diplomatic dimension, our situation has never been so fragile. [...] This time the problem is not the strength of the Arabs but the loss of the West. [...] If we lose our last allies, we have lost. [...]

To actually take the long road that will guarantee Israel's strength and future, the government of Israel must honor John Kerry and respect John Kerry's peace initiative - and must say yes to it."

Ari Shavit, HAA 16.01.14

Paying the price

"Kerry issued a seemingly matter-of-fact statement on Wednesday, but anyone who understands American English could tell that Kerry had not put the matter behind him. [...] It is clear Netanyahu will have to get involved and pay a price to Washington. Perhaps a freeze on settlement construction for a certain period or lowering the bar on the wording of Israel's demands in the peace negotiations or delaying some of these demands to a later date.

The U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv knows very well Ya'alon is the biggest skeptic among top Israeli leaders in the peace negotiations. If the Americans got the chance, and had partners behind Ya'alon's back, they would seek to either remove Ya'alon from the top leadership circle or at least weaken his position in that circle."

Dan Margalit, IHY 16.01.13

Timing of insults creates perfect storm

"The U.S. has enhanced and expanded its security cooperation with Israel in recent years, but is nonetheless subjected to a steady barrage of slights, aspersions and insults by the Israeli right, especially when American officials are engaged [...] in promoting a peace process with the Palestinians. [...]

Opponents of the peace process have been trying to undermine Kerry's hope to present a framework of principles for an Israeli-Palestinian deal. [...]

By making a federal case out of Ya'alon's remarks yesterday, the U.S. hopes not only to draw a line in the sand about what can and cannot be said within the framework of 'legitimate disagreements between friends' but to also deter other senior Israeli officials from following in Ya'alon's outspoken path."

Chemi Shalev, HAA 15.01.14

Netanyahu fumbled the Ya'alon affair

"In a parallel universe, [...] Netanyahu would have [...] been shocked by the blatancy and obscenity [...] of the defense minister's remarks, [...] summoned [...] Ya'alon and demanded an unequivocal clarification. [...]"

Netanyahu would have [...] decided to telephone President Obama, to apologize [...].

But [...] this is Israel. State Department officials [...] know that what Ya'alon said [...] is what Netanyahu thinks in his heart of hearts. [...]"

The US is shifting away from the Middle East for a variety of reasons: Complete independence from Middle Eastern oil, lack of hope for alliances in the Arab world and relocation of priorities to the Far East. Netanyahu is not to blame for this process. His job is to slow it down as much as possible and not – as Ya'alon did – speed it up. But that's in a parallel universe. Here in Israel, Netanyahu has been verbally attacking the US president for five years. So what could we actually expect from Ya'alon?"

Alon Pinkas, JED 16.01.14

Ya'alon is telling the painful truth

"Kerry so it seems, has almost completely adopted the Palestinian stance, and that is the background for the harsh statements made by Ya'alon [...].

The outline of the agreement they are suggesting may end in a security disaster for Israel, but if we insist on our vital interests they will see us as responsible for the talks' failure. And if this is the situation, it's no wonder that the defense minister is furious. [...]"

The defense minister argues that in practice there are no negotiations taking place right now, because Abbas refuses to recognize Israel as the Jewish nation state, refuses to give up on the right of return and refuses to sign an agreement which will bring all claims to an end. This truth may be painful, but someone has to say it – and that's what Ya'alon did."

Shimon Shiffer, JED 16.01.14

Yedioth Ahronoth chose the US over Israel

"By printing Ya'alon's comments on Kerry, Yedioth Ahronoth engaged in journalistic malpractice, flouting the basic rules of the profession. It helped the administration put pressure on Israel. This collusion is very troubling considering the complex challenges our nation faces at this point in time. Yedioth Ahronoth was cognizant of the potential harm to

Israel, but decided to go ahead with the story anyway. This suggests that for Yedioth Ahronoth, readership and publicity trumps Israel's well being."

Haim Shine, IHY 16.01.14

3. 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 einen Gesetzesvorschlag, demzufolge der **Gebrauch des Wortes "Nazi"** verboten werden soll:*

Policing speech

"In a preliminary reading, the Knesset passed legislation this week that seeks to make it illegal to use the word 'Nazi' or Holocaust symbols except in certain educational or historical contexts. If it becomes law, the measure will place an unnecessary limit on freedom of speech. [...]"

When [...] demonstrators lose control of their mouths and shout 'Nazis!' at police [...] attempting to maintain order or when they wear striped pajamas and yellow stars [...], this is distasteful and uncalled-for, whether those demonstrators are left-wing activists [...], haredim fighting against Shabbat desecration [...], or hilltop youth [...]. But never do these hotheaded activists intend to incite to genocide. Rather, they are doing quite the opposite, they are accusing their opponents of behaving in a violent way. It is just that their use of metaphor is not particularly tactful. [...]"

The exploitation of the word 'Nazi' or of Holocaust imagery [...] is best combated through education and the promotion of a public discourse that rejects the belittling of the memory of the Shoah and its victims."

JPO 16.01.14 Editorial

Nazi' an illegal slur? It's about time

"I naively thought there [already] was such a law, but that it was just not being enforced very well. [...]"

In dozens of countries [...], including Germany and Austria – there has been for decades a law banning

Holocaust denial, incitement on anti-Semitic grounds [...] and use of Nazi symbols. [...]

As opposed to what some Israelis think, the curse 'Nazi' is not like any other swearword. That's because its intention is not just to tease a person, but to compare him to those who exterminated six million Jews, hundreds of thousands of Poles, Soviet prisoners of war and gypsies in death camps, and caused the death of more than 60 million people when they launched a world war. So there is no logical reason to compare between a so-called acceptable curse and the word 'Nazi.' [...]

Racist curses must be prohibited, and so there is a need for such a law too. I can't understand how some allegedly sane and normative people in Israel believe there is no room for such a law, which should have been enacted decades ago."

Noah Klieger, JED 15.01.14

Über den Rabbi Yosiyahu Yosef Pinto, der verdächtigt wird, Polizeibeamte bestochen zu haben:

Letting Pinto off the hook? Absolutely not!

"Pinto's people had been spreading rumors that Attorney-General Yehuda Weinstein struck a deal: The rabbi would be cleared in exchange for incriminating information on Maj. Gen. Menashe Arbiv.

In other words, Arbiv, who allegedly received improper gifts from Pinto when he served as the head of the Israel Police's Lahav 433 major crimes unit, will stand trial, but the rabbi who initiated the transaction will walk. [...]

His attorneys said they would surrender the information implicating Arbiv only if Pinto faces no charges. That is unacceptable. [...] Pinto is accused of trying to bribe Brig. Gen. Ephraim Bracha, head of the National Fraud Investigations Unit.

Pinto essentially wants to become a state witness. If he were to strike such a deal, this would be because law enforcement traditionally focuses on the big fish. But even if the damning allegations against Arbiv are corroborated, Pinto is still the whale that investigators should try to catch. [...] Weinstein should not accept Pinto's terms; he should not let him off the hook. Rather than swat flies, he should drain the swamp."

Dan Margalit, IHY 19.01.14

Rabbis are not above the law

"A rabbi is not above the law, especially when he keeps testing its limits. On the contrary -- a rabbi must hold himself, and be held to, far higher standards of honesty and integrity. [...]

As Pinto has professed his innocence, he should refrain from asking his excellent lawyers to hatch a deal with the State Attorney's Office and instead make himself available for police interrogation voluntarily. He should divulge all the information, refute these rumors and put an end to slander and blasphemy."

Aviad Hacoen, IHY 19.01.14

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

Veröffentlicht im: Januar 2014

Verantwortlich:

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

Redaktion:

*Maike Harel
Judith Stelmach*

Homepage: www.fes.org.il

Email: fes@fes.org.il