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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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1. Kontroverse um Knesset-Rede von Martin Schulz

Während einer auf Deutsch gehaltenen Rede vor der Knesset betonte EU-Parlamentspräsident Martin Schulz (SPD) die Freundschaft zwischen der EU bzw. Deutschland und Israel, sprach sich gegen jegliche Boykottmaßnahmen gegen Israel aus, nannte die jüdischen Siedlungen im Westjordanland jedoch ein Hindernis für den Frieden. Eine Anekdote in seiner Ansprache sorgte für einen besonderen Eklat. So berichtete er, es habe ihn besonders bewegt, als palästinensische Jugendliche ihn fragten, warum Israelis viermal soviel Wasser zur Verfügung stehe wie den Palästinensern.

Obwohl Schulz selbst sagte, er habe diese Fakten nicht überprüft, verließen mehrere Regierungsmitglieder laut protestierend den Saal. Handelsminister Naftali Bennet bezichtigte Schulz der Lüge und gab an, er werde "diese Propaganda" erst recht nicht auf Deutsch dulden. Auch Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu bezeichnete Schulz' Kritik als einseitig, sagte aber selbst, dass es einen Unterschied im Wasserverbrauch gebe, der jedoch "erheblich kleiner" sei.

Schulz bezeichnete die Abgeordneten, die ihn während der Rede gestört hatten, in einem Interview als "Extremisten". Auch in der israelischen Opposition wurde das Verhalten von Bennet und seinen Parteikollegen kritisiert.

Bennet leads Israel's retreat from the civilized world

"Martin's Schulz's speech was a declaration of friendship for Israel. [...] He said that he felt personal responsibility for what Germany had done to Jews in the Nazi period. As such it was a speech that primarily showed the depth to which Schulz, Germany and the EU stand behind Israel. [...] He [also] told Israel, as a friend, that the international commu-

nity will never accept Israel's colonization of the West Bank. [...]

But Bennett & Co. have a simple principle: [...] Israel's friends are supposed to applaud anything that Israel's extreme right comes up with. [...]

Israel cannot expect to treat its European friends with such shameless lack of civility and expect this friendship not to be harmed. [...]

Overplaying the Holocaust card has but one effect: Growing parts of the free world are coming to feel that Israel is no longer part of it."

Carlo Strenger, HAA 16.02.14

Schulz and Bennett: Bad manners – even worse diplomacy

The decision by Martin Schulz to repeat hearsay during an address to the Knesset was a very silly blunder; the decision by the Jewish Home to storm out dramatically in protest was equally silly, and reckless. [...]

Bennett needs to apologize to the Israeli people for so publicly humiliating an ally and a friend. There is no shortage of Europeans who would like to see Israel crushed under the weight of boycotts, but Schulz went out of his way to praise Israeli "freedom, democracy and the rule of law"; [...]

At the same time, however, Martin Schulz should apologise too. [...] The remarks hit a raw nerve, because it appeared to vindicate Israelis' suspicions about Europeans: that they don't know what they're talking about, that they make foreign policy on the basis of a distorted understanding of the facts, and that this puts Israeli lives at risk."

Eylon Aslan-Levy, TOI 12.02.14

Casual lies

"Can you imagine the leader of any country haphazardly throwing into their speech in a foreign parliament a statement or accusation that hadn't been checked and verified a dozen times?

Of course not! These speeches are usually carefully prepared and vetted by many bureaucrats, political aides and superior officers. But not when it comes to Palestinian lies about Israel. They can casually be cast into a major, formal speech in the Israeli parliament without caution.

That is a classic example of the bias in EU behavior regarding Israel, and is exactly what Israel abhors about European attitudes these days. All's fair in the Palestinian war against Israel, and Europe is there to lap up Palestinian accusations against Israel, and to churn them out and amplify them without judicious review, reflection or balance."

David Weinberg, IHY 13.02.14

Water torture for the Palestinians

"Why is the Israeli establishment so bent on denying the existence of water discrimination? Because this time the Israeli establishment cannot wrap it in the usual security excuses it resorts to with other sorts of blatant discrimination. [...] The religion of security, which is used to justify the land theft, checkpoints and blockade, has yet to come up with an explanation for why a Palestinian child is entitled to less water than a Jewish child."

Amira Hass, HAA 18.02.14

Fresh water and old assumptions

"Today, contrary to what President Schulz was advised by his young student friend in Ramallah, Israeli and Palestinians per capita consume equal volumes of fresh water. [...] Artificially generated water is solely within each authority's control, sanction and prerogative. [...] Since 1967, Israelis have dramatically reduced their per capita annual consumption of fresh water, while the Palestinians have increased theirs. [...]

The Palestinians have recklessly failed to invest in their water infrastructure (hence the astronomical leakage), have failed to build more than one, solitary recycling plant, even though plants have been approved for all major cities, and even though there is an existing international fund of \$500 million waiting and ready to finance these plants."

Joel Golovensky, JPO 18.02.14

Water concerns

"While Israelis living both inside the Green Line and in settlements in Judea and Samaria enjoy unlimited water supply, the situation for Palestinians living in the West Bank is much different. Water supply is sporadic. [...]

The construction of sewage treatments plants, which would enable Palestinians to rely less on potable water for agriculture, [...] depends on Israeli permission [...]. For instance, Israel has demanded that sewage treatment plants funded by international donors in places such as Salfit, near Ariel, serve Jewish settlements as well as Palestinian ones. Palestinians and their donors reject this proposal. [...]

Helping Palestinians to solve their water issues is not only the right thing to do, it would provide considerable political gains in the eyes of the international community at a relatively low cost."

JPO 13.02.14 Editorial

Say a big 'thank you' to Martin Schulz

"Martin Schulz [...] is a brilliant intellectual and a thoughtful politician, and we don't need to worry – he won't give up his existential friendship so easily. [...]

We ought to be grateful to President Schulz. [...] He did to Netanyahu what Netanyahu loves doing to others: He removed a few masks from the prime minister's arrogant, hysterical face. [...]

What matters is that the prime minister admitted there are disparities between Jews and Arabs, between Israelis and Palestinians. [...] The current Israeli government [...] accepts the premise that the Jews deserve more. And this is the fundamental moral premise that is ticking like a bomb at the gateway to any present or future peace agreement. For only an agreement based on full equality has even the faintest chance of proving durable."

Avraham Burg, HAA 16.02.14 Editorial

Schulz is closer to Herzl's vision than Bennett

"Parts of the Israeli public will always label Germans as a type of Nazi, and will always create great interest mixed with panic in their reactions to Germans. [...]

No, Martin Schulz did not lie. He wanted to report to the Knesset what he had heard from Palestinians, and that's what he did. [...] None of us, in the fiery, explosive and inflammable discourse, is really interested in the facts. Especially the Bayit Yehudi members, who are only interested in incitement and explosiveness."

Ariana Melamed, JED 13.02.14

Oh my God, he speaks German!

The real gem [...] was Naftali Bennett mumbling (echoed later by some others) that such accusations against Israel, inside the Israeli parliament were

uttered in German, no less. That, symbolically, adds insult to injury and makes a political-informational issue into an emotional and historic hot potato. [...] Bennett knows (I think, but am not sure) that Germany is Israel's greatest ally, aside from the US. Germany stands by Israel in the EU against heavy pressure all around. [...] Playing on the sensitive connotation of 'He said it in German' is cheap. [...] How does Israel benefit from an infatuation with being isolated? What good comes from constantly repeating 'They are all against us?'"
Alon Pinkas, JPO 13.02.14

2. Finanzkrise des Hadassah-Krankenhauses

Die beiden Krankenhäuser des Hadassah Medical Centers, die zu Jerusalems wichtigsten Kliniken gehören und einen weltweiten Ruf genießen, stehen vor dem Bankrott. Das Jerusalemer Bezirksgericht gewährte dem Privatkrankenhaus im Besitz der amerikanischen Frauenorganisationen Hadassah Anfang Februar eine Frist von 90 Tagen, um sein Defizit von 350 Millionen Euro unter Kontrolle zu bekommen.

Im Zuge der Untersuchungen wurden extreme Fälle von Misswirtschaft durch die Krankenhausleitung bekannt. Dazu gehören unbezahlte Steuern und Rentenbeiträge, doppelte Abrechnungen von Ärzten, die Nutzung von Forschungsgeldern für den regulären Betrieb und mehr. Der drohende Bankrott des Hadassah Medical Centers, durch den nun die Gesundheitsversorgung Jerusalems gefährdet ist, führte zu einer öffentlichen Diskussion über die mangelnde Kontrolle der wirtschaftlichen Gebarung privater Krankenhäuser durch den Staat, obwohl diese ein wichtiger Pfeiler der Gesundheitsversorgung im Lande sind.

Aufgrund der Finanzkrise zahlte Hadassah seinem Personal im Januar keine vollen Gehälter. Außerdem waren die Versicherungen gegen ärztliche Kunstfehler nicht erneuert worden. Dies führte zu einem zwei Wochen andauernden Streik. Erst nachdem ausgehandelt wurde, dass Mitarbeiter, die weniger als 3000 Euro im Monat verdienen, von Gehaltskürzungen ausgenommen werden, kehrten Krankenschwestern und Ärzte an ihre Arbeitsplätze zurück.

Inquiry committee for Hadassah

"It's not enough to address the future; an accounting of past actions is also needed. It is inconceivable for

labor to pay the price, while management goes scot-free.. [...]

From the minutes of its meetings it is clear the board did not stand up to management, making do with gentle criticism that was not acted on. Thus, the conduct of the chairmen during this period should also be scrutinized. [...]

In order to get to the bottom of these weighty issues, the cabinet should appoint a commission of inquiry that will examine the reasons for the financial collapse, the conduct of the director general and all the gatekeepers – the directors, accountants, internal auditors, the Registrar of Nonprofit Organizations and the health and finance ministries."

HAA 13.02.14 Editorial

A plan to save Hadassah

"Hadassah runs two major Jerusalem medical centers and cannot be allowed to collapse. The state has no choice but to shell out huge sums of money in grants and loans in an effort to get the medical organization back on its feet. But these taxpayer funds must only be provided on condition that all the hospital employees agree to a painful recovery plan. [...]

The crisis and the acceptance of state funds require a revolution in the hospital's organizational culture and financial management."

HAA 11.02.14 Editorial

This failure has two fathers

"The government-run hospitals owned by the state and under the supervision of the Health and Finance ministries are managed better and much more efficiently than Hadassah. [...] The hospital [should be] transferred to the purview and ownership of the state [...].

It is also important to note that the Health Ministry, for its part, never tried enforcing, even when the need presented itself, any type of meaningful oversight of the hospital's affairs. Even after very harsh complaints were publicly aired this past year about the management of the privatized medical care system at Hadassah (which allows the patient to choose his or her doctor and reduce waiting time at an additional cost), and after criticism was voiced to this effect by State Comptroller Yosef Shapira, [...] Health Minister Yael German failed to act and implement a mechanism of oversight at Hadassah."

Ran Reznik, IHY 11.02.14

Hadassah's lesson

"If there is one conclusion to be drawn from the latest developments at Hadassah Medical Center, it is that hospitals cannot be managed by members of the club [...]. Doctor-managers tend to identify too much with their club, and too little with [...] the general public and the patients. [...]

Private healthcare surgeries are also carried out in the morning... which means that the doctor receives double salary for the surgery: both his salary and his salary for private practice. [...]

Senior doctors arrive at work and go directly to their private practice. Their public work ends with their pay check, without them being required to provide anything in exchange. [...]

The Ministry of Health's ability to enforce any regulations on private healthcare is close to zero."

Eli Tsipori, GLO 10.02.14

How I lost Hadassah money

"Most neurologists in the [state-run] clinics in the community receive payment on a per-patient basis; this amounts to around 150 NIS per patient seen. [...] [They are] motivated to see as many patients as possible, as quickly as possible. Sure, you can spend an hour with each patient; you will simply get paid 150 NIS per hour (before tax). [...]

Hadassah is a center of excellence where it is fitting that specialized clinics should run. [...] We are expected to spend as long as it takes to get the job done, whether or not this is 'profitable.' When I read that Hadassah will be turned over to a manager instructed to 'remove unprofitable services' I am scared, though not for myself and my family. Whilst an 'unprofitable doctor' will always be able to find profitable work, an 'unprofitable patient' will be left with no-one to turn to."

Marc Godkine, TOI 10.02.14

Trouble at Hadassah

"Could it be that the reason for the waste, the high salaries, and the general atmosphere of disregard for responsible management has something to do with the way HMO is funded? Unlike other hospitals and health maintenance organizations, which receive hundreds of millions of shekels in government financial support annually, HMO receives nothing from the government.

Its budget comes from Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America [...] all raised from donations. [...] Perhaps because the funding was provided by donations from American Jewry, the level of accountability by Israelis was lower."

Thank you for your money ladies, and goodbye

"Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America laid the foundations for modern medicine in Israel, but the medical center's crisis is a signal that Israelis must take responsibility for themselves. [...]

The Hadassah debacle has provided a valuable lesson to both Israelis and American Jews. While the financial assistance of the Diaspora was extremely valuable, perhaps crucial, to Israel in its early years, continuing to rely on the generosity of kind women in America can lead to bankruptcy, as it has in Hadassah. Israelis have to take ownership of their own social issues, just as they must do with all their other challenges. This doesn't mean we are ungrateful in any way, only that we have to grow up. We're still friends and if you want to continue donating, that's great, but if not, well then, thank you ladies for your money and good-bye."

Anshel Pfeffer, HAA 21.02.14

3. Diskussion über die Einberufung von ultra-orthodoxe Juden zum Wehrdienst

Traditionell leisten die meisten ultra-orthodoxen Juden ("Haredim") in Israel keinen Wehrdienst, obwohl dies für alle anderen Juden, die israelische Staatsbürger sind oder ihren Hauptwohnsitz in Israel haben, gesetzliche Pflicht ist. Im Februar 2012 entschied der Oberste Gerichtshof jedoch, dass das sogenannte Tal-Gesetz, das diese Ausnahme ermöglichte, verfassungswidrig sei. Seitdem versuchen Politiker eine Lösung zu finden, die für alle Seiten akzeptabel ist.

Zurzeit ist die Shaked-Kommission damit beauftragt, einen entsprechenden Gesetzesvorschlag auszuarbeiten. In einem Anfang Februar vorgelegten Entwurf ist vorgesehen, dass der reguläre Armeedienst für Männer von 36 auf 32 Monate verkürzt wird, während religiöse Männer, die in dem "Hesder"-Programm, das Armeedienst und religiöse Studien verbindet, dienen, statt 16 nun 17 Monate dienen sollen. Dies entspricht nicht den Forderungen der Armee, die eine Ausweitung des Hesder-Dienstes auf zwei Jahre sowie eine Verlängerung für Frauen von 24 auf 28 Monate verlangt hatte.

Die Shaked-Kommission entschied außerdem, dass die Wehrdienstverweigerung von Ultra-Orthodoxen als Straftat verfolgt werden soll. Dies ist eine zentrale Forderung der Partei Yesh Atid, die jedoch von

ihrem Koalitionspartner HaBait HaYehudi abgelehnt wird. Bisher ist es den Kommissionsmitgliedern noch nicht gelungen, sich auf einen Kompromiss zu einigen.

A fair draft

"For years the state has dragged its feet and has failed to gradually put an end to an intolerable and unfair situation in which able-bodied 18-year-old haredim men are permitted to postpone indefinitely their military service while their secular brethren are forced to give up three years of their lives – often risking their lives in the process – to defend the State of Israel. [...]"

While it is wise to avoid as much as possible a direct confrontation with the haredi community and its leaders – who will exploit the issue to perpetuate separatist tendencies and their control over this population – the government has an obligation to its constituents and to the principle of equality before the law.

The High Court's decision to halt the transfer of taxpayers' money to young men who should be in the IDF serving their country is a signal to our lawmakers that the status quo cannot and must not continue."

JPO 06.02.14 Editorial

IDF draft law must be stopped

"If the law sets criminal sanctions against haredi draft dodgers, as Yesh Atid wants, their implementation may create a 'Jewish intifada' and perhaps even – God forbid – acts of 'martyrdom' here and there. The enforcement will be expensive and the breaches in the law will allow thousands to dodge the draft very easily. Economic sanctions according to the outline suggested by Habayit Hayehudi will not yield results either. [...] The new economic sanctions [...] are so proportionate and considerate, that I doubt they will hurt yeshiva students' motivation to dodge the draft. [...]"

We must recognize the fact that there will always be inequality when it comes to carrying the security, economic and social burden. What can be done is to reduce the injustice involved in this situation and speed up the processes which are anyway taking place at the moment – the integration into the workforce and into the Israeli society in the haredi sector and in the Arab sector.

It will be done through effective financial incentives and a tight, efficient supervision system which will prevent their abuse. That's it. Patience and determination in the performance will lead to the desired

change within several years [...]. For that purpose the law must be simplified, based mainly on economic incentives – both positive and negative."

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 12.02.14

The virtual enlistment bill

"The haredim have no plans to join the Israel Defense Forces. [...] If I could believe that at the end of all this, we would have a law that would have the haredim lining up at IDF enlistment centers, I would not give up the fight. [...] But universal service will not happen. [...] Lawmakers must think of other options that go beyond just appeasing certain coalition parties. [...]"

I would urge lawmakers to restrict themselves to simply amending the current conscription law to allow for the exemption of ultra-Orthodox men [...] without making them 'prove' that they are studying in a yeshiva. This would enable the haredim to join the workforce or pursue higher education -- something that they particularly need -- and integrate into Israeli society and the market. Later, they would come to realize that military service offers certain advantages and they would gradually enlist. So simple, and so practical.

Yossi Beilin, IHY 20.02.14

The right way to integrate the ultra-Orthodox

"We must ask ourselves, as we seek to put greater emphasis on universal conscription, whether the Jewish state also seeks to uphold the values of Torah study and the preservation of its Jewish character. The haredi public, with its yeshivas and rabbis, sees itself as the torchbearer of Torah study, the direct descendant of thousands of years of existence of the Jewish people. Does the general public value the historical role of the haredim? [...]"

Holding Torah study in contempt or trying to force societal change in a single move are childish mistakes that will serve no one."

Yoni Chetboun, IHY 20.02.14

4. Medienquerschnitt

Die Vielfalt der in Israel relevanten Themen kann in einem Medienspiegel nicht umfassend wiedergegeben werden. Um den deutschen LeserInnen dennoch einen Einblick in das breite Themenspektrum, das in den Medien behandelt wird, zu gewähren, veröffentlichen wir in dieser Schlaglichtausgabe wieder eine kleine Auswahl an weiteren Themen, die in den vergangenen zwei Wochen die israelische Gesellschaft bewegten.

*Über die Ankündigung Spaniens, dass Nachfahren der sephardischen Juden, die während der Spanischen Inquisition vertrieben wurden, die **spanische Staatsbürgerschaft** erhalten können:*

Andalusia calls

"These initiatives [...] appear to be gestures of reconciliation for the sorrowful treatment of the Jews during the Middle Ages. In 1390, anti-Jewish riots in Spain sparked a wave of exile and conversion that culminated in 1492, when King Ferdinand expelled all the Jews who were left. [...]

Against the backdrop of campaigns in several European countries to outlaw circumcision and ritual slaughter, the move by Spain and Portugal to redress its history of oppression by extending citizenship to Sephardi Jews might be interpreted as a refreshingly positive trend. [...] As Zionists who believe in the value of aliya or Jewish immigration to Israel, however, we cannot view mass Jewish immigration to Spain as a positive development. [...] Admittedly, many who are interested in obtaining Spanish citizenship do not necessarily want to move to Spain. [...] For many Israelis, adding Spanish citizenship simply provides additional emigration options 'just in case.'"

JPO 16.02.14 Editorial

And what about an Ashkenazi passport?

"Five hundred years after the Inquisition, and without a significant Jewish presence to speak of, poverty-stricken Spain is today still one of the more anti-Semitic countries in all of Europe. The attempt to attract Jews stems from the widespread, anti-Semitic stereotype that equates Jews with money. A lot of money."

Gonen Ginat, IHY 14.02.14

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

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