



## Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 05/14

### Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

22. Februar – 10. März 2014

#### 1. Merkel-Besuch in Israel

*Zusammen mit ihrem Kabinett ist Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel Ende Februar zu den fünften deutsch-israelischen Regierungskonsultationen nach Israel gereist. Aus Anlass des 50. Jubiläums der deutsch-israelischen Beziehungen, das nächstes Jahr ansteht, trafen sich deutsche Minister mit ihren israelischen Amtskollegen, um diverse Kooperationsprojekte zu planen. Unter anderem wurde angekündigt, dass Deutschland Israel zukünftig in Ländern ohne israelische Botschaft konsularisch vertreten werde.*

*Die Gespräche zwischen Merkel und dem israelischen Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu wurden von beiden Seiten als positiv und freundschaftlich beschrieben. Dennoch war unübersehbar, dass die beiden Regierungschefs in vielen Punkten uneins sind. So betonte Netanyahu, dass ein Boykott Israels den Frieden zurückwerfen würde, während Merkel den anhaltenden Siedlungsbau kritisierte. Deutlicher wurden ihre Differenzen bezüglich des iranischen Nuklearprogramms. Während Netanyahu den Europäern "Fehler" in ihrem Verhalten gegenüber dem Iran vorwarf, verteidigte Merkel die Verhandlungen und mögliche Lockerungen der Sanktionen.*

#### **Under Merkel, boycott floodgates stay closed**

"At its core, her visit is meant to bolster economic ties between Israel and Germany, not to feed the pollution of political disagreement. [...]"

In the international relations lexicon, friendship does not always imply unanimous accord, and Merkel's Israeli hosts must take into account that beyond supporting two states for two peoples, the German chancellor would also like to see Jerusalem split into two capitals. [...] Israel should value her friendship and assistance, even though she disagrees with Jerusalem over such issues. [...]"

Merkel is a welcome guest, especially given the fact that anti-Israel boycotts have become quite fashionable in certain circles in Europe. Her government [...] is still closing the floodgates to the boycott movement."

Dan Margalit, IHY 24.02.14

#### **Question marks above Germany**

"Germany [...] is gearing up for change. [...] President Joachim Gauck gave the first signal [saying] that there are individuals who use Germany's guilty past as an excuse for avoiding action and for indolence.' [...]"

Social Democrat Frank-Walter Steinmeier [...] claimed that Germany could not remain 'off the field' in political affairs. [...] Over the next several months, we are probably going to see Germany expand its military base -- both in terms of its operational capabilities and the ability to act.

In principle, we could view the shift in a positive light. [...] But there's a catch. [...]"

It would be unwise to disregard the signs that Germany's moral and practical responsibility to the Jewish people is undergoing a shift. [...]"

Even though Merkel never hesitates to reiterate her commitment to Israeli security, sometimes it seems as though she is justifying it in the spirit of 'saving Israel from itself.' In other words, she disagrees, occasionally using blunt language, with the policy of Israel's current elected government."

Zalman Shoval, IHY 20.02.14

#### **Welcoming Germany**

"In the eyes of many Israelis, Germany's Holocaust legacy disqualifies the Germans from expressing anything but wholehearted support for whatever policies a given Israeli government chooses to pursue.

The attack on Schulz launched by Netanyahu and Bayit Yehudi head Naftali Bennett, for instance,

was undoubtedly fueled by the knowledge that lashing out at a German politician [...] would be received well by Israelis, who tend to harbor anti-German sentiments. [...]

Instead of caving in to populism, however, both sides – Israel and Germany – need to tone down the rhetoric and try harder to adopt a clear-eyed view of indisputable realities. [...]

After the US, Germany is probably Israel's greatest ally."

JPO 24.02.14 Editorial

### **Germany escaping its past by lecturing Israel**

"Ceremonialism has been taking over relations between the two countries for a long time now. Too often, it amounts to hollow statements on both sides about the duty to 'remember but forgive'. [...]

The question which should have been asked [...] is whether Germany has done enough to justify trusting the 'land of the criminals,' or has it focused its efforts on causing people to forget the fact that it used to be the 'land of the criminals,' by diverting the attention from the relations between Germans and Israelis – to relations between Israelis and Palestinians.

If Germany is indeed investing so much effort in achieving a durable peace to secure Israel's future, what practical steps has it taken to make the Palestinians and Arab countries cease their endless anti-Semitic incitement [...] ? Or is Germany's only contribution to peace telling the Jewish state what more it must do in order to satisfy the other side's claims?" Eldad Beck, JED 24.02.14

### **Israel and Germany: From the Holocaust to the Palestinians**

"One cannot erase the memory that hangs over this most unique of relationships, nor can one base them strictly on that memory. In other words, Israel cannot deny the Germans the right to criticize its behavior towards the Palestinians.

From conversations I had in Germany recently I learned that Merkel is willing to stand beside Israel completely on all issues except for one - the Palestinians. [...]

Merkel has said many times in private conversations that Netanyahu is not always honest with her about settlement construction. She believes that it is up to the prime minister to prove his intentions, and restore the mutual trust between them.

Shimon Shiffer, JED 24.02.14

### **We do not rule the world**

"What motivates Germany? We think that because of the Holocaust we deserve everything, but there's a limit to the guilt feelings. [...]

Germany in truth fulfilled Chancellor Adenauer's pledge to Ben Gurion [...] to guarantee Israel's security over and above the reparations."

Yoel Marcus, HAA 28.02.14

### **Enemies? A love story**

"One would have to be blind to depict the arguments over the settlements as a nadir in Israel-Germany relations, just as their cabinets are meeting in a format that is unprecedented in Germany. The entire German cabinet [...] came to Jerusalem. Both sides invest enormous effort in strengthening the close special relationship between the two countries, and both want that relationship to continue for many more generations. Consider this precedent: This time, nobody will visit the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial. Neither the Germans nor the Israelis want to look backward anymore. Both sides are laying the foundations for a better future."

Gil Yaron, HAA 27.02.14

### **Merkel in Jerusalem: A different kind of meeting**

"Merkel recognizes the Jewish State, she has said so and says so openly. In the rest of Europe they are scared to take a stand, lest they be perceived as unfair to the Palestinians. [...]

Next year, we will mark 50 years since the establishment of formal Israeli-German relations, while I, as a third generation of the Holocaust, still have a hard time hearing German. I believe her when she says she wants to strengthen the ties and that she wants to listen to us. But Europe is busy with its own internal affairs. The struggle over the very character of the continent makes more of an impact than a feud over language. We are just in the way – a reminder of what was, a mirror to what is."

Yoaz Hendel, JED 05.03.14

## **2. Umsturz in der Ukraine**

*Auch in Israel dominierten der Umsturz in der Ukraine und die russische Intervention auf der Krim für einige Tage die Medien.*

*Dabei lag der Fokus insbesondere auf der amerikanischen Reaktion auf das russische Vorgehen, sowie auf den Auswirkungen der Revolution auf ukrainische Juden. So war es in den vergangenen Wochen in der Ukraine zu einigen antisemitischen Vorfällen gekommen. In den russischen Medien wird der rechtsnationale Charakter von Teilen der ukrai-*

*nischen Opposition betont. Andererseits gehörten auch einige Juden zu den pro-westlichen Demonstranten am Maidan-Platz.*

### **Putin's audacity, Obama's timidity**

"Russian brazenness in Crimea is a direct result of American fecklessness. [...] The Russian invasion of the Ukraine is what happens when America is in global retreat. [...]"

Obama [...] seeks the weakening of the United States on the global stage as a good and necessary outcome. [...] He explicitly views America's past global performance to be arrogant and high-handed; to be militaristic and not completely moral. [...] His path, then, has been to 'fundamentally transform' America's place in the world; [...] to drag America down from its imperious perch.

It is no wonder, then, that Putin fears Obama not at all, and feels free to re-take the Ukraine without serious repercussion. [...]"

Alas, we can expect similar impudence and defiance from the Iranians and Turks, too."

David Weinberg, IHY 02.03.14

### **US security guarantees are worthless**

"Ukraine has been abandoned to its fate, whether Putin wants to continue to destroy it militarily and economically or not. But it won't receive military aid. That is how the West betrayed Ukraine [...]. And at the exact same time, the same US is offering us its security guarantee in Judea and Samaria. [...] Now everyone understands what an American security promise is worth and what dubious 'security arrangements' Kerry's paper is offering. It's a paper, just like it was with Ukraine. In both cases, papers in the air."

Guy Bechor, JED 06.03.14

### **Putin is in it to win it**

"Moscow has no intention of giving up Ukraine, which is a crucial asset in Putin's new imperialistic policy of 'Euro-Asia.'

The 26 victims who died in the Kiev riots on Tuesday proved the failure of Washington's and the EU's attempts to mediate. [...] The two camps in Ukraine today, the government and the demonstrators, do not trust the U.S. or the EU, which makes it very difficult for them to negotiate the crisis. [...] The problem of the pro-West activists in Ukraine is that, beyond the saber-rattling, they are not going to do anything. The pro-Russian camp, on the other hand, could rely on Russia to provide a lot more. [...]"

And what exactly have the Europeans or the Americans done so far for the sake of the pro-Western camp?"

Boaz Bismuth, IHY 20.02.14

### **Putin exercising caution in Ukraine crisis**

"Russia's global situation is bad. It is only pretending to be a world power: Its influence in the world is declining. Apart from a veto in the Security Council, it has nothing to offer its friends. The Russian military is not only lagging in technology, at least two generations behind the US Army. [...]"

Putin knows that and is therefore exercising caution in his attitude towards the Ukrainian crisis."

Sever Plocker, JED 02.03.14

### **What Ukraine can learn from Israeli-Palestinian conflict**

"This somber unfolding of events is not only due to the recklessness of [...] Putin, but also the incompetence of Western leaders. [...]"

The Western blanket critique of Russia will foster inflexibility in the Ukrainian leaders, and, on the basis of unconditional US support, allow them to overreact in a way that does not serve the interests of any of the parties involved. [...]"

The solution that best serves the interests of all parties in the conflict [...] is for the ethnic Russian population in Ukraine to be given a chance to vote for either the status quo, autonomy within an independent Ukraine, or annexation by Russia."

Rafael Castro, JED 04.03.14

### **Come home, Ukrainian Jews**

"Of utmost concern from our point of view [...] is the plight of Ukraine's Jews. [...] The unrest has led to a rise of anti-Semitism. [...]"

Many questions regarding the future of Ukraine remain unanswered. But what seems certain is that none of the possible scenarios awaiting Ukraine's citizens, particularly those of the Jewish persuasion, arouses much optimism. Under the circumstances, perhaps Ukrainian Jews should [...] follow in the footsteps of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian Jews who have already come home to Israel."

JPO 23.02.14 Editorial

### **In the Ukraine crisis, danger to the Jewish and Muslim minorities**

"Amid the specter of chaotic civil war, there is also ample reason for concern for the well-being of Ukraine's approximately 300,000 Jews and 500,000 Muslims. [...]"

Ukrainians must [...] be vigilant to prevent any recurrence of an age-old propensity to scapegoat the Jews as the source of their misfortunes.

Concern on this score cannot be lightly dismissed given that last month there were attacks on two yeshiva students, who were beaten by anti-Semitic thugs [...] one cannot help but look with disquiet on the fact that one of the three main opposition parties, Svoboda [...], has a history of anti-Semitic rhetoric. Given the tragic history of massive anti-Jewish violence in Ukraine [...], both the government and opposition coalition have a special responsibility to be vigilant in preventing the outbreak of anti-Jewish violence in the coming days."

Marc Schneier, JPO 24.02.14

### **Putin, a dangerous friend of the Jews**

"If you were relying only on Kremlin-financed media [...] you would be convinced that a dark wave of anti-Semitism has smashed down on this country. [...] I can only point to the conclusion that the rise [in anti-Semitism] has been minimal so far. [...] Highlighting Ukrainian anti-Semitism has been one of [Putin's] central propaganda tools whenever there is a pro-western government in Kiev. [...] His defense of Jews is not the product of any form of liberal or enlightened mindset. [...]

Israel, living in its rough neighborhood, has little choice but to engage with Putin, and really has no business getting involved in the Ukrainian crisis. [...] But in our dealing with the master of the Kremlin, we should never forget what a repressive dictator he is. Whatever the reasons for his ostensible friendship towards the Jews, it is an instrumental and cynical relationship."

Anshel Pfeffer, HAA 06.03.14

### **Two core issues the new Ukrainian government will have to tackle on 'the day after'**

"Fed by the propaganda aired on Russian TV channels, many in the east tend to see all the revolutionary forces as anti-eastern and increasingly dominated by the radical nationalists. [...]

Even in a best-case scenario, the new central government taking shape in Kiev is sure to be much weaker than its predecessors. The lack of financial resources coupled with the Ukrainian nationalists' desire to secure political achievements in the western regions on the one side, and the above-mentioned entrenchment and suspiciousness in the east on the other, will inevitably undermine the central power."

Yuri Teper, JPO 26.02.14

## **3. Netanyahu trifft Obama in Washington**

*Anfang März reiste Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu in die USA. Im Mittelpunkt seiner Reise stand ein Treffen mit Präsident Barack Obama, der ihn drängte, das amerikanische Rahmenabkommen für israelisch-palästinensische Friedensgespräche zu akzeptieren. Aus demselben Grund wird es Mitte März auch zu einem Treffen zwischen Obama und dem palästinensischen Präsidenten Mahmoud Abbas kommen. Während Obama sagte, dass ein Abkommen "Kompromisse von beiden Seiten" erfordere, meinte Netanyahu im Weißen Haus, dass die Palästinenser im Gegensatz zu Israel "ihren Teil" nicht beitrügen.*

*In einem Interview vor Netanyahus Besuch hatte Obama betont, dass nicht mehr viel Zeit für erfolgreiche Friedensverhandlungen bleibe. Wenn es zu keinem Abkommen käme und die Siedlungsbautätigkeiten anhielten, so Obama, werde Washingtons Fähigkeit, die internationalen Reaktionen darauf einzudämmen, in Zukunft eingeschränkt sein. In den israelischen Medien wurde diese Aussage weitgehend als Drohung interpretiert, mit der die USA – bzw. Obama – Israel andeuteten, dass auf ihre uneingeschränkte Unterstützung nicht mehr viel länger Verlass sei.*

### **Frameworks for disaster**

"What would happen in the event that Israel and the PA do not agree on [...] a 'framework'? This, undoubtedly, will be the focus of Obama's meeting with Netanyahu [...] and subsequently with Abbas [...]. Netanyahu, on the other hand, has one thing on his agenda: preventing a nuclear Iran by any means necessary. [...] Unfortunately, though, Obama is more concerned about extending the deadline for Mideast 'peace,' a euphemism for the establishment of a Palestinian state. [...]

This is very bad news. Whenever Netanyahu impresses upon Obama the urgency of stopping Iran before it's too late, the US president responds by pressuring him into promises of appeasement, if not concrete concessions.

It is a framework for disaster."

Ruthie Blum, JPO 02.03.14

### **A partner in the White House**

"Netanyahu [...] sees a single goal ahead: To rescue himself and the State of Israel from negotiations that could lead to a withdrawal from the territories

and yield peace [...], hence the efforts to evade the strangling hug of the American partner, which insists on getting both sides to sign a framework agreement. [...] It has become clear that the negotiations are not between Israel and the Palestinians, but between Jerusalem and Washington. [...]

If Washington thinks the continuation of the conflict harms not just the future of Israel but also critical American interests, it would be appropriate to say so openly and publicly."

HAA 03.03.14 Editorial

### **Surviving Obama**

"Now that he no longer has to concern himself with the wishes of the American public and its representatives in Congress, Obama has dropped the mask of opposition to Iran and forged ahead with a diplomatic process that all but ensures Iran will acquire nuclear weapons. [...]

After the congressional elections, Obama will feel entirely free to attack the US's closest ally in the Middle East. [...]

During his trip to the US this week, Netanyahu made clear that he understands the challenge and is competent to handle it. [...]

Netanyahu rebutted every position Obama has staked out on the Palestinians and Iran without ever mentioning Obama's name. By doing so he energized Israel's supporters while denying Obama the ability to claim that Netanyahu is unsupportive of his policies."

Caroline Glick, JPO 06.03.14

### **Frankly, Bibi doesn't give a damn**

"Bibi did best what he does well. He went through an official visit abroad and kept his cabinet intact. He said the meeting with Obama was very good; that he had made clear to the president that Iran must not be allowed to obtain nuclear weapons.

But he didn't reveal Obama's response. We can assume the president was [...] clear [...] regarding the Americans' ability to stand by if Israel rejects the Kerry plan. We can assume he was [...] clear in his assessment that Israel must not lose President Mahmoud Abbas as the most moderate Palestinian leader Israel can hope for in the foreseeable future."

Yoel Marcus, HAA 07.03.14

### **For Netanyahu, a bombshell battering by Obama**

"The president's comments reinforce years of grievance that have accumulated in Netanyahu's circles and some distance beyond, to the effect that the president ignores the inconsistencies, duplicities and

worse of the Palestinian Authority [...], while placing exaggerated blame for the failure of peace efforts at the door of the Israeli government. [...]

For one thing is certain, the president's resort to a newspaper interview on the eve of their talks to issue near-apocalyptic warnings about the disaster Netanyahu risks bringing upon Israel is just about the last thing likely to bolster the prime minister's confidence in their alliance, and just about the last thing likely to encourage Netanyahu to further alienate his hawkish home base by taking steps such as halting building outside the settlement blocs."

David Horowitz, TOI 03.02.14

### **Push for an interim deal**

"In the current circumstances, Israel has started to taste international isolation. But Netanyahu could reach a general understanding with Obama, who, whether he is weak or strong, is the president of the friendliest world power Israel has ever known, a nation that will stay powerful until the end of his term. In choosing between Economy and Trade Minister Naftali Bennett and Obama, Netanyahu would be doing Israel a great service by bolstering his cooperation with the U.S. president, rather than reaching agreements with Bennett. Even he knows that."

Dan Margalit, IHY 04.03.14

### **Obama giving Netanyahu one last chance**

"White House officials estimate that this time too, Netanyahu arrived with a suitcase filled with empty promises. [...]

Obama will give the last chance before pulling the curtains over the window of opportunities created: He will [...] push him against the wall so that he accepts the framework agreement [...]. If an agreement isn't reached this time, there will be no other opportunity, certainly not during his term. He will make it clear to Netanyahu that he is willing to get personally involved, but only if there is really someone to run with. [...]

If Netanyahu is wearing a mask, this time Obama intends to tear it off his face."

Orly Azoulay, JED 03.03.14

## **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 ein **Schiff mit iranischen Waffenladungen**, das von der israelischen Armee abgefangen wurde:

### **Iran: Pulling the strings of terror**

"It is in Iran's best interest to provide its allies with weapons, especially terrorist groups. Using terror groups to fight its enemies is one of the most important components in Iran's security outlook because it has proved to be an effective method of deterrence. [...] Assisting terrorist groups fighting Israel has helped Iran in its goal to wear Israel down through armed struggle. [...]

The weapons discovery marked an embarrassment for Iran, which has been endeavoring both to improve its international standing and to paint a positive, moderate picture of itself to reach agreements with Western governments over its nuclear program. [...]

Still, it is likely that the damage to Iran's image will be slight. Its involvement in terrorism has been well-known for years. Capturing this vessel, therefore, is not going to change that very much. And since it is also a high Western priority to reach a final deal over the nuclear issue, it is unlikely that this affair is going to put the brakes on the nuclear talks."

Ephraim Kam, IHY 09.03.14

### **Iranian cement and Israeli whitewash**

"Israel, which is armed with almost every kind of weapon in the world, does not allow others to arm themselves with even a little of what it has. [...]

The IDF managed to intercept a shipment of rockets. [...] But a country that basks in the glory of military achievement, no matter how impressive, is not a healthy country. After every possible praise had been heaped on the commanders and the soldiers, [...] we are also permitted to ask what it's all about. [...]

This is first and foremost a showcase [...] intended mainly to serve PR and propaganda purposes and to blur reality and make it disappear. [...]

The Iranian cement is meant to conceal the rockets and the Israeli whitewash is meant to conceal dangers that are greater than any rocket, Iranian or Syrian."

Gideon Levy, HAA 09.03.14

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

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