



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 22/16
Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

16.-30. November

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Kampf gegen Brandserie

Sechs Tage lang kämpften Israels Feuerwehr und Armee mit Unterstützung mehrerer palästinensischer Löscheinheiten sowie Hilfe aus Ägypten, Jordanien, Europa und schließlich den USA gegen zahlreiche Großbrände an. Nach ersten polizeilichen Vermutungen habe in den meisten Fällen vorsätzliches Handeln zu den Flammen geführt. In den zehn Tagen, die seit dem Ausbruch der Brände vergangen sind, konnten die Ermittler jedoch keine stichhaltigen Beweise für diesen Verdacht finden. Nun verstärkt sich die Vermutung, dass vor allem das Wetter eine Rolle gespielt habe. Die heißen, regenlosen Sommermonate trockneten die Wälder aus. Dazu kamen sturmartige Winde, die das Feuer ausbreiteten. Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu dankte Palästinenserpräsident Abbas für die Hilfe bei der Flammenbekämpfung. Gleichzeitig kündigte er harte Maßnahmen gegen Brandstifter an. Bei der Mehrzahl der Männer, die die Polizei unter dem Verdacht der Brandstiftung in Untersuchungshaft nahm, handelte es sich um Palästinenser aus dem Westjordanland. Am schwersten von den Großbränden betroffen war die Stadt Haifa, wo rund 70.000 Menschen temporär ihre Wohnungen verlassen mussten. Umstritten unter Politikern und Sicherheitsexperten war der Einsatz des weltweit größten Löschflugzeugs aus den USA vom Typ Boeing 747. Der sogenannte Supertanker wurde erst zum Ende der Katastrophe eingesetzt.

Igniting incitement

(...) Having passed a freezing night in the fields together, I feel that our community could teach this country's leadership a thing or two about humane behavior in times of crisis. Cohesion and unity in the face of fire is not so surprising in our village – the first and only Jewish-Arab village in the Middle East or the world. It is what makes us really feel that forty years of living together through wars, intifada, crises, military “campaigns” and lots of pain, has been worthwhile. (...) in a show of good neighborliness, Kibbutz Nachshon, nearby Bekoa and Tal Shahar, opened their gates to us. At six in the morning they took in these evacuated Arab and Jewish men, women and children and offered them a warm and cozy place, without first checking the identity papers that most of us had anyway left behind in our homes. (...) The attempt to sabotage the humanity of Arabs and Jews who live in this common space, in order to survive politically, is a highly dangerous experiment that places in jeopardy the lives of both Jewish and Arab citizens. This is truly playing with fire. If a scorched forest takes years to rehabilitate, the work required to rehabilitate human relationships is far more difficult and painful. (...) Arab villages burned across northern Israel and we never heard a single MK accusing hateful Jews of burning Umm al-Fahm or the towns of Bil'in or Majd al-Krum or Sakhnin or dear Haifa. (...) Instead of struggling together against the fire, the leadership you have

chosen is busy explaining how much your Arab neighbors hate and want to burn you. I do not need to mention here the actual burning of a boy from Shuafat or an entire family in Duma (...) if there really are people who go out and commit arson, in response to incitement from any direction, they, rather than an entire national group, deserve to be accused and prosecuted. (...) Look around and see that people, irrespective of religion, race and gender, are afraid of the fire and any other natural disaster, just like you. And it is best to learn how to survive it together, or else we will burn together.
Samah Salaima, TOI, 25.11.16

They burn, we build

(...) Jews, do not anger your neighbors too much, they might get upset. (...) On social media and in official places, they are speaking about the "muezzin bill" that caused the fire. (...) Our land is burning not just because of accidents (...), but also because of the behavior of arsonists who have adopted the wrongful belief: "Let it be neither ours nor yours." (...) They burn and we build, that is, after all, the fixed historical contract. Haifa and the Carmel Forest will be rehabilitated; the same is true for Nataf in the Jerusalem Hills and for Talmon in the Judean Hills, as well as for other places. The good land will flourish once again, despite those who rise up against it.
Dror Eydor, IHY, 25.11.16

Fighting fire

(...) The well-coordinated firefighting effort of both local and foreign crews, combined with orderly evacuations, was a reassuring sign that Israel, this time, had indeed learned from past mistakes. (...) Unfortunately, we have been forced to learn (...) by confronting (...) terrorism. (...) describing the current events by the term "fire intifada," as it is increasingly being dubbed by certain media, may actually attract terrorist firebugs. Things are bad enough (...) it was premature for Education Minister Naftali Bennett to fan the flames of discord by labeling many of the current fires as "terrorism in every sense of the word" and saying via Twitter on Wednesday that the perpetrators are "someone to whom this land does not belong." (...) Fighting fire with fire is not a helpful metaphor, when racism and incitement can only spark the fire next time.
Editorial, JPO, 26.11.16

As fires rage across Israel, Netanyahu busy with political pyromania

The prime minister and members of his cabinet have been quick to point to Arabs as the arsonists behind the fires that raged across Israel last week, risking far more dangerous blazes than no supertanker can extinguish. (...) The time for evaluation still lies ahead, but this time we should demand that indictments or determined administrative steps are taken against those who did not properly utilize the fire-fighting budget and did not apply the lessons of the previous state inquiry. (...) the gap between the seriousness and professionalism of those at work and those who call themselves our leaders is infuriatingly large. This gap now fuels the race to find guilty parties to hold responsible, and deflect the searing wind from the faces of those who are really responsible toward the usual suspects. (...) Senior police officers were actually very cautious (...). They know there is no reason to hastily draw targets, but mainly that such irresponsible accusations could ignite far more dangerous fires than no supertanker can extinguish. The pursuit of the "inciters" has become a social-media ritual whose purpose is to conceal all failures. (...) Some of the fires may have been started by arsonists, and there may be people who incited others to set fire to houses and forests. But alongside the investigation to uncover the arsonists, if there are any, must come caution, rigor and responsibility to stop the political pyromania directed toward an entire group of Israeli citizens.

Editorial, HAA, 27.11.16

Organized terrorism

There is no room to blame the Arab public for the wave of arson. (...) Arab residents were willing to help; and the Palestinian Authority offered its equipment to assist the firefighters. There is no room here for incitement. (...) the police and the Shin Bet security agency (...) would be wise to "do some thinking" and to review things from the opposite perspective -- since organizing arson requires more time and planning than an individual's spontaneous decision to take a knife from his kitchen and set out to murder; and since more than one terrorist takes part in the act and the materials are not as readily available. (...) we must suspect, or at least look into, the possibility that this may have been prepared in advance with briefings from a central official (...). The police and the Shin Bet would rather think of this as the actions of individuals. After all, if it were to be otherwise, people would ask why

they were asleep at the switch. So many Arabs involved in the preparations and the Israeli security forces didn't know about it? This is "ostrich" policy. But it is more important to take look at the reality to prevent future arson than it is to avoid the temporary unpleasantness of such questions. (...)
Dan Margalit, IHY, 27.11.16

U-Boot-Affäre

*Bei dem Kauf dreier weiterer U-Boote aus Deutschland, so beteuerte Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu, sei es ihm allein um die Sicherheit seines Landes gegangen. Hintergrund aktueller Korruptionsvorwürfe ist die Verbindung zwischen Netanyahu persönlichem Anwalt David Shimron und Miki Ganor, der ebenfalls Klient Shimrons ist. Ganor ist der israelische Vertriebspartner des deutschen Unternehmens ThyssenKrupp, das die U-Boote herstellt. Dass Shimron den Handel eingefädelt haben könnte, streitet Netanyahu ab. „Ich werde noch lange bleiben“, signalisierte er Journalisten, dass er reinen Gewissens sei und deshalb nichts zu befürchten habe. Informationen des israelischen Fernsehsenders Channel 10 zufolge, habe Shimron, seiner anfänglichen Darstellung zuwider, indes mindestens einmal mit einem Vertreter aus dem Verteidigungsministerium telefoniert, angeblich um eine internationale Ausschreibung für die U-Boote zu unterbinden. Erst auf Drängen Netanyahus habe das Verteidigungsministerium dann tatsächlich auf eine Ausschreibung verzichtet. Die U-Boote gelten als die teuerste Kampfmaschine der israelischen Armee. Während der frühere Verteidigungsminister Ehud Barak die Investition für sinnvoll hielt, warnte sein Nachfolger Moshe Yaalon vor dem teuren Kauf. Die U-Boote dienen zur Abschreckung vor allem mit Blick auf **den** Iran, Israels gefährlichstem Feind. Aktuell sollen sie zum Schutz der Gasfelder vor Israels Küste eingesetzt werden. Umstritten war der Handel von Anfang an auch in Deutschland, denn die U-Boote können mit Atomwaffen bestückt werden. Die neuen U-Boote sollen ab 2027 die in den Jahren 1999 und 2000 gelieferten Modelle ersetzen.*

Netanyahu must be investigated

Lawyer David Shimron is a relative of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. (...) As in all the best families, blood in the Netanyahu-Shimron-Molho family is thicker than water. (...) There is a built-in conflict of interests here, but apparently not an illegal one since former Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein and State Comptroller Joseph Shapira both allowed

it – whether by acts of commission or omission. (...) But this isn't enough to whitewash the impropriety, because these familial gatekeepers were involved in the vetting and appointment process of at least one legal gatekeeper: Shapira himself. This crooked state of affairs would surely have continued had another aspect of Shimron's professional life not come to light this week: his ties to a German corporation that seeks to sell additional submarines to the Israeli navy. Shimron serves as a lawyer for Miki Ganor, the German shipyard's Israeli representative, and is even listed as being on the board of directors of one of Ganor's companies, though Shimron claims he resigned from that job long ago, shortly after the company's establishment. (...) This affair is crying out for investigation, like other affairs in which Netanyahu is concerned. (...) The public needs to know whether Israel's government is headed by a corrupt politician, or not.

Editorial, HAA, 20.11.16

Submarines and advisers

(...) A leader less astute than Netanyahu could have easily gotten Israel embroiled in one of the many conflicts on our borders. But now his long-lived stint as prime minister is being threatened by allegations of unethical practices in connection with a multi-billion shekel deal to purchase German submarines. (...) That Israel possesses advanced submarines is undoubtedly a strategic plus. They enable Israel to project power far from its shores and give Israel a reported second strike capability. Clearly there is justification for the purchase. And Netanyahu has succeeded in keeping Israel safe in a very dangerous region. Why not assume the submarine deal is part of his successful strategy? (...) Whether or not Netanyahu knew that Shimron was involved in the negotiations (...), the imbroglio raises questions. While we understand the prime minister's need to surround himself with advisers whom he trusts, he should also (...) maintain a clear distinction between his public role as the leader of the nation and his personal connections with special advisers and negotiators.

Editorial, JPO, 20.11.16

Israel cannot afford uncalculated risks

Submarines are vital weapons of immense strategic importance for Israel. (...) Israel has six submarines, which is the reasonable minimum required for purposes of redundancy, even before factors such as time-to-target, the need to operate in multiple arenas, routine maintenance rotations, repairs and

random malfunctions are taken into account. (...) The issue on the table is three submarines to replace three older ones, among the six that are in service today; and, as stated, they are an extremely sophisticated, expensive weapons system (...). There have always been arguments within the IDF and the Defense Ministry over developing and using innovative and expensive systems, because of their high cost and the desire to invest in other systems. (...) We tend to forget the IDF's pushback against entering the age of satellites and precision weaponry, but we do recall the "battles" over the Iron Dome missile defense system and the F-35 fighter jets. The new submarines will only arrive in a decade, but if the decision to procure them had been delayed, we could have been left unprepared for the critical tests we will face in the future. And when it comes to these types of strategic decisions, we cannot take uncalculated risks. (...) Israel made the correct strategic decision, at the right time and proper scope.

Uzi Dayan, IHY, 21.11.16

Netanyahu's lawyer presents: A finger in every pie

(...) The most important thing we should learn from this affair about Shimron (...) is that he does not work for free, that he knows how to demand full compensation and high pay for every single action. After all these years, however, it is pretty clear that despite conflict of interest agreements and the many formal prohibitions, something in this business is not working. Because somehow, the private public worlds—which are supposed to be managed in parallel without touching one another—are being mixed and connected in a way that makes one wonder, with Shimron on one side and Netanyahu on the other. (...) By searching through public archives (...) we tried to shed some light on part of the Shimron-Molcho law firm's client list. We compiled a list of more than 40 clients the firm's lawyers have handled since 2009, the year Netanyahu began his second term as prime minister, to this very day.

It's a very diverse list from many areas of commerce. The communications field does capture a big part of it, with clients such as Pelephone, Cellcom, Channel 9, CNN, Jerusalem Capital Studios and more. (...) The firm is involved in the liquidation of the Heftsiba group of companies and represents Catholic orders, religious institutes and foreign companies in the real estate field. In one case, Shimron's partner Molcho served as a special manager on behalf of the liquidator of the Karta governmental

company. And so, he found himself signing a document approving the transfer of rights from Africa Israel to a company belonging to Robert Rechnitz, the son of a prominent family of donors from the United States who is associated with Netanyahu. (...) Some of the clients on the list were not handled vis-à-vis government ministries but were only represented in legal proceedings, so there is no fear of a conflict of interest in their cases. Nevertheless, it's interesting to see the variety of clients and areas the law firm deals with. (...)

Shachar Ginosar, Tsach Shpitsen, JED, 30.11.16

Retroaktive Legalisierung von Siedlungen

Uneins sind die Koalitionsparteien über eine Gesetzesinitiative zur retroaktiven Legalisierung sogenannter Siedlervorposten. Dabei geht es um rund einhundert in den Palästinensergebieten wild errichteten Ortschaften, denen die israelischen Behörden offizielle Baugenehmigungen versagt hatten, trotzdem aber für die nötige Infrastruktur sorgten. Die nationalreligiöse Partei Habayit Hayehudi drängt auf eine rasche Abstimmung der Parlamentarier über den Gesetzentwurf, um die vom Obersten Gerichtshof bis zum 25. Dezember angeordnete Räumung des Siedlervorpostens Amona zu verhindern. Die Richter urteilten gegen eine Petition, die die Regierung eingereicht hatte, um die Räumung Amonas um weitere sieben Monate zu verschieben. Moshe Kahlon, Chef der Partei Kulanu, positionierte sich gegen eine „Untergrabung“ des Obersten Gerichtshofs. Amona liegt, wie die meisten anderen wild errichteten Siedlungen, auf privaten palästinensischen Grundstücken.

Whitewashing apartheid

The creativity of the Justice Ministry knows no bounds when it comes to trying to whitewash the crimes of the settlements. (...) Their efforts are intended to legitimize not only the outposts, but the apartheid rule in the territories. One of the proposals is to declare settlers a "local population," in an area defined as under military occupation. (...) By this definition (...) could lands be taken from Jews to benefit the Palestinians? Would the laws that are applied to the Palestinian local population, including military law, be applied to the settlers, with both groups judged by the same courts (...)? Since the answer to this question is no, defining the settlers as a "local population," will only continue a long process of creating apartheid rule. Because if these are "local" populations, why should they be subject to

different legal systems and why should they not have equal rights, including granting Palestinians the right to vote in elections in Israel? (...) The best solution for Israel is the two-state solution. The other possibility – granting full civil rights and equality before the law for Jews and Palestinians – would mean the end of the Jewish state. The third possibility is called apartheid.

Editorial, HAA, 18.11.16

Outpost bill can stand up to scrutiny

The drama over the impending eviction of the Samaria outpost of Amona is in full swing, and Attorney General Avichai Mendelblit is seemingly trying to prevent the Knesset from resolving the situation peacefully. (...) Mendelblit argues that international law bars the military commander of a territory held in belligerent occupation to expropriate land for the purposes of retroactively regulating construction, and that he cannot refuse to protect private proprietary rights. But even if the attorney general's argument had merit, it would still not apply to this case, as the Knesset and a military commander are hardly comparable. In Israel, the Knesset is the legislator. (...) Under Israeli law, should a conflict arise between Knesset legislation and any other law, the former has the upper hand. (...) Even if the decision on Amona fell under the purview of a military commander, Mendelblit's assertion would still be wrong. (...) The attorney general is also of the opinion that standard, regular expropriation laws (...) as expropriation for settlement purposes cannot be considered one done to serve public needs. But case law in Israel demonstrates that there are many precedents in Israel of the legal expropriation of land in favor of the settlement enterprise. (...) Mendelblit's attempt to torpedo the outpost regulation bill lacks legal merit and is even perilous to the democratic process. The best thing the attorney general could do now is withdraw his opposition to the bill.

Avi Bell, IHY, 18.11.16

Israel Should Kill Regulation Bill

(...) The proposed legislation, known as the Regulation Bill, is the brainchild of Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked and Education Minister Naftali Bennett, leaders of the radical right-wing Jewish Home Party and two of the most extreme members of Israel's parliament. (...) If the bill becomes the law of the land, there will be dire consequences. (...) Bennett and his allies are determined to tighten Israel's grip on the West Bank and thereby sabotage the chances of a peaceful resolution of Israel's long-running

conflict with the Palestinians. (...) Absent Palestinian sovereignty in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Palestinians most probably would escalate their resistance to Israel's nearly 50-year occupation, plunging both sides into another spiral of bloodshed. (...) since when it is permissible for Jewish settlers to take the law into their own hands and seize private land from their rightful proprietors? This does not happen in a democratic country where the rule of law is cherished and respected. (...) It's incumbent on Netanyahu to quash this misbegotten bill at the first opportunity.

Sheldon Kirshner, TOI, 18.11.16

Amona – a case of state-sponsored chaos

(...) Since the State of Israel returned to the historical lands of Judea and Samaria in 1967, the settlement process in the area has lacked a clear government policy, often shifting with competing political imperatives. This is never more evident than with regard to neighborhoods known as "outposts" (...). Over the years, the residents of Amona have generally enjoyed the support of their government regardless of whether it was Right- or Left-leaning. (...) Infrastructure was built at these sites, paved roads replaced the clay and dirt roads and generators gave way to the public electricity infrastructure. (...) However, a petition to the High Court of Justice by some anti-Israel organization can bring about the destruction of a settlement (...) that the state (...) had approved for construction years earlier. The gap exists, among other reasons, due to the technical fact that over the years no fewer than three different land-use maps were drawn, using different technologies and based on the different data available at the time. Twenty-five years ago, it was thought that Amona's land was state land. It became clear just a few years ago that it is privately owned land. (...) As a result, land previously considered state land can suddenly become private land and vice versa. This is state-sponsored chaos. (...)

Oded Revivi, JPO, 22.11.16

Medienquerschnitt

Umstrittener Muezzin-Ruf

Israel's dictating of a tolerable Muslim noise

The calls to prayer emitted by some mosques can indeed be a nuisance to their neighbors, Jews and non-Jews alike, especially when the muezzin makes his call before dawn. (...) The government is obligated to preserve not just freedom of worship but

also quality of life. (...) But this bill isn't motivated by liberal secular ideals or concern for the sensitive ears and quality of life of the mosques' neighbors. The bill was submitted by Knesset members from the extreme right and is supported by Likud and Kulanu officials as part of the government's war against Arab Muslims. From the bill's original wording (...) one can conclude that this is another step in the effort to dictate to Muslims the Jewish state's boundaries for "tolerable Muslim noise." This bill joins the ludicrous demand that MKs, ministers and other officials make sure the flag is flown wherever they make an appearance. (...) In this case, too, the intent is not just to glorify the flag but to force Arab MKs to display their devotion to the symbol of the Jewish state. It's interesting that the bill's sponsors are the same loud legislators who consider Arab MKs traitors. (...) However, to put an end to the loudspeaker nuisance there is no need for a festival of declarative legislation. Understandings could be reached with the leaders of the Muslim community and the mosque managers. There might also be technological solutions that would replace the noisy calls to prayer. But (...) there has to be (...) understanding of Muslims' religious needs and a willingness to stop patronizing. Right-wing MKs display none of the above.

Editorial, HAA, 16.11.16

A war of consciousness

When Muhammad, the founder of Islam, instructed his followers to call to prayer out loud five times a day, loudspeakers did not exist. (...) The use of loudspeakers at mosques was banned in Iran, along with several other cities in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. (...) To this day, the sound of church bells is non-existent in Muslim countries, and you won't see processions on Easter or any other Christian holiday. (...) The Palestinian demand is political at its core: We are the sovereign here, we are Muslims, and this land belongs to us, and one of the identifying features will be the muezzins' very loud call to prayer five times a day, even if it also bothers us. Government ministers did well to pass the bill to prohibit the use of loudspeakers in mosques, and the Knesset would do well to ratify it into law. Today, the brunt of the war does not take place on a battlefield. Egypt is collapsing under the weight of its internal problems; Hezbollah and Syria are busy fighting their own wars. The primary fight today is over hearts and minds and is dominated by the delegitimization and demonization of the State of Israel. We need to learn the rules of this war of consciousness

very quickly, and win it, just as we have won all of our wars until now.

Dr. Ephraim Herrera, IHY, 17.11.16

The 'Muezzin Bill' – a masquerade

(...) This bill, which aims at banning the use by mosques of public address systems for the daily call to prayer, is a masquerade, which all participants are party to. Nobody really thinks that those who proposed this bill aren't actually motivated by nationalistic and religious considerations (...). Likewise, some of the bill's opponents disregard the real disturbance muezzins cause for non-Muslims and present the issue as an exclusively racist and anti-Muslim initiative and therefore not requiring reassessment. (...) restrictions on use of PA systems by mosques exist in many countries, including Arab states, and therefore it is clear that this bill is not simply the invention of fevered minds seeking to harm Islam and its followers in Israel. On the other hand, there seems to be no real and definitely no urgent need for new legislation relating to noise pollution, because current law prohibits unusual and unreasonable noise levels. (...) Loudspeakers obviously did not exist in antiquity, indicating the use of powerful PA systems by mosques is not religiously mandated and other solutions can be considered, and compromises reached. These might include applications for smartphones and computers, which would allow those interested in hearing the muezzin to do so while at the same time feeling comfortable that they are not disturbing their neighbors. (...) the state should invest in developing something like this and implementing it in the Muslim public domain. Instead, Israel's masquerade continues, and the politicians on both sides of the issue continue to paint the matter in black and white. (...) Of course, the bill's proponents would not conceive of applying these measures to the weekly Shabbat sirens, regardless of what they preach concerning the nuisance of noise pollution. (...) Ultra-Orthodox circles have established a long record, both in Israel and overseas, of demanding respect for religious freedom whenever challenges to their privileges and rituals are involved. (...) these demands are not evidence of sincere commitment on their part to universal values of religious freedom and equality. (...) The recent battle over the Western Wall and the Ritual Bath Law, denying use and freedom of worship to fellow Jews, and Litzman's quick clarification on the rationale for opposing the Muezzin Bill make it, once again, patently clear.

Uri Regev, JPO, 21.11.16

Netanyahu und Trump

Netanyahu and Trump's success won't presage end of the world

(...) Despite Trump's outlandish personality and Netanyahu's rhetorical skills, both are nothing more than a collection of clichés that reflect the mood of the public that elected them. (...) Trump's control of the social networks is not magic or the result of a special talent. Rather, it is because his strumming on the strings of xenophobia and conservatism touched the exposed nerves of American society. Netanyahu's standing on the balcony at Zion Square in Jerusalem during a right-wing political rally or his harsh statements were not sufficient to make Yigal Amir shoot Rabin. This is not to say that Trump and Netanyahu are not responsible for their words or actions. However, a slightly wider perspective allows us to say that it is likely that their part in the swaying of the historical pendulum is not as significant as it seems. Since the dawn of the new millennium, this pendulum has swung in the opposite direction from the tolerance and globalization that flourished after World War II, especially after the dismantlement of the Eastern Bloc in the 1990s. Do dialectic laws stand behind this movement, or is it just the sum total of the desires of citizens around the world? (...) it is no accident that liberal voices ended up in the political wilderness in Russia, Israel and now in the United States. This is not enough to conclude that we must resign ourselves to the situation and stop protesting, but recognize that we are witnessing major processes likely to help Democrats in the United States, the opposition in Russia and the left in Israel put themselves and their leaders in perspective.

Liza Rozovsky, HAA, 18.11.16

Frauen in Uniform

Religious Zionists vs. women in Israeli army

(...) Maintaining women's presence in the IDF is the best way to halt the religious Zionist takeover of the army, and of Israel. In a place where there is equality between the sexes, freedom of movement for religious Zionist soldiers is limited. (...) the crisis of motivation among secular draftees (...) has led the military to become dependent on the "knitted-kippa wearers," and as their power increases, more pressure is put on the military to curb the integration of women. (...) The time has come to disband the "alliance of brothers" between the secular bourgeois (Yesh Atid) and the religious-Zionist bourgeois

(Habayit Hayehudi). Pushing the "shivyon ba'netel" (equality in sharing of the burden) was a colossal strategic mistake by Yair Lapid, who underestimated the threat to Israel posed by the settlers. The last thing the army needs is to recruit the Haredim, with all that implies for the sacralization of the IDF. Lapid fell into the trap set for him by Naftali Bennett, who understood that the way to the country's heart passes through the IDF – that whoever rules the IDF rules Israel. In Lapid's foolish crusade, he was not only ready to hand the reins of the state to the settlers, he even volunteered to lead the struggle, and on behalf of the value of equality, no less. (...)

Carolina Landsman, HAA, 25.11.16

Fromm versus weltlich

The problem isn't the rabbi, it's the Rabbinate

Rabbi Eyal Karim (...) is not the problem. The opinions he presented are problematic not because of a radical interpretation of the Halacha. (...) Karim is not calling for the execution of those accused of homosexual intercourse, is not demanding that the halachic evidence laws regarding women be applied to the civil courts and is not in favor of making rape permissible for soldiers in need of strengthening their combat spirit. Rabbi Karim represents the majority opinion, or at least the Orthodox majority opinion in Israel. (...) The mainstream halachic stance (...) is simply not in line with the universal equality values, which the State of Israel at least allegedly supports. The Halacha does not believe in equality between men and women, (...) and it definitely does not believe in equality between Jews and gentiles. (...) that doesn't mean that these rules are always implemented. (...) In any event, the sacred order itself and the sacred tradition it is wrapped in are not canceled. Rather, they are placed on the shelf, and the question of whether to use them halachically or not is put in the hands of the authorized commentators—namely, Rabbi Karim and his colleagues. (...) In a secular state, is it appropriate for people whose world view completely contradicts the state's to be in positions of power on the state's behalf? The answer is no. (...) It won't be easy finding a different Orthodox rabbi with a liberal and egalitarian world viewpoint. The solution, then, is not finding such a rabbi, but keeping rabbis away from the decision-making process on behalf of the state. The problem, in other words, is not the rabbi. The problem is the Rabbinate.

Aviad Kleinberg, JED, 26.11.16

Israelische Soldaten töten vier IS-Kämpfer

The Golan incident: Local initiative or strategic change

(...) The question (...) seems to be whether the event was a local initiative (...) or a planned initiative that constitutes a semi-baked change of strategy that necessitates an appropriate response from the IDF. It may also be a one-time event, with the IDF strike that followed acting as enough of a deterrent so as to put them off trying a similar event in the future. There seem to be three possible scenarios here. The first is that the Golani Brigade on a mission was found out by the ISIS-affiliated forces, which tempted one of their local commanders so much that he sent a truck equipped with a machine gun to shoot at it, either for deterrence or to succeed in hitting it. (...) In this case, the IDF needs to investigate and draw the appropriate conclusions so that the next time it sends a normally excellent infantry patrol such as Golani's go out, their field craft ability will be better. Another, less likely possibility is that the ISIS affiliate in the southern Golan Heights has become increasingly desperate, having been cut off from the central ISIS headquarters in the Syrian city of Al-Raqqah, or that ISIS in general is finding itself in dire straits, so that it decided to strike at Israel as an act of despair. ISIS, for that matter, could be planning large-scale terrorist attacks against Israel in the Golan, in which case Israel should up its alertness around the border fence and look out for car bombs that might be trying to reach Israeli villages in the Golan. And then there is a third possibility, where one of the many moderate rebel forces currently fighting ISIS in Syria tried to provoke the IDF so that it would carry out a response against ISIS, thereby doing the rebels' work for them. It is most likely that what actually happened was that it was a local attack that targeted the Golani unit, causing the Israeli Air Force to successfully take out four ISIS terrorists. (...)

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED, 27.11.16

HAA = Haaretz

JED = JediothAhronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

Veröffentlicht im: Dezember 2016

Verantwortlich:

Dr. Werner Puschra,

Leiter der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Israel

Redaktion:

Susanne Knaul

Judith Stelmach

Homepage: www.fes.org.il

Email: fes@fes.org.il