



**Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 12/19  
Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen**

**16.-30 Juni**

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**1. Workshop in Manama**

Kurz vor dem Startschuss für den von US-Präsident Donald Trump lange angekündigten Jahrhundertplan für einen Nahostfrieden trat die Regierung in Washington noch einmal auf die Bremse. Bei dem Treffen in Manama sollte es allein um wirtschaftliche Fragen gehen. Alle Lösungsvorschläge für die politischen Streitpunkte zwischen Israel und den Palästinensern bleiben mindestens bis zum November weiter unter Verschluss. Die Palästinenser\_innen boykottierten von vornherein ihre Teilnahme, woraufhin das Weiße Haus entschied, auch keine israelischen Regierungsvertreter\_innen nach Bahrain einzuladen. Die Erwartungen niedrig halten, so schien die Leitlinie für den zunächst als Auftakt für Trumps großen Friedensplan geplanten Gipfel. Nicht einmal von einer „Konferenz“ wollte man laut reden, sondern lediglich von einem wirtschaftlichen „Workshop“. So bescheiden sich Trumps Sondergesandte, sein Schwiegersohn Jared Kushner und der Jurist Jason Greenblatt, geben, so ambitioniert ist ihr „Frieden zum Wohlstand“, so der Titel der Ergebnisse zweier Arbeitsjahre. Der auf der Webseite des Weißen Hauses veröffentlichte Wirtschaftsplan legt „Eine neue Vision für das palästinensische Volk“ dar. Auf 40 Seiten beschreiben Kushner und Greenblatt die rosige Zukunft für den Gazastreifen und das Westjordanland, darin enthalten neue Straßen, technisch modern ausgerüstete Krankenhäuser, Schulen, bezahlbarer Strom, sauberes Wasser und

schnelle Internetverbindungen. Innerhalb von zehn Jahren könnten eine Million Arbeitsplätze geschaffen, die Armut halbiert und das Bruttonationalprodukt verdoppelt werden. Der Plan sieht zudem eine Verbindung zwischen dem Gazastreifen und dem Westjordanland vor. Insgesamt veranschlagen die Autoren in ihrem detaillierten Finanzierungsplan 50 Milliarden US-Dollar, die auch in Projekte für palästinensische Flüchtlinge in Jordanien und im Libanon sowie in Projekte in Ägypten fließen sollen. Oberstes Ziel der zwei US-Sondergesandten ist, die Palästinenser\_innen wieder an Bord zu locken, bevor die politischen Verhandlungen beginnen.

**The path between the Trump peace plan and applying Israeli law to settlements**

(...) At this critical point in time, instead of offering the Palestinians concessions so that they might ultimately be persuaded to not reject the plan out of hand, and also responding to the appeals of the Arab countries that are the main partners to the process (...) to improve the terms for the Palestinians, the American team finds itself under pressure to tilt the plan even further toward Israel's benefit, in order to assist Netanyahu. (...) President Trump's adviser and son-in-law, Jared Kushner, announced that the Trump plan does not propose a two-state solution, because each side interprets this principle differently; thus the plan does not call for the creation of a Palestinian state. With that, the Trump

administration is terminating dozens of years of consistent American policy supporting a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This is the reason that all the Palestinian factions have pledged in advance to reject the plan out of hand and deem it a blueprint for continuing the Israeli occupation through other means. (...) The strategic objective of the Trump plan is much broader than the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The administration is interested in coming up with a new Middle East configuration, in bringing together an Arab-American-Israeli coalition and, by so doing, shoring up the anti-Iranian and anti-jihadist alliance emerging between the Gulf states — mainly Saudi Arabia — and Israel, as well as rallying Arab countries into supporting the peace process. The administration is also interested in crafting conditions for bringing about an end to the Israeli occupation (...) in a manner that gives the Palestinians control over the decisive majority of the Palestinian population and territory in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. (...) the Trump plan (...) takes into account the positions of the Israeli government and Israel's security needs and also recognizes the reality that has been created in the conflict arena over the last five decades. This is the American position closest to Israeli positions in the framework of an agreement with the Palestinians. (...) Udi Dekel, TOI, 19.06.19

### **Bahrain has effectively been canceled**

Nothing ground shaking will happen on June 25, when the Trump administration's economic "workshop" gets underway in Manama, Bahrain. (...) Before you announce that you're convening an economic forum that will include the Israelis and the Palestinians, as well as Arab and international leaders, you check to see who is willing to take part. But it's probably that instead of doing that, the Americans made do with Manama agreeing to host the forum, and immediately made public an idea that is, at best, half-baked. (...) the forum will be relatively sparsely attended, and the people who will be there are not the decision-makers in their countries. The political part of the plan will have to wait until after Israel's do-over election and will be presented only after a new government is established — assuming we aren't sent to the polls for a third time — and after the next US election. Anyone who was pinning their hopes on a "present" from our American uncle, or was worried about it, can calm down. An economic workshop attended by economic officials from the region, particularly businesspeople, is simply a conference, and certainly no substitute for a real peace

plan. Just like it isn't worth getting our hopes up, it isn't worth protesting. After the administration pulled back from its original intention of holding a major economic summit, it appears to have made peace with the event to all intents and purposes being canceled.

Yossi Beilin, IHY, 19.06.19

### **The bribe of the century**

To the credit of those who came up with this plan, it should be said that the bribe is neither small nor modest. It involves an enormous sum of money: approximately 50 billion dollars that are slated to bolster several Middle Eastern economies, and of which a significant part will be transferred to the Palestinian territories. (...) the primary aim of the American team seems to have been to confuse the Palestinian public, and it appears Washington partly succeeded in doing just that. In other words, due to the strong opposition of the Palestinian Authority leadership in Ramallah and even Hamas's leadership in Gaza to the plan, the Americans tried to offer an aid package fat enough to would ignite the imaginations of millions of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. They may have succeeded. Not all the Palestinians in the territories were on board with the Palestinian leadership's out and out rejection of everything to do with the Trump plan. (...) But (...) not even a single high-ranking Palestinian official can be found who will encourage the PA to attend the summit. On the contrary, a mixed multitude of high-ranking Palestinians from the PLO and Hamas have been quick to condemn the Americans' attempt to buy off the Palestinians. As things appear at present, the link between the economic plan, which is only theoretical at this stage, and the Palestinian leadership's unequivocal refusal to accept any part of the Trump plan, doom the plan to complete failure. In the meantime, the Palestinians will have to make do with fantasies of a better economic future, and perhaps of a worthy leadership as well.

Avi Issacharoff, TOI, 23.06.19

### **Donald Trump's dangerous deal**

The economic workshop (...) in Bahrain (...) comes with a headline that sounds promising, on paper at least. But (...) the flashing warning light should have come on for every Israeli and Palestinian familiar with the last 30 years of conflict. This is nothing more than a new exterior for the same failed format that was once called "economic peace" (...). The attempt to approach this complicated process through economics (...) is also a strategic mistake

with potential for real disaster. (...) an attempt to start with the economy before discussing the core issues of the conflict is (...) a slap in the face of Palestinians and a complete misreading of their national aspirations. (...) it also lacks all feasibility. (...) There's no point in starting out if the end goal is not defined from the beginning. For both the Palestinians and the State of Israel, this goal must be the end of the occupation and, with the necessary exchange of territory, the establishment of a Palestinian state next to Israel along the 1967 borders. (...) The road to hell is paved with good intentions. Except that in the case of the Trump plan, it is not clear if the intentions are good, or if in reality the American president is just giving Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a political cudgel so that the latter can win the endless blame game and paint the Palestinians, again, as refusers of peace. However, this gift is liable to drag all sides and the whole region into an escalation of violence that will set back the possibility of a productive dialogue by many years. (...) Ami Ayalon, YED, 23.06.19

### **Bahrain opportunity**

(...) the Palestinians have not accepted even the most generous political solutions in the past, hence the focus this time on the economy first. And while bemoaning the undoubted current economic crisis, Abbas is refusing to accept any of the millions of dollars Israel wants to transfer from tax revenues collected on behalf of the PA, because Israeli authorities are deducting the money slated to go to the families of imprisoned and dead terrorists. (...) More than anything else, Abbas is against any normalization of relations with Israel, without which peace will be impossible, and quiet and stability will remain elusive. (...) The fact that Israel has managed to reach agreements in the past with two neighboring countries should be evidence that it is not Israel which is inherently against peace, but the Palestinian leadership – doing all it can to avoid it. (...) if the Palestinian leadership truly wants to create an independent state of its own, it should be seeking ways of maintaining its own schools, hospitals and organizations rather than relying on UNRWA. (...) The 83-year-old Palestinian leader needs to decide what he wants to leave as his legacy: a better, safer and more prosperous society for his people, or (...) take the opportunity to miss an opportunity yet again. Editorial, JPO, 24.06.19

## **2. Schäfers Rücktritt**

*Zahlreiche Expert\_innen für das Judentum solidarisierten sich mit Peter Schäfer nach seinem Rücktritt vom Amt des Direktors des Jüdischen Museums in Berlin. In dem offenen Brief der 45 Wissenschaftlerinnen aus Israel, Europa und den USA heißt es: "Für diejenigen von uns, die Professor Schäfer und seine Arbeit kennen, ist die Behauptung schockierend, er setze sich nicht für die jüdische Sache und den Kampf gegen Antisemitismus ein." Schäfer habe sich während seiner Karriere unter anderem der "Förderung des Verständnisses von Juden und dem Judentum verschrieben". Mit initiiert hatte das Schreiben Ishay Rosen, Leiter der Talmud-Abteilung an der Tel Aviv Universität. Auch der frühere israelische Botschafter in Deutschland, Shimon Stein, und der israelische Historiker Moshe Zimmermann kritisierten den Umgang mit dem Jüdischen Museum und warnten vor einer Beschneidung der Meinungsfreiheit in Deutschland. Schäfer war nach Kritik an einem Tweet des Museums zurückgetreten, in dem er eine Leseempfehlung für einen Artikel über die anti-israelische Boykottbewegung BDS (Boykott, Desinvestitionen, Sanktionen) abgab. Der Bericht in der Taz (Die Tageszeitung) behandelte wiederum die Kritik jüdischer und israelischer Wissenschaftler\_innen an der Entscheidung des Bundestages, BDS als antisemitisch einzustufen. Die BDS-Kampagne ist eine transnationale politische Kampagne, die Israel wirtschaftlich, kulturell und politisch isolieren will, um ihre im Jahr 2005 beschlossenen Ziele zu erreichen: Ein Ende der israelischen Besatzung des Westjordanlandes, des Gazastreifens, der Golanhöhen und Ost-Jerusalems, volle Gleichberechtigung für Israels arabisch-palästinensische Bürger und den palästinensischen Flüchtlingen und deren Nachkommen die Rückkehr in ihre frühere Heimat und zu ihrem Eigentum zu ermöglichen. Israel wirft der BDS-Bewegung vor, den jüdischen Staat zerstören zu wollen und Kontakte zu Terrorgruppen zu unterhalten. Israels Strategieminister Gilad Erdan bezeichnete die Bundestagsentscheidung als "bisher wichtigsten Schritt" im Kampf gegen die BDS-Bewegung.*

### **Berlin's Jewish problem**

The director of Berlin's Jewish Museum, Peter Schäfer, resigned (...) following severe criticism from Germany's Jewish community over the museum's support for BDS efforts in the country. (...) Putting aside the issue of BDS itself, what does it have to do with a Jewish museum? (...) At a time when Germany's government commissioner on

antisemitism suggests that Jews should not always wear their kippah in public, in the wake of a spike in anti-Jewish attacks in Germany, the BDS resolution should have nothing to do with a cultural institution whose mission is explaining Jewish traditions, history and art. (...) This was not the first time Schäfer's actions were called into question. After the original tweet blew open the storm, he was quoted as saying that he regretted the tweet – and adding that the museum was never tasked with taking sides in current political debates. But it did. Time and again, the Jewish Museum Berlin got involved in politics, even before Schäfer came on board, though he continued the dishonorable tradition. In 2012, the museum hosted the pro-BDS academic Judith Butler, after she expressed support for the terrorist entities Hezbollah and Hamas in 2006. (...) Objecting to Israeli policy is political criticism, and there's nothing inherently antisemitic about that. But depicting a political issue using the hot-button item like soap – in Germany! – is inherently antisemitic. (...) In his statement of resignation, Schäfer said he was doing it “to avoid further harm to the Jewish Museum Berlin.” He should have done it a long time ago.  
Editorial, JPO, 16.06.19

### **Better late than never**

The resignation of the Berlin Jewish Museum Director Peter Schäfer is a small victory in an important campaign against the continued efforts by German authorities to use "Jewish museums" as a means of struggle against the State of Israel. "Jewish museums" in Germany have in recent years become a sort of "kosher seal of approval" for the Israeli criticism industry. If in the past, radical left-wing Israeli and Jewish activists would absolve Germany of its culpability for its Nazi past by claiming Israel was now the Nazis' successor, this role has gradually been handed over to "Jewish museums." (...) the Berlin Jewish Museum is not a Jewish museum. It is a German museum, funded by the German government and the Berlin Municipality. (...) Museum management received absolute support for its anti-Israel activities from its financiers. It is for this reason that Schäfer's resignation is but the first phase in the campaign to put the "Jewish museum" back on track. Either Germany's Culture Minister Monika Grütters, who serves as museum chair, must resign or Chancellor Angela Merkel should fire her immediately. Following the exposure of the museum's anti-Israel activities last year, Grütters threw her support behind Schäfer (...). This absolute backing, based on lies, from a minister in the German government,

gave Schäfer and others in the museum's management team the impression they could continue their anti-Israeli line and become a center for the defense of BDS. That is why Grütters must be sent packing: to send a message that the German government understands it cannot use "Jewish museums" as part of its dual approach to Israel that sees it declare its support for Israel while funding efforts toward its destruction. (...) Israel must continue to tell Germany's government in a clear and direct manner: You either are our true friends, or you aren't. This phenomenon that sees you fund anti-Israel activities at the United Nations has a name: hypocrisy. If this clear message doesn't come from Israel, the Germans will continue their hypocritical policies.  
Eldad Beck, IHY, 16.06.19

### **Germany is betraying the fight against anti-Semitism**

(...) On the one hand, Germany has a special relationship with Israel. On the other, it has become more and more aware of the massive abuse of Palestinian human rights and the Israeli government's systematic derailment of any possible peaceful solution to the conflict. Last month, the Bundestag gave up what was left of the balance between these two duties and abandoned the ideal of human rights, opting instead for blind support for the Israeli government - the most right-wing and populist government ever to rule Israel, whose current values are in direct contravention to all the values that Germany of the 21st century claims to support.

(...) Anti-Semitism is real and should be confronted in Germany and any other place, using all legal means. However, there is nothing anti-Semitic about BDS as such. Non-violent popular campaigns launched to hold states to account for severe discrimination and grave violations of human rights, are a legitimate and established practice. Think about apartheid South Africa. We ask the German government: do you really think there is any similarity between boycotting a bottle of wine produced in the occupied territories on lands stolen by settlers who are protected by the army of the strongest regional power – and boycotting the store of a defenseless Jew during Nazi Germany? Drawing this comparison defiles the memory of the Holocaust and strongly undermines the balance of Germany's post-war duties. Worse, the decision deeply harms the fight against the real anti-Semitism, which originates from European nationalism and today also comes from parts of the Muslim communities in Europe. The decision by Bundestag mixes up the struggle

against anti-Semitism with support for an Israeli nationalist agenda, thereby alienating large populations that could be otherwise supportive of the fight against Jew-hatred in these very communities. Moreover, the Bundestag motion restricts freedom of thought and expression, the pillars of every liberal democracy. (...) Lacking any balance, the Bundestag rallied behind a government that does its very best to prevent any political solution to the conflict through the ongoing construction and expansion of settlements. (...) We know, from German history, how dangerous such a move can be. (...) the Bundestag has betrayed its duty to fight anti-Semitism in a principled and honest manner. It has betrayed its liberal and democratic values, as well as its duty to promote human rights and the rule of law, in Germany and Israel. It actually betrayed its duty as a true friend of Israel as well. (...)

Avraham Burg, Dani Karavan, HAA, 17.06.19

### **Why I resigned from Berlin's Jewish Museum**

(...) The shameful firing of Peter Schäfer, among the most important scholars of Judaism in the world, in the wake of an aggressive campaign of "fake news" conducted by the Israeli Ambassador to Germany, Jeremy Issacharoff, and Josef Schuster, president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, made it clear that the German government is not interested any more in guarding the artistic and academic autonomy of the museum. And I am not interested in working for an institution that relinquishes its independence to serve the political interests of this or that state. (...) Is it appropriate for a German state museum to be called a Jewish museum at all, or must it be under the complete control of the official Jewish community (...)? Is a Jewish museum, in the absence of a similar institution addressing the Muslim community or other minority groups, responsible for providing space for the perspectives of children of migrants in Germany, many of whom live in neighborhoods nearby, and for conducting Jewish-Muslim dialogue? (...) Should the museum function as a forum in which various opinions in the Jewish world can be heard, those touching on Israel as well? The answer of the head of the Jewish community, the Israeli ambassador and right-wing journalists, who for years have been running a toxic and untruthful campaign against museum staff, is an absolute no. Thus a significant portion of the criticism of the museum suggests, or even declares openly, that the very fact that many of the staff members of the museum are not Jews negates their right to social activism that is not in keeping with the

political preferences of the Jewish community's representatives. (...) Accusations of anti-Semitism, which carry enormous weight in Germany, lead more and more to censorship and self-censorship. (...) Only in Germany, because of its great sensitivity to anti-Semitism and deep identification with Israel in the wake of the Shoah, are there politicians not only on the right but on the left as well who vehemently endorse the silencing of criticism of Israel. (...) If the German and Israeli governments are interested in the Jewish Museum representing only their narrow political interests and denying its staff members freedom of expression, I am not interested in having a part in it. (...)

Yossi Bartal, HAA, 22.06.19

### **3. Israel zwischen zwei Parlamentswahlen**

*Israels Ex-Ministerpräsident Ehud Barak will bei den Parlamentswahlen am 17. September mit einer neuen Partei antreten. „Dies ist nicht die Zeit, um die Hände in den Schoß zu legen“, erklärte der 77-Jährige, der den Kampf aufnehmen will gegen „die korrupte Regierung“ von Benjamin Netanyahu und seinen Partnern, „extremistischen Rassisten“. Der Staat Israel befinde sich auf einem „zerstörerischen Pfad, der in den Abgrund führt“. Um den Rechtsstaat zu retten, gelte es jetzt, die Kräfte zu vereinen, „um für den Sieg zu kämpfen“. Nicht die Größe der Partei sei entscheidend, sondern die Größe des Blocks, meinte Barak in Anspielung an Benny Gantz, den Chef von Blau-Weiß, der zwar bei den letzten Wahlen die gleiche Anzahl von Stimmen wie der Likud erzielte, dann aber keine realen Koalitionsmöglichkeiten hatte. Gantz habe es während des Wahlkampfes an „Entschiedenheit und an dem Willen zu Siegen“ gemangelt. Barak ist der einzige Politiker, der es jemals mit Netanjahu aufnehmen konnte. 1999 entschied Barak die Wahl für sich und führte ein Jahr später den Abzug Israels aus dem Südlibanon durch. Die von ihm geführten Friedensverhandlungen mit dem damaligen Chef der Palästinensischen Befreiungsorganisation (PLO) Jassir Arafat scheiterten hingegen. Nachdem er sich 2013 aus der Politik zurückgezogen hatte, wurde er als Geschäftsmann zum Multimillionär. Sein politisches Comeback nach sechsjähriger Pause kommt zu einer Zeit, in der der Likud versucht, die Wahlen zu verhindern. Berater\_innen Netanyahus prüfen, ob die Entscheidung für die Auflösung der Knesset annulliert werden könnte, was Jurist\_innen bezweifeln. Nötig wären die Stimmen von zwei Drittel der Parlamentarier\_innen. Bei Teilen der Arbeitspartei,*

die bei den Wahlen im April auf ein historisches Tief von nur noch sechs Mandate gefallen war, stieß Baraks Ankündigung auf offene Ohren. Amir Peretz, der am 2.7.2019 zum neuen Vorsitzenden der Arbeitspartei gewählt wurde, steht allerdings einer Kooperation mit Barak kritisch gegenüber. Eine gute Nachricht ist die Kandidatur Baraks für Tzipi Livni, ehemals Justizministerin, die die letzten Friedensverhandlungen mit den Palästinenser\_innen führte und die Barak mit ins Boot holen will. Potentieller Partner für den künftigen linken Block wäre auch Meretz. Neuer Chef der linksliberalen Partei ist seit kurzem der offen schwul lebende Nitzan Horowitz.

### **Zandberg puts Meretz at risk. Elect Horowitz for party leader**

If the members of the Meretz party convention want their party to have a chance of surviving in the upcoming September election, they should elect Nitzan Horowitz as the party's leader (...). That's not because of how the current chairwoman, Tamar Zandberg, handled allegations of sexual harassment against a party member, Nimrod Barnea, but because it was simply a mistake to have elected her. A party whose past leaders have been so impressive was led into April's Knesset election by someone who is – how can this be put delicately – not very impressive. Zandberg says all the right things: She's against the occupation and supportive of LGBT people and women's rights, but she doesn't delve into any issue, doesn't take the initiative and doesn't present fresh ideas (...). Sometimes she seems more like the spokeswoman rather than the leader of the party. Meretz has only been in government for five out of the 27 years of its existence. For the past 19 years, it has not even come close to entering coalition negotiations. And yet during this period, its leaders left their mark on the country's public life on occasion. Admiration for Yossi Sarid, Yossi Beilin, Haim Oron and Zehava Galon extended across party lines. They were able to lead public and political initiatives and they were perceived as of greater importance than the size of their party. Zandberg is of far lower standing. (...) The Meretz campaign was pitiful, not only because it was uninteresting, worn and gray, but also because it focused for some reason only on the chairwoman, who was repeatedly depicted in complimentary poses. (...) Horowitz was the Meretz candidate for mayor of Tel Aviv in 2013 and lost by a large margin to Mayor Ron Huldai. There's no shame in that. (...) he is far preferable to Zandberg as a result of his familiarity with the

issues, his passion and his genuine willingness to join forces with the Labor Party. (...) Raviv Drucker, HAA, 24.06.19

### **Can Netanyahu spin himself out of another election?**

(...) whenever Netanyahu comes up with a new political idea, several parties are quick to realize that whatever it is, it must be bad for them. And as expected, Blue and White quickly dismissed the plan as spin meant to exonerate Netanyahu from the blame of dragging the nation to the second round of elections in a year. (...) The problem is that many fine and talented people are working to make the cancelation initiative a reality. (...) polls show that the majority of the public want a unity government, not another round of elections. (...) The chances of the cancelation actually happening are slim, both legally and politically. But who knows? Netanyahu has already proved that when it comes to his political survival, he has no limits. And if Blue and White are bored by being in opposition, they might end up receiving an offer they cannot refuse from the prime minister. (...)

Sima Kadmon, YED, 27.06.19

### **Back in the game, but not as a lone player**

Former Prime Minister Ehud Barak is a unique personality. He will always be the most decorated soldier in the history of the IDF, brave, determined, and sure of himself. An Ehud Barak isn't born every day, and the political system can't let him go that easily. (...) despite being out of the government and the Knesset, Barak was the stand-out figure among the opposition to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (...) His term as prime minister was indeed too short, and that was mostly due to his lack of political experience, which made it difficult for him to hold onto his coalition partners. But his time in office was most significant in terms of his election promise. This time, he is going to the public with nothing more than a very general promise of "tikkun" (fixing or repairing) in the religious sense. But that cannot be enough. The new generals' party has to make a clear, unequivocal statement, such as saying it is willing to launch immediate negotiations with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas based on a two-state solution and the 1967 borders. He needs to promise that he will pick up where he left off and that he will do everything so that by the time the next Knesset finishes its term, Israel will have a border between it and the Palestinians, even if that border isn't a concrete wall, and even if Palestinians

are allowed to work in Israel and Israelis are allowed to live in Palestine. (...) if he actually brings us a new platform, and manages to bring Labor and Meretz on board with it (...) then Barak's new framework might have a chance of succeeding. A brave man has founded a new movement, and it will take a brave man to throw off the cloak of slogans and announce what he intends to do. (...)  
Yossi Beilin, IHY, 28.06.19

### **As long as infighting kept at bay, Barak's contribution could help get rid of Netanyahu**

It's hard to ignore the political breath of fresh air that former Prime Minister Ehud Barak has brought into the election campaign. He's sharp, focused, unfiltered, on the ball and aimed straight at the only goal for which he decided to return to politics – ousting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Barak has charged the center-left with new energy and created a new, surprising opening in the middle of a campaign that until now had seemed tired and sleepy. (...) It was easy to see the differences between Barak and Kahol Lavan chairman Benny Gantz, who spoke just two hours before Barak's announcement. Gantz doesn't have Barak's rhetorical skills, nor does he have the killer instinct, that "knife between the teeth" that shines forth from every word the former prime minister utters. (...) Barak's entry into the race (...) is (...) likely to expand the center-left bloc. His plan to create a joint ticket with the Labor Party, and perhaps Meretz as well, could forge an effective left-wing front that, together with the center represented by Kahol Lavan, might well increase the number of seats the center-left bloc wins in the election. To fulfill this mission, Gantz and Barak must keep in mind throughout the campaign that they have a shared goal, one that brought them both into politics at this stage of their lives – getting rid of Benjamin Netanyahu's corrupt, destructive government.

Editorial, HAA, 28.06.19

### **Think About it: The superfluous elections should not be canceled**

Anyone who feels that the title of this article is a non sequitur simply doesn't understand the completely wacky political reality in which we find ourselves these days. (...) the elections to the 21st Knesset (the one that is to be replaced on September 17) should have taken place sometime in November 2019 – four-and-a-half months from now. Why did they not take place in time (...)? Because the basis on which our prime minister has decided when elec-

tions should take place has nothing to do with the real needs of the state and its citizens, but exclusively with how to prolong his own political career and how to avoid standing on trial for as long as possible, if not permanently. (...) Now Netanyahu appears to be having second thoughts about the second of the two superfluous elections, allegedly because opinion polls held by the Likud suggest that Netanyahu's position has weakened (...) the current superfluous elections might well have saved the anti-Bibi camp from four years in opposition. (...) the fact that the four Arab parties have learned the lesson from the April elections, and will run in a single list (...) will probably increase the number of their seats (...); the chances that the new party that former prime minister Ehud Barak is in the process of forming will run in the elections in a single list with the Labor Party (...) and Meretz (...), and will form a focus of support for the political Left, leaving Blue and White free to turn to the "soft," liberal Right. Though Barak certainly is not devoid of weaknesses, the fact that, unlike the Blue and White leadership, he has genius, experience, a bee in his bonnet in addition to a killer instinct provides him with a clear advantage over the Blue and White foursome. All this is likely to increase the representation of the Center-Left and Arab bloc from 55 to over 60. (...) Blue and White and a list headed by Barak might be in a better negotiating position – vis-à-vis Liberman in his current state of mind, and a more pragmatic Naftali Bennett at the head of the New Right, should he manage to pass the qualifying threshold this time – and thus in a better position to head the national unity government that Israel so desperately needs in order to return some stability and sanity into its political reality and daily life. From a Center-Left perspective, this is undoubtedly a much better scenario than the gloomy results of the April elections.  
Susan Hattis Rolef, JPO, 30.06.19

## **4. Medienquerschnitt**

### **Neue Ortschaft auf dem Golan nach Trump benannt**

#### **Some Golan loyalist Bibi is**

(...) The only move the right ever made for the sake of the Golan was the application of Israeli law there by Prime Minister Menachem Begin in 1981 (...). Since then, the "national camp" has basically left the Golan alone, only remembering to mention it when there's an election coming up, as Benjamin Netan-

yahu does. It has no interest in its empty spaces and its secular, agricultural character. If the settlers were truly interested in moving there, they could have flooded the area en masse. But there are no holy graves or sacred land in the Golan Heights, only basalt rock and monuments to fallen soldiers. Nor are there any Palestinians to abuse or exploit as cheap labor. After four decades of near-continuous right-wing governments, the Jewish population of the Golan Heights stands at just 22,000. (...) Netanyahu actually had an ongoing interest in the Golan Heights: He made a notable effort to return it to the Syrians. (...) Netanyahu's contacts with Assad junior were only halted upon the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011. (...) This week, he pledged allegiance to the Golan Heights, and in the name of Donald Trump, no less, who deserves a badge of shame and not the royal treatment, since he was the one who was ready to abandon the Golan Heights to forces hostile to Israel. (...) This is what we've come to: a transitional government that received no vote of confidence from any Knesset and possesses no authority to establish a new community holding a festive ceremony to mark the establishment of a community that will never be established. (...) All for the sake of groveling before the master with a golden sign announcing Trump Heights. (...) Uri Misgav, HAA, 20.06.19

## **Weiter Spannungen zwischen USA und Iran**

### **The race is on to retrieve the U.S. spy drone brought down by Iran**

The MQ-4C Triton - the drone brought down by Iran over the Straits of Hormuz - is (...) the most technologically advanced intelligence-gathering drone both in U.S in particular and the world in general. (...) The significance of its fall into the waters of the Persian Gulf is not just about the loss of tens of millions of dollars. The greatest concern is the fate of the components, in particular the sensors, of one of the most advanced and secret weapons in the United States arsenal. (...) It is fair to assume that as soon as the UAV was shot down, the Iranians scrambled to recover its parts from the water. If they do get their hands on the UAV, the Iranians may try to reverse engineer the sensors and will almost certainly try to sell the technology to China and North Korea. Having the sensors will also allow the Iranians to understand what kinds of intelligence the Americans can gather with the Global Hawk. (...) The race to retrieve the Triton fragments, especially

the sensors, from the waters of the Persian Gulf could trigger to a violent confrontation between the Iranian Revolutionary Guards naval forces and the U.S. naval forces currently sailing in the Gulf. Equally important, the interception of the UAV and the need to prevent it from falling into Iranian hands, as well as the need to take punitive and deterrent steps to the attack on their aircraft in international air space, could lead the Americans to send the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier and the massive naval task force accompanying it, into the Persian Gulf. In order to do this, the task force and the carrier must pass through the Strait of Hormuz, which the Iranians have threatened to block by force. (...) Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 20.06.19

### **Israel is not ready for any scenario**

(...) Iran may not suffice with this limited confrontation with the Americans. Instead, it may launch a provocation on one of Israel's borders, with the goal of intensifying the crisis mood and forcing the Trump administration to urgently reconsider its steps (...). But it's doubtful that the Israel Defense Forces are really ready to provide an answer to any scenario. (...). The data shows that Israel is short of about 30 percent of the military ambulances it would need for a war, while 20 percent of the army's medical staff positions remain unfilled. Moreover, these officials said, the IDF's plan to rely on cooperation with the Magen David Adom ambulance service to evacuate casualties on the home front doesn't jibe with the actual conditions expected in wartime. (...) Israel's military preparedness, as reflected in two large-scale exercises conducted this week, apparently doesn't include paying serious attention to the scope of casualties, both civilian and military, which is likely to be higher than in the past. At the moment of truth, apathy and amateurism on this issue are liable to prove tragic.

Editorial, HAA, 21.06.19

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes



Veröffentlicht am: 4. Juli 2019

Verantwortlich:

*Dr. Paul Pasch,  
Leiter der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Israel*

Redaktion:

*Susanne Knaul  
Judith Stelmach*

*Homepage: [www.fes.org.il](http://www.fes.org.il)*

*Email: [fes@fes.org.il](mailto:fes@fes.org.il)*