



## Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 8/08

### Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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#### 1. Jimmy Carter im Nahen Osten

*Auf seiner neuntägigen Nahostreise besuchte der ehemalige US-Präsident Jimmy Carter, der 1978 an den Friedensverhandlungen zwischen Ägypten und Israel beteiligt war und dafür mit dem Friedensnobelpreis geehrt worden war, vergangene Woche unter anderem Israel und das Westjordanland. Carter, der sich schon aufgrund seines Buches 'Palestine: Peace not Apartheid' in Israel geringer Beliebtheit erfreut, konnte weder bei Premierminister Olmert noch bei anderen Regierungsmitgliedern einen Termin erhalten und wurde einzig von Präsident Shimon Peres empfangen. Dieser kritisierte ihn jedoch wegen einem geplanten Treffen mit dem politischen Führer der Hamas, Khaled Meshal. Carter hatte sich gegen eine Isolation der Gruppe, die von den USA, der EU und Israel als terroristische Organisation eingestuft wird, ausgesprochen und angegeben, durch Einbeziehung der Hamas den Friedensprozess fördern zu wollen.*

*Trotz aller Kritik trat er öffentlich im Rahmen einer Vortragsveranstaltung des Israeli Council on Foreign Relations in Jerusalem auf.*

#### Why Israel snubbed Carter

"From the government's point of view, nothing good - and some bad - could come out of Jimmy Carter's unsolicited visit here. [...]"

[But Carter] got his high-profile meetings with some Israeli leaders, gaining an audience with President Shimon Peres. [...] These meetings, according to diplomatic officials, can now be used by Carter against pro-Israel activists in the US trying to marginalize him because of his comparisons between Israel and apartheid South Africa. The concern is that Carter will now accuse his Jewish critics in the US of 'hysteria,' pointing out that Israel's own president had no problem meeting him.

[...] The government is concerned that Carter, by meeting the Hamas leader in Damascus, will set a trend. [...] In addition, a concern of appearances precluded an Olmert-Carter meeting after Carter made clear he was determined to meet the Hamas head. Israel was worried that if Carter met Olmert and then met Mashaal, it would inevitably be reported that he had brought a message to the Hamas leader from the Israeli prime minister. Israeli denials would do little to dispel impressions that there were some indirect negotiations going on - an image that would perhaps serve Carter, but not necessarily Israel. "

Herb Keinon, JPO 16.05.08

#### Our debt to Jimmy Carter

"The government of Israel is boycotting Jimmy Carter [...]. The boycott will not be remembered as a glorious moment in this government's history. Jimmy Carter has dedicated his life to humanitarian missions, to peace, to promoting democratic elections, and to better understanding between enemies throughout the world. [...] But Israelis have not liked him since he wrote the book 'Palestine: Peace not Apartheid'. Israel is not ready for such comparisons, even though the situation begs it. [...] The interim political situation in the territories has crystallized into a kind of apartheid that has been ongoing for 40 years. [...] Whether Carter's approach to conflict resolution is considered by the Israeli government as appropriate or defeatist, no one can take away from the former U.S. president his international standing, nor the fact that he brought Israel and Egypt to a signed peace that has since held. [...] For the peace agreement with Egypt, he deserves the respect reserved for royalty for the rest of his life."

HAA, 15.04.08

### **Just say no to Carter**

"The honor due Carter for his help in reaching the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt is written in the history books, but he did not come to the Middle East this week for honor, but to work. And his work, for years, has had one goal: undermining the status of Israel, thwarting its policies and ridiculing its hopes. That is why Israel acted correctly in having him meet with only the ceremonial echelon - President Shimon Peres. [...] Carter, once the exaggerated attention is stripped away, is nothing but a nuisance. [...] His views do not represent the American public [...] and his righteous trouble making is just a guise for continued hostility to Israel, which he views as partially responsible for ending his presidential career after only a single term.

[...] It is possible to ignore him, protest his manipulative tricks, and still continue to work for true peace between Israel and the Arabs. There is no contradiction."

Shmuel Rosner, HAA 17.04.08

### **Carter can't be fooled**

"President Shimon Peres, the former darling of the settlers, who backed the establishment of the first settlements in the 1970s, self-righteously reprimanded Carter. This marks no more than the ongoing refusal by most of Israeli society and leadership to look at the unflattering image in the mirror. [...] Yet Carter can't be fooled, as opposed to all sorts of 'Israel friends' who arrive for hypocrisy-laden solidarity visits during which they must not insult their Israeli hosts, or heaven forbid, raise difficult questions regarding Israel's policy. [...]

One can agree or disagree with his diplomatic activism and meetings with the most murderous of Israel's enemies today, yet this man, who saw the Israeli settlement enterprise come to life, knows well what many Israelis (most of whom have no idea where the Green Line is) prefer to forget: The reality prevalent these days in the West Bank is not a given reality that was there since the world was created, but rather, the direct result of political choices made by all Israeli government over the past four decades. [...] People like Jimmy Carter who present both Israelis and Palestinians with the true choices available to them and the true implications of their deeds are those who contribute to the creation of a local political culture that is hinged on facts, rather than religious and nationalistic fantasy. "

Dror Etkes, JED 16.04.08

## **2. 30 Jahre Peace Now**

*30 Jahre sind vergangen, seitdem die israelische Friedensbewegung Peace Now 1978 gegründet wurde. Die Organisation war entstanden, nachdem eine Gruppe von 348 Reserveoffizieren Menachem Begin dazu angehalten hatte, den Friedensprozess mit Ägypten voranzutreiben. Peace Now setzte sich für die Rückgabe des Sinai ein, gegen die Invasion des Libanons 1982 und vor allem für Frieden mit den Palästinensern und gegen jüdische Siedlungstätigkeiten in den besetzten Gebieten. Obwohl viele der Positionen von Peace Now in der Mitte der israelischen Gesellschaft angelangt sind und eine der Gründerinnen – Bildungsministerin Yuli Tamir – inzwischen der Regierung angehört, ist die Bewegung seit Beginn der Intifada und dem Zusammenbruch des Friedensprozesses stark kritisiert worden und hat an Unterstützung verloren.*

### **Peace Now at 30**

"The movement embodies the almost instinctive yearning for peace shared by virtually all Israelis. That's why Peace Now has charmed both Israeli and Diaspora Jews for three decades with its unjaded enthusiasm for a Middle East where Israelis and Palestinians respect each others' aspirations, hear each others' narratives and live side by side in peace and security. [...] They always knew what they were against - settlements and the 'occupation' - but never managed to articulate a viable alternative. [...] To attain *peace now* - notwithstanding what the Palestinians are saying or doing - has always required the group to almost willfully disregard the unpleasant realities of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Its emphasis is exclusively on what Israelis should concede, as if our collective craving for peace alone can supernaturally overcome Palestinian intransigence, incitement, internal upheaval and the culture of violence. "

JPO 07.04.08

### **A white tent in the square**

"Despite its weaknesses, Peace Now was an impressive civil movement, which struggled for the Israeli consciousness and managed to change it. It paved the way to Israelis' disenchantment with the occupation, their willingness to reconcile and to support the two-state solution.

Success and failure were intertwined. Peace Now won the battle over consciousness, but lost the fight on the hills. It brought the Israeli center to adopt

unmistakably left-wing positions, but could not stop the settlements in time. It created a situation in which the gap between Israel's intention to divide the land and its ability to do so is intolerable. [...] Then, when harsh reality struck at Camp David, Peace Now lacked the courage to face it and take stock. It did not face the public and declare where it was right, and where it went wrong, and how it would update its peace message. With this failure, Peace Now's moral authority crumbled, it lost political clout and finally it simply faded away."

Ari Shavit, HAA 10.04.08

### War and Peace (Now)

"If Peace Now had the intellectual courage to analyze sincerely its achievements, its primary finding would be that the movement's intentions were positive but the means used to accomplish its goals were mistaken. The fact is that peace, which tops its list of objectives, is moving further away and the number of victims - Jewish as well as Arab - is rising.

In addition, when the movement pinned the primary blame for the absence of peace on its own people, it sinned against truth, and against peace as well. The ramifications of this sin are that it undermined many people's confidence in the righteousness of the Zionist enterprise, and even in the Jewish state's right to exist in the Land of Israel.

The more this feeling of Jewish righteousness was undermined, the more the Arab, especially the Palestinian, sense of self-confidence blossomed. For if the Jews blame themselves, as proven by Peace Now rallies (which a biased press greatly exaggerated, thereby strengthening the Arabs' feeling that time was on their side), then why move toward a peaceful solution?"

Israel Harel, HAA 10.04.08

### 30 Years of Peace Now

"Peace Now's focus on the issues of the occupation and settlements was not a political caprice, but rather an expression of a worldview that sees the Jewish people as fundamentally identifying with those who are occupied, and despising the occupier and oppressor. [...] This view leads me to recognize the failure of Peace Now. We did not convince the public that these heartfelt issues are important to us in the same way that the Mercaz Harav yeshiva students and Kedumim settlers proved that settlement in all of the Land of Israel is etched in their hearts. Part of Israeli society regards us as a

group of hedonists and defeatists, and not as an ideological group.

It seems to me that Peace Now placed too much emphasis on the price of war and the benefits of peace, and too little on the principled stance against ruling over another people. [...] I have no idea whether peace is possible, but our positions are still correct in my eyes, even if peace is only a dream."

Ariel Rubinstein, HAA 12.04.08

(Der Autor ist einer der Gründer von Peace Now)

### 3. Aharon Barak vs. Daniel Friedmann

*In den vergangenen Tagen lieferten sich Justizminister Daniel Friedmann und der ehemalige Präsident des Obersten Gerichtshofes Aharon Barak einen Schlagabtausch in der israelischen Presse. Barak hatte sich nach langem Schweigen in mehreren Artikeln gegen die Politik Friedmanns ausgesprochen und Premierminister Olmert dazu aufgerufen, den Justizminister zu entlassen. Barak warf Friedmann vor, die Unabhängigkeit der Judikativen und die Autorität der Gerichte zu gefährden. Besondere Kritik rief Friedmanns Gesetzesvorschlag hervor, der vorsieht, dass ein vom Obersten Gericht abgelehntes Gesetz zwar für sechs Monate ausgesetzt wird, eine Mehrheit der Knesset-Abgeordneten aber verfügen kann, dass das Gesetz für 5 Jahre ohne weitere Überprüfung gültig wird. Friedmann wies die Kritik zurück und warf Barak vor, dem Obersten Gericht Machtbefugnisse und Vorrechte eingeräumt zu haben, die ihm nicht zustehen.*

### Ausschnitt aus dem Interview mit Barak, Ha'aretz 11.04.08

"In the past 25 years an administrative reality was created in which the courts system was administered jointly by the president of the Supreme Court and the minister of justice. [...] The judiciary's independence was maintained by the court president's standing on the ramparts and looking inward, at the courts system, while the minister stood with his back to that sphere, looking outward at the governmental, political and public spheres. [...] Now comes the justice minister and says: I will run the system. He is trying to remove the court president as the guardian of the ramparts, and in so doing he is toppling them and creating a direct connection between the political and the judicial. [...] Personal independence will continue to exist – no one will phone a judge and tell him to write this or

that judgment – but institutional independence will cease to exist. [...]

Until 1992, Israel was a parliamentary democracy on the Westminster model. In that type of democracy, the parliament is all-powerful. [...] In 1992 the Knesset enacted two Basic Laws that made Israel a constitutional democracy. [...] A proper democracy entails the rule of the majority and the rule of law. There is no democracy without the rule of the majority, but there is also no democracy without the rule of law, without separation of powers and without protection of the individual and of minorities. What Minister Friedmann is trying to do now is to turn the wheel back. If he succeeds, Israeli constitutional democracy will disappear. [...] Therefore I am afraid that if Israel ceases to be a constitutional democracy, it will become a Third World country. What characterizes a Third World country? They are countries in which law exists, but is not upheld, because they act in keeping with the wishes of the powerful."

#### **The argument centers on the essence of democracy**

"The basic debate surrounds the meaning of Israeli-style democracy. Friedmann's view is that democracy is formal in nature, based on the rule of the majority; according to this view, the Knesset is 'omniscient' and is able to do as it wishes in matters of individual rights in general, and minority rights in particular.

Barak represents a viewpoint [...] of essential democracy, in which the laws are subordinate to individual and minority rights, which cannot be undermined except in the 'necessary degree' crucial for maintaining democracy. [...] Freedom of the press and freedom of demonstration, as well as personal freedom, will be subject, according to what is being proposed, to the arbitrary decision of the government, in matters of security and on other issues. [...] The success of Friedmann's plan, with the help of a Knesset majority, will not turn us into a 'Third World country,' as per Barak's harsh description, but it will cast a stain on Israeli democracy, both domestically and externally."

Ze'ev Segal, HAA 14.04.08

#### **Keep Beinisch's court supreme**

"I know Justice Minister Daniel Friedmann doesn't intend to cripple Israel's democracy and turn it into a Third World country, which is what former Supreme Court President Aharon Barak just warned is going to happen.

But I'm convinced Barak is right - that's where Friedmann's 'reforms' are leading.

Friedmann is not the only liberal who thinks the Supreme Court, especially under Barak, overstepped its bounds and usurped powers that rightly belong to the government and Knesset. [...] The problem, though, [...] is that Friedmann [...] has become the stalking horse for a huge, well-represented, powerful force in the Israeli public that doesn't want to merely curtail the Supreme Court's power. They want to neutralize it, which really would be the end of Israel's democracy. I'm talking about the entire haredi public, the entire right-wing Orthodox public, and much of the secular right wing. [...] The members of this giant camp aren't critics of the Supreme Court, they're enemies. They hate the idea that a handful of unelected 'elitists' can stop the 'nation' from doing whatever it wants with its political and military power. [...]

In countries with free elections, it is the courts, not the public and the politicians, that usually are the guarantors of minority rights, human rights, civil rights. Such cases, almost by definition, pit the court *against* the will of the majority.

This is why Friedmann's bid to transfer power from the Supreme Court to the politicians can only make Israel a less just society than it is, the danger being that at some point down the road Israel would stop being a democracy, where political power is limited by the law, and become a popular dictatorship, where political power is limited by nothing."

Larry Derfner, JPO 9.04.08

HAA = Haaretz  
HZO = Ha Tzofe  
JED = Jedioth Ahronoth  
JPO = Jerusalem Post  
MAA = Maariv  
IHY = Israeli HaYom

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