



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 13

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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1. Sekuläre vs. religiöse Israelis

Die letzten Wochen brachten in vielerlei Hinsicht den meist unterschwellig bestehenden Konflikt zwischen religiösen und sekulären jüdischen Israelis in die Schlagzeilen.

In der Knesset wurde mit großer Mehrheit das sogenannte Tal-Gesetz verlängert. Dieses Gesetz ermöglicht ultra-orthodoxen Juden eine Befreiung vom Wehrdienst.

Ein Gesetz, das auch orthodoxe Schulen dazu zwingt, ein sekuläres Kerncurriculum (Englisch, Geschichte, Naturwissenschaften) einzuführen, wurde hingegen abgewiesen.

Zur gleichen Zeit einigten sich Justizminister Daniel Friedmann und der sephardische Oberrabbiner, Shlomo Amar, darauf, künftig standesamtliche Hochzeiten zwischen Paaren, die keiner Religionsgemeinschaft angehören, zuzulassen. Bisher lag die Verantwortung für Eheschließungen allein bei den religiösen Gerichten, eine rein standesamtliche Trauung ist derzeit nicht möglich.

Eine Umfrage der Zeitung „Yedioth Ahronoth“ ergab indes, dass die ultra-orthodoxen Juden („Haredim“) die in Israel meistgehasste Bevölkerungsgruppe darstellen.

The end of Zionism

"This [the Tal Law] is a cynical, immoral law that absolves a significant portion of Jewish Israelis from the need to either do army service or work for a living. The fact is that 80 percent of ultra-Orthodox men do not work; instead, they live on government grants and stipends and the earnings of their wives. After all, why should they risk their lives? Why should they leave their

comfortable incubators as long as the secular donkey is there to bear the burden for them?

The secular donkey does not merely bear the military and economic burden; it also continues to expand the scope of government support for ultra-Orthodox education, including even the most extremist strains." Nehemia Strasler, HAA 19.07.07

Our apartheid state

"This [the extension of the Tal Law] was a blatantly anti-democratic arrangement and even those who drafted it reemphasized that it was merely a temporary agreement for five years only, yet around here the temporary becomes permanent, particularly when we're talking about discrimination and racism." Yossi Paritzky, JED engl. 24.07.07

Democracy at risk

"It appears that the secular public has retreated from the campaign over the soul of the republic and has come to terms with its defeat. [...] Secular society requires a 'defensive democracy,' a term used with regards to the campaign against global terror. [...] Defensive democracy will not sanctify the right of the minority to educate its offspring to its ways if its path leads to the destruction of democracy. [...] It will not boost a culture that despises multiculturalism and strives to instill a single culture – a culture of a minority that thrives thanks to the tolerance of the majority." Yaron London, JED engl. 26.07.07

The threat of the 'demographic threat'

"If the Haredim do not do army service or are not productive enough, the responsibility rests with the secular majority, which allows these phenomena. If the Arabs do not contribute enough, or are even hostile to the state, the state bears much responsibility for this. [...] Those who want a country to their own liking here must fight for the emergence of an Israeli ethos that is shared by all elements of society, whatever their size, and discard the racist bookkeeping." Gideon Levy, HAA 22.07.07

Glad tidings for the lepers

"Friedmann apparently thought he would be able to alleviate the suffering of Jews who are 'not recognized' by the Orthodox establishment. However, Amar scored a triple success: His proposal strengthens the Orthodox monopoly in marital matters, torpedoed various proposals to introduce civil marriage made by liberal bodies, and consolidates the racist dichotomy between Jew and 'all the others'. Glad tidings for the lepers: From now on they will be able to marry each other as long as they do not intermingle with pure Jews. [...]"

True, Friedmann is right in assuming that this is the most he can obtain, considering the present political alignment, but he is wrong in thinking that what he did is beneficial. It behooves liberals like him to strive for a complete separation between the Orthodox establishment and the state, and to work for the creation of a civil code free from religion, one that will allow anyone who so wishes to marry and have a family without having to endure the humiliation of presenting proof of his parents' descent." Avirama Golan, HAA 22.07.07.

A brilliant oxymoron

"Yet it appears that only a few people realized that the Friedmann-Amar agreement does not just minimize the realm of clerical control, but rather, that it dramatically expands its authority and jurisdiction. [...]"

For the sake of judicial accuracy, Friedmann and Amar simply invented another 'denomi-

nation' - the denomination of those 'with no religious affiliation.' And this denomination - similar to all the other religious denominations recognized by the State - will only be eligible to marry within that "faith" and is banned from "assimilating" into other denominations. [...]"

And here we have yet another global Israeli precedent. "Civil marriage" - under the supervision of the rabbinate. [...]"

And all those who are assuming that a hole has been opened up in the clerical wall, it should be noted that rather than a hole opening up, a plug has been inserted.

This plug would make it even more difficult to make any progress towards enforcing real civil marital laws - civil marriage that is not dictated by religion, but rather, by law." B. Michael, JED 25.07.07

A practical, but problematic step

"The agreement [...] on marriages between non-Jews is an important step, even if it is far from being sufficient. [...]"

The agreement has been criticized for lacking in substance and significance. This is not the case: While the agreement is far from being satisfactory, it is significant for the hundreds of couples who will benefit from it each year. Although the deal has an element of humiliation, attributing 'special status' for such couples, it seems that most of them would prefer such a practical, albeit problematic, solution over nothing. [...]"

Obviously, this agreement is not enough. [...]"

[However,] its opponents must ask themselves a simple question: If the agreement is not in any way a breakthrough, then why did the rabbinate oppose it for years? [...] The rabbinate understood that the agreement is a crack in the wall, a precedent on the path for civil marriage.

Even if the beginning is of limited scope and involves a relatively small group, its existence and the fact that people will become accustomed to it could eventually result in its authority spreading and including a broader segment of society." HAA, 25.07.07

2. Streik des öffentlichen Sektors

Nachdem es dem im Mai gewählten Chef des Dachverbandes der israelischen Gewerkschaften ("Histadrut"), Ofer Eini, und dem Anfang Juli von Premierminister Olmert ins Amt berufenen Finanzminister Ronnie Bar-On nicht gelang, sich bezüglich einer Gehaltserhöhung für Arbeitnehmer im öffentlichen Dienst zu einigen, wurde am 25. Juli 2007 ein Generalstreik ausgerufen. Betroffen waren unter anderem Ministerien, Stadtverwaltungen, Häfen, Grenzübergänge, die Bahn, die Post, und Krankenhäuser. Ein Streik der Angestellten des Ben Gurion Flughafens ab dem folgenden Tag wurde angedroht.

In der Nacht zum 26. Juli kam es zu einer prinzipiellen Einigung. Laut Eini wird der Streik jedoch wieder aufgenommen, sollte der Versuch einer endgültigen Einigung bis nächste Woche scheitern.

Crime against the people

"Ofer Eini [...] has stood up and declared a war on the people of Israel. [...] Eini wants to show us that he has power, but that's not enough. Power should be used against the government, the body he is apparently striking against. Yet he doesn't have the power to do that, and the people aren't the government. The people can't change a thing at this time. There are no elections coming up. The prime minister is on vacation." Yoram Kaniuk, JED engl. 25.07.07

Rattling the Cage

"The public sector – state-run services like government offices, ports and utilities – are all the once-mighty Histadrut has left. And striking is the only way it can protect its members, who are mainly low-wage office workers, from the tender mercies of the Finance Ministry. But Israeli governments and the Israeli middle class, not to mention the upper class, [...] have no more patience or sympathy for the Histadrut, its complaints, its demands or its strikes." Larry Derfner, JPO 25.07.07

Together we'll make a laughingstock of the government

"A stubborn rivalry prevailed for years between employers and the Histadrut Labor Federation. [...] This situation changed with the election of Shraga Brosch as head of the Manufacturers Association and Ofer Eini as Histadrut chairman. They created an alliance that said: You help me and I'll help you – and together we'll make a laughingstock of the government. After all, we both know that this is a weak government. [...] Brosh did not take into consideration that the moment the public sector got its five percent increase, budgets would have to be cut, including for industrialists. Nor did he consider that a public-sector wage hike would lead to similar demands in industry." Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA 25.07.07

Wanted: A sound compromise

"The strike was unavoidable. Histadrut Chairman Ofer Eini had to flex his muscles; otherwise, the negotiations would not have been budged. Without a strike, Eini would also not have been able to prove to the public he represents that he obtained the maximum possible. But even if the strike was unavoidable, it must be kept as short as possible to limit the public's suffering and prevent damage to the economy." Editorial, HAA 26.07.07

The sanctity of the airport

"A general strike hits the country and the only public discussion concerns the future of the vacation plans made by several thousand passengers. Hospitals, clinics, trains, welfare offices and the offices of the National Insurance Institute can remain shut, just don't close the terminal. [...] although there has never been respect for strikers or some appreciation of the strike weapon here, not once has it all been so blatantly channeled toward the airport terminals. Call it healthy hedonism or normalcy – still, one can't help but get angry in the face of the total collapse of such values as social solidarity, concern for the less fortunate, a willingness to pay a personal price and mutual assistance, as

archaic as they may seem." Gideon Levy, HAA 29.07.07

3. Wahlen in der Türkei

Aus den türkischen Wahlen am 22. Juli ging die islamisch-konservative Partei AKP des Ministerpräsidenten Tayyip Erdogan mit fast 47% als Sieger hervor. In Israel wurden die Wahlen mit Spannung beobachtet. Einerseits wird befürchtet, dass eine konservative Koalition die Islamisierung der Türkei vorantreiben wird. Andererseits haben sich die Beziehungen zwischen Türkei und Israel in der Amtszeit Erdogans seit 2002 sehr vertieft und seine Regierung wird generell als israelfreundlich angesehen.

Die Schleier sind schon unterwegs

„Sollte [Erdogan] Gül zum Präsidenten ernennen, wäre dies eine Demütigung der Armee und der säkulären Öffentlichkeit“, sagt Dr. Alon Liel, ein [israelischer] Türkei-Experte. Er nimmt jedoch an, dass Erdogan einen Weg finden wird, die Armee und die Säkulären versöhnlich zu stimmen. „Er braucht die Geschäftsleute und in die Intellektuellen, und sein Sieg ist so bedeutend, dass er großzügig sein kann.“ Jacky Huri, MAA 24.07.07

In Israel ist man zufrieden, hegt jedoch auch Befürchtungen

Die Wahlergebnisse in der Türkei wurden in Israel mit gemischten Gefühlen aufgenommen: Einerseits Zufriedenheit über den Sieg der Regierungspartei, in deren Amtszeit die Beziehungen zwischen Israel und der Türkei neue Höhepunkte erreicht haben. Andererseits macht man in Israel [...] keinen Hehl aus der Sorge über den Islamisierungsprozess der Türkei. [...]

Hohe politische Stellen sagen, die ausgezeichneten Beziehungen zwischen den beiden Staaten seien eine Garantie für die Stabilität der Kontakte.

[...] gerade da die Partei Erdogans islamische Wurzeln habe, versuche sie ständig zu beweisen, dass sie dem Westen zugeneigt und

an guten Beziehungen zu Israel interessiert ist. [...]

Gleichzeitig gäbe es auf lange Sicht jedoch auch Grund zur Sorge: Die Türkei wird allmählich eine islamische Großmacht, und man könne nicht wissen, ob sich langfristig eine Annäherung zum Iran vollziehen werde.“ Itamar Eichner, JED 23.07.07

Der Kampf um die Demokratie

„Was Israel betrifft, betont die türkische Regierung immer wieder, dass die Beziehungen zwischen den beiden Staaten sich weiterhin vertiefen werden. Meiner Meinung nach gibt es gute Aussichten dafür, dass dies tatsächlich geschehen wird.“ Zvi El-Peleg, 23.07.07

HAA = Haaretz

HZO = Ha Tzofe

JED = Jedioth Ahronoth

JED engl. = www.ynetnews.com

JPO = Jerusalem Post

MAA = Maariv

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