



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 13/11

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

28. Juni - 12. Juli 2011

1. Gesetz gegen Siedlungs-Boycott verabschiedet

Spät am Abend des 11. Juli wurde in der israelischen Knesset nach fünfständiger Debatte ein Gesetz verabschiedet, das Personen und Institutionen, die Israel oder die jüdischen Siedlungen in der Westbank boykottieren bzw. dazu aufrufen, unter Strafe stellt. Das Gesetz, vom Likud-Abgeordneten Zeev Elkin eingereicht, sieht vor, dass Firmen oder Organisationen, die aufgrund ihrer geografischen Lage boykottiert werden, auf Schadensersatz verklagen können. Es wurde mit 47 zu 38 Stimmen verabschiedet – Atzmaut, Ehud Baraks Partei und Teil der Regierungskoalition, nahm nicht an der Abstimmung teil. Auch Premierminister Netanyahu und Außenminister Lieberman waren nicht anwesend. Die Opposition kritisierte das Gesetz indes scharf. Mehrere Menschenrechtsorganisationen kündigten an, das Gesetz beim Obersten Gerichtshof anfechten zu wollen. Auch der Rechtsberater der Knesset hatte vor Verabschiedung des Gesetzes bereits seine Zweifel an dessen Legalität angebracht. Elkin und andere rechte Abgeordnete drohten daraufhin mit einer Beschneidung der Autorität des Obersten Gerichtshofes.

Laws for liquidation

"Even those who oppose boycotts as a tool for social change cannot stand idly by as the Knesset passes such a harmful law. [...] It hits at the very place where the people need the broadest possible freedom of expression - the realm of political expression. [...] The bill is an imposition of the views of the majority on the minority, essentially by shutting the latter up. [...]"

Ever since the 18th Knesset was formed, MKs have been competing among themselves to see who can more heavily bruise Israel's democratic regime. The flood of anti-democratic laws [...] are the product of

a guiding hand. [...] These policies come directly from the school of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Foreign Minister, Avigdor Lieberman. [...] All of them are trying to change Israel's democratic system, which still allows room for broad freedom of expression and defense of minority rights. [...]"

The harm these people are doing to the State of Israel will cause mortal damage to its legitimacy, because the nations of the world, including the United States, will not support an undemocratic state."

Talia Sasson, HAA 11.07.11

Stifling the debate

"This bill is flawed first of all because of its twisted definition: 'Geographical boycotts'. [...]"

In other words, we are allowed to utilize boycotts to fight against the price hikes of dairy producers here, [...] , but we must not utilize this weapon in struggling over an issue the has been tearing this nation apart for 44 years now – the territories conquered in the Six-Day War. [...]"

I am allowed to think that some of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank jeopardize the State of Israel's existence. I am also allowed to think that if there is no other choice, these settlements need to be 'dried up.' But I'm not allowed to let anyone know that this is what I think? Is this the idea?

What we have here is a legitimate, longtime debate that will apparently not end tomorrow – with the new law or without it."

Ariella Ringel-Hoffman, JED 10.07.11

The bad boycott law

"Israeli proponents of [boycott, divestment and sanctions] (BDS) expect our government to end the 'occupation' by simply giving in to all Palestinian demands [...]. Elkin's bill [...] aims to do away with this 'absurdity.' [...] But while we empathize with Elkin and other lawmakers' protective instinct vis-a-

vis the Jewish state, we must, nevertheless, respectfully disagree with their proposed legislation. Civil society has an unalienable right to organize peacefully and to use its buying power or freedom of association to further political objectives [...]. Elkin's legislation prohibits private Israeli citizens and businesses from spending or not spending their money the way they see fit or associating or not associating with whomever they wish.

Legislation that infringes freedom of expression is not the way to battle the local BDS movement. [...] Attempts to legitimize Jewish presence in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem through the stifling of criticism may just achieve the opposite, by providing BDS proponents with a truly worthy cause to champion – their own right to freedom of expression."

JPO 12.07.11 Editorial

Say 'yes' to patriotic law

"Is there really a need to explain why the State of Israel is supposed to object to those who call for a boycott against it? Is there a need to explain why a democracy must not support or subsidize bodies that call for a domestic boycott? [...]

The bill against imposing boycotts that will be brought before the Knesset this week partly contends with a unique absurdity in the democratic realm: Bodies and institutions that receive financial support from the State of Israel, while at the same time work independently in a bid to boycott it. [...]

Those who claim that resorting to boycotts and protests is legitimate in a democratic state are correct. However, the democratic legitimacy does not entitle such acts to be funded by taxpayers' money.

As of late there is a feeling that our democracy is not allowed to work against those who smear the State of Israel."

Yoaz Hendel, JED 10.07.11

A law to subvert democracy

"This contemptible law blatantly violates Israel's Basic Laws. It is couched in vague language. [...]

This vagueness is intentional, designed to conceal the goal of spreading a wide protective net over the settlements, whose products, activities and in fact very existence - which is controversial to begin with - are the main reason for the boycott initiatives, both domestic and foreign. [...]

The law's sponsors are also creating a mendacious equivalence between the State of Israel and Israeli society as a whole, on one hand, and the

settlements on the other. They are thereby granting the settlers sweeping legitimization. [...]

Knesset members who vote for this law must understand that they are supporting the gagging of protest as part of an ongoing effort to liquidate democracy. Such moves may be painted as protecting Israel, but in reality, they exacerbate its international isolation."

HAA 11.07.11 Editorial

2. Das Scheitern der zweiten "Gaza-Flottille" und die "Fly-In-Initiative"

Mehr als ein Jahr nachdem der erste Schiffskonvoi im Mai 2010 versuchte, die israelische Seeblockade des Gazastreifens zu durchbrechen, scheinen die Bemühungen, mit einer zweiten Flotte in See zu stechen, gescheitert zu sein. Zunächst sprachen sich mehrere europäische Staaten gegen eine Teilnahme ihrer Staatsbürger aus. Dann sagte auch die türkische Hilfsorganisation IHH, eine der führenden Kräfte der ersten Flottille, ihre Mitwirkung ab. Schließlich verwehrt Griechenland, wo die Schiffe vor Anker lagen, den Aktivisten die Abfahrt. Zuvor waren außerdem einige Boote durch Sabotageakte lahmgelegt worden.

Stattdessen kündigten die Organisatoren dann an, Israel durch ein "Fly-In" zu "erstürmen" – pro-palästinensische Aktivisten aus aller Welt planten nach Israel zu fliegen, um von dort aus weiter in die Westbank und nach Gaza zu reisen. Dabei kalkulierten sie natürlich ein, dass Israel dies nicht zulassen würde. Wie erwartet stationierte Israel mehrere hundert Polizisten am Ben-Gurion-Flughafen und nahm den Großteil der Aktivisten – etwa 150 – sofort nach Landung fest. Die meisten wurden in den Folgetagen zurück in ihre Heimatländer abgeschoben. Über 200 Aktivisten waren gar nicht erst losgeflogen, weil Israel die Fluggesellschaften über ein Einreiseverbot informiert hatte.

Ships of Fools

"Organizers of the flotilla claim their goal is to end Gaza's 'humanitarian crisis.' [...]

While the situation is tough – unemployment is about 25%, [...] and three-quarters of the population relies on food aid – there is no humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Literacy is nearly universal and infant mortality is relatively low. Health conditions remain better than across much of the developing world. [...]

If so, what is the real motivation of those 'activists' intent on challenging Israel's blockade [...]? Could it be their stubborn preoccupation with Israel's purported abuses [...] of Gazans, while conveniently ignoring the injustices of an increasingly unpopular Hamas regime, are the result of a certain ingrown prejudice against the Jewish state?"

JPO 27.06.11 Editorial

Israel's violent discourse

"Yes, they want to create a provocation - the only way to remind the world about Gaza's situation [...]. Yes, the situation in Gaza has improved [...], in part because of the previous flotilla. But [...] it has no outlet to the sea or air, there are no exports, and its inhabitants are still partially imprisoned. [...]"

But look at how Israel is reacting. The flotilla was described immediately [...] as a security threat; its activists were classified as enemies. [...]"

We have become a society whose language is violence, a country that seeks to resolve nearly everything by force, and only by force."

Gideon Levy, HAA 30.06.11

Flotilla won't bring peace

"Another round of 'Flotilla Activism' aimed at inciting greater tension in the Arab-Israeli conflict is scheduled for this week. [...] The latest crop of flotilla participants – a fringe group of extremists working alongside terrorists – is more concerned with their own PR and promoting hate, violence, and chaos, rather than with working with Israelis and Palestinians to find peaceful solutions to the conflict. [...] The flotilla, therefore, fills no great humanitarian void, but is clearly designed to provoke Israel."

Jason Edelstein, JED 28.06.11

Our new friend, Greece

"It appears that organizers did not take one thing into account: Greece's attitude to the flotilla and that dramatic change this year in Israel-Greece ties. [...] The country was always considered a pro-Arabic state and an enthused supporter of the Palestinians. [...]"

However, this year Greece's prime minister decided to reshuffle the deck. The crisis in ties between Israel and Turkey, Greece's neighbor and rival, created an opportunity. [...] He understands that Greece's global status will be boosted should it apply a more balance Mideastern policy. [...]"

If last year flotilla organizers managed to surprise Israel and the IDF, this year it was Greece that surprised the organizers."

Menachem Gantz, JED 03.07.11

The flotilla and the Jewish stereotype

"The Greek government wanted to save people [...] from a traumatic and perhaps even fatal experience. [...] Greece wanted to prevent a 'humanitarian disaster' in the event of a clash between the Israel Defense Forces and the protesters. [...]"

We must now await future media leaks to know what exactly Greece received in exchange, other than closer military ties. Perhaps money [...]"

The sympathy of the Greek soldiers who arrested the Tahrir's passengers [...] was with the flotilla and with Gaza, not with their government's orders. That's all we need: another country whose government gets along well with Israel in complete opposition to popular sentiment."

Amira Hass, HAA 07.07.11

The unwelcome fly-in

"The stage-managed production obviously has more to do with a propaganda ploy than with breaking the anyway fictional siege on Gaza. [...]"

One minor detail is illuminating: The organizers of the fly-in refuse to call the destination [...] Ben-Gurion Airport. They have dubbed it 'Lydda Airport,' after the [...] British Mandate-era aerodrome. These semantics carry the explicit message of challenging Israel's very sovereignty – not merely protesting its policies.

No state can tolerate such an onslaught. [...] The inimical visitors [...] need to be stopped. [...]"

We hope that somehow, ways will be found both to deny the provocateurs entry, yet avoid getting dragged into the PR trap they have sprung."

JPO 06.07.11 Editorial

Hysteria at the airport

"If the intention of flotilla and fly-in organizers was to direct global attention to Gaza, Israel [is] doing everything to help them. [...]"

We are told about intelligence preparations, assessments, [...] undercover detectives, a task force, reinforcement of security and feverish preparations. Israel is preparing for war, not for a protest. [...]"

This is not a deployment, but rather, hysteria. Fly-in organizers can go ahead, cancel their tickets and save their money. The Israeli government did the job

for them. [...] Israel's PR establishment is offering its fine services free of charge."
Haim Zisovitch, JED 07.07.11

3. Verhaftung von Rabbi Dov Lior

Dov Lior, der als einer der führenden Rabbiner des radikalen Flügels der Nationalreligiösen gilt, ist wegen Verdachtes auf Volksverhetzung festgenommen worden. Lior hatte das religiöse Traktat "Torat Hamelech" ("Die Torah des Königs") in einem Vorwort gutgeheißen. In dem Buch wird behauptet, das jüdische Gesetz erlaube in Extremfällen die Tötung von nichtjüdischen Zivilisten. Nachdem Lior mehreren Vorladungen der Polizei nicht nachgekommen war, wurde er festgenommen und eine Stunde lang verhört. Nun muss die Staatsanwaltschaft über eine Anklage entscheiden.

Nach Liors Verhaftung kam es zu Ausschreitungen in Jerusalem, wo hunderte von Sympathisanten den Verkehr lahmlegten und gegen den Obersten Gerichtshof protestierten.

Rabbi Yaakov Yosef, ein Sohn des ehemaligen Oberrabbiners Ovadia Yosef, wurde gleichfalls festgenommen. Seine Verhaftung führte zu erneuten Protesten vor dem Obersten Gerichtshof.

The remedy for "Torat HaMelach"

"It is not at all clear that Lior has committed a crime. He has, however, placed his rabbinic reputation behind a morally repugnant book [...], based on the essentialist premise that non-Jewish lives are inherently less valued [...]. The state prosecutor and the police have a duty to investigate suspicions of incitement.

Nevertheless, in a Jewish state that respects not only the rule of law but also democratic principles, special care should be made not to stifle intellectual expression, even if the result is books like *Torat Hamelech*. [...]

The remedy for *Torat Hamelech* is not censorship or intimidation, but the eminently Jewish practice of open intellectual debate and exchange of opinion."
JPO 28.06.11 Editorial

A dangerous fire

"Those who favor freedom of expression will of course find it difficult to accept as self evident the arrest of a person, any person, for things that he said or wrote. [...]

It may have been wiser [...] to decide to allow these inciters to continue to trade in their dubious merchandise, and at the same time to continue to

keep tabs on the practical results of their words, using the methods permitted in a democracy. [...] Freedom of expression must be strictly maintained, but Rabbi Lior should be dismissed from all his positions."

HAA 29.06.11 Editorial

Rabbi's arrest wrong move

"Those who made the decision to detain Lior, and certainly in the manner he was arrested, may be law enforcement officials, but they are also reckless. [...] Such crude act, arresting Lior on a city street, thereby undermining the honor of an elderly spiritual leader admired by the masses, cannot but convey a provocative, haughty message."

Israel Wolman, JED 29.06.11

King Lior and his subjects

"Menachem Livni, who was convicted of murders, headed a terror organization dubbed the 'Jewish underground' [...] testified that the spirit behind the underground was Lior. [...] [But] Lior was not to be arrested, tried or even seriously interrogated. The very belated and slight delay for an hour of questions relating to the book [...] is therefore ridiculous. [...] Lior does not stop at incitement. [...] Rabin's assassin used to travel to Hebron to see the rabbi. [...]

As long as rabbis who identify with Rabbi Lior are not ousted from their jobs; as long as funding for the present religious education is not stopped; as long as Lior's involvement in acts of murder [...] is not prosecuted, the country has no right to demand its citizens serve in the army or pay taxes. Until the change takes place, Israel is not a state."

Sefi Rachlevsky, HAA 01.07.11

Treat Jews, Arabs equally

"Rabbis are not above the law. [...] When a rabbi is summoned for interrogation, he should report. [...] [But] at this time, the State of Israel conveys a dual, confusing message in respect to incitement. On the one hand, [...] any delusional statement by rightist activists is perceived as the crossing of a red line. [...] On the other hand, [...] Israel shows incredible tolerance in respect to different kind of incitement. [...] A blind eye is being turned to hundreds of Muslim clerics who write and speak hatred openly under guise of the Jewish State's mosques."

Yoaz Hendel, JED 29.06.11

Rabbi Lior's arrest

"Let us ask the seemingly forbidden question: Could it be that perhaps both the authors and the endorsers are correct in their analysis? [...]"

There have been many instances throughout history in which righteous nations fought against tyranny and enemy civilians were killed in the process. The most glaring example was WWII, when the allied forces bombed the heavily populated German cities [...] Was this a crime? [...] Certainly not! [...] In a time of war, it is certainly permissible. [...]"

I applaud Rabbi Lior for standing firm for the right to express his opinion about such an important national issue."

David Rubin, AS 28.06.11

Why was the Rabbi detained?

"The affair involving the arrest and interrogation of Rabbi Dov Lior has nothing to do with matters of law and order. [It was] meant to humiliate [...] rather than to enforce the law."

After all, there was no real need to interrogate Rabbi Lior. [...] Any legal decision regarding his actions can be taken without him present. The demand to probe him [...] was a belligerent provocation by Attorney Shai Nitzan, who for years now has been leading a McCarthy-like hunt against Jewish settlers in Judea and Samaria."

Benny Katzover, JED 30.06.11

Religious extremism and the Jewish state

"There is a worrying trend emerging on the fringes of the national religious sector, [...] resorting to street violence as a vehicle to promote their views. [...]"

The real challenge rests not with the law enforcement officials, but with mainstream religious leaders who are principally responsible for the erosion and distortion of traditional religious values. [...] The time has come for the moderate Zionist rabbis and laymen to stand up [...] condemning religious extremists."

Isi Leibler, JPO 29.06.11

Democracy vs. God

"Those of us who believe that the internal debate [...] in Israel is still focused on defense needs or the number of settlements that should be evacuated, were proven wrong [...]. The real controversy focuses on the image of Israeli society and the nature of the country's governance. [...] Whose power is greater? The rule of law set by institutions with democratically elected officials, or the rule of rabbis who make decisions in accordance with the

Torah? [...] Should Israel be a democracy [...], or an ethnocracy? [...]"

In his book *Der Judenstaat*, Herzl wrote: 'Will we have a theocracy? No!... We will not allow the theocratic tendencies of our religious leadership to raise their head. We will know how to keep them in the synagogues [...] They should not interfere in matters of state. [...]'

If we do not appreciate and implement what Herzl said, the rioters in Jerusalem will not stop at the Supreme Court."

Shaul Arieli, HAA 06.07.11

4. Medienquerschnitt

Die Vielfalt der in Israel relevanten Themen kann in einem Medienspiegel nicht umfassend wiedergegeben werden. Um den deutschen LeserInnen dennoch einen Einblick in das breite Themenspektrum, das in den Medien behandelt wird, zu gewähren, veröffentlichen wir in dieser Schlaglichtausgabe wieder eine kleine Auswahl an weiteren Themen, die in den vergangenen zwei Wochen die israelische Gesellschaft bewegten.

*Über den Vorschlag, das **israelische Wochenende** von Freitag/Samstag auf Samstag/Sonntag zu verschieben:*

Say 'no' to Sunday off

"The Muslim day of rest is Friday. This is the day where a significant part of our citizens pray. A democratic state must show consideration to its minorities."

And here is another argument: Even without an official government decision, Friday has already become a day of rest for many workers. In fact, most members of our economy work five days already, Sunday through Thursday. [...]"

We shall welcome the declaration of Sunday as a day of rest, but we shall have trouble giving up our freedom on Friday. Will the economy be able to function with only four days of work per week? [...]"

In practice, industrialists shall aim to take advantage of their factories on weekends as well, and people who are having trouble making ends meet will secure 'an additional job' for the weekends (as is the case in America.)

And so, while the wealthy will celebrate a three-day weekend, the poor will be working seven days a week."

Moshe Ronen, JED 06.07.11

The Sunday imperative

"Shortening the workweek will undoubtedly have the downside of hurting economic output. [...]"

Israelis, however, already work many more hours on average than citizens of most other industrialized countries. [...]"

In contrast, workweeks have fallen significantly in the US and even more so in Europe, since the mid-20th century, primarily due to increasing levels of productivity. By raising GDP per capita, Israel could easily accommodate a shorter workweek without suffering a drop in total output. A two-day weekend would also be a boon for recreation industries such as sports, music and domestic tourism. [...] It should come as no surprise, therefore, that hoteliers, the Manufacturers Association and the Chamber of Commerce have come out in favor. [...]"

Transforming Sunday into a second day of rest is [...] feasible from an economic standpoint and conducive to alleviating religious tensions. By all standards, Sunday off is an imperative."

JPO 07.07.11 Editorial

Über Argumente gegen die *unilaterale Ausrufung eines palästinensischen Staates*:

Abbas headed for disaster

"Abbas is heading full force into his own collapse, and that of his Authority, in September.

It's already clear that a Palestinian state will not be established. New states are only established through a Security Council decision, and the United States already made it clear in the most explicit way that it would impose a veto. [...] This week, the Americans sent a special envoy to warn Abbas. The Europeans did the same, yet he insists on rushing towards the wall.

[...] Abbas' people fail to make a distinction between UN legitimacy, which they can obtain via the support of more than 100 states [...] and acceptance as a UN member, which they will not be getting.

Their disappointment may be immense and destructive. Palestinian violence may result and possibly focus on Israel, but also turn domestically, against the Palestinian Authority that prompted the failure.

Why could this turn into a collapse? Because Abbas is endangering the relationship of his fragile Authority with the US, with Israel, and with the European Union. At this time already, America is furious over the Authority's pact with Hamas, and should the PA act against the wishes of the great

superpower it may lose American support, thereby collapsing diplomatically and economically."

Guy Bechor, JED 01.07.11

I won't join the solidarity march

"I won't join the solidarity march in support of the Palestinian demand to declare independence. [...]"

The solidarity march is the answer of those of us who believe that the side that bears the main responsibility for the failure to implement the two-state vision so far is Israel, which is ruled by a right-wing government and the settlers. [...] According to this approach, there is no need to build incentives that will cause the Palestinians, too, to change their views, as a precondition for a just and stable agreement.

I don't accept this analysis. [...] Israel has a large majority ready for a stable compromise agreement. Moreover, the present Israeli government, as right-wing as it may be, is officially committed to a two-state solution. [...]"

The dead end in the negotiations is based on the Palestinians' positions no less than those of Israeli opponents of partition. Therefore, a proper process of progress toward implementing the two-state vision must include clear and consistent Israeli and international activity to create political, economic, social and ethical incentives that will convince the two sides to accept the 'painful concessions' required."

Ruth Gavison, HAA 10.07.11

HAA = Haaretz

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