

## HAARETZ

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## Back to recalcitrance

When Avigdor Lieberman became defense minister two weeks ago, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, "I want to clarify that I'm committed to achieving peace with our Palestinian neighbors and with all our neighbors ... the [2002] Arab Peace Initiative includes positive components that could help restore constructive negotiations with the Palestinians. We are prepared to conduct negotiations with the Arab states on updating that initiative in a way that reflects the dramatic changes that have occurred in our region since 2002, but will preserve the agreed objective of two states for two peoples."

At the time Netanyahu was being battered by public criticism over his brutal ouster of Moshe Ya'alon for Lieberman, and primarily by international pressure in the run-up to the Paris conference. He was clinging to the address by Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sissi to declare that winds of peace were blowing in the region.

Now, only short while later, Netanyahu has reverted back to his recalcitrance in typical fashion. Yesterday he told a meeting of Likud ministers that he would never accept the Arab League initiative as a basis for negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. "If the Arab states will understand that they have to alter the Arab Peace Initiative based on the changes that Israel demands, then there'll be something to talk about," he said. "But if they bring the 2002 initiative and say 'take it or leave it,' then we'll choose to leave it," (as reported by Barak Ravid in Haaretz).

This is not just another right turn in Netanyahu's usual style, but the same old tiresome pattern whose aim is to foil negotiations in advance and avoid debating the issues they involve. Netanyahu, who declares from time to time that he is committed to the two-state solution (while also declaring the opposite) as well as to diplomatic negotiations, is careful to insist on conditions (like recognition of Israel as a Jewish state that came up during the negotiations the previous government conducted with the Palestinian Authority) that prevent a dialogue from even beginning. If he isn't satisfied with the Arab initiative, it would behoove him to suggest his own peace plan. To date, he has made do with empty and contradictory declarations and efforts to undermine existing proposals.

Netanyahu can continue with his verbal acrobatics but – as French Foreign Minister Jean Marc Ayrault said, as he told Netanyahu that the French would continue to advance its peace initiative despite Israel's objections – "The train has left the station." The Quartet report, which will deal with the diplomatic stalemate and is expected to include recommendations regarding Israel's occupation of the territories, is to be released by the end of the month. It will echo the French peace initiative and international public opinion, which is not prepared to continue accepting the Israeli occupation. Given all this, Netanyahu's defiance and volatility are not appropriate policies.



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Nitzan Horowitz

## The unique suffering of the victims of the Orlando massacre

It wouldn't have been any less bad if Omar Mateen had perpetrated the massacre at a "normal" club rather than a gay club, as did his terrorist colleagues who slaughtered innocent revelers at the Bataclan in Paris.

Still, the attack at Pulse in Orlando deserves discussion because of the nature of the place, and not necessarily from the perspective of the Islamic State. To this murder corporation, Paris with its cultural and entertainment institutions is as filthy as Orlando with its amusement parks and LGBT life. To the murderers there's no difference, and anyone who deludes himself into thinking there is only plays into their hands.

The difference between the Bataclan and Pulse isn't in the terrorists' target but rather the feeling of victimhood and the responsibility the issue puts on society. Many people visiting LGBT venues like Pulse see them as a kind of refuge, a safe space. They go there to be who they are, free of the constant pressure that some of them endure every day. They go there to party, to dance, to laugh – to live, like every other free person.

Many of the murdered and wounded at this club

had already fallen victim to violence, persecution and humiliation. Sometimes they suffered at home at the hands of parents or relatives, sometimes at school or work, and sometimes it's just an endless string of humiliation and teasing on the street, at the beach and on social networks. This is the bitter truth that many people, both in the

happen on the way home? And if something happens, do we tell the police, who will mock us, or our parents, who will banish us?

Whether it be "plain" homophobia or a mixture of homophobia and extreme Islam with Islamic State terror, or the homophobia and racism of skinheads and neo-Nazis, or any other sick concoction,

older people – some of whom have experienced more than their share of violence.

The fact that the murders are unsolved certainly hasn't added to the sense of security. That's also how it was after Shira Banki was murdered at last year's Jerusalem Pride Parade, in the same place and by the same bastard who sowed the seeds of fear exactly one decade earlier.

The LGBT community's impressive successes, the major public events and the enormous changes in the lives of many of its members are real and important, but this is the half full part of the glass. The other half is filled with violence, discrimination and fear.

All this is of no interest to the murderous emissaries of the Islamic State and the terror groups. They act against everyone: Jews, minorities, gays and simply Americans, French people and Israelis. Everyone is a target in their eyes.

But the victims, as a group, aren't identical; special understanding is required. Openness, tolerance and equal rights are a civilized society's best answer to terror and murder. Its power is no less than any military operation.

### Many of the murdered and wounded had already fallen prey to violence, persecution and humiliation every day of their lives.

United States and Israel, refuse to see.

For the victims, the murder rampage in this cheerful, sun-soaked city is a double blow; it's hard to imagine that any of the Bataclan attendees experienced what's still the reality among many LGBT people. Some of them are anxious when they show up at places like Pulse.

This concealment, this conspiracy of silence, this fear of other people's reaction is often amplified by very palpable fears. What will happen on the way there? What will

the harm is unbearable because it joins a deep hurt that has harried some of these people ever since they stood up for their beliefs.

I can't forget the difficult feelings in the Israeli LGBT community following the Barneo murders in 2009. Anyone who thinks that these feelings disappeared after the story dropped from the headlines is making a bitter mistake. For years, these murders have hung like a bland cloud over every activity and a seed of fear in the hearts of young people – and

land allocation, and segregation in housing? Instead of spotlighting exceptional stories and individuals, should not Israeli society address the structural and collective impediments that make those elevating stories the exception, rather than the rule? Karayanni's appointment illustrates Israel's Arab citizens' double bind more than it does the breaking of any ceiling: Every time an Arab in Israel scores a professional achievement, she becomes proof of Israel's goodness (to the moderate right-wing), or its progressive evolution (to the center-left).

In this self-serving Israeli view, lack of qualifications explains the absence of Arabs from leading positions. In other words, structural racism has nothing to do with it. If, on the other hand, the individual Arab is successful, it confirms the openness of the system.

It thus proves an already existing thesis: that the system works well by allowing for individual success. The individual's qualifications become incidental to her success. Either way, this claim does not seriously question the sociopolitical system that institutionalizes discrimination against Arab citizens. It does not refute the analogy to South Africa's apartheid. Karayanni's success comes despite Israel's system, not because of it.

What are the implications of Karayanni's appointment to the current debate on the

Rogel Alpher

## Lapid's tears don't help the autistic

Like Yair Lapid's daughter, my son Yotam is an autistic teen of army age. And like Lapid's daughter, Yotam volunteered to serve with his classmates on an army base. It's because of this that I found Lapid's Facebook post last week about his daughter Ya'eli's army service jarring.

"At the graduation ceremony, Ya'eli saluted the commander," wrote Lapid, the head of the Yesh Atid party. "She was wearing a uniform and an orange beret, and her father wiped his eyes and hoped no one was looking." He was moved to tears because his daughter looked and acted like an Israeli soldier. She saluted. She was wearing a uniform.

Of course, I can identify with the tears; Yotam often moves me to tears. I'm excited when, with admirable emotional strength, he overcomes the enormous obstacles life has put in his path – when he achieves something that regular people take for granted.

Yotam is now working on learning how to take the bus by himself. It scares him. It demands true courage from him. When he succeeds with this, he'll be proud of himself and I'll be proud of him. And I'll be emotional and will probably shed a tear.

For me, the reference point for judging Yotam's accomplishments isn't the regular world. He's struggling with his limitations and is competing with himself, not with his two sisters. The joy and satisfaction in his life will stem solely from accepting himself and making the best of himself as he is, not from a Sisyphean, unfair effort to be like his sisters, an effort doomed from the start.

I wasn't excited by seeing Yotam in uniform at his ceremony. I wasn't choked up when he saluted. It doesn't thrill me to see Yotam masquerading as a regular person or trying to imitate regular behavior.

It's relatively easy for the autistic to adopt mechanical, ritual codes of conduct. Series of actions are a meaningless syntax for them. Syntax without semantics. They feel reasonably comfortable when they find themselves in

social situations that are not too complex; when they don't have to use judgment. They march, they halt, they salute.

So I can empathize with Lapid's tears, but I wonder why he was crying. The wonder increased when I read the following sentence by Lapid: "So now you're a soldier, like Lior?" I asked Ya'eli, and my mute daughter nodded vigorously.

He didn't refer to her autism in the post at all. He referred to her as "mute" and having "special needs." To me this seemed like sophistry or evasion. Helen Keller didn't speak either and had special needs. Lapid's daughter is autistic. I'm proud that Yotam is autistic.

### The Yesh Atid leader shouldn't try to convince his daughter that she's 'just like' his non-autistic son. 'Autistic' isn't a curse.

I'm proud when he explains that he's autistic (fortunately, he can speak). Yotam is a proud autistic young man. "Autistic" isn't a curse.

I was very dismayed that the only dialogue with Lapid's daughter in the post was his question whether she was now like her brother Lior. Of course she isn't, and I think it's a shame that Lapid is trying to encourage her to think that she is.

It's a very mistaken way to educate autistic young people, I think. She isn't meant to do anything "like Lior." Any such attempt would be a hollow, fake, false representation and empty posturing. I hope that Lapid is proud of her for what she is, and not just when she acts, in a most superficial way, "like Lior."

"Did you cry?" Yotam asked me after his military ceremony. He loves making me cry. "No," I told him. "I'm happy for you, but anyone can wear a uniform. On the other hand, when you draw, it's a drawing that only you can draw."

Alona Ferber

## Israel must fight Jewish extremists

After nearly a year in administrative detention, last week Israel released a Jewish extremist held following the 2015 Duma arson, in which a Palestinian infant and his parents were murdered. Meir Ettinger, who will spend three months under house arrest, leads "The Revolt," a group advocating violence to bring about the end of the Jewish state to be replaced by a "Jewish kingdom."

This ideology has deep roots in Ettinger's own family. The 24-year-old is the grandson of far-right radical Rabbi Meir Kahane, who also advocated using violence to expel Arabs from Greater Israel. Kach, the hardline party Kahane established in 1971, was banned along with an offshoot "Kahane Chai" in 1994, a month after Baruch Goldstein, a Kach supporter, massacred 29 Palestinians at prayer in Hebron.

The ideology of Kahane, assassinated in his native New York in 1990, did not disappear. Today, Kahane's legacy echoes in the Israeli far-right clarion call "Kahane tzadak" ("Kahane was right"), a phrase often reproduced in 'price tag' graffiti and on the lips of far-right protesters. And its ripples can be felt in the likes of Lehava, the extremist group led by another Kahaneist, Rabbi Bentzi Gopstein.

In recent weeks, the Anti-Defamation League, in an unusual step, has en-

tered the fray, urging the attorney general to take action against Lehava's "hateful discourse," which it said harms Israel abroad and at home. The ADL called "to draw a clear red line before this phenomenon that is so dangerous to Israel's society and democracy."

Lehava, meaning "flame" in Hebrew, is also an acronym for "Preventing Assimilation in the Holy Land." Founded in 2009, the anti-miscegenation group is vehemently anti-Arab, anti-Muslim and anti-Christian, and its members have been known to use violence. Lehava's activities range from publicity stunts bordering on the risible – such as urging supermodel Bar Refaeli to break up with her gentle boyfriend, Leonardo di Caprio – to the more sinister. In 2015, its members protested the wedding of a Jew and a Muslim, shouting "Death to Arabs." In November 2014, members of the group set fire to a Jewish-Arab school in Jerusalem. They spray-painted "Kahane was right" and "there's no coexisting with cancer" on the building's walls.

Legal action would send a clear formal message that there is no place for Lehava's hateful incitement in Israel. After a number of failed attempts in recent years to take such action against the group, it would also show Gopstein – who has branded Christians "blood-sucking vampires" and has called on

followers to continue "Kahane's way" – that words have consequences. It would show him he cannot act with impunity.

But this is the very least a democracy can and should do in the face of incitement to violence. The endurance of the ideas of Kahane and his ilk indicates that banning a group like Lehava is not enough. To prevent future generations of Jews adopting such a worldview, we must engage with – and directly challenge – the ideas behind it, from the inside.

Research by the Centre on Religion & Geopolitics shows that every ideological violent extremism has its non-violent fellow travellers. And they have the responsibility to speak out. Their insider status means they have unique persuasive power and authority – to stop activists taking a violent path. Jihad and the various currents of Jewish extremism are not one and the same, but much has been written about the lessons Israel can learn from how other countries deal with Islamist extremism.

We need to hear more voices from within the Jewish religious world speaking up against toxic Jewish extremist ideas. We also need initiatives that challenge the ideology and provide alternatives. Racist and extremist language has entered the Israeli mainstream, and is tolerated too often. Examples include calling for the boycott of Arab businesses, as

Avigdor Lieberman did during the 2014 Gaza war, or for the segregation of Jewish and Arab women in maternity wards, as a lawmaker did in April. Two-thirds of Israel's Orthodox public support the idea of expelling Arabs, according to a recent poll. It is therefore essential that many of the voices pushing back against the nexus of right-wing politics and religiously-inspired violence come from the political and religious right, from which Lehava draws its support.

Far-right movements will likely always exist. In Israel, amid the tension between Jewish identity and liberal democracy, room has been given to racist and ultranationalist ideas with a religious justification. These are radical, fringe movements. Still, as the Goldstein massacre, Rabin's assassination and more recent incidents like the Duma arson show, they can cause enormous damage. They undermine fragile Jewish-Arab relations and the ever-distant prospects for peace and coexistence.

A climate of tolerance for Jewish extremist ideas in society in general, and within the religious and cultural circles closest to known activists and their surrogates, gives them room to grow. To curb their growth and guard against future violence, we all must challenge them.

The writer is an editor at the Centre on Religion & Geopolitics.

Jamil Dakwar and Nimer Sultany

## Arab exception proves Israeli rule

Several commentators and politicians have rushed to utilize the appointment of Professor Michael Karayanni to the deanship of Hebrew University's Law School to bolster the "bridging the gaps" narrative. To them, this appointment is a refutation of the BDS movement. Opposition leader Yitzhak Herzog, for instance, tweeted that this is a "historic step that breaks another glass ceiling for Israel's Arabs."

Yet Karayanni's well-deserved appointment does not lend support to these arguments. In fact it supports the opposite conclusions. Like in previous cases, the prevailing discourse inverts the relation between the exception and the rule – the exception is deployed to conceal the rule rather than to prove it. The achievement itself becomes evidence of a supposed rule, while the arduous process Karayanni and Arab citizens go through recedes from view.

Should we not ask: Why did it take so long for an accomplished Arab jurist like Karayanni to become dean of an Israeli law school? Why do so few tenured Arab professors teach in Israeli academe? Are a handful of individual success stories enough to break the ceiling, as Herzog would have it? Will they magically solve inequalities in infrastructure, education, and zoning plans? Will they provide redress to unrecognized villages, discrimination in

legitimacy of the BDS movement, which includes the boycott of Israeli academic institutions? The BDS movement calls for boycotting institutions, not individuals, due to their complicity and contribution to the oppression of the Palestinian people. This ranges from discriminatory student admissions and staff-hiring policies to complicity, and often direct support, to the longest military occupation since World War II.

Karayanni's appointment should highlight what is missing in the fierce debate about the legitimacy of BDS – namely, the underlying goals of the campaign against Israel. Most BDS discussions are focused on ending the brutal military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. However, this is only one of three goals of BDS. The other goals highlight the denial of the Palestinian refugees' right of return to their homeland, and ending the institutional discrimination against the Palestinian minority in Israel.

Instead of seriously reflecting on whether and why BDS is necessary or valuable, Israel and its supporters are diverting the conversation by focusing on whether it is legitimate or legal to engage in a form of protest rooted in nonviolence, grassroots organization and civic mobilization. They obfuscate the issues by outlawing BDS calls, demonizing the movement and falsely accusing its supporters of anti-Semitism and

even terrorism.

The anti-BDS efforts clearly aim to silence any debate concerning Israel and its policies in historic Palestine. They seek to have a chilling effect on the freedom of speech and civil-society activism not only in Israel, but now increasingly in North American and European countries. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's recent order to blacklist companies and institutions that support BDS is only one recent example. Ultimately, though, the prevailing self-serving discourse is as untenable as the general politics of defenders of Israel, a politics grounded in the stubborn denial of facts and realities. It will not be able to credibly reconcile supporters of Israel's oppressive policies with their complicity in Israel's crimes and violations of international law indefinitely.

An individual success story cannot justify all of this and erase everyone else's reality. Karayanni deserves his appointment and it should be an ordinary recognition of an accomplished individual who is treated as an equal to his Jewish peers. Palestinians have the right to end their oppression and be treated equally and with dignity. Until that happens, we will continue to support BDS.

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