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Introduction

In May 2006, the campaign against the State of Israel waged by the anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) public reached a new level when a delegation from Neturei Karta attended an international conference held in Teheran "to reexamine the Holocaust story." The Neturei Karta representatives at the conference called for the destruction of the State of Israel "in peaceful ways."[1] The hostility of this movement toward the State of Israel seems to have pushed it into the arms of Holocaust deniers: a paradoxical development given that Neturei Karta does not question the historical authenticity of the Holocaust.[2] This incongruence may help explain the fact that the delegates' participation in the conference met with an unsympathetic response in the Haredi world and even within their own communities.[3]

The participation of radical ultra-Orthodox Jews in a Holocaust denial conference marked one of the peaks of their anti-Israeli campaign. In the

[1] Assaf Uni, "Neturei Karta Delegate to Iranian Holocaust Conference: 'I Pray for Israel's Destruction 'in Peaceful Ways,'" *Ha'aretz*, January 24, 2007 (accessed September 1, 2013). www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/810100.html.

[2] Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum, the spiritual leader of the anti-Zionist Haredi movement, is himself a Holocaust survivor. His book *Vayoel Moshe* devotes considerable space to explaining the meaning of the Holocaust. See: Yoel Teitelbaum, *Sefer Vayoel Moshe: Kolel Shelosha Maamarim*. Brooklyn. NY: Bet Mishar Yerushalayim, 1981 (in Hebrew).

[3] The Satmar Rebbe, Yekutiel Yehuda Teitelbaum, even issued a "Torah opinion" stating that the representatives who visited Teheran were "committing an act of insanity" that weakened the community and its zealous struggle. See: www.yoel-ab.com/data/upload_images/docs/4581bc19075add6b.jpg (accessed September 1, 2013). One of the participants in the delegation was assaulted by other Haredim. See: http://tsofar.com/zofar/see_article.asp?id=4720 (accessed April 8, 2014).

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past, Neturei Karta enjoyed symbolic representation in the governing body of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), while members of the Satmar Hasidic movement regularly protested against Israel in the United States.

What are the roots of this resentment toward the State of Israel? Why do some Haredi circles engage in what may seem to an outside observer to be an obsessive campaign against Zionism? Are they motivate solely by anti-Israeli sentiments or are less overt motives also involved? This book attempts to answer these questions through an examination of the history of the two main anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodox streams: Neturei Karta and the Satmar Hasidic dynasty. Our narrative focuses on their leaders: Rabbi Amram Blau (1894–1974), head of the Jerusalem-based anti-Zionist Neturei Karta ("Guardians of the City,") and Yoel Teitelbaum (1887–1979), founder of the Satmar Hasidic movement in New York. This historical study highlights the course taken by these leaders in order not only to withstand rising secularism but also to survive the Holocaust, as in the case of Yoel Teitelbaum, and to emerge as important players in contemporary Judaism.

The opposition of Teitelbaum and Blau to the State of Israel must be understood as part of their broader struggle against modern culture in all its manifestations. They embody a unique type of fundamentalist leadership: one that is enclave based and defensive yet engages in constant protest, albeit with only limited use of violence.

This book examines a Haredi subculture that originated in the middle of the nineteenth century in Hungary as a counterresponse to the trends of Enlightenment and Reform. A similar trend also emerged in Jerusalem in the 1920s in response to the rise of the Zionist movement. This subculture was able to survive the Second World War. Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum, himself a Holocaust survivor, immigrated to Williamsburg, New York in 1946 and reestablished the Satmar Hasidic court. Against all odds, the movement has rebuilt itself and is now one of the strongest Hasidic movements in America and around the world, with an estimated one hundred thousand followers in the United States alone.

Ultra-Orthodoxy is a fast-growing movement in Israel and the United States, primarily due to its very high natural growth rate.[4] This book discusses two movements that stand at the far right of ultra-Orthodoxy and serve, I will argue, as a benchmark for Haredi society as a whole in

[4] www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/The-impending-haredi-implosion (accessed April 8, 2014).

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terms of religious radicalization. An understanding of these two movements can therefore inform our understanding of religious radicalization in contemporary Judaism.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON JEWISH ORTHODOXY

Jacob Katz, a leading scholar of modern Judaism, argues that Orthodox Judaism is a product of the late eighteenth century, when Jewish society on the threshold of modernity underwent a loosening of the bonds of tradition leading to the emergence of non-Orthodox tendencies and trends. According to Katz, the difference between Orthodoxy and earlier traditional Jewish society is that in modern times loyalty to tradition is the product of a conscious decision. Awareness of other Jews' rejection of tradition, an option that was not available in most cases in premodern times, is therefore an essential and universal characteristic of all forms and variations of Orthodoxy. This term became the label for those who persisted in their traditionalist behavior once different kinds of Jew appeared on the scene – *maskilim* (exponents of the Jewish enlightenment) or reformers who deviated from traditional norms while continuing to affirm their affiliation to the community.[5]

However, Orthodoxy is not just the guardian of pure Judaism, as its followers tend to argue. According to Katz, "Orthodoxy was a method of confronting deviant trends, and of responding to the very same stimuli which produced those trends, albeit with conscious effort to deny such extrinsic motivations."[6]

From the eighteenth century onward, Central and Western European Jewry witnessed the rise of the Haskalah movement and various forms of Reform Judaism. The latter part of the nineteenth century saw the

[5] Jacob Katz, "Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective." In: Peter Medding (ed.), *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 2: *The Challenge of Modernity and Jewish Orthodoxy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986, pp. 3–4.

[6] *Ibid.*, 5. David Sorotzkin offers a somewhat different analysis, arguing that Orthodoxy and modernity should be seen not as contrasting movements but as two symbiotic sides of the same historical development. As such, one should not see Orthodoxy as merely responding to heterodoxy; these two movements actually interacted with one another. Sorotzkin bases his argument on S.N. Eisentadt's idea of "multiple modernities," according to which secularity and fundamentalism are manifestations of the same modern phenomenon. David Sorotzkin, *Orthodoxy and Modern Disciplination: The Production of Jewish Tradition in Europe in Modern Times*. Tel Aviv: HaKibbutz HaMeuhad, 2011, pp. 3–16 (in Hebrew).

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emergence of Jewish secularism,[7] Zionism, and the Bund (Jewish Socialism) in Eastern Europe. These ideological movements attracted people searching for new forms of Jewish identity. For the most part, the traditional rabbinical and communal leadership responded with resolute opposition. However, they understood that they must create new structures and organizations in order to compete for the souls of the Jewish population.[8]

The existence of Jews who deviate from normative Halakhic (Jewish religious law) practice is by no means an exclusively modern phenomenon. In premodern Jewish societies, however, there was no question that normative Judaism was defined by allegiance to the law. The autonomous Jewish communities had the power to expel, fine, or excommunicate the deviants. The emancipation of the Jews in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries eliminated the coercive power of the organized community. The growing number of Jews who preferred a less observant lifestyle created a dramatic change in the Jewish world as observant Jews became a small minority among the Jewish masses of Europe.

Moshe Samet proposed the following four characteristics of ultra-Orthodoxy:

1. A departure from the time-honored principle of *Klal Yisrael*, the perception of a unified Jewish community encompassing both the observant and the "backsliders." In locations where it was unable to control the Jewish community as a whole, Orthodoxy tended to separate itself from the larger community and to create its own institutions and congregations. In effect, Orthodoxy formed a society within a society.
2. Orthodoxy viewed modern culture with the utmost suspicion. As a rule, it rejected modern schooling, even when Jewishly sponsored and directed, in favor of an autonomous and conservative Orthodox educational system. This system adopted a highly selective position toward "secular" studies.
3. Orthodox Jews adopted an extremely strict standard of observance with respect to the Halakhah. It could be argued that a stringent standard of observance previously associated with an elite now

[7] Shmuel Feiner, *The Origins of Jewish Secularization in 18th Century Europe*. Philadelphia and Oxford: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.
[8] Adam Ferziger, *Exclusion and Hierarchy: Orthodoxy, Nonobservance, and the Emergence of Modern Jewish Identity*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005, p. 2.

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became the common norm. Likewise, there developed within Orthodoxy a belief in the ability of the pious Halakhic ruler to discern "Halakhic truth."

4. Under Orthodox inspiration, yeshivot were established for advanced religious studies. The students studied Talmud as a means of developing their religiosity and traditionalism and as a sign of piety. Later, in Israel, men studied in these institutions for years on end, regardless of the economic difficulties this created.[9]

According to Adam Ferziger, one of the most important Orthodox responses was the development of a sense of superiority. Many groups within Orthodoxy did not simplistically seek to exclude all other non-observant Jews. They maintained a commitment to a collective bond uniting all Jews, yet at the same time embarked on a constant process of setting boundaries between the members of this collective. Following Mary Douglas's model, Ferziger argues for a distinction between a "hierarchical" and an "enclavist" response. According to Douglas, "Hierarchy is essentially based on grading, so that it must tolerate the idea of a recognized bottom level and make provisions for it [. . .] Enclavists have reasons to avoid grading their members altogether: their habit is outcasting rather than downgrading: their exclusions all work on the outer boundary, the difference between belonging and not belonging. Their virulent hatred of the outsider is shocking to the other cultures [. . .]The religion of an enclave tends to be that of a dissident minority, so sectarian."[10]

Ferziger argues that German Orthodoxy adopted the hierarchical model, allowing it to contain the deviants, who at that point already constituted the majority of the Jewish community, within the boundaries of the Jewish collective. A perception evolved within Orthodoxy that all Jews were part of a greater whole, yet an internal distinction was forged between those who adhered to traditional beliefs and those who deviated from these tenets. The practical result of this process was the stratification of the community into "first-class" and "second-class" Jews. This construction reflected a realization that in a world in which deviance had become normative, an absolutely exclusionary approach was untenable. Room had to be made for those who identified

[9] Moshe Samet, "The Beginnings of Orthodoxy," *Modern Judaism* 8(3), (1988), 249–69.
[10] Mary Douglas, *In the Wilderness: The Doctrine of Defilement in the Book of Numbers*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993, pp. 45–6.

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as Jews despite having abandoned traditional Jewish practice, without legitimizing their actions.[11]

Streams within Hungarian Orthodoxy, which I define as radical ultra-Orthodoxy, developed enclavist tendencies. They labeled as illegitimate any type of Jewish lifestyle that accepts on an ideological level even minor or tactical adjustments to modern innovations and stigmatized those who followed such a course as outcasts. The enclavists developed a pseudo-sectarian approach. Although they did not always attain the level of separateness generally associated with a sect, they demonized all of their enemies, even those from within the Orthodox world, as emissaries of Satanic powers of the *Sitra Ahra* (the "other side") (see Chapter 6). According to Menachem Keren-Kratz, if one of the basic characteristics of Orthodoxy is its conscious seclusion from the non-Orthodox world, radical ultra-Orthodoxy adds a second level of segregation. These groups disassociate themselves not only from non-Orthodox society, but also from mainstream Orthodoxy. These radical groups refrain from participating in Orthodox organizations such as Agudat Yisrael; indeed, their leaders relentlessly and harshly attack these bodies and their members.[12] As Michael Silber has noted, the main campaign waged by radical ultra-Orthodoxy was not directed against the *maskilim* or the reformers but against more moderate exponents of Orthodoxy.[13]

Three different types of Orthodoxy developed in Europe: The first type, neo-Orthodoxy, became the dominant approach among German Jews. Convinced of the inner significance of every detail of the Law, they observed it scrupulously while at the same time remaining open to the influence of the non-Jewish environment, to which they belonged by virtue of civic emancipation.[14]

The second type emerged in Eastern Europe and was willing to adapt to change on various levels. The followers of this philosophy reject modernism and its works on the principled level, even if they have to accommodate themselves to it in practice. The political and cultural developments in Eastern Europe did not include the adoption of modern education and political emancipation, and Jewish social structure was

[11] Ferziger, *Exclusion*, pp. 11–5.
[12] Menachem Keren-Kratz, "Marmaros – The Cradle of Extreme Orthodoxy," Modern Judaism 35(2),147–74.
[13] Michael Silber, "The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodoxy: The Invention of Tradition." In: Jack Wertheimer (ed.), *The Uses of Tradition: Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era*. New York: JTS, 1992, pp. 23–84.
[14] Katz, "Orthodoxy," p. 5.

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more diverse. The Hasidic communities generally functioned as fortresses against modern life style. However, some Hasidic rabbis adopted a pragmatic approach to the changing times, seeking to promote Torah study while accepting changes that did not threaten the core of their traditional values. An example of this was the Gerrer Rebbe, Avraham Mordechai Alter (1866–1948), who was one of the most prominent leaders of Orthodox Judaism in Poland. Alter supported the use of new mechanisms, such as political parties and limited modern education, in order to preserve the foundations of Orthodoxy (I will discuss this aspect in greater detail in Chapter 4).[15] The response in the Lithuanian Orthodox movement (non-Hasidic) was complex and uneven. One of its leaders, for example, Rabbi Israel Meir HaCohen (the "Hafetz Haim," 1888–1933), developed a multitiered response to deviation that strongly condemned secularity but was on occasions open to a more lenient approach to the Halakhah. As a rule, all of the Eastern European Jewish authorities opposed the idea of a formal schism within the Jewish community between secular and Orthodox.[16]

The third type of response is that of organized and total resistance to change – the radical ultra-Orthodox response that emerged in Hungary, and on which this study focuses. After various religious reforms were introduced in the Arad community under the leadership of Rabbi Aharon Horin (1766–1844) in the early nineteenth century, the traditionalists, under the leadership of Rabbi Moshe Sofer (1762–1839) (known as the "Hatam Sofer,") and Rabbi Moshe Teitelbaum (1758–1841),[17] went onto the offensive. In an effort to safeguard their community, the rabbis adopted an intellectual and institutional strategy that rejected all

[15] Gershon Bacon, *The Politics of Tradition: Agudat Yisrael in Poland, 1916–1939*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1996.

[16] Binyamin Brown, "As Swords to the Earth's Body:" Opposition among Eastern European Rabbis to the Idea of Congregational Schism." In: Yossi Goldstein (ed.), *Yosef Daat*. Beersheva: Ben Gurion University Press, 5770 – 2010, pp. 215–44 (in Hebrew); *idem*, "The Spectrum of Orthodox Responses: Ashkenazim and Sephardim." In: Aviezer Ravitzky (ed.), *Shas: Cultural and Ideological Aspects*. Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2006, pp. 41–96 (in Hebrew).

[17] Moshe Teitelbaum, the great-grandfather of Yoel Teitelbaum, exerted a profound spiritual influence over the Satmar Hasidic movement. Relatively little research has been conducted concerning Moshe Teitelbaum. The first scholar to examine both Teitelbaum Senior and Junior is Keren-Kratz, "Marmaros"; see also: Jacob Katz, *A House Divided: Orthodoxy and Schism in Nineteenth-century Central European Jewry*. Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1998, pp. 77–85; David Myers, "'Commanded War:' Three Chapters in the 'Military' History of Satmar Hasidism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 81(2) (2013) 1–46.

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innovations; indeed, the Hatam Sofer coined the adage that "Anything new is forbidden according to the Torah." He argued that the integrity of the Jewish community depends on the strict adherence of its members to the Orthodox way of life; deviators automatically forfeit the right to be called Jews.[18]

The clash between traditionalists and innovators gained intensity during the decades following the death of the Hatam Sofer. The state authorities also became embroiled in the conflict after the government proposed the establishment of a modern rabbinical seminary, a suggestion that was accepted by the reformers but rejected by the Orthodox. In 1868, following the emancipation of the Jews in Hungary, the government asked the Jews to form a national representative body along the lines of other recognized denominations. The Orthodox minority refused to join such a body, and a schism took place, after which Orthodoxy developed its own institutions. This was the first instance in European Jewish history of an officially recognized Orthodox subgroup.[19]

The attempt to retrace the genealogy and ideological development of radical ultra-Orthodoxy leads to Marmaros County, situated in the northeast of Hungary to the south of Galicia (after the First World War, the area formed part of Romania and later Czechoslovakia). According to Menachem Keren-Kratz, for a period of almost a hundred years, Marmaros and some of the adjacent Hungarian counties served as the arena for the consolidation of ultra-Orthodox ideology. During this period the region became a bastion of religious zealotry, influencing the whole Jewish world by marking the limits of resistance to all modern ideas. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum emerged from this region.[20]

As Keren-Kratz noted, radical ultra-Orthodoxy developed within two streams of Orthodox Judaism: Ashkenazi (non-Hasidic, often known as Lithuanian) and Hasidic.[21] Neturei Karta developed from both these streams; Amram Blau was not a Hasid, but the movement in the United States was dominated mainly by Hasidic circles. Another form of Jewish Orthodoxy, Religious Zionism, is not relevant to our current discussion though it will be mentioned by way of comparison in Chapter 7.

[18] Katz, "Orthodoxy," pp. 6–7.
[19] For more details on the schism see: Katz, *A House Divided*.
[20] Menachem Keren-Kratz, *Marmaros-Sziget: "Extreme Orthodoxy" and Secular Jewish Culture at the Foothills of the Carpathian Mountains*. Jerusalem: Carmel, 2013 (in Hebrew).
[21] *Ibid*.

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ULTRA-ORTHODOXY AND ZIONISM

Jewish nationalist ideas began to crystallize in the 1880s with the founding of the Hibbat Zion ("Love of Zion") movement. The movement was not initially associated with a secular worldview, although it included clearly secular elements. Important rabbis also joined the movement, one of whose leaders was Rabbi Shmuel Mohilever, who advocated cooperation between Jews holding different worldviews in order to promote a common national cause.[22]

Although the movement did not arouse strong opposition, certain circles reacted with suspicion. The Mahzikei HaDat ("Adherents of Religion") society was founded by Rabbi Shimon Sofer of Krakow and the Admor (spiritual Hasidic leader, ofter referred to as "Rebbe") Yehoshua of Belz in 1878/9. The purpose of the society was to oppose the Enlightenment that was gaining strength among the Jews of Galicia. The movement founded a newspaper – *Kol Mahzikei HaDat* ("Voice of the Adherents of Religion") – that openly attacked the nationalist ideas promoted by the supporters of the Hibbat Zion movement.[23] The newspaper initially expressed mild disapproval, highlighting the secular tendencies of the movement's leaders. Writers in the newspaper suggested changes to the educational approach of Hibbat Zion and called for its supervision by the Old Yishuv, the community of Torah students living in Palestine who settled the land for spiritual purposes. Toward the end of the 1890s, however, the tone of its opposition intensified considerably. Writers in the newspaper claimed that Jewish nationalism was merely a replication of the process of assimilation on the national level. Indeed, they argued that since Zionism employed the Jewish emblems of language and land, it actually presented a greater threat than Reform or the Enlightenment.[24]

Mahzikei HaDat served as the most prominent body coordinating opposition to Zionism until the formation of the "Black Bureau" in Kovne (now Kaunas) after the First Zionist Congress in 1900. The Black Bureau was established in direct opposition to Herzl's book *The Jewish State*, and was particularly opposed to his demand at the Second Zionist

[22] Ehud Luz, "The Limits of Toleration: The Challenge of Cooperation between the Observant and the Nonobservant during the Hibbat Zion period, 1882–1895." In: Shmuel Almog, Jehuda Reinharz, and Anita Shapira (eds.), *Zionism and Religion*. Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1998, pp. 44–54.

[23] Yosef Salmon, *Religion and Zionism – Early Conflicts*. Jerusalem: The Zionist Library, 5750 – 1990, p. 222(in Hebrew).

[24] *Ibid*., p. 223.

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Congress that the movement seek to secure leadership positions in the Jewish community and to establish Zionist educational institutions – steps that were interpreted as a direct challenge to the hegemony of the traditional Jewish community in Russia. In response, the Musar ("Morality") movement worked under the inspiration of the Black Bureau to establish groups in the major yeshivot and to encourage anti-Zionist and anti-modernist activities. The Musar movement harassed youths from traditional homes who became involved in Zionist activities. These actions were the first organized steps to oppose Zionist supporters.[25]

Cooperation between Hasidim and Mitnagdim (non-Hasidic Orthodox Jews) in the struggle against Zionism began when Shalom Dover Schneerson, the fifth *Admor* of the Lubavitch dynasty, expressed his support for the Black Bureau. Schneerson's antimodernist approach included strong opposition to Zionism. He claimed that at this time there was no commandment to live in the Land of Israel, and indeed he urged Jews living in the Land of Israel to leave. On the theological level he rejected the concept of natural redemption, which argued that the Jews could win their salvation through human actions, and demanded that Jews rely solely on miraculous redemption.[26]

In the spring of 1900 the Black Bureau published a book entitled *Or Liyesharim* ("Light for the Righteous") in an attempt to bring together the main anti-Zionist positions of Haredi Jews in Russia. The contributors to the book included leading figures from traditionalist circles: The leader of Russian Jewry, Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik, as well as rabbis with modern education such as David Friedman and the British Chief Rabbi Naftali Adler. The Old Yishuv was also represented in an article by Yisrael Dov Frumkin, editor of the newspaper *HaHavatzelet*.[27]

Or Liyesharim was the first book to present a structured argument against the Zionist idea. It presented a theological argument that sanctified Jewish passivity and opposition to activities to expedite the messianic End. The book also emphasized opposition to the antireligious tendencies of Zionism. In practical terms, the authors argued that Zionism was impractical due to economic reasons and that its supporters were few in numbers.[28]

[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 227–9.
[26] Shalom Ratzbi, "Anti-Zionism and Messianic Tension in the Thought of Rabbi Shalom Dover," *HaTziyonut* 20 (5756 – 1996), 77–101 (in Hebrew).
[27] Dalya Levi, "'Or Liyesharim' – An Anti-Zionist Manifesto – and Several Responses," *HaTziyonut* 19 (1998), 31–65 (in Hebrew).
[28] Shlomo Z. Landau and Yosef Rabinowitz, *Or Liyesharim*, Warsaw: R. Meir Yechiel Alter Publications, 1900, pp. 38–43 (in Hebrew).

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