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# The Modesty Campaigns of Rabbi Amram Blau and the Neturei Karta Movement, 1938–1974

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# The Modesty Campaigns of Rabbi Amram Blau and the Neturei Karta Movement, 1938–1974

## ABSTRACT

The article examines the modesty campaigns led by Neturei Karta circles in the period 1938–1974 under the leadership of Rabbi Amram Blau (1896–1974). This study was made possible following the discovery of Blau's personal archive. It explores the defensive stage of the modesty campaign that was aimed mostly to strengthen the Haredi enclave and to separate it from secular Jerusalem with the establishment of the modesty patrols. It discusses the offensive campaign with the examination of the struggle against mixed swimming pools and against a club operated by Working Mothers' organization. The second stage was intended mainly to reinforce Neturei Karta's leadership position among the Haredi public in Jerusalem. It explores the zealotry ethos in the context of the torching of the Eros sex shop in Jerusalem.

## INTRODUCTION

**T**HIS ARTICLE DISCUSSES HOW NETUREI KARTA AFFECTED WOMEN'S status in Haredi society in Jerusalem. Modesty campaigns, launched under the leadership of Rabbi Amram Blau (1896–1974), were designated to gain power and control, not just over women, but also over the entire Haredi enclave. It presents these campaigns from the initiators' perspectives, and explores their open and hidden agendas. This study was made possible following the discovery of Blau's personal archive, which by a convoluted route reached the library of Boston University, where it has been opened to the academic community.<sup>1</sup>

Haredi society views itself as the guardian of Jewish tradition and the representative of ancient Jewish values. I argue that its function is to maintain traditional standards and withstand the ravages and profound changes that have occurred in the Jewish world since the nineteenth century. On the level of principle, Haredi society rejects the innovations of the modern world and demands that its members live in a manner similar to that of the Jewish shtetl of Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup> One of the innovations of the modern era is the change in the status of women and in relations between the sexes. This issue has become one of the main challenges facing Haredi communities.<sup>3</sup>

Although Haredi society in Israel may appear monolithic to the outside observer, it actually includes a wide range of nuances. The most conservative group includes the members of *Ha-Edah Ha-Haredit* (“the Haredi Community”) and Neturei Karta, which define themselves as the loyal descendants of the “Old Yishuv” (1840–1914) in Jerusalem—the traditional Jewish community of Torah students that lived in Palestine for centuries.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF NETUREI KARTA

The late nineteenth century saw dramatic developments in the character of the Jewish community in Palestine with the commencement of Zionist immigration. The Old Yishuv in Jerusalem included a community of Sephardi and Ashkenazi Torah students who adhered to the traditional perception of settlement in the Land of Israel as a religious and spiritual value of importance to the entire Jewish people.<sup>5</sup>

The First World War profoundly destabilized the economic structure of the Old Yishuv. Following the introduction of the British Mandate, the status of the Old Yishuv declined while the Zionist settlement gained strength.<sup>6</sup> From the 1920s, Palestine became a major destination for Jewish immigration. Immediately after the British conquest of Jerusalem, the Zionists attempted to unite the entire Jewish presence in the city in a single organization called the City Committee for the Jews of Jerusalem. Some sections of the Haredi population were strongly opposed to this move, and in response established the Ashkenazi City Committee (February–March 1918), which later became known as *Ha-Edah Ha-Haredit* (the Haredi Community), which was also joined by more radical elements opposed to any cooperation with Zionism.<sup>7</sup>

Agudat Israel is a political movement founded in 1912 to unite all sections of the Orthodox community. In Palestine, it was represented by circles that supported the principle of total separatism.<sup>8</sup>

Polish anti-Semitism and the closing of the United States to mass Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe led to a wave of immigration to Palestine by middle-class Jews during the period 1924–1928 (the Fourth Aliya). This immigration included a large group of Hassidic Jews, particularly from the Gur dynasty, who sought to live a productive, economic life in Palestine, rather than one focused solely on sanctity. In their country of origin these immigrants had identified with Agudat Israel, but after arriving in Palestine they discovered that the movement was identified with an anti-Zionist position. The result was the gradual emergence of tension between the Old Yishuv and these new Haredi immigrants. The main point of contention was the realization that the position adopted by the members of the Old Yishuv was unrealistic in economic and social terms. These immigrants were absorbed by the growing Zionist community and integrated in the Jewish workforce. Moreover, these immigrants wished to provide their children with a certain level of secular education—a position that was fiercely opposed by the radicals. These tensions led to the first signs of division.<sup>9</sup>

The Arab riots of 1929, the main victims of which were the members of the Old Yishuv in Hebron and Safed, marked a turning point in the relations between Agudat Israel and the Zionist institutions. The tragic events, in which sixty-seven Jews were murdered, underscored the common fate of the Jews in the conflict with violent Arab nationalism. Four years later, Hitler came to power in Germany. The rise of Nazism led to the recognition that Palestine was a key place of refuge, including for the leaders and supporters of Agudat Israel.

In the mid-1930s a delegation of Agudat Israel leaders from Poland visited Palestine and decided to remove the movement from the Old Yishuv's control and replace it with a joint leadership representing the veteran population in Jerusalem alongside immigrants from Poland and Germany. It adopted a policy of essential cooperation, without which it could not survive, but which was not to be accepted on an a priori basis. Some sections of the Haredi public refused to accept this policy; the opponents dubbed themselves the "Society of Life", a name that was later replaced by *Neturei Karta*.<sup>10</sup> The new movement was led by Aharon Katzenelbogen and Amram Blau.<sup>11</sup>

*Neturei Karta*'s ideology reflected a radical stance against the secular world, and particularly against Zionism, which the movement defined as an organization of apostates. It advocated the principle of political passivity; therefore their fierce opposition to Zionism, which they saw as a heretical and sacrilegious movement. *Neturei Karta* emerged as a counter-reaction

to the conciliatory trends that began to emerge among the Haredi leadership as Agudat Israel moved toward a post-factum acceptance of Zionism and cooperation with the movement in terms of social responsibility and governance. Neturei Karta rejected such partnership since its radical separatist approach refused to acknowledge the secular supporters of Zionism as proper Jews.<sup>12</sup>

As the leader of Neturei Karta, Amram Blau launched a series of public campaigns intended mainly to highlight the separation between his community and the secular State of Israel, and to protest against Zionism. The main campaign during the transitional period from the Yishuv to the state related to the issue of the internationalization of Jerusalem and to prevent the future state from gaining sovereignty over the Haredi neighborhoods of Jerusalem.<sup>13</sup> After the establishment of the state, Blau was involved in major public campaigns against the desecration of the Sabbath, such as the passage of vehicles through Haredi neighborhoods.<sup>14</sup> Blau also waged a protracted campaign against participation in the elections to the Israeli Knesset.<sup>15</sup> His resolute opposition to Zionism and his uncompromising campaign against de facto Haredi cooperation with Zionism made him a benchmark for the Haredi public, and others were obliged to fall into line with his positions.<sup>16</sup>

## GENDER CONTROL IN RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM

Fundamentalism is a complex process that may be identified in different religions and in different parts of the world. It may be defined as a form of religious radicalism that develops in response to processes of secularization.<sup>17</sup> Fundamentalist movements may, in many cases, withdraw into the enclave, whether it is a physical one or a cultural one, in order to block the influence of the secular world over their followers and to strengthen their power and authority.<sup>18</sup>

Gender control is one of the hallmarks of modern fundamentalism. Many religious traditions view the observance of religious commandments in the family and the education of children to the religious lifestyle as key components of religious behavior. Accordingly, changes in the family unit will also impact on religion. Fundamentalist movements have seen one of their central functions as the struggle against any threat to the traditional family unit. In order to avoid such threats, these movements have not hesitated to restrict the leeway open to women and children. These positions thus constitute a counter-reaction to openness and modernization and to the concept of the advancement of the status of women in society.<sup>19</sup>

From the end of the nineteenth century, the feminist movement altered the traditional tasks of women and definitions of femininity.<sup>20</sup> The American fundamentalist movement was founded in an age of anxiety surrounding gender relations. For American Protestants, the traditional family came to emblemize the ideal social order, and Christian fundamentalism placed a return to these values at the center of its religious concerns.<sup>21</sup>

Islamic fundamentalist movements emphasize male superiority, and hence their moral authority—supported by the Koran—to supervise their wives and children. These fundamentalists claim that gender superiority forms the kernel of Islamic religious doctrine. Thus, for example, the first constitutional step taken by Ayatollah Khomeini after consolidating the Iranian Revolution in 1979 was to nullify laws granting rights to women, particularly a law from 1967 permitting women to divorce and to receive alimony.<sup>22</sup>

Control of clothing norms is another key characteristic of Islamic fundamentalism. This control is intended to prevent the sexual excitement of men. Radical movements have sometimes used coercion to impose these rules. Again, Khomeini imposed the penalty of caning on immodestly-dressed women after the revolution.<sup>23</sup> The fundamentalist movements pay particular attention to issues of feminine sexuality, which is perceived as dangerous, polluting, and capable of ensnaring men, leading them to lose their self-respect and destroying the family. These movements saw the campaign for modesty as a key component of their struggle against modernity.<sup>24</sup> In the Islamic world, the veil became the emblem of a struggle. While secular Islamic nationalism encouraged the modernization of women, including more revealing clothes, one of the symbols of the return to religion has been the adoption of modest clothes by women, including use of the veil.<sup>25</sup>

The Halakhah (Jewish religious law) does not grant equal status to men and women. Women are not permitted to hold the status of legislators or judges and are excluded from the law-making process.<sup>26</sup> Although women enjoy inheritance and property rights in several instances, they are denied the right to study Torah—the central value of Jewish culture. Throughout Jewish history women lived in a world controlled and defined by men.<sup>27</sup>

Orthodox Judaism was founded in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century as a reaction and opposition to the processes of modernization and reform in Jewish life.<sup>28</sup> Orthodox society was organized on a voluntary basis and included a particularly strict approach to processes of social supervision in order to prevent the loss of the younger generation. In

Israel, this community adopted a particularly strict approach to modesty from its inception.<sup>29</sup>

### MODESTY CAMPAIGNS IN THE HAREDI ENCLAVE

The research explores Neturei Karta's modesty campaigns from a historical perspective: What were their roles? How did they affect the Haredi enclave? Why were they initiated? I argue that these campaigns were designed to control women, but they also served to gain leadership roles and power.

Haredi society had followed a traditional modesty code, which was practiced by the Old Yishuv.<sup>30</sup> Once Neturei Karta made modesty one of their major activities, gender supervision became a prominent hallmark of this movement. A distinction may be discerned between two key phases in Neturei Karta's modesty campaigns. In the first stage, mostly in the 1930s and 1940s, the campaign was waged within the Haredi neighborhoods in an effort to combat lax public attitudes toward women's clothing. This campaign was characterized by insulation, the closing of chinks in the armor of the community itself, and the separation of the Haredi community from the general public. Thus this stage was essentially an internal process within the Haredi community. Blau's role of the modesty campaign reflected initiative and leadership, and the strict rules he followed concerning women's dress are still followed to this day. Blau established the modesty patrols, which operated as an internal police, to enforce these rules. The patrols operated under an instruction from the Court of Justice of *Ha-Edah Ha-Haredit*, and gained a reputation for their willingness to use forceful means to perform their function.<sup>31</sup>

From the late 1940s, and particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, the modesty campaign moved out from the confines of the Haredi neighborhoods. The main goal now was to prevent mixed cultural and sports activities in the secular part of Jerusalem. This approach constituted a break with the traditional approach of Neturei Karta as a body devoted to defending the borders of its community. This campaign can be viewed as illogical, since the opposed activities took place outside the Haredi neighborhoods and involved individuals whom Neturei Karta did not even consider to be proper Jews. In my opinion, therefore, this phase was intended mainly to reinforce Neturei Karta's leadership position among the Haredi public in Jerusalem at the expense of Agudat Israel, a movement that was a partner of the Zionist state. Moreover, the modesty offensive by Neturei Karta took place alongside another major campaign by the movement—the campaign

over the Sabbath. In this case, too, its activists went out from Mea Shearim to protest against the opening of the Edison Cinema on the Sabbath.<sup>32</sup>

The demonstrations began with vigils by small groups, but after the police responded by beating and arresting protesters, large groups joined the protests. The demonstrators came to be regarded as martyrs, forming the kernel for the development of a myth of Haredi heroism. At the time of the establishment of the State of Israel the Haredi public had a poor sense of self-esteem. There was a sense that Haredi society was disintegrating due to the Holocaust and processes of secularization. The Sabbath demonstrations and the modesty campaigns raised Haredi morale and created the sense that the community was on the rise, against the antireligious atmosphere that dominated Israel at the time under the hegemonic leadership of the socialist Mapai party.<sup>33</sup>

The modesty campaign of Neturei Karta under Blau's leadership is consonant with the efforts of fundamentalist movements in general to restrict the status of women. The campaign began as a response to increasing laxity and openness; it strengthened male authority within the family unit, since the man was defined as responsible for the modest appearance of the women in the household; it imposed severe restrictions on the external appearance of women in order to prevent externalized manifestations of sexuality; it established a strict system of enforcement in the form of the modesty patrols; and it also imposed restrictions on women's education. The education system of Agudat Israel, which permitted certain relaxations in women's education, was subjected to fierce attacks.

## THE MODESTY CAMPAIGN—THE DEFENSIVE STAGE

The earliest evidence of the existence of modesty patrols can be found in a letter from 1938 in the Blau archive. The anonymous letter reveals that once a week people would pass through the markets and distribute propaganda on the subject of modesty.<sup>34</sup> A notice from that period written by Blau complained that women were deliberately walking through the Haredi neighborhoods in immodest dress and that there was no-one who could oppose this.<sup>35</sup> A few years later the term "modesty patrols" appeared for the first time in a letter written by Blau, in which he demanded that guards be placed on the streets of Mea Shearim on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:30 to 11:30.<sup>36</sup>

An important milestone in the elaboration of the function of the modesty patrols came in 1945, when the *Beit Din Tzedek* [the Court of

Justice] of *Ha-Edah Ha-Haredit* issued a warning to the residents of the Haredi neighborhoods to pay strict attention to the dress of their daughters and wives:

With heavy, sad, and broken heart we turn to you, our dear ones, with a merciful request and plea. Our hearts have been broken with shame to hear and see how we have deteriorated, and how in many homes of those who keep the Torah the impure plague of immodesty, Heaven protect, has spread in indecent clothes, short dresses, failure to ensure long sleeves, and so forth. This hellish custom corrupts from tip to toe and removes the Divine Presence from Israel, G-d forbid, and the spiritual woes bring in their wake physical woes, Heaven protect. All this has come upon us because of our negligence and silence, which have led to the widening of the opening in such an awful manner, Heaven protect. Thus we have come to ask each father and household to dedicate themselves to removing this appalling ugliness from your homes and to restore your former dignity. Let each man take the harness of supervision in his hand and supervise the daughters of the house, to ensure they are dressed in modest garments (and particularly to supervise the sewing of dresses). We are also obliged to supervise neighbors and relatives, to warn and to protest, so that we may not bear responsibility. [. . .] This is particularly so since once this opening has occurred, it is no easy matter to uproot it, and we must adopt strident means, to awaken from the general slumber and silence, and to awaken ourselves and others [. . .]. To explain the depth of ugliness of this matter, and the gravity of the prohibition in accordance with our holy Torah be a holy educator, and there can be no punishment unless a warning is given, lest we be forced, G-d forbid, to take unpleasant steps against the violators. Happy he who listens, takes heed, and warns others; his reward shall flow as a river and he shall dwell securely and safely, in blessing and calm, with a fair livelihood and all good in spirit and soul.<sup>37</sup>

The leaflet carried a warning to the residents of Mea Shearim to pay attention to modest dress, including the threat of sanctions. The call was for the husbands to be responsible for their wives and daughters' behavior. The declaration echoes to Maimonides' rule, that this is the male's responsibility to supervise women and children in their household.<sup>38</sup> In order to enforce the rules of modesty, it was first necessary to determine what constituted desirable dress. To this end, Blau formulated a dress code including a series of stringent conditions:

1. The dress of a Jewish woman must be long, reaching at least to below the knees in such a manner that even if she is seated, her knees shall not be visible.
2. The dress must be wide and not excessively tight on the body.
3. The sleeves of the shirt must be long and reach almost to the hand.
4. The dress must not be made from transparent or red cloth.
5. Slippers must not be transparent or flesh-colored.
6. The obligation of modesty applies to girls from the age of three.
7. A married woman must cover her hair with a headkerchief, and shall also wear a veil on leaving the house.<sup>39</sup> In May 1964, a prohibition was added to the modesty code forbidding the wearing of the “*peruk*”-type wig, with hair that appears natural—“which desecrates G-d’s name, so that many cannot distinguish between immodest hair and Gentile hair, causing many improprieties.”<sup>40</sup>

Blau explained that the reason why Jewish women must cover their bodies modestly is in order not to lead men to improper sexual thoughts. He argued that a Jewish woman who dresses immodestly causes the public to fail, and is therefore considered a “pursuer” (*rodef*) and as such, according to the Halakhah, is liable to the death penalty imposed by God.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, immodest dress constitutes a “turning of the back on the Holy One, blessed be He”; “a public desecration of G-d’s name”; and a phenomenon that will lead “to the removal of the Divine Presence from above the Jewish people”.<sup>42</sup> Thus Neturei Karta’s regulations were aimed first and foremost at ensuring men’s moral conduct, guarding them against any possible temptations. The easiest way to do so was by restricting women’s behavior. Women’s code of dress was established in order to prevent any chance that men’s desire might be aroused.

As Haredi society views itself as the guardian of righteous traditions dedicated to the worship of God, modesty became as one of its outmost values. According to their perspective, a woman wearing immodest clothing was committing not only a personal offence, but also a public one. Therefore, if the Divine punishment for immodesty is to be imposed on everyone, it is a communal duty to fight it.<sup>43</sup>

Therefore, in July 1950, the issue of the modesty rules gained further prominence after Blau convened a special gathering of Jerusalem rabbis to discuss the problem. During the meeting a clear and binding code was drafted for setting and enforcing standards of modesty. It prepared the ground for a protracted modesty campaign that was not confined solely to the issue of enforcement within the Haredi community, but which

also extended beyond the Haredi neighborhoods to other parts of the city without any Haredi presence. It also consolidated Blau's position as a leader in the Haredi community: He determined that the community would be mobilized on this issue; he pressured rabbis, who needed only to support his work on this matter of principle; and he even dared to engage in an offensive relating to the character of Jerusalem as a whole, rather than confining himself to maintaining modesty within his own neighborhood of Mea Shearim.

The summary of this meeting is a fascinating document. Decisions were taken on a range of subjects:

- A. *Avoiding the immodest*: The community was urged to supervise women and girls in order to ensure that they dress and act modestly to the highest possible standards; to distance women from their friends who do not observe these rules and who visit theaters and cinemas—behavior considered indecent for religious women; to distance women from any place where there are immodestly-dressed women; and to bring together women who dress modestly in order to strengthen them in their modesty.
- B. *Reproach*: On the High Holy Days, after the reading from the Torah, a special blessing was to be recited for women who dress modestly; reproach must be used to create social pressure—each man must be urged to scold his brothers, neighbors, and relatives; in the case of the “offenders” themselves, the reproach should be indirect, through a parent or relative or person able to exercise influence.
- C. *Protest and support*: The community must protest and take a scornful and humiliating attitude toward “these wild hussies (*pruzot mitparzot*) who darken the world through their arrogant and ugly dress.” Conversely, ways must be found to strengthen the “might and force” of those who dress modestly.
- D. *Public protest*: The community should take to the streets and proclaim, “We do not wish hussies and wild and naked women, Heaven protect, on our streets.” Notices should be posted bearing slogans against immodest dress; educational material should be published to alert the public and recruit it to public protest.
- E. *Implementation*: A committee dedicated to improving modesty standards should be established in each neighborhood; women should be recruited to the committees to encourage and connect modest women and to distance the immodest; educational means should be used in the women's galleries of the synagogues.

- F. *Worthy proposals*: The *gabbai* (the rabbi's assistant) should make "pleasant" comments to those whose daughters and wives fail to conform to the modesty rules; all invitations to celebrations should emphasize that women must come in modest dress, and that the immodestly-dressed are not invited.

In order to enforce the modesty code, it was decided to urge the *gabbais* to announce the code in the synagogue and to organize elections for modesty committees. The *gabbais* were also asked to collect money for this purpose. It was decided to form a group of twenty to thirty young men who would pass from synagogue to synagogue in the city and help organize the local committees. In the short term it was agreed that propaganda and notices should be used to recruit public support. In order to mobilize the community around the campaign, it was also decided to prepare a mass petition and to organize "noisy protest marches of 'brigades of demonstrators' to parade through the streets of the Haredi neighborhoods from time to time shouting slogans against immodesty." The ultimate purpose of the campaign was to prepare the foundation for demonstrations on this issue.<sup>44</sup>

The establishment of the modesty committees in the early 1950s was the first time that women were recruited to participate in a public campaign. This is virtually the only case in which women have participated in the campaigns of *Neturei Karta* (the only other case is that of Ruth Ben-David, a convert to Judaism who was recruited in order to smuggle the kidnapped child Yossele Shumacher out of Israel).<sup>45</sup> Women's participation was intended to create social pressure and to present a united community on that issue.

It is unclear at what stage the modesty patrols began to use violence in order to secure their goals. During the Mandate it seems probable that *Neturei Karta* activists preferred to turn to the police in order to solve modesty issues that it could not resolve without recourse to violence. An example of this appears in an incident described in Blau's archives in 1938. It emerged that a certain house in Mea Shearim was being used as a brothel where prostitutes met with their clients at night. Blau asked the police to close the place before the matter "leads to public outrage".<sup>46</sup> By contrast, in a testimony from 1966, some thirty years later, concerning an incident in which merchants from Mea Shearim asked Blau to "purify their neighborhood" of Mandel Green, they claimed that a soda salesman was a secret missionary who placed crosses on the walls of his shop and publicly desecrated the Sabbath. By this time the modesty patrols had come to resemble an internal police force that did not necessarily deal only with modesty issues.<sup>47</sup>

As the leader of the modesty patrols, Blau was able to achieve authority, which put him on the same line with the spiritual leadership of the Haredi community. Whereas the rabbis gained their authority from their rabbinical knowledge, Blau gained authority from his supervising units.

The archive yields little information on the subject of men's dress. The modesty campaign focused on women's clothing and made no mention of that of the men. A few references to men's garb can be found, however. In a leaflet entitled "Ours—Not Ours", Blau emphasized the external differences between Haredi yeshiva students and those from the Mizrahi stream of religious Zionism:

Ours have long earlocks; those who are not ours have clipped earlocks and short hair in hoodlum style; ours wear head coverings in awe of their Maker; those who are not ours wear blue and white head coverings or with the emblem of the State of Israel, may the name of the evil rot.<sup>48</sup>

This leaflet emphasizes the Haredi opposition to any change in clothing, including that of men. In another case Blau was asked whether it was permissible for a man to continue to wear the same clothes as his ancestors, even if these differed from the clothing customs of Jerusalem. Blau replied that if the clothes reflect the customs of the man's ancestors, and are not a form of "dandification or progress", then this does not constitute immodesty. Thus, if unusual garb is the result of the observance of tradition, rather than a desire to appear modern, the garb is permissible. He noted Rabbi Yisroel Zev Soloveichik, who did not alter his dress after arriving in Jerusalem, yet whose presence glorified the city.<sup>49</sup>

The defensive stage had focused strongly on a separatist approach that negates any imitation of the secular way of life. This campaign emphasized that the supervision of clothing of Jewish women is a collective duty, and women's dress, ostensibly their private affair, came to be considered a communal symbol. Therefore, women's modest garbs were to be considered for the entire nation's sake, while immodest cloths were viewed as desecration of God's name that might bring God's punishment.

The campaign for modesty was one of Blau's main spheres of activity. It allowed him to demonstrate authority and leadership. The modesty patrols he established became the practical instrument for imposing strict codes of dress on the Haredi population in Jerusalem. These campaigns made him a leader.

As Margalit Shilo clearly demonstrates, Haredi women were a weak force in the old Yishuv community, and modesty prohibitions were strictly

enforced upon them.<sup>50</sup> Therefore they were vulnerable targets for Blau and his modesty patrols. Since the Haredim view themselves as holding a unique spiritual nature, they were willing to accept more restrictions and regulations.

### THE OFFENSIVE STAGE

In 1947 a mixed swimming pool was opened in Ramat Gan; the first pool established in the Yishuv aroused the wrath of the zealots in Mea Shearim and Blau led a public campaign on the issue.<sup>51</sup> It might seem strange that Blau would launch a campaign concerning a pool situated far from Jerusalem, and established by those whom he already regarded as heretics and rebels. The reason for his outrage was his concern that the opening of this swimming pool might set a precedent for further mixed pools—a concern that proved accurate. As Blau feared, just a few years later a mixed swimming pool was also opened in Jerusalem.

Neturei Karta activists engaged in various actions in an effort to prevent the opening of the pool in Ramat Gan. They secured 4,000 signatures to a petition against the opening of the pool (almost all the adult members of the Haredi community in Jerusalem at the time)<sup>52</sup> that was sent to the High Commissioner. It demanded the cancellation of the opening of the swimming pool in order to protect young people from depravity and defend the honor of the Land of Israel.<sup>53</sup> According to the Blau's perspective, immodesty detracted from the Land of Israel's sanctity. The High Commissioner denied their request.<sup>54</sup>

Neturei Karta activists also undertook other actions in an effort to close the swimming pool. They submitted a request to the Ramat Gan council and organized meetings and protests in Jerusalem and Ramat Gan with the assistance of the council of Bnai Brak, a Haredi city adjacent to Ramat Gan. Contacts were also made with factories in Ramat Gan, asking for their support in closing the pool and threatening a consumer boycott of their products.<sup>55</sup> Although the campaign against the pool was unsuccessful, it illustrated Neturei Karta's organizational strength and its ability to mobilize protests.

Some ten years later Blau's fears materialized: preparations began to open a mixed swimming pool in the German Colony neighborhood of Jerusalem. He was concerned about the possible temptation and he tried to remove the obstacle. In January 1958, after news of the plan emerged, Jerusalem rabbis held an emergency meeting. The excuse that they used in

order to get into action was to defend the honor of the sacred city, and they decided to launch various protest actions: in addition to demonstrations, a boycott of municipal taxes was organized, as well as boycotts of all those involved in the construction of the pool.<sup>56</sup> Neturei Karta published the boycott in several languages—English, German, Arabic, and Spanish—in an effort to apply economic pressure on the owner of the pool, Haim Schiff, who was also the owner of the President Hotel in the city, by encouraging consumers to avoid the tourism services he marketed.

Neturei Karta even employed sorcery, imposing curses on Haim Schiff and Jerusalem Mayor Gershon Agron:

They shall light a wax candle with the name of the evil one, the above-mentioned individual, and if there is no wax then another candle, and they shall all recite Psalm 109 and direct their intentions to the above-mentioned head of evil, and after finishing the psalm they shall overturn and cast off the extinguished candle and say that just as this candle has been extinguished, so shall the candle of the above-mentioned individual be extinguished, Amen Selah, etc.<sup>57</sup>

The candle is preserved in the archive, inside a folded piece of paper bearing the names of Schiff and Agron. According to anthropologist Mary Douglas, sorcery is a source of authority. Those holding the powers to bless or curse are considered uncontrolled and dangerous, and their mystical powers give them social control.<sup>58</sup> This is yet another example of Blau's hunger for power.

Neturei Karta was eventually forced to admit that its campaign had failed. The pool opened and operated without incident, although Schiff was ultimately obliged to sell the pool to Kibbutz Shoshonim after the Chief Rabbinate threatened to remove the Kashrut certificate from all his businesses. This incident illustrates the moral force of the Jerusalem zealots and their ability to influence the Chief Rabbinate, a state-sponsored organ, which acted against Schiff according to the approach dictated by Neturei Karta.

Neturei Karta was more successful in a further campaign against mixed swimming. In 1961–62, a beach was planned in Tiberias. A private buyer reached an agreement with the Tiberias municipality to remove a sewage pipe that had channeled waste into the Kinneret for many years, thus enabling the establishment of a bathing beach on the site. Religious dignitaries in Tiberias, not all of whom were identified by Neturei Karta, asked Blau to launch a public campaign against the plan on the grounds that the road to the Tiberias cemetery passed through the planned bathing beach,

as did the road to the grave of Rabbi Meir Ba'al Ha-Nes. In addition to the usual demonstrations, Blau also contacted a wealthy philanthropist, Yaakov Pinchas Gewirt, whose donation of 90,000 Israeli pounds enabled the purchase of the beach from the promoter and closed, removing the threat.<sup>59</sup>

The strategy of resolving tension between religious and secular Jews by purchasing the property in dispute was employed in the case of the "Club Affair" in Jerusalem. In 1955, a fierce debate erupted between the secular and religious communities in Jerusalem. Neturei Karta organized turbulent demonstrations against a club operated by the Working Mothers' organization. The club, situated on the edge of the Mea Shearim neighborhood, held joint ancillary after-school classes for boys and girls. Neturei Karta claimed that mixed dancing also took place there. Approximately 170 people were arrested at the demonstrations, held on a daily basis during approximately a year and prohibited for periods of up to 28 days. Blau was arrested and detained for 21 days for participating in an unlawful gathering. He rejected a proposed compromise by which a wall would be constructed to separate the club from Mea Shearim.

In his vitriolic attacks against the club, Blau argued that,

All the sum of humanity might find its place in the holy city of Jerusalem; any scoundrel, and dirty or filthy one, any base and despicable adulterer, all the people of the lowest circles will come to spread their filthy abominations in the holy city of Jerusalem. To deface and pollute Jerusalem and to foul and poison the air with all manner of wantonness and depravity.<sup>60</sup>

He was determined to remove what he described as the pollution that was contaminating the holy city. The protracted protests became a struggle for the character and nature of the city. The secular public also initiated protests against religious coercion. The Mapai party, for example, urged its members to go to Mea Shearim in support of the club and to ensure it remained open.

Against the background of this war of principles, it is interesting to discover the real motives behind the issue, as revealed in the Blau archive. It emerges that a large girls' school was situated alongside the club. The school was attended by some 700 girls and suffered from a serious lack of space. Due to the proximity to the club and the unacceptable standards of modesty from the Haredi perspective, the educators refused to allow the girls to use the school courtyard. Neturei Karta was asked to demonstrate in order to close the club and enable the use of the building by the school. Blau's letter to the Satmar Rebbe in New York, Yoel Teitelbaum, describing the campaign reveals that the owner of the property was asking

7,000 Israeli pounds for its sale. After more than a year of demonstrations, the owner agreed to sell the property for 2,000 Israeli pounds. Blau contacted influential rabbis in the United States, such as the leaders of the Satmar and Stokov Hassidic sects, in an effort to raise the required sum. The property was eventually purchased by Yechiel Benedict, a philanthropist.<sup>61</sup> Thus the demonstrations served purposes not necessarily confined to elevated concerns of modesty and purity. Practical considerations such as shortage of space in Mea Shearim also underpinned the protests, as the Haredi community sought to expand its presence beyond the confines of the enclave.

From as early as the 1940s, consumer boycotts were widely used in order to “correct” businesses that acted in a manner contrary to the desires of Neturei Karta. The Haredi public learnt to use this tool, and due to its monolithic character it has been able to use it effectively through to the present day.

The appeal to Diaspora philanthropists is another pattern in Neturei Karta’s actions. The movement itself, and its several followers and functionaries, were sponsored by the Jewish Diaspora, as was the old Yishuv. Therefore, conflict resolution techniques included the purchase of properties at points of friction in order to resolve the campaign successfully. This pattern was seen in the case of the beach in Tiberias and the “Club Affair” in Jerusalem.

Blau sought to reinforce his leadership by appealing directly to Haredi public opinion through broadsheets urging an extreme approach and opposing any compromise, and through deliberate provocations such as demonstrations bordering on violence, or through the fierce language he used to attack his opponents, and even using public cursing ceremonies against them. His approach eventually won him support among rabbis and leaders of the Haredi community who were left with little choice but to grant *post factum* approval for his actions. Blau demanded a high standard of modesty, and was able to drag the entire community to demonstrations, even on topics that were not directly connected to them.

Blau’s case thus exemplifies the moral strength of the zealots within the fundamentalist community: the zealot is viewed not as a fifth column or as someone who seeks to destroy the community from within, but as a role model, and accordingly the public accepts his presence among them, even if his fierce attacks are against the leadership of the community.

THE LIMITS OF ZEALOTRY: THE BURNING OF THE  
EROS SEX SHOP IN JERUSALEM (1972)

In 1972, a shop called Eros opened in Jerusalem selling pornography and sex-related items, the first time such a shop had opened in the city. Unsurprisingly the development aroused the wrath of the city's zealots. Two young Haredim who torched the shop were apprehended by Police, prosecuted, and sentenced to a year and 18 months in jail, respectively.

The arson attack became the subject of lively debate within Haredi circles. On the one hand, a campaign by religious organizations against pornography was certainly considered a legitimate goal by the religious public. On the other, the action taken by the two young men went beyond the normal confines of protests, such as demonstrations and propaganda. The arson attack was an offense against the laws of the state, endangered the well-being of individuals, and constituted a case of individuals taking the law into their own hands. Apparently rabbis and religious circles raised these arguments in distancing themselves from the attack.

Commenting on the arsonists' action, Blau justified their approach and argued that it was consistent with the Halakhah. He explained his point by reference to the Biblical story of Pinchas, the son of Elazar the priest. The story of Pinchas focuses on the following drama: The People of Israel, camped at Hittin on their way to the Land of Israel, met Moabite women and men began to pursue them. The sexual act this involves constituted part of the Baalite ritual of the Moabites. God was furious with the Children of Israel and imposed a plague that left 24,000 dead. Moses summoned the leaders of the people to the Tent of Meeting and demanded that they stop their evil acts. While they were discussing the matter, Zimri Ben Salu, prince of the tribe of Shimon, appeared together with a Midianite woman, Kozvi Bat Zur. The Bible does not tell us clearly what happened next, but it was enough to cause great weeping among all those gathered at the scene.

Zimri's appearance was clearly a challenge to Moses. Just as he was demanding that the men stop fraternizing with Moabite women, one of the leading members of the tribe of Shimon appeared together with a gentile woman. Although the text is ambiguous, it seems that in the tent an act of sexual intercourse was observed by the entire people, as part of the Baalite ritual. Pinchas, who saw this act, seized his spear and stabbed both Zimri and Kozvi. At this precise moment the plague ended. Moreover, God spoke to Moses:

Pinchas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned My wrath away from the children of Israel, in that he was very zealous for My sake among them, so that I consumed not the children of Israel in My zeal. Wherefore say: Behold, I give unto him My covenant of peace; and it shall be unto him, and to his seed after him, the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel. (Numbers 25:11–13)

Thus we see that not only does Pinchas kill two people without any trial, in violation of the explicit commandment “You shall not murder”, but also he is not punished for this act. On the contrary, his descendents are awarded an everlasting priesthood. It is also notable that it is not Moses or the tribal elders who act as zealots; Pinchas operates on his own, with no need for court or law. He feels that he knows what is zealotry to God and what is God’s will, and he acts at that precise moment in accordance with the command of his conscience.

The Sages added their own interpretations to the story of Pinchas in an effort to dilute its potentially anarchist message. The Babylonian Talmud states that had Zimri turned round and killed Pinchas, rather than vice versa, he would have been found innocent, since Pinchas had the status of a “persecutor”<sup>62</sup> (*Sanhedrin* 71b–72a). In the Mishna, we learn that before a person is executed, they are entitled to a fair trial; two witnesses must be questioned. A Sanhedrin that sentenced one person to death in 70 years was considered a “murderous” court. Rabbis Akiva and Tarfon said: “Had we been on the Sanhedrin, no-one would ever have been executed” (Babylonian Talmud, *Makot*, 7a). Yet in the Biblical story, Pinchas implemented a “sentence” without any such niceties, and rather than punishment he receives a dramatic reward.

Taking this precedent as his point of departure, Blau emphasized that he did not condone violence or underground actions. However, it could not be claimed that the two men acted in a manner that was contrary to the Halakhah. He acknowledged that the Torah does not permit individuals to do “that which is right in their own eyes”. For any problem a clear and detailed Halakhic provision may be found. Blau asked why Pinchas had not obeyed Moses’ instruction, choosing instead to act on his own. His answer: “Because when there is desecration of God’s name, one does not pay respect to the rabbi.” Thus in such an extreme state of debauchery and abomination, there is no need to wait for instructions from the rabbis; action must be taken even without an explicit order.

Blau then embarked on a discussion of the principle of “accepting the yoke of Torah and the commandments”. He argued that the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai and the acceptance of the Torah by the people of Israel made the people “partners in an unlimited business”—i.e., a binding partnership. Accordingly, each partner must prevent and protest any action liable to destroy the business. Every Jew is responsible for every other Jew, and accordingly what one Jew destroys will affect everyone. Blau claims that the individual has the right to take the law into his own hands, since Pinchas did not wait for official permission. Accordingly, this is the Halakhic approach. It is interesting to note that in this interpretation, Blau does not distinguish himself from the seculars, and sees them all as being parts of the same organ, unlike his previous statements.

Blau further notes that the Jewish people is not a democracy, since it accepted the Torah, which is not democratic. He characterizes democracy as “each one doing what is right in his own eyes”, whereas the Torah determines the proper course for the Jewish people. There can be no deviation from this course, and penalties are prescribed for any violation. The Jewish people accepted the Torah as a collective and all are committed to it, argued Blau. Accordingly, anyone who acts in the name of the Torah is not to be considered wicked or criminal. The two men did not torch the shop out of wickedness, or out of a desire to commit a crime such as a bank robbery. They acted on the basis of their religious sentiment of respect for the Torah, and the public supported their action. Accordingly, their faithful devotion to the Torah clears them of any offense.<sup>63</sup>

Blau’s defense argument echoes the French judicial category of “Crime Passionnel” committed under the influence of sudden or extreme passion. Killing an adulterer or adulteress upon the sudden discovery of adultery is characterized as a crime committed in the heat of passion, and as such required a lesser penalty or even complete acquittal.<sup>64</sup>

Blau’s response reflects the dialectics of *Neturei Karta* zealotry. He himself would not send men to commit such an act, since he advocates a passive and non-violent struggle. After the act has been committed, however, it can only be justified, and those who committed it must be defended against their many opponents within the Haredi public. Although the intention was that the modesty campaigns would take the form of non-violent protest, the danger is always present that a protester who considered himself a zealot may engage in serious physical violence. This approach carries the danger of descent into violence, although most cases did not reach this extreme.<sup>65</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This article has examined the subject of the modesty campaigns led by Rabbi Amram Blau as the leader of the Neturei Karta movement, with the support of the Court of Justice of *Ha-Edah Ha-Haredit*.

In many cases the Modesty Campaigns were used to reinforce Neturei Karta's leadership position among the Haredi public in Jerusalem at the expense of Agudat Israel, a movement that was a partner of the Zionist state. It is worth noting that during the modesty campaign Neturei Karta published fierce and strongly-worded statements against Agudat Israel for cooperating in the Knesset and the Municipality of Jerusalem.<sup>66</sup>

With the benefit of hindsight, the defensive modesty campaign can be judged a great success. The rules imposed on women's clothing in the 1940s are still enforced today, with minor variations. Conversely, the offensive modesty campaign may be judged as a failure. Neturei Karta was unable to prevent the secular development of Jerusalem. Even in the period 2003–2008, when Jerusalem had a Haredi mayor, Uri Lupoliansky, this did not prevent the opening of places of entertainment on the Sabbath, let alone mixed swimming or dancing. Eventually, Neturei Karta almost abandoned the offensive modesty campaign. However, the demonstrations raised the self-esteem of the Haredi public and created an aura of heroism around the campaigners for modesty. Blau thus became one of the most influential figures in the Haredi community in Jerusalem, and Neturei Karta became a dominant movement. Blau showed determination and was willing to pay a heavy personal price for his activist stance, including severe beatings from police and counter-demonstrators, and numerous detentions. This transformed him into an outstanding figure of historical importance.

The rise of religious fundamentalist movements can be explained as a resistant reaction to secularity, and their actions are intended to regain political powers after years of feeling attacked by the secular society and state.<sup>67</sup> One of the main characteristics of this response is creating an enclave, a safe haven where the particular lifestyle can be maintained without outside interference. Joining the enclave is voluntary; therefore religious adherence is strictly enforced.<sup>68</sup>

In a controversial article in 1983, "Extremism as a Religious Norm", Charles Leibman, an Israeli political scientist, argued that extremism is an affirmation of "the more the better". The first dimension of it is with the expansion of the religious law to include the public as well as the private realm, and to put greater restrictions and hardship on implementing the law. The second dimension is isolations. The third is the rejection of cultural

norms that are indigenous to the religious traditions. Liebman argued that the rise of extremism in the Jewish world is due to the breakdown of the Jewish community and the breaking of the institutions that were able to restrain the radicals. In addition, the search for a harsher interpretation of the law consistent with the desire to assure one's self and others that one is indeed living accordance with what is commanded to do.<sup>69</sup>

Adding to Liebman's argument, Gil S. Epstein and Ira N. Gang developed a mathematical model that explains the rise of extremism in a fundamentalist movement. According to them, the laws and regulations in a fundamentalist movement are becoming harder to follow, and followers might find themselves not sure exactly what the laws and regulations are. It is the ignorance of the followers and their desire to do what is right according to their religion that drives the increasing level of observance which they assume increases the probability of fulfilling religious law. The most severe position results in the greatest certainty that God's will is being performed.

Religious leaders drive fundamentalism by using religion to control behavior and thus obtain rents from followers or adherents. The leaders are assumed to possess more knowledge regarding the laws and rules that should be obeyed, while the followers are assumed to be less informed. Leadership rivalry leads to a race to the top in observance level, not to the bottom. The desire to hold on to members would radicalize clergy.<sup>70</sup>

These theories can help understand the success of Blau's modesty campaigns. Establishment of the Haredi enclave in Jerusalem was intended to block secular influence. Blau and his movement competed for power; therefore they pushed their modesty demands into the extreme. The expansion of modesty rules came due to the insecurity of the community, and the assumption that "the more the better". Women were a weak spot in the structure of this society, as historically this was also the case. Since Neturei Karta demanded not to allow any changes in the Jewish way of life of the Old Yishuv, no authority confronted these rules, and Neturei Karta became a leading force for modesty. In a case like that, modesty campaigns never really stop.

## NOTES

1. Boston University, Howard Gottlieb Archival Research Center, Amram Blau, 1731, boxes 1-3.
2. Menachem Friedman, "Jewish Zealots: Conservative versus Innovative,"

in *Jewish Fundamentalism in Contemporary Perspective—Religion, Ideology, and the Crisis of Modernity*, ed. Laurence J. Silberstein (New York, 1993), 148–63.

3. Samuel Heilman and Menachem Friedman, “Religious Fundamentalism and Religious Jews: The Case of the Haredim,” in *Fundamentalism Observed*, ed. Martin E. Marty and Scott Appleby (Chicago, 1991), 197–264.

4. Emanuel Etkas, “Between Religion and Economics: The Image of the Old Yishuv at the Beginning of the 20th Century,” *Cathedra* 106 (2002): 189–93 [Hebrew].

5. Menachem Friedman, *Society and Religion—Non-Zionist Orthodoxy in the Land of Israel, 1918–1936* (Jerusalem, 1978), 1–2 [Hebrew].

6. Etkas, “Between Religion and Economics”.

7. Menachem Friedman, *The Haredi Society—Sources, Trends and Developments* (Jerusalem, 1991), 31.

8. Yosef Fund, *Separation or Participation: Agudat Israel versus Zionism and the State of Israel* (Jerusalem, 1999) [Hebrew].

9. Friedman, *Haredi Society*, 33–7.

10. *Idem*.

11. *Ibid.*, 88–9.

12. Menachem Friedman, “Haredi Violence in Contemporary Israeli Society,” ed. Peter Medding, *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 18 (2002): 186–97.

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15. Heilman and Friedman, “Religious Fundamentalism”.

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17. Gabriel A. Almond, Scott R. Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan, *Strong Religion—The Rise of Fundamentalism around the World* (Chicago, 2003), 17.

18. *Ibid.*, 23–89.

19. Charles W. Peek, George D. Lowe, and L. Susan Williams, “Gender and God’s Word: Another Look at Religious Fundamentalism and Sexism,” *Social Forces* 69.4 (1991): 1205–21.

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21. Helen Hardacre, “The Impact of Fundamentalisms on Woman, the Family, and Interpersonal Relations,” in *Fundamentalism and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family, and Education*, ed. Martin Marty and Scott Appleby (Chicago, 1993), 132.

22. Shahla Haeri, “Obedience versus Autonomy: Women and Fundamentalism in Iran and Pakistan,” in *Fundamentalisms and Society* (Chicago, 1993), 181–213.

23. Hardacre, "The Impact of Fundamentalisms," 139–40.
24. Andrea B. Rugh, "Reshaping Personal Relations in Egypt," in *Fundamentalisms and Society*, 151–80.
25. Hala Sukrallah, "The Impact of the Islamic Movement in Egypt," in *Feminism and the Study of Religion: A Reader*, ed. Darlene M. Juschka (London, 2001), 180–97.
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27. Jay M. Harris, "Fundamentalism: Objections from a Modern Jewish Historian," in *Fundamentalism and Gender*, ed. John S. Hawley (New York, 1994), 137–73. See also Tamar Ross, "Orthodoxy, Halakhah and the Challenge of Feminism," in *Jewish Orthodoxy: New Aspects*, ed. Yosef Shalmon, Aviezer Ravitzky, and Adam Praziger (Jerusalem, 2006), 255–96 [Hebrew].
28. Michael K. Silber, "The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodoxy: The Invention of a Tradition," in *The Uses of Tradition*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (New York, 1992), 23–84.
29. Heilman and Friedman, "Religious Fundamentalism".
30. Margalit Shilo, *Princess or Prisoner? Jewish Women in Jerusalem, 1840–1914* (Waltham, MA, 2005), 69–107.
31. Ehud Sprinzak, *Brother against Brother: Violence and Extremism in Israeli Politics from Altalena to the Rabin Assassination* (New York, 1999), 87–112.
32. Friedman, *Neturei Karta*.
33. Sprinzak, *Brother against Brother*, 87–112.
34. Unsigned, untitled, Box 1, File 10, Doc. 43 (hereinafter "the Modesty File").
35. Modesty File, Doc. 16.
36. Modesty File, Doc. 49.
37. Rabbi [Zelig R.] Bengis, Rabbi Pinchas Epstein, and Rabbi David Jungreis, "Notice and Warning," 20 Sivan 5705 (1 June 1945), unnumbered, Modesty File. All translations made by the author. The original text was written in Hebrew.
38. Shilo, *Princess or Prisoner?* 85.
39. Amram Blau, "Instructions on Modesty to the Jewish Woman," undated, Modesty File, Doc. 28.
40. Selection of Articles of the *Patrol of Our Walls* from the Members of Neturei Karta, 17 Sivan 5724—1964: 156 [Hebrew].
41. *Din rodef* (the law of the pursuer) is based on the precept that "If a man comes to kill you rise early and kill him first." This law applies whenever a person's life is endangered and the "pursuer" may be killed in order to remove the danger. This law of self-defense applies whether or not a Sanhedrin is in existence. The obligation and right to save life applies at any time and to any person who recognizes that his life, or that of others, is endangered. For further discussion, see Eliav Shuchtman, "Jewish Government Cannot Be a 'Pursuer'," *Tehumin* 19 (5759–1999): 40–8 [Hebrew].

42. Amram Blau, "Instructions on Modesty to the Jewish Woman," undated, Modesty File, unnumbered.

43. Shilo, *Princess or Prisoner?* 70.

44. Modesty File, Doc. 29, Summary of Meeting, 5 Menachem-Av 5710—1950.

45. See Ruth Blau, *Guardians of the City* (Jerusalem, 1979); cf. Isser Harel, *The Yossele Operation* (Tel-Aviv, 1982) [both in Hebrew].

46. Amram Blau, "To the Commander of the Jerusalem Police," 10 Adar 5698—1938, Box 1, File 6, unnumbered.

47. File 6, unnumbered.

48. Amram Blau, "Ours—Not Ours," undated, Modesty File, Doc. 78.

49. Amram Blau, untitled, undated, Modesty File, Doc. 93.

50. Shilo, *Princes or Prisoner?* 70–5.

51. On the development of swimming pools as leisure resorts and a place of integration of sexes and races, see Jeff Wilste, *Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools in America* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2007).

52. According to a census conducted in 1947, the Haredi community in Jerusalem included 4,445 men and women above the age of 18. See Yuval Frankel, "Haredi," 247–89, and particularly 256 [Hebrew].

53. Unsigned, "His Excellency the High Commissioner," undated, Modesty File, Doc. 7.

54. *Idem.*

55. Unsigned, "Preparing for the Meeting against Galei Gil," undated, Modesty File, Doc. 112.

56. Resolutions of the Public Protest Meeting, Modesty File, Doc. 90.

57. Modesty File, Doc. 105.

58. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York and Washington, 1966), 99.

59. Amram Blau, "To Our Distinguished Friend, etc. etc., R. Yaakov Pinchas Gevirt, May He Live Days That Are Pleasant and Long," 9 Adar 5722—1962, Modesty File, unnumbered.

60. Amram Blau, "Remember, Lord, What We Had," Modesty File, unnumbered.

61. Amram Blau, "To the Glory of Our Heads, Our Teacher Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum, May He Live Days That Are Pleasant and Long," undated, Modesty File, Doc. 70. See also Amram Blau, "To Our Distinguished Friend, Our Teacher Rabbi Yechiel Benedict, May He Live Days That Are Pleasant and Long," 8 Sivan 5716—1956, *ibid.*, Doc. 67.

62. Michal Wolf, "The Halachic Attitude to Din Rodef and Din Moser," in *Delinquency and Social Deviation: Theory and Practice*, ed. Moshe Arad and Yuval Wolf (Ramat Gan, 2002), 215–49 [Hebrew].

63. Modesty File, Doc. 60.

64. Ruth Harris, "Hysteria and Feminine Crimes of Passion in the Fin-de-Siècle," *History Workshop* 25 (1988): 31–63; Robert Ferrari, "The 'Crime Passionnel' in French Courts," *California Law Review* 6.5 (1918): 331–41.

65. During the Gay Pride march in Jerusalem in 2005, one of the participants was stabbed by a young Haredi, Yishai Shlissel, who was later sentenced to 12 years in prison and fined NIS 280,000. This incident is further proof of the potential for zealous protest to descend into violence.

66. Neturei Karta even imposed a *pulsa di-nura* curse on Meir Yitzhak Levin, the political leader of Agudat Israel, who agreed to serve as the Minister of Welfare in the first government of Israel (1948–52). The *pulsa di-nura* (literally, in Aramaic, “lashes of fire”) is a curse calling for a person to meet with an unnatural death. See: Amram Blau, “A Warning Advice to a Hostile Enemy of Israel,” Blau Archive, Box 3, File 1, No. 6.

67. For an historical account of fundamentalism as a global phenomenon see Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God* (New York, 2001).

68. Almond, Appleby, and Sivan, *Strong Religion*, 23–89.

69. Charles Leibman, “Extremism as a Religious Norm,” *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion* 22.1 (1983): 75–86.

70. Gil S. Epstein and Ira N. Gang, “Understanding the Development of Fundamentalism,” *Public Choice* 132.3/4 (2007): 257–71.

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