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Enemy of Israel

Abstract

All through history Israel never lacked antagonists or enemies filled with hatred towards Jews or towards a Jewish statehood. Reading the title, a long list of possible enemies comes to mind. This article, however, is about an enemy that is Jewish, even Orthodox Jewish. The article deals with a certain group of Orthodox Jews that declares themselves to be against the State of Israel: *Neture Karta*.

Keywords: Judaism, Ani-Zionism, Israel, *Neture Karta*, Radical movement

Neture Karta opposed the establishment of and retains all opposition to the existence of the so-called “State of Israel”!

This Statement is found on the well maintained homepage of a group of people who call themselves by the name *Neture Karta* (Aramaic: The Guardians of the City).¹ Reading these words one would suspect them to be written by extremists, perhaps terrorists that wish to declare their intention to destroy the State of Israel as they neither accept it nor believe in its right to exist.

The reader who thinks that this is the case is certainly right. But contrary to what most would have guessed, this group does not belong to some extreme Muslim variant or to any of the Arab countries surrounding the State of Israel from almost all of its sides. It does not even belong to Iran which nowadays positions itself as the main state antagonist to the State of Israel. The members of this extreme group are entirely Jews, Ultra-Orthodox Jew, and, true believers in the God of Israel.

¹ <http://www.nkusa.org/AboutUs/index.cfm>.

It is something of a paradox that religious Jewish people would be against the State of Israel. Not only because according to the Old Testament, a holy book for the Jews, the land of Israel was given to Abraham by God, but also, and not less important, due to historical facts that point out to that if not for the State of Israel most of the Jewish population of the world would have vanished in several occasions.

When one reflects on the meaning of the word “enemy” other issues pop up such as war, nationality, racism and so on. These issues do not really fit the subject of this article.

Neture Karta is a group of Orthodox Jews, thus belonging to the major group of citizens in the State of Israel – the Jews. They did not establish a country of their own and at the same time they refuse to be included as citizens of Israel and therefore are not included as such. Accordingly, one cannot define their relations to the State of Israel as a state of war. Some of them even live in different places in Israel though they do not wish to acknowledge its existence.

Neture Karta members are considered by the Jewish majority as very fanatic in their opinions and beliefs.² It is interesting to write about them since they are so out of the Jewish main stream, yet manage to get the attention they wish for due to their deeds that are considered extreme both inside and outside the Jewish world. Exactly how many individuals belong to this group it is uncertain. However, in Israel, according to the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, they consist only of a few dozen families concentrated in the Me’ah She’arim quarter of Jerusalem and in Bnei Brak. Still, they gain support from wider Orthodox circles by creating periodic religious controversies, such as demonstrations against Sabbath violations and mixed bathing.³ On their mailing list, some 500 names are found. Yet again, there is also a group that calls itself *Neture Karta International*, which mostly operates outside of Israel. The members of this group that acts in different countries are few thousands. In this article I refer to both groups as one: *Neture Karta*.

Established in 1938,⁴ its first members were previously members of the Jewish Orthodox political movement *Agudat Israel* who left it because they thought it was not segregated enough from the Jewish Zionist *Yeshuv* in Israel. Their leader at that time

² Fundamentalism exists not only in Judaism. For a thorough study on fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam see Bruce B. Lawrence, *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt Against the Modern Age*, Harper & Row, San Francisco 1989. Lawrence also defines the starting point of the emergence of fundamentalism as ideology among the three monotheistic religions. According to him it has started within Judaism during the last fifty years, among the Protestants in America in the end of the 1800, and among Muslims since World War II. For another approach to this issue see Emile Marmorstein, *Religious Opposition to Nationalism in the Middle East*, “International Affairs” 1952, 28/3, pp. 344–359.

³ Menachem Friedman, *Neture Karta*, in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Second Edition, Volume 15, pp. 114–115; Also Ha-Edah ha-Ĥaredit, 1964, *Keẓ ha-Ma’arakhah*; and Menachem Friedman, *Neture Karta and the Sabbath Demonstrations in Jerusalem, 1948–1950*, in: *Divided Jerusalem, 1948–1967: Sources, Summaries, Selected Incidents, and Ancillary Material*, ed. Avi Bareli, Jerusalem, 1994, pp. 224–240 (Hebrew).

⁴ <http://www.nkusa.org/aboutus/index.cfm>.

was R. Chayim Zonenfeldt (1849–1932).⁵ *Agudat Israel* was not radical enough *visa vi* the *Yeshuv*.⁶

In 1960 the first major split occurred, when a group of people from *Neture Karta* under the leadership of Uri Blau, son to Rabbi Amram Blau, came closer to the main Orthodox groups. This group started to collaborate with other groups among the Orthodox Jews and thereafter refrained from calling themselves *Neture Karta*.

The majority of the members of *Neture Karta* stayed, however, in the group that took upon itself also the name *Torah veYirah*, and was led by Chaim Ketsenelberg son-in-law of Rabbi Amram Blau. This group became even more radical and extreme in their thoughts and believes against the State of Israel. Until today this group consists of the main stream in *Neture Karta*. It is also responsible to different educational institutes at various levels from the kindergartens and until the Yeshiva.

In the beginning of the 21st century this group was divided again. This time by people who were much more radical in their opinion against the State of Israel. As previously, the main part has continued to function and some people left it and started a group of their own. This group is acting until these days. It called *Sikrikim* and it is known of its extreme opinions and acts. They do not reject even physical violence to promote what they believe in, namely that the State of Israel should not exist right now. Also they have established several educational places according to their belief.⁷

The name *Sikrikim* or as it is known in its Latin version “Sicarii” was given to this sub-group by one named Aharon Kalizkin because of their violence against him and his publishing house due to his critical views of them.

Sikrikim was first used for a group of radical Jews that acted in the times of the first Jewish-Roman war. This group used much violence in their actions against the Romans and also against Jews that were against their methods and views. They were called so due to the small daggers “sicae”.⁸

Returning now to the meaning of the name of the main movement and its origin: *Neture Karta* is actually a name that includes two words from the Babylonian Aramaic

⁵ See <http://www.ynet.co.il/yaan/0,7340, L-16831>.

⁶ See Menachem Friedman, *The Haredi Ultra-Orthodox Society: Sources Trends and Processes*, The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, Jerusalem 1991, pp. 88–89. (in Hebrew); and Sam Lehman-Wilzig & Giora Goldberg, *Religious Protest and Police Reaction in a Theo-Democracy: Israel, 1950–1979*, “Journal of Church and State” 1983, No. 25, pp. 491–505 (497).

⁷ For further reading on the history of *Neture Karta* see among others 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; Yuval Frankel, *Haredi and Religious Judaism in Jerusalem during the Siege Period*, “HaTziyonut” 1994, No. 18, pp. 247–289 (Hebrew); and Motti Inbari, *Rabbi Amram Blau, Founder of the Neture Karta Movement: An Abridged Biography*, “Hebrew Union College Annual”, 2010, Vol. 81. Ronen Yizhak, 9 *כתב עת לציבורות וליהדות*, 9 *כיוונים חדשים: כיוונים המדינה*, “פעילותם של נטורי קרתא נגד הקמת המדינה”, (אוקטובר 2003), עמ' 174–158 וכן

⁸ Richard Gottheil and Samuel Krauss, 2002. Sicarii. http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view_friendly.jsp?articid=681&letter=S; Price, Jonathan. 2008. Zealots and Sicarii. http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0021_0_21428.html.

which mean “The Keepers of the City”. These pair of words is to be found in *Echa Rabbah* at the opening chapter of the Midrash⁹:

...For it is said, ‘why is the land in ruins, laid waste like a wilderness, with none passing through? [The Lord replied, “Because they forsook the Torah I had set before them”].’

...Rabbi [Judah the Patriarch] would dispatch R. Assi and R. Ammi to go out and inspect the condition of the towns of the land of Israel.

They would go into a town and say to the people, “Bring us the guardians of the town.”

So the people would produce the captain of the guard and seabor and say to them, “Here are the guardians of the town.”

They said to them, “These are the guardians of the town? These are those who ravage the town.”

They said to them, “Then who are the guardians of the town?”

They said to them, “They are the scribes and teachers, who dwell upon, repeat, and keep the Torah day and night”...¹⁰

According to this text the ones who learn the Torah are the ones who protect the city and its inhabitants and not the authorities of the state or soldiers with weapons. As long as many will learn and teach the Torah and will adopt it as their way of life the people will be safe. However, those who think that they protect the people by holding weapon instead of concentrating on the Torah are those who cause the destruction of

⁹ The *Echa Rabbah* was edited in Israel probably in the 5th or the 6th hundred a.c. Since then it has been used especially in the public ceremonies of the 9th of Av. Later on it has become two separate texts, which are evidence to two versions of the Midrash. These versions have developed in two places: one in Italy and Ashkenaz, and the other in Spain and in the East. To each of these versions were added different texts. The languages used in this Midrash are Hebrew mixed with Galilean Aramaic, Greek and Latin. In some parts of the Midrash that are considered to be late and additions is found also Babylonian Aramaic. It is divided into five main parts *Parashot*, and opens with 36 homilies with a special structure, which are called *Ptichtaot*. The text in front of us is the beginning of the second *Ptichta*. For further reading on the Lamentations Midrash Rabbah see: Leopold Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden, historisch entwickelt: ein Beitrag zur Altertumskunde und biblische kritik, zur Literatur- und Religionsgeschichte*, L. Lamm, Berlin 1919. Shaye S.D. Cohen, *The Destruction: From Scripture to Midrash*, “Prooftext” 1982, Vol. 2/1, pp. 18–39; Jacob Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah; An Analytical Translation*, Scholars Press, Atlanta, Georgia 1989; Günter Stemberger & Herman L. Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1991 (translated by Markus Bockmuehl); and Mendel 1997 מנדל פ' השלישית לפרשה ביקרונית ומהדורה מבוא, רבתי איכה מדרש.

¹⁰ Translated by J. Neusner, 1989, pp. 13–14. In this translation also the texts that the original text only shortly refers to are given in a full version. Like this it is much more clear to the reader who is not familiar with this Hebrew-Aramaic text than the text in the original languages. Neusner not only translate this text among the other parts of the Midrash but also discusses its structure as a separate text and as a part of the whole Midrash (ibid, p.17). According to him this text is related to the previous one in the way that they both deal with the same basic text, Jer. 9:16–18, however, they explain it in different ways by using different texts and various methods: “The cited verse [...] forms the base of a unitary composition and is given three complementary and repetitive explanations. The whole then serves the exposition of the base verse in some interesting way”.

the city. Meaning, the only right way to live is according to the Torah and the Halacha and there is no salvation to the ones who do not follow it.

This group of Orthodox Jews, *Neture Karta*, is against Zionism¹¹ and do not acknowledge the State of Israel, its constitution and laws.¹² According to their belief the State of Israel should not be defined as such until the times of the Messiah. And, since according to their belief, which in this matter is similar to the general Jewish belief, the Messiah has not yet come, there is no reason for such a state to exist. Furthermore, according to them, not only has the time of the establishment of Israel as the State of the Jews not yet come, but such an establishment rather even damages the Jews since it is made only for the sake of irritating the rest of the world and therefore cause unnecessary wars and bloodshed. When speaking about the lack of necessity of wars because of the early declaration of the State of Israel we find other Jewish Orthodox groups that share the same opinion, but their opinions do not go that far as to consider the inexistence of a Jewish State.

From times before the establishment of the State of Israel, *Neture Karta* refused to take part in the actions of the Zionist *Yeshuv*. This negative approach to Zionism has continued also after the declaration of the State of Israel. After the War of Independence they demanded from the United Nations that Jerusalem will be internationalized so that there will not be an Israeli rule in the city.¹³

They further do not define themselves as citizens of the State of Israel. As a part of their refusal to be called citizens of the State of Israel they also insist to prohibit their members from participating in the elections to the *Knesset*, the Israeli parliament. Furthermore, the group is not being financed by the state for its educational causes and establishments. All the members of this group are forbidden to speak Hebrew. They differ in their opinions, however, when it comes to other issues that have to do with economy, belief, daily life, and health and so on. The members act on these issues according to the instructions of the individual leaders in their particular group.

The acts of *Neture Karta* are also an issue that depends on the group to which the members belong. However, with no difference to the group they use words in order to defame religious leaders and Rabbis who have positions in the Jewish State or who support different issues that are connected to the relationship of orthodox Jews and the State of Israel. One target of such defamation was Rabbi Steinmats who supported the Tal law and Orthodox groups which will serve in the army.

The most extreme members of the groups of the *Neture Karta* believe that since the State of Israel should not have been established, the right thing to do is to belong to its enemies. Therefore they met with different Palestinian leaders and speak against the defense of Israel. The most extreme act that was done by members of these groups

¹¹ "Fortunately, though, Zionism is missing the most potent weapon in any ideology's arsenal. It doesn't have the truth on its side". <http://www.nkusa.org/AboutUs/Zionism/index.cfm>.

¹² Zionism can be defined as the Jewish national movement for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Israel.

¹³ See <http://www.ynet.co.il/yaan/0,7340, L-16831>.

is the participation in a conference of denying the existence of the Holocaust in 2006, on this act reacted negatively not only Jews who are not members of these groups, but also members of these groups that are themselves relatives of people that have suffered and were murdered in the Holocaust. Many Orthodox Rabbis condemned this act and declared that this act is insulting the name of God.

This organization has an anthem written by Rabbi Amram Blau in the late 1940's after the establishment of the State of Israel. He wrote it when sitting in prison in Israel. *Neture Karta* uses it in various occasions:

God is our king,
 We are his servants
 The holy Torah is our Law
 We are loyal to it.
 We do not recognize the Heretic Zionist
 Regime
 Its laws do not apply to us
 We walk in the ways of the Torah
 In fire and water
 We walk in the ways of the Torah
 To Sanctify the Name of Heaven¹⁴

Two issues emerge in the *Neture Karta's* anthem: The belief of the members of the *Neture Karta* in the God of Israel and in the Torah. Because their belief is radically fundamental and because they except with no doubt the Torah as the book one should follow as the law and since their worship of God is total, they refuse to consider the laws of the State of Israel. Furthermore, since they believe that the Zionists are unbelievers they do not except their rule. According to their anthem God is the only king and ruler and him and only him they obey.

However, this is only the surface of the things. *Neture Karta* makes no compromise in their believes concerning the right of the State of Israel to exist. By saying in their anthem that "we do not recognize the heretic Zionist regime" they do not only mean that they themselves refuse to follow the laws of the State of Israel, in which a large group of them live, and that they do not accept the authority and the right of this State to give them any kind of instructions concerning their way of life. By referring to the Zionists as the ones who built the State of Israel they refer to them as great sinners. Because according to their belief one should not found the State of Israel before the arriving of the Messiah and he did not come yet.¹⁵ Therefore nothing good will develop and be

¹⁴ This English version of the *Neture Karta* anthem was taken from <http://www.nkusa.org/aboutus/anthem.cfm>.

¹⁵ See Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1996; Emanuel Sivan & M. Friedman (eds.), *Religious Radicalism & Politics In The Middle East*, New York: State University of New York Press, New York 1990; and Aviezer Ravitzky, *Religious Radicalism and Political Messianism in Israel*, in: Emanuel Sivan, & M. Friedman (eds.), op. cit., pp. 11–37.

the outcome of such an act, and therefore the State of Israel must cease to exist. They declared that they are against the State of Israel in its present form and not against the Jews wherever they are.

In their eyes the belief is complete when one follows the instructions of the Halacha. Meaning that they do not follow the words of the Torah as the only truth but rather follow the Halacha. However, when investigating their own explanations of their theory one finds that it is not the main stream of the Halacha that they follow, but rather only a few incidents and instructions that mostly belong to the unexceptional side of the Halacha and that in different occasions they have taken out of context.

One should distinguish between the people who call themselves *Neture Karta* and the ones who are members of the *Neture Karta International*. While *Neture Karta* are the ones who live in Israel (most of them in Jerusalem) and are numbered about 5000, the *Neture Karta International* live also in other places in the world such as USA, England, Canada etc. *Neture Karta International* activates two sites in the internet. As an example of what they write, see their opinions against the actions of the IDF in Lebanon of 2006, and how the state has “stolen” the name *Israel* from the Jewish people.¹⁶

This antagonistic approach is to be found all over their internet sites, their scribes, interviews and lectures. They ventilate it on different occasions and consequently come repeatedly to the same conclusion, namely, that the State of Israel is the reason for much hatred, wars, bloodshed, and even anti-Semitism in the world.

According to their belief God have sent the sons of Israel to a long exile and it is only he who will decide when it will be over. Until then the Jews should not try to establish a State in the land of Israel. The time will come with the coming of the Messiah but it did not come yet and therefore the existence of the so called “State of Israel” damages the order of the world. And only when it, the state, will cease to exist the possibility of the coming of the Messiah and of the building of the real Jewish State of Israel will become a reality. Therefore one should act strongly for the destruction of the State of Israel.

This group also has come with a solution to the “problem in the Middle-East” according to which the UN has to give the land to the Palestinians and they will have the possibility to decide whether or not they give a certain Israeli citizen or the other the permission to stay in the land or even to become a citizen of the Palestinian State.¹⁷ They even published a proposal for the details of such an act.¹⁸

¹⁶ <http://www.nkusa.org/aboutus/whatzionism.cfm>; <http://www.nkusa.org/aboutus/index.cfm>.

¹⁷ This approach is to be found also in <http://www.nkusa.org/AboutUs/index.cfm>: “This would, of course, include a full right of return for all Palestinian refugees. That is what elementary justice demands. This is the path of the Torah and of common sense”. And also: “Of course, today, millions of Jews reside in Palestine. Whether some, all or none of them might stay under Palestinian rule is, of course, up to the land’s rightful rulers, the Palestinians”.

¹⁸ For further reading of their “solution” see *Neture Karta* home page. Already in 1948 Rabbi Duchinsky sent a petition to the UN asking for the Orthodox community in Jerusalem to be considered as a separate entity from the State of Israel. D. Yisroal Weiss, *Judaism – an Alternative to Zionism*, Islamic Human Rights Commission, Wembley 2001, <http://www.nkusa.org>. p. 6.

According to a thorough study made during thirty years in Israel on the different protests occurred in Israel under these years (1950–1979), concerning religious issues, there is no doubt that the group that was most active in such protests and demonstrations was the one of *Neture Karta* and their supporters. This group reached a total of 47.3% during this period. That means that although this group is relatively small in comparison to the other groups that were involved in these demonstrations, it was responsible for approximately half of the protests, while the other groups all together made the other fifty percent.¹⁹

Talking about *Neture Karta International*, it is no doubt that they are not only anti-Zionists in their thoughts but also in their actions and that they do not hesitate to act in violence when they think it can serve their cause. Furthermore, they sympathized with the enemies of Israel or with the ones who wishes for Israel to stop to exist. They declare this sympathizing on every opportunity they have. They define themselves as “Jews united against Zionism”.

And such is also the definition of Rabbi Yisroel David Weiss, one of its activists and one of the speakers of the *Neture Karta International*, of the people who have established the Zionist movement: “One hundred years ago, a Jew, far removed from his faith and in total ignorance of its basic beliefs, launched the movement today known as Zionism. Its early adherents were almost uniformly drawn from the ranks of Jews who had previously abandoned their faith”.²⁰ The goal of this text is according to its writer “we will, God willing, explain why Zionism is a rejection of Judaism and how its demise is the only path to true peace. He farther continues: “Our perspective is representative of the Torah view, maintained by hundreds of thousands of Jews worldwide, which offers a real alternative to the current impasse”.²¹ He further explains the belief of this group that the land of Israel was given as a divine gift to the Jews, however, this gift was a conditional gift, namely, that if the “Jews will fail with their spiritual task, they would be banished from the land and sent into exile”. This punishment is to last till the arrival of the Messiah which will start a new future in which all mankind will worship God and the center of it will be the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

In p. 3 he further explains that the Jews are not supposed to take the land of Israel and therefore it should be retaken from them by the force of arms. Yet further, the exile is the physical State of the Jew, and the only means to end the exile and to cause worldwide peace is spiritual.

In the internet addition of “HaAretz” daily newspaper in Hebrew, an article was published by Etinger on 2.5.2010.²² In it the death of Moshe Hirsh one of the most controversial members of the *Neture Karta* was discussed. It was further noticed that he

¹⁹ For these results see Lehman-Wilzing, S. & G. Goldberg, op. cit., p. 495.

²⁰ Y.D. Weiss, op. cit., p. 2.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Yair Etinger, *Died Moshe Hirsh, from the People of Neture Karta* (2010). <http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/spages/1166784.html> (in Hebrew).

was related to the head of the Palestinian authority, Arafat, while he was alive, giving him and the Palestinians unlimited support in both action and words.

This strong relation with Arafat began, according to this article in “HaAretz”, already in the 80’s when Arafat was still in Tunis. When the Palestinian Authority was established it was Hirsh that got among others the position of “Advisor for Jewish affairs”. He was the son-in-law of the founder of *Neture Karta* Rabbi Aharon Kazenelburg and was the leader of one of the most extreme groups of it. He also was called “the minister of foreign affairs of *Neture Karta*”. He was most extreme in his opinions and was not even appreciated by other Ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionist groups such as the *Satmar*-group that usually does support the group of *Neture Karta*.

In 2006 the *Neture Karta International* sent a delegation to a conference for denying the Holocaust that took place in Iran. This event made cracks in the movement because some thought that it was out of place to do such a thing, and that there must be limits to the actions and support the group gives to the enemies. It further gained a lot of negative remarks from all the range of Ultra-Orthodox, Orthodox, religious and secular Jewish leaders in Israel and around the world. Among them Rabbi Israel Lao who was both the chief rabbi of Israel and the head Rabbi of Tel Aviv and who himself was a survivor of the Holocaust. He said that when he was only seven years old he was taken to the Buchenwald concentration camp, there, like other Jews, he was forced to have a tattoo on his arm with a number that was a symbol for the end of his participation in the human race. He survived the Holocaust but many others did not and he cannot understand a Jew that gives support to someone who denies the Holocaust.

Many actions, protests, and demonstrations are made both by *Neture Karta* and by *Neture Karta International*. Some are more extensive and some are less, but they are all against the Zionists and their creation, the state of Israel. As an example for a “smaller” act one may mention the words of hate that were written on the memorial sign that is in the city Zefat for the headquarters of the “National Military Organization” from the time before the declaration of the state of Israel. It was also written there “Zionists Out”. Of course this was not something exceptional but only a small link in a huge chain of actions against the state of Israel that these groups occupied themselves with since the times of their establishment.

The Council of the Seven is the highest body of *Neture Karta*. In the meetings of this group of people decisions have been made concerning issues that have to do with the daily life of the members of *Neture Karta*. There decisions were accepted by all the members of this community.

There are mainly two kinds of texts about the *Neture Karta*: The ones written by members of the group or its supporters; and the texts written by people who neither belong nor support the group. The texts written by the members of the group and its supporters are positive and supportive in their nature. They submit the version of the group concerning its members acts and believes. These texts have only one truth and one way of seeing the world in general and the Zionists and their “stupidity”/“evilness” that caused the founding of the State of Israel in particular. Of course none of their

propaganda or explanatory texts are written in Hebrew because according to them Hebrew is a language that should be used only for reading and writing the holy scripts. Therefore, also in their sight in the internet Hebrew is not one of the several languages into which the texts can be translated.

Sam Lehman-Wilzig and Giora Goldberg have studied the religious protest and police reactions in Israel during 1950–1979.²³ In the beginning of their study they declare one of the most solid facts concerning the reality of the State of Israel: “The problem of religion and State has been one of the longest lasting issues in the relatively short history of the modern State of Israel”. Nonetheless, according to their study this problem is not based on the fact that the large minority of inhabitants in the State of Israel are Muslims and that there are several other groups of different religions and beliefs such as Christians, Buddhists, Bahai and so on, that all live in a relatively very small area. Rather the sensitive balance between State and religion in Israel is the one between the State and the Ultra-Orthodox Jews, and among them the most extreme and problematic one is the small group called *Neture Karta*.

According to Lehman-Wilzig and Goldberg the main way to deal with this controversy is from a “coalitional/legislative standpoint”, or even “a legal/juridical perspective”. Nevertheless, there is another way to deal with the dispute “a cultural/sociological point of view”. According to them: “The streets constitute an important battleground as well (for political as well as public relations purposes)”.²⁴

Upon beginning their investigation they had two main assumptions: the first was that the protests on religious issues were more violence than the ones about other issues; and the second, that the reactions of the authorities and the police to these protests would prove to be harsh, and even much too harsh. However, both their assumptions were proven wrong.²⁵ They also found out that the major percentage of the religious protests was made by a relatively small group of Ultra-Orthodox Jews, the *Neture Karta*.²⁶

Although the *Neture Karta* claimed not once that they are against the existence of the State of Israel not because of its, according to them, secular character but rather due to the fact that because the Messiah has not arrived the time for the State of Israel to reestablish did not come yet and that no human being should try to change the decision of God. God has sent the Jews to a diaspora and the time did not come yet to return from this diaspora because the Messiah is still not here.²⁷ Nevertheless, in other declarations of this group on different occasions they emphasize that their opposition to the State of Israel is also

²³ Lehman-Wilzig, S. & G. Goldberg, op. cit., p. 491.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 492.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 491–505.

²⁶ Furthermore, from their study it occurs that only 6.5 percent of the protests over religion are of the kind of anti-religion (ibid., p. 496).

²⁷ This kind of explanation to the anti-Zionism of this group is to be found not only among the texts submitted by members of this group but also among some scholars. For such an explanation see ibid., p. 497. Nonetheless, also they recognize the anti-secular type of resistance in the protests of the *Neture Karta* and explains it not as the reason for their wish for the State of Israel to cease to exist but rather in their wish to hold religious life.

due to the fact that according to them this is a secular State. They also emphasize that the man who first came out in public with the idea of building a Jewish State, Theodor Herzl was not religious himself and neither were any of the prime ministers of the so called Zionist country until our days. According to *Neture Karta* they are all sinners.²⁸

Mintz describes the life of Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum (1888–1979) after the Second World War and his rescue from Bergen Belzen.²⁹ Kaplan tries to survey the social and religious background of the man in Hungary in order to explain the reasons that lead Rabbi Teitelbaum to his extreme anti-Zionist approach.³⁰ Rabbi Teitelbaum was saved from the death camp Bergen Belzen in 1944 as one of those who were lucky and invited as passengers in the train wagons arranged by Rezo Rudolf Kastner, a leader of the Zionist movement in Romania and Hungary. Rabbi Teitelbaum arrived to New York in 1947 passing through Switzerland and Israel.³¹ Upon his arrival to New York he established the Satmar group. His followers were not only the Orthodox Jews from Satmar in Transylvania that had survived the Holocaust but also other Orthodox Hasidic Jews that had lost their leaders during the Second World War and therefore joined him as their leader.³² Already in his time in Szeto-Mare (Satmar) before the Second World War he belonged to the Satmar group of Hasidic Ultra-Orthodox, a group that strongly opposed the Zionist movement. After the war, though he was saved by Zionists he kept his beliefs and opinions and also his Hasidim followed him. This group quickly became a very big and rich group that was and still is today radically anti-Zionist. There were several attempts by scholars to explain this paradox in the life of the Rabbi, however, all the explanations are at the most assumptions since the Rabbi himself has refused to talk about the issue until the day he died.

The establishers of *Neture Karta* followed his doctrine as a base for their approach and belief. According to Rabbi Teitelbaum in his *Va Yoel Moshe* the establishment of the State of Israel, before the times of the Messiah, is a Satanic act. He also proposed that the Holocaust was a punishment by God for the appearance of Zionism.³³

²⁸ G.J. Neuberger, *The Great Gulf between Zionism and Judaism. Paper delivered at the Tripoli Conference on Zionism and Racism* (2003). <http://www.nkusa.org>, p. 2.

²⁹ Jerom Mintz, *Hasidic People: A Place in the New World*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1992, pp. 27–29.

³⁰ Zvi Jonathan Kaplan, *Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, Zionism, and Hungarian Ultra-Orthodoxy*, “Modern Judaism” 2004, Vol. 24, pp. 165–178.

³¹ According to Arie Davidovich (in a telephone interview on 19.9.2011) who was a child in those days and was an eye witness to the event, the Rabbi traveled with a train in Israel standing outside and his followers and other believers could (if they had luck) kiss him or touch him on his hand.

³² For the Ultra-Orthodox Jews of Hungary see Jacob Katz, *Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective*, “Studies in Contemporary Jewry” 1986, Vol. 2, pp. 3–17; and Michael K. Silber, *The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodoxy: The Invention of a Tradition. The Uses of Tradition*, ed. Jack Werthmeimer, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York 1992.

³³ Joel Teitelbaum, *Vayoel Moshe*, Jerusalem 1959, pp. 5–6 (Hebrew). For a discussion on Teitelbaum and his writings see Z.J. Kaplan, op. cit.

In Teitelbaum's point of view, by establishing a modern Jewish State of the European model the Jews took upon them a nationalistic identity instead for a religious identity.³⁴

Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin work in the Academy in USA. They present themselves as scholars. However, when reading their writings it appears that they cannot leave their personal opinions outside the academic platform. Though they are not members of *Neture Karta* they are very enthusiastic supporters. Both Boyalin brothers are Ultra-Orthodox Jews. When writing about *Neture Karta* they put their opinions out in the open. According to them, *Neture Karta* has a point in their saying that in order to live in a place one does not have to define it as his State.³⁵ Some other scholars who have examined this radical group and its supporters have much to say against its view. One such scholar is Arkush who claims that the reality that the *Neture Karta* wish and struggle for the Jews in Israel are very dangerous for the Jewish people and their existence.³⁶

In his striving to keep the Jewish tradition, Rabbi Teitelbaum found himself building a new tradition. A tradition based not only on the texts of the Halacha that have been considered main stream but rather used some parts and pieces of Halacha, kabbalah, aggadah and other texts in order to support his own theories.³⁷

Neture Karta accuses the Zionists and the State of Israel of taking upon themselves the role of representing all the Jews. According to *Neture Karta* they have neither moral nor religious and even not a political right to do so. However, *Neture Karta* or its International variant itself takes upon it the same role of representing all the Orthodox-Jews although not all groups and streams among Orthodox Jewry share their opinions. Furthermore, even Ultra-Orthodox Jewry does not except the methods by which the *Neture Karta* and *Neture Karta International* act and not even their opinions. One of many examples for proving this role that was taking by *Neture Karta* is in the speech that was written by Weiss who represented the *Neture Karta* for the Islamic human rights commission.³⁸ There he considers the head Rabbis of *Neture Karta* as the head Rabbis of Jerusalem ignoring completely the fact that there were head Rabbis assigned by the Rabbinate and recognized by the State of Israel as the head Rabbis. In the same paper Weiss claims that "They [Orthodox Jewry] refuse any form of recognition of, or co-operation with the State" which is not correct because until the Second World War Orthodox Jewry was of the opinion that one should not hurry the end of the exile but because of the Holocaust they have decided to support the Zionists in their establishment of the State of Israel and the saving of what was left from the Jews who lived in Europe.³⁹ They even became part of the Israeli Knesset later on. Such a group that joined the Knesset in 1977 was the *Agudat Israel* from which the *Neture Karta* split up and which they oppose until today.

³⁴ Kaplan, *ibid.*, p. 168.

³⁵ For further survey on the Boyarins and their doctorin see Allan Arkush, *From Diaspora Nationalism to Radical Diasporism*, "Modern Judaism" 2009, Vol. 29, pp. 326–350.

³⁶ A. Arkush, *op. cit.*, pp. 326–350 (339).

³⁷ Z.J. Kaplan, *op. cit.*, pp. 169–170.

³⁸ Y.D. Weiss, *op. cit.*, pp. 6–7.

³⁹ A. Ravitzky, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

Now and again members of *Neture Karta and Neture Karta International* define Zionist actions or attentions as similar to the actions and attentions of the Nazis. One of many examples is to be found in the referring to the Jews as a race. According to *Neture Karta* the only ones who have ever done so are the Zionists and the Nazis.⁴⁰

The great dispute between *Agudat Israel* and *Neture Karta* became even bigger in the time of the 1967 War when the army forces had to pass through the part of the town in Jerusalem that most of its habitants is Orthodox and this had to be also during Shabbat days and holydays. *Agudat Israel* did not protest against these events since they understood the importance of it in times of war. *Neture Karta* however, not only resisted these events both by words and by actions that have become more and more violent, but also in their reaction against the *Agudat Israel* and other groups of Jewish orthodox that have supported the defense forces.

There is no doubt that this small group of people with extremist opinions against the State of Israel and in the belief that the time of the Messiah is yet to come and that the State of Israel is causing a direct delay to the time of the arrival of the Messiah is very active. Its activities have a twofold aim: to cause the diminishing of the State of Israel, and as a result of that to make the coming of the Messiah a possible reality.

The activities of this group are both peaceful and violent.⁴¹ They have contacts and meetings in the Muslim world. They have gatherings and lectures. Yet again, at the same time they oppose physically with violent demonstrations mainly in Israel, and mostly in Jerusalem, both police forces and do not hesitate to injure civilians either.⁴²

In their home page on the internet, some details are presented. The descriptions include the information of time and place.⁴³ For some of their activities they have more detailed and separate place in their web site.⁴⁴ They also use the media in different ways, even though only because it serves their purposes and not because they agree with these medias. One of the more conventional ways in their use are the letters and newsletters.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, they use also forms of Media and communication that are less or even not conventional in their circles.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ G.J. Neuberg, op. cit., p. 1.

⁴¹ For a sociological treatment, see Menachem Friedman, *Religious Zealots in Israeli Society*, in: *On Ethnic and Religious Diversity in Israel*, ed. by Ernst Krausz, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan 1975, pp. 91–112. See also: Menachem Friedman, *Haredi Violence in Contemporary Israeli Society*, “Studies in Contemporary Jewry” 2002, Vol. 18, pp. 186–97. For a critical discussion of its ideology see Norman Lamm, *The Ideology of the Neture Karta-According to the Satmarer Version*, “Tradition” 1971, Vol. 12, pp. 38–53. Nore sympathetic treatments of the movement are to be found in Emile Marmorstein, *Heaven at Bay*, Hamadpis, Lomdon 1958.

⁴² Menachem Friedman, op. cit., pp. 186–197.

⁴³ For some of their activities see <http://www.nkusa.org/activities/index.cfm>.

⁴⁴ For their demonstrations see <http://www.nkusa.org/activities/demonstrations/index.cfm>; for speeches they give on different occasions see <http://www.nkusa.org/activities/demonstrations/index.cfm>; for the various times they have been interviewed see <http://www.nkusa.org/activities/interviews/index.cfm>, for the different conferences they have organized or have participated in see <http://www.nkusa.org/activities/conferences/index.cfm>, and so on.

⁴⁵ For some see <http://www.nkusa.org/activities/Letters/index.cfm>, and <http://www.nkusa.org/activities/Newsads/index.cfm>.

⁴⁶ See http://www.nkusa.org/Media_Clips/index.cfm, and of course their web site.

Most of their activities are documented in such a way that everyone who are interested is able to follow it.

Among other information that can be found in their web-site, *Neture Karta* publishes a table in which all the late events and actions that were made by them as a group or by their individuals in consent from the group are to be found.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, there are many more activities and all have the same purpose, to help to the destruction of the State of Israel. Such activities vary from the burning of the flag of Israel on different occasions such as on the 16 of Mars 2014 in Montreal, in Brooklyn NY, in Kiryas Joel NY, Monsey NY, and London, all on the same day, which is the day of the Jewish holyday of Purim.

They also continue with an official warm attitude towards the Palestinians and the causes of the most extreme Arab groups. As for example on the 6th of June 2014 in their participation in the so called “Global March to Jerusalem” in NYC, on 9 July 2014 a protest for “Palestine” in NYC, on 11 Juli 2014 a speech for “Palestine”, on 16 July 2014 in Montreal a rally in support with Gaza, and the same actions on the 18th of July in Buffalo NY and Luton England, on the 20th July in Chicago IL, on the 23th July 2014 in Boston, and on the 24th of July in Jerusalem, 25th of July 2014 in Atlanta GA etc.

Many times this attitude leads to violent events such as on 5th July 2014 both in London and in Washington DC., where members of *Neture Karta* have protested against what they call “Jewish outrage at Zionist attacks in Palestine”.⁴⁸ There are many more instances in which violence occurred in their actions. In most of them violence in its various levels was planned beforehand.

They also continue with public lectures and interviews against the State of Israel, its leaders and its existence, as for example on the 27th of January 2014 in NYC, 18 Mars 2014 in Forth Wayne IN, 21st Mars 2014 NYC, 25th of May 2014 in Toronto, 1 June in NYC, in 6th of June 2014 in NYC a press TV interview with Rabbi Weiss, and on the 12th of June a radio interview with Burt Cohen.

Different kinds of protests and demonstrations against the existence of the State of Israel take place, some are more and some are less violent, as the following: on the 2nd of Mars 2014 in Washington DC a protest of AIPAC convention, followed only one day later and in the same place by a protest of the visit of the Israeli Prime minister, on the 4th of May 2014 in Boston MA an Israeli Independence day protest, and the same kind of protest on the 5th of May 2014 in Ukraine, on the 6th of May in Montreal, and on the same day in Jerusalem.

They also give their opinion about every issue that is in dispute between the State of Israel and the Arab states, such as the Temple Mount as it is written in <http://www.nkusa.org/AboutUs/index.cfm>: “The true Torah solution, the key to peace is the immediate return of Palestine to the Palestinians in its entirety including the Temple Mount and Jerusalem”. Of course, their opinion is in total agreement with the most extreme views

⁴⁷ <http://www.nkusa.org/activities/Recent/index.cfm?selectedyear=2015>.

⁴⁸ This article is not the place to discuss the wrong facts in this title.

against Israel and the Jews living there. While trying their best to sabotage any agreement between the sides, they consider themselves as righteous and their opinions as “authentic Jewish opinion”.⁴⁹ They also support and sympathize with the Al-Nakba, “The Disaster”, the Arab name for the loss of the Arabs against the Jews on the 1948 war. Their loss made it possible to build the modern State of Israel. On the 15th of May, the day of the national day of Israel, the *Neture Karta* see it as appropriate to march and demonstrate in sorrow. Such activities on this day is very common. For example see the supports of *Neture Karta* on the An-Nakba on the 15th of May 2014 in London, Ottawa, Washington DC, NYC and more.

They further openly support the attitude of the leaders of Iran, and their wish to diminish the State of Israel, such as the counter protest at the Iranian mission in NYC on the 27th April 2014. They even participated in the convention of denying the existence of the Holocaust that took place in Iran.

For them there is no limit and no issue too sensitive or too important on the way to destroy the State of Israel.

On the left side of all the parts of their home page there is the flag of Israel standing up and blowing in the wind.⁵⁰ It could have been a nice picture without the red prohibition mark above it.

This mark is actually the main concept of the *Neture Karta* group. There is no existence for the State of Israel. It is a forbidden identity. This is a very strong mark because of the exact place it is placed on, namely the center of the flag of the Jewish State. And also due to the fact that the flag beneath the sign is moving. So the sign above it blocks not only the flag but also its movement. It denies all forms of existence and all signs of life of the flag that symbolizes the Jewish State of Israel.

To be sure *Neture Karta* belongs above all to the periphery of the Jewish political and religious spectra. In fact, contrary to their view the majority of the ultra-Orthodox circles has increased their involvement in Israeli political life in the past few years. *Neture Karta* will not be able to do that as, to them, there is no middle way between complete Exile and complete salvation. And, from that follows that *Neture Karta* refuses to recognize the right of anyone to establish a “Jewish” State during the present period of exile.

⁴⁹ As for example see the 5th of Mars in NYC about the issue of the Mount Temple.

⁵⁰ Start page is to be found in <http://www.nkusa.org>.