



## Foreword

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The recent Israeli elections have handed the ultra-Orthodox minority unprecedented and outsized political power. Demographic trends suggest that by 2065, one in three Israelis will belong to this group. Given the religious dogmatism of the ultra-Orthodox, their regressive social views, and their minimal contribution to the Israeli economy and to its armed forces, some Israelis have begun to seriously doubt the viability of the Zionist enterprise, or at least to consider it gravely endangered.

This special issue comprises five research articles and one exceptional document that explore different aspects of the ultra-Orthodox in Israel. The articles, all written especially for this special issue by secular, Religious Zionist, and ultra-Orthodox scholars, engage with political, social, cultural, educational, psychological, and theological dimensions of ultra-Orthodox existence in the modern State of the Jews.

The special issue originates in the first annual conference of the Shandon-Tel Aviv Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, which took place on May 9, 2021. The conference was attended by a particularly large audience from China, Israel, the United States, France, and other countries, indicating the growing interest in a social group whose importance and uniqueness invite more academic attention.