

# “The Wall” and “Ascending as a Wall”: Neturei Karta, Zionism, and the Holocaust

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**Abstract:** This article examines how the Holocaust and related issues were discussed by Neturei Karta, the ultra-Orthodox faction most harshly opposed to Zionism. Based on an extensive analysis of hundreds of articles and opinion pieces published in the faction’s journal, it argues that writing about the Holocaust was central to Neturei Karta’s efforts to delegitimize Zionism on the eve of the State of Israel’s founding and in its first decades of existence. Zionists were blamed for directly and indirectly bringing about the physical destruction of European Jewry, as well as for exacting “a spiritual holocaust” against Jewish believers. These perspectives echo to this day.

**Key Words:** Neturei Karta, Zionism, the Holocaust

## Introduction

Neturei Karta is a faction within the Eda Haredit (The Haredi Council of Jerusalem).<sup>①</sup> The Eda Haredit consists of tens of thousands of people who, unlike mainstream ultra-Orthodox Jewish factions, isolate themselves from national institutions almost entirely, including abstaining from voting in

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<sup>①</sup> The Neturei Karta belonged to the Eda Haredit until 1966, when it withdrew from it. At the end of the 1970s, however, some Neturei Karta members rejoined the Eda Haredit and until today, there are some in Neturei Karta who identify with the Eda Haredit and others who do not.

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elections. Neturei Karta comprises several hundred individuals, most of whom live in Jerusalem's Mea Shearim neighborhood. Members of this faction are characterized by their especially harsh opposition to the Zionist state and its institutions. Some go beyond passive opposition and openly cooperate with Israel's enemies, describing Israel as occupied Palestinian territory.

One expression of Neturei Karta's radical worldview is their perspective on the Holocaust. The faction's current leader, Rabbi Meir Hirsch, publicly blames Zionism for the destruction of European Jewry and for "a spiritual holocaust" that supposedly happened to the Jewish people.<sup>①</sup>

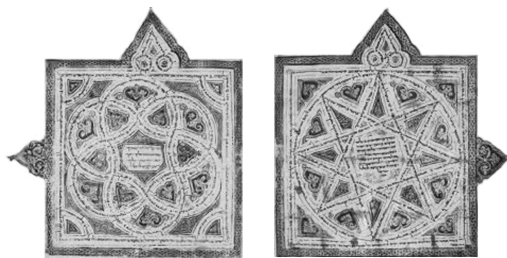
Radical as it may sound, Rabbi Hirsch's stance, which might have landed him in court and resulted in a lengthy prison sentence in some European countries, is not new. It reflects a perspective towards the Holocaust shaped by Neturei Karta's rhetoric since the end of the Second World War. It also echoes the way in which the faction's leadership treated different affairs related to the Holocaust, including the Kasztner Affair and — notably different — the Eichmann trial.

This article — originally a master's thesis written at Tel Aviv University under the guidance of Prof. Dina Porat — is based on a contextual analysis of hundreds of opinion pieces and articles published between 1944 and 1961 in *HaChomah* (*The Wall*), Neturei Karta's journal. The article argues that writing about the Holocaust was central to Neturei Karta's consistent effort to delegitimize Zionism.

At the height of the Holocaust, and later throughout the 1948 Palestine War and the efforts to establish a Jewish state, Neturei Karta blamed the Zionists for directly and indirectly bringing about the physical destruction of European Jewry, as well as for exacting a spiritual holocaust against Jewish believers. This article illustrates that, instead of seeking to understand the Holocaust, Neturei Karta abused history to generate lies portraying Zionism as a diabolic movement.

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<sup>①</sup> See: "Enemy of the State: An Interview with Rabbi Israel Meir Hirsch," in the last article of this special issue.



## I . Neturei Karta: Historical Background

Neturei Karta began when some representatives of the anti-Zionist Haredi circles in Jerusalem's Old Yishuv withdrew, near the end of the First World War, from "The City Committee for Jerusalem's Jews"—an autonomous group responsible for representing the interests of the entire Jewish population in Jerusalem. They inaugurated an alternative group to represent the anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodox Jews of Jerusalem, called "The City Committee for Ashkenazi Communities" (which, since 1937, has been known as the Eda Haredit). It was led by Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld (1849-1932) and Rabbi Yitzhak Yerucham Diskin (1839-1925), who were, at the time, among the prevalent spiritual leaders of the Old Yishuv.

Another step in the group's self-isolation was the debate surrounding the "The Communities Ordinance of 1921" (*Hukat Hakehilot*). The ordinance intended to organize Jewish representation vis-à-vis British Mandate authorities in Palestine. According to the ordinance, all Jews in the Land of Israel would be represented before Mandate authorities through an umbrella organization: the Knesset of Israel. The *Kanaim* (Zealots) of Jerusalem refused to be represented by Zionists, and also opposed the establishment of a chief rabbinate.<sup>①</sup> As part of their struggle, they joined World Agudath Israel, the movement representing the majority of ultra-Orthodox Judaism.<sup>②</sup>

Following Hitler's rise to power in Germany (1933), World Agudath Israel was forced to collaborate with the Jewish Agency for Israel to acquire immigration (*aliyah*) certificates for its members. This collaboration exacerbated tensions within World Agudath Israel between those who argued a policy of total separation from the Zionist movement was obsolete and the *Kanaim*, who opposed collaboration under any circumstances. In 1935, following these tensions,

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① Motti Inbari, "Rabbi Amram Blau Founder of the Neturei Karta Movement: An Abridged Biography," in *Jewish Radical Ultra-Orthodoxy Confronts Modernity, Zionism and Women's Equality*, ed. Motti Inbari (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 195-196.

② Kimmy Kaplan, *Amram Blau: The World of Neturei Karta's Leader* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi and Ben-Gurion Institute, 2017), 48-49. [Hebrew]

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a faction led by Rabbi Amram Blau, the brother of Moshe Blau, the leader of Jerusalem's Agudath Israel, and Rabbi Aharon Katzenelbogen, withdrew in order to establish a new institution called HevratHahaim.<sup>①</sup>

In 1938, following their refusal to pay the tax fundraising the "Community Ransom" (*KoferHayishuv*), HevratHahaim's leadership published an announcement explaining their position. It was signed Neturei Karta. They have been using the name ever since.

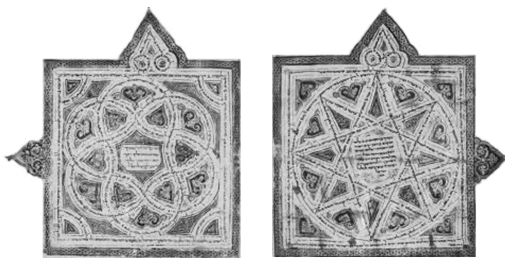
Neturei Karta is an Aramaic term meaning "guardians of the city." It is first mentioned in a midrash describing three wise men whom Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi sent to wander the Land of Israel and inspect its cities and towns to correct the wrongs they might see in them. When they arrived in one of the Jewish cities, they asked to meet the city's guards and were met by armed persons. They responded that these were not the guardians of the city, but its destroyers. According to them, the true guardians of the city are those studying the Torah. From the point of view of Neturei Karta, the scouts and guards in the Jewish Yishuv during the British Mandate were the city's destroyers, while the Yishuv's true guardians remained those who dedicated their lives to the Torah and its commandments (*mitzvot*).<sup>②</sup>

Aviezer Ravitzky, a scholar of Jewish religious and political thought, explained the purpose of the name Neturei Karta was to defy the shift in values that Zionism had attempted to implement. For generations, the Jewish people were instructed to adhere to the world of the Torah and to focus on spiritual-religious matters. They had to live by an oath not to "ascend as a wall" — meaning not to migrate to Israel in an organized, political manner. Zionism's mere existence led the Jewish people to act like other nations and peoples. It

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① Motti Inbari, "Rabbi Amram Blau Founder of the Neturei Karta Movement: An Abridged Biography," 196-197. Until 1945, both moderate and radical (*kanaim*) Haredim were members of the Eda Haredit. However, following the former's loss in organizational elections, Agudath Israel withdrew from the Eda Haredit. See: Menachem Friedman, "'Neturei Karta' and the Shabbat Demonstrations in Jerusalem between 1948-1950, Processes and Background," in *Divided Jerusalem — 1948-1967: Sources, Summaries, Selected Affairs, and Helpful Tools*, ed. Avi Bareli (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, 1994), 228-229. [Hebrew]

② Menachem Friedman, "Haredim and Palestinians in Jerusalem," in *Jerusalem: A City and Its Future*, eds. Marshall J. Breger and Ora Ahimeir (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 235-236.



asked the Jewish people to neglect the Torah and God and achieve its national aspirations using physical force. According to Neturei Karta, Zionism's actions defy divine ordinance.<sup>①</sup>

## II. *HaChomah* Journal

With the establishment of Neturei Karta as a body independent of The Jewish National Council and World Agudath Israel, its members, led by Blau (the editor of World Agudath Israel's journal between 1927-1933),<sup>②</sup> surmised that in order to influence Haredi public opinion, as well as general public opinion, they had to make themselves heard. They decided to create their own journal.

Despite the opposition of the Old Yishuv, Neturei Karta among them, to the use of Hebrew as an everyday language, they chose it as the language of their publications. The Hebrew language was the language of the majority in the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine, and the faction understood that for their opinions to be heard, they had to express them in Hebrew.<sup>③</sup>

The first issue of *HaChomah* was published in the Hebrew month of Sivan in 1944 (May-June). A manifesto of sorts was printed on the cover detailing the journal's roles, declaring: "The Target: To instill and establish a fortified wall for a Judaism religiously loyal to our holy Torah without compromise or concession."<sup>④</sup> Over the years, the journal was published under different names, including *Chomatenu* (Our Wall) and *MishmeretChomatenu* (Our Wall's Guard).

Neturei Karta used their journal to polemicize on two fronts: First, against the Zionist Yishuv in Palestine during the British Mandate and against the Israeli state and its institutions after its formation. Second, against

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① Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 61-62.

② A position he had lost due to his expressed disdain of the Chief Rabbinate and its leader, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook. See: Menachem Keren-Kratz, "Kol Yisrael and Crystallization of Haredi Identity in Mandate Palestine," *Kesher* 51 (2018), 149-150.[Hebrew]

③ Kimmy Kaplan, *Amram Blau: The World of Neturei Karta's Leader*, 27.

④ *HaChomah: An Issue for Religious Reinforcement*, Sivan 1944.

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Agudath Israel and its affiliated movements, Poalei Agudath Israel and Poalei Agudath Israel Jerusalem, who collaborated with the Zionists and were the main target of assault.<sup>①</sup> The journal addressed various sensitive issues, including the decision to establish the state, the public desecration of Shabbat, the enlistment of Haredim to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), and elections to the Israeli parliament. The Holocaust of European Jewry and its causes, along with other related affairs, were also discussed in the journal.

### III. Blaming Zionism for a Spiritual Holocaust

Separation from the Zionist enterprise and its characteristics was a central tenet of Neturei Karta's worldview. Their struggle against the Zionist movement was meant to emphasize Zionism's anti-religious character and the faction's disagreements with it. *HaChomah* was used as a platform for public protest against various issues connected with Neturei Karta's opposition to the Zionist enterprise and the State of Israel. Over the years, it published numerous articles attacking and denigrating Zionism and its leaders, along with the State of Israel and its institutions, while pointing out their "crimes" against religious Judaism.

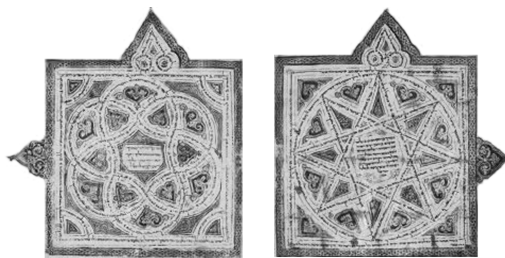
The discussion surrounding the Holocaust of European Jewry — as it happened and after the fact — was central to Neturei Karta's radical anti-Zionist rhetoric and to its efforts to present Zionism as an illegitimate movement. This discussion included an analogy between Nazi crimes and Zionist "crimes," as well as claims concerning the alleged collaboration between Zionists and Nazis.

This article focuses on such debates published in *HaChomah* between 1944 and 1961.

*HaChomah* claimed that the way in which children who emigrated to Israel were raised constituted a spiritual holocaust. These claims were

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<sup>①</sup> Poalei Agudath Israel saw the settlement of Israel and the State of Israel as valuable, while the Poalei Agudath Israel Jerusalem, while professing anti-Zionist views similar to those of Neturei Karta and the *Kanaim* in general, did not act to distance themselves completely from Zionist enterprise and even ran for seats in Israel's parliament. Kimmy Kaplan, *Amram Blau: The World of Neturei Karta's Leader*, 60.



motivated by the debate surrounding the Tehran Children at the beginning of the 1940s. At the time, an argument was taking place between the Religious Zionist and Haredi camps and the secular camp regarding the intake of hundreds of children, most of them orphans, who had been able to escape from Poland to Iran and were, in turn, brought to Israel by the Jewish Agency. Agudath Israel, representing Haredi Jews, argued that most children came from Haredi homes and, therefore, must be raised in the same way. Nevertheless, the great majority of children were sent to non-religious settlements and were raised in secular institutions.<sup>①</sup>

Already in June 1944, *HaChomah* concerned itself with child Holocaust survivors who were brought to Israel by the Jewish Agency, claiming that the children were forcefully secularized.

Therefore it [the Zionist movement] is now exploiting the terrible Holocaust which came as if in ambush, to steal the soft, inferno-struck children now reaching Israel, to take their religion away, incite them and remove them from holy Jewish law... In this manner, the ceaseless Zionist extermination machine operates. What Hitler, may his name and memory be blotted out, cannot finish abroad, the Zionist leadership completes here in Israel.<sup>②</sup>

Under the pen name “Man of Jerusalem,” the writer used the Holocaust both directly and metaphorically to describe the Zionist movement, its targets, and its activities. He explained how it maliciously exploited the innocence and orphanhood of child Holocaust survivors to exterminate them spiritually.

This was done, according to him, by controlling their intake and education in Israel while pursuing its true objective — the extinction of the Jewish religion. He went on to emphasize the devilish act (and thus also the comparison with the Nazis) by claiming that Zionism “exploited” the Holocaust to increase Jewish emigration to Israel under the pretense of rescue, as part of a plan to establish a national home for the Jewish people.

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① Dvora Hacoen, “History, Memory, Historiography: The ‘Tehran Children’ Controversy,” in *Culture, Memory, and History: Essays in Honor of Anita Shapira*, eds. Meir Hazan and Uri Cohen (Jerusalem: ZalmanShazar Center and Tel Aviv University, 2012), 275-311. [Hebrew]

② “The Child Slayers [Hebrew],” *HaChomah*, August 13, 1944.

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In an issue published several months later, the same line of attack persists, aiming to present the Zionist movement as a regime with Nazi objectives. The Zionists, like the Nazis, aspire to destroy Judaism:

And while our brothers abroad are led to the gallows, and their bodies meet the stake in the evil Goy detention camps, we see in front of our very eyes the burning of thousands of clear and pure souls of the children in Israel, in the extermination camps of our own evildoers, who torture them and force upon them a mental inquisition, tearing from their soft cores the belief in one God which their holy fathers MGAT [May God Avenge Them] wished for them as their souls rose to the heavens by pure and holy avenues. Aha! Crematoriums for our brother's bodies in Nazi camps — there, and Crematoriums for our children's souls in Zionist camps — here.<sup>①</sup>

The education of immigrant Jewish children was subject to many debates in the first years of the State of Israel as well. The leaders of Neturei Karta saw public and Zionist education as an attempt to extract children from the path of true Judaism.<sup>②</sup>

The analogy between the physical Holocaust and the spiritual “holocaust” persisted in the pages of *HaChomah* during the early 1950s as well. An article from June 1950, revolving around the opposition to the education given to children in immigration camps, states that “as we know, the Zionists established extermination camps in Israel, where tens of thousands of souls burn each day, souls of Jewish children who were brought here from every corner of the earth. The Zionist Gestapo quarantined the camps and erected blockades by the camps' entrances to delay those who want to enter and alert parents to the destructive terror hovering over their heads.”<sup>③</sup>

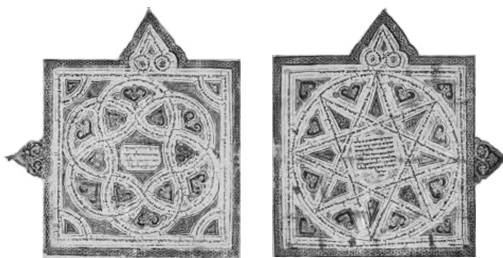
Similarly, in the preface to an article concerning the treatment of immigrants in the immigration camps (which *HaChomah* called “extermination camps”), it was said that: “While this is written, thick smoke

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① “Cremating the Souls [Hebrew],” *HaChomah*, February 7, 1945.

② Kimmy Kaplan, *Amram Blau: The World of Neturei Karta's Leader*, 479-480.

③ Zvi Jacobson, “On the Souls of Our Children [Hebrew],” *Om Ani Chomah*, June 1, 1950.



is seen gathering and rising from every refugee camp across the country... The Zionists who now wield power are this very day on their spiritual extermination quest... as was their target.”<sup>①</sup> After which, the writer pondered as to which extermination was worse since “their activity [the educational activity of Zionists] has in it an element that competes with the Nazi’s actions in the Majdanek and Auschwitz gas chambers.”<sup>②</sup>

In an issue from April 1950, an article was published under the headline: “In Auschwitz and in Israel.”<sup>③</sup> From the headline, it is evident that the article’s content aimed to create a parallel between the lives of Jews in Nazi concentration camps and the lives of religious Jews in Zionist Israel. In other words — it asserted that Nazi objectives during the Holocaust, i. e., the destruction of the Jewish people, and the desires of the Zionist regime to destroy the Jewish religion in the State of Israel, are identical.

The events that took place in Auschwitz are described by a Holocaust survivor who criticized the way Jewish prisoners who were assigned to supervise forced labor and other tasks in the camp conducted themselves. He presents them as Nazi collaborators, even though he knew full well that they had been forced, rather than chosen, to act the way they had.

In the interview, the Holocaust survivor compares the Zionist regime with the Nazi regime. He explains that by virtue of its secularism, the Zionist regime is an apostate one, sinful and blasphemous in its essence, which, through force, seeks to detach immigrants from Torah values and from *halakha* (Jewish law). The writer called the immigration camps “concentration” and “extermination” camps, the purpose of which was to force Jewish people to leave the path of the Torah and religious belief in God.<sup>④</sup>

#### IV. Zionism as Responsible for the Holocaust and the Physical Destruction of European Jewry

Gershon Greenberg, a scholar of Jewish theology, found that during the

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① “In the Fire’s Tongues [Hebrew],” *Om Ani Chomah*, July 27, 1950.

② Ibid.

③ S. Halevi, “In Auschwitz and in Israel,” *Om Ani Chomah*, July 27, 1950.

④ Ibid.

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first years of the Second World War, Orthodox Jewish thinkers emphasized the role of Amalek—a generic term for the traditional enemy of the Jewish people who embodies evil throughout the world as part of the divine plan to bring the Jewish people back to the righteous path of the Torah. However, as the war went on and the extent of evil increased, it became more difficult to justify the horrors with the claim of divine providence. Some turned to an explanation focused on the inner Amalek, part and parcel of the Jewish people, who encouraged the outer Amalek, meaning the Nazi gentiles (*goyim*, i.e., non-Jews).<sup>①</sup>

Years before the Holocaust, Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman (1874-1941)—a prominent rabbi and leader of Agudath Israel who was killed in the Holocaust—wrote that the inner Amalek precedes the outer Amalek and feeds it by asking Jews to assimilate into other cultures and people, leading to increased hatred towards the Jews. Wasserman believed that belief in God, as well as the Torah, is part of human existence and that without it, the “evil inclination” (*yetzer hara*) grows and manifests itself in blasphemy and idol worship (*avodazara*). Accordingly, the blasphemy brought about by national and secular Judaism—the destruction of the Torah and persecution of its followers—was, in fact, a declaration of war against God that led to the inner destruction of the Jewish people. For these reasons, Rabbi Wasserman saw those variations of Judaism as an inner Amalek, one that fueled the external hate inherent to other nations and ultimately led to the Holocaust.<sup>②</sup>

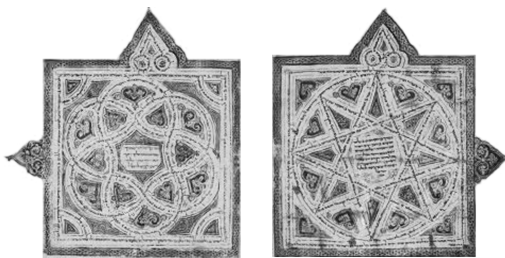
*HaChomah*'s first issue quoted Wasserman's ideas, copied from his book *A Collection of Notes*. His ideology was adapted to fit the times:

And it is written, God fights with Amalek from one generation to the next, and the Torah testifies that the war persists in every generation until the coming of the Messiah. But in previous generations, when the Torah ruled in Israel, the war was waged by the seed of Amalek from the gentile nations of the world. But since we unburdened ourselves from the

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① Gershon Greenberg, “Amalek in Holocaust-Era Orthodox Jewish Thought,” in *Bioethical and Ethical Issues Surrounding the Trials and Code of Nuremberg: Nuremberg Revisited*, ed. Jacques J. Rozenberg (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003), 203.

② *Ibid.*, 205-206.



Torah, the seed of Amalek now sprawls in our midst and multiplies among our converted to enrage...<sup>①</sup>

The identification of Zionism as a blasphemous secular movement is the ideological basis for Neturei Karta's isolationism. According to them, in wishing to resemble other nations and peoples, Zionism aspired to build a national home without tradition, without the Torah and its commandments, and, in doing so, it brought about the destruction of the Jewish religion; therefore, it was seen as the root of all the evils experienced by the Jewish people.

## V. Blaming Zionists for Sabotaging the Rescue of Jews in the Holocaust

According to Neturei Karta, the Zionist leadership's hatred towards diaspora Jews, especially religious Jews, was not manifested only in their forced secularization of Jewish children but also in their efforts to sabotage the rescue of ultra-Orthodox Jews in Europe. Thus, Zionists were blamed by Neturei Karta for participating, alongside the Germans, in the murder of Jews during the Holocaust.

At the end of August 1944, Neturei Karta's journal included the supposed testimonies of religious Jews who immigrated through the efforts of the Jewish Agency's "Rescue Committee" (*VaadHahatzalah*). The committee was formed in January 1943 after reports that confirmed, at the end of 1942, the systematic extermination of European Jews. The committee's goal was to act as an umbrella organization for the entire Yishuv in Mandatory Palestine, which would include the various factions and coordinate rescue efforts.

The article referred to activities aimed at rescuing Hungary's Jews that year. Its title, "Rescue Committee or Extermination Committee," implies its content:

Some Torah-observant Jews say: Those [Zionist Jews] who were appointed agents of the rescue committee do not allow a Torah-observant

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<sup>①</sup> "Our Condition [Hebrew]," *HaChomah*, Sivan 1944. See also: "Our Condition [Hebrew]," *HaChomah*, December 14, 1944.

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Jew to be rescued. They do not give him room to board a ship, or any means of rescue, under any circumstances... They also say: agents of the rescue committee came, carrying fortunes, to a famous place of slaughter to save a list of twenty-eight blasphemous Zionists, their friends. And when these were not found there, other Jews begged them to be saved now that they had no other choice, and those [the agents] refused to hear and went back whence they had come.<sup>①</sup>

The Zionist leadership, and the Rescue Committee as its representative, were thus presented as a cruel devil, the enemy of the Jewish people, who wished to destroy Haredi Judaism and “finish” the German mission.

Behind these claims lies a complex reality. The Nazis invaded Hungary in March 1944. Prior to the invasion, David Ben-Gurion, then the head of the Jewish Agency, had proposed to try and put pressure on Britain to increase its quota of immigration permits, while at the same time increasing the sums allocated for rescue.<sup>②</sup> A debate raged between various parties and movements regarding immigrants’ demographics and the allocation of seating on the ships. Agudath Israel claimed it was marginalized, and that despite agreements promising it six percent of immigration capacity, the ships that had arrived in April and May did not include even one of its members or affiliated persons.<sup>③</sup>

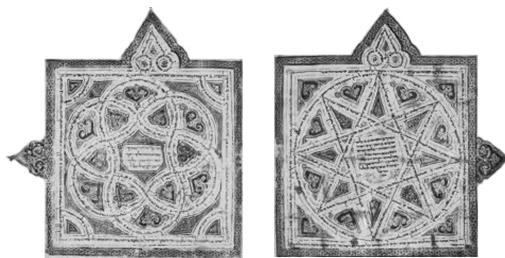
It cannot be ignored that throughout the debates that took place in the Jewish Agency, complaints were raised among some of the Zionist party leaders concerning the number of anti-Zionist immigrants. On the other hand, other officials agreed with Agudath Israel that the number of immigrant members from their ranks on the ships was indeed small. The debate was mainly moot, however, since, in practice, the operator of the Romanian shipyard was a Greek man called YankiPandelis, and the people of the Mossad

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① “Aha! Rescue or Extermination Committee God Have Mercy?! [Hebrew],” *HaChomah*, August 30, 1944.

② Tuvia Friling, *Arrows in the Dark: David Ben-Gurion, the Yishuv Leadership, and Rescue Attempts During the Holocaust*, Vol. 2 (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 4-5.

③ Chaim Shalem, *A Time to Take Action to Rescue Jews: Agudat Yisrael in Eretz Israel Confronting the Holocaust 1942-1945* (Sde Boker: The Ben-Gurion Research Institute/Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2007), 184-185. [Hebrew]



Aliyah Bet knew that his motivations were entirely financial.<sup>①</sup>

Yitzhak Gruenbaum, a Polish Jewish leader during the 1920s, was the head of the Rescue Committee. Gruenbaum, as the committee's representative, was himself put under fire in the pages of *HaChomah*, both for being a secular Zionist and for leading the rescue efforts, which were largely unsuccessful.<sup>②</sup> He was attacked and described as one who maliciously and intentionally acted to exterminate Haredi Judaism based on personal grudges. His son, Eliezer, who was imprisoned in Auschwitz during the war, was criticized severely:

There is a certain Jew in Poland named Gruenbaum who, during the last five years of the war, placed himself at the service of the Nazis and became a Gestapo agent, the executor of the extermination of Polish Jews. Gruenbaum did his job with zeal, delivered his own people to the slaughter, crushed the skulls of babies and infants using his very hands, threw thousands of brothers and sisters, old folk and elderly, rabbis and *tzadikim* [righteous people] into the gas chambers and furnaces, [and] brought thousands of the Sons of Israel out of hiding and put them on the gallows... They, the Zionist leaders, know better than anyone that Gruenbaum, the son, inherited the morals and ideology of the father. He had learned from him the lesson that the goat's life is superior to that of a human being, and that standing on the blood of Jews for whichever interest is permitted, he understood that a death blow must be given to Haredi Jews...<sup>③</sup>

The article also claims that Gruenbaum used money allocated for the rescue of European Jews in order to save his son, who was under arrest in Paris at the time. According to the article, the leaders of the Yishuv were aware the money was being used for these purposes but kept quiet because they feared that public knowledge might turn to public outrage or, worse, that the

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① Dina Porat, *The Blue and the Yellow Stars of David: The Zionist Leadership in Palestine and the Holocaust 1939-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 247-249.

② *Ibid.*, 64-71.

③ "The Sins of the Father [Hebrew]," *HaChomah*, January 21, 1946.

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money they had been receiving might stop.<sup>①</sup>

These are baseless claims. Eliezer (Itche) Gruenbaum, son of Yitzhak Gruenbaum, was, in fact, imprisoned in Auschwitz at the end of June 1942, where he was appointed to various positions, one of which was block attendant. When the war ended, he returned to Paris.

In August 1945, he was arrested for assisting the Nazis and became subject to investigations after having been identified in the streets by some survivors. During these investigations, he met his father numerous times. He was eventually released, largely thanks to his father, who sought out witnesses to testify on his behalf, but also because he was arrested in France for an offense that neither took place within its territory nor against its citizens. Therefore, he could not be tried in the country.<sup>②</sup>

As for the allegation itself, once the scope of calamities became apparent, and even more so after 1942, the elder Gruenbaum acted prodigiously, within his position, to rescue Jews despite holding an advisory office with no executive powers.<sup>③</sup> In deliberations within the Jewish Agency in the summer of 1944 following the occupation of Hungary, Gruenbaum asserted, contrary to Ben-Gurion's opinion, that a Zionist prerequisite should not be set for immigration. This was due both to common perception in Jewish public opinion and because in Romania, to which Jewish refugees escaped, everyone was in an appalling state that made preferences of this kind ill-advised.<sup>④</sup>

## Ⅵ. The Zionist Leadership's Indifference towards the Holocaust

Along with Gruenbaum, *HaChomah* mentioned Dr. Chaim Weizmann,

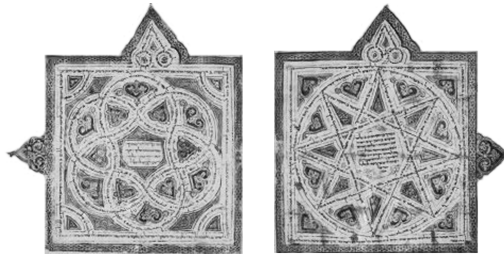
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① "The Sins of the Father [Hebrew]," *HaChomah*, January 21, 1946.

② Tuvia Friling, *A Jewish Kapo in Auschwitz: History, Memory, and the Politics of Survival* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2014), 31-50, 137-155.

③ Dina Porat, "'Do Your Utmost to Verify Your Cable': Yitzhak Gruenbaum, His Activities and Statements During the Holocaust," in *When Disaster Comes from Afar: Leading Personalities in the Land of Israel Confront Nazism and the Holocaust, 1933-1948*, ed. Dina Porat (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, 2009), 449, 465-471 [Hebrew]; Tuvia Friling, *Arrows in the Dark: David Ben-Gurion, the Yishuv Leadership, and Rescue Attempts During the Holocaust*, 5-7.

④ Dina Porat, *The Blue and the Yellow Stars of David: The Zionist Leadership in Palestine and the Holocaust 1939-1945*, 248-250.



who served as president of the World Zionist Organization during the Holocaust. In an article published in the September 1948 issue and which was mainly a severe indictment against the Jewish Agency as representative of the Zionist movement, the two were asked to respond to allegations that numerous opportunities to rescue European Jews arose during the war and that these were intentionally blocked, despite knowing full well that this was a death sentence for Jews who were not rescued. The article argued that the supposedly reductive statements by Weizmann and Gruenbaum regarding European Jews during the Holocaust were allegedly proof of their decision to abandon European Jewry to the Nazis.<sup>①</sup>

According to the article, at the bottom of the hierarchy of European Jews, in the eyes of Zionism and its leaders, stood, allegedly, religious Jews, who did not have any right to exist as far as Zionists were concerned. That is why they did not merit being rescued, and there is no problem with them “going into the furnaces.”<sup>②</sup>

The article stated that the same leaders who abandoned Jewish people to die were those whose policy of ingratiation at the feet of foreign nations—in order to normalize the idea of Jewish nationalism—had led to growing antisemitism in Europe. In this way, Zionism, according to the authors of the article, aided, directly and indirectly, the Holocaust and the deaths of millions of Jews.<sup>③</sup>

At the peak of the 1948 War, around the time Israel declared its independence, *HaChomah* published an opinion piece entitled “Is This the Love of Israel?” The writer argued that the deaths of hundreds of Jews in the war did not indicate dedication and sacrifice for ideals, as the Zionists sought to portray it, but a grave crime, an intentional mass murder. What guided Zionism and its leaders was not the love of Israel, but the hatred of it.

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① “The Jewish Agency Is Required to Respond with a Clear Yes or No [Hebrew],” *HaChomah*, September 30, 1948. Porat indicates that even during the 1980s, Haredi allegations against the Zionist movement and its role in the Holocaust prominently included these two figures. Dina Porat, “‘Amalek’s Accomplices’ Blaming Zionism for the Holocaust: Anti-Zionist Ultra-Orthodoxy in Israel During the 1980s,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 27 (1992), 700-701.

② “The Jewish Agency Is Required to Respond with a Clear Yes or No [Hebrew],” *HaChomah*, September 30, 1948.

③ Ibid.

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The proof was that the Zionists were the ones who had delivered Torah-observant Jews into the hands of the Nazis so that the former would not become an obstacle to their future plans: “And who might these be, the ones who delivered into Nazi hands in Europe those among the Jews who wouldn’t take a Zionist Shekel; who might they be, who persecuted Torah-observant Jews to death during the war and afterward, who might they be, if not these so-called ‘Lovers of Israel...’”

Through his words, the writer directly connected the Holocaust, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the 1948 War, and explained that on its way to fulfilling its primary objective of establishing a state, Zionism was willing to act at the expense of the suffering and deaths of many people, and drag Israel into a bloody war not only with the Arabs living in Palestine at the time but with every Arab nation surrounding it. The Zionists acted the same way, the article argued, during the Holocaust, when they intentionally sabotaged the rescue of religious Jews as part of its plan to establish a secular-Zionist state.<sup>①</sup>

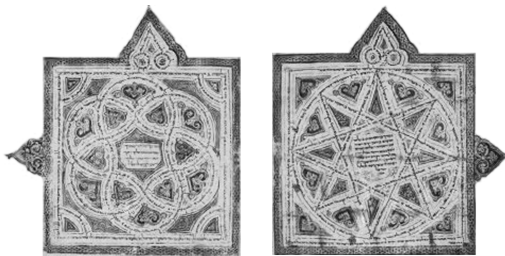
In the same spirit, in 1948, two months after Israel’s declaration of independence and at the end of the first temporary truce in the war, *HaChomah* published an article with a similar orientation — not only are the Zionists not really the traditional sons of Israel, but they aim to uproot the Torah of Israel. Accordingly, the secular Zionist nation is just like the other nations of the world. As such, it participated, along with other nations of the world, in the destruction of six million Jews during the Holocaust by standing aloof and out of a clear interest in achieving its ultimate goal — establishing a nation-state.

The writer argued that the Zionists persisted in this way by dragging the people into a war that resulted in the unnecessary loss of many Jewish lives for a theologically illegitimate cause, a Jewish state:

They are a nation as low as the rest of the *goyim* [other nations]. Just like the rest of the world’s nations stood aloof and killed our six million brothers in Europe with their own hands, just like them, the modern nation of the Zionists, they too have a hand in the cruel mass

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① Y. P., “Is This the Love of Israel? [Hebrew],” *HaChomah*, March 4, 1948.



murder of millions of our martyrs. It is, therefore, no wonder that when they declared a state, they favorably remembered that enemy of the Jews, Hitler, may his name and memory be blotted out, who had helped them in their efforts to establish their nation by exterminating millions. They follow him in his ways as a modern nation by destroying thousands and tens of thousands of peaceful inhabitants to achieve their false objective.<sup>①</sup>

Thus, according to Neturei Karta, the birth of the State of Israel constitutes heresy against God's will and, therefore, must be condemned and confronted fiercely. Moreover, Zionism, on its way to self-fulfillment, had done intentional evil—whether in the 1948 War that took the lives of many, or earlier, in not rescuing European Jews from extermination, standing by and even actively aiding their destruction.

### VII. The Kasztner Trial

Attempts to link Zionism with Nazi actions did not revolve exclusively around those acting from within the Yishuv. According to Neturei Karta, the moral decline which characterized the Zionist leadership after the establishment of the State of Israel was tethered to the way its representatives acted in Europe, and generally to all those who identified as Zionists, who were seen as suspected collaborators,<sup>②</sup> or worse—as central causes for the extermination of European Jewry.

Dr. Israel (Rezső) Kasztner was, during the Second World War, one of the Zionists movement's most prominent leaders and a member of the Aid and Rescue Committee in Budapest. As part of his role, he negotiated with the Germans, a fact known to the Zionist leadership in Mandatory Palestine, to save Hungarian Jews. After the war, Kasztner's rescue efforts and the results thereof provoked a controversy that reached its peak in the Greenwald-Kasztner trial. The trial, which commenced on January 1, 1954, quickly turned political. At its center stood the political and ethical problems the

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① "Investigation and Clarification [Hebrew]," *HaChomah*, July 21, 1948.

② See: "From One Week to The Next [Hebrew]," *Om Ani Chomah*, January 11, 1951.

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Zionist leadership faced concerning rescue efforts during the Holocaust.<sup>①</sup>

The trial began with a criminal complaint for libel filed against Malchiel Greenwald, a gonzo pamphleteer who had accused Kasztner of collaborating with the Nazis and abandoning Jews. In June 1954, Kasztner turned from accuser to accused, and the trial transformed into the Kasztner affair and a fierce public debate over the policies of the Zionist leadership in Mandatory Palestine during the Holocaust. It was only at this point that Neturei Karta's journal found it apt to publish an article about the trial. Kasztner's name was not mentioned in the article. Instead, Zionism, as a movement, was blamed for participating in the destruction of Hungarian Jewry:

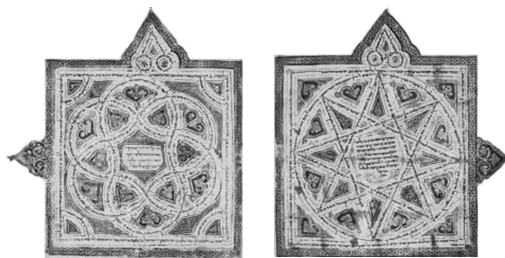
And now comes the trial between two Hungarian immigrants, which places in front of the Zionist judge the shameful conduct of the Zionists in its entirety when it came to saving the Jews of Hungary. The hairs of one's head should stand on end upon hearing the atrocious details of how these ignoble murderers lent their hands in delaying and sabotaging rescue, all to help each other to establish the apostate state. The details of how, with their very hands, they misled one of the rescue agents and put a stop to the entire plan are terrible. And terrible, too, are the declarations and responses of the Zionist leaders, who openly said that they would not let the details come to light or anything concerning their Zionist inclinations, even if the cost would exceed hundreds of thousands of Jews, who were, for these reasons, led to their extermination in the fiery furnaces...<sup>②</sup>

It was for a reason that the writer chose to argue that the Kasztner Trial supplied decisive evidence that Zionism was actively and maliciously sabotaging the rescue efforts of Jews during the Holocaust. Greenwald himself had made this kind of allegation in his pamphlets when he explained that Kasztner chose, allegedly, to save his relatives and affiliates for bribe money, while everyone

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① Yehiam Weitz, *The Man Who Was Murdered Twice: The Life, Trial, and Death of Dr. Israel Kasztner* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1995). [Hebrew]

② A. Yehuda Cohen, "Upon Thy Walls Jerusalem: Those Destroyers [Hebrew]," *MishmeretChomatenu*, June 17, 1954.



else, Haredi Jews among them, were sent to the extermination camps.<sup>①</sup>

The historical truth is different. The decisions on the make-up of the passengers were made by a small committee headed by Auto Komoly, the director of the Rescue Committee. Alongside Kasztner, this committee consisted of additional representatives, including some from the Orthodox community in Cluj. Kasztner was a key figure in this affair, but he was not the only one who decided who would board which train.<sup>②</sup>

The proceedings, which placed the leadership of the Yishuv alongside Kasztner at the forefront of the accusations, affected public opinion and did not go unnoticed by Neturei Karta, which found it fertile grounds for their anti-Zionist ideology. In order to prove that the Zionist idea and its proponents brought about a disaster, the February 1955 issue of the movement mentioned another affair concerning the Holocaust alongside their coverage at the peak of the Kasztner trial. The affair, namely the reparations agreement between Israel and West Germany, had already led to wide public debate at the time.<sup>③</sup>

The writers emphasized that the trial confirmed the claim concerning Zionism's responsibility during the Holocaust; it was not merely a passive participant but actively collaborated with the Nazis, and the proof of this lay in Kasztner's deeds. As if this was not enough, according to the article, Zionism went further by taking reparation money and German commodities as part of the reparation agreement, in the manner of "Hast thou killed and also taken possession."<sup>④</sup>

On June 22, 1955, the verdict was passed in Kasztner's trial. In it, Judge Benjamin Halevi, the president of the district court, determined that Kasztner had "sold his soul to the devil," for in his actions as a Nazi collaborator, he had effectively supported the Nazi extermination operation.

Nine days later, an article was published in Neturei Karta's journal under

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① Yehiam Weitz, *The Man Who Was Murdered Twice: The Life, Trial, and Death of Dr. Israel Kasztner*, 95.

② Yehuda Bauer, *Jews for Sale? Nazi-Jewish Negotiations, 1933-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 198.

③ Isaac Ashkenazi, "Herzl's Doctrine of Slaughter [Hebrew]," *MishmeretChomatenu*, February 17, 1955.

④ The term originates in the biblical tale of Naboth's vineyard, 1 Kings 21:19 (KJV).

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the large, bolded headline: “The Kasztner Trial.” This was the first time since this journal began reporting on the trial that the name of Israel Kasztner was mentioned as the primary defendant.

Nevertheless, the content accorded with the manner of reporting that Neturei Karta’s journal had taken until then, emphasizing that “during the Kasztner trial, Zionist leaders in Israel were also accused of aiding the extermination.” Furthermore, “To us, this is not new. Haredi Jews knew and still know that the Zionists are the haters of Judaism, in mind and in spirit alike.”<sup>①</sup>

In mid-July 1955, the journal returned to the Kasztner trial. Again, Kasztner was not mentioned by name as a defendant, and the article began by stating: “A Zionist directly participated in the extermination of about a million Hungarian Jews.”<sup>②</sup> The timing of these publications is noteworthy — shortly afterward, on July 26, Israel’s third parliamentary elections were set to be held. It was a tumultuous election with the trial, especially the verdict, in the background. All sides tried to exploit the verdict during their campaigns for political gain.<sup>③</sup>

Neturei Karta did not participate in the election. Nevertheless, its leaders wanted to remind the public, especially close to the elections, that “The Zionists have ceased to be ‘suspects’ and are now direct defendants on trial for the mass extermination of large Jewish groups.”<sup>④</sup> Kasztner himself, it was claimed, was only one example of Zionism’s crimes, and therefore mentioning him by name was of no importance; it was enough to say that he was a “*Nazo-Judes*,” and that he felt that “there were a million superfluous Jews in Hungary; this ‘excess’ he tried, dedicated wholeheartedly to the Hitlerite Asmodeus, to remove.”<sup>⑤</sup>

Why did Kasztner collaborate with the Nazis, according to the authors?

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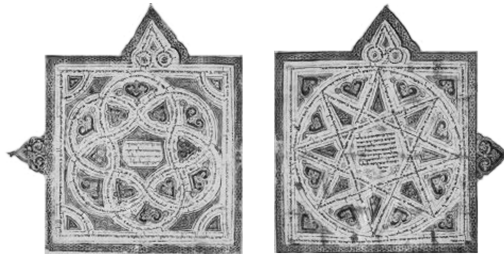
① M. H., “The Kasztner Trial [Hebrew],” *MishmeretChomatenu*, June 30, 1955.

② Porat, *The Yellow Badge*; “The Zionist Hackenritzles [Hebrew],” *MishmeretChomatenu*, July 15, 1955.

③ Yehiam Weitz, *The Man Who Was Murdered Twice: The Life, Trial, and Death of Dr. Israel Kasztner*, 287-299.

④ “The Zionist Hackenritzles [Hebrew],” *MishmeretChomatenu*, July 15, 1955.

⑤ *Ibid.*



They suggested that not unlike the Zionist leaders, he acted out of heartfelt hatred for Haredi Jews and to prevent their migration to the Land of Israel. He went as far as negotiating with the Nazis, which eventually led to them sending hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Haredi Jews to their deaths.<sup>①</sup>

In January 1957, proceedings commenced in the appeal the state had submitted against Benjamin Halevi's verdict in the hope of clearing Kasztner's name. However, on the night of March 3, 1957, Kasztner was murdered near his home. The murder struck a nerve in Israeli society despite its political and ideological polarization, which was expressed in the various newspapers that reported with shock on the assassination.<sup>②</sup>

Neturei Karta, for its part, chose to ignore the murder. Only at the end of that month did it mention it in a small article, which deepened the demonic image of the Zionist regime. The article argued that Kasztner's assassins had learned from their Zionist predecessors how traitors and opponents should be treated, as had been the case with Dr. Jacob Israël de Haan (1881-1924)<sup>③</sup>—the spokesperson for the anti-Zionist Haredi Jews in Jerusalem — who was murdered in June 1924 at the entrance to the Shaare Zedek Hospital (an operation possibly carried out by the Haganah due to De Haan's communications with British and Arab leaders).

## VIII. The Eichmann Trial

On May 23, 1960, David Ben-Gurion announced the capture of Adolf Eichmann and of his being brought to Israel to stand trial. Eichmann was one of the prominent architects of the Holocaust of European Jewry.<sup>④</sup> The announcement electrified the nation and became the main topic of discussion in

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① "The Zionist Hackenritzles [Hebrew]," *MishmeretChomatenu*, July 15, 1955.

② Yehiam Weitz, *The Man Who Was Murdered Twice: The Life, Trial, and Death of Dr. Israel Kasztner*, 325-328.

③ "Whoso Keepeth the Fig Tree Shall Eat the Fruit Thereof [Hebrew]," *MishmeretChomatenu*, March 28, 1957.

④ "The Prime Minister's Announcement Regarding the Arrest of Adolf Eichmann [Hebrew]," *DivreiHaKnesset* 22 (May 23, 1950):1291.

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the Israeli-Jewish public.<sup>①</sup>

In contrast, Neturei Karta referred to Eichmann's arrest only at the beginning of June and declared in their journal: "The land trembles, and a great uproar sounds from the edge of the Zionist state... after many years they were now able to catch the vile enemy of Israel, Adolf Eichmann, may his name and memory be blotted out, and bring him clandestinely to their country."<sup>②</sup>

While Israel's streets were brimming with national pride and hunger for vengeance, Neturei Karta chose to present the future trial as an attempt by the Zionists to "fabricate history" and clear their name after the Kasztner Trial, which had revealed to the public that they had collaborated with the Nazis.<sup>③</sup>

Indeed, in the years leading up to the capture of Eichmann, both right and left-wing politicians claimed Ben-Gurion was not doing enough to capture the Nazi criminal because of some fear that, if he were to stand trial, Eichmann would expose his ties to Kasztner, and the affair would return to the headlines and haunt Ben-Gurion and his party, as it indeed did during the trial itself.<sup>④</sup>

Neturei Karta's journal presented the trial's objectives, supposedly citing Ben-Gurion himself,<sup>⑤</sup> and, at the same time, claimed that the Zionists' ultimate purpose was to clear their name from their guilt which had become public knowledge. What was this guilt? The article's title, "The Inveigler and the Killer... One Judges the Other..." speaks to it. It originates in a passage from Midrash Numbers Rabbah in the name of Rabbi Shimon: "How do we know that a man's inveigler does more than his killer? For the killer kills in this world and leaves a part for the next one, while the inveigler kills him in this world and in the next one."<sup>⑥</sup>

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① Hanna Yablonka, *The State of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann* (New York: Schocken Books, 2004), 33-36.

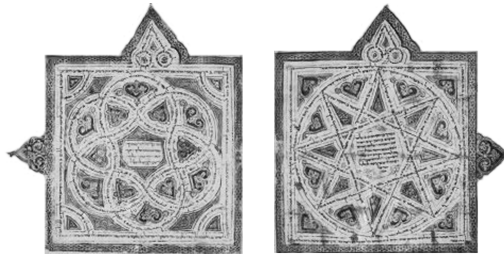
② "The Inveigler and The Killer...One Judges the Other..." [Hebrew], *MishmeretChomatenu*, June 9, 1960.

③ Ibid.

④ Ora Herman, *The Furnace and the Reactor: Behind the Scenes at the Eichmann Trial* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2017), 17. [Hebrew]

⑤ "The Inveigler and The Killer...One Judges the Other..." [Hebrew], *MishmeretChomatenu*, June 9, 1960.

⑥ Numbers Rabbah 21:4 [Hebrew].



Therefore, Zionism is the worst sin. According to Neturei Karta's journal, the Nazis might be guilty of exterminating the Jewish people by killing their bodies, but the Zionists' sin is greater because their notions of Jewish nationalism, blasphemous in themselves, led to antisemitism in Europe and to a hatred of Jews that brought about their destruction. According to the article, the Kasztner and Eichmann trials proved that the Zionists participated in the Holocaust by collaborating with the Nazis and negotiating with them.

In the following issue, Neturei Karta's journal described how the Zionists meant to clear their names of the bloodshed of millions of European Jews. They intended to do this, the article claimed, by drafting special laws that would allow for Eichmann to stand trial in Israel.<sup>①</sup> The issue of Israel's right to try Eichmann was at the center of the debate as soon as Eichmann was brought to the country. At that time, Ben-Gurion declared that Israel was a sovereign state and that it had the right to try Eichmann in an Israeli court, by Israeli judges, and according to Israeli laws.<sup>②</sup>

After discussing Eichmann's capture and its implications, Neturei Karta did not tend to the matter further. Only six months later or so, following Eichmann's formal arrest in Israel and while preparations for the trial, which was due to begin on April 11, 1961, were underway, did Neturei Karta's journal publish two articles criticizing Zionism and its role in the Holocaust.

Instead of dealing with Eichmann himself and his crimes as an enemy of the Jewish people, the journal chose to focus again on blaming the victim, as someone whose part in the destruction of European Jewry was even greater than that of the perpetrator of the crime — citing the murderer himself and treating his words as historical truth and fact.

Shortly after the trial began, the cover page of the mouthpiece published an article, spread across two pages, and titled: "The Zionists Try Eichmann,

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① S. D. Katz, "Thee Which Frameth Mischief by a Law [Hebrew]," *MishmeretChomatenu*, June 23, 1960.

② Ora Herman, *The Furnace and the Reactor: Behind the Scenes at the Eichmann Trial*, 61-65; Yehiam Weitz, "The Holocaust on Trial: The Impact of the Kasztner and Eichmann Trials on Israeli Society," *Israel Studies* 1 (1996), 17.

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May His Name and Memory be Blotted Out.”<sup>①</sup> The article brimmed with criticism and accusations, according to which the primary cause for the destruction of European Jewry was Zionism, the national ambitions of which meant breaking an oath not to “immigrate as a wall” and ended ultimately in bringing about the Holocaust.

The article stated, “If one took everything into account, one would find that these blasphemous Zionists are far worse for the House of Israel than all of its enemies and opponents hitherto. All evil nations threatening Israel have not done to the people of Israel what the Zionists came to do [with their many iniquities].”<sup>②</sup>

Apart from another article that continued to blame Zionism and its leaders for the Holocaust through the Eichmann trial,<sup>③</sup> the journal did not discuss the Eichmann trial further—not the survivors’ testimonies, the verdict, or the death sentence, which was eventually given, nor the execution. This, while the trial and the testimonies heard in it were at the center of the public agenda in Israel.<sup>④</sup>

The great importance of the Eichmann trial, as explained by the historian Hanna Yablonka, was that it generated a double shift in consciousness: On the one hand, it crystallized information about the Holocaust into knowledge and consciousness, and on the other hand, it bound the Holocaust to the Israeli national ethos.<sup>⑤</sup>

According to Michal Shaul, a scholar of Haredi Holocaust memory, the Eichmann trial changed attitudes toward the Holocaust also in the mainstream ultra-Orthodox public. In the eyes of Haredi Jews, *Kiddush Hashem* (sanctification of God’s name) was absent from the trial, which instead emphasized Zionist values of armed heroism and presented Israel as the only

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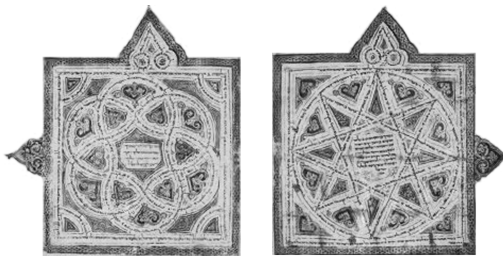
① “The Zionists Try Eichmann, May His Name and Memory Be Blotted Out [Hebrew],” *MishmeretChomatenu*, April 27, 1961.

② Ibid.

③ “Eichmann: I Was Enthused by the Zionist Idea and its Initiator, Herzl (the Name of the Wicked Shall Rot) ‘Some Country, Some Firm Ground under their Feet [Hebrew],” *MishmeretBeitenu*, June 29, 1961.

④ Yehiam Weitz, “The Holocaust on Trial: The Impact of the Kasztner and Eichmann Trials on Israeli Society,” 19.

⑤ Hanna Yablonka, *The State of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann*, 222.



refuge for the Jewish people.<sup>①</sup> The ultra-Orthodox factions felt, accordingly, that they were not permitted to take part in shaping Israeli remembrance of the Holocaust. As a result, in the early sixties, the ultra-Orthodox remembrance of the Holocaust was no longer integrated with the general historical memory, but became a counter-memory in which the two types of heroism were seen as polar opposites.<sup>②</sup>

In any case, changes in Holocaust remembrance in Israeli society at large, including among ultra-Orthodox factions, did not leave a mark on *Neturei Karta*. The main function of Eichmann's trial for the movement was to serve as another piece of supposedly supporting evidence to blame Zionism and its leaders for the Holocaust of European Jewry.

## Conclusion

*Neturei Karta's* journal, like other Haredi newspapers, functioned as a tool in an ideological struggle more than as a platform for credible news articles.<sup>③</sup> Accordingly, *HaChomah*, in its various incarnations, is a mirror that reflects the spirit and values that characterized this group.

*Neturei Karta's* persistent and relentless struggle against Zionism shaped the way in which their journal treated the Holocaust and related events. *Neturei Karta* claimed that the Zionists contributed directly and indirectly to the extermination of Jews, mainly religious Jews, and were responsible for the spiritual Holocaust that befell Jewish people.

Though *Neturei Karta* is numerically a small group in Haredi society, the

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① Michal Shaul, "Holocaust Memory in Ultra-Orthodox Society in Israel: Is it a 'Counter-Memory?'" *The Journal of Israeli History* 32 (2013), 221. Roni Stauber adds that in articles written during the fifties in ultra-Orthodox parties' newspapers, the heroism of the fighters in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, while strongly rejecting the claim that the physical resistance was tied to Zionism ideology and explaining that the uprising was a Jewish resistance. See: Roni Stauber, *Lessons for this Generation: Holocaust and Heroism in Israeli Public Discourse in the 1950s* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi/The Ben-Gurion Research Center/Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2000), 113. [Hebrew]

② Michal Shaul, "Holocaust Memory in Ultra-Orthodox Society in Israel: Is it a 'Counter-Memory?'" 228-229.

③ Kimmy Kaplan, "Profiles in the Haredi Press in Israel: History, Development, and Characteristics [Hebrew]," *Sectoral Media in Israel* 3 (2006): 1-47. [Hebrew]

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multiple struggles they fought in the fifties were concomitant with those of the main factions in ultra-Orthodox Judaism. As Menachem Friedman explained, their ideological influence is greater than their demography, because mainstream ultra-Orthodox society regarded them, especially in the early 1950s, as martyrs who were willing to pay heavy prices for their uncompromising beliefs.<sup>①</sup>

Additional research is needed in order to learn to what extent the distorted historical representation of the Holocaust in Neturei Karta's journal affected how the Holocaust and Zionism are interpreted in ultra-Orthodox society at large.

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① Menachem Friedman, *The Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) Society—Sources, Trends and Processes* (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 1991), 94-95. [Hebrew]