In *Jewish Radical Ultra-Orthodoxy Confronts Modernity, Zionism and Women’s Equality*, Professor Motti Inbari undertakes a study of the culture and leadership of Jewish radical ultra-Orthodoxy in Hungary, Jerusalem, and New York. He reviews the history, ideology, and gender relations of prominent ultra-Orthodox leaders Amram Blau (1894–1974), founder of the anti-Zionist Jerusalemite Neturei Karta, and Yoel Teitelbaum (1887–1979), head of the Satmar Hasidic movement in New York. Focusing on the rabbis’ biographies, the author analyzes their enclave building methods, their attitude to women and modesty, and their eschatological perspectives. The research is based on newly discovered archival materials, covering many unique and remarkable findings. The author concludes with a discussion of contemporary trends in Jewish religious radicalization. Inbari highlights the resilience of the current generations’ sense of community cohesion and their capacity to adapt and overcome challenges such as rehabilitation into potentially hostile secular societies.

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Jewish Radical Ultra-Orthodoxy Confronts Modernity, Zionism and Women’s Equality

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Translated by Shaul Vardi
To Aliza with love
Contents

Acknowledgments ix

Introduction 1

1 The de Haan assassination and the background to the formation of Neturei Karta 20

2 Rabbi Amram Blau, founder of the Neturei Karta movement 31

3 The modesty campaigns of Rabbi Amram Blau and the Neturei Karta movement, 1938–1974 74

4 Messianic activism in the work and thought of Rabbi Chaim Elazar Shapira (the Munkacser Rebbe) in the interwar period 94

5 The life and work of Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum, founder of the Satmar Hasidic Court in New York 131

6 Eschatology, dualism, and the decline of the generations: the world view of radical ultra-Orthodoxy 173

7 Jewish zealotry – past and present 203

Epilogue: contemporary trends in radical ultra-Orthodoxy 232

Bibliography 241

Index 255
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While I was a postdoctoral fellow at the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis in 2008, I received an e-mail one morning from my academic supervisor, Dr. Ilan Troen, informing me that Boston University recently acquired Rabbi Amram Blau’s personal archive. As a scholar of Jewish Orthodoxy in Israel, the news was interesting, but still I had many hesitations. At that point, I was engaged in writing another book so I was very busy, and my field of expertise was religious Zionism, not ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionism. Still, I decided to visit the Gottleib Archival Research Center in Boston University, where the personal archive is stored, and I am glad I did that. Blau’s archive provided a rich and interesting outlook on Neturei Karta, the movement he established, and its relationship with the greater haredi (ultra-Orthodox) community, and I also found fascinating information about his personal life. From the archival materials I discovered, I composed two chapters, and I wanted to continue my research thus deciding to further investigate other ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionist leaders: Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum, the Satmar Rebbe, and Rabbi Chaim Elazar Shapiro, the Munkacser Rebbe. The book you are holding right now is the product of that research.

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