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"To Be Free in Our Country": Fighting the *Kulturkampf* With Tzerie Meretz

A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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Israeli society is deeply divided along religious-secular lines in a manner characteristic of *kulturkampf*. This dissertation discusses the role of the Meretz political party in this struggle, building on ethnographic research carried out with the youth sections of the party in 1999 and 2000 and subsequent peace activism. The history and nature of the Jewish *kulturkampf* are charted and described, as is the development of the secular Jewish identity community. Interview excerpts are used to elucidate the understandings and experience of culture war and Jewish identification from the standpoint of committed secular activists. Finally, predictions are made for the future trajectory of the *kulturkampf*

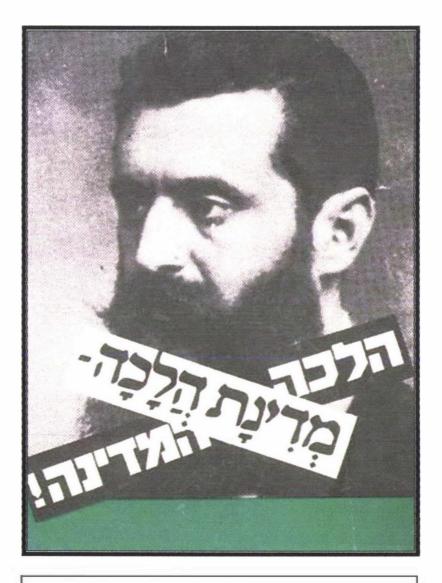


Figure 1: A RATZ sticker with Herzl in the background: "A Halakhic State- The State is Gone!"

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