

'THEY NO LONGER DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THE NATION OF
ISRAEL AND GENTILES': RAV TZVI ISRAEL THAU AND HIS
BATTLE AGAINST FOREIGN INFLUENCES

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Abstract

Since its establishment in July 2019, the Noam party has been fighting against what it defines as 'foreign influences'. The party believes that these influences endanger the continued existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish state. The party's struggle focuses on the areas of Feminism, LGBTQ, and opposition to contemporary non-orthodox Jewish streams. The party also strives to bring about a total merger of religion and state. In this article, I seek to shed light on the party's insistence on abandoning core issues that traditionally characterized religious-zionist politics. The party prefers to lead a war in explosive issues that alienate potential right-wing and religious voters. To understand this, I trace the political thought of the party leader, one of the senior rabbis in religious-zionism, Rabbi Tzvi Israel Thau.

In this article I emphasize on R. Thau's emergency consciousness according to which intensive political activity is necessary for the state of Israel to continue to exist as a Jewish state. In addition, I show that the party's rhetoric concerning 'foreignness' is drawn from significant Jewish philosophical sources, that draw an ontological distinction between Jews and non-Jews. Also, I explain R. Thau's decision to join the political arena, in contrast to his past opposition to any political activity, consider Kookist historiography and its current development by R. Thau. I also describe aspects of R. Thau's struggle with foreign influences, and how the disengagement plan from Gaza may explain his

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choice to dedicate himself to this struggle. The article concludes with a discussion of possible political scenarios that may materialize in the wake of the political turning point of R. Thau and his students.