

United Torah Judaism
haaretz.com

Spiritual Leaders – Various rabbis

Political Leaders – none

United Torah Judaism, which represents Haredi-Ashkenazi interests in the Knesset and government, is not a party in any real sense of the word. Rather it is a tense parliamentary alliance of the various power groups in the Haredi community. The two main factions are Agudath Yisrael, which encompasses most of the Hasidic movements and dynasties, and Degel HaTorah which is ruled by the "Lithuanian" (i.e. non-Hasidic) rabbis.

UTJ has no leaders or established hierarchy as its MKs are all literally representatives of the senior rabbis and large Hasidic courts (chiefly Ger, Vizhnitz and Belz) and beholden to them. The party's senior MKs, Deputy Health Minister Yaakov Litzman (for Agudath Yisrael) and Knesset Finance Committee Chairman Moshe Gafni (For Degel HaTorah), have no authority over the other MKs. In principle, while being a coalition member, the non-Zionist party does not have cabinet ministers. Litzman has full control of the Health Ministry (despite the fact that Netanyahu is officially Health Minister) and while he attends many cabinet meetings, he does not vote.

The party has no official position on issues of security and diplomacy though they have usually felt more at home in a Likud coalition. Some MKs, especially Meir Porush, are very close to the far-right while others like Litzman are "doves," but in crucial Knesset votes they either abstain or vote according to their rabbis' orders.

[From wikipedia.com](#)

United Torah Judaism יהדות התורה המאוחדת

Leader Yaakov Litzman Moshe Gafni **Founded** 1992 **Headquarters** Jerusalem and Bnei Brak
Official colors **Black and white**

United Torah Judaism (Hebrew: **יהדות התורה המאוחדת**, *Yehadut HaTorah HaMeukhedet*; **UTJ**) is an alliance of Degel HaTorah and Agudat Israel, two small Israeli Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) political parties in the Knesset. It was first formed in 1992.

The two parties have not always agreed with each other about policy matters. However, over the years they have cooperated and united as a voting bloc in order to win the maximum number of seats in the Knesset, since many extra votes can be wasted if election thresholds are not attained under Israel's proportional representation parliamentary system.

When UTJ joined Ariel Sharon's coalition in 2004 it split into its two constituent factions of Degel HaTorah and Agudat Israel. Before the 2006 election, Degel HaTorah and Agudat Israel agreed to revive their alliance under the banner of United Torah Judaism to not waste votes and achieve maximum representation in the 17th Knesset.

The two factions again united for the 18th Knesset elections in 2009. The bloc won five mandates, a loss of one seat.

Ideology

- UTJ opposes negotiations with the Palestinians and the formation of a Palestinian state.
- UTJ wants to maintain a status quo relationship in regard to religion and state issues. UTJ also supports increasing settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Formation of the party

UTJ was always a coalition of two factions:

- The Degel HaTorah ("Banner [of] the Torah") party that is guided by the rabbinic heads

(usually the leading rosh yeshivas ("deans") of the Lithuanian yeshivas) of non-Hasidic Haredi Ashkenazi Jews.

- The Agudat Israel ("Union [of] Israel") party that is guided by the followers of Hasidism in Israel, and also consisting of Ashkenazi Jews. The leading members of this party are the followers of the Ger, Vizhnitz, Boston and Sadigura Hasidim.

[UTJ does not publish a platform. Their main concerns are protecting the benefits given by the government to yeshivas and the haredi community, including financial payments and army exemptions. The following articles make their concerns more clear].

Many political commentators and activists have wondered at the alliance between the Bayit Yehudi (Jewish Home) party and Yesh Atid. Now MKs have revealed an alliance that, on the surface of things, may seem even more unlikely: strong ties between the hareidi-religious Yahadut Hatorah (United Torah Judaism) faction and the left-wing, secularist Meretz party. Yahadut Hatorah head MK Moshe Gafni and Meretz head MK Zahava Gal-On recently spoke to *AI-Monitor* about the alliance.

The Yahadut Hatorah-Meretz partnership had a real effect on the national budget, Gafni said. "Many things changed, thanks to our joint struggle on the budget. The initial plan was much more draconian," he explained.

"Yair Lapid, after all, reads what the media is saying and acts accordingly," he said, adding, "I was taking care of the middle class when Lapid was still a radio announcer."

The alliance is not limited to the budget, he added, "It's true that we have disagreements on the topic of religion and state, but besides that there is hardly anything. It could be that in Meretz they are extreme about the diplomatic process, and I am less so. But I am not the Likud Party... I support a diplomatic process. We are not the right."

Gal-On, too, said the joint work between the two parties has had a real impact. "As a result of our joint struggle we succeeded in removing some troublesome elements from the budget," she said. She and Gafni have known each other for many years, she continued, "I have great esteem for him." "Gafni knows that I support the separation of religion and state, pluralism, and a core curriculum — on all these issues we have deep divisions, and we didn't touch them. We went only with the social issues and presented a model for an alternative budget," she explained. Gafni said, "What I most want is for this government to become a thing of the past. In politics you pick your partners according to your goals."

Israelnationalnews.com

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Hareidi MKs Vow to Fight Enlistment Plan

"Draconian sanctions are ineffective and have no chance," says MK Moses.

Hareidi Knesset Members are up in arms over **the recommendations for enlistment of young hareidi men** to the military, which are to be approved by the government in its next session.

"The bill is divorced from reality and will not be implemented, of course," predicted MK Yaakov Litzman (United Torah Judaism). "Anyone who speaks about limiting Torah learners, setting a goal for top yeshiva students and quotas, exhibits ignorance in this ever so sensitive and complicated matter, as well as a patronizing and supercilious attitude."

"We have guarded Torah students throughout the generations, and today, too, there will not be a situation in which a person who wishes to study Torah in Israel finds himself in jail or paying fines," he vowed. "The hareidi representatives did not take part in the Perry Committee deliberations, because of the clear aim of the Lapid-Bennett government under Netanyahu, is to harm Torah students, to place limitations on a huge and central sector of Torah observers, in the guise of caring for equality in sharing the burden of military service."

MK Menachem Moses (UTJ) also declared that "There will not be a situation in which a Torah student finds himself in jail or threatened in one way or another. We will not be cowed with forced legislation and draconian sanctions. This is a bill that was born of complete ignorance and misunderstanding of the hareidi sector, and a hatred of religion, and its entire aim is the uprooting of the values of Judaism and religion. We are loyal to the instructions of the Great Sages of Israel and they will tell us how to act."

MK Meir Porush (UTJ) said that instead of creating ministerial committees to discuss hareidi enlistment, he would have expected ministers to discuss why secular education leads youths "to murder, steal and more... deeds that a hareidi Jew is ashamed to even speak about."

"Let whoever has a part in this wretched law, which is an attempt to crush the Torah world, know that the future of our existence here in the Land is in danger," he said. "I call on the Bayit Yehudi rabbis - it is not too late, do not lend your hands to this harsh blow to the Torah world and to the holy yeshivas that are the soul of the Jewish nation."

The Perry Committee on equal IDF service for all on Thursday filed its recommendations with the government. The law proposed by the committee would allow for up to only 1,800 top yeshiva students to remain fully exempt from service for as long as they were in yeshiva. Others would be drafted at age 18, but can defer service for 3 years. The committee recommended that the changes go into effect 3 years from now.

Individuals who do not report for the draft will be criminally prosecuted. Yeshivas that encourage their students not to register for the draft will be punished by losing their state funding, while yeshivas with a high percentage of draftees will be rewarded.

UTJ: New Government 'Hateful, Evil, Corrupt, Disloyal,' etc.

UTJ MKs slammed the new government, heaped invective on its members, and expressed wishes for its rapid demise

First Publish: 3/14/2013

MKs of the hareidi United Torah Jewry slammed the new government, heaped invective on its members, and expressed their wishes for its rapid demise at a meeting Wednesday night. In a meeting summing up the the party's efforts to join the government, and its ultimate failure to do so, MKs called the new government "disloyal," "corrupt," "hateful," "evil," and more.

Party chairman MK Meir Porush said that with his decision to form a government with Yesh Atid and Bayit Yehudi, to the exclusion of hareidi parties, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu had "betrayed" his historic alliance with the hareidim. "Netanyahu is incapable of keeping promises," he said. "This is a government of puppets, and it is quickly running out of time. Netanyahu will be incapable of managing with his partners. He is too tired, and the puppets will be controlled by puppetmaster Lapid. Such a government will be unable to last for too long."

MK Ya'akov Litzman, formerly Deputy Health Minister, said that "this is government based on corruption, hate, boycotts, divisiveness, and dissension. Yair Lapid and Naftali Bennett plan to inflict damage on the holiest parts of the Jewish nation. We will remain in the opposition, actively fighting with all our abilities to topple this evil government.

"This is a new era, in which Israelis will be under a sword of budget cuts that will damage the welfare of all Israelis, and especially the poor. UTJ will represent the majority of the Jewish people with strength and pride, protecting them from the damage Lapid and Bennett will do to religion, values, and the survival of poorer Israelis," Litzman said.

MK Yisrael Eichler was more optimistic about the future. "This is a 'time of trouble for Jacob,'" he said, using a term traditionally employed for major dangers to the Jewish people. "But I am sure we will be saved. This is an 'edict from Heaven,' and these things always turn out well. Even a situation like this, where we must remain in the opposition and fight against a secular government that will try to damage hareidi education, can be positive. This is a government where the High Court has taken control of the lawmakers of the Knesset, and at least we will not be a party to their edicts.

"We will fight them in the traditional way Jews have fought: With bribes, prayers, and war," Eichler said, referring to the Biblical story of Jacob meeting his brother Esav. David Ben Gurion, the secularist first Prime Minister of Israel, "was stronger than they are, and hareidi Jewry was much

weaker then. Even he understood that hareidi education could not be compromised. The current leaders will learn the same thing, the hard way," he added.

Hareidi MKs to Jewish Home: You're Being Used

7/29/2013

Hareidi-religious Knesset members attacked the Habayit Hayehudi (Jewish Home-New National Religious Party) for its part in drastic budget cuts, Monday, during debate on the 2013-2014 budget and Financial Arrangements Law. Referring to cuts in support of needy families, Chairman Aryeh Der'i of the Shas party said, "They [members of the coalition -ed.] are using you now. [Prime Minister Binyamin] Netanyahu knew that there was no government without an induction bill and a budget bill, and without your sign of kashrut, it would be impossible to pass this [budget] and cut the child allowances - with us this wouldn't work."

Chairman Menachem Mozes of the United Torah Judaism faction asked, "Why are you deluding yourselves? You are holding up this government until the solution of two-states for two peoples comes and then they'll throw you out like squeezed lemons and get along without you until the Labor Party enters [the coalition] or provides a safety net. And now is the time that you can stop these terrible steps, also those being taken against the hareidi public."

Report: UTJ Refused to Enter Government Without Shas

3/8/2013

Sources in the Sephardic hareidi-religious Shas party said, Thursday, that members of the Ashkenazic hareidi United Torah Judaism (UTJ) faction were offered an opportunity to enter the government without Shas during the past two days but rejected the offer outright, according to a Friday morning report by the *Yisrael Hayom* daily.

The both-or-none approach has been prominent in the coalition talks of Yesh Atid and Habayit Hayehudi (Jewish Home-New National Religious Party). On Thursday, UTJ Member of Knesset Ya'akov Litzman cited Chairman Naftali Bennett of Habayit Hayehudi for allying himself with Chairman Yair Lapid of Yesh Atid - who is outspoken in his opposition to funding for hareidi institutions and Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria (Shomron) - and not with the hareidi parties.

UTJ: Raze Settlements but Save our Yeshivas

Did Bayit Yehudi push hareidim too far? UTJ appears set to abandon right-wing posture.

By Gil Ronen

First Publish: 2/19/2013, 1:47 PM



UTJ's MK Yaakov Litzman

Israel news photo: Flash 90

The heads of United Torah Judaism, the Ashkenazi hareidi party, may be taking a turn toward the left wing in a bid to forestall a bid to force yeshiva students into military enlistment and national service.

According to *Maariv*, UTJ is preparing a document listing its principles for the coalition negotiations. The principles reportedly will include a green light for Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to make territorial concessions in exchange for "preserving the yeshiva world" and maintaining the status quo regarding enlistment of hareidim.

Until now, the party has been seen as part of the right wing bloc, which is opposed to territorial concessions.

A source in the party told *Maariv*, however, that UTJ will now support uprooting isolated communities in Judea and Samaria, as well as a construction freeze outside the "settlement blocs." It would also vote in favor of halting the flow of budgets for Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria.

These positions, the newspaper reported, may make it easier for the prime minister to offer U.S. President Barack Obama concessions regarding Judea and Samaria settlements when Obama visits Israel in March.

The press leak by UTJ regarding its plan to change tack regarding the settlement enterprise is an obvious warning to Bayit Yehudi and the religious Zionist sector to "rein in" Bayit Yehudi leader MK Naftali Bennett, whose pact with Yesh Atid leader Yair Lapid appears solid. Lapid heads a mostly secularist party and wants to force most hareidi men to enlist into military or national service. He refuses to even sit in the same government with hareidi parties.

Bennett is using the pact with Lapid to exert pressure on Netanyahu, who has been treating him with undisguised coldness, not deigning to meet him until after he had met all other potential coalition partners and even some opposition party leaders. This, despite the fact that Bennett has consistently said he supports Netanyahu as prime minister.