

“Netanyahu’s Safety in Paris”: Israel’s Shin Bet Security Force Manhandled France’s Prime Minister in Grand Synagogue, Netanyahu Insulted French Jewish Leadership

"You don't make the rules here. You provide security for the prime minister of Israel, that is all." France's Prime Minister Manuel Valls

By [Richard Silverstein](#)

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Maariv today published an astonishing story. Anyone reading this blog is used to the brutishness of the Shin Bet. But usually it's reserved for Palestinians, Arab journalists, and air travelers with Arab "racial" profiles. We would never expect it to be meted out to the elected leader of a country that is an Israeli ally.

On the day of the memorial service for those slain in the kosher supermarket attack, Prime Minister Manuel Valls sought to take his seat in the synagogue with the President, Francois Hollande and Israel's leader, Bibi Netanyahu. As he approached his seat, his path was blocked by a Shin Bet agent who refused to allow him to pass until Netanyahu had taken his own seat. According to Valls, the agent grabbed his arm and forced him to wait until the Israeli had seated himself.

Valls shouted at him in French and English:

You don't make the rules here. You provide security for the prime minister of Israel, that is all.



The Israeli ambassador to France apologized for the encounter. There can be no doubt that this was a deliberate affront to France's political leadership. Hollande and Valls made clear during Netanyahu visit that he wasn't wanted in the country. Bibi isn't one to suffer insults gladly. So either he, his official lackeys, or the Shin Bet itself took it upon itself to take Valls down a peg or two. It seems to me this is an extremely dangerous game. It also seems to me this is a game played by very desperate people who share no concern for the overall long term interests of their country. But who are rather motivated by personal needs and emotions.

In a separate encounter, a leader of the French Jewish community recounted a meeting Netanyahu held with the communal leadership. Those attending were "deeply insulted" by the prime minister's comparison of their behavior to those of the Spanish Jews in 1492 "who felt good in Spain but who erred" in not leaving when they had the chance.

You may recall that Netanyahu's father, [Ben Zion](#), was a scholar of medieval Spanish Jewry. Maariv notes that in the meeting Bibi summoned his father's authority to support the insult he offered the French leadership. I've said here before that Bibi has none of the supposed erudition of his father regarding Jewish history. Where would he have had Spanish Jews go? To the Holy Land? As it was, Spanish Jews found refuge in many places from Amsterdam to Brazil to New Amsterdam. But to say that in the 15th century, Spanish Jewry should've known that they were doomed if they remained in Spain, seems the height of foolishness.

If we draw the historical analogy further, Bibi seems to be saying that France is headed for the same sort of religious takeover that Catholics engineered in 15th century Spain. Except that this time, it will be Islamists taking over. Further, Bibi infers that the Islamist hordes who do take over France will expel all French Jews after they do. Therefore, they should escape now to Israel, their homeland, while there's still time. I think most reasonable people can see how ludicrous this logic is. It's the product of a distorted view of reality induced by the thinking that characterized Ben Zion Netanyahu, Zeev Jabotinsky's personal secretary.

Netanyahu's tongue-lashing is little different (in fact it's pretty much the same) as blaming Polish and Russian Jews for not foreseeing Hitler's rise and the Holocaust, and escaping while they still had time. This is a shameful act of blaming the victims. It's easy to read history with 20/20 hindsight, but much harder when you are in the middle of such great tragedy. As someone who's known Holocaust survivors and written an oral history of an Auschwitz survivor, I make it a point never to judge the actions of those facing such life and death dilemmas. It takes a cold, cruel, heartless man to do so. And Bibi Netanyahu is just such a one.

Stories like this presage a hardening of the world's attitude toward Israel. When asked politely to stay home, Netanyahu defied his French hosts. What country in the world will want to welcome him after this? Now, an act of petty vengeance by a Shin Bet goon has strengthened the process of isolation represented by BDS.

Bibi had already been warned that defying Hollande's wish would sour bi-lateral relations for the rest of Bibi's premiership. Now, Israel can expect a French vote in the UNSC in favor of Palestinian statehood.

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