

The War Against Netanyahu

by [Mordechai Nisan](#) (September 2025)



Following Likud's victory in the 1996 elections, the Left released its war against Netanyahu. He was a formidable political rival—a native-born Israeli and American-educated, radiating youth, charisma, confidence, and sporting a highly commendable military record in the IDF. Netanyahu's biography and attributes were ostensibly a perfect fit for the ideological and political Left, but Bibi, considering his family and his views, belonged to the nationalist camp on the Right. Stunned by Netanyahu's hairbreadth victory over Labor Party candidate Shimon Peres, the Left launched its campaign of de-legitimization and defamation. Tens of Hebrew University professors signed a letter in 1997 to oppose inviting the prime minister to the graduation ceremony on Mount Scopus. They considered his rhetoric divisive and damaging to

democracy, and a threat to future peace negotiations with the Palestinians. This incident portended that the war against Netanyahu would take a toxic turn.

The rise of Binyamin Netanyahu to the pinnacle of politics and the extent of his extraordinary success is an exceptional Israeli story. As of 2025, he served as prime minister for a total of 18 years. The democratic election process in the parliamentary system does not impose term limits. Based on the practice of coalition governments, Netanyahu was deftly able to assure Likud rule with the collaboration of smaller parties. Over time, Leftist aversion to Bibi turned into hatred.

The Leftist smear campaign against the Right and Likud, and mercilessly targeting Netanyahu, reached an explosive point in recent years. Controversy and confrontation touched on issues that tore the public fabric of Israeli society, sowing tension and animosity. The judicial machinery, including the Attorney General/Judicial Adviser, and the State Prosecution Office, filed charges in 2000 against Prime Minister Netanyahu for a breach of trust, bribery, and fraud. The Right considered the trumped-up accusations as an exercise in manufactured political manipulation. The Left remained adamant to paint Netanyahu as a villain squirming to escape the legal ramifications of his political and personal conduct. Court deliberations alternated between legalisms and trivia as the trial dragged past five years.

The high point on the political precipice concerned the judicial reform package proposed by Likud and its allies in early 2023. Minister of Justice Yariv Levin sought to overhaul the judicial apparatus suffering from leftist politicization and manifold systemic ailments. The reform package included a number of steps: revamping the selection mechanism for judicial appointments to the Supreme Court; curtailing Supreme

Court intervention to invalidate government policy and legislation; and confining the practice of the government's Judicial Adviser from arrogating authority to block policy. The citizens elected the Knesset, the Knesset voted confidence in the government, and then the Court gagged the government and sent the people adrift in the uncharted waters of political chaos.

One of the more outrageous interventions by the Attorney General and the Supreme Court was in March 2025 when Netanyahu decided to fire Ronen Bar, the director of SHABAK (the Shin Bet security agency). After the security failure of October 7, Bibi wanted a new man in this most critical position. Although the law gave the prime minister full authority to choose and dismiss the SHABAK head, the judges and lawyers acted to override the law. They demanded a reconsideration while suspecting Netanyahu's motives. This case was tantamount to a constitutional crisis with rebellion by Ronen Bar lurking in the shadows. He refused to leave and that *he* would choose his successor. Here was the making of a judicial and security coup in broad daylight.

For many years, the public impression solidified that the police, the prosecution, and the High Court chose partiality and selectivity in investigating potential lawbreakers. Public and political figures—Reuven Rivlin, Yehuda Neeman, Silvan Shalom, Rafael Eitan, Avigdor Lieberman, Avigdor Kahalani—were among the many on the Right who were arbitrarily detained, whose names were tarnished, suspected of criminal behavior—*later none were found guilty*. The Left insisted that judges are politically detached and objective professionals who do not succumb to their personal views. Perhaps angels in human form.

How fitting in Israel is the iconic sentence by Franz Kafka in *The Trial*: “For without having done anything wrong he was

arrested one fine morning." This is a procedure designed to spread fear and force submission. In connection with Netanyahu's trial, two confidants and associates of the Prime Minister, Shlomo Filber and Nir Chefet, suffered humiliation and intimidation under police interrogation in ways that a functioning civil democracy would never condone.

The case of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in 2005 was sensationalist and showed the power of the Deep State. The Leftist compulsion for territorial withdrawal from Gush Katif in the Gaza area led Sharon to capitulate, and he ruthlessly expelled over 8,500 Israelis and destroyed a flourishing settlement zone. This political blackmail technique sufficed to close the file on his involvement in the Greek island scandal.

Another case of legal selectivity was the refusal of the Attorney General to investigate the murky NSO cyber-espionage affair that suspiciously implicated prominent individuals affiliated with the political Left. Members of the elitist cabal enjoyed shady privileges, like engaging in secretive surveillance of private persons, and with impunity.

When Netanyahu governments sought to expel illegal African residents, whose presence in southern Tel Aviv neighborhoods spread insecurity for Jewish residents, the court said NO. When Netanyahu governments wanted to protect the Zionist integrity of Israeli communities based on a singular Jewish population, the court said NO. When the government wanted to use Palestinian terrorists as bargaining chips against the Arab enemy, the court said NO. However when Arabs claimed proprietorship over land in Judea-Samaria with flimsy undocumented evidence, the court said YES, and ordered state authorities to destroy Jewish homes in Ofra, Amona, and Derech Ha-Avot.

Chief Justice Aharon Barak was president of the Supreme Court from 1995 until 2006, and he who injected progressive activism

as the court's DNA. He rejected law professor Ruth Gavison as a nominee for a seat on the bench because, he said, "she has an agenda." He nixed her appointment, as simple and authoritarian as that. Barak referred to the superiority of "the enlightened camp" (liberal, secular, leftist...) which controlled the High Court under his stewardship and that of his successors. Religious and Mizrahi Jews were likely to feel unwelcome interlopers unless they towed Barak's line.

Judge Yoram Broza in the magistrate's court in Beersheba repeatedly made offensive remarks against the religious public. He once told a religious judge: "Once we're done with Hamas, we'll deal with the religious Zionists ... They are the greatest threat to the country." Broza gave voice to an odious agenda without paying a price for his hateful comments.

Since 2003, when an authorized Knesset committee voted to disqualify Arab candidates in a general election, because their party platform rejected the definition of the state of Israel as a Jewish state, the Arabs' appeal to the Supreme Court bore political fruit. The court overturned a Knesset decision *and ignored the law*, and permitted Arab citizens to compete in elections in a country whose Jewish existence they rejected. The Supreme Court unhinged Israel from its national ethos while replacing the Knesset as the highest authority in Israel.

The height of absurdity concerned Palestinian terrorists from the territories, non-citizens and murderous enemies of Israel, who enjoyed legal standing before the High Court of Justice to appeal cases adjudicated by the Military Government in Judea and Samaria. In December 2024, the Court accepted an appeal from the Association for Civil Rights on behalf of Palestinian terrorists—the *nuchba* who committed the massacre of October 7—euphemistically called "security prisoners." The Court ordered the state authorities to supply terrorists with a

reasonable quantity and quality of food. Masochism and buffoonery combined in this display of Aharon Barak's principle that "everything is justiciable" –including the diet of Islamo-Nazis held in Israeli detention.

The Left opposed judicial reform with all means possible. It chose confrontation and scorned dialogue with Member of Knesset Simcha Rothman, the Chairman of the Knesset Judicial Committee. From January 2023 until October 6 that year, Israel was embroiled in the most violent and destructive challenge *from within* to the stability of the country and the very existence of the state. With exceptional resources, financial and logistical, organizational skill and media sophistication, the Left mounted a militant protest against the Netanyahu government and coopted leading Israeli institutions—commercial and corporate, academic and medical—to join forces and paralyze normal life in the country. They closed down the Ben-Gurion airport, Israel's primary transportation link with the world, and used the weapon of the strike to close down the economy. They called on the wealthy elites to send their money abroad and bring the domestic economy to a halt. They hounded, threatened, and physically attacked government ministers and Members of the Knesset. Roads were blocked and tires burnt evoking fear and chaos. Mobocracy was threatening the democracy that the anarchists claimed they came to save. An enigmatic mass psychosis spread throughout the country. On one occasion, the Netanyahu-haters laid siege to a hair salon in Tel Aviv with Sarah Netanyahu trapped inside, chanting hostile slogans and creating a frenzied atmosphere. The police rescued her from danger and a possible violent end.

A judicial reform plan that included a procedural alteration to facilitate diversity of views on the Supreme Court, and unchain the government from the stranglehold of bureaucrats and lawyers, became inexplicably a catalyst for violence and hatred.

The most radical aspect of the mass opposition was the call for soldiers to refuse to serve and abandon their posts.

Leading protesters warned the prime minister: "Soon you won't have an army, and you won't have an air force..." The clamor of rebellion brewed throughout the land. Toppling the Netanyahu government had become a sacred cause. Former ministers of defense and retired army generals protested in the streets and spewed wrath in television studios. Past heads of the General Security Services (SHABAK) – Ami Ayalon, Yoram Cohen, and Nadav Argaman—joined the anti-Netanyahu campaign. Some accused Netanyahu of planning a coup. Their public opposition to reform was seemingly without context, but consider Max Weber's argument in the Israeli case that "the conquest of political power by the strata on whose shoulders the military burden rested" became bureaucratically fixed. The only rational explanation was a personal power motive propelling the subversive behavior of retired military and security elites.

The lawless campaign was not civil disobedience, but as former Prime Minister Ehud Barak screamed, a *civil rebellion*. He called for physically blocking the Knesset in Jerusalem until the government falls. The language of war became current in mobilizing tens of thousands in the streets of Tel Aviv, and thousands in other Israeli cities and towns. The Left's pathological hatred of Netanyahu metastasized into an uncontrollable political malaise as the protest abandoned any sign of restraint.

Avner Netanyahu, the son of Bibi and Sarah, was to marry his fiancée in 2025, and twice the date was postponed because of an explicit Leftist security threat to physically prevent and disrupt the wedding. We wondered: was all this really happening?

In an intricate assault, the *Brothers in Arms* agitprop force wired up and obstructed the entrance to the Kohelet Policy

Forum that had advised the government on the reform proposals. This trespass of private property magnified the mind-set of Leftist law-breakers. In all instances of illegal actions, the State Prosecution and Attorney General did not file charges not even once.

During 2023, the anti-Netanyahu campaign assumed international dimensions as protest demonstrations hit the streets in Europe and America. The Left was unchained in engaging in political sabotage against the elected government in Jerusalem, and the playing field was global. On September 22, Jewish and Israeli protesters demonstrated outside the United Nations building in New York, where Netanyahu was to address the General Assembly. The protesters called for foreign intervention by turning to President Biden "to save democracy in Israel." We now know from Congressional investigation that under Biden, many millions of dollars helped finance the protest movement. Wearing the mask of democracy the Left was relentless on all fronts.

It is important to recall that Leftist hatred of Netanyahu and the Right was not born on Balfour Street in Jerusalem (beginning in 2000) or Kaplan Street in Tel-Aviv (beginning 2023), where chaos and anarchy, punctured by noisy megaphones and ear-shattering drumming, caused disruptions of traffic and public order. The vitriolic accusations against Netanyahu regarding the submarine affair or later the Qatar-gate affair—*unproven*—suggest further that a hidden force was behind these repeated distractions for the purpose of sapping Netanyahu's strength and deluding the public.

After the judicial affair came the hostage imbroglio. The barbaric Hamas massacre of 1,200 Israelis on October 7, 2023, which partially brought the judicial reform chaos to a stop, provided the Left with another opportunity to thrash Netanyahu politically. Signs and sounds broadcast: "You are the head,

you are guilty.” The fact that the IDF and ancillary security services failed to foresee and prevent the Islamic assault made transparent the military’s responsibility and guilt.

The “hostage square” in Tel Aviv became a popular site for protests against the government’s handling of the war and calling for negotiations for the release of 251 hostages. By late June 2025, 148 returned alive along with 56 bodies. Hamas held the Israeli (and other) captives suffering torture and starvation in deep underground tunnels, subject to emotional stress and cut off from the world. Hamas refused to allow the International Red Cross to visit and succor the hostages—children, women, men, the elderly, and the sick. In glaring contrast, the United Nations and later the United States organized hundreds of truckloads of daily supplies, termed “humanitarian aid,” for the Palestinian population. Even Israel provided aid nourishment while her own hostages subsisted on half a pita a day.

Targeting Netanyahu for October 7 revitalized the Left, adding to his guilt for the security failure his guilt for not bringing all the hostages home. Hamas demanded Israel stop the fighting, withdraw from all of the Gaza Strip, and thus capitulate and accept a searing defeat. The government declared victory, ending threats to the ‘Gaza Envelope’ Israeli communities, and the exit of Gazans altogether, as the goals of the war. The Left’s war against Netanyahu was fiendish in accusing him “of killing the hostages.” Netanyahu was strapped in an excruciating bind, between pursuing war against Hamas with loss of soldiers’ lives and facing public protest; or bending to the pressure exerted by the families of the hostages and abandoning the strategic imperative of destroying Hamas to achieve a secure border for the communities proximate to Gaza. Public discourse did not honor the moment to discuss the issues in a spirit of national calm and respect.

An overriding strategic consideration for Israel is not to appear as a defeated nation. All eyes in the Middle East and beyond will scrutinize Israel's tenacity, strength, and image, when the war ends, and how it ends. A weak or weakened Israel cannot be an option for the beleaguered Jews, because the consequences could be grave. The Muslim neighbors will whet their appetite and sharpen their swords if Israel falters and withers under the pressure of the Gaza War.

The hackneyed neologism "Crime Minister" to defame Bibi coincided with the charge that he headed a "criminal organization (Likud, the government...). The Left called Bibi a Nazi (!), while the Deputy Chief of Staff of the IDF, Yair Golan, said in 2016 that "processes" apparent in Israeli society aroused the sensation of Germany in the 1930s. No longer in the army, Golan offered a gruesome way to evoke the image of genocide when he accused the IDF in May 2025 "of murdering [Arab] babies as a hobby." This graphically paralleled the Nazi practice of murdering Jewish babies.

Former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert insidiously stated that Israel's war in Gaza was close to a war crime. In August 2025, hundreds of musicians, actors, and singers signed a petition charging Israeli soldiers with war crimes. The Left never needed to provide proof, facts, examples or evidence, for their grotesque demonical portrayal of Netanyahu and the Rightist government.

Let us go back and beyond and suggest a historical and ideological perspective for the deep-seated rancor plaguing Israel.

Examples of the Left against the Right:

- Socialists maligned the Zichron Yaakov farmers who hired Arab labor in defiance of the ethos of Hebrew labor; and opposed the anti-Ottoman Nili espionage underground in the years of the First World War that skirted the establishment Zionist leadership.
- The Jewish-led Palestine Communist Party openly supported a campaign for an Arab Palestine and decried Zionist colonialism beginning in the 1920s.
- Brit Shalom rejected the idea of a Jewish State in 1926 in preference for a bi-national (non-Zionist) state.
- In 1933, the socialist Haganah Laborites attacked a parade in Tel-Aviv of the Revisionist Betar movement founded by Zev Jabotinsky, leaving bloodied youth.
- In 1933, senior Jewish Agency/Labor figure Haim Arlozorov was murdered in Tel-Aviv. Ben-Gurion and the Left immediately accused Revisionists, though none were found guilty of the crime, and the suspicion lay with an Arab murderer.
- In the 1940s, Jewish Agency Labor/Mapai affiliated personnel informed the British of Irgun activities, led by Menachem Begin, leading to the arrest of Jews.
- In 1948, a far-left Mapam member opposed a Mapai agreement with the Irgun because "it was capable of doing what the Nazis did."
- In 1948, under orders from Ben-Gurion, the IDF fired on the Irgun arms vessel Altalena off the coast of Tel-Aviv, leaving 16 Jews dead.

Ben-Gurion refused as Prime Minister to allow the remains of Jabotinsky, who died in New York in 1940, to be buried in Israel. In 1964, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol agreed that the commander of Betar find his final resting place, fulfilling his personal testament, in Jerusalem.

Our brief list of the Left's war against the nationalist Right Revisionists until the founding of Israel provides historical background and precedent, for what was to follow.

The Likud electoral victory in 1977, with Menachem Begin becoming Prime Minister, changed the contours of Israel's political landscape. The curtain came down on a long streak of 29 years of Labor rule, leaving the party traumatized, reversing the political order. Likud promoted tradition, patriotism, and strategic realism in the violence-prone Islamic Middle East, and won again in 1981, a sign that 1977 was not an accident but a political redrawing of public sentiments. The Leftist elite was out of touch with the rhythms of Zionism and Judaism.

In response to Likud's victory in 1977, Yitzhak Ben-Aharon, a leading figure in the Labor movement, asserted that: "If this is the people's choice, he is not willing to respect it." Here was a revelation of the Left's enfeebled commitment to democracy.

The politics of Israel had crossed a historical threshold with Likud becoming the predominant party for many decades thereafter. The transformative revolution induced BDS—the *Bibi Derangement Syndrome*—leaving Netanyahu's opponents bewildered and frustrated at the success of the Magician [Ha-Kosaim], Netanyahu's moniker in Israel.

The Left's solution to the democratic election process that produced disappointing results was to circumvent the system and sabotage Likud's grip on power. Rather than searching within for the decay of the Left, healing elitist snobbism, and examining the demographic and social shift in the strengthening of the nationalist camp, the Left adopted a reactionary posture of ideological entrenchment. This would

assure that the Left's entanglement in the political wilderness would continue.

The Left's sense of "born to rule" was unscathed. They relied on the functioning and unshakeable Deep State, with a self-assured arrogance to maintain control of the machinery of power and influence in the media, academia, the arts and culture, the civil service bureaucracy, the courts and the military. An ostensible Leftist cabal dominated the news outlets, the universities, the theatre companies, the state prosecution, and the highest echelons of the army—*until today*. This panoply of power repressed diversity, debate, and liberty, and signified the virtual disenfranchisement of the majority of the Israeli people—who voted Right, then muffled under Leftist hegemony.

Noteworthy public figures were victims of discrimination, intimidation, and character assassination. Some of the outstanding examples included satirist Ephraim Kishon, songwriter Naomi Shemer, singers Meir Ariel and Ariel Zilber, all of whom paid a price for not touting 'the party line', diverging from the Leftist cant. Army generals known for their activist and war ethos—Effie Eitan, Ofer Winter, Imad Fares, and Chico Moshe Tamir—failed to advance, or were dismissed from the upper ranks of the IDF. Academics, the likes of Emmanuel Sivan and Moshe Ma'oz, who stood in solidarity with Palestinian causes, strutted with moral pomposity.

Israelis who did not share the narrative of betrayal faced a few options. They could stand strong, give voice to their views, and pay whatever career or other price. They might choose silence and appear as non-political in an essentially very political society. Another option for penitents was to cross the political divide (going to Canossa), exclaim with contrition that they now see the light, rip into Netanyahu for a myriad of faults, and join the rival camp. Political apostasy could be a rational choice: Dan Meridor, Tsipi Livni, Meir Shitreet, and Limor Livnat, bolted Likud ranks to take

cover under the Deep State. The most egregious example was hard-liner Ariel Sharon's defection—deciding on Israel withdrawing from the Gush Katif settlement zone in 2005—to save himself the ignominy of a criminal trial and public defamation. The Left engaged in political extortion that would not embarrass dictatorial and totalitarian regimes from near and far.

To the extent politics deals with issues, the Left is largely bankrupt. More and more Israelis feel disdain for the image of the “Ashkenazi, White, Secular, Elitist Left.” The Labor Party of Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir, the historic center-left party, traveled to the far Left, then officially dissolved and disappeared in 2024.

The Left lost contact with the magic, the miracle, and the myth of the Jewish story. Asa Kasher, a public intellectual associated with the Left, proposed cancelling the Law of Return whereby any Jew in the world can come to Israel and acquire citizenship. His proposal would strip Israel of its Jewish identity and *raison d'être*.

Inspired and diverted by Marxism's war on the family, religion, morality, property, and peoplehood, Socialist Zionism in its founding set out to eradicate—or redefine—the social, spiritual, and national attributes of the Jews. It threw common sense to the wind, planning that a new revolutionized community of Israelis would replace the historic Jewish people. The upshot in this downward slide was alienation from the Land of Israel – opposing Jewish settlement, conceding territory to the Arab enemy, recognizing the Palestinian fake people. The Left showed signs of a surreal case of self-hatred, ideological impoverishment, and political treachery. Moreover, they feign empathy for the

Arabs, citizens and others, as a way to shield their hatred of the Right. The slogan of Israel as a “state of its citizens” is the knockout blow to Israel as a Jewish state.

Despair and pessimism became the lot of the Left. *Rabin* committed a gigantic security miscalculation in 1993 in recognizing the PLO and hoping it will become docile and peaceful. *Barak* pulled the IDF from Lebanon in 2000 and hoped Hezbollah would disarm and cease battling Israel. *Sharon* veered from the Right to the Left and decided Israel withdraw completely from the Gaza Strip in 2005. In all these cases, disaster and massacre of Israelis was the outcome as Islam’s war against the Jews charged forward. We sense a foreboding that the ongoing multi-front war Israel is fighting in 2025 may end with the IDF withdrawing from present military positions in Lebanon, Syria, and Gaza.

I imagine the war against Netanyahu will continue, with or without the end of the Gaza war. The Left will invent new charges, fabricate new tactics, and sustain and escalate public protests. How all this will end only Heaven knows.

[Table of Contents](#)

Mordechai Nisan is a retired lecturer at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He also taught at Bar-Ilan University, the Open University, and the pre-army Lachish academy at Beit Guvrin. Among his books: *Minorities in the Middle East*, *Toward a New Israel*, *The Crack-up of the Israeli Left*, *The Conscience of Lebanon*, and *Identity and Civilization*.