From Sacha Wigdorovits



Children from Gaza who were brought to Belgium – similar to Beat Jans' PR campaign.

Last Wednesday, Zurich's city parliament, the municipal council, referred a postulate to the city government demanding the admission of war-damaged children from Gaza and around 80 accompanying persons.

It is unlikely that this initiative will ever be implemented. This is because the cantonal government of Zurich is refusing to participate in this campaign initiated by the federal government. It justified this with serious security concerns regarding the people accompanying the children injured in the war in Gaza.

And rightly so. As these escorts are only allowed to leave the Gaza Strip with the blessing of Hamas, it can be assumed that they either belong to Hamas themselves or are at least very close to it. Otherwise the terrorist group would not have granted them the privilege of leaving for Switzerland and seeking asylum here – as Federal Councillor Beat Jans has promised them.

It is hardly surprising that the proposal nevertheless found a majority in Zurich's

municipal council. This is because the city parliament is dominated by the red-green party. In other words, two parties that are always in favor of the Palestinians and against Israel at a national level.

What is striking, however, is that the motion was also supported by the Jewish side. In the run-up to the council debate, the “Jewish Forum Switzerland – Gescher” sent an email to all municipal council groups asking them to support the postulate.

Gescher accused the Zurich cantonal government of “an attitude full of racist undertones” due to its refusal to participate in the federal government’s campaign. Gescher rejected the cantonal government’s security concerns as unfounded. After all, the people leaving Gaza were “carefully checked by several Swiss and international authorities to ensure the highest security standards.”

This assertion by Gescher is naive at best, but in any case false. Because in Gaza, Hamas decides who is allowed to leave, the Israeli government is happy when Hamas members emigrate from the Gaza Strip into exile far away from Israel, and the Federal Intelligence Service has no way of verifying the identity of these people.

The email from Gescher to the Zurich municipal council groups is therefore proof that there are also “useful idiots” (Leon de Winter) in the Jewish community in Switzerland who support Hamas with their thoughtless actions.

The good news is that there are only a few of them. Gescher’s email to the Zurich municipal councillors was written in the name of “Jewish people in Zurich”. But that sounds like more than it actually is. Because the appeal is only signed by seven people: The Gescher board members.

These include Dina Pomeranz, who works as a professor at the University of Zurich UZH – in other words, she works for the very government council that she accuses of racism. However, Pomeranz need not fear that this could have consequences for her.

The head of the cantonal Department of Education, Cantonal Councillor Silvia Steiner, answered a corresponding question from FokusIsrael.ch with the following words: “UZH is an independent institution under public law. The Director of Education is not the boss of the university employees and does not intervene in personnel matters.”

According to Steiner, however, all cantonal employees can invoke their freedom of expression despite their duty of loyalty. For the former public prosecutor, it is therefore not a breach of fiduciary duty to publicly insult one's own bosses as "racists".

It is questionable whether the 500 people who supported the founding of Gescher in 2024 will be able to identify with the email to the municipal council.

"It goes without saying that the people who signed the open statement from summer 2024 are neither automatically members nor jointly responsible for statements made by the Gescher Board of Directors," says Managing Director Timrah Schmutz.

The Gescher supporters in 2024 also included Edi Rosenstein and Arthur Braunschweig, who are running as co-candidates for the presidential election of Switzerland's largest Jewish community, the Israelitische Cultusgemeinde Zürich (ICZ), on 8 December. This is piquant because the ICZ has distanced itself from Gescher's email in sharp words in its own statement to the Zurich cantonal government.

Former Gescher co-signatory Edi Rosenstein is therefore not happy about the email from the association's board. "I have nothing to do with this email and knew nothing about it beforehand, because I am neither part of the Gescher organization nor a member of the association," Rosenstein announces on request (although he is still listed on the Gescher website as a co-signatory of the founding statement). And further: "I don't like the tone of the appeal and certain formulations".

In contrast to the Gescher board's email, however, Rosenstein does not wish to distance himself from the content. On the fundamental question of whether or not Switzerland should take in children and accompanying persons from Gaza, he simply says: "You can see it either way."

Rosenstein's partner for the ICZ presidential election and Gescher co-supporter Braunschweig had not yet commented at the time of publication of this article.

The opposing candidate from Rosenstein and Braunschweig for election as ICZ President, Noëmi van Gelder, takes a completely different view. She unequivocally condemns the Gescher board's municipal council email: "The fact that Gescher is accusing the governing council of racist motives is presumptuous, politically

irresponsible and does not represent the Jewish community in Switzerland.”

She is very grateful to the Zurich cantonal government for its careful security policy assessment, says van Gelder. “The security concerns of many Jewish Zurich residents are real, and the cantonal government is taking them seriously.” Aid for the children of Gaza must be provided in the region without any security risks for the population in Switzerland.



Indoctrinated from an early age to kill Jews: Such children and their relatives are now also being brought to Switzerland.

Sacha Wigdorovits is President of the Fokus Israel und Nahost association, which runs the website fokusisrael.ch. He studied history, German and social psychology at the University of Zurich and has worked as a US correspondent for the SonntagsZeitung, was editor-in-chief of BLICK and co-founder of the commuter newspaper 20minuten.