



What are the benefits of working for the Diaspora Jews?

From Sacha Wigdorovits

Last week, I was massively annoyed – and ashamed – of the Jewish students at the University of Zurich. They stood idly by and watched as their pro-Palestinian fellow students invited a well-known anti-Semitic Arab activist to give a “lecture”.

Once again, I asked myself the question: “What is the point of standing up for Jews in the diaspora?” When many of them do not defend themselves at all against the fact that they are increasingly being discriminated against with impunity, unjustly pilloried and, in the worst cases, even physically attacked. In other European countries, this is even more severe than in Switzerland.

From a moral point of view, it is clear that we Jews must fight this development. Anti-Semitism is an unacceptable discrimination and questioning of our Jewish life and thus violates not only ourselves, but also the fundamental values of our society. But not only the values, but also the applicable law based on these values, such as the anti-racism criminal provision StGB ^{261bis}.

What’s more, we are not fighting this battle alone. We are supported by many – mostly middle-class – politicians who are not Jewish. And also by many non-Jewish citizens who stand up for us. It would be shameful to let them all fight for us without leading this fight ourselves.

But we must not close our eyes to the facts: In Europe, the future looks bleak for us Jews. This is not doom and gloom, it is a question of demographic developments. Specifically, it is the result of the millions of Muslims who have migrated to Europe in recent decades. Most of them are anti-Semites.

This has been shown by the pro-Palestinian demonstrations since October 7, 2023, where the call for the annihilation of Jews is just as central as the demand for a Palestinian state (“from the river to the sea”, i.e. without Israel). However, representative international surveys such as those conducted by the Anti-Defamation League ADL also confirm the widespread anti-Semitism among Muslims.

Taken on its own, this threat would be manageable. But the longer it goes on, the more the (anti-Jewish) Muslims in Europe become an attractive potential voter. The first party to recognize this and therefore consistently focus on anti-Semitism is the left-wing populist Jean-Luc Mèlenchon’s “La France insoumise”. The Green Party in England has also understood that voters can be won over with anti-Semitism.



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The Swiss Social Democratic Party and the Green Party have not yet reached this stage. But because of their anti-capitalist and anti-colonialist stance, they turn a blind eye to Islamic “anti-Zionism” (=anti-Semitism) on our streets. This is another way to recommend yourself to Muslim voters.

Admittedly, there are currently only a few political parties across Europe that are using anti-Semitism as an attractive election argument out of sober calculation – or inner conviction. But as the French author Michel Houellenbecq diagnosed in his 2015 bestseller “Submission”: Islamization is a trend. Not just in France, as Houellenbecq did, but in large parts of Europe. Sooner or later in Switzerland too.

In 1896, Theodor Herzl declared in “The Jewish State” how European Jews should counter anti-Semitism: By packing their bags and moving to the Jewish state. When Herzl recommended this, this “Jewish state” did not yet exist. Today, thanks to Israel, things are different.

This leads to a paradoxical situation: although the increasingly virulent anti-Semitism is a problem for us Jews in the diaspora, it is a blessing for Israel. Because it is the best incentive for aliyah (emigration to Israel). And if Israel wants to remain a modern constitutional state and a successful business location, it urgently needs European Jews: well-educated, democratic, humanistic.

Is it still worth fighting for the Jews in the diaspora? In view of the demographic and political developments in Europe and from Israel’s point of view, no. But we still have to do it. For our own sake – and for our free and democratic society, which we must not leave to fanatical extremists once again. Because their fanaticism does not stop with us Jews.

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