From Sacha Wigdorovits

It is nothing new that the red-green city of Zurich is a good place for radical Islamists and equally radical post-colonialists. They are not only allowed to shout out their anti-Semitic hate messages disguised as “anti-Zionism” at demonstrations on the street. They are also regularly given hospitality in institutions such as the Rote Fabrik or the Zentralwäscherei, which are subsidized by the city. This is with the blessing of the city government, which invokes political pluralism and the right to freedom of expression.

Now this anti-Israel policy, which has so far only been supported by the red-green party, is receiving support from the political center: from the Green Liberal Party (GLP) of the city of Zurich. Its party leadership has – apparently against the recommendation of the cantonal party leadership – publicly reprimanded its member Ronny Siev for disseminating posts critical of Islam from other Facebook users. Siev was a founding member of the GLP in the city of Zurich and is one of 15 GLP representatives in the 125-member city parliament (municipal council).

He is also Jewish and is a vocal campaigner on the municipal council and in social media against the increasingly aggressive anti-Semitism and hostility towards Israel in Zurich as a result of the Hamas massacre of 1,200 Israelis and other nationals on October 7, 2023.

In the course of this engagement, Siev spread a post by a German journalist on Facebook in which she wrote: “Almost every Muslim is a Jew-hater”. And on Instagram, he re-posted a message that described Islam as a “death cult”. This was in the context of the walls and barriers that Israel had erected against Palestinian terrorists and suicide bombers in Gaza and the West Bank.

Compared to the anti-Jewish statements that can be read millions of times a day on social media, these two posts seem harmless. And, as I said, they were not even made by Ronny Siev himself. Nevertheless, they earned him a criminal complaint for violating Article ^{261bis} of the Criminal Code, the so-called “anti-racism criminal norm”.

At least this is what the anti-Israel online platform Baba News, which is close to the radical Islamists, claims. Siev himself is not yet aware of the criminal complaint. If it exists, it is unlikely to have any chance of legal success.

Baba News, on the other hand, turned it into a bigger story. The aim was clear: Siev was to be smeared by his party, the GLP, and silenced as a vehement defender of Israel and campaigner against hatred of Jews.

This approach is part of the business model of Baba News and other circles close to the radical Islamists. Anyone who stands up for Israel in public is attacked by legal and/or media means in order to silence them. Baba News has already tried to do the same to the author and recently to the Swiss-Israeli Society GSI. Both times without success.

In the case of Ronny Siev, too, the defamation ploy did not seem to work at first. In an initial statement, the party leadership of the Green Liberals in the city of Zurich explained that these posts were Siev's private matter.

But then a few critical emails were received – and that was enough for the executive committee of the city party to bow to the pressure and grovel before the Islamist circles. It summoned its member Ronny Siev for a meeting, warned him and made this public.

However, Siev had made it easy for the party leadership to pillory him. Contrary to the recommendation from Muslim circles, he had apologized for the dissemination of the two posts, even though there was no reason to do so. According to the motto "Qui s'excuse s'accuse – he who apologizes, accuses himself", Siev thus opened the door for his public excoriation by his own party superiors.

But the party leadership of the GLP in the city of Zurich also scored an own goal. With its approach, it turned a total no-event – apart from a few emails, there was no reaction to the aforementioned, boringly written Baba News report – into a media story. It remains to be seen whether this will help the Green Liberals to win additional votes in the municipal elections in the city of Zurich on March 8, 2026. The behavior of the GLP party leadership leaves a stale aftertaste for another reason: when Ronny Siev received death threats a few months ago because of his public commitment against hatred of Jews and for Israel, the party leadership lacked any solidarity and remained passive. This also fits in well with the current political climate in the city of Zurich.

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.