

Wiesenthal Center to German 'Left Party' Leaders:- "Expel Holocaust Slanderer from your Party in order to keep it in Camp of Post-War and Post-Wall Democracy"

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In a letter to Gregor Gysi, Chairman of the Left Party (Die Linke) Parliamentary Group and Petra Pau, the Party's Vice President of the Bundestag, the Simon Wiesenthal Centre's Director for International Relations, Dr. Shimon Samuels, declared that "we are sickened at the statements by your party representative in Duisberg, North Rhine - Westfalia, Hermann Dierkes."

The letter continued, "the fact that he endorses Palestinian violence and the boycott of Israel as 'an apartheid regime', is bad enough.

However, his questioning of Israel's right to exist and his belittling of the severity of the Holocaust, take him beyond the pale, in challenging the so-called 'German-Israeli special relationship' over the past four decades of diplomatic normalization.

Samuels suggested that "Dierkes is ingenuous in his question, 'where is the voice today that we should have a special relationship to the Soviet Union or the successor states of the Soviet Union'. Thereby, he distorts both memory and responsibility for the Holocaust."

The letter noted that "he adds contempt in presenting 'Israel as only the refuge for the survivors of the Holocaust ...The survivors are dying.

That is the most dangerous place for all the Jews in the world. The entire thing is dishonest'. Is Dierkes ambiguously questioning the veracity of the Holocaust or is he endorsing a repetition? Most disconcerting is the silence of the German media, intellectuals and churches in regard to these egregious statements."

Samuels reminded Pau that "when we last met in Jerusalem, you called for a campaign against antisemitism", likewise recalling to Gysi that "we first spoke in the heady days of January 1990, when the wall had fallen and you fought to prevent the passage of neo-Nazis from West to East Berlin" continuing, "both of you have publicly denounced Dierkes, but your declared cause to contain antisemitism and neo-Nazism cannot be served by allowing such discourse to remain in your Party."

The Centre called on the two leaders "to take measures to expel Dierkes and his fellow-travellers from Die Linke. This is vital to keep the Party in the mainstream camp of German post-war and post-wall democracy."

"We also propose that you adopt an educational programme on the Holocaust, Israel and contemporary Jewry for your Party rank and file and, thereby, clarify the responsibilities of the German-Jewish special relationship in this 65th anniversary year of the end of World War

Two", concluded Samuels.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center is one of the largest international Jewish human rights organizations with over 400,000 member families in the United States. It is an NGO at international agencies including the United Nations, UNESCO, the OSCE, the OAS, the Council of Europe and the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino).

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