

Islamoswimsuits don't float in France

by Nidra Poller

How did a burkini ban imposed in more than 30 seaside municipalities become the center of international scorn? France, reeling in the aftermath of allahu akhbar mass murders, suddenly becomes the bad guy? Videos, some of them staged provocations, of innocent Islamically dressed women, victims of “police brutality” on French beaches replace the horrifying reality of the dead and the maimed on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice, and hardly anyone notices the paradox?

First of all, it's not a burkini. The catchy misnomer is good marketing but it does not describe the hijabathing suit that covers a woman from head to toe, leaving only the face, the hands, and the feet exposed. Unless it's supposed to mean a transition from burqa to bikini? More likely vice versa! As it stands today, it's nautical miles away from a bikini and the gaggles of ladies performing in front of the French embassy in London and similar locations are paddling in bad faith. “No one can tell me what to wear,” they declaim, echoing sharia - friendly slogans we've heard before. Europe is pockmarked with neighborhoods controlled by sharia promoters who most certainly do tell women what to wear. And punish them if they do not comply. In one of countless “honor” murders in France the parents of a young man who burned a woman alive defended him with this straightforward explanation: she wore makeup.

Hala Gorani (CNN International) invited two Muslim women to comment on the French burkini ban. One, dressed in Western clothes, is against the burkini and against the ban. Walking in a neighborhood in Bradford she heard men who did not know she understood their language tearing her apart for showing her face. The other guest, her head and neck enclosed in an

opaque winding sheet and the rest of what must be her body hidden inside a thick-skinned jilbab, summed up the French burkini ban as “white men telling brown women what to wear.” The current French government is a stickler for parity but that doesn’t penetrate the young woman’s hijab. From her viewpoint, the president is a white man, the male and female cabinet ministers are a white man, the naughty burkini ban is a white man’s insult to Muslim women.

Islamically correct neighborhoods in our modern Western countries are modelled on Islamic nations in which women are most vehemently told what they can wear. Tourists, businesswomen, wives of heads of state, female politicians, and journalists cover their arms and legs and wrap their heads in scarves more accurately described as hijab when they tread those grounds.

Fallacious sisterhood

Daughters or granddaughters of bra-burners frolic on a makeshift beach in front of a French embassy, arm in arm with their Muslim sisters whose mothers or grandmothers fled oppressive Islamic lands. Egged on by the usual battalions of reporters in prestigious media, they scold the intolerant French. Nobody can tell you what to wear? Tell me, American and British sisters, can you go topless on your beaches? Can you wear street clothes in the swimming pool? Of course not, and everyone knows. It’s my choice to cover myself? Women who “freely choose” to hide their bodies also accept a wide range of constraints and impositions that may include genital mutilation and purdah. But this ad hoc Sisterhood equates the choice of Islamically hiding one’s body with Women’s Liberation! Contraception, abortion, sexual freedom, the right to be a bus driver, party all night, stay alone in a hotel without being branded a prostitute...and the right to swathe my body in yards of fabric to stifle its improper sexual invitation.

What's not French about a burkini? asks one sassy progressive. Didn't Victorian bathing costumes cover women from head to toe?

All the right-thinking commentators, newspapers of reference, international TV networks, and cutesy protestors shook fingers of reprobation at the French, repeating the same storyline, the same clichés, being shocked by the same (probably staged) incident, and not daring to dip a toe into the ocean of evidence that stretches out to the horizon.

The basic premise is: everything Islamic is by definition harmless, benevolent, justified, justifiable, and totally disconnected from that nasty "terrorism" mistakenly connected to the noble religion of Islam and its Muslim populations. There is nothing reprehensible about encouraging or forcing women to hide their bodies, the choices of Muslims are always free and compatible with life in modern democracies, any suggestion to the contrary is a disgraceful stigmatization and, what's more, feeds the flames of "terrorism."

It follows that the burkini ban is an act of gratuitous hostility by right wing mayors. The honorable ladies and gentlemen of the Human Rights League (a paragon of anti-Zionism) and the (questionable) Collective against Islamophobia rightfully challenged the shameful ban. Decent people everywhere sighed with relief when the highest administrative court, *le Conseil d'Etat*, suspended the ban in one commune, Villeneuve-Loubet. Case closed? Not so fast. Most of the mayors are maintaining the ban. The plaintiffs will have to challenge all of them collectively or each one individually. The debate has not ended with the August 26th decision, it has just begun. Lawmakers are preparing bills that will stand up to scrutiny by the Courts. Despite the lack of support from his own administration, Prime Minister Manuel Valls has not backed down. 64% of French people polled in the heat of the controversy support for the ban. By next summer

France will have a president from the *Républicains* party. And Islam will be a decisive issue in the elections.

What's wrong with France?

Disgusting racists, far right extremists, xenophobes, retrograde repressive stubborn fools that don't understand where the world is going? Diversity is the marching order. Respect for differences, moving over and making room for refugees and immigrants, appreciating their rich cultural heritage, living side by side in peace and harmony, that's the way to go. So why don't a majority of French people want to go there?

Is it because they're hooked on *laïcité*? If ostentatious religious symbols are really the issue, the municipal decrees would really target the kippa, the cross, a priest's collar, a nun's headdress and, who knows, certain tattoos and esoteric symbols. Religious outfits don't disturb the peace. I never saw an Orthodox Jewish woman in long sleeves and thick stockings on a French beach, but if she did spread a towel and roast in the sun, would it bother anyone? The problem is not religion it's Islamic conquest, animated by genocidal hatred. And the Collective against Islamophobia is a bad actor in this drama.

Religiously speaking, the burkini is *haram* for the sharia compliant. See "the True Salaf" [