

## Western Politicians Seem Incapable of Winning Elections without Peddling Islamophobia

### News:

On Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December, German Chancellor, Angela Merkel publicly endorsed her party's call for a partial ban on the burqa and niqab in Germany. She told attendees at the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Conference in Essen that, "*The face veil was inappropriate and should be banned wherever it is legally possible*", and that, "*our law takes precedence over codes of honour, tribal or family rules and over Shariah law – that has to be spelled out clearly.*" It was her first party address since she announced that she would be standing for a 4<sup>th</sup> term as chancellor in next year's federal elections. Her CDU party is currently trying to pass a motion proposing a ban on the full-face veil in courts, schools, universities, during police checks and in government offices. In September, Merkel's party suffered a significant defeat in local elections to the far-right anti-Islam populist party, Alternative fur Deutschland, including in her home state. Many attributed this to her immigration policy of allowing hundreds of thousands of refugees of mainly Muslim origin to enter the country. This raised anti-migrant sentiment amongst voters, many of whom claimed that it threatened German's secular culture and foundations. Her statements against the burqa are therefore clearly aimed at showing the more xenophobic elements of her party and German electorate that she can be as anti-Muslim as they want her to be if she has their vote. Merkel's support of a burqa ban comes in the wake of the partial ban in November of the full-face veil in hospitals, municipal institutions, schools and on transport in the Netherlands, which also has parliamentary elections scheduled for next year.

### Comment:

You can always tell when it's election season in Western states because the political guns are out, aimed at the Muslim woman's dress; and calls from politicians proposing bans or restrictions on other aspects of Islam hit the headlines. Infact attacks on the Muslim woman's dress has become a favourite electioneering tool of those secular politicians and parties who are lagging behind in the polls, or who wish to make their mark amongst an increasingly xenophobic electorate. France is another case in point. This summer, with party presidential nomination elections looming, French politicians were clambering over each other, competing with their opponents as to who could issue the most derogatory statements against the Burkini, and promise the more harsher restrictions against the Muslim woman's dress. Their aim seemed to be to prove to the large Islamophobic sector of their public that they, rather than their political opponents were equipped with the best anti-Muslim credentials to be the leader of France's extremist secular state. Indeed, in today's world, political 'Muslim-bashing' has become a recognized tradition of Western secular politics and how to win elections.

Angela Merkel always presented herself as a pro-immigration, tolerant, pro-diversity chancellor but clearly even she is willing to use the anti-Muslim card when faced with the prospect of losing an election. It demonstrates the fickle nature of secular democracy where 'U-turns' on principles, promises and moral values is part of the fabric of politics. But it also emphasizes the considerable dangers of this political system, where even so-called mainstream parties and leaders are willing to ride the xenophobic wave of far-right populism

inorder to garner electoral support regardless of its divisive consequences. This is rather than disregarding poll ratings and sticking to principles by confronting the hate-filled vitriol of the racists and Islamophobes, for the sake of what's right and just. Furthermore, the irrational strategy of mainstream political parties and politicians to prevent far-right nationalist parties from entering power is to play them at their own game of bigoted politics, using their Muslim populations and immigrant minorities as a political football inorder to win votes. In such an unpredictable, pliable, immoral system, the door to fascist rule is always open!

Clearly, in secular democracies, principles will always play second fiddle and be discarded for the sake of maintaining power. Indeed, secular politicians will even trample over their own secular liberal freedoms – such as the freedom to practice religious beliefs – in order to bag a few cheap votes – demonstrating the true level of regard that they hold for such 'liberal' values. These same 'liberal' values which they discard for the sake of political expediency are the ones they hypocritically berate Muslims for rejecting and that they expect them to swallow to be categorized as 'good integrated citizens'.

The use of Muslim and immigrant-bashing to win elections is clearly proof that secular politicians of all hues have conceded defeat in trying to win over their electorate from the strength of their political, economic, and social policies. It is dog-whistle politics that uses distractions, smokescreens and scapegoats to hide the cracks in their own secular ideology and democratic system and its dismal failure to solve the problems of the people and ensure for them prosperous, fair, safe, and just lives. It reflects a system that has proven incapable of uprooting racist and xenophobic attitudes within the society; infact its politicians play to the tune of such repugnant populist views to enhance their political careers. All this is not surprising for it is the inevitable result of ruling by any man-made system which is bereft of any solutions to human problems and where the pursuit of political ambitions and hunger for power will reign supreme.

This is why the whole world is in dire need of an alternative model of how to do politics – one which has clear solutions to the problems of mankind. Where politics is about sincerely taking care of the needs of the people rather than a power struggle between self-serving career politicians. Where the role of political parties is not to vie for power but to hold the leadership to account to ensure that it fulfills its responsibility to all its citizens – Muslims and non-Muslims, and indeed to the world. This alternative model is nothing other than the Khilafah (Caliphate) based upon the method of the Prophethood.

﴿أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُيُوتَهُ عَلَى تَقْوَىٰ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ أَسَّسَ بُيُوتَهُ عَلَىٰ شَفَا جُرُفٍ هَارٍ فَاتَّخَذَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

***“Is he who founded his building upon duty to Allah and His good pleasure better; or he who founded his building on the brink of a crumbling, overhanging precipice so that it toppled with him into the fire of hell? Allah guideth not wrongdoing folk.” [9: 109]***

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