

# RCPB(ML) condemns Salman Rushdie On their knees before fundamentalism: The rightists vs. anti-religious books

Where does petty-bourgeois nationalism and liquidationism lead? The RCPB(ML) has recently come out against the publication of Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses*. These alleged "Marxist-Leninists" are prostrating themselves before the worst excesses of Islamic fundamentalism. Their rightism has so removed them from the spirit of the rebellious proletariat, it has so destroyed any sense of principle or of honor, that they can not even hold aloof from the holy crusade against Rushdie.

The Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (M-L) is closely tied to the Communist Party of Canada (M-L), and both have been carrying out a petty-bourgeois nationalist and liquidationist line for years on end. They are also both supporters of the rightist stands from the Party of Labor of Albania, which, in particular, has been supporting the regime of the Ayatollah Khomeini, the hangman of the revolution and the masses, as the supposed embodiment of the Iranian revolution. And the RCPB(ML) and the CPC(ML) have followed right along in prettifying Khomeini's barbaric despotism.

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Khomeini has called for death to Salman Rushdie for writing *The Satanic Verses*. What stand would the RCPB(ML) take? What matter a little book or two where the RCPB(ML) already closes its eyes to the deaths of tens and tens of thousands of communists and militants in the jails and torture cells of the Iranian Islamic regime. So in the February 25, 1989 issue of *Workers' Weekly* (Vol. 16, No. 8), came out against the publication of Rushdie's book in a front page lead article entitled "Britain should cease its hostile acts against Iran."

The article declares that:

"Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* is a deliberate insult against the religious beliefs of millions of Muslim believers throughout the world, a book published despite warnings from the publishers' consultant in India that it would provoke outrage. Leaving aside its all-round reactionary character and attempts to denigrate anything progressive, the book should be condemned purely on the basis of its calculated insults against the Muslim peoples, against believers in Islam, including tens of thousands of British citizens."

It adds that:

"...it is not correct that freedom of expression should extend to the publishing of materials which denigrate, ridicule or insult the personal beliefs of millions of people, to views which are extremely harmful to the people's interests. The publication of a book which causes such grave insult, which incites such fervour and causes such tensions, and which has already lead to deaths, is not acceptable."

So, according to the RCPB(ML), nothing should be published which "denigrates, ridicules or insults the personal belief of millions of people..." Thus the RCPB(ML) throws out the freedom to anti-religious propaganda or, for that matter, freedom for any revolutionary views. Did not Marxism and all militant working class literature, with its condemnation of the bourgeoisie, "denigrate, ridicule or insult" the bourgeoisie and the oppressors? Or is it only religion which is to be protected? In which case, why single out Islam? Isn't *Elmer Gantry* deeply offensive to the Protestant clergy, and what about *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You* on the Catholic private schools? And didn't millions of religious people

feel deeply offended by the publication of Darwin's theory of evolution, particularly the assertion that human beings evolved from the lower animals?

In order to hide its stand, RCPB(ML) engages in outright lies.

It calls Rushdie a reactionary. Actually, he is a liberal. **The Satanic Verses** is written against Thatcherism in Britain, and has received the disapproval of the British government. He has also criticized the Indian government in other works and been sued by Indira Gandhi. He is only a liberal, not an revolutionary, but it is simply a outrageous lie to paint him as a diehard reactionary.

It talks of Rushdie's work as inciting violence. Actually, it is the Islamic fundamentalists who have carried out this violence. And this has been cynically done as part of political maneuvers. In Pakistan, the ultra-reactionaries used it to go after the Benazir Bhutto government. In Iran, it is part of the internal maneuvers of the Islamic regime. To denounce Rushdie as inciting violence is a gutter lie that would resemble blaming abortion clinics for the violence of the Christian fundamentalist anti-abortion movement.

The RCPB(ML) denounces the hypocrisy of the British and other governments in their stand on the issue of Salman Rushdie's book. They point to the British government's crusade against the publication of **Spycatcher** which talks about British spy activities. Strangely enough, however, the RCPB(ML) is silent in this article about the revival of Christian religious fanaticism in the Western countries and the blocks, bans, and even persecution of anti-religious literature. It is also silent over the actual hostility of the British and Indian governments to Rush-

die's criticism. And it is silent over the Soviet revisionist hypocrisy of smiling on the condemnation of Rushdie for the sake of making time with Khomeini and the bloody regime, a hypocrisy which bears a good deal of resemblance to that of the RCPB(ML) itself. The RCPB(ML) denounces bourgeois hypocrisy only to take up its own petty-bourgeois liquidationist hypocrisy. Apparently its logic is that if the bourgeois governments can engage in hypocrisy over literature, why can't it also?

The RCPB(ML) states that:

"It is scarcely believable that their [the U.S., British and various other European governments] stance could follow solely from the threats to the life of Salman Rushdie from Iranian leaders."

It points to the assassination activities of these governments. But there is a strange omission. The RCPB(ML) article fails to give its own stand on the death threats on Rushdie, unless this stand is implicit in its condemnation of the publication of Rushdie's work. It tries to slur over this issue. What toadies to the Iranian regime! But then again, the RCPB(ML) hasn't condemned any of the mass executions of Iranian communists and activists by the butchers in Teheran, so why should it be concerned with the price on the head of Rushdie?

Here we are not judging the nature or value of Rushdie's works nor how effective or well-considered this or that book of his is. But neither we nor the working class as a whole will consent to the censorship of what it can read by the religious fundamentalists, Christian or Islamic.

Shame, shame on the RCPB(ML)!

## Haitian refugees protest detention in Miami

Another spark of struggle flared in the fight against racial oppression in Miami, Florida on January 29.

Four hundred Haitians gathered to demonstrate at the Krome Avenue Detention Center where immigrants are held by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The protesters demanded an end to harsh and discriminatory treatment of refugees from Haiti.

At the Krome Detention Center, Haitian refugees are held indefinitely. One demand of the demonstration was for the release of almost 200 Haitians who are currently being held there.

The INS follows a discriminatory policy towards refugees, one factor being whether the country of origin is considered hostile or friendly to the U.S. government. If the U.S. government wants to overthrow the government of the country, and the INS believes that the refugees may embarrass the government, and especially when it believes

that they may be anti-communist or fervently pro-imperialist, then it tends to favor them. If the country is pro-Western, then the INS shows no mercy towards dissidents, downtrodden workers, etc. Thus, while Cuban refugees arriving in boats from Cuba are let out on bond within 24-48 hours, Haitian boat people are kept here indefinitely. An additional reason for the discrimination against Haitians is that they are black and the INS is racist.

The Miami demonstration also protested deportations of Haitians back to Haiti. The day following the protest, the U.S. Coast Guard intercepted a small boat holding 149 Haitians who asked for political asylum. But the Coast Guard sent all but six back, saying that the boat had not yet reached U.S. territorial waters.

Some time after the January 29 demonstration, 15 Haitians detained at Krome were released. There are plans underway for another demonstration in March.