

Rightists continue to condemn Rushdie RCPB(ML) wants to outlaw religious blasphemy

In the March 15 issue of the **Supplement** we reported on the disgraceful stand of the "Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (M-L)" condemning the publication of the **Satanic Verses** by the liberal author Salman Rushdie. This showed where petty-bourgeois nationalist and liquidationist ideas could lead a group. The RCPB(ML) is closely tied to the CP of Canada (ML) and both support the foreign policy stands of the Party of Labor of Albania.

The RCPB(ML) condemned Rushdie in a front page article in the February 25 issue of its paper **Workers' Weekly**. Here we simply want to add a brief update on what's happened since then. The RCPB(ML) has continued to campaign against Rushdie. The lead article of the May 27 issue of its paper (Vol. 16, No. 21) is entitled "The demands of the Muslims are just and should be supported by all democratic people." And what demand are they talking about? The article begins

"This weekend many thousands of people are demonstrating in London to demand the banning of the book **The Satanic Verses** and the extension of the blasphemy laws to cover religions other than Anglican."

Blasphemy laws and other state privileges for religion in Britain are a sign of the falseness and hollowness of bourgeois democracy. Such measures aim at being a chain upon the people, at enslaving them in religious prejudice, and suppressing the sarcastic and impious attitude of broad masses towards religious dogma.

But the RCPB(ML) has become pious and worshipful. It demands that

"...there should not be freedom to insult

and denigrate the deeply-held beliefs of millions. It is just ... to demand that the blasphemy laws, which at present apply to one religion only, should be extended to others. Salman Rushdie's books should be withdrawn by the publishers or banned."

As you can see, instead of demanding the abolition of all blasphemy laws, it demands their extension. Presumably an imperial censor could ensure that nothing that could offend any believer or upset the beliefs of any school child should be published.

And what about the demands for the death of Salman Rushdie for his blasphemy? The RCPB(ML), which in February dismissed them as irrelevant, now talks about "alleged" death threats against Rushdie. What a servile stand before the hangman regime in Iran! As before, the RCPB(ML) continues to equate the revolutionary masses of Iran with those who are torturing and executing them. It continues to support, not the vast masses yearning for change in the Muslim countries, but the ties of the old and backward over them.

But, dear souls of the RCPB(ML), why so shy about the death threat to Rushdie? After all, historically blasphemy has often been punished by death, and the Iranian regime you support has certainly meted out death to the hilt. Since you have taken the plunge and demanded the suppression of blasphemous books, why draw back from the logical conclusion? Perhaps you could campaign for the joys of the Spanish inquisition and the Salem witch hunt trials being extended for the protection of non-Christian religions as well. ■