Behind the U.K. Terror: Her Majesty's Rushdie Provocation

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach and Jeffrey Steinberg

There are ceremonious events which the Queen of England must attend to every day, most of them purely symbolic, be it the inauguration of an orphanage, or the attendance at a horse show. But there is one royal act which is of the highest political import: that is, when Queen Elizabeth II herself, goes through the formalities of knighting British subjects, or others, for services rendered to the Crown. Thus, when the Queen bestowed the title of "Sir" on author Salman Rushdie on June 16, there was a reason for it, and a reason for its occurring precisely at that time.

The news of the knighting of Rushdie, author of the blasphemous book, *The Satanic Verses* (1988), ripped through the Islamic world like a hurricane. While Muslim crowds rallied spontaneously to organize demonstrations against Britain and its Queen, for having thus honored a person considered worse than an apostate, governments in both the Sunni and Shi'ite Islamic world organized formal protests, convoking British High Commissioner Robert Brinkley in Islamabad, and summoning British officials to the Iranian foreign ministry, to lodge official protests. Pakistani Religious Affairs Minister Ijaz ul-Haq went so far as to state to the National Assembly, "If somebody has to attack by strapping bombs to his body to protect the honor of the Prophet, then it is justified." Though he later retracted the statement, the Assembly did pass a resolution condemning the knighthood on grounds that it would encourage "contempt" for the Prophet.

Mohammad Ali Hosseini, foreign affairs spokesman of Iran, hit the nail on the head, when he stated on June 17, that the honor conferred on Rushdie would "definitely put the British officials in confrontation with Islamic societies. This act shows that insulting Islamic sacred values is not accidental. It is planned, organized, guided, and supported by some Western countries."

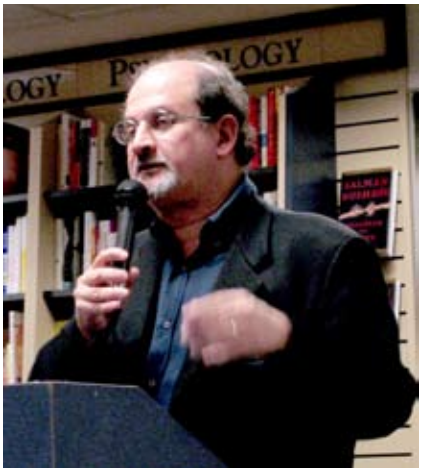
Indeed, the significance of the Queen's ceremonial act, lies in the explicit acknowledgement, by Britain, and the monarchy inself, that they are actively engaged in fomenting wars, under the guise of religious conflict, as a means to the end of establishing world empire—a new form of post-nation-state feudalism, maintained by a monopoly on mass-kill weapons.

When Elizabeth II touched Salman Rushdie's shoulder with her sword, she was signalling to him and the world, the monarchy's gratitude for services rendered by the Indian-born author, in the interests of religious war. In addition to being justly outraged by the act, Islamic governments and communities should understand the knighting as a form of "outing": The British monarchy admits its role as the force that has manipulated religious, sectarian conflict, not only recently, but throughout centuries, as a method of imperial control.

London and Glasgow

True to British imperial "gang-countergang" methods, there was another more immediate objective served by the Rushdie provocation. The knighting of Rushdie was the actual trigger of the series of amateur terrorist attacks that took place in London and Glasgow, June 29-30. While the only person injured in the attacks was the driver of a jeep that attempted to ram the terminal at Glasgow Airport, the incidents drew massive media attention, invoking images of a new round of al-Qaeda mass terror.

On July 12, the *Times of India* confirmed what well-informed U.S. and Scottish circles had told *EIR* more than a week earlier: The "terrorists" who carried out the bungled attacks in London and Glasgow were driven to act out of outrage over the Rushdie knighthood. "It was the knighthood to writer Salman Rushdie, which has angered many radical Islamic groups, that forced alleged bomber Kafeel Ahmed to execute the Glasgow airport attack. Investigators have stumbled upon this while gathering details about his transformation from a devout student to a radical." Citing leads provided by Indian and British investigators, the newspaper added, "Kafeel and his associate, Iraqi doctor Bilal Abdulla, attempted the terror attack to 'teach a lesson' to the UK for honouring



Ken Conley

Salman Rushdie presenting his book Shalimar the Clown *in California, October 2005*

Rushdie." One investigator interviewed for the story explained, "The knighthood to Rushdie was the final nail. That's why they conspired and attempted the attack."

The two men had met, according to first-hand accounts, while students at Cambridge, and would meet at the Islamic Academy on Gilbert Road in that university town. According to the July 5 *New Statesman*, that Islamic center was associated with Hizb ut-Tahrir (the "Party of Liberation"), a 50-year-old Sunni Muslim organization that preaches the revival of the caliphate, and which is closely scrutinized by British security services. U.S. sources report that Britain's internal security service, MI5, had the men under surveillance *prior* to the attacks, lending further credence to the idea that the whole affair was a British Crown-orchestrated hype.

Why knight the Islam-slanderer Rushdie near the anniversary of serious terrorist attacks that rocked London's subways several years ago? The Crown had a series of objectives in provoking the amateur terror attacks and then hyping them as the work of al-Qaeda sleeper cells.

First and foremost, the London and Glasgow attacks, and the media frenzy they triggered, diverted attention from the growing "Al-Yamamah" scandal, which implicates the British monarchy and a nest of major British multinational corporations, led by BAE Systems, British Petroleum, and Royal Dutch Shell, in a covert warfare slush fund, hidden for two decades, within an oil-for-arms barter deal with the Saudi monarchy. At the bottom, the Al-Yamamah project generated at least $80-100 billion in off-the-books money, hidden in various accounts in British offshore money-laundering centers. Successive British governments have been implicated in the world's biggest offshore secret operations fund, and, as one of his first official acts in office, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced that he would not reopen the Serious Fraud Office probe of BAE. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair had shut down the SFO probe on "national security" grounds late last year, and had thus set off an international furor, and as many as a dozen investigations into the Al-Yamamah bribery, weapons trafficking, and clandestine warfare schemes. Most dangerous are a series of U.S. government inquiries. Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) has taken an interest in the way that the Department of Justice is handling its probe, including his demand for all communications between the White House and the DOJ with regard to BAE.

In addition to attempting to divert public attention from the BAE scandal, the London-Glasgow bombings also provided a welcome boost for Gordon Brown, whose public poll ratings shot up by a reported 25-30%, after the bungled attacks. As the 9/11 attacks in the United States demonstrated, nothing boosts support for a newly minted government more than a mass-carnage terror attack, that rallies popular support for the "war on terror." Sources tell *EIR* that the Crown has decided to throw its support behind Brown for the time being, and that the terror scare was, in part, aimed at strengthening Brown, who had been under fire from his Tory rival David Cameron.

The third aim of the Rushdie provocation, according to U.S. and Scottish government sources, centered on the Glasgow attack. In recent elections, the Scottish National Party was swept into office in a backlash against the imperial follies of the Blair government, and the sentiment for a break from the U.K. is strong and growing among the Scots. Such a break would potentially devastate the power of the City of London for some time to come. The Glasgow attack afforded the Scottish-born Gordon Brown the opportunity to rally unionist forces around the common plight of Englanders and Scots—both targeted by Islamist extremists.

Who Is Salman Rushdie?

Sir Salman Rushdie is nothing but a latter-day British pawn in the larger and older imperial game of religious manipulation, a mentally deficient individual deployed to mount a deliberate provocation. As the history of British manipulation of religious strife has documented, one can ignite riots and even war, by killing a sacred cow and throwing it into a Hindu temple; by desecrating a church, or bombing a mosque on a Shi'ite holy day. The bomb that Rushdie threw was in the form of a book, *The Satanic Verses*, geared to offend Islam as a religion.

Whether or not he carries the relevant identification card, Rushdie is a British intelligence agent, attested to by his curriculum vitae, as well as his services rendered. Born in Bombay on June 19, 1947, Rushdie had no real religious upbringing. As he said in an interview with the *Independent*, his parents were "almost totally irreligious," going to mosque only a couple of times a year. Although they hired a religious teacher for the children, Rushdie related, "Unfortunately, they had also brought us up as extremely irreverant children. It was their fault for raising us as devilish infidels! So myself and my sisters gave this poor guy such a hard time, that after about two lessons, he told my parents that he didn't know what to do. And, to their immense credit, they said, 'All right, then,'

and gave up." Rushdie also recounted in a work, *In God We Trust*, that he would take part in religious festivals now and again, with his father, going to the mosque, where he would "rise and fall with the multitude, mumbling my way through the uncomprehended Arabic. . . ." But that was it.

His parents remained in Bombay during the partition, and did not identify with those among the Muslim population who formed Pakistan. What Rushdie identified with was Britain and the British way of life. He was sent off to England, at age 13, in 1961, to attend the Rugby School; a year later his parents became British citizens—or more precisely, British subjects. When they later decided to return to Pakistan, Salman stayed in England, and, in 1965, went on to King's College, Cambridge. It was in this period that he began to frequent literary circles, and dabble in film and theater. His literary icons were the leading degenerates of the day: James Joyce, Günter Grass, and Gabriel García Márquez.

Significantly Rushdie's first major work, *Midnight's Children* of 1980, which gained him recognition, had a political thrust: a critique of Indira Gandhi, who sued him for libel and won. Mrs. Gandhi was assassinated four years later. Another work, entitiled *Shame* (1983), targetted Pakistani leader Zia ul-Haq as well as Benazir Bhutto, daughter of Ali Bhutto, who had been murdered on orders from Henry Kissinger.

It was in 1988, that Rushdie made his major breakthrough, with the publication of *The Satanic Verses*. As soon as the book appeared, protests broke out throughout the Islamic world, where it was seen as a blasphemous attack on Islam. The wave of protest reached a climax when Ayatollah Khomeini, then the supreme leader in Iran, issued a religious decree, or fatwa, condemning Rushdie to death. After that, Rushdie went into hiding; he became an instant *cause célèbre*.

The charge of blasphemy is justified. *The Satanic Verses* presents the Prophet, under the pseudonym of Mahmoud, as someone who violates the commitment to monotheism, by acknowledging three pagan goddesses who are worshipped by a certain Abu Simbel, an adversary of Mahmoud. Mahmoud also is depicted as involved with Abu Simbel's wife, Hind. In addition, alterations are introduced into the revelation received by Mahmoud, revelation considered by Muslims inalterable. Finally, prostitutes in a brothel are presented as having taken on the names of the wives of the Prophet. One of the pagan goddesses ends up killing the Prophet, who thanks her for doing so.

The Method of Madness

At least one hapless professor has taken on the task of trying to provide an *explication du texte* of *The Satanic Verses*. This is Paul Brians, professor of English at Washington State University, who issued his "Notes for Salaman Rushdie: The Satanic Verses," in 2004. His aim was to help readers plough through the work, which, like Joyce's books, is almost incomprehensible. Professor Brians admits right off that "Between its hostile critics who refuse to read it and its supporters who fail to read it, *The Satanic Verses* must be one of the most widely-unread best sellers in the history of publishing." Further on he explains, "The problem with *The Satanic Verses*, is that many readers have found themselves so disoriented that they have never finished the book."

Disorienting is putting it mildly. Rushdie, who said, "Joyce is always in my mind, I carry him everywhere with me," indeed tried to replicate Joyce's psychotic literary style, known as the "stream of consciousness." This is, in fact, clinical paranoia, whereby everything that passes through the mind (or that is the illusion the writer creates) is put down on paper. Reality "out there," as it were, does not really exist. James Joyce, himself a British intelligence agent, deployed his considerable knowledge of the English language and the Classics, to destroy both. In his "masterpiece" *Ulysses*, he took the great epic poem of Homer, and reduced it, piece by piece, to the banal story of an uninteresting individual, Leopold Bloom, all told through internal monologues. The evident purpose of the voluminous work, like those of similar intelligence agents in literature, such as T.S. Eliot and George Bernard Shaw, was to undermine the noble idea of Man, as presented by Homer and the entire humanist tradition. As Rushdie saw it, "The lives of ordinary people are also worthy of great art. One can create *grandeur* out of banality."

Rushdie's book is certainly more impenetrable than Joyce's wanderings, even with the help of poor Professor Brians and his Notes. The most interesting insight into the book, comes from Marjory Wallace, the director of Schizophrenia, A National Emergency (SANE) who told BBC in a 1990 interview, that the description of people falling through the air (from an airplane hit by a terrorist attack), with which the book opens, was "The best descriptions she had ever read of a person undergoing Psychotic Schizophrenic Breakdown."

If Rushdie is clinically insane, he would not be the first such unfortunate wretch to be exploited by her Majesty's secret services, to do a cultural wrecking operation, in this case against one of the world's major religions. The methods used by the British in cultural warfare have never been pretty.

The lesson to be drawn from the Rushdie case should be clear. When his book first appeared, it had the desired effect of eliciting an enraged response from among the highest authorities in the Islamic world. Today, by knighting Rushdie, the Queen has evidently desired to trigger such a response again, just as leading assets in her stable, such as Tony Blair, Benjamin Netanyahu, and Dick Cheney, are gearing up for another "religious" war, this time against Iran. The recent outburst of "Islamic terrorism" in the British Isles is intended to provoke just such a reaction. As Lyndon LaRouche wrote in a recent piece, "Russia and Iran on Strategy" (*EIR*, April 6, 2007), it is important to know your enemy, and also not to allow the enemy to draw you into a confrontation on his terms. A wiser response would be to expose the nature of the operation, the methodology deployed, and the intended reaction, so as to defeat its purpose.