



Europe's publishers self-censor on Islam

When Rushdie was published, bookstores were attacked and others refused to sell the book, but the publisher stood firm. Not today.

Giulio Meotti

May 10, 2022

When Salman Rushdie published *The Satanic Verses* in 1989, Viking Penguin, the British and American publisher of the novel, was subjected to daily threats from Islamists. As Daniel Pipes wrote, the London office resembled "a battlefield", with police on guard, metal detectors and an escort for visitors. At the New York office, trained dogs sniffed mail packages and the offices were called a "sensitive place."

Many bookstores were attacked and many others refused to sell the book. Viking spent three million dollars on security measures, but it never faltered. Today, Western publishers all self-censor. And London capitulates to intimidation.

A popular children's book from the Biff, Chip, and Kipper series has just been retired following complaints that its portrayal of the Muslim people was racist, the *Telegraph* said. Oxford University Press is the publisher of *The Blue Eye*, in which young characters are transported to a foreign land with the help of a magic key. Children gather at a busy street market, which appears to be somewhere in the Middle East, where men are wearing white turbans and a woman is dressed in a niqab. The publisher said: "The book has been completely withdrawn from print and we have destroyed our remaining stock of the book, although a small number of copies may still remain in the supply chain. Some older titles may still be available in bookstores or as second-hand copies."

"And it doesn't matter, as the *Times* recalls, that" millions of children were trained in England on the books of Biff, Chip and Kipper". Turbans and niqabs are not appropriate, says the BBC.

Islam is treated in white gloves in so-called multiculturalism.

A translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, translated into Flemish by Lies Lavrijsen, recently removed Muhammad from Hell in order not to be "uselessly offensive", as editor Blossom Books put it. Antwerp translator Lies Lavrijsen removed the words about Muhammad. "In Dante, Muhammad suffers a raw and humiliating fate, just because he is the precursor of Islam", says the publisher. "Thieves or murderers in Dante's hell have made real mistakes, while creating a religion cannot be reprehensible".

In Germany, Gabriele Brinkmann, a famous novelist, was left without a publishing house. According to the publishing house, Droste, her novel *Wem Ehre Gebührt* could have "angered Muslims" and exposed the publisher to intimidation. So the writer was asked to censor some passages, but she refused and lost the publishing house.

Abdel-Samad's book, *Der Islamische Faschismus: Eine Analyse*, was burned at the stake not in Cairo by the Islamists, but in France by some cowardly publishers. The Parisian publishing house Piranha had acquired the rights to translate the work into French and there was also a release date on Amazon. But the publishing house reversed at the last moment.

The head of culture at the Danish newspaper *Jyllands Posten*, Flemming Rose, had to publish his book on the "tyranny of silence" at a tiny publishing house of a think tank, the Cato Institute. Because as Rose explained to the *Washington Post*, "other publishers have hesitated in fear."

The contract with the publishing giant Little & Brown of the famous British journalist Julie Burchill was torn apart after the accusation of "Islamophobic comments" (it was then published by a tiny publishing house).

"The Jewel of Medina", the novel by the American Sherry Jones on the life of Muhammad's third wife, was bought and then trashed by the mega publishing house Random House, which had already paid the author a large advance and already launched a ambitious promotional campaign.

In Salman Rushdie's time, many Western publishing houses bowed to intimidation. Christian Bourgois, a French publishing house, refused to publish the book after buying the rights, and so did the German publisher Kiepenheuer. Other publishers chose to tame Rushdie's killers. Among these, the Oxford University Press which decided to participate in the Tehran Book Fair together with two American publishing houses, McGraw-Hill and John Wiley, despite the request of Viking Penguin, l'Publisher of Rushdie, to boycott.

We recall that those were the years in which Rushdie's Japanese translator was killed, the Norwegian one took a pistol shot and the Italian one from Mondadori a knife in Milan.

Today the ancient fear of Islam has been welded to the new Woke hegemony. "Wokism has just begun" Pascal Bruckner writes this week in *Le Figaro*. "It is introduced as a product imported from the United States, especially on campuses (synthesis of asylums and re-education camps) with all the seduction of novelty and chic. It is a passing fad that is turning into a leftist ideology and is destined to consolidate itself for many years in the media, at school and in business. It will disappear only when public opinion gets tired of the nonsense or professed abominations of gender, identity, race. It will take a whole generation".

Let's get ready for a long wave of censorship. The West is now the west. A waning civilization.