

THE FACTORY WITH RATSUS AND JABBERWOK



Letters

Hite reports on her reviews

Editor:

Thank you so much for Torie Osborn's beautiful review of my book. I was delighted to receive it, and have showed it to many people.

In These Times' review was the very first—out of over a hundred reviews—to mention the political/social aspects of the analysis.

I would like to clarify a point in your review. I disagree with the analysis that biology originally determined the female condition; and just so, I do not feel that technology and population growth have created the conditions for the liberation of women from biological dictates. I do not believe that men are in power because they are physically stronger, or because women are dependent during pregnancy. The earliest families we know of have no "fathers"; in fact, the word was not even known in the earliest Indo-Europeans. The earliest families consisted of the mothers, the aunts, the sisters and brothers and uncles and children - more like some of the primate families we know.

It seems clear that there were societies earlier than patriarchal societies, although to call them "matriarchal" seems a mistake. Perhaps they were neither, but something entirely different. Civilization as complex as our own, at least philosophically, goes back at least 40,000 years, according to some recent research. I believe the society we know, with its patriarchal/hierarchical (capitalistic?) structure is an historical phenomenon that needs to be further researched and analyzed and set into a proper historical framework.

It seems clear to me that women's second-class status did not grow out of our biology, but rather the needs of a patriarchal society—i.e., you can't have inheritance through men without men owning a vessel (woman) through which to bear children. Thus monogamous intercourse was institutionalized by the Hebrew tribes returning from the Babylonian exile c. 3000 years ago.

In other words, patriarchy is a limited, historical phenomenon, and not a biological phenomenon.

—Shere Hite
New York

Is Walton a scab?

Editor:

What happened to Bill Walton's "advocacy of causes . . . even on the basketball court" (*ITT*, April 27) when he and his Portland Blazer teammates ignored the NBA umpires' picketline?

—H. Boal
Winnetka, Ill.

Driven or fled?

Editor:

Recently you have received a number of letters concerning whether or not the Palestinian refugees fled or were driven out of their homes by the Zionists in 1948. The research of Maxime Rodinson, Don Peretz and others reveals that the reality was a combination of both phenomena. The more important question concerns the right of these refugees to return to their homes. The Israeli policy was clearly stated by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion on July 16, 1948, "No Arab refugees should be admitted back."

A more humane and just approach was suggested by Eric Fromm: "It is often said that the Arabs fled, that they left the country voluntarily, and that they therefore bear the responsibility for losing their property and their land. But in general international law, the principle holds true that no citizen loses his property or his right to citizenship; and the citizenship right is defacto, a right in which the Arabs in Israel have much more legitimacy than the Jews. Just because the Arabs fled? Since when is that punishable by confiscation of property and by being barred from returning to the land on which a people's forefathers have lived for generations."

Needless to say it is now impossible to restore the particular homes and property in Israel to the Palestinian refugees. But a just settlement of the Arab-Israel dispute should grant the Palestinian refugees the right of repatriation and compensation as well as the creation of an autonomous Palestinian state alongside of Israel.

—Simon Rosenblum
Johnson City, N.Y.

More on rape

Editor:

Joshua Dressler's column about the Inez Garcia case (*ITT*, Apr. 6) made good sense, but I must object to his last statement: "The rapist is not shot down in the street by the woman, but instead is forced to go to trial where the entire society can express its revulsion for, and condemnation of, his action." Dressler has obviously never been to a rape trial. I am the director of a rape crisis center and have had occasion to attend numerous trials. Never once have I seen the rapist condemned or revulsion expressed. In fact, it is the *victim* who feels this way. Several victims wonder afterwards why they ever decided to have anything to do with the criminal justice system. I do not blame them. I am not sure I would report a rape to the police and I certainly would never have the illusion that the trial would serve the purpose Dressler suggests.

I don't have any answers: shooting the guy down is not a good solution, besides it is unrealistic. On the other hand, trials are unsatisfactory, at least under this system of justice.

—Roxanne Park
Seattle, Wa.

The answer to cancer

Editor:

Salvador Luria's article "Cancer and Circulatory Diseases are Diseases of Development" (*ITT*, Apr. 13) omits a few basic facts. 80% of cancers are environmentally caused and thus preventable. Cancer-producing substances are by-products of our industrial processes. Stress has been shown to be the most important risk factor in circulatory disease. Social stress is an integral part of the way our working and living conditions are organized. For example, unemployment, oppressive bureaucracies, deteriorating and overcrowded conditions in cities, and job dissatisfaction being stressful, cause biological responses leading not only to circulatory disease, but other diseases as well.

It is misleading to explain cancer and circulatory diseases solely in terms of developmental biology. This explanation focuses attention on factors outside of human control and thus contributes to our sense of powerlessness. Technology can be used to reduce environmental cancer substances. We can change our society to reduce stress. Health and medical information must expose the social basis of disease. This information opens up ways we all can work for *healthy* social change.

—Jim Schlosser
Syracuse, N.Y.

The new storm troopers?

Editor:

On Friday morning, April 18, I was selling *The Militant* in front of Eberhards supermarket located in the Eastown area of Grand Rapids, Michigan. A car full of people circled around the corner, they then parked across the street and a man got out of the car. He walked over and said he was an organizer of the U.S. Labor party. He was selling their newspaper *New Solidarity*. He started hassling me, kept asking me my name, where our meetings were held, how often we met and how many there were of us. I answered none of his questions. He then crossed the street to his car.

I turned my back towards them and went on selling *The Militant*. A few minutes later I was surrounded by five people. They grabbed at my papers, yelled at me to give them my name and tried to push me into the busy street.

I told them to move out of my way. The organizer yelled that "when Rockefeller tells us to move we say fuck you, now you tell us to move and we are not going to say fuck you—we are going to knock you down right here on this street and rape you sister." He grabbed my jacket, I told him if he laid a hand on me he would be on the sidewalk looking up at me. He just looked at me and then walked across the street to his car. Two Labor Party women came from the back of the building and started selling their paper. People had been watching them harass me and would not buy the paper. A young Black man came out of the

supermarket. He saw what they were doing to me, walked over, took my arm and led me out of their circle. He offered to stay with me until my ride picked me up. I thanked him and told him I would be all right. He then went back into the store to tell people not to buy the Labor Party paper.

—Jody R.
Grand Rapids, Mi.

A gift she enjoys

Editor:

In answer to your letter asking for contributions. Am sorry that I can't help you. If I could, I sure would. My grandson, who lives in Amherst, Mass. gave me *In These Times* as a Christmas gift. I am 89 years old, live on a small S.S. pension.

I like your paper. We need it. When my subscription runs out, we will see if I am still able to read. Reading is my favorite pastime.

—Anna Dizard
Duluth

Beyond him

Editor:

The Dialog on Eurocommunism between Leland Neuberg and Diana Johnstone (*ITT*, Mar. 23) was both frank and provocative.

While on the whole I agree with Johnstone's opinion that "nobody knows how at this point . . . to make a socialist revolution," it still seems to me that the Eurocommunists are way out in right field. An excellent example of this is seen in their contrived explanation of the Soviet Union's drift back to capitalism as merely results of "bureaucratic deformations," inheritance from the Tsarist past, and "personal despotism of Stalin."

Besides, on the important questions of capitalist division between mental and manual labor, its goal of both an expansionist and a debt economy, the issue of workers' control of the workplace beyond just formal nationalizations, and a host of other critical problems under monopoly capitalism, the Eurocommunist parties offer no innovative visions. How they can continue calling themselves Communists is beyond me.

—Danny Li
Honolulu

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★ BECOME A MINI-DISTRIBUTOR OF InTT!

Order bundles of 5 (10, 15, up to 25) copies of *In These Times* to be mailed directly to you every week for three months. You pay us in advance, at 20¢ a copy, and help us expand circulation. Are you a natural? Then fill in the coupon below.

Name _____
Street _____
Town/State/zip _____

Send me a bundle of (check one):
 5 10 Other (up to 25) _____
 I enclose, @ 20¢, for 3 months, (check one):
 \$12 \$24 Other \$ _____

Joshua Dressler

Burger Court challenged on rights in Congress

In my first column in these pages I alluded to the growing number of reactionary decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court. These decisions have increased police power or decreased individual civil rights, while closing federal court doors to citizens who wish to complain about their diminishing rights.

I indicated that one of the few remaining short-term national remedies to short circuit these decisions would be the enactment of federal legislation to give back by statute what the Nixon Court has taken away by fiat.

Former Justice Robert Jackson wrote that the Supreme Court was "not final because we are infallible, but we are infallible because we are final." I suggested that the Supreme Court is not the final source of power, but that the people are, and that we can and must force our will on our elected representatives.

It is gratifying to report that a start in the right direction is being made by Senators Charles McC. Mathias and Edward Brooke and Representative Parren J. Mitchell, who have introduced S-35 and HR-4514. Known as the "Civil Rights Improvement Act of 1977," this legislation, although complicated, would generally undo Court decisions that have decimated the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1871, the statute that implements the citi-

zens' Fourteenth Amendment rights against loss of life, liberty and property without due process of law.

The need for such legislation is obvious.

As Sen. Mathias stated in a recent speech, "almost every week now when the Court is sitting we receive some kind of troubling reminder that the battle for civil rights and civil liberties is never won." He noted that whereas under Earl Warren the Court "became the conscience of the country, . . . a not-so-funny thing happened on the way to our Bicentennial. The Courthouse doors once flung so wide, began little by little to close again."

Under the proposed statute, the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1871 would be given new life. The bill would expressly overrule three of the most egregious Court rulings of last year dealing with the Civil Rights Act.

It would overrule *Paul v. Davis*, in which a Louisville citizen, whose name and photograph was circulated by police to countless merchants as a "convicted shoplifter," and who was nothing of the kind, was told by the Court that he had no protection under federal law. His reputation was not part of one's "liberty" or "property" as defined in the Constitution, the Court said. S-35 would place a person's reputation within our

protected rights.

Imbler v. Pachtman would also be undone. The Court decided in that case that a prosecutor was immune from suit even when he or she knowingly used perjured testimony to obtain a murder conviction.

Also, *Rizzo v. Goode* would be overruled. That case denied urban citizens the right to obtain injunctions against future police misconduct even upon showing regular and continuing unconstitutional past behavior by law enforcement officials.

The legislation is good, and must be supported. But it does not go far enough. First of all, federal court doors are being shut even beyond the 1871 Federal Civil Rights Act. Last year the Court denied access to federal courts for state court defendants who wish to have excluded evidence illegally seized by police. That decision, and others like it, are left untouched. It leaves police undeterred in their illegalities.

More substantially, access to federal courts is meaningless if there are no rights left to protect in the courts. This statute does nothing to undercut a substantial number of Court decisions that re-interpret the Constitution so as to make lawsuits to enforce our constitutional rights worthless.

For example, in recent years, the Court



has held that federal police no longer need to obtain warrants prior to arrests in public places, even when they have time to obtain them. (Soon they will decide if that rule pertains to arrests in homes.) The right of citizens to be told prior to police questioning of their rights to an attorney and to remain silent has been seriously diminished. The Court had denied citizens the right to counsel at Grand Jury hearings and on Supreme Court appeals. It has permitted Grand Juries the power indefinitely to jail people who refuse to answer questions on the grounds of self-incrimination. It has permitted reduction of the size of juries, and permitted less-than-unanimous jury convictions. Most of these and other lost rights can be regained by statute.

S-35, even though limited, is crucial legislation. It indicates an apparent awareness of some in Congress to the need to give citizens, especially the poor and non-white, as Julian Bond has put it, "the dim feeling that we [can] really help bring about change."

Let your Congressional representatives know you wish to disclaim the Nixon Court's weapon to give the police unlimited power. Support S-35 and HR-4514.

Joshua Dressler is a lawyer who teaches at the University of San Fernando Valley College of Law, Los Angeles. His column appears regularly.

Simon Rosenblum

The Balkanization of Canada would serve nobody's purpose

On November 15, the province of Quebec elected the pro-independence Parti Quebecois (PQ) and threw a scare into the rest of Canada. Initial reactions are hasty and often ill tempered. Enough time has passed by now, however, more calmly to evaluate the meaning and implications of the PQ victory.

First of all, the election of the PQ was not a vote for separatism. The PQ won only a plurality of 41 percent of the popular vote—up from 24 percent in 1970 and 30 percent in 1973. This constitutes a majority of French-speaking voters. Polls indicate that only about one-third of the 41 percent PQ vote was hardcore separatist and that Quebec voters were far more concerned with the dismal state of the Quebec economy than language rights or separatism. The PQ was the only alternative party that seemed capable of forming a government.

In the election campaign the PQ itself toned down its commitment to independence and campaigned instead on a reform-oriented social welfare program. PQ leader Rene Levesque stumped the province promising an extension of medical coverage, solutions to the housing crisis and improvements in industrial working conditions.

So much for the election itself. The more crucial question is what effect the PQ victory will have on the movement towards separatism. On this there are conflicting tendencies. The most evident is that separatism will be significantly boosted by having a government that propagandizes regularly for independence. Levesque says a provincial referendum on separatism will be held in two or three years and there is no doubt that the PQ government will devote considerable energies and resources to winning that vote.

On the other hand there may be an

It is doubtful that Confederation can be saved by gradually chipping away at its foundation. The result would be political fragmentation based upon a destructive regionalism.

historical irony. The election of a pro-independence government may actually dampen the separatist initiative. By protecting language rights in Quebec, the PQ may actually defuse some of the separatist impulse.

Even more significantly, the PQ must concern itself with administration of the province as well as its larger dreams of changing history. The economic constraints on the Quebec government are considerable, and the present international recession only intensifies them.

The unknown factor in this scenario is the trade union movement. The victory of the PQ occurred within the context of one of the most intense periods of social agitation in Canadian and Quebec history, beginning with the first general strike in 1972. The PQ government will have to play a subtle balancing-act towards organized labor, while trying to isolate labor's socialist left-wing.

The PQ is aware that its eventual success depends on its ability to mobilize a united trade movement behind its policies. Since the election the PQ has raised the minimum wage to three dollars an hour, increased funding for day-care centers and children's health, declared its intention to obtain control of the asbestos industry and committed itself to tighter work safety rules.

These measures and declarations will encourage a favorable attitude toward the government by the trade unions. Will the confidence continue? Much will depend on the extent to which the PQ can reconcile its plans for social reform with the constraints that result from the current

economic crisis. A recent editorial in the Montreal-based left journal *Our Generation* saw the following development to be quite likely:

If significant socio-economic goals are sacrificed to nationalist goals, genuine left social democratic tendencies within the PQ will eventually be forced to break away and link-up with sections of the trade union movement in the form of a labour party, the formation of which would not likely repudiate nationalist achievements but would lay stress on socio-economic gains from a class base. The present and somewhat ambiguous class orientation of PQ nationalism would thus be exposed and a more thorough-going struggle with neo-capitalism in Quebec would be initiated.

Meanwhile, the rest of Canada can still not sit back and rest assured that Quebec will remain in Confederation. The federal government must show the people of Quebec that Canada has something to offer.

Prime Minister Trudeau speaks of necessary concessions to Quebec but what this means beyond a person from Quebec being able to visit his or her member of Parliament in Ottawa is difficult to figure out. What then is necessary?

The most common response is more autonomy and "special status" for Quebec in matters of cultural and social affairs. This has been tried before and only begs the real question of how Canada can be a home for both English and French speaking nationalities. It is doubt-



ful that Confederation can be saved by gradually chipping away at its foundation. The result of this would be political fragmentation based upon a destructive regionalism.

The balkanization of Canada would serve nobody's purpose other than a new generation of politicians and government technocrats. Canada would wind up as ten republics totally at the mercy of multinational corporations and more firmly than ever within the ambit of the American empire.

If more autonomy is not a viable alternative, then it becomes necessary to come to grips with the more fundamental concern of language. Bilingualism as introduced by the federal government has been a superficial approach to the serious problems of bringing Canada's two major groups closer together. Shoving the French language down the throats of middle-aged English-Canadian civil servants creates only a shallow bi-culturalism and only results in arousing resentment and antagonism.

What is needed from the English-Canadian people and their governments is a serious declaration of intent towards a more meaningful biculturalism. This is only possible through a commitment from the public school system to make the upcoming generation fluent in both languages.

There are enough European examples to indicate that such a program can be successful. But the desire and the resources are a necessity. The next Federal election will undoubtedly have Quebec as a major issue. Trudeau may well be successful in turning his high-sounding but vague federalism into an effective weapon against the bankrupt Tories. The danger, of course, is that Trudeau may win Canada while Canada loses Quebec.

Simon Rosenblum is a Canadian who is a graduate student at SUNY, Binghamton, N.Y.