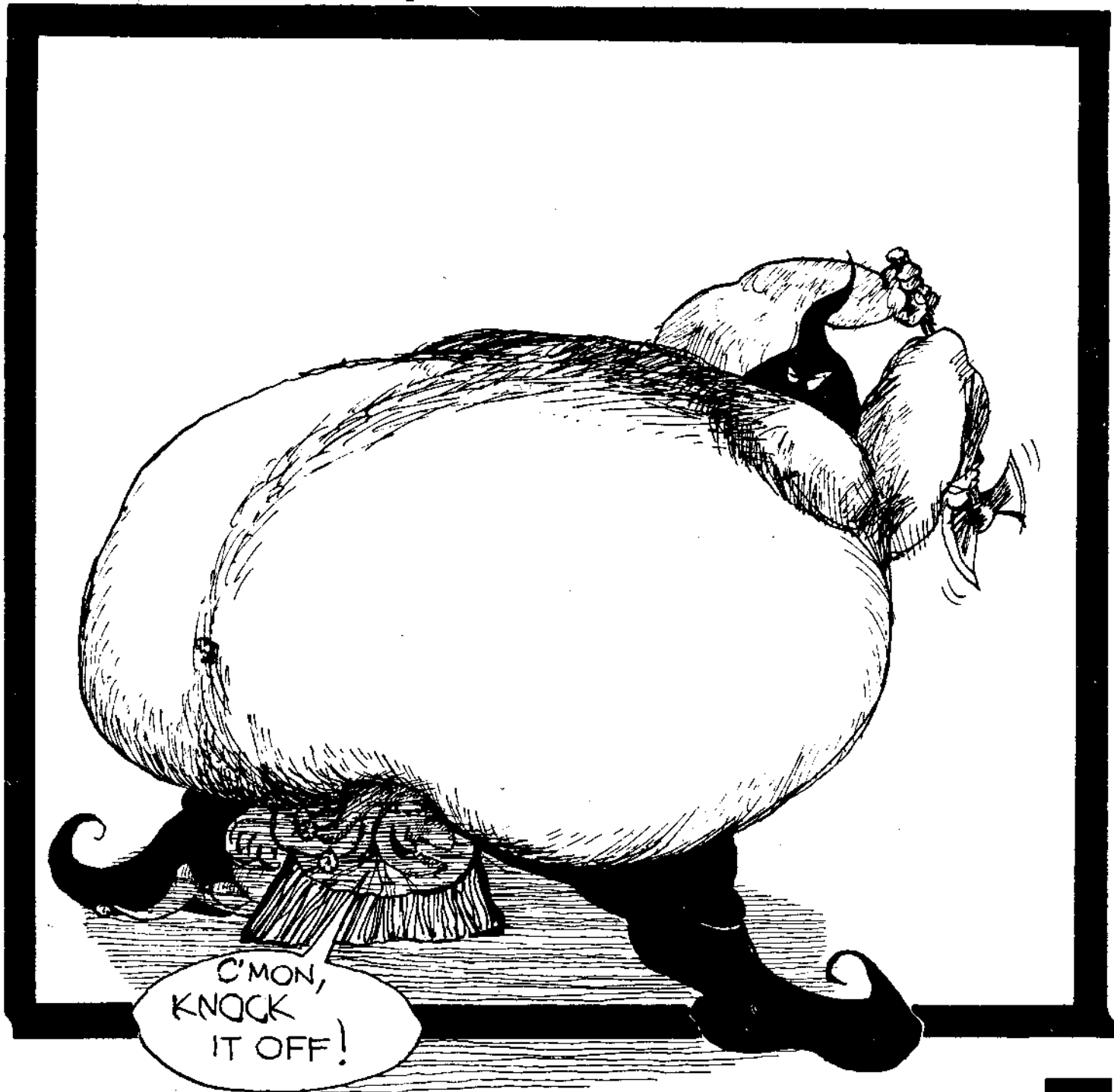
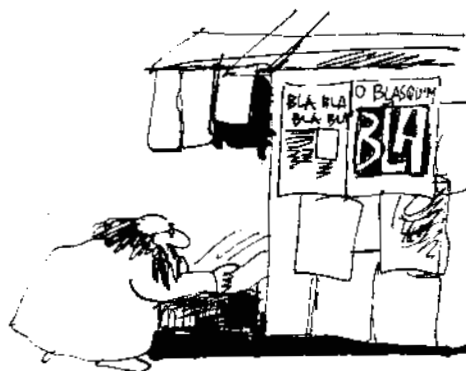


the **cartoon**
as an instrument
of political education

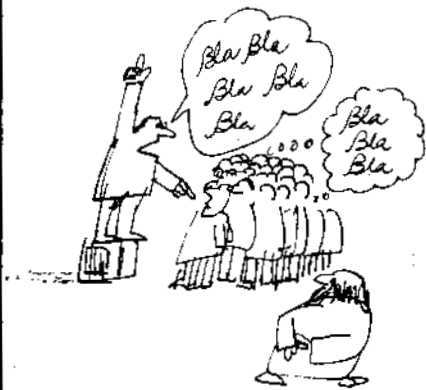
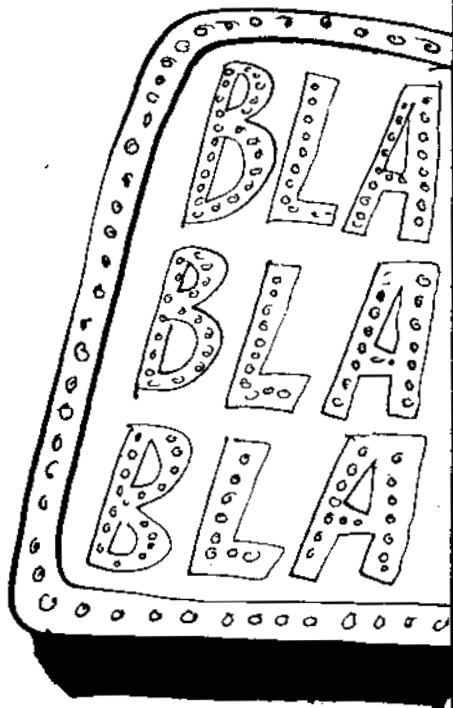
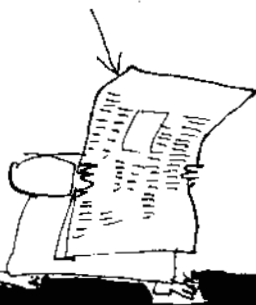


Malaquias o Profeta

Claudius
1956



BLA BLA BLA
BLA BLA BLA
BLA BLA BLA
BLA BLA BLA
BLA BLA BLA



BLA BLA BLA



Introduction

One of the major marks of the urban industrial civilization is its visual nature. The **image** cannot be separated from any civilization. From pre-historic peoples who put their sacred drawings on cave walls to the contemporary city, the image, and the message which it contains, has come a long way. The city itself puts out visual images which we absorb without being aware. The way a city is arranged spatially, the inequality between the “beautiful” sections and the poorer sections, the importance given to certain buildings with their grandness and their locations, accessible by way of wide avenues: all these are symbols, messages which tell us how the urban society is established. The city can be read in its fabric, and this implies a system of well-defined ideological values.

But the city contains more explicit messages—the special lighting for certain areas and buildings, the festival of neon advertising, large publicity posters, department store windows, theatre and cinema marquees, the covers of magazines on sale in news-stands, advertising in and on the public transportation systems, are all broadcasting visual messages for which we are the recipients, to be reached, to be impressed, and to be convinced. If we add to this the fact that our free time is largely taken up with television and cinema, we see how the circle is closed.

We can say that in all these forms of communication there is a message with a more or less explicit ideological content, giving us a certain world-view and leading us to a consensus. The totality of information given out by all these images has a striking homogeneity with regard to the models, ideas, and ways of life which are offered to us. To understand this, (and why it is so), is a necessary first step in avoiding the trap—a trap which is all the more dangerous because it presents itself in apparent innocence and gives a certain aesthetic pleasure to the eye.

All perception of reality is, in a sense, preceded or anticipated by an ensemble of ideas which represent it. More and more, before knowing something—or even in place of knowing it—we have a **representation** of it, and image of it, or an idea of it. Ideas, values, and world-views, all are articulated according to the way human beings are socially linked to each other. Images come out of social myths and constantly refer us to cultural models generated by a society which is organized according to very well defined rules. When, within a society, a group controls the material means necessary to the survival of that society, this same group also controls the means of producing ideas insights, and world-views.

Just as with the arrangement of the city—decided according to material interests and imposed on the population—information is also controlled, selected, and processed by a minority, and this information is adapted to the minority interests before being released. Then the released ideological information, (which does not correspond to reality, which veils reality, which bit by bit replaces reality), is finally accepted as reality itself. Points of friction disappear, or, robbed of their content, are presented according to the minority point of view. The powerful force of persuasion, which is the consequence of this manipulation, tries to anesthetize critical capacity and create a false homogeneous world and a consensus about what is necessary for that world’s perpetuation. So it is that things in place tend to stay in place and any unavoidable change is reduced to a simple adjustment which does not threaten the established order.

That is the unstated wish of the ruling class. In reality, however things are not quite so simple. Social practices, class interests, cultural and political factors, are all elements which prevent this total massification. One's involvement in society can unveil the hidden reality. Certain elements break, time and again, the bubble of internal logic of these mechanisms and unveil the reality around it. Even though the most powerful means of communication is always the revolutionary process itself, it would be false to say that apart from exceptional moments, (like May 1968 in France for example), there is no way to grasp reality or to decode the mechanisms of which it is composed. The important lesson to learn from those privileged moments is the idea of participation, that is, a social and political practice in which people educate themselves. Such education can be the result of an event, but it can also be had through the daily practice of deciphering the reality around us. That is the only way to break the separation between ideas and things, between the intellectual and the material, between those who know and process information and those who do not know but receive it passively.

The question we deal with in this document concerns comic strips and cartoons and their potential role in a process of political education. The cartoon is presented here as an example—among others—of the possibility of breaking the monopoly on information and of unveiling the mechanisms which are hidden behind events as presented to us. We are not interested in justifying cartoons as serious communication or attributing to them more possibility than they actually have. Our aim is to discuss and examine certain concrete examples.

This study could have been done on the basis of cartoons published in Europe, Latin America, or North America, but we have taken, rather, the work of one of the members of the IDAC collective, which means that the cartoons presented here have particular interest to us. In fact, the themes here dealt with have been touched in previous **IDAC Documents** in one way or another — development education, process of raising awareness, critique of the highly industrialized society. Finally, we look at this medium because, beginning this year, we are undertaking the production of audio-visual materials—slides, super 6 films, and video tapes—in which the cartoon will play a significant role. Before getting to the concrete examples of cartoons and considering their possibilities, it would be interesting to look at this means of expression, to understand its characteristics and its limitations.

Our interest here is to see how a visual means of expression, widely used and accepted, as is the cartoon, can serve as a pedagogical instrument to set in motion a process of political education and to see what can be learned from the examples which we shall use.

First of all, we must define our terms. We are not interested in discussing the “apolitical” cartoon. To begin with, it is possible to say that the “apolitical” cartoon does not exist, because all cartoons necessarily express the social myths which underlie well defined social models. This point has been extremely well documented in an interesting study made by Mattel art and Doffraan in which they analyze the ideological implications of *Donald Duck* cartoons and comic strips.

Freud, in his book, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, proposes a division between innocent jokes, (that is, those jokes which apparently have no reason for being other than to make one laugh), and those to which Freud dedicates the larger part of his study, which have another purpose and meaning. In this latter category we have cartoons which expose through satire and comedy, the “real” hidden nature of what we want to show.

My presenting a Hitler as comic and ridiculous, Charlie Chaplin, in *The Great Dictator*, managed to secure a victory which was materially impossible at the time. The audience showed its approval and complicity through laughter. Humor “will evade restrictions and open sources of pleasure that had become inaccessible”, says Freud.

Humor represents a rebellion against authority, liberation from absolute control. Between the author and the object of the satire, there is the public, the audience, which reacts through laughter when it sees what the author tries to show and rediscovers the reality which had been previously hidden.

Our main concern here, then, is the political cartoon —be it an individual drawing or a sequence of drawings. When cartoonists like Levine, Tim, Steadman, or Sorel draw their cartoons, they unveil some of the characteristic traits of an individual which were previously hidden from us. But the cartoon does not attack the person as an individual, but rather as a representative of an institution, of a moral or religious dogma, or of things that were considered too “serious”, so that a critique can be made only indirectly. The cartoon, while attacking one specific target, often gives the impression of dealing with an entirely different, subject. The fables are examples of this—as we shall see in the cartoons selected for this document.

It is interesting to consider the relationship between the image and the person who receives that image. McLuhan classifies the comic strip among what he calls the (6) “cool” media which, according to him, give little information on a subject but demand the participation of the reader-observer so that the message can be completed, McLuhan’s main interest is the medium in itself, its technique which he equates with its content. Without going that far and without entering here into a critique of his work, (for that, see Baldelli, Eco, among others), it is true that the cartoon has remarkable pedagogical possibilities of communication, since it does open the way to interactions, to feedback, to the reader’s responsibility in decoding and processing the message presented. (7)

The author organizes the information, which exists in a raw state. This information is taken, processed, and sent back to the audience.

That leads us to deal briefly with an often mentioned problem: the intellectual’s contribution to a process of social change. When the subject matter of a political cartoon is a reality consciously or sub-consciously experienced by large numbers of people, (be it international happening or local event) its possibilities of communication increase considerably. This reality, which is re-processed and codified by the artist, on the basis of an experience common to that artist and those who will work out the message of the drawing, is clarified by the people’s participation. The message is shaped, and its de-codification becomes a shared experience, a synthesis from which a new step forward might be taken on the way to political consciousness.

The cartoonist's message will be the more valid in so far as that cartoonist is in direct contact with the audience he or she would like to reach, and according to his or her capacity to be witness and spokesman, with a work grounded in political practice. Such a work can put in motion a process of critical analysis shared by a large number of people, thus becoming an instrument in the process of social change and political education.

The drawn, reconstructed, and remodeled image of people and situations introduces a critical dimension which we thought only words were capable of. After the leaflet and the poster, the cartoon—thanks to the distance between what is represented and the experienced situation—draws attention to relationships, traits, and associations until then only implicit. One finds then, that the image ceases to be a mere shadow of what is real and proposes, (or sometimes even imposes), another interaction, another global meaning.

The cartoon, then, becomes a valuable instrument of parallel education, a political tool designed to inform, to educate, and to mobilize.

Two other points should be raised here. First, one must establish a difference between the critical dimension of the cartoon on the one hand, and political propaganda on the other. There is, in fact, a risk that this medium become a vehicle for messages so biased that the final result is negative, even though there is validity in the subject matter which should have been communicated. Edmundo Desnoes, in his presentation of a Cuban poster exhibition, (9) points up this problem in recognizing that, although the posters have an excellent graphic quality, they constitute a kind of short-cut to authentic communication, since real communication cannot take place on a one-way basis. The critical impact of the cartoon comes from the participation which is asked from the reader-observer in the work of deciphering or decoding the message. A certain effort of reflection is required to discover a cartoon's most complete meaning.

Another point which it would be good to consider for a moment is the cartoon median's characteristic. The cartoon has the qualities of the printed press. That means that it can be rapidly executed, cheaply produced, given a wide and quick distribution, and can deal with current issues and immediate situations.

Contrary to the "elitist culture" cartoons enjoy a wide acceptance, permitting a use of free and direct expression not usually granted to other vehicles. Cartoons have an ability to bring together visually elements which were originally scattered, isolated, or hidden from view. The assemblage of these elements, then, creates a new reality.

Humor created by contrast, of ideas, by nonsense, by surprise, and by the unveiling of things that would have otherwise remained hidden, is an essential part of this medium.

In the "dream work" described by Freud there is also this process of condensation which bears a striking resemblance to the technique of the cartoon and of the comic strip. Moreover, being a non-permanent medium of communication, (the paper is "used" and thrown away), the cartoon has a great flexibility in its distribution, and it can create a receptive attitude, thanks to the seeming ease with which the message is presented and conveyed. Since cartoons and comic strips give the impression of demanding less effort than a written text on the part of the reader-observer one is naturally more open to receiving it and to considering what it wants to say.

And that should be enough written introduction, for there is a contradiction present in spending too much time discussing in writing the subject of visual communication.



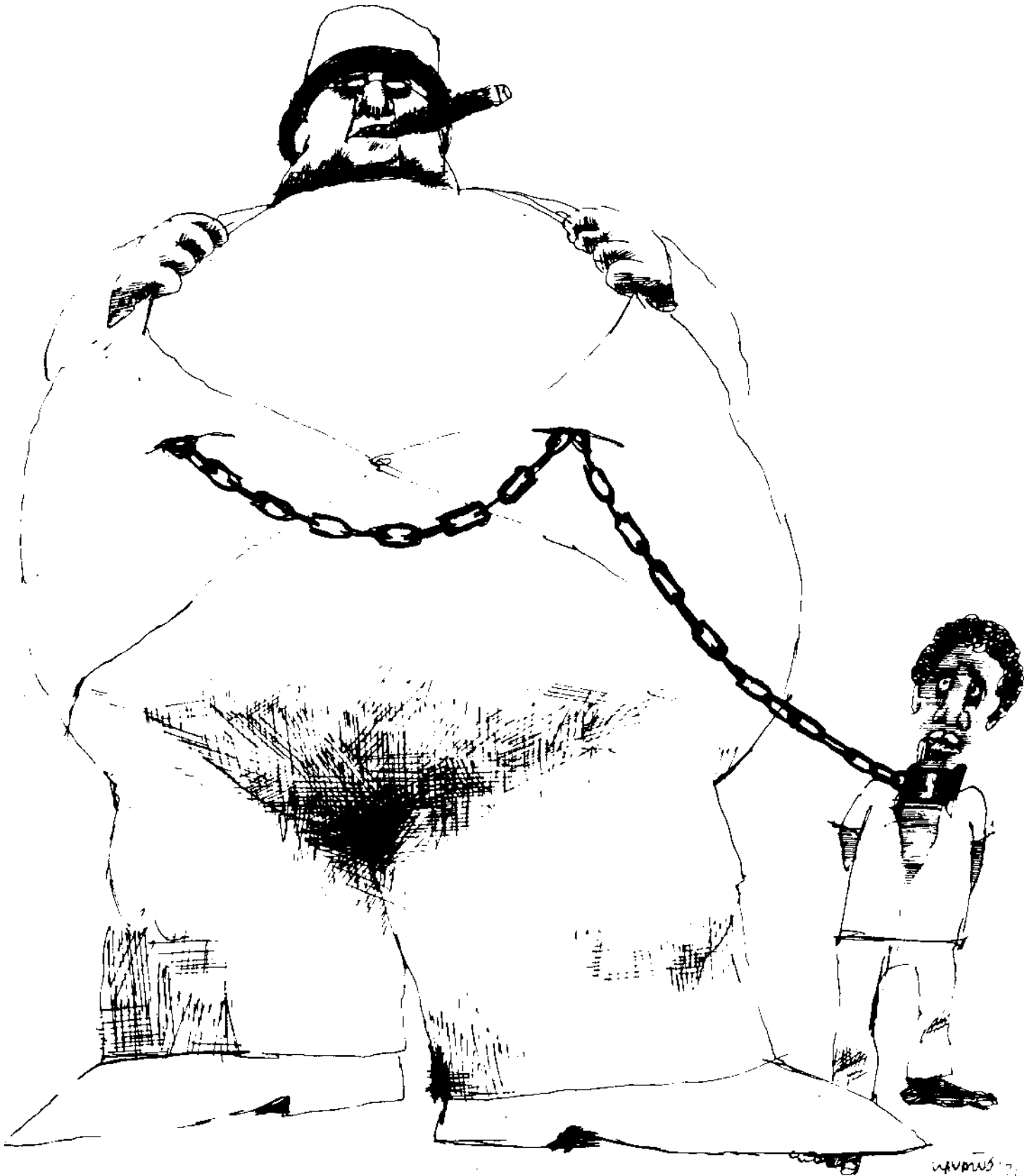
footnotes

1. See Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart, Para Leer el Pato Donald, Siglo Veintiuno, Buenos Aires, 1973.
2. See Pio Baldelli, Informazione e Contro-Informazione, Milan, Mazotta Editore, 1972.
3. Dorfman and Mattelart, op.cit.
4. Freud, Sigmund, Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1960.
5. idem.
6. McLuhan, Marshal, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, McGraw Hill paperback ed., N. Y., 1964.
7. See the preface by Umberto Eco in I Fumetti di Unidad Popular-- uno strumento di informazione popolare ne Cile di Allende. CELUC--Il Manifesto, Milan, 1974.
8. See Anne Marie Thibault-Laulan, L'image dans la Société Contemporaine. Paris, Editions, E.P. Danoël, 1971.
9. Desnoes, Edmundo, Introduction to an Exhibition of Cuban Posters in Ameterdam, 1973.

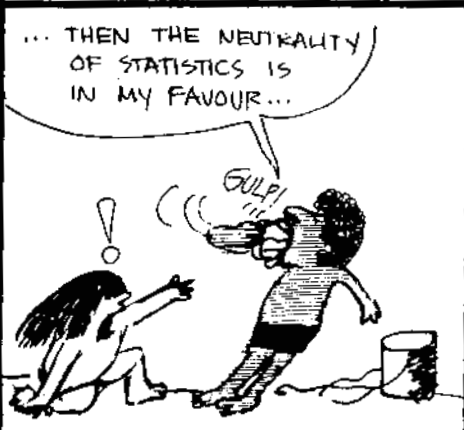
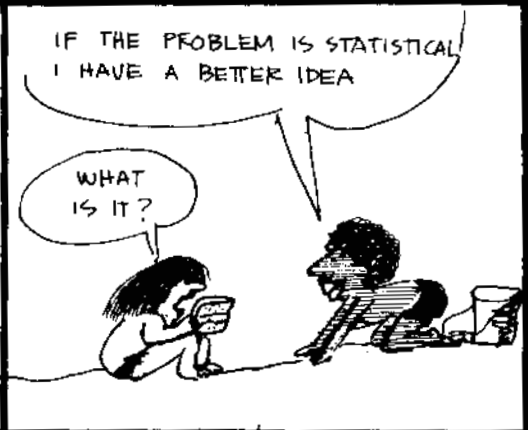
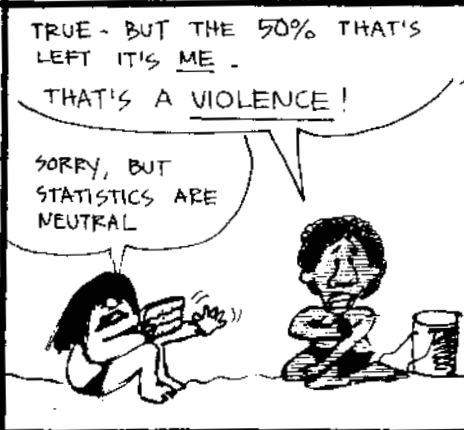
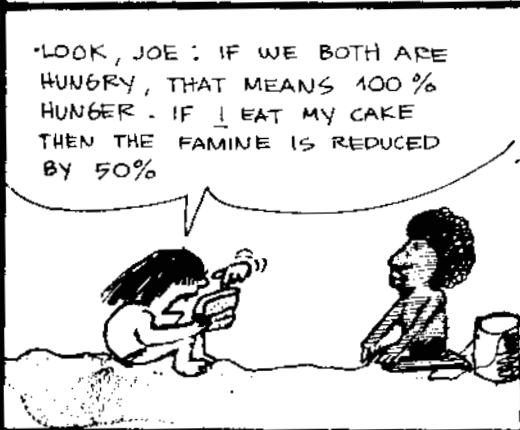
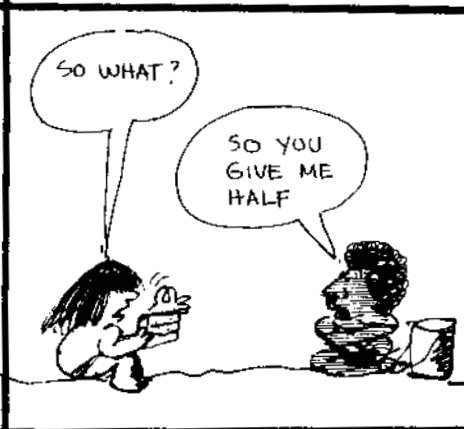
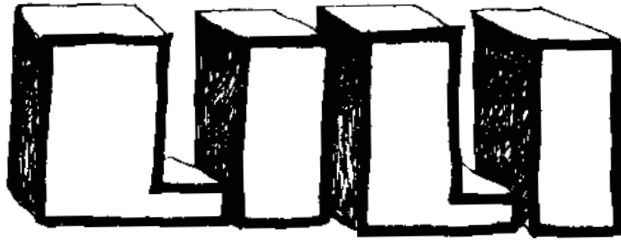
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The stories following in this document have appeared in O Pasquim, a Brazilian humoristic weekly edited in Rio. The author of the drawings is one of the founders and regular contributors to that weekly. Some of the other drawings--especially those dealing with aid and development--have been printed in different publications of the World Council of Churches in Geneva and in the Jornal do Brasil. We especially thank the CCPD in Geneva for permitting the re-publication here of drawings which were done for their use.

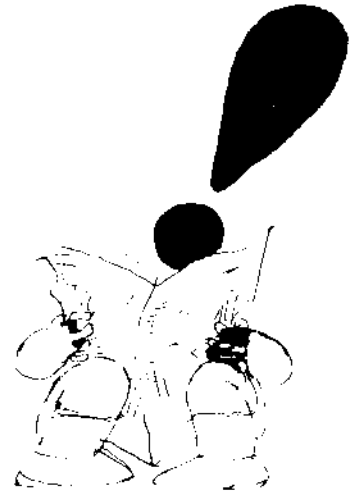
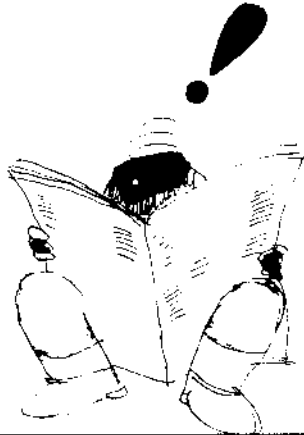
The comic strips and cartoons are the work of a member of the IDAC staff, CLAUDIUS CECCON.



WAVRUS 21



Lili



TIO EURICO...

I JUST READ IN A NEWSPAPER THAT IN 30 YEARS THE LATIN AMERICAN POPULATION WILL RISE 123 PERCENT ABOVE 1970 - THERE WILL BE 355 MILLION MORE PEOPLE!

235 MILLION MORE WILL MOVE INTO THE BIG CITIES - 85 MILLION NEW WORKERS WILL NEED JOBS 100 MILLION MORE KIDS WILL NEED SCHOOLS!



BRAZIL WILL HAVE HALF THAT POPULATION! WHERE CAN WE PUT 117.5 MILLION MORE INHABITANTS IN OUR URBAN CENTERS?

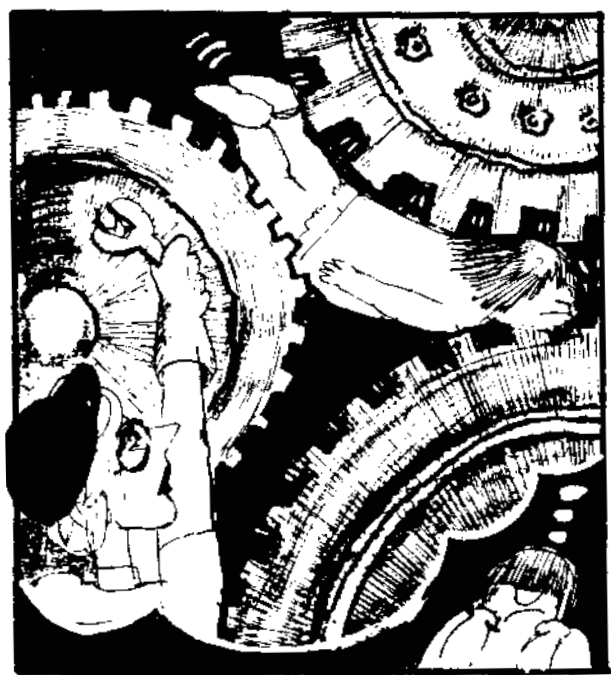
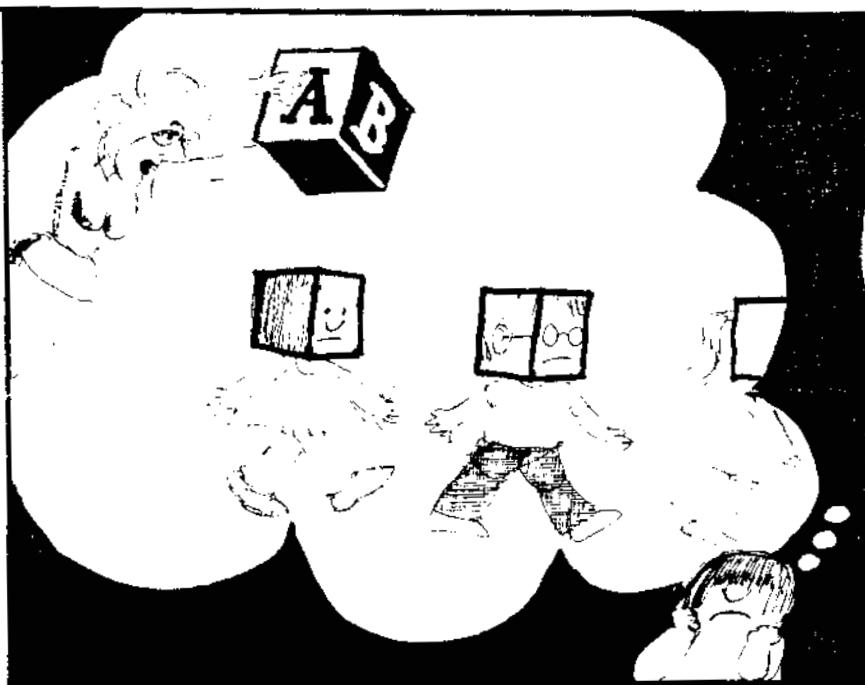
RELAX, LILI - THEY WON'T BOTHER US, CAUSE MOST OF THEM CAN'T PAY THE RENT IN THIS AREA.

JOE, GUESS HOW MANY NEW NEIGHBORS YOU'RE GETTING...?



CLAUDIUS:
Lili

I WANT YOU TO
WRITE HOW
SEE YOUR SCHOOL

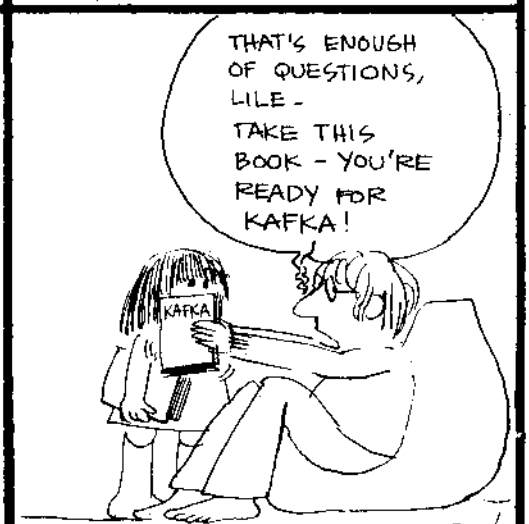
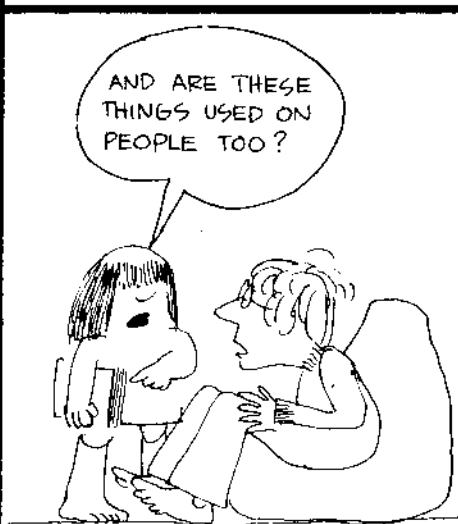
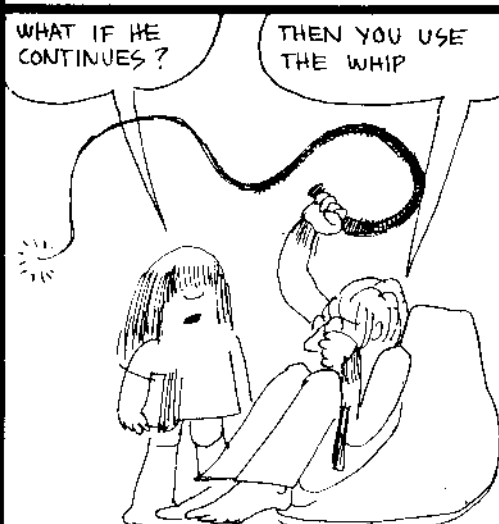
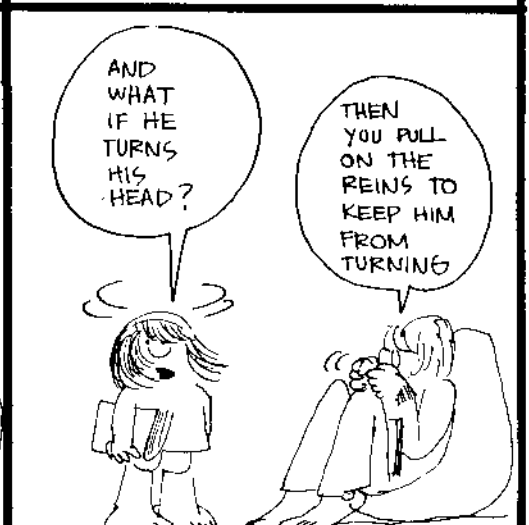
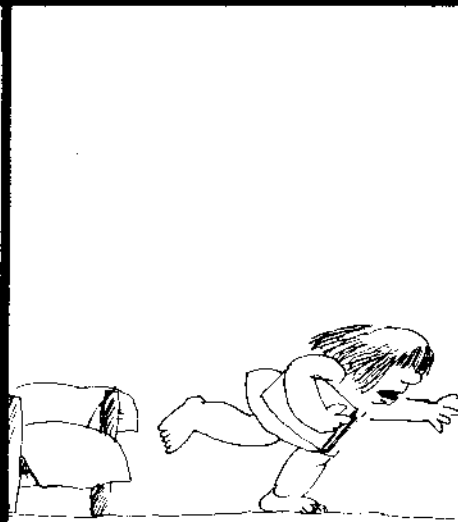
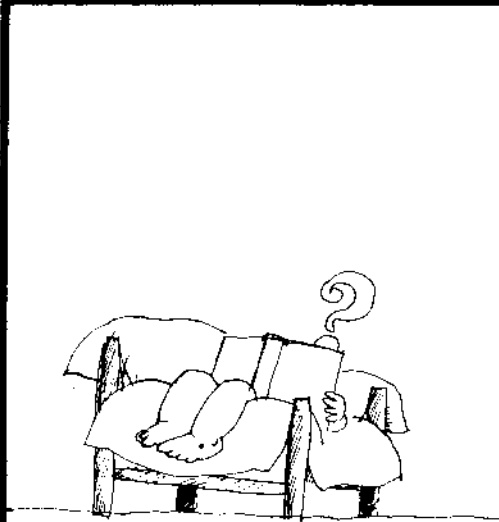


WHAT WERE
YOU THINKING
ABOUT?

HOW HARD
IT IS TO
HAVE A
CLASS-
CONSCIOUSNESS!

Claudius :

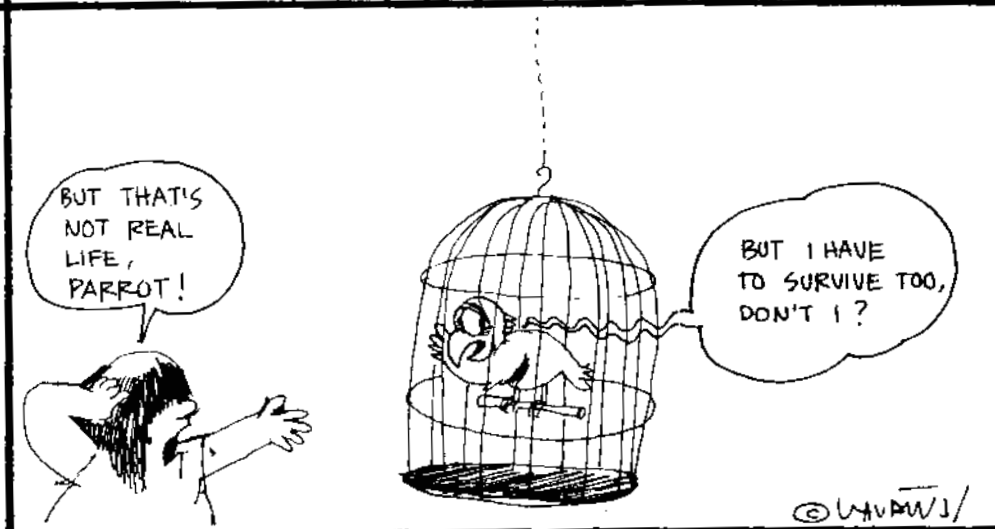
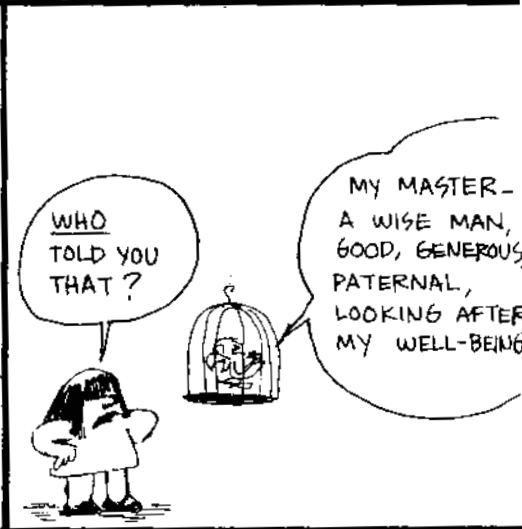
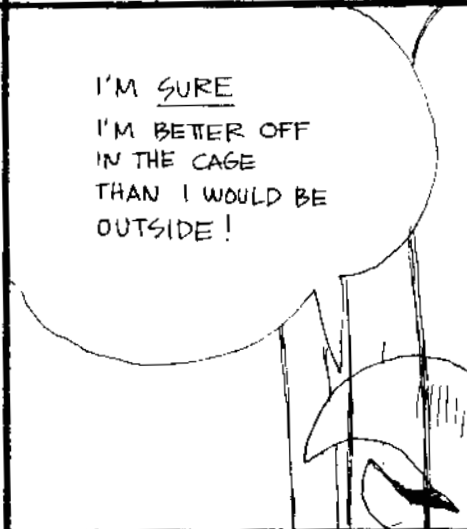
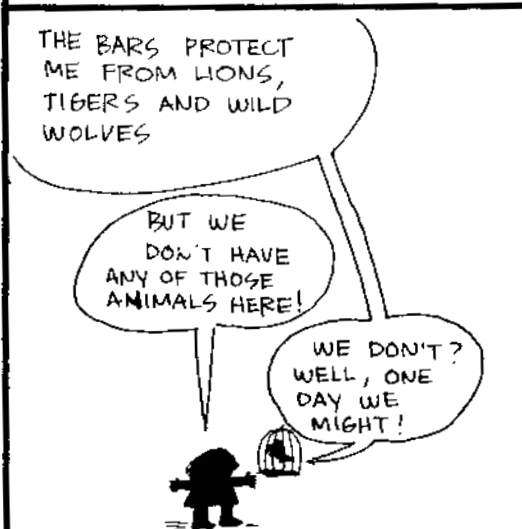
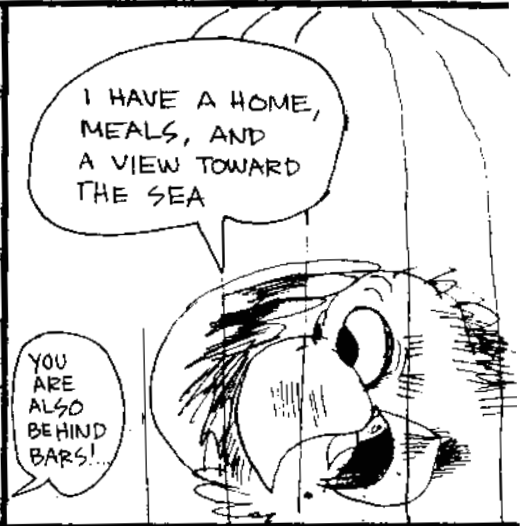
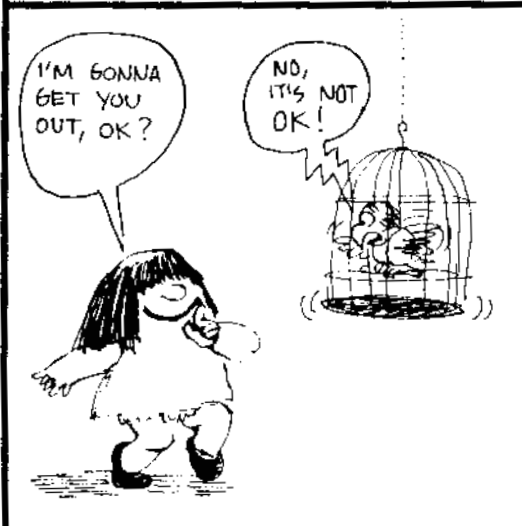
LILI

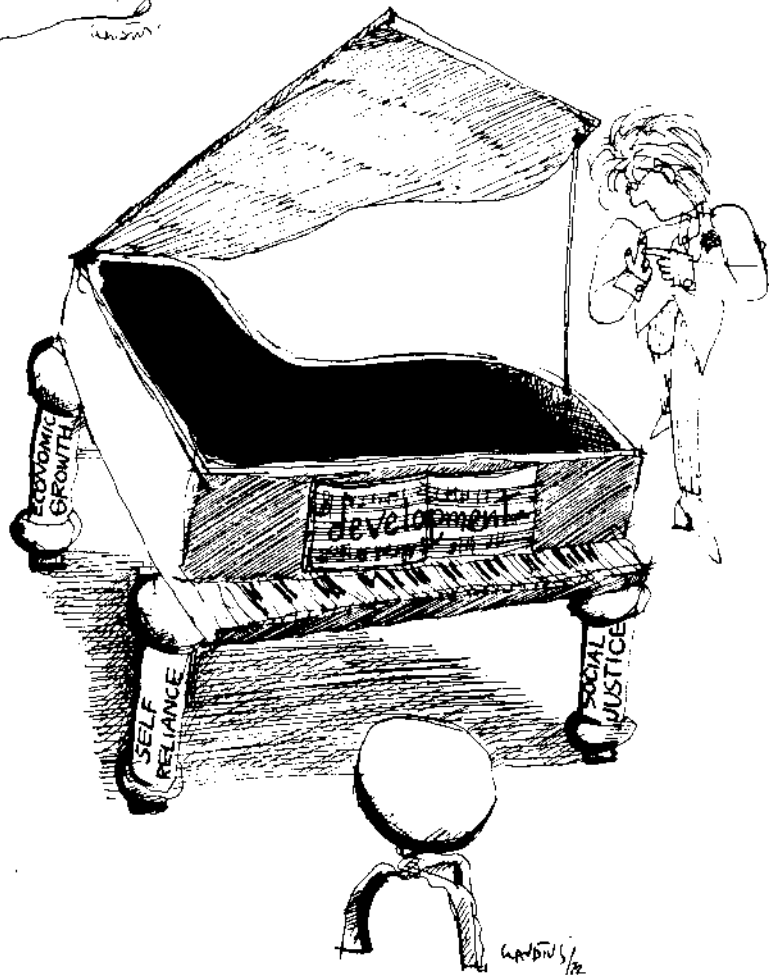


CLAUDIUS

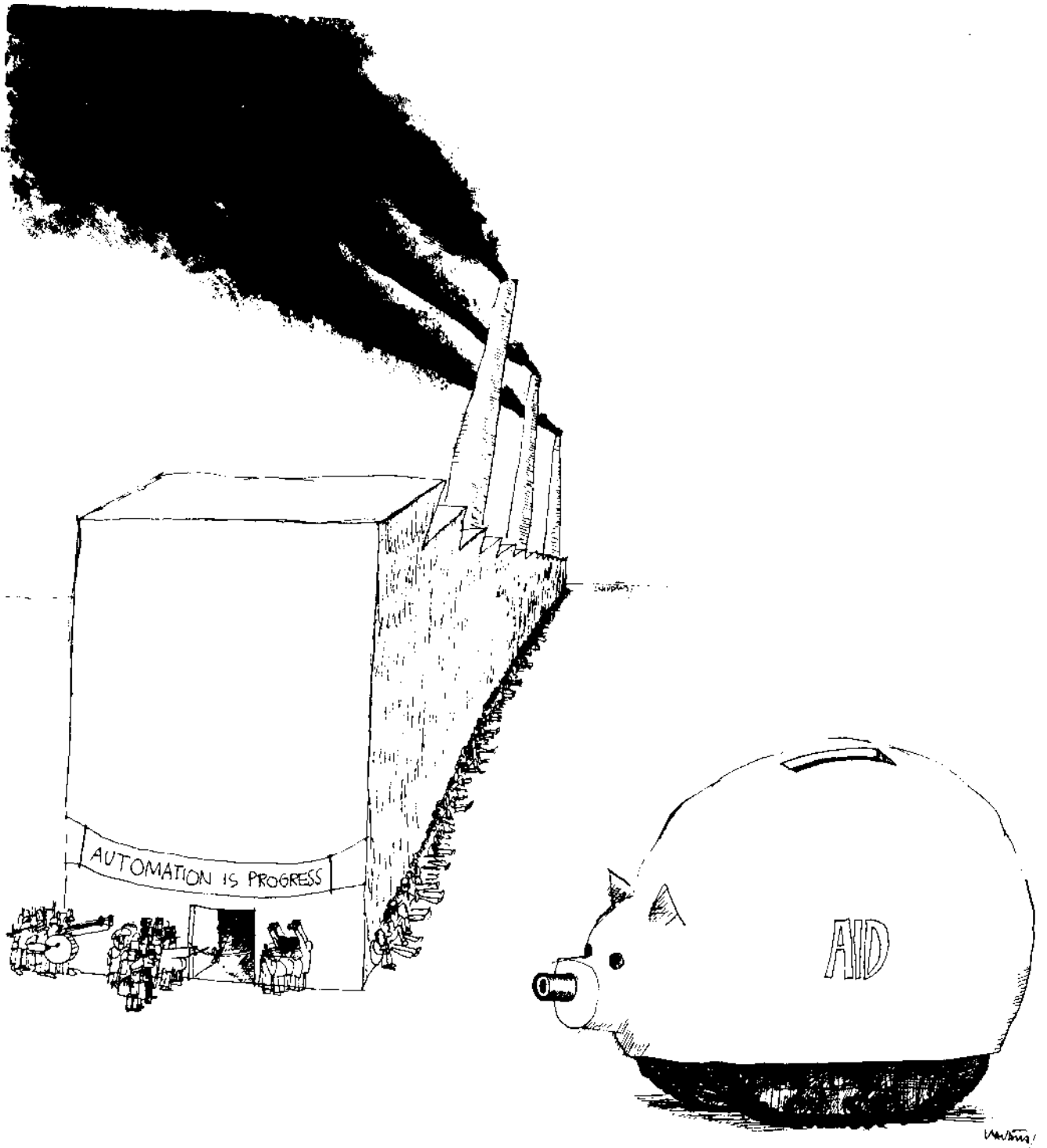
(UM TRISTE FAZENDO HUMORISMO)

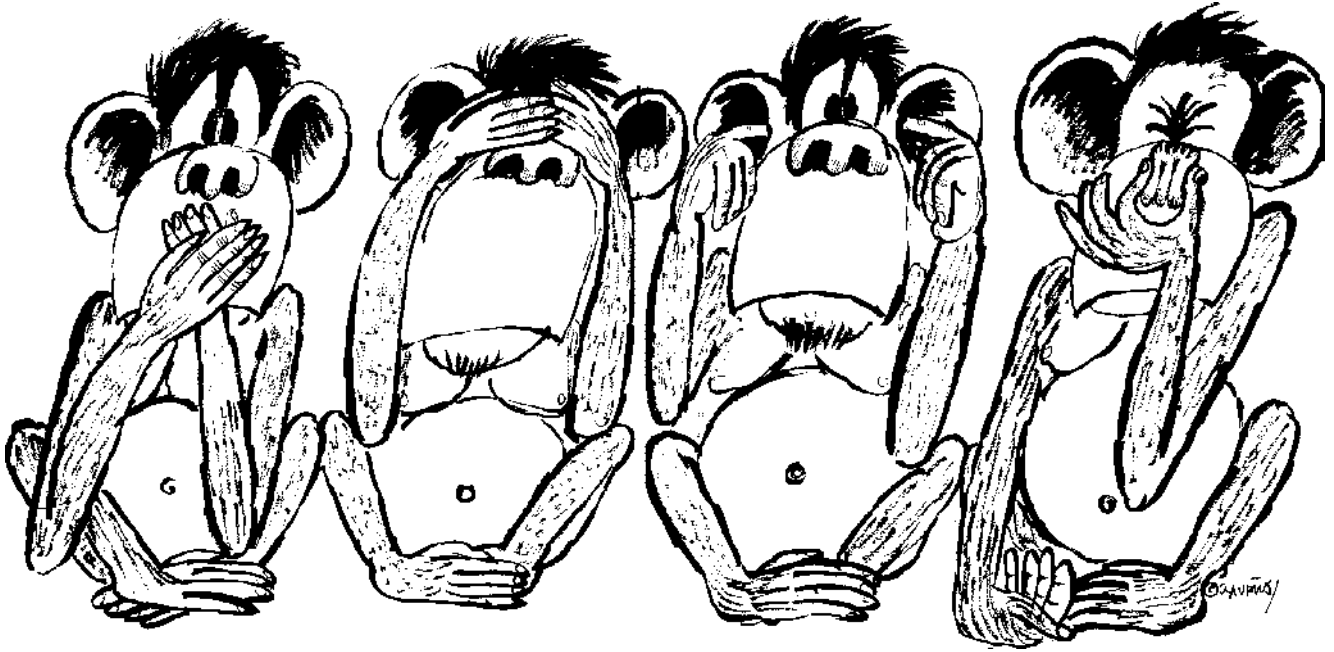
Lili

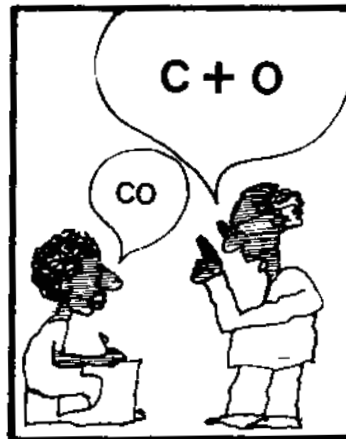




MARION GALLIS
"TRADE FOR JUSTICE"
© CCPD - WCC







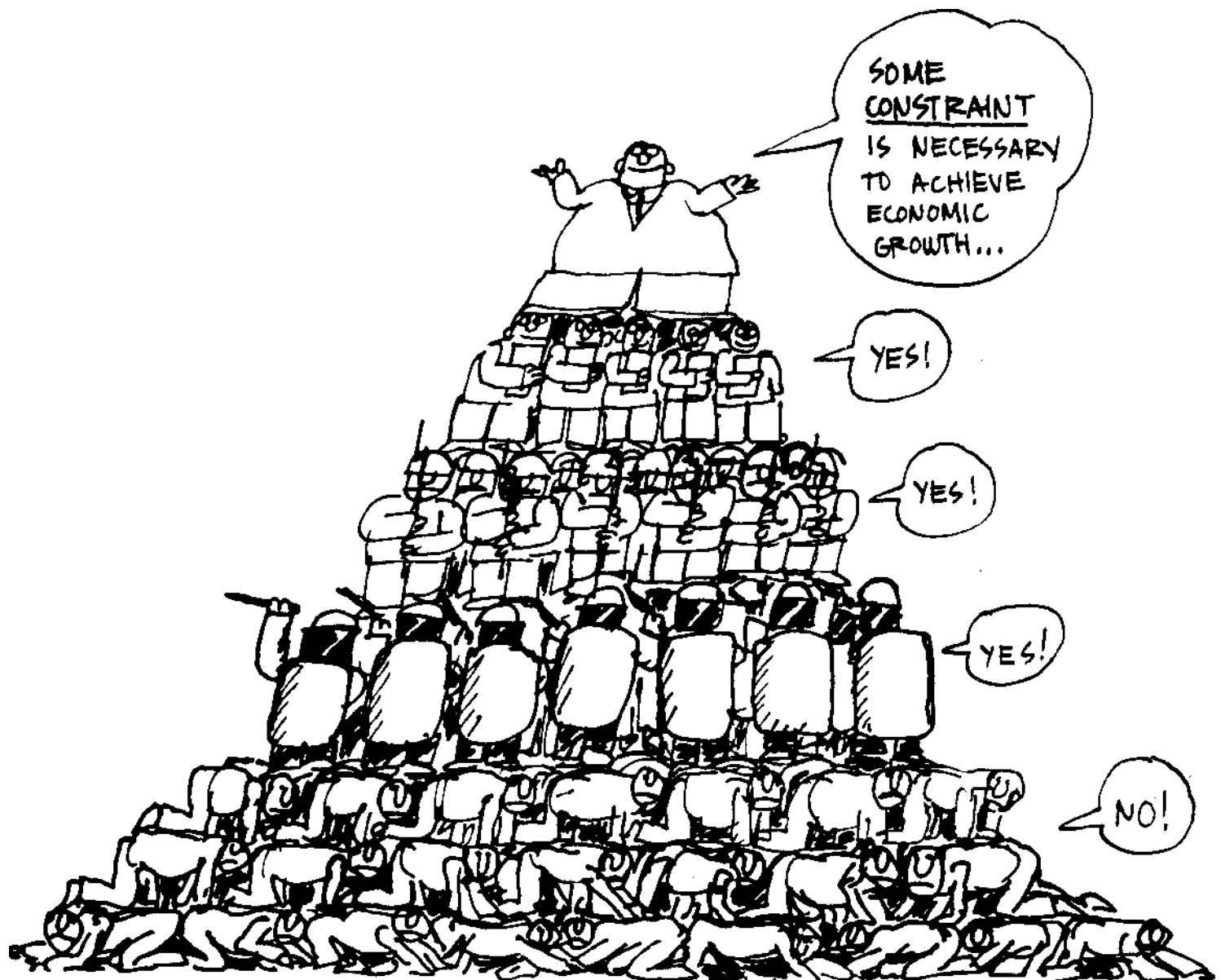
CANDY



EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

UNIVERSITY

WAVONS/73

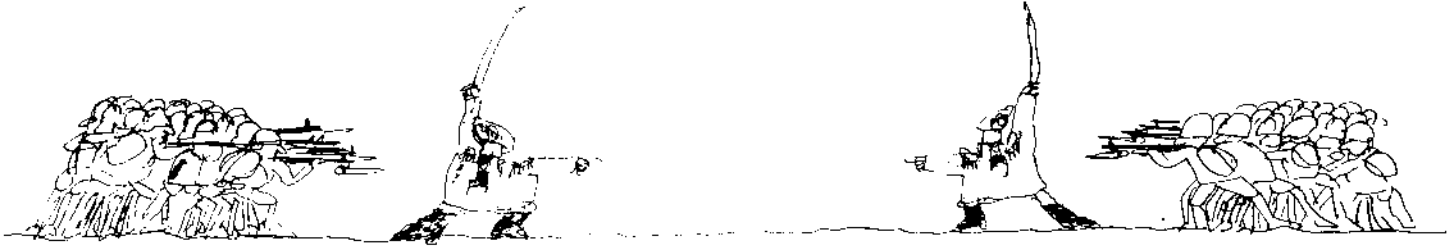


- UN PEU DE CONTRAINTE EST NÉCESSAIRE POUR ATEINDRE LA CROISSANCE ÉCONOMIQUE.
- DE LA RÉPRESSION, VOILÀ CE QUI EST NÉCESSAIRE POUR MAINTENIR UNE DISTRIBUTION INJUSTE !

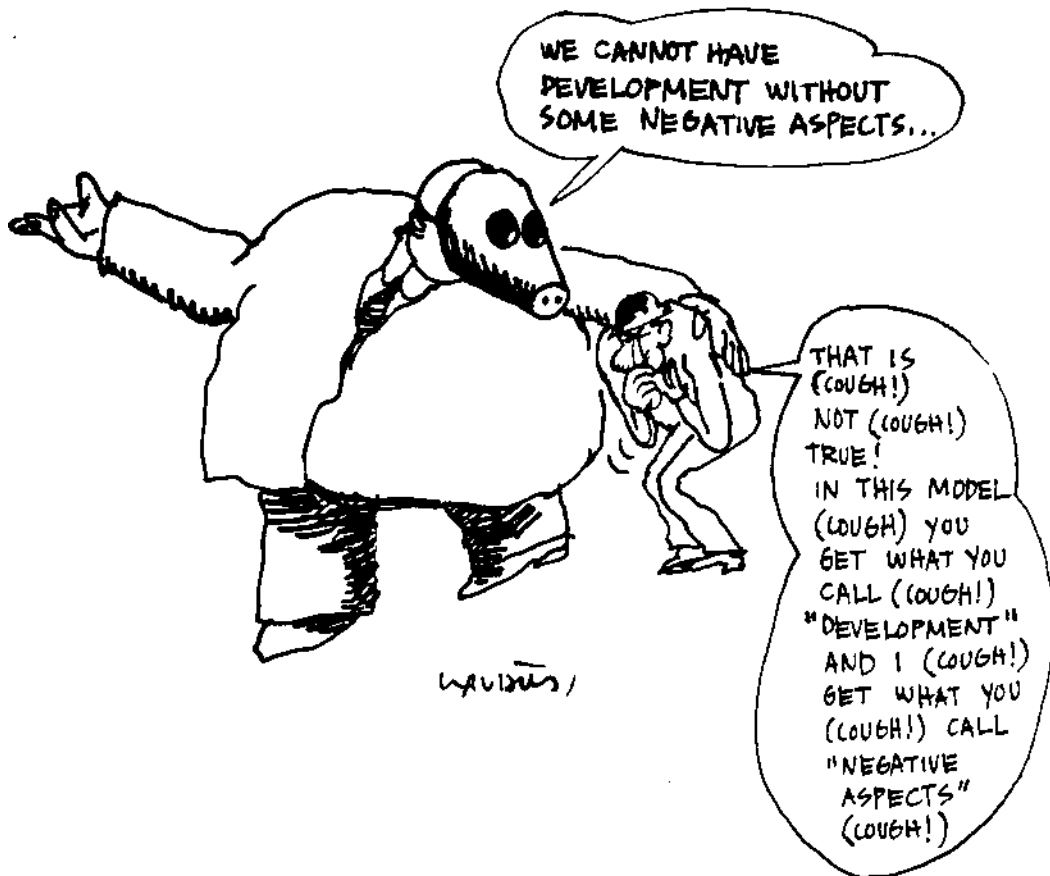
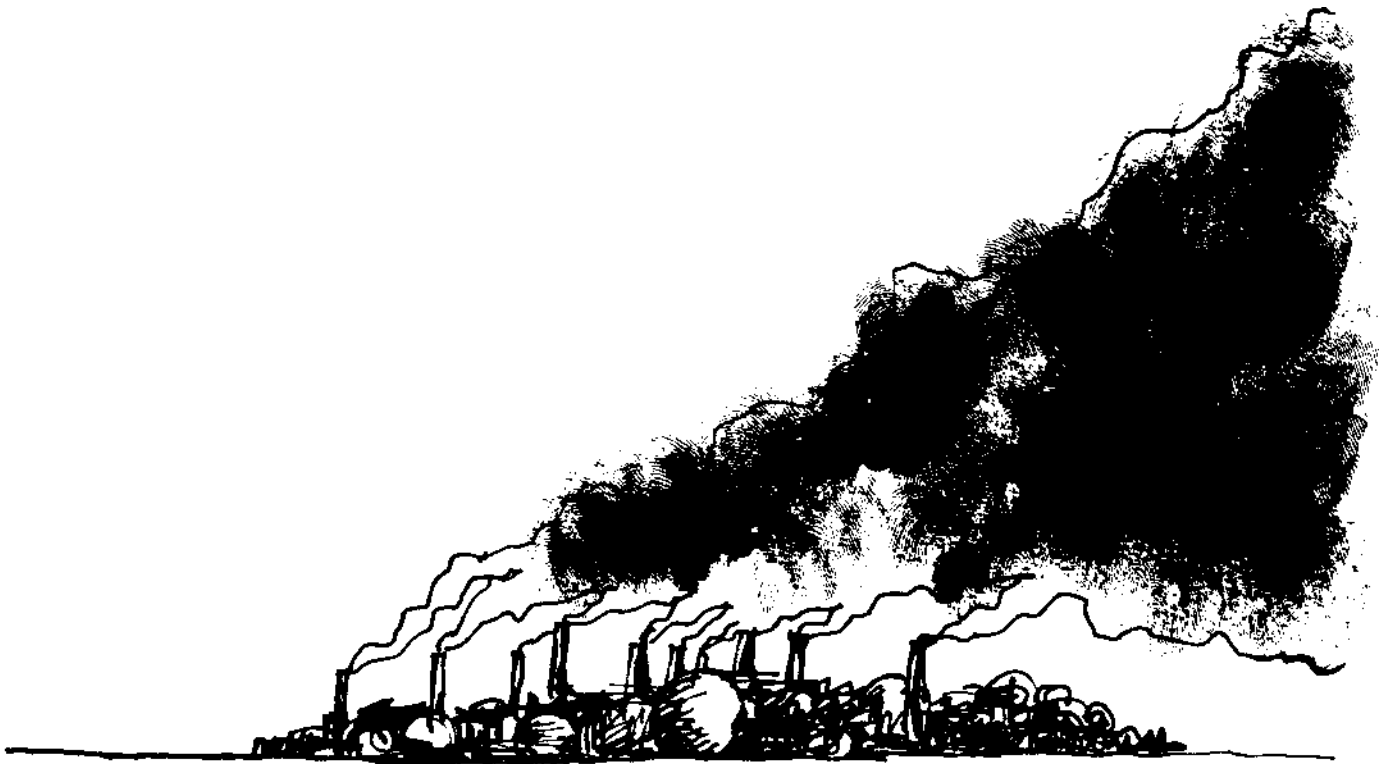
REPRESSION IS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN THIS UNJUST DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH!

Claudius:

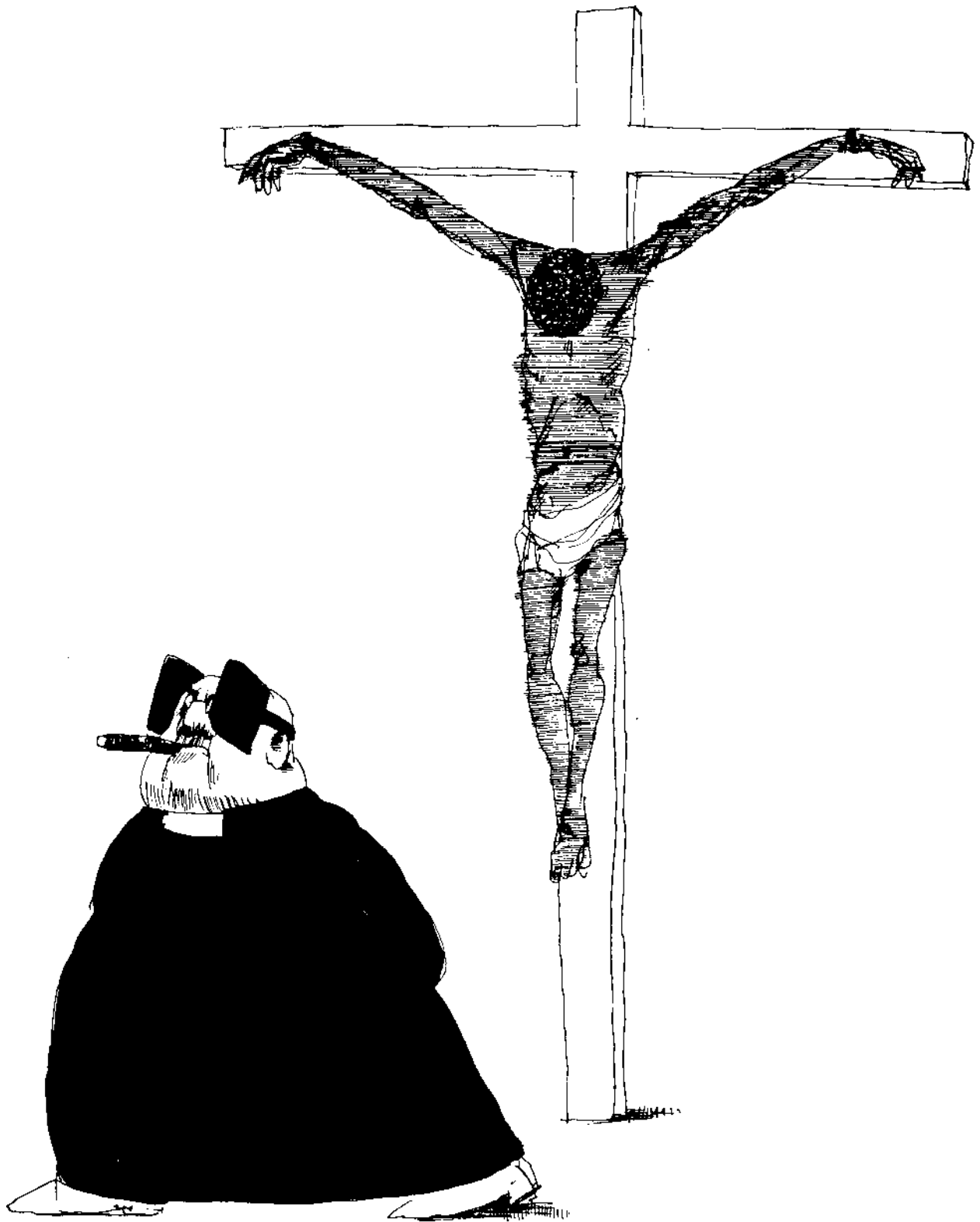
LA GUERRE...



... C'EST LA GUERRE



- ON NE PEUT PAS SE DÉVELOPPER SANS QUELQUE INCONVÉNIENT...
- FAUX! AVEC UN TEL MODÈLE, VOUS AVEZ CE QUE VOUS APPELEZ "DÉVELOPPEMENT" ET MOI, C'EST CE QUE VOUS APPELEZ "INCONVÉNIENT"...



LAWSON

CLAUDIUS

1

IN THE PAST,
WOMEN STAYED
AT HOME AND
MEN WENT
HUNTING...



2

THEN THE
COLONIALISTS
CAME,
BRINGING
NEW ATTITUDES,
IMPOSING
NEW MORALS...



5

THEN THE
COLONIALISTS
NEEDED
SOME "NATIVES"
FOR MINOR
ADMINISTRATIVE
WORK AND PREFERRED
MEN TO DO IT...



6

THERE WERE
OF COURSE
"GOOD" "NATIVES"
AND BAD ONES -
ACCORDING TO
THE COLONIALISTS'
STANDARDS,
OF COURSE



9

THEN
INDEPENDENCE
CAME
AND OUR
MEN TOOK
POWER



10

'TRADITIONALLY'
WE ARE
CONSIDERED
AS INFERIOR



AND NOTHING
REALLY
CHANGED

③ THEY SHOWED NO DISCRIMINATION AT ALL BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN...



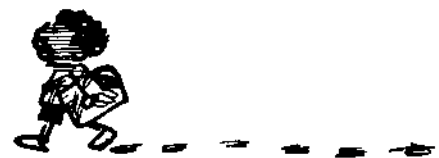
④ THEN THEY NEEDED PEOPLE TO DO MINING WORK AND MEN WERE STRONGER...



⑦ WOMEN STAYED AT HOME, DOING WOMEN THINGS



⑧ WHILE MEN HAD NEW OPPORTUNITIES IF THEY WERE "GOOD"

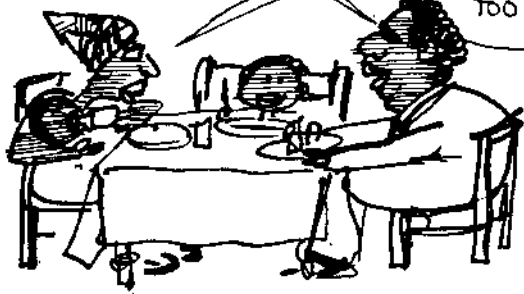


⑪ THERE CAN BE NO FREEDOM BUT FREEDOM FOR ALL, MEN AND WOMEN!

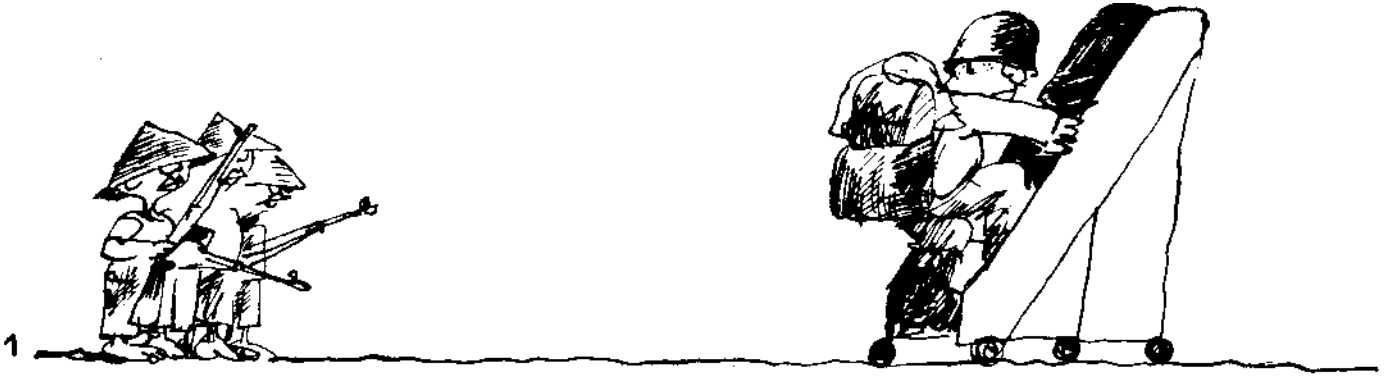


⑫ OUR SOCIETY IS GEARED TOWARDS THE PRINCIPLE OF NO EXPLOITATION OF MAN BY MAN

YES? SO NOW I'LL STRUGGLE TO GEAR IT TOWARDS THE PRINCIPLE OF "NO EXPLOITATION OF WOMAN BY MAN" TOO!



WAVES/72



Claudius

BERGMAN'S FILMS
ARE INCREDIBLE...

MISTER, GIVE
ME SOME
PENNIES



HERE,
SONNY

WHAT WERE
YOU SAYING
ABOUT
BERGMAN?



...AS I STARTED
TO SAY...

SIR, CAN
YOU SPARE
FIVE CEN



HEY,
MISTER

THE
BERGMAN OF
WILD STRAWBERRIES
AND THE BERGMAN
OF CRIES AND WHISPERS
ARE TWO DIFFERENT
PEOPLE



ANOTHER
ONE?
TAKE THIS

SIR...



I SAW
WILD STRAWBERRIES
ELEVEN TIMES ...

HERE,
SON



...YOU WERE
SAYING?

YOU CAN'T HAVE
A QUIET
CONVERSATION
HERE



HERE COME SOME
MORE OF THEM -
PRETEND NOT
TO SEE THEM

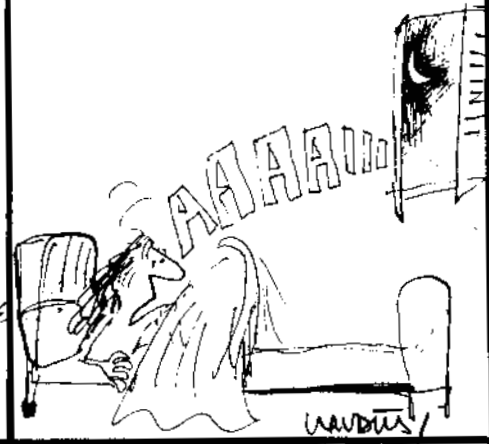
THEY LOOK
LIKE
CHARACTERS
OF THE
7TH
SEAL



THE ROLE OF
DEATH IN THE
SEVENTH SEAL
HAS THE MOST
DRAMATIC
FORCE ...



...AND THEN, BIBI
ANDERSON...
HEY! HEY,
CUT IT OUT!
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING? STOP IT!...



MALAQUIAS, O PROFETA

HEY, WE HAVE TO SEE WHAT KEYNES SAID ABOUT THIS...



... AND MARX'S FAMOUS THESIS ON FEUERBACH IN THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY OF 1846...



LUKACS IN HIS EARLIER WORKS HAS A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO THE QUESTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS - WHAT ABOUT THAT?



FREUD AND REICH TOOK OTHER APPROACHES WHICH COINCIDED ONLY GEOGRAPHICALLY IN VIENNA - THE INDIVIDUAL OVER AGAINST THE COLLECTIVE...



MARCUSE WAS LUCKY - HE HAD HISTORIC DISTANCE SO AS TO CLARIFY ALL THIS ...



I KNOW ALL THAT - BUT NOW, TELL ME, HOW WILL WE EVER GET OUT OF ALL THIS CRAP?



HOW COULD I KNOW?
ISN'T HE THE PROPHET?!



MALHAQUIAS

ELIUDIVUS

IT'S THIS WAY DOCTOR:
THE AUTOMOBILES
ARE GETTING BIGGER
AND MORE POWERFUL,
WITH MOTORS SO STRONG
THAT YOU CAN DO AMAZING
SPEEDS...

...AND THEN
WHAT?



YOU HAVE ENORMOUS
TRAFFIC JAMS AND
NO ONE CAN DO MORE
THAN 10 MILES
PER HOUR



AND THE AIRPLANES, WHAT
ABOUT THEM? PARIS TO
NEW YORK IN 6 HOURS!
AND THEN WHAT?



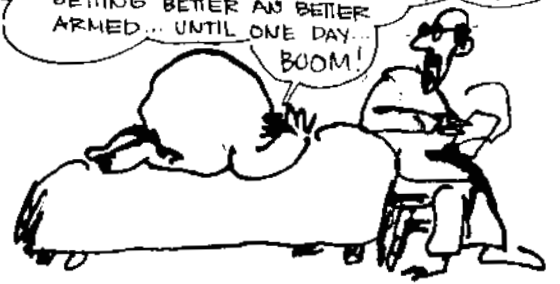
THEN YOU HAVE
AN OIL CRISIS
AND THEY
HAVE TO STAY
ON THE
RUNWAYS



AND INDUSTRY? IT CAN
PRODUCE ANYTHING AND LOTS
OF IT, ALL THROUGH
COMPUTERS - ALL MATERIAL
PROBLEMS CAN BE RESOLVED...
BUT THEN, EXACTLY THOSE
WHO ARE IN NEED CAN'T BUY...



AND WEAPONS? THEY ARE ALWAYS
MORE TERRIBLE THAN THE YEAR
BEFORE - ATOMIC BOMBS, H BOMBS,
SUPER-BOMBS. IT'S NO LONGER POSSIBLE
TO MAKE WAR WITHOUT BLOWING
YOURSELF UP - BUT EVERYBODY KEEPS
GETTING BETTER AND BETTER
ARMED... UNTIL ONE DAY...
BOOM!



AND WHEN I SAY
ALL THIS, THEY
CALL ME CRAZY. IF I'M
CRAZY, WHAT ARE
THEY? IF BEING WELL
MEANS BEING LIKE
THEM...

... I'D
RATHER
BE CRAZY!



PUT HIM
IN A STRAIGHT-JACKET,
GIVE HIM MASSIVE
DOSE OF TRANQUILIZERS
AND SEE THAT HE
GETS A PADDED CELL!

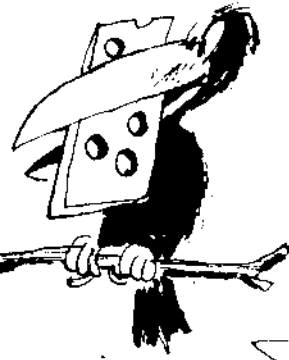


WARRIS!

As Fábulas do Tio La Fon Claudius

Once upon a time...

there was a crow who had some cheese in his beak. A fox who saw the cheese said;



"What a beautiful chee... I mean crow, such marvellous plumage! What a voice you must have!"



hearing this, the proud crow began to sing, dropping the cheese

The fox quickly swallowed the cheese



The song finished the fox applauded and asked for an encore. He told the crow that in foreign lands everyone would fall at the feet of such a talent, that great

things awaited the crow - fame, money, success... and the fox proposed himself for manager.



But, in order to do that, I'll need some samples of your marvellous plumage..."



"that is, one for each impresario."

they are 390...



J'exporterai l'escadent...



ATCHU!
ATCHU!

"Give me back my feathers!"

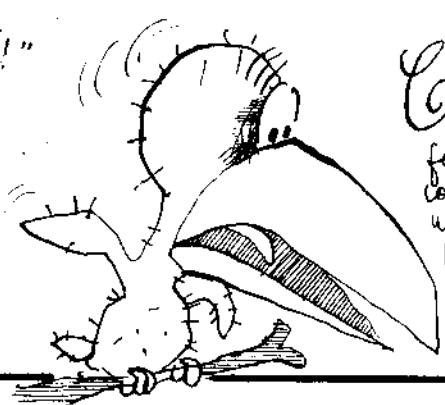
Crop?

look, I'm de-feathered, I'll catch a cold and lose my wonderful voice

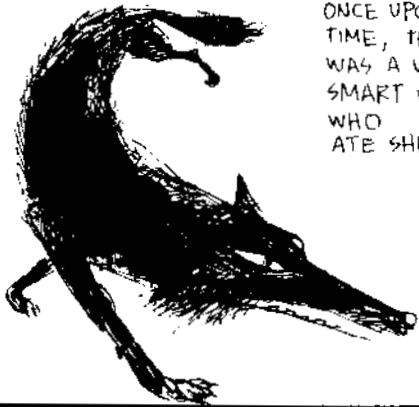
Don't worry - they will grow back - next season you'll have a new crop...

feathers don't come in crops! what shall I do?!

you can disguise yourself - tourists will just love that!



Le Loup



ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A VERY SMART WOLF WHO ATE SHEEP

EVEN THOUGH IT WAS A QUESTION OF HARMLESS ANIMALS, CERTAIN RISKS HAD TO BE OVERCOME.

AFTER CONSIDERABLE THOUGHT, THE WOLF HAD AN IDEA



ONE NIGHT HE ATTACKED THE FLOCK AND KIDNAPPED A LITTLE LAMB



*Wolves are Ok
Lambs are bad*

HE TAUGHT IT HOW TO BE A WOLF, USING PERSUASION, FORCE AND BRAIN WASHING

THEN THERE WERE THE PRACTICAL LESSONS... THE LAMB LEARNED TO CHASE SMALL ANIMALS



SOON THE TRAINING ENDED AND THE LAMB WENT OFF ON A FIRST MISSION:

TO GET ANOTHER LAMB

SO THE WOLF HAD NO MORE NEED TO TAKE RISKS FOR FOOD. ALL WAS DONE BY A REPRESENTATIVE.

THE SHEEP ARRIVED AMONG THE FLOCK. THE OTHERS WERE SCARED. THERE WAS A SMELL OF WOLF



BUT EVERYTHING SEEMED TO BE OK TO THE PASTOR

THAT NIGHT... ALL WERE ASLEEP.



THAT IS : ALL BUT ONE

AT DAWN, THE TRAITOR GRABBED A LAMB AND MADE OFF, BEFORE THE OTHERS COULD EVEN NOTICE...



THE WOLF, RECEIVING THE CAPTIVE, WAS VERY HAPPY. HIS PLAN HAD WORKED WELL...



... BUT WHAT HE DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT HIS SHEEP HAD TASTED BLOOD...



... AND LOVED IT

