EVIL TWIN COMICS
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ACTION PHILOSOPHERS!

WORLD DOMINATION HANDBOOK



YOUR WISHES ARE OUR COMMANDS!

THE BAD NEWS IS THAT THIS ISSUE IS JUST A *TAD* LATE. THE *GOOD* NEWS IS THAT BECAUSE IT IS, WE CAN PRESENT THE WINNERS OF THE ON-LINE VOTING FOR THE *PEOPLE'S CHOICE* ISSUE - A TWO-WAY FIRST-PLACE TIE BETWEEN ***SOREN KIERKEGAARD*** AND ***ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN*** AND ***IMMANUEL*** KANT TIED FOR SECOND, BUT BECAUSE OF THE LAST-MINUTE SURGE OF WITTGY FANS (YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE), THE JUDGES AWARDED THE THIRD SLOT TO THAT CRAZY LOGICAL POSTIVIST.



BUT IF THE PHILOSOPHER YOU SELECTED DIDN'T WIN, PLACE OR SHOW: NEVER FEAR! BECAUSE WE WERE BLOWN AWAY BY THE RESPONSE TO THE POLL, WE DECIDED TO INTERSPERSE THE OTHER TOP VOTE-GETTERS ACROSS THE NEXT TWO ISSUES AS WELL! AREN'T WE SWELL? HERE'S THE LINEUP FOR OUR NEXT FOUR UPCOMING ISSUES:

ACTION PHILOSOPHERS #5: HATE THE FRENCH!

DESCARTES! SARTRE! DERRIDA!

ACTION PHILOSOPHERS #6: THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE!

KIERKEGARD! ST. THOMAS AQUINAS! WITTGENSTEIN!

ACTION PHILOSOPHERS #7: IT'S ALL GREEK TO YOU!

THE PRE-SOCRATICS! ARISTOTLE! EPICETUS THE STOIC!

ACTION PHILOSOPHERS #8: SENSELESS VIOLENCE SPECIAL!

KANT! SCHOPENHAUER! JOHN STEWART MILL!

TO SEE HOW THE CANDIDATES RANKED AMONG EACH OTHER, CHECK OUT ***WWW.ACTIONPHILOSOPHERS.COM*** AND KEEP THOSE EMAILS COMING IN AT ***RYAN@EVILTWINCOMICS.COM*** OR ***FRED.VANLENTE@GMAIL.COM*** TOO! WE LOVE 'EM!

AND YOU BAY AREA FOLKS: STOP BY AND SAY HOWDY AT THE ACTION PHILOSOPHERS TABLE AT THE ***ALTERNATIVE PRESS EXPO (APE)*** IN SANFRAN APRIL 8-9, 2006! WE'LL BE WEARING PANTS AND EVERYTHING!

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A SPECTER IS HAUNTING EUROPE--
THE SPECTER OF ACTION PHILOSOPHER #99:
KARL MARX
WHEN I WAS A KID, THERE WAS ONE THING ABOUT THE WAY THE WORLD WORKED THAT I NEVER ENTIRELY UNDERSTOOD.
I MEAN, BY THIS POINT I HAD FIGURED OUT THAT THE WHOLE POINT OF LIVING WAS TO MAKE MONEY.
BUT, IF THAT WAS THE CASE...
WRITERS OF THE WORLD! UNITE BEHIND FRED VAN LENTE! DOWN WITH EFFETE BOURGEOIS *ARTISTE* RYAN DUNLAVEY!

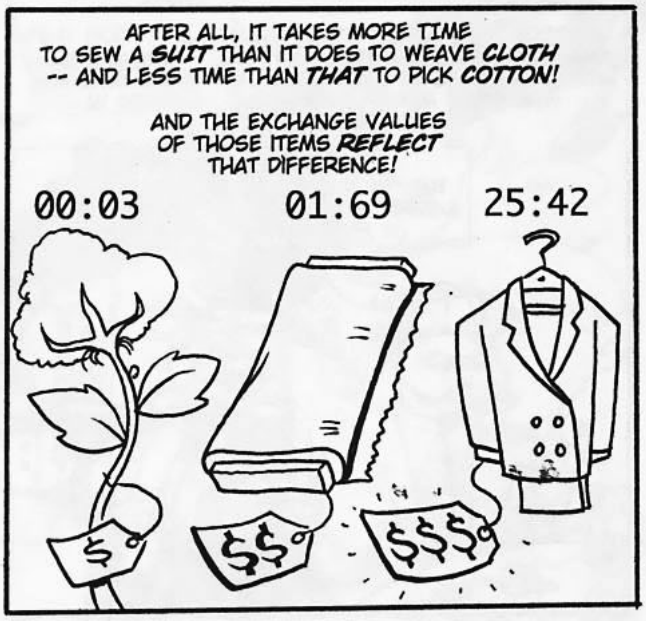

...THEN WHY ARE NECESSITIES OF LIFE LIKE FOOD AND WATER SOLD RELATIVELY CHEAPLY?
AND LUXURIES OF NO PRACTICAL USE ARE INCREDIBLY EXPENSIVE?
MILK
1.69
I MEAN, IF YOU WANTED TO MAKE A LOT OF MONEY, SHOULDN'T THOSE THINGS BE REVERSED?
MILK
FORCE PEOPLE TO SHELL OUT THE BIG BUCKS FOR THINGS THEY REALLY NEED, AND LEAVE THEM TO SPEND WHAT'S LEFT OVER ON THE THINGS THEY JUST WANT?
SO... WHY IS MILK CHEAPER THAN GOLD?
MILK
POP!
I CAN ANSWER THAT QUESTION, FREDDY...BUT IT'LL REQUIRE A LITTLE TRIP!
OH, BOY! KARL MARX!
A MAGICAL MYSTERY TRIP ... INTO THE WONDERFUL, SPLENDIFEROUS WORLD OF...
... COMMODITIES!
JINKERS!
ACTION
"A COMMODITY IS, IN THE FIRST PLACE, AN OBJECT MADE OUTSIDE OF US, A THING THAT BY ITS PROPERTIES SATISFIES HUMAN WANTS OF SOME SORT OR ANOTHER."
-- DAS KAPITAL VOL. 1 (1867)

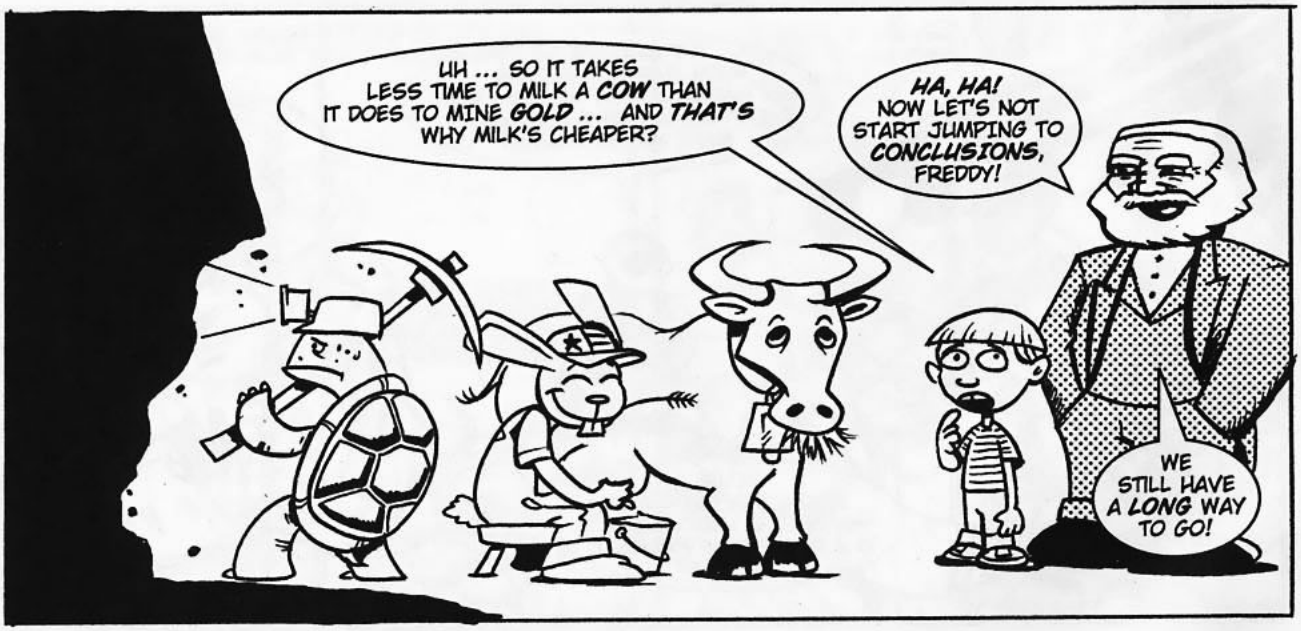

BUTCHER
FINE MEATS
THE NATURE OF SUCH WANTS, WHETHER, FOR INSTANCE, THEY SPRING FROM THE STOMACH OR FROM FANCY, MAKE NO DIFFERENCE!
PHONEY
YOUR DISTINCTION BETWEEN 'NECESSITY' AND 'LUXURY' IS A DANGEROUS FALLACY, FREDDY!
AW.


THE UTILITY OF A THING MAKES IT A USE-VALUE!
USE-VALUES BECOME A REALITY ONLY BY USE OR CONSUMPTION... THEY ARE, IN ADDITION, THE MATERIAL DEPOSITORIES OF EXCHANGE-VALUE.

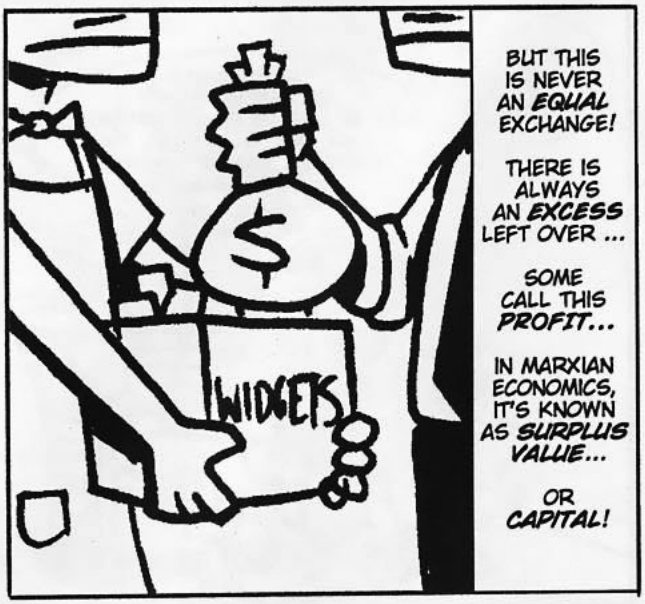

BUT THERE IS AN EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IMMATERIAL FACTOR THAT DIFFERENTIATES COMMODITIES FROM EACH OTHER.
A USEFUL ARTICLE HAS VALUE ONLY BECAUSE HUMAN LABOR HAS BEEN EMBODIED OR MATERIALIZED IN IT!


THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS VALUE IS MEASURED BY THE QUANTITY OF THE LABOR CONTAINED IN THE ARTICLE!
QUANTITY OF LABOR IS MEASURED BY DURATION --TIME!

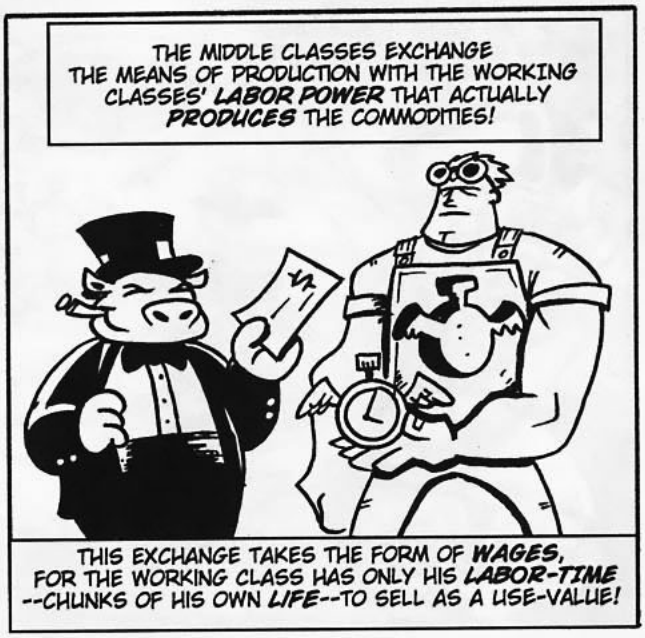

AFTER ALL, IT TAKES MORE TIME TO SEW A SUIT THAN IT DOES TO WEAVE CLOTH -- AND LESS TIME THAN THAT TO PICK COTTON!
AND THE EXCHANGE VALUES OF THOSE ITEMS REFLECT THAT DIFFERENCE!
00:03
01:69
25:42
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UH ... SO IT TAKES LESS TIME TO MILK A COW THAN IT DOES TO MINE GOLD ... AND THAT'S WHY MILK'S CHEAPER?
HA, HA! NOW LET'S NOT START JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS, FREDDY!
WE STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO!


TO BECOME A COMMODITY, A PRODUCT MUST BE TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER, WHOM IT WILL SERVE AS A USE-VALUE, BY MEANS OF AN EXCHANGE.
IN OTHER WORDS, A COMMODITY MUST NOT ONLY PRODUCE USE-VALUES, BUT USE-VALUES FOR OTHERS... SOCIAL USE-VALUES!
NOT A COMMODITY
COMMODITY
WIDGETS
WIDGETS


WIDGETS
BUT THIS IS NEVER AN EQUAL EXCHANGE!
THERE IS ALWAYS AN EXCESS LEFT OVER ...
SOME CALL THIS PROFIT...
IN MARXIAN ECONOMICS, IT'S KNOWN AS SURPLUS VALUE...
OR CAPITAL!


"CAPITALISTS" ARE PEOPLE WHO BENEFIT FROM THE EXCHANGE, NOT THE PRODUCTION OF COMMODITIES. THEY ARE THE BOURGEOISIE...THE MIDDLE CLASSES WHO WERE MONEYLENDERS AND USURERS IN MEDIEVAL TIMES...
... AND IN OUR MODERN ERA, THEY'RE THE FACTORY OWNERS AND LANDLORDS WHO CONTROL THE MEANS OF PRODUCING COMMODITIES.


THE MIDDLE CLASSES EXCHANGE THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION WITH THE WORKING CLASSES' LABOR POWER THAT ACTUALLY PRODUCES THE COMMODITIES!
THIS EXCHANGE TAKES THE FORM OF WAGES, FOR THE WORKING CLASS HAS ONLY HIS LABOR-TIME --CHUNKS OF HIS OWN LIFE--TO SELL AS A USE-VALUE!



THE KEY TO CREATING SURPLUS VALUE IS TO MAKE SURE THAT WAGES REMAIN ***LESS*** THAN THE EXCHANGE VALUE OF THE COMMODITIES THAT THE WORKERS PRODUCE.

EVEN ***BETTER***, SINCE YOUR WORKERS DON'T DIRECTLY REAP THE ***BENEFITS*** OF THEIR OWN LABOR, THEY'LL SUFFER FROM ***ALIENATION***.

FEELS LIKE I'VE SPENT MY WHOLE ***LIFE*** AT THIS CRUMMY JOB...

...BUT ***TODAY*** WAS MY ***FIRST DAY***!

TO COMPENSATE, THEY'LL GORGE THEMSELVES ON ***COMMODITIES*** WITH EVERY DIME THEY MAKE!

WHOEVER DIES WITH THE MOST TOYS ***WINS***! BWHAHAHA!!

HE'S NOT JUST THE ***PRODUCER***, HE'S ALSO THE ***CONSUMER***...

AMAZING CAMICS

DVP

GI JOE

AND ***I*** POCKET THE DIFFERENCE IN THE FORM OF ***SURPLUS VALUE***! HEH-HEH!

GEEZ ... WORKERS EXCHANGE THEIR LABOR-TIME FOR WAGES... WHICH THEY GIVE ***BACK*** TO THE CAPITALIST SO THEY CAN ***BUY*** THE VERY COMMODITIES THEY ***PRODUCE***!

WHAT A ***VICIOUS CYCLE***! IS THERE ANY WAY IT CAN BE ***BROKEN***, MR. MARX?

ACTUALLY, I CAN THINK OF ***SIXTY*** WAYS, FREDDY!

M-60, THAT IS.

KLIK-KLAK!

LET'S ***DO*** THIS THING.

UH...

...WHAT THING WOULD THAT BE, MR. MARX?


I KICK ASS FOR THE PROLES!*
SURPLUS VALUE INC.
BRAKATA! BRAKATA! BRAKATA!
QUARTERLY REPORT
*: APOLOGIES TO PETER JACKSON. --F&R
B-BUT M-M-MR. MARX...
CAN'T WE MAYBE TALK ABOUT THIS FIRST?
HA, HA! YOU'RE SO ADORABLY NAIVE, FREDDY!
SNAP!
"THE HISTORY OF ALL HITHERTO EXISTING SOCIETY IS THE HISTORY OF CLASS STRUGGLES!"*
*: KM & F. ENGELS, MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY (1847)
"THE COMMUNISTS DISDAIN TO CONCEAL THEIR VIEWS AND AIMS! THEY OPENLY DECLARE THAT THEIR ENDS CAN BE ATTAINED ONLY BY THE FORCIBLE OVERTHROW OF ALL EXISTING SOCIAL CONDITIONS!"*
*: DITTO
SEIZING THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION IS THE ONLY WAY THE WORKERS CAN END THEIR EXPLOITATION FOR SURPLUS VALUE!
GEE WILIKERS, MR. MARX ... WHAT LED TO YOU HAVING SUCH EXTREME VIEWS?


GOSH KNOWS I DIDN'T START OUT THAT WAY, FREDDY! I WAS BORN IN PRUSSIA IN 1818. MY DAD WAS A LAWYER, AND I WENT TO SCHOOL TO STUDY LAW, BUT I GOT BITTEN BY THE PHILOSOPHY BUG, INSTEAD...
GRENADE ME, FREDDY.
FLASHBANG OR INCENDIARY?
INCENDIARY.
THANKS.
I WAS A STUDENT OF HEGEL'S, BUT I REJECTED HIS IDEALISTIC DIALECTIC FOR A MATERIALLY-DETERMINED THEORY OF HISTORY.
IDEAS ARE ALL WELL AND GOOD, BUT I HUNGERED TO CHANGE THE WORLD, NOT MERELY INTERPRET IT...
...SO I TURNED TO JOURNALISM. I WORKED FOR A BUNCH OF LEFTIST WORKERS' PAPERS. THAT GOT ME KICKED OUT OF PRUSSIA ... THEN FRANCE, WHEN THOSE TWO COUNTRIES BECAME ALLIES ...
CHUNK!
... THEN I WOUND UP IN LONDON, WHERE THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE ASKED ME AND MY COLLEAGUE FRIEDRICH ENGELS TO WRITE A MANIFESTO ON THEIR BEHALF.
TOSS!
THAT WAS IN 1847. I BECAME A BIG WHEEL IN THE MOVEMENT AFTER THAT. I TRAVELED ALL OVER EUROPE, ORGANIZING WORKERS' PARTIES...
BWHOOM!
...AND EVERYWHERE, I SAW THE SAME POVERTY AND MISERY AMONG THE WORKERS -- THE SAME FORCED IGNORANCE! LIKE WE WROTE IN THE MANIFESTO:
"THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN INDUSTRY CUTS FROM UNDER ITS FEET THE VERY FOUNDATION ON WHICH THE BOURGEOISIE PRODUCES AND APPROPRIATES PRODUCTS."
"WHAT THE BOURGEOISIE PRODUCES, ABOVE ALL, IS ITS OWN GRAVE-DIGGERS."
AAAAAH! AAAAAAH!
"ITS FALL AND THE VICTORY OF THE PROLETARIAT ARE EQUALLY INEVITABLE."


B-BUT, I MEAN, THE OVERTHROW OF ALL SOCIAL CONDITIONS? IS THAT REALLY NECESSARY?
Y-YOU KNOW, SINCE YOU WERE ALIVE, A LOT OF POSITIVE THINGS HAVE HAPPENED IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY --
POW
-- LABOR UNIONS, SOCIALIZED MEDICINE, MINIMUM WAGE, CHILD LABOR LAWS...


REFORMIST DRIVEL!
BOURGEOIS "SOCIALIST" COMPROMISE!
BAND-AIDS ON A CANCER PATIENT!


NOBODY LISTENS! I TOLD THEM COMMUNISM WOULD ONLY BE POSSIBLE IN A GLOBAL REVOLUTION!
THE WORLD CANNOT EXIST PART CAPITALIST AND PART COMMUNIST--IN A HEAD-TO-HEAD MATCH-UP, CAPITALISM WILL ALWAYS WIN!
BULGARIA
WHY?
POLAND
BELARUS S.R.
UKRAINE S.R.
USSR


"BECAUSE CAPITALISM IS NOTHING IF NOT DUCTILE! FROM TIME TO TIME GROUPS COME ALONG WHO FANCY THEMSELVES REVOLUTIONARY--"
LOOK OUT, HETERO-HEGEMONY! HERE COMES QUEER THEORY!
POST-COLONIALISM IS GONNA KNOCK YOU ON YOUR PASTY WHITE IMPERIALIST ASS, CRACKER!
WE REJECT THE GENDERED SUBJECT IMPOSED ON US BY PHALLO-CENTRISM!


"--BUT CAPITALISM APPEASES WOULD-BE REFORMERS -- ABSORBS THEM INTO ITSELF -- SEDUCING ONE-TIME SOCIAL PARIAHS INTO BECOMING JUST ANOTHER DEMOGRAPHIC FOR ITS COMMODITIES!"
FIERCE MONTHLY
AFRICA
SEX in the CITY


FOR CAPITALISM IS NOT FUNDAMENTALLY WHITE -- OR STRAIGHT -- OR MALE!
REVOLUTION RECORDS
MARX BREW
COFFEE ROASTERS
LENIN LIT
OPEN
RED OR DEAD ROAST
IT HAS NO QUALMS ABOUT "EMBRACING" ANY IDEOLOGY, SO LONG AS ITS OWN EXISTENCE IS PERPETUATED!


AND IF THE BOURGEOISIE CANNOT EXPLOIT THEIR OWN COUNTRYMEN FOR SURPLUS VALUE--
MADE IN CHINA
--THEY'LL JUST MOVE JOBS OVERSEAS IN ORDER TO FIND NEW VICTIMS!


THOUGH CAPITALISM APPEASED THE FIRST WORLD'S LABOR MOVEMENT WITH REFORMS LIKE MINIMUM WAGE...
...THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE COMMODITIES PRODUCED FOR YOUR "LIBERAL" REPUBLICS...
...ARE PRODUCED FAR FROM THE MALLS AND SUBURBS WHERE THEY'RE SOLD!


THERE THE SITUATION OF THE 21ST CENTURY PROLETARIAT IS NO DIFFERENT THAN THE EUROPEAN FACTORY WORKERS OF MY DAY!
WAGES MEASURED IN PENNIES--UNSAFE CONDITIONS--INADEQUATE HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION--NO HOPE FOR SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT--
BUT WHEN THE THIRD WORLD STARTS DEMANDING ITS RIGHTS --
--AND THE CAPITALISTS RUN OUT OF PEOPLE WILLING TO BE EXPLOITED--
--THEN THE TRUE COMMUNIST ERA WILL BEGIN!



"ONCE THE WORKERS SEIZE THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION, SURPLUS VALUE WILL BE ***ELIMINATED***! THE BASIS OF THE ***COMMUNIST*** ECONOMY IS:"

"From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs."

"WORKERS WILL NO LONGER FEEL ***ALIENATED*** BECAUSE THEY SHALL BENEFIT ***DIRECTLY*** FROM THE PROCESS OF PRODUCTION! "

"THIS WILL END ***COMMODITY FETISHISM*** -- THE PRACTICE OF MAKING ***PRODUCTS*** MORE IMPORTANT THAN ***PEOPLE***!"

BUT, UH, MR. MARX, HUMAN NATURE HAS ALWAYS SEEMED KIND OF... Y'KNOW, ***COMPETITIVE*** TO ME... OBSESSED WITH ***STATUS***!

DON'T YOU THINK THAT TO EXPECT HUMANS TO SUPPRESS THEIR INNATE URGE TO ***DOMINATE*** EACH OTHER TO FORM A COMMUNIST ***UTOPIA*** IS A LITTLE...

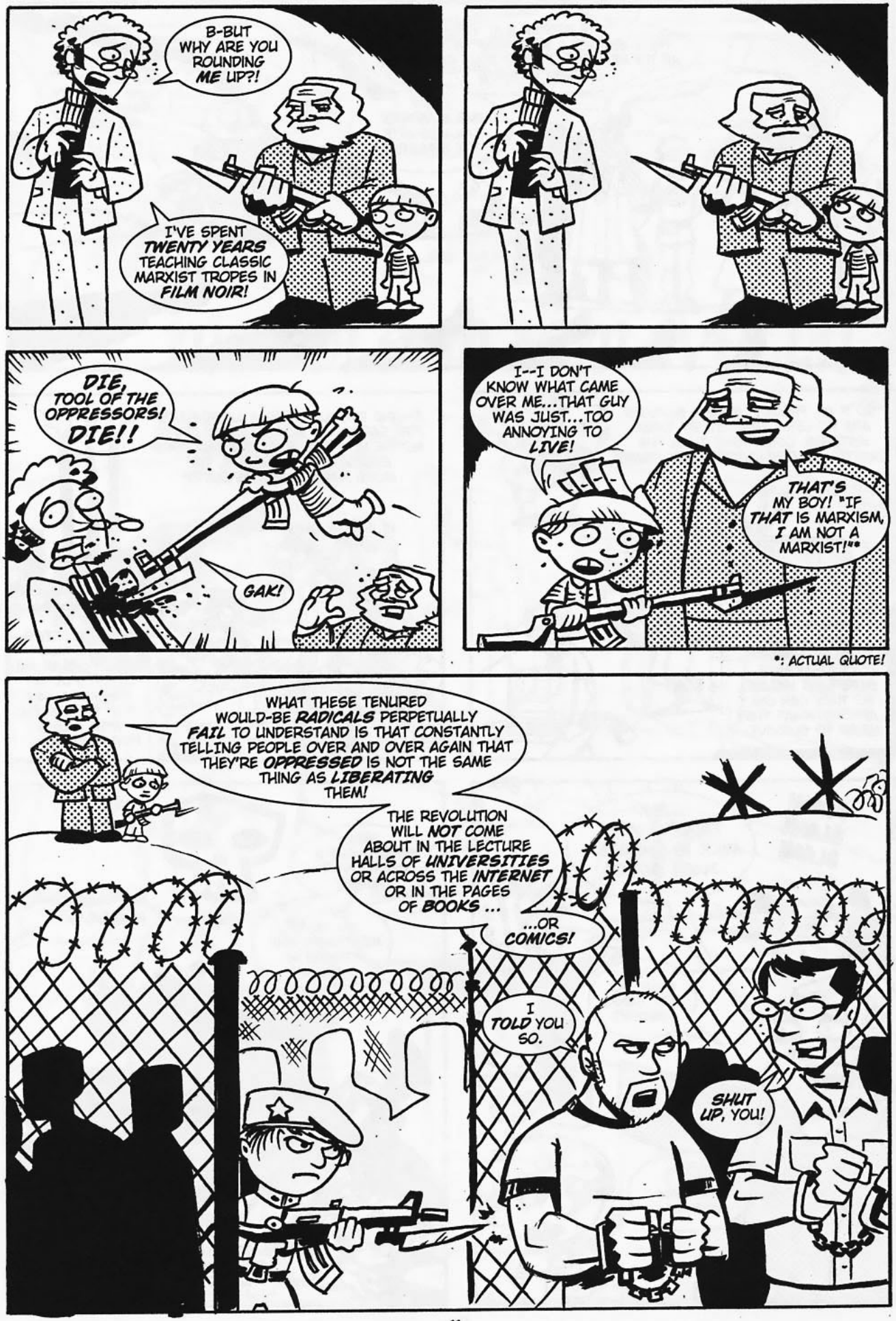
...UH... ***UNREALISTIC***?

"HUMAN NATURE!" PISH-TOSH! AREN'T YOU A LITTLE OLD TO BELIEVE IN ***FAIRY TALES***, FREDDY?

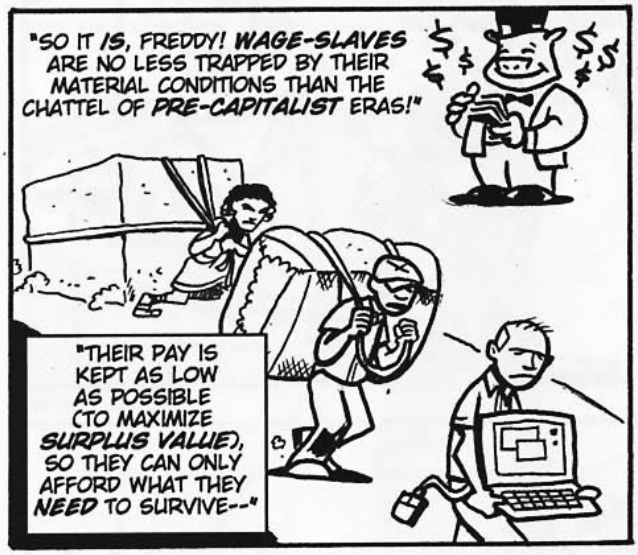
NO SUCH ***THING***! THE MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF OUR LIVES DETERMINE THIS "HUMAN NATURE", NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND!

OF COURSE CAPITALISM HAS PRODUCED A "***HUMAN NATURE***" OBSESSED WITH STATUS AND COMPETITION! THAT'S WHY THE FIRST STEP TOWARD COMMUNISM IS TO GET ***RID*** OF THE CAPITALISTS!

GRAB SOME SKY, BOURGEOIS WHELPS!


B-BUT WHY ARE YOU ROUNDING ME UP?!
I'VE SPENT TWENTY YEARS TEACHING CLASSIC MARXIST TROPES IN FILM NOIR!
DIE, TOOL OF THE OPPRESSORS! DIE!!
GAK!
I--I DON'T KNOW WHAT CAME OVER ME...THAT GUY WAS JUST...TOO ANNOYING TO LIVE!
THAT'S MY BOY! "IF THAT IS MARXISM, I AM NOT A MARXIST!"*
*: ACTUAL QUOTE!
WHAT THESE TENURED WOULD-BE RADICALS PERPETUALLY FAIL TO UNDERSTAND IS THAT CONSTANTLY TELLING PEOPLE OVER AND OVER AGAIN THAT THEY'RE OPPRESSED IS NOT THE SAME THING AS LIBERATING THEM!
THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT COME ABOUT IN THE LECTURE HALLS OF UNIVERSITIES OR ACROSS THE INTERNET OR IN THE PAGES OF BOOKS ...
...OR COMICS!
I TOLD YOU SO.
SHUT UP, YOU!


"THE WRITER MAY VERY WELL SERVE A MOVEMENT OF HISTORY AS ITS MOUTHPIECE, BUT HE CANNOT OF COURSE CREATE IT."
ONLY THE MASSES CAN LIBERATE THE MASSES!
SOUNDS LIKE A PRETTY TALL ORDER, MR. MARX!

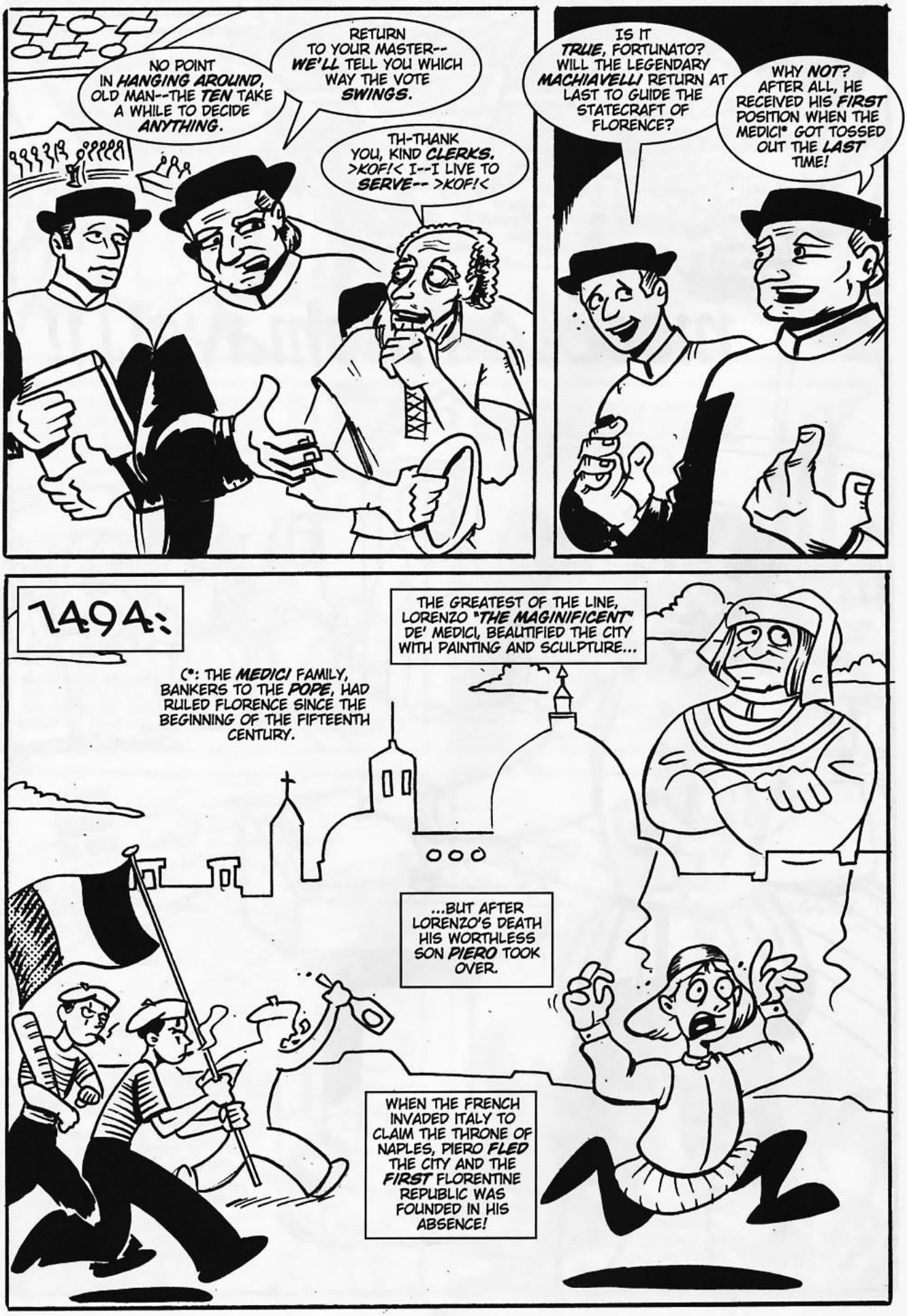

"SO IT IS, FREDDY! WAGE-SLAVES ARE NO LESS TRAPPED BY THEIR MATERIAL CONDITIONS THAN THE CHATTEL OF PRE-CAPITALIST ERAS!"
"THEIR PAY IS KEPT AS LOW AS POSSIBLE (TO MAXIMIZE SURPLUS VALUE), SO THEY CAN ONLY AFFORD WHAT THEY NEED TO SURVIVE--"


"--AND PRODUCE MORE LABORERS FOR CAPITALIST EXPLOITATION! (EVER NOTICE HOW THE POORER AND LESS EDUCATED A FAMILY IS, THE MORE KIDS IT PUMPS OUT?)"
"SO THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE MUST REMAIN CHEAP AND PLENTIFUL SO WORKERS CAN BUY THEM EVEN WITH THEIR PITIFUL WAGES..."


BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
...AND THAT'S WHY MILK IS CHEAPER THAN GOLD!
SO WHAT DO YOU THINK, FREDDY?
I--I THINK I WANT MY MOMMY...


WHY, SURE--SHE'S RIGHT OVER THERE!
SAY-- YOU NEVER MENTIONED SHE WORKED IN A BANK!
WAAAAA!!
ENDINGS OF THE WORLD! UNITE!


1527:
I CALL THIS MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TEN OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC TO ORDER!
THE FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA IS THE REINSTATEMENT OF OUR FORMER SECRETARY...
...ACTION PHILOSOPHER #117...
NICCÒLO MACHIAVELLI!
this tale hath been told byest:
federico di lente III, duke scripturio
&
ryan "il fuzzino" of the erieshire dunlaveys, first earl of the comely doodles


NO POINT IN HANGING AROUND, OLD MAN--THE TEN TAKE A WHILE TO DECIDE ANYTHING.
RETURN TO YOUR MASTER-- WE'LL TELL YOU WHICH WAY THE VOTE SWINGS.
TH-THANK YOU, KIND CLERKS. >KOF!< I--I LIVE TO SERVE-- >KOF!<
IS IT TRUE, FORTUNATO? WILL THE LEGENDARY MACHIAVELLI RETURN AT LAST TO GUIDE THE STATECRAFT OF FLORENCE?
WHY NOT? AFTER ALL, HE RECEIVED HIS FIRST POSITION WHEN THE MEDICI* GOT TOSSED OUT THE LAST TIME!
1494:
*: THE MEDICI FAMILY, BANKERS TO THE POPE, HAD RULED FLORENCE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.
THE GREATEST OF THE LINE, LORENZO "THE MAGINIFICENT" DE' MEDICI, BEAUTIFIED THE CITY WITH PAINTING AND SCULPTURE...
...BUT AFTER LORENZO'S DEATH HIS WORTHLESS SON PIERO TOOK OVER.
WHEN THE FRENCH INVADED ITALY TO CLAIM THE THRONE OF NAPLES, PIERO FLED THE CITY AND THE FIRST FLORENTINE REPUBLIC WAS FOUNDED IN HIS ABSENCE!


PIERO LATER ALLIED HIMSELF *WITH* THE FRENCH IN A BID TO REGAIN POWER, BUT HE *DROWNED* FLEEING A LOSING BATTLE, THUS EARNING HIM THE NICKNAME *"THE UNFORTUNATE"*...
GLUB!
DUMBASS
The WHIZZER
SCHMUCKBOY
SIR RUNS-A-LOT
The Unforunate
...THOUGH *OTHERS* WERE CONSIDERED.)
YOU'RE TOO *YOUNG* TO REMEMBER, MONTRESSOR, BUT THE EARLY DAYS OF THAT *FIRST* REPUBLIC WERE *DARK* INDEED!
"THE PEOPLE FELL UNDER THE SPELL OF *GIORLAMO SAVONAROLA* -- THE CRAZED PRIEST WHO PREACHED THAT THE SPLENDOR OF LORENZO'S *RENAISSANCE* WAS AN *AFFRONT* TO GOD!"
"HE ORDERED MIRRORS--COSMETICS--BOOKS--MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS--CAST ONTO HIS *BONFIRE OF THE VANITIES!*"
"HE ORDERED BOTICELLI TO THROW HIS *OWN PAINTINGS* INTO THE FLAMES!"
"WE TIRED OF HIS *ZEALOTRY* SOON ENOUGH, THOUGH. AFTER THE POPE *EXCOMMUNICATED* HIM WE *HANGED* AND *BURNED* HIM AT THE SAME TIME!"
"RIGHT...THAT'S OUR *EXTRA DOUBLE DELUXE* EXECUTION WITH CHEESE. I HEARD THAT MACHIAVELLI WAS *THERE!*"
it must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things.

"I SUPPOSE IT'S ***POSSIBLE***. NOT LONG ***AFTER***, HE WAS APPOINTED SECRETARY TO THE REPUBLIC'S ***SECOND CHANCERY***. HIS FIRST DIPLOMATIC MISSION WAS TO THE PROVINCE OF ***ROMANGA***, WHERE FRANCE'S ALLIES BESEIGED MILAN'S RULING ***SFORZA*** FAMILY. THOUGH THE SFORZAS' CASTLE WAS ***IMPENETRABLE***, IT WAS OVERTHROWN FROM ***WITHIN***. THE PEASANTS, SICK OF ***OPPRESSION***, SIDED WITH THE ***FRANCOPHILES!***"

I would blame any ruler who, trusting in fortresses, recks little of being hated by her people.

"AT ***FORLI***, MACHIAVELLI MET CESARE BORGIA, ***DUKE VALENTINO***, WHO ***LED*** THE SEIGE."

"IS IT TRUE THAT MANY OF THE PAINTINGS OF ***JESUS CHRIST*** FROM THAT ERA WERE ***BASED*** ON THE HANDSOME DUKE, FORTUNATO?"

"WHY NOT? HE ***WAS*** THE SON OF POPE ***ALEXANDER VI*** AND ONE OF HIS MANY ***MISTRESSES***, AFTER ALL. VALENTINO OWED ***EVERYTHING*** HE HAD TO HIS FATHER'S PATRONAGE OF FRANCE!"

ITALIA

JUST BRING IT HOME IN ONE ***PIECE***.

GOLLY! ***THANKS***, DAD!

"SOON ***ALL*** OF ROMAGNA FELL TO THE DUKE'S ARMIES. HE APPOINTED THE CRUEL ***REMIRRO DE ORCO*** ITS RULER!"

In taking a state a conqueror must arrange to commit all his cruelties at once, so as not to have to recur to them every day.

for injuries should be done all together, so that being less tasted, they will give less offense.


this man (remirro), in a short time, was highly successful in rendering the country orderly and united:
REMIRRO TERRORIZES POOR FARMERS AND IMPRISONS THE PEASANTRY FOR NO GOOD CAUSE, DUKE VALENTINO!
HMMM... YOU DON'T SAY... THAT'S AWFUL... >TSK!<
whereupon the duke, not deeming such excessive authority expedient, lest it become hateful, resolved to show that that if any cruelty had taken place, it was not by his orders, but through the harsh discipline of his minister.
DUKE'S ORDERS: TERRORIZE IMPRISON


there are many who think therefore that a wise prince ought, when he has the chance, to foment astutely some enmity, so that by suppressing it...
WHA-- WHAT I DO WRONG? >GAK!<
...he will augment his greatness.


"WHO KNOWS HOW FAR VALENTINO COULD HAVE CLIMBED, HAD HIS FATHER NOT DIED SO SUDDENLY?"
"SCANDALMONGERS SAY THE POPE PLANNED TO POISON A CARDINAL, BUT THE WILY CLERIC SWITCHED THEIR SWEETMEAT BOXES, SO ALEXANDER'S OWN TREACHERY DID HIM IN!"


"GOOD RIDDANCE, I SAY. THE REPUBLIC SENT MACHIAVELLI TO ROME TO MONITOR THE ELECTION OF THE NEW POPE."
GO POPE!
"DUKE VALENTINO, SUFFERING FROM A FEVER, WAS MANIPULATED INTO ALLOWING AN ENEMY OF THE BORGIAS BE ELECTED POPE JULIUS II!"


"IF VALENTINO THOUGHT JULIUS WOULD BE GRATEFUL, HE WAS IN FOR A NASTY SURPRISE!"
whoever thinks that in high personages new benefits cause old offenses to be forgotten, makes a great mistake.
the duke erred in his choice and it was the cause of his ultimate ruin.

"WITH VALENTINO *IMPRISONED*, ROMAGNA TURNED TO *VENICE* FOR MILITARY PROTECTION. BUT JULIUS II WOULDN'T STAND FOR THAT -- HE *PERSONALLY* LED PAPAL ARMIES AGAINST THEM!"

BATTLEPOPE

"MACHIAVELLI WAS MUCH *IMPRESSED* BY THE BOLDNESS WITH WHICH THE NEW POPE CONQUERED *BOLOGNA*:"

Fortune is a **woman**, and it is necessary, if you wish to **master** her, to conquer her by **force**.

POPE OF THE BEACH

It can be seen that she lets herself be overcome by the **bold** rather than by those who proceed **coldly**.

"THE POPE FORMED A PACT WITH SPAIN, FRANCE AND THE *HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE* TO OPPOSE THE VENETIANS!"

LEAGUE of CAMBRAI

"BUT ONCE VENICE WAS BROUGHT TO THE PAPAL HEEL, JULIUS SWITCHED ALLIES *AND* AIMS -- JOINING *WITH* THE CITY TO DRIVE THE FRENCH OUT OF ITALY!"

No FRENCHIEZ Allowd

SACRE BLEU!

If men were all **good**, it would be good to keep faith with them; but as they are **bad**, and would not observe faith with **you**, you are not bound to keep faith with **them**.

"I BELIEVE MACHIAVELLI WAS IN *VIENNA* THROUGH 1508, SERVING AS ENVOY TO HOLY ROMAN EMPEROR *MAXMILIAN I*. HE WAS LESS THAN IMPRESSED:"

a **secret man**, he does not communicate his designs to **anyone** or take **any** advice...

PLANS

...but as on putting them into effect they begin to be known and discovered, they begin to be **opposed** by those he has about him, and he is easily **diverted** from his purpose.

a prince ought **always** to take counsel, but only when **he** wishes, not when **others** wish...

...he ought to be a great **asker**, and a patient **hearer** of the truth about those things of which he has inquired.

LISTEN

AGT

we have in our own day **ferdinand**, the present king of **spain**.

he had recourse to a **pious cruelty**...

AGT!

UK

FRANCE

SPAIN

...driving out the **moors** (and the **jews**) from his kingdom and **despoiling** them.

these and other acts have kept his subjects' minds uncertain and **astonished**, so that they have left no time for men to settle down and plot against **him**.


"IT TOOK ALL OF MACHIAVELLI AND HIS FELLOW MINISTERS' DIPLOMATIC SKILLS TO KEEP FLORENCE OUT OF THE ITALIAN WARS. BUT HE LEARNED THE HARD WAY..."
IRRESOLUTE PRINCES, TO AVOID PRESENT DANGERS, USUALLY FOLLOW THE WAY OF NEUTRALITY, AND ARE MOSTLY RUINED BY IT.
"THE POPE COULD NO LONGER RISK THE POSSIBILITY THAT FLORENCE MIGHT ALLY WITH HIS ENEMIES. IN 1512, FERDINAND'S ARMIES OCCUPIED THE CITY, AND THEN, BY PAPAL DECREE..."
HONEY, I'M HOME!
"...JULIUS RETURNED THE MEDICIS TO POWER! GUILIANO, PIERO'S BROTHER, BECAME THE CITY'S NEW DUKE!"
"A MEDICI GOON SQUAD SOON ARRESTED TWO YOUNG REPUBLICAN CONSPIRATORS WITH A LIST OF PEOPLE THEY THOUGHT MIGHT BE SYMPATHETIC TO AN OVERTHROW OF PAPAL CONTROL!"
?
"GUESS WHO'S NAME THEY FOUND ON IT?"
NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI
"GASP!< DID MACHIAVELLI NAME NAMES?"
"HOW COULD HE? HE HAD NO IDEA HOW HIS NAME GOT ON THE LIST IN THE FIRST PLACE!"

"HIS LIFE WAS **SPARED**-- BUT THE MEDICI BANISHED HIM TO A FARM IN THE **SUBURBS**, HIS GOVERNMENT POSITION FOREVER **LOST**!"

"**>FEH!<** SOME **MERCY**! TO EXILE ONE SUCH AS **NICCOLO** FROM THE HALLS OF POWER ... THEY MIGHT AS WELL HAVE CUT OFF HIS **AIR SUPPLY**!"

STILL, HE FOUND A WAY TO KEEP BUSY IN HIS **LIBRARY**.

on the threshold I slip of my day's clothes with their mud and dirt, put on my curial robes, and enter the ancient courts of the men of old.

I am not ashamed to address them and ask them the reasons for their action, and they reply considerately; and for two hours I forget all my cares.

and since Dante says that we can never attain knowledge unless we retain what we hear, I have noted down the capital I have accumulated from their conversation and composed a little book...

"HE DEDICATED HIS WORK TO PIERO'S SON **LORENZO** IN AN ATTEMPT TO WIN THE FAVOR OF THE MEDICIS AND RECLAIM HIS POSITION!"

"IT CONTAINED THE **SUM TOTAL** OF MACHIAVELLI'S STUDY OF ANCIENT LORE, COMBINED WITH HIS **DECADES** OF EXPERIENCE IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE!"

the herein-mentioned things, if **prudently** observed, make a **new** prince seem **ancient**, and render him at once more secure and firmer in the state than if he had been established there of old.

IL PRINCIPE

my intention being to write something of **use** to those who understand, it appears to me more proper to go to the real **truth** of the matter than to its imagination.

how we live is so far removed from how we **ought** to live, that he who abandons what **is** done for what **ought** to be done, will rather learn how to bring about his own **ruin** than his preservation.



a man who wishes to make a profession of goodness in **everything** must necessarily come to grief among so many who are **not** good.

therefore it is necessary for a **prince**, who wishes to **maintain** himself...

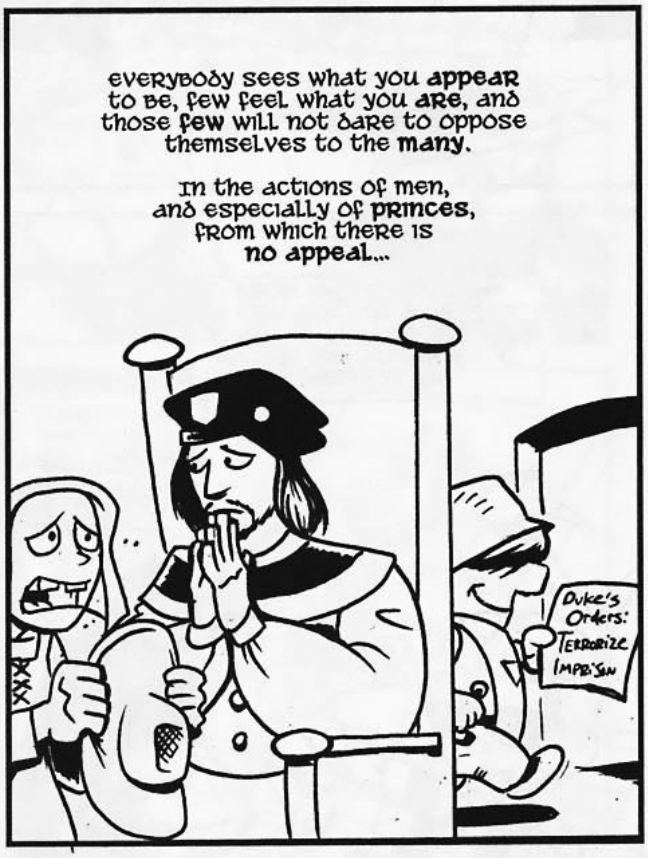


...to learn how **not** to be good.



everybody sees what you **appear** to be, few feel what you **are**, and those **few** will not dare to oppose themselves to the **many**.

in the actions of men, and especially of **princes**, from which there is **no appeal**...



...the **end** justifies the **means**.


"THE STUPID BRAT NEVER READ THE COPY OF THE PRINCE MACHIAVELLI PRESENTED TO HIM--"
"--IF HE HAD, MAYBE HIS FAMILY WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN EXILED AGAIN!"
CHUCK!


"THE PEOPLE OF FLORENCE TURNED AGAINST THE POPE WHEN FOREIGN TROOPS --HIS OWN ALLIES-- SACKED ROME!"
"WE REPUBLICANS ARE BACK ON TOP AGAIN!"


SINCE THEN, THE PRINCE HAS BECOME RENOWNED ACROSS EUROPE--EVEN I HAVE WHOLE CHAPTERS MEMORIZED!
WITH MACHIAVELLI AGAIN AT THE HELM OF FLORENCE'S STATECRAFT, NO DOUBT THE REPUBLIC'S SECURITY IS ASSURED--
SSSHH!! SOUNDS LIKE DEBATE IS WINDING DOWN--

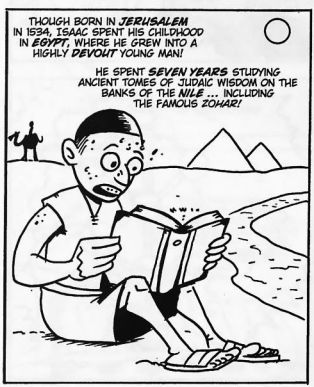

SO IT'S UNANIMOUS THEN!


THANKS TO OUR FORMER SECRETARY'S CYNICAL SCREED, THE VERY WORD "MACHIAVELLIAN" HAS BECOME A SYNONYM FOR RUTHLESS DUPLICITY!
WE CANNOT HAVE SUCH A PERSON WORKING FOR US!


THE CITIZENS OF FLORENCE MUST KNOW THEIR GOVERNMENT IS RULED BY FAITH, CHARITY AND RELIGION!
SIGNORE MACHIAVELLI'S PETITION IS REJECTED!


B-BU-BUT... MACHIAVELLI DID NOTHING MORE THAN TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT HOW POWER WAS WIELDED IN HIS TIMES--
EXACTLY! ONE OF THE WORST THINGS YOU CAN DO IN GOVERNMENT IS BE SMARTER THAN YOUR SUPERIORS!
HE FORGOT ONE OF HIS OWN MAXIMS--
It is not, therefore, necessary for a prince to have faith, charity and religion...
THE NEXT BILL WOULD ALLOW US TO DEDUCT OUR MISTRESSES AS BUSINESS EXPENSES! ALL THOSE IN FAVOR--?
AYE!
AYE!
AYE!
AYE!
...but it is necessary to seem to have them.
GUESS WE'D BETTER FIND THAT SERVANT SO HE CAN GIVE HIS MASTER THE BAD NEWS...
UH-OH! SEE WHERE ALL THOSE PEOPLE ARE GATHERED--ISN'T THAT THE ADDRESS HE GAVE US?
WHAT HAS HAPPENED, SIGNORA?
>SOB!< POOR SIGNOR MACHIAVELLI--THE FEVER FELLED HIM AS SOON AS HE GOT BACK FROM THE PALAZZO VECCHIO!
I DIDN'T EVEN RECOGNIZE HIM -- THE TORTURE HAS AGED HIM SO, THE POOR PAPER-PUSHER!
MACHIAVELLI DIED WITHOUT EVER LEARNING THAT HIS BELOVED FLORENTINE REPUBLIC HAD OVERWHELMINGLY REFUSED TO RETURN HIM TO OFFICE.
GASP! THAT BROKEN-DOWN OLD FARMER... HE WAS THE FEARED MACHIAVELLI?!
AND "HONEST MEN" HAVE USED HIS NAME AS A PEROJORATIVE EVER SINCE!
IL fmito


OY, VEY!
ACTION PHILOSOPHER #123 IS ISAAC LURIA, A/K/A YITZHAK BEN SOLOMON ASHKENAZI, A/K/A/ ARI, A/K/A:
EMANATED FROM THE TWO-MAN TRIBE OF LIFE FRED "GOY" VAN LENTE (WRITER) AND RYAN "GOYER" DUNLAVEY (ARTIST)!
RABBI OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!


THOUGH BORN IN JERUSALEM IN 1534, ISAAC SPENT HIS CHILDHOOD IN EGYPT, WHERE HE GREW INTO A HIGHLY DEVOUT YOUNG MAN!
HE SPENT SEVEN YEARS STUDYING ANCIENT TOMES OF JUDAIC WISDOM ON THE BANKS OF THE NILE ... INCLUDING THE FAMOUS ZOHAR!


THIS "BOOK OF RADIANCE" FIRST APPEARED IN SPAIN IN THE 1200'S, PUBLISHED BY ONE MOSES DE LEON.
A 1,000-YEAR-OLD COLLECTION OF MEDITATIONS ON THE TORAH, DISCOVERED BY ME! VERY RARE! A STEAL AT FIFTY PESETAS!
ZOHAR
ZOHAR
AFTER DE LEON DIED, THOUGH, HIS WIFE CONFESSED HE WAS THE TRUE AUTHOR!)

LIKE THE PLACEBO THAT ACTUALLY *CURES* THE PATIENT, HOWEVER, DE LEON'S *ZOHAR* SPARKED THE SCHOOL OF JEWISH MYSTICAL THOUGHT KNOWN AS *THE KABBALAH*, WHICH MEANS...

TRADITIOOOOON! TRADITION!

6th Grade FIDDLER on the ROOF

...OR, MORE LITERALLY, *"THAT WHICH IS RECEIVED."*

KABBALISTS, FOLLOWING THE *ZOHAR*, REFER TO THE JEWISH GOD AS *EIN SOF*--

I *THINK* GOD'S DOWN THERE *SOMEWHERE...* >GULP!<

--AN ESSENTIALLY UNKNOWABLE *"INFINITE"* FROM WHICH ALL CREATION *EMANATES*.

CONTEMPLATING EIN SOF ALONG THE NILE, ISAAC HAD A VISION OF THE PROPHET *ELIJAH*...

THE TIME FOR STUDYING IS *OVER!* YOU MUST NOW GO *OUT* INTO THE WORLD, AND SHARE WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED WITH GOD'S *CHOSEN PEOPLE!*

BUT FIRST... TAKE A *SHOWER*, WILLYA? *PEE-YEW!*

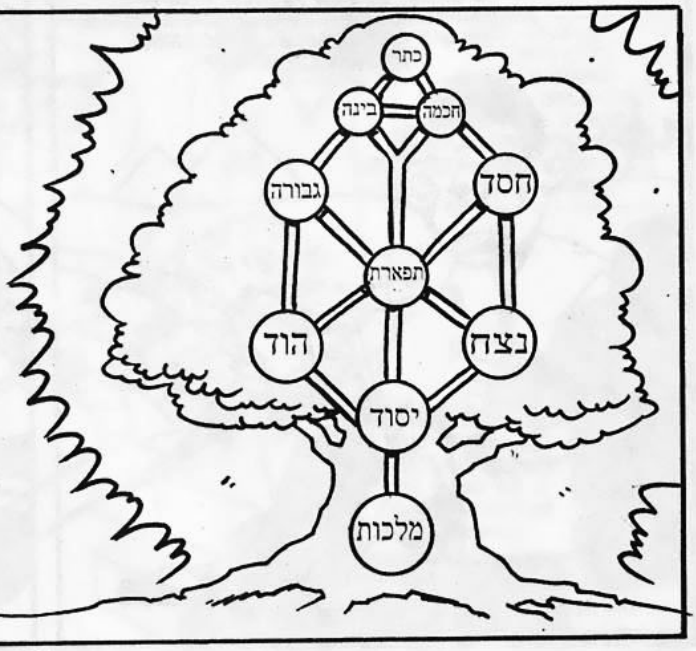
THE LURIAS DECAMPED FOR *ISRAEL*, SPECIFICALLY *SAFED*, A SMALL TOWN IN THE MOUNTAINS OF GAILILEE AND A *HOTBED* OF KABBALIST STUDY.

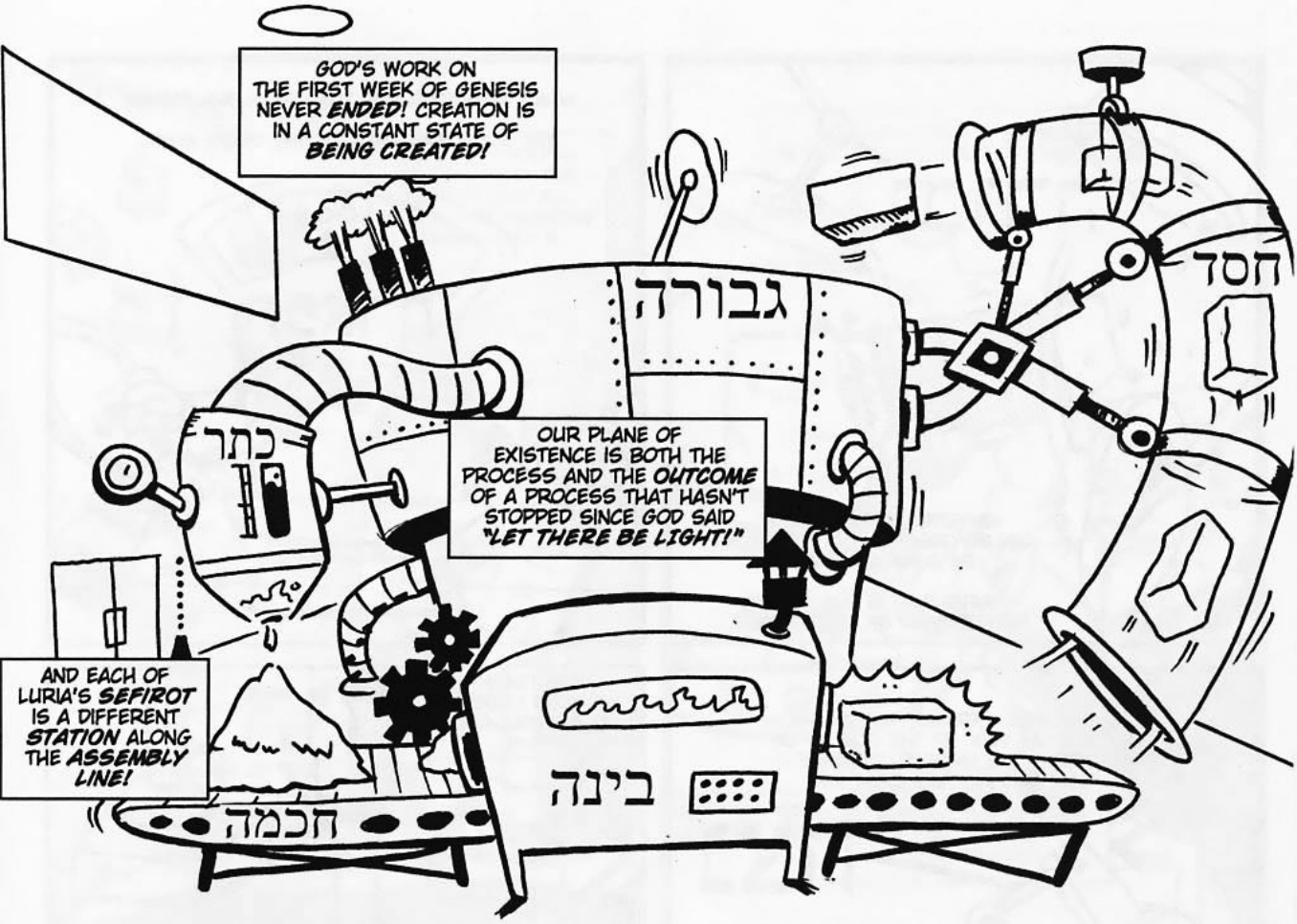
ISAAC'S STUDENTS CALLED HIM *ARI*-- A HEBREW ACRONYM FOR "OUR MASTER RABBI ISAAC" THAT ALSO MEANS *"LION"*--

-- SO THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE *"CUBS!"*

THIS *TREE OF LIFE* IS THE COSMIC *FLOWCHART* BY WHICH EIN SOF *EMANATES* REALITY--

--I CALL EACH *STAGE* OF THAT PROCESS A *SEFIRAH*, OR "ENUMERATION!"

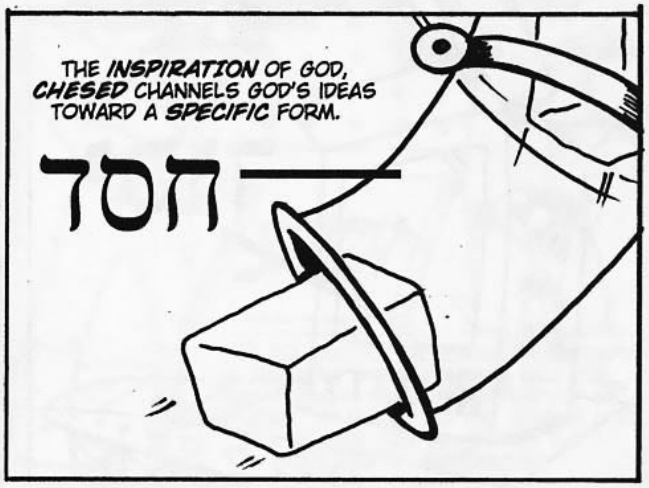


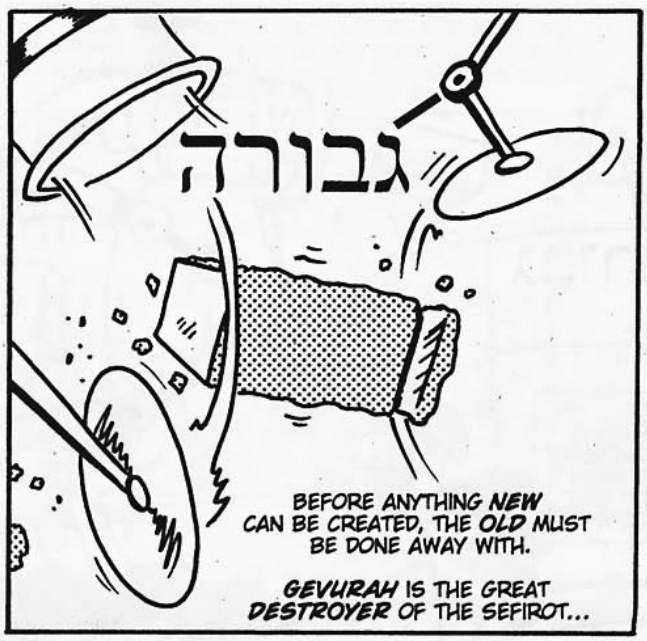

GOD'S WORK ON THE FIRST WEEK OF GENESIS NEVER ENDED! CREATION IS IN A CONSTANT STATE OF BEING CREATED!
OUR PLANE OF EXISTENCE IS BOTH THE PROCESS AND THE OUTCOME OF A PROCESS THAT HASN'T STOPPED SINCE GOD SAID "LET THERE BE LIGHT!"
AND EACH OF LURIA'S SEFIROT IS A DIFFERENT STATION ALONG THE ASSEMBLY LINE!
כתר
גבורה
חסד
בינה
חכמה


כתר
KETER, "THE CROWN", IS THE SEFIRAH AT WHICH CREATION FIRST RECEIVES THE SPARK OF POSSIBILITY.
KETER IS PURE CREATIVITY -- AT THIS POINT, ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN!


CHOKHMAH IS GOD'S WILLPOWER! IT GIVES GOD'S THOUGHTS THE ABILITY TO ACTUALIZE THEIR POTENTIAL.
חכמה


בינה
FROM CHOKHMAH, THEY PASS ON TO BINAH, THE MOTHER OF FORM, WHICH GRANTS GOD'S THOUGHTS THE POTENTIALITY OF PHYSICAL MANIFESTATION.


THE INSPIRATION OF GOD, CHESED CHANNELS GOD'S IDEAS TOWARD A SPECIFIC FORM.
חסד



BEFORE ANYTHING ***NEW*** CAN BE CREATED, THE ***OLD*** MUST BE DONE AWAY WITH.

GEVURAH IS THE GREAT ***DESTROYER*** OF THE SEFIROT...

. ...WHILE ***TIPHERETH*** IS THE GREAT ***BALANCER*** ...

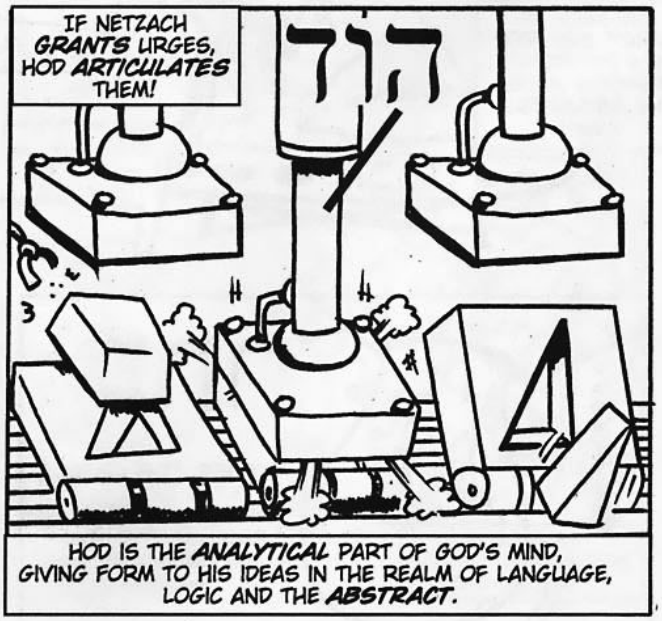
THE ***RATIONAL*** PART OF THE DIVINE MIND!



BY PASSING THROUGH ***NETZACH***, GOD'S IDEAS PICK UP THE QUALITY OF ***DESIRE*** -- THE URGE TO ***CREATE*** -- THAT ***MOTIVATES*** CREATION!

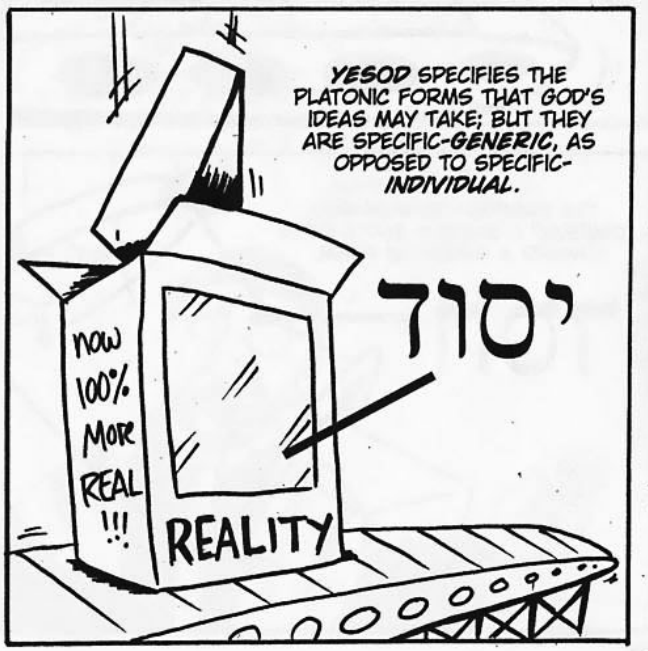


IF NETZACH ***GRANTS*** URGES, HOD ***ARTICULATES*** THEM!



HOD IS THE ***ANALYTICAL*** PART OF GOD'S MIND, GIVING FORM TO HIS IDEAS IN THE REALM OF LANGUAGE, LOGIC AND THE ***ABSTRACT***.

YESOD SPECIFIES THE PLATONIC FORMS THAT GOD'S IDEAS MAY TAKE; BUT THEY ARE SPECIFIC-***GENERIC***, AS OPPOSED TO SPECIFIC-***INDIVIDUAL***.



ALSO KNOWN AS "THE KINGDOM", ***MALKUTH*** IS THE "OUTPUT TRAY" OF THE TREE OF LIFE, THE ***FINAL*** MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S THOUGHTS INTO ***CORPOREAL REALITY***.

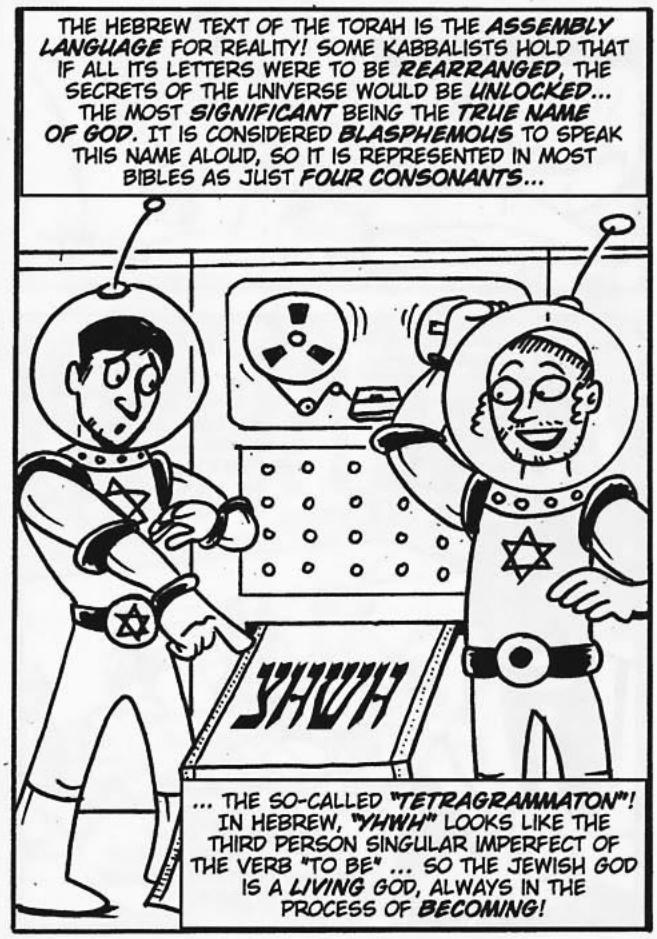
"THE WORD MADE FLESH," AS THE BIBLE SAYS, AND MALKUTH ENCOMPASSES THE FLESH OF THE ***ENTIRE PHYSICAL UNIVERSE***!

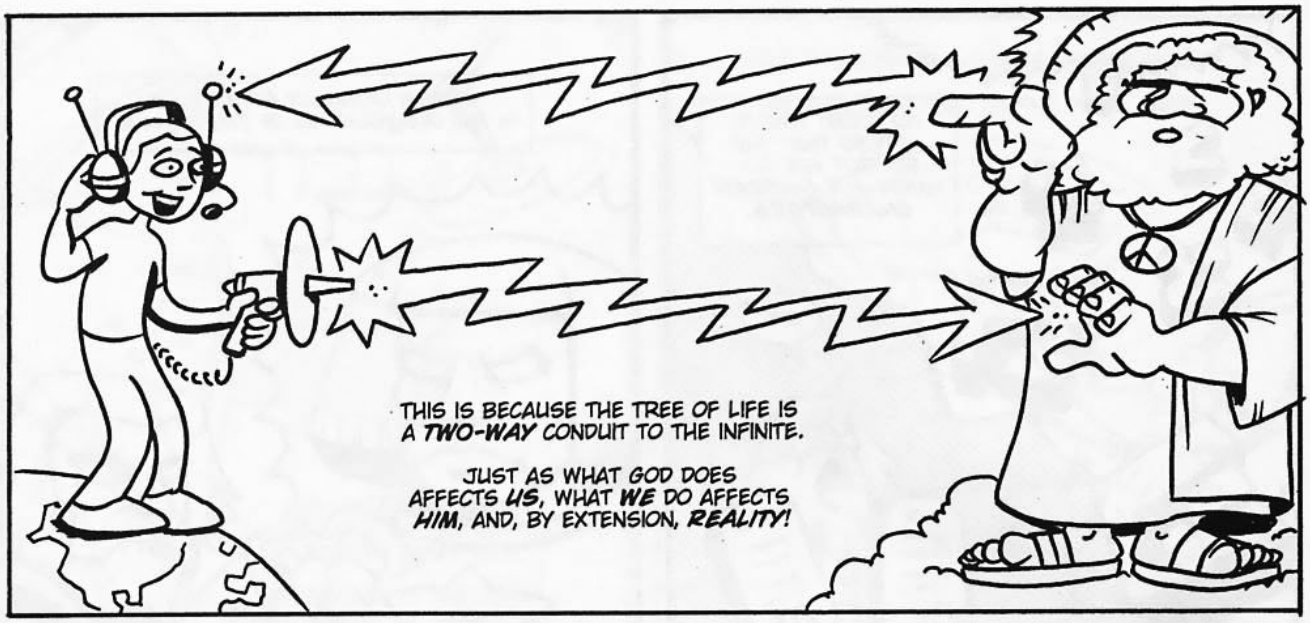



NO DOUBT YOU'VE NOTICED THAT THE SEFIROT ARE ALL NAMED FOR *HEBREW CHARACTERS.*
OY!
I-V
VI-X
KABBALISTS BELIEVE THAT THE HEBREW LANGUAGE--THE LANGUAGE OF THE *TORAH*--IS AS *DIVINELY INSPIRED* AS THE SCRIPTURES *THEMSELVES!*


HEBREW LITERALLY *GIVES LIFE* IN THE OLD FOLKTALE OF *THE GOLEM.*
A KABBALIST RABBI ANIMATES A CLAY STATUE BY WRITING THE HEBREW WORD FOR *"TRUTH"* ON ITS FOREHEAD!


WHEN THE GOLEM'S WORK IS DONE, THE RABBI TURNS HIS CREATION BACK INTO INANIMATE CLAY BY ERASING THE *FIRST LETTER*, THUS SPELLING *METH*, OR *"DEATH!"*
(IN THE *BROTHERS GRIMM* VERSION OF THE TALE, THE GOLEM GROWS *TOO TALL* FOR THE RABBI TO REACH HIS FOREHEAD ...LEADING TO *DISASTROUS RESULTS!*)


THE HEBREW TEXT OF THE TORAH IS THE *ASSEMBLY LANGUAGE* FOR REALITY! SOME KABBALISTS HOLD THAT IF ALL ITS LETTERS WERE TO BE *REARRANGED*, THE SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE WOULD BE *UNLOCKED*... THE MOST *SIGNIFICANT* BEING THE *TRUE NAME OF GOD*. IT IS CONSIDERED *BLASPHEMOUS* TO SPEAK THIS NAME ALOUD, SO IT IS REPRESENTED IN MOST BIBLES AS JUST *FOUR CONSONANTS*...
YHVH
... THE SO-CALLED *"TETRAGRAMMATON"*! IN HEBREW, *"YHWH"* LOOKS LIKE THE THIRD PERSON SINGULAR IMPERFECT OF THE VERB "TO BE" ... SO THE JEWISH GOD IS A *LIVING* GOD, ALWAYS IN THE PROCESS OF *BECOMING!*


THIS IS BECAUSE THE TREE OF LIFE IS A TWO-WAY CONDUIT TO THE INFINITE.
JUST AS WHAT GOD DOES AFFECTS US, WHAT WE DO AFFECTS HIM, AND, BY EXTENSION, REALITY!

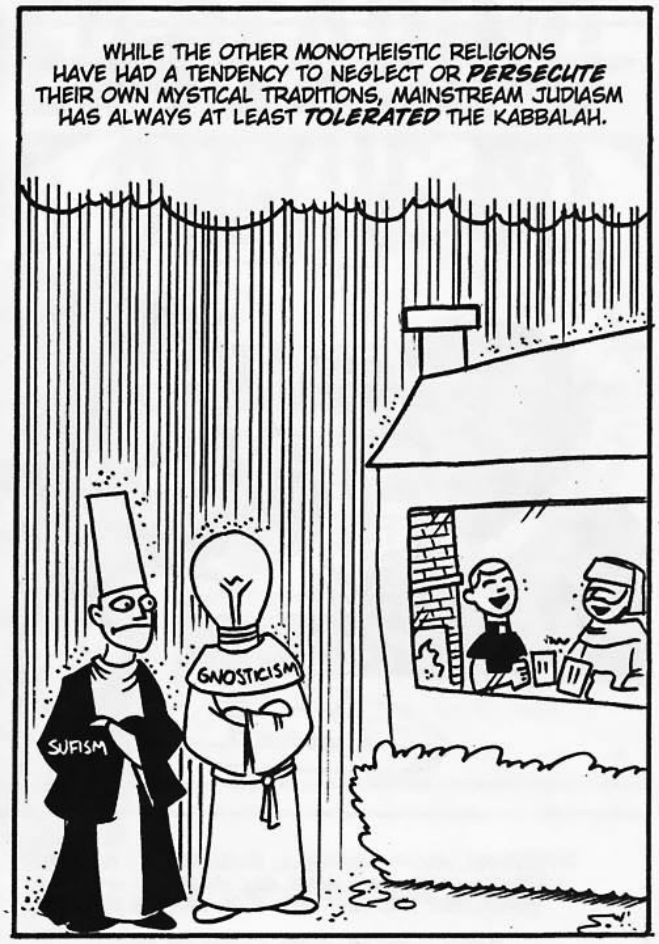

BY CLEAVING TOWARDS GOD, DOING GOOD WORKS, AND LEADING A PIOUS LIFE, A HUMAN BEING HELPS GOD, AND THEREFORE CREATION, INTO A MORE FULLY REALIZED STATE.
SNIFF, SNIFF! WE'RE GETTING THERE...


CONVERSELY, EVIL, SELFISH ACTIONS IMPEDE THE FLOW OF CREATION, AND ARE DETRIMENTAL TO GOD.
>ERRK!< I'M GETTIN' VERKLEMPT HERE! STAY OUTTA YOUR MOTHER'S PURSE, SHLOMO!
OY!

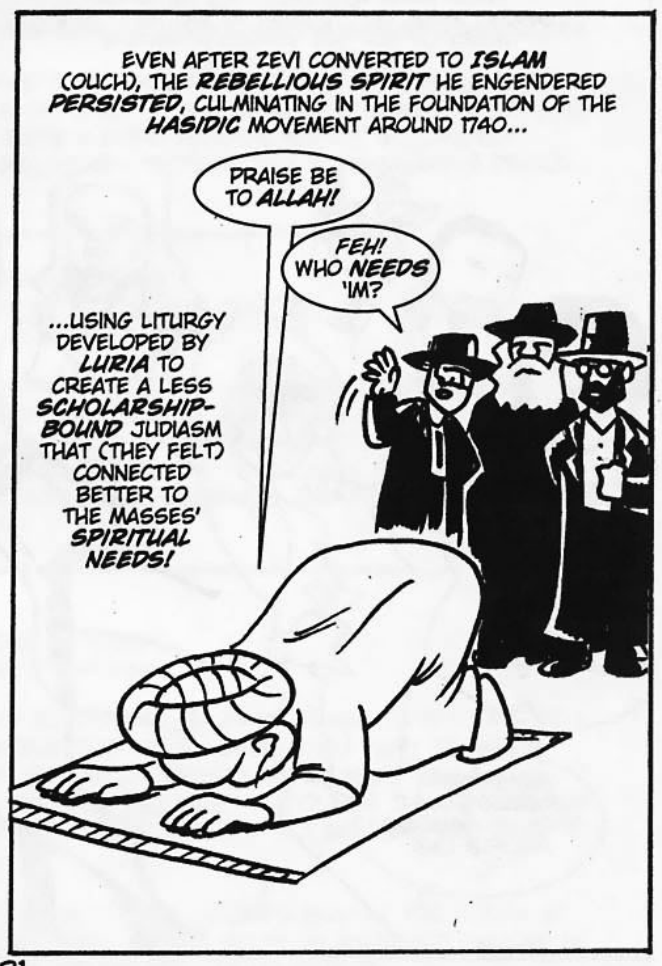

LURIA HIMSELF WAS SAID TO POSSESS MANY MYSTICAL POWERS DERIVING FROM HIS ABILITY TO INFLUENCE THE FLOW OF REALITY.
"THE ELEMENTS OF TIME, SPACE, AND MOTION ARE MERELY AN EXPRESSION OF THE LIMITATIONS IMPOSED BY THE PHYSICAL BODY ON THE SOUL."
"WHEN THE SOUL HAS SWAY OVER THE BODY, THESE LIMITING FACTORS CEASE TO EXIST."


"LET US NOW PROCEED TO JERUSALEM, FOR OUR PHYSICAL BODIES HAVE LOST THEIR INFLUENCE OVER OUR SOULS!"
BEAM ME UP, ISAAC!


LURIA DIED IN 1572 AT THE AGE OF 38 WITHOUT HAVING WRITTEN ANYTHING DOWN.
WAIT! DON'T KICK OFF JUST YET--LET ME GET DOWN THAT LAST BIT OF WISDOM--
GAK!
DAMMIT!
BUT THE CUBS CAPTURED AS MANY OF HIS TEACHINGS AS THEY COULD IN THE SIX VOLUMES OF THE TREE OF LIFE, WHICH SOON SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE JEWISH WORLD.


WHILE THE OTHER MONOTHEISTIC RELIGIONS HAVE HAD A TENDENCY TO NEGLECT OR PERSECUTE THEIR OWN MYSTICAL TRADITIONS, MAINSTREAM JUDIASM HAS ALWAYS AT LEAST TOLERATED THE KABBALAH.
GNOSTICISM
SUFISM


NOT THAT THERE HAVEN'T BEEN A FEW BUMPS IN THE ROAD.
YHWH!
A LURIANIC KABBALIST NAMED SABBATAI ZEVI CAUSED A MAJOR SCHISM BETWEEN RABBINICAL JUDIASM AND THE JEWISH MASSES IN THE 1600'S BY PROCLAIMING HIMSELF THE MESSIAH.


EVEN AFTER ZEVI CONVERTED TO ISLAM (OUCH), THE REBELLIOUS SPIRIT HE ENGENDERED PERSISTED, CULMINATING IN THE FOUNDATION OF THE HASIDIC MOVEMENT AROUND 1740...
PRAISE BE TO ALLAH!
FEH! WHO NEEDS 'IM?
...USING LITURGY DEVELOPED BY LURIA TO CREATE A LESS SCHOLARSHIP-BOUND JUDIASM THAT (THEY FELT) CONNECTED BETTER TO THE MASSES' SPIRITUAL NEEDS!

THE TREE OF LIFE INFLUENCED **CHRISTIAN** THOUGHT AS WELL...PARTICULARLY AMONG **ALCHEMISTS** WHO WERE TRYING TO INFLUENCE CREATION IN RATHER **MATERIAL** WAYS...

NOPE. STILL **LEAD.**

YOU KNOW, WE REALLY **SUCK** AT THIS.

AND, OF COURSE, THE RECENT FASCINATION OF MANY **CELEBRITIES** WITH THE KABBALAH, SPEARHEADED BY **MADONNA**, HAS BEEN WELL-PUBLICIZED.

TABLOIDS REPORTED THAT POP STAR **BRITNEY SPEARS** PLANNED TO GIVE BIRTH TO HER FIRST CHILD IN A POOL FILLED WITH **ONE THOUSAND** ONE-LITER BOTTLES OF SPECIALLY BLESSED **"KABBALAH WATER!"** (AT A PRICE TAG OF $3,800!)

HIT ME BABY

POP!

ROSEANNE, NAOMI CAMPBELL, ELIZABETH TAYLOR AND BARBARA STREISAND HAVE **ALL** MADE TRIPS TO THE IMMENSELY **TRENDY** KABBALAH CENTRE IN L.A.

RABBI LURIA WAS ONLY WITH US FOR A **SHORT TIME**, SO IT'S HARD TO SAY WHAT HE'D **MAKE** OF ALL THIS SUDDEN ATTENTION. OUR **BEST GUESS** IS...

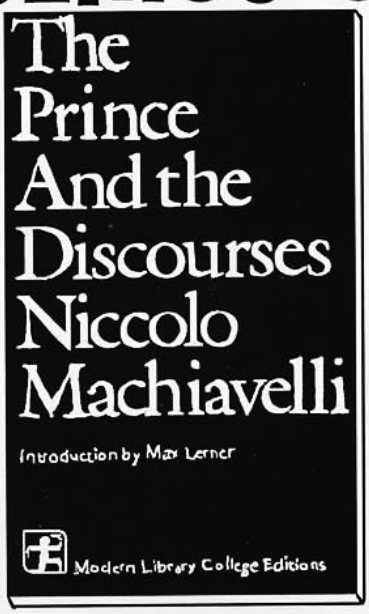
REMEMBER, BUBELAH, JUST BECAUSE **FAMOUS PEOPLE** LIKE IT...

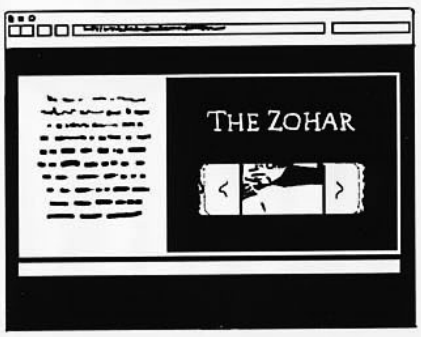
...DON'T MEAN IT **AIN'T TRUE!**

MAZEL TOV!

RECOMMENDED READING FOR THE GENIUS-ON-THE-GO







KARL MARX AND FREIDRICH ENGELS. *MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY* IN ROBERT C. TUCKER (ED.) *THE MARX-ENGELS READER* (2ND ED).
NEW YORK: WW NORTON, 1978. TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY ENGELS.
OR READ IT FOR ***FREE*** ON-LINE: HTTP://MARXISTS.ORG/ARCHIVE/MARX/WORKS/1848/COMMUNIST-MANIFESTO/INDEX.HTM

FRANKLY, I'D PREFER EVERYONE READ MARX'S TRUE MASTERWORK, *DAS CAPITAL*, BUT THIS COLUMN IS ADVERTISED AS BEING FOR THE GENIUS ON THE GO. *THE MANIFESTO* IS PROBABLY AMONG THE TOP FIVE MOST INFLUENTIAL DOCUMENTS EVER PRODUCED, AND THERE'S GOOD REASON WHY: IT SUCCINCTLY MERGES MARX'S THEORIES OF CLASS STRUGGLE AND DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM WITH STIRRING PROLETARIAT PROPAGANDA.

NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI. *THE PRINCE AND THE DISCOURSES.*
NEW YORK: THE MODERN LIBRARY, 1950. TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN BY LUIGI RICCI.
OR READ IT FOR ***FREE*** ON-LINE: HTTP://SIDEREUS.ORG/LIBRARY/THE-PRINCE.HTM

DUE TO ITS SCANT LENGTH, *THE PRINCE* IS USUALLY COMBINED WITH MACHIAVELLI'S OTHER MAJOR THEORETICAL WORK, *THE DISCOURSES*, WHICH IS ANOTHER PRODUCT OF THE EXILED DIPLOMAT'S TWO-WAY CONVERSATIONS WITH HIS FARM'S LIBRARY--SPECIFICALLY THE FIRST TEN BOOKS OF TITUS LIVIUS'S MONUMENTAL HISTORY OF ROME, *AB URBE CONDITA*. MACHIAVELLI FOUND THE ROMAN EMPIRE SO MUCH MORE HONORABLE THAN HIS OWN ERA--AND GIVEN THE HYPOCRISY, SCANDALS AND PERPETUAL WARFARE OF THE LATE RENAISSANCE, WHO CAN ARGUE WITH HIM?

MOSES DE LEON. *THE ZOHAR.*
TRANSLATED FROM THE HEBREW BY MICHAEL BERG (I THINK).
READ IT FOR FREE ON-LINE: HTTP://WWW.KABBALAH.COM/K/INDEX.PHP/P=ZOHAR

THERE'S ENOUGH HOOEY WRITTEN ABOUT THE KABBALAH TO MAKE PT BARNUM BLUSH. IT'S TOUGH FOR ME TO RECOMMEND *ANY* OF THE SOURCES I USED TO WRITE THIS STORY SINCE THEY VARY BETWEEN FEEL-GOOD SELF-HELP FLUFF (RABBI BERG'S *THE WAY*) AND IMPENETRABLE SCHOLASTIC DIRGES (SCHOLEM'S *ON THE KABBALAH AND ITS SYMBOLISM*). IN FACT, THE BEST DISCOURSE I EVER READ ON THE SUBJECT WAS BY SOME BRITISH GUY ON A USENET SITE THAT I PRINTED OUT AROUND 1997 AND HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO LOCATE SINCE. OH, WELL.

SO, FOR WANT OF A BETTER OPTION, I'LL SEND YOU STRAIGHT TO THE HORSE'S MOUTH. THE FOLKS AT RABBI BERG'S KABBALAH CENTRE HAVE UPLOADED THE ENTIRETY OF THE BOOK OF RADIANCE ON-LINE IN HYPERTEXT FORMAT. ENJOY! ASSUMING YOU CAN MAKE HEADS OR TAILS OF IT, THAT IS...

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ACTION PHILOSOPHERS!

HATE THE FRENCH!

