

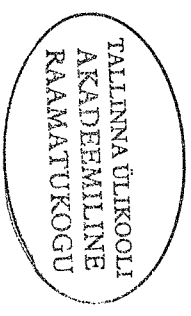
PERSEPOLIS

MARJANE SATRAPI



PANTHEON

73/76



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INTRODUCTION

In the second millennium B.C., while the Elam nation was developing a civilization alongside Babylon, Indo-European invaders gave their name to the immense Iranian plateau where they settled. The word "Iran" was derived from "Aryana Vaejo," which means "the origin of the Aryans." These people were semi-nomads whose descendants were the Medes and the Persians. The Medes founded the first Iranian nation in the seventh century B.C.; it was later destroyed by Cyrus the Great. He established what became one of the largest empires of the ancient world, the Persian Empire, in the sixth century B.C. Iran was referred to as Persia — its Greek name — until 1935 when Reza Shah, the father of the last Shah of Iran, asked everyone to call the country Iran.

Iran was rich. Because of its wealth and its geographic location, it invited attacks: From Alexander the Great, from its Arab neighbors to the west, from Turkish and Mongolian conquerors, Iran was often subject to foreign domination. Yet the Persian language and culture withstood these invasions. The invaders assimilated into this strong culture, and in some ways they became Iranians themselves.

In the twentieth century, Iran entered a new phase. Reza Shah decided to modernize and westernize the country, but meanwhile a fresh source of wealth was discovered: oil. And with the oil came another invasion. The West, particularly Great Britain, wielded a strong influence on the Iranian economy. During the Second World War, the British, Soviets, and Americans asked Reza Shah to ally himself with them against Germany. But Reza Shah, who sympathized with the Germans, declared Iran a neutral zone. So the Allies invaded and occupied Iran. Reza Shah was sent into exile and was succeeded by his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who was known simply as the Shah.

In 1951, Mohammed Mossadeq, then prime minister of Iran, nationalized the oil industry. In retaliation, Great Britain organized an embargo on all exports of oil from Iran. In 1953, the CIA, with the help of British intelligence, organized a coup against him. Mossadeq was overthrown and the Shah, who had earlier escaped from the country, returned to power. The Shah stayed on the throne until 1979, when he fled Iran to escape the Islamic revolution.

Since then, this old and great civilization has been discussed mostly in connection with fundamentalism, fanaticism, and terrorism. As an Iranian who has lived more than half of my life in Iran, I know that this image is far from the truth. This is why writing *Persepolis* was so important to me. I believe that an entire nation should not be judged by the wrongdoings of a few extremists. I also don't want those Iranians who lost their lives in prisons defending freedom, who died in the war against Iraq, who suffered under various repressive regimes, or who were forced to leave their families and flee their homeland to be forgotten.

One can forgive but one should never forget.

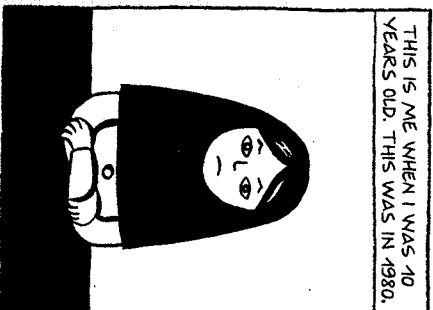
Marijane Satrapi
Paris, September 2002

PERSEPOLIS

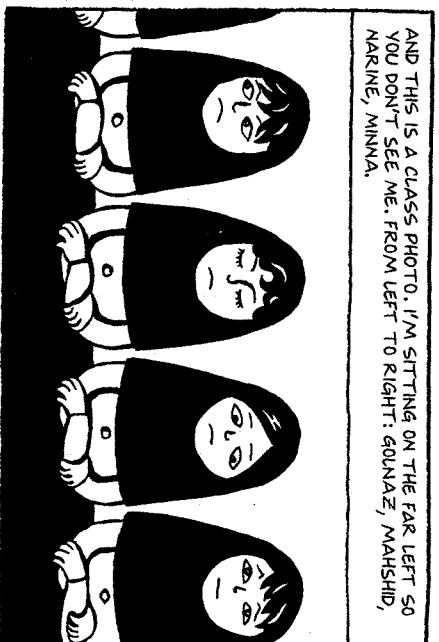


THE VEIL

THIS IS ME WHEN I WAS 10 YEARS OLD. THIS WAS IN 1980.



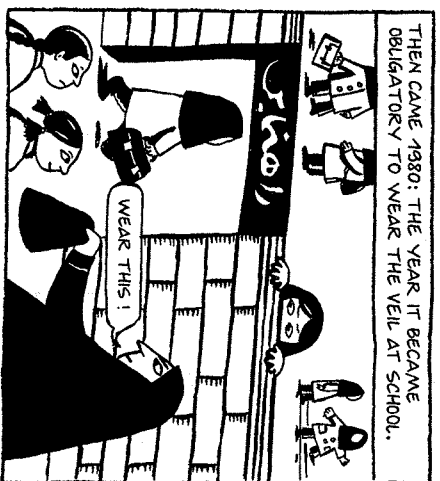
AND THIS IS A CLASS PHOTO. I'M SITTING ON THE FAR LEFT SO YOU DON'T SEE ME. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: GOLNAZ, MAHSHID, NARINE, MINNA.



IN 1979 A REVOLUTION TOOK PLACE. IT WAS LATER CALLED "THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION".



THEN CAME 1980: THE YEAR IT BECAME OBLIGATORY TO WEAR THE VEIL AT SCHOOL.



WE DIDN'T REALLY LIKE TO WEAR THE VEIL, ESPECIALLY SINCE WE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY WE HAD TO.

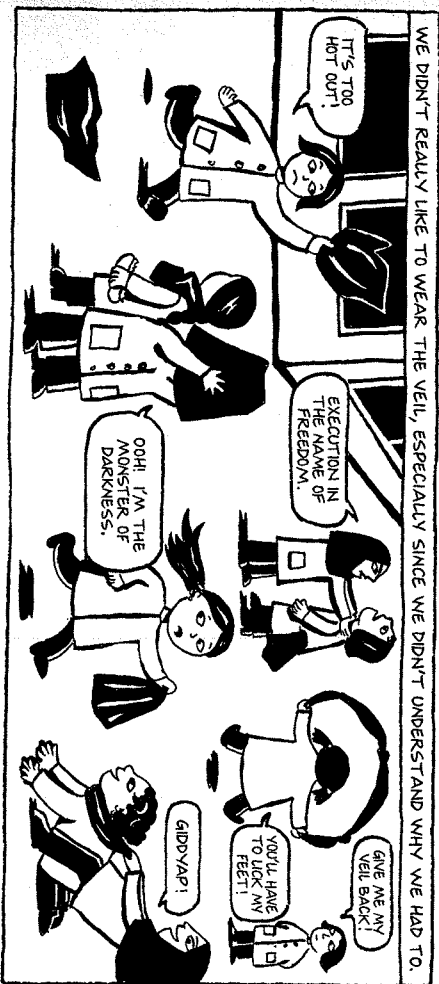
IT'S TOO HOT OUT!

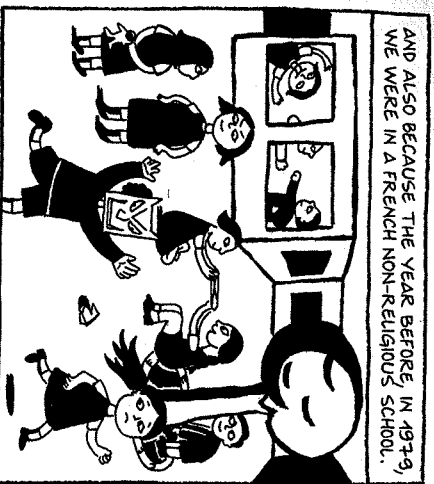
EXECUTION IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM.

OOH, I'M THE MONSTER OF DARKNESS.

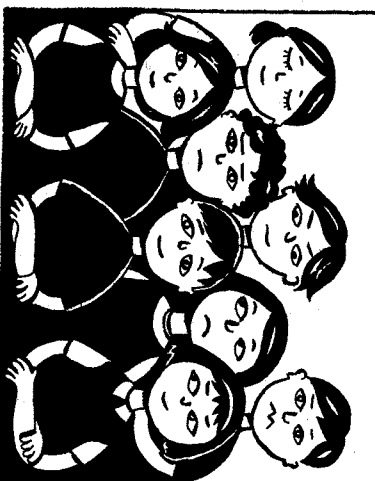
GIVE ME MY VEIL BACK!

GIDDYAP!





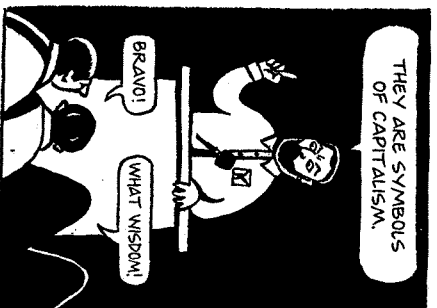
AND ALSO BECAUSE THE YEAR BEFORE, IN 1979, WE WERE IN A FRENCH NON-RELIGIOUS SCHOOL.



WHERE BOYS AND GIRLS WERE TOGETHER.



AND THEN SUDDENLY IN 1980...
ALL BILINGUAL SCHOOLS
MUST BE CLOSED DOWN.



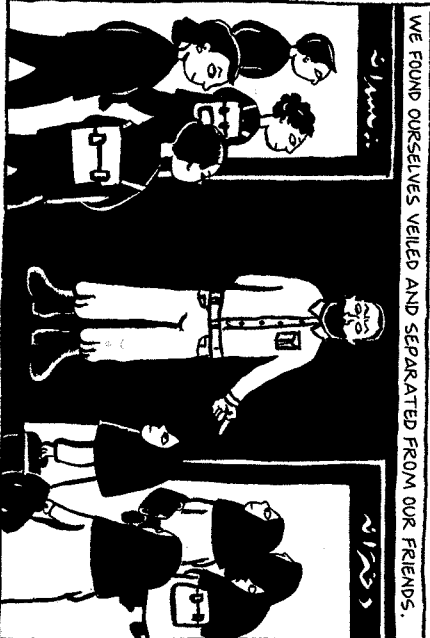
THEY ARE SYMBOLS
OF CAPITALISM.

BRAVO!

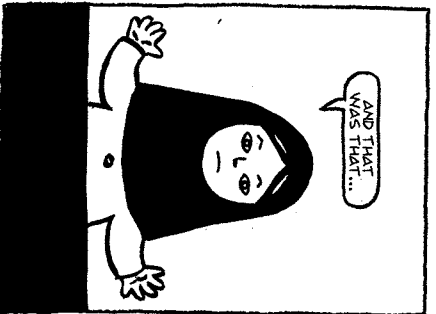
WHAT WISDOM!



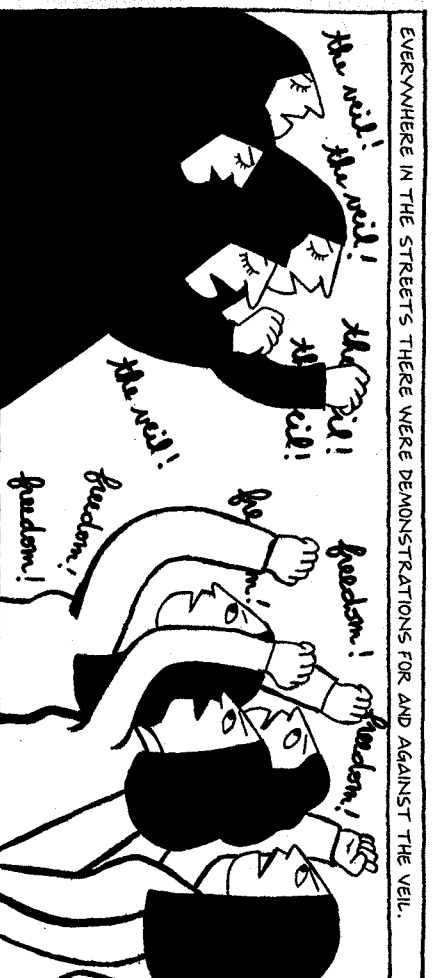
OF DECADENCE.
THIS IS CALLED A
"CULTURAL REVOLUTION."



WE FOUND OURSELVES VEILED AND SEPARATED FROM OUR FRIENDS.



AND THAT
WAS THAT...



EVERYWHERE IN THE STREETS THERE WERE DEMONSTRATIONS FOR AND AGAINST THE VEIL.



AT ONE OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS, A GERMANY
JOURNALIST TOOK A PHOTO OF MY MOTHER.



I WAS REALLY PROUD OF HER. HER PHOTO WAS
PUBLISHED IN ALL THE EUROPEAN NEWSPAPERS.



AND EVEN IN ONE MAGAZINE IN IRAN,
MY MOTHER WAS REALLY SCARED.

HAVE YOU SEEN
THIS?

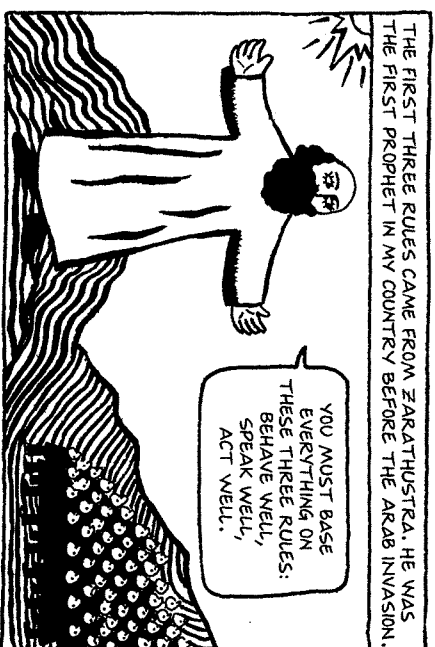
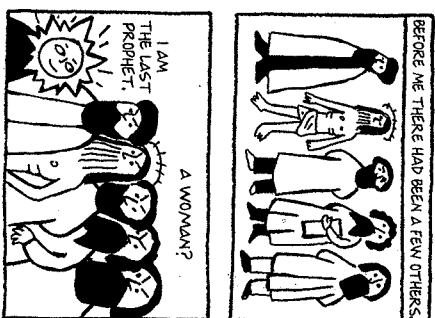
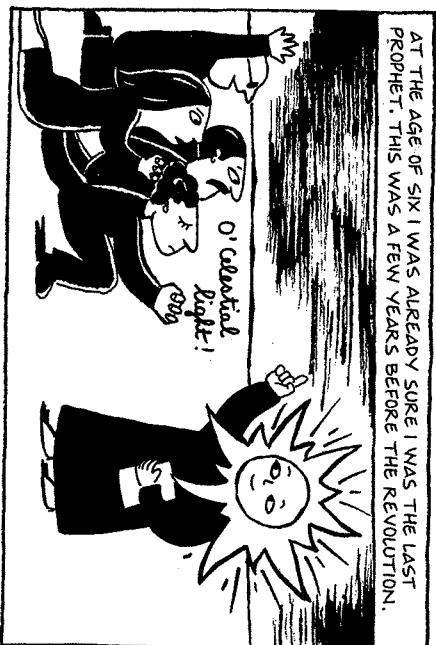
DON'T
WORRY,
DARLING.

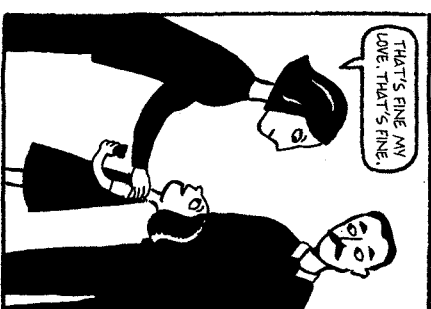
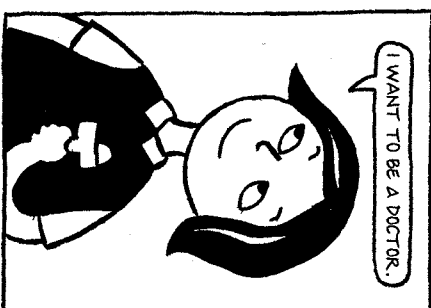
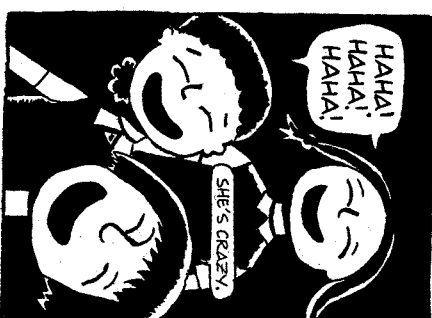


SHE DYED HER HAIR.

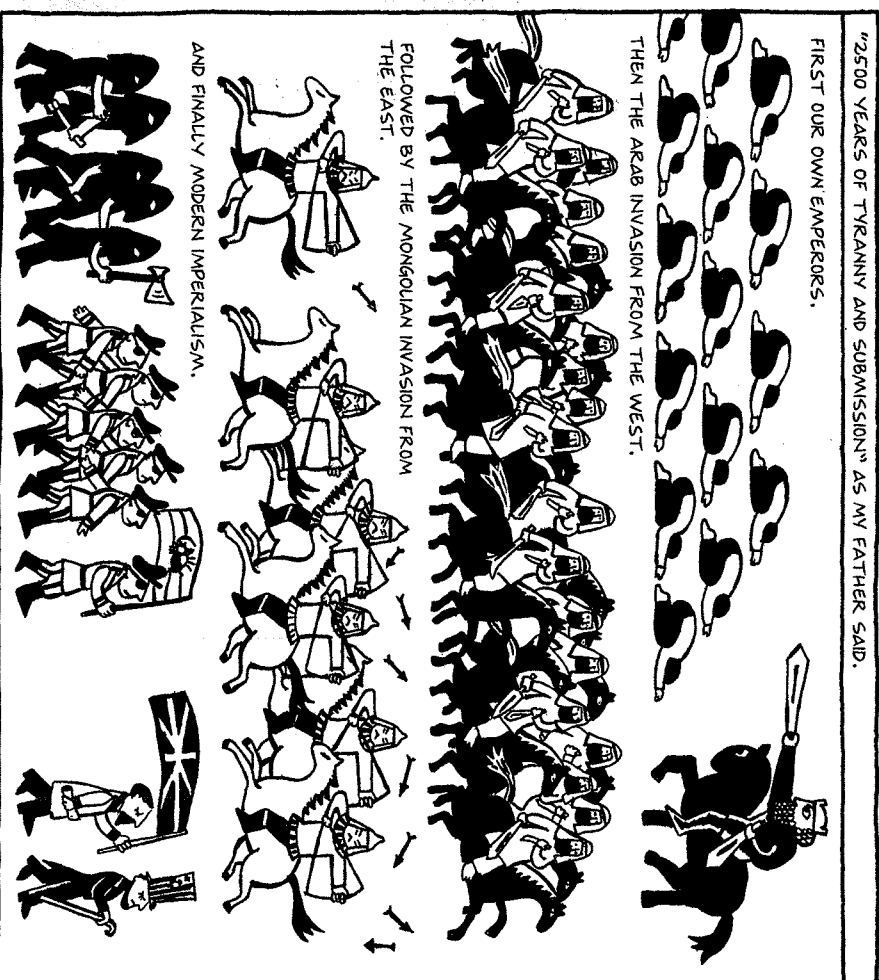
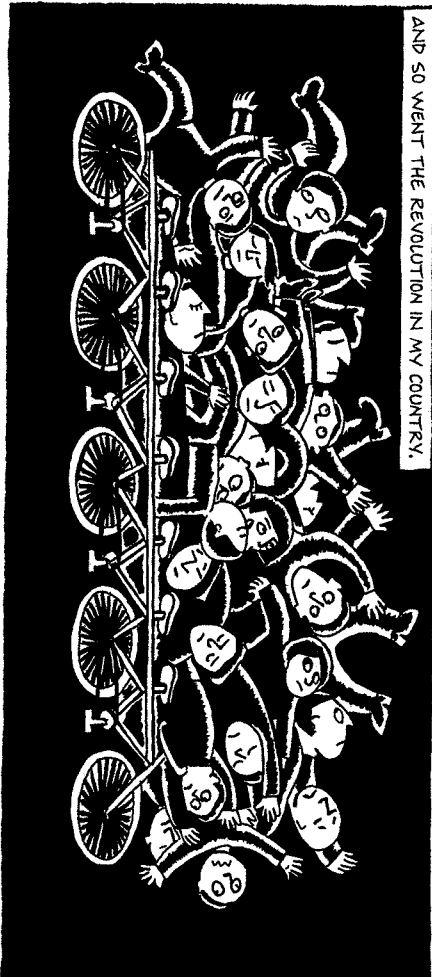
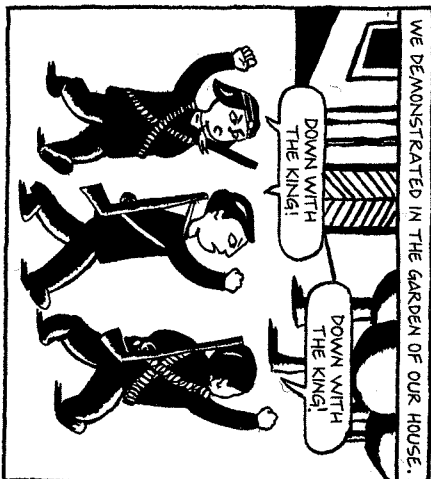


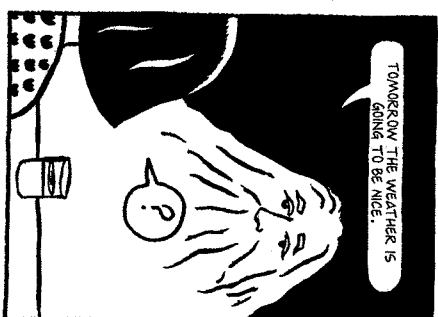
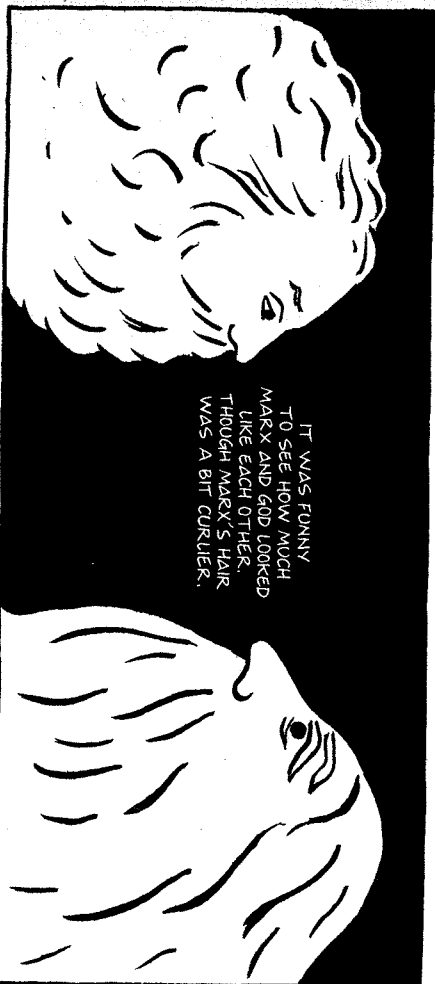
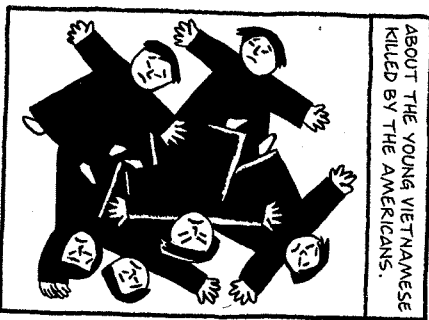
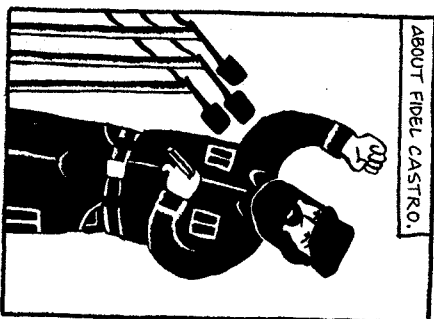
AND WORE DARK GLASSES FOR A LONG TIME.

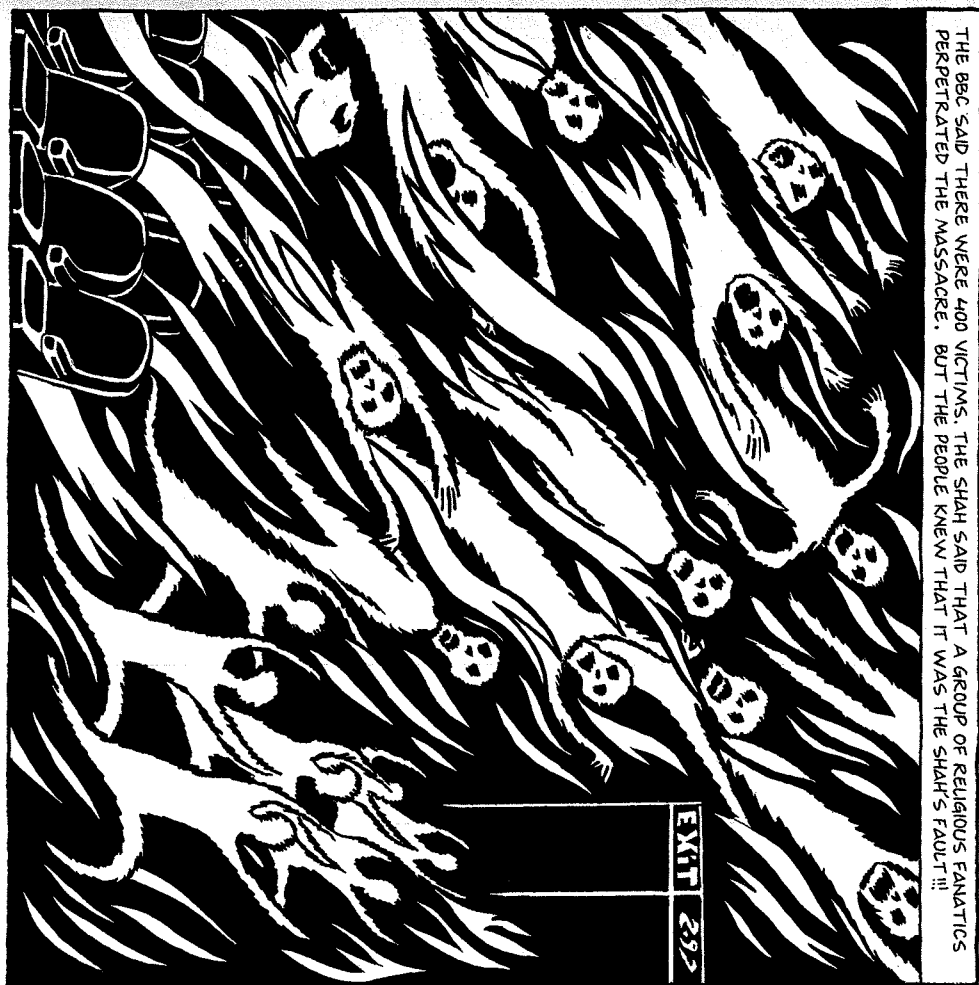
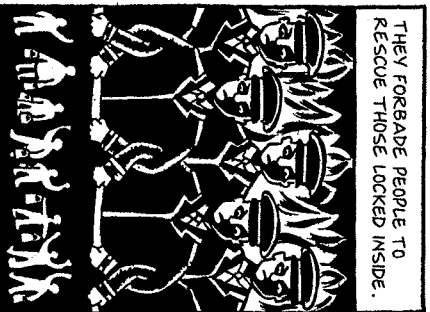
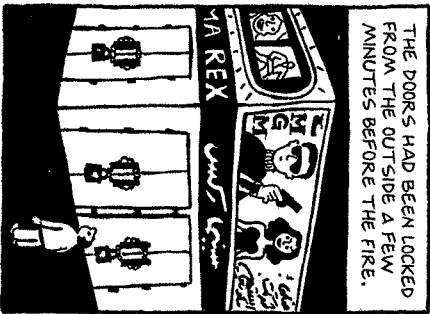


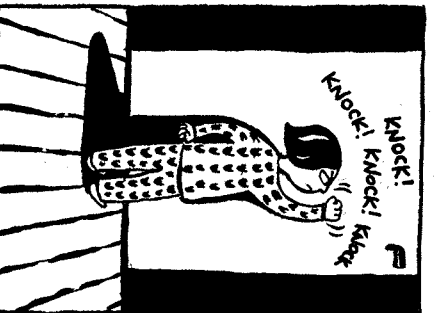
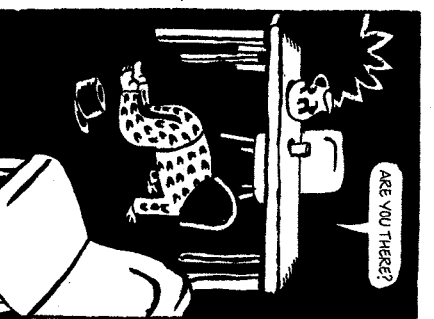
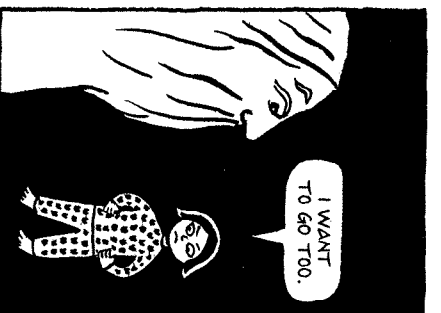


THE BICYCLE



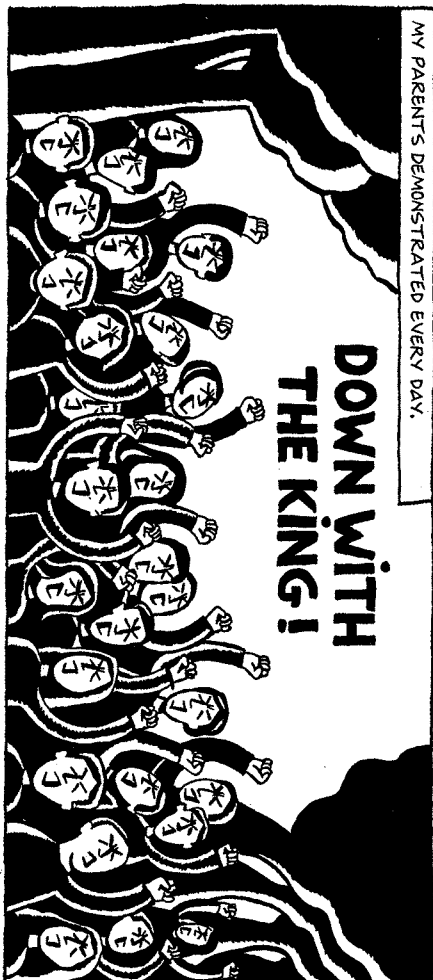




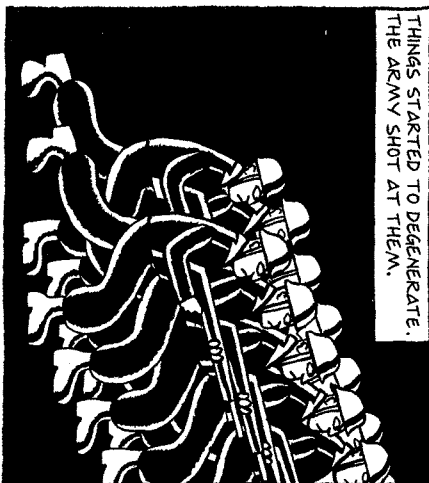


THE WATER CELL

MY PARENTS DEMONSTRATED EVERY DAY.



THINGS STARTED TO DEGENERATE. THE ARMY SHOT AT THEM.



AND THEY THREW STONES AT THE ARMY.



AFTER MARCHING AND THROWING STONES ALL DAY, BY EVENING THEY HAD ACHES ALL OVER, EVEN IN THEIR HEADS.



HEY MOM, DAD, LET'S PLAY MONOPOLY.

DARLING, WE ARE TIRED.

NOW IS NOT THE RIGHT TIME.



MONOPOLY, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. HAI HAI!

IT IS NEVER THE RIGHT TIME!

AS FOR ME, I LOVE THE KING, HE WAS CHOSEN BY GOD.



GOD DID NOT CHOOSE THE KING.



HE DID SO! IT'S WRITTEN ON THE FIRST PAGE OF OUR SCHOOLBOOK.



WHO TOLD YOU THAT?

MY TEACHER AND GOD HIMSELF.



COME SIT ON MY LAP, I'LL TRY TO EXPLAIN IT TO YOU.

GOOD, EXPLAIN EVERYTHING, I'M GOING TO BED.



THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY.



THE TRUTH IS THAT 50 YEARS AGO THE FATHER OF THE SHAH, WHO WAS A SOLDIER, ORGANIZED A PUTSCH TO OVERTHROW THE EMPEROR AND INSTALL A REPUBLIC.

IF IT IS GOD'S WILL, WE WILL REACH THE CAPITAL IN 19 DAYS.

GOD IS WITH US REZA, GOD IS WITH US.

AND EVEN IF HE ISN'T, WHAT CAN STOP US?



AT THE TIME THE REPUBLICAN IDEAL WAS POPULAR IN THE REGION BUT EVERYBODY INTERPRETED IT IN HIS OWN WAY.

GANDHI IN INDIA



THE HINDUS AND THE MUSLIMS MUST MAKE PEACE TO OVERTHROW THE BRITISH.

ATATURK IN TURKEY



WE, THE TURKS, ARE SECULAR WESTERNERS. FOR PROOF LOOK AT MY GREEN EYES.

SO THE FATHER OF THE SHAH WANTED TO DO THE SAME.



BUT HE WASN'T EDUCATED LIKE GANDHI, WHO WAS A LAWYER...



...NOR WAS HE A LEADER OF MEN LIKE ATATURK, WHO WAS A GENERAL.



A BLESSING FOR THE VERY INFLUENTIAL BRITISH WHO SOON LEARNED OF HIS PROTECTS.



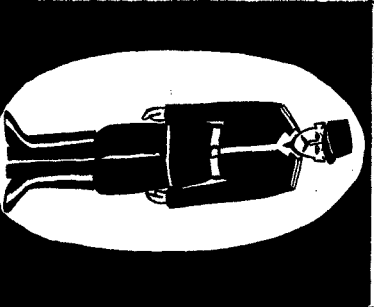
THE COUNTRY IS RICH!

AND THE BOUSHEVICS ARE NEAR.

WHAT'S THAT SOLDIER'S NAME AGAIN?

REZA! WE SHOULD GO MEET HIM.

IMMEDIATELY! PERSIA IS FULL OF OIL!



WELL REZA, SH-
NING YOUR BOOTS?



WHEN YOU ARE EMPEROR,
YOUR SECRETARY OF STATE
WILL SHINE THEM FOR YOU.



EMPEROR, ME?

BUT OF COURSE,
MY FRIEND. IT'S
MUCH BETTER THAN
BEING PRESIDENT.



BUT THERE ALREADY
IS AN EMPEROR!
I WANT TO CREATE
A REPUBLIC.



THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS
ARE AGAINST IT AND THEY'RE
RIGHT. A VAST COUNTRY LIKE
YOURS NEEDS A HOLY SYMBOL.

YOU WILL HAVE
EVERYTHING.
POWER, SHE
SHINERS...



AND EVEN MORE.
ANYTHING YOU
WANT IN CASH!



WHAT DO I
HAVE TO DO?



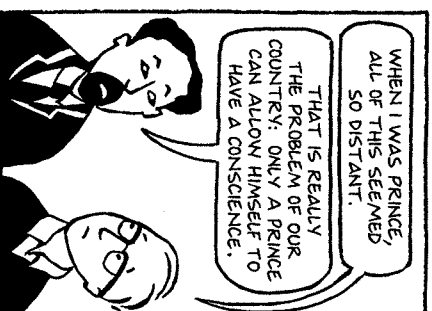
NOTHING!

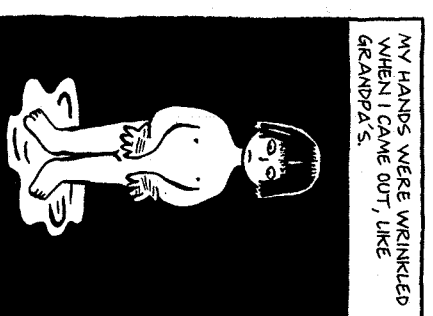
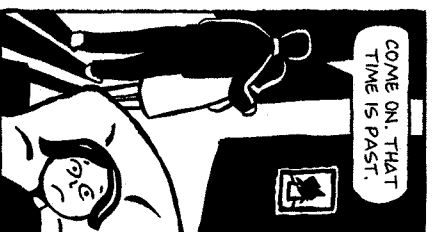
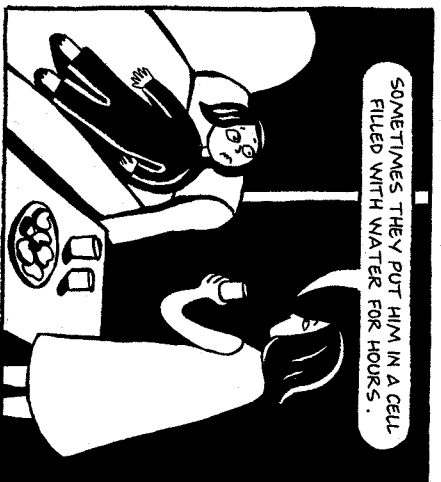
YOU MUST
GIVE US THE
OIL AND WE'LL
TAKE CARE OF
THE REST.



AND THAT'S
HOW HE BE-
CAME KING AND
NATURALLY HIS
SON SUCCEEDED
HIM. GOD HAS
NOTHING
WHATSOEVER
TO DO WITH
THIS STORY.









PERSEPOLIS

ONE DAY AFTER SCHOOL...

HI, MOM.

HI. GO AND LOOK IN THE GUEST ROOM. THERE'S A SURPRISE FOR YOU.

GRANDMA!

ARE YOU LEAVING ALREADY? JUST CHANGING.

MOM TOLD ME THAT GRANDPA HAD BEEN IN PRISON.

HMM, HOW WAS SCHOOL...

TO SURVIVE I TOOK IN SEWING AND WITH LEFTOVER MATERIAL, I MADE CLOTHES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY.

LOOK HOW WELL DRESSED WE ALL ARE IN THIS PHOTO.

WHY ISN'T GRANDPA THERE? WAS HE IN PRISON? YES, THE FATHER OF THE SHAH WAS VERY TOUGH BUT HIS SON WAS TEN TIMES WORSE.

IT MUST HAVE BEEN VERY HARD ON YOU.

OH, MY BACK! CAN I HELP YOU?

NO, I'M OK. AS YOU SAY, IT WAS VERY HARD FOR ME BUT ALSO FOR YOUR MOTHER AND FOR YOUR UNCLES.

THE SHAH'S FATHER TOOK EVERYTHING HE OWNED. I LIVED IN POVERTY.

WHAT? YOU MEAN YOU WERE POOR, TOO?

OH, YES, SO POOR THAT WE HAD ONLY BREAD TO EAT. I WAS SO ASHAMED THAT I PRETENDED TO COOK SO THAT THE NEIGHBORS WOULDN'T NOTICE ANYTHING.

MMMM! MOM IS COOKING SOMETHING GOOD!

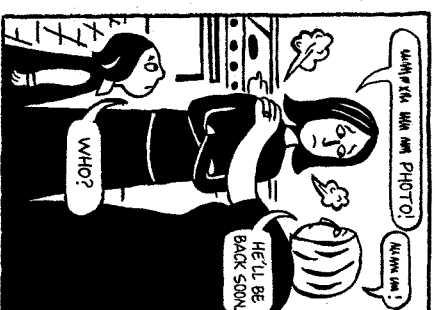
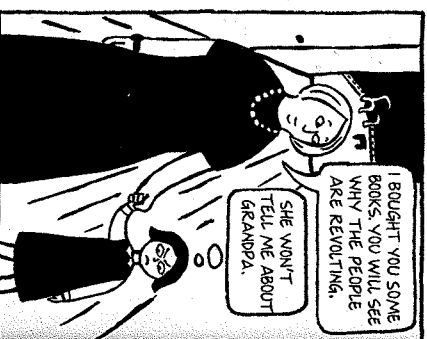
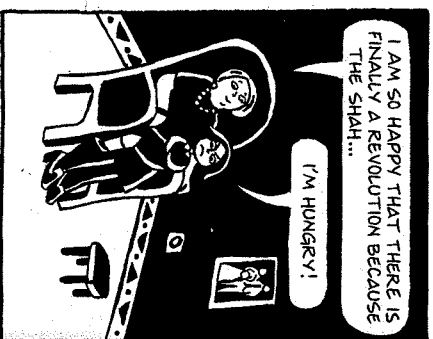
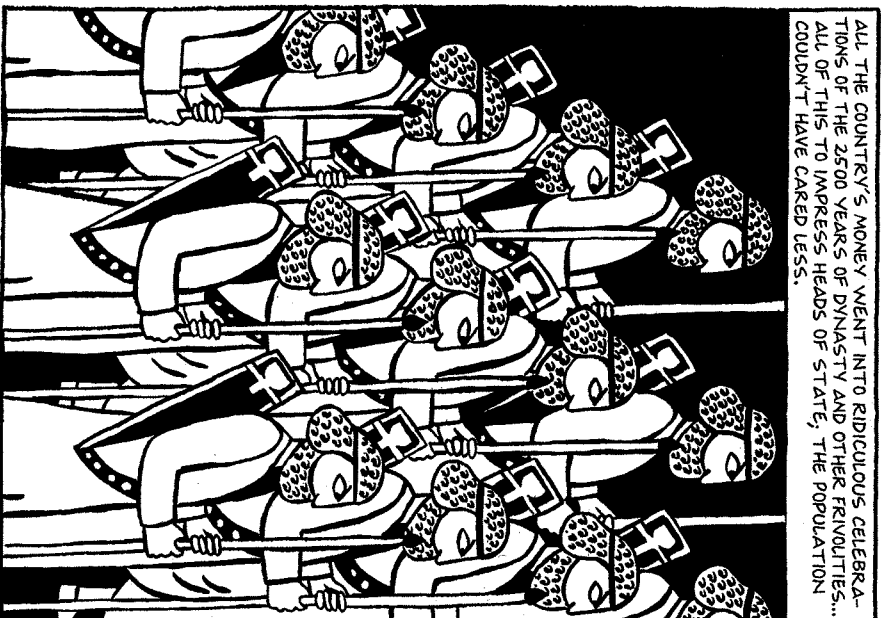
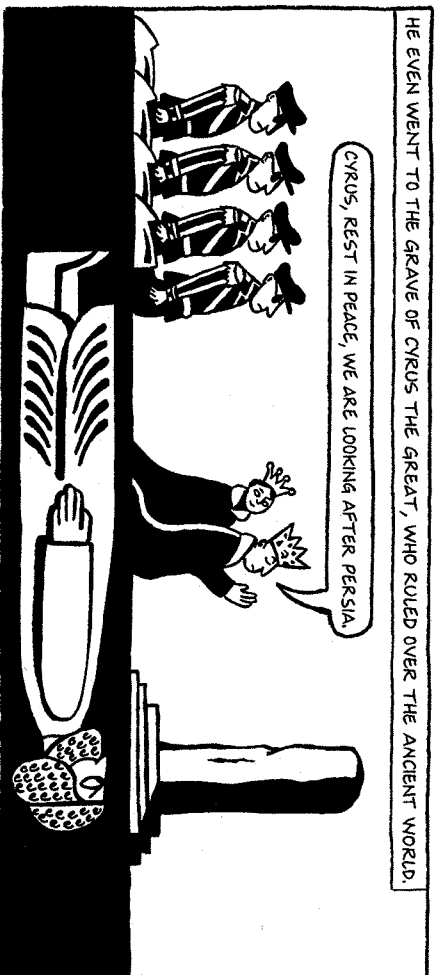
COME ON! SHE IS JUST BOILING WATER AGAIN.

EVEN WORSE!

YOU KNOW, MY CHILD, SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME, DYNASTIES HAVE SUCCEEDED EACH OTHER BUT THE KINGS ALWAYS KEPT THEIR PROMISES. THE SHAH KEPT NONE, I REMEMBER THE DAY HE WAS CROWNED. HE SAID:

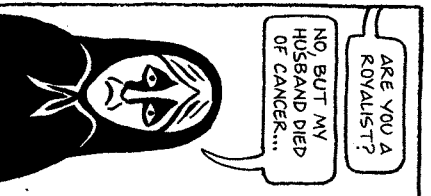
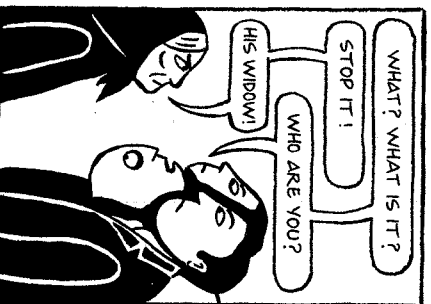
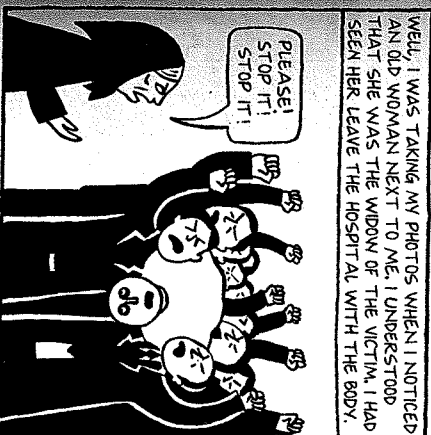
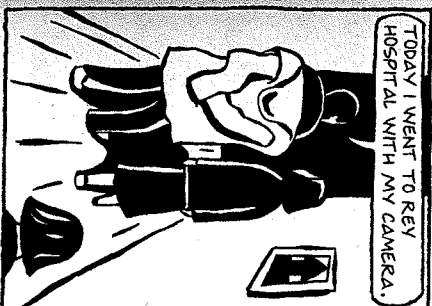
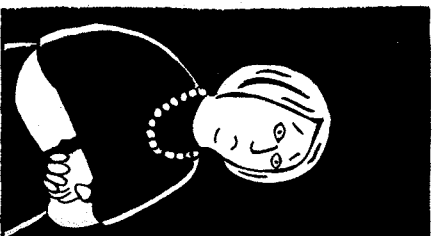
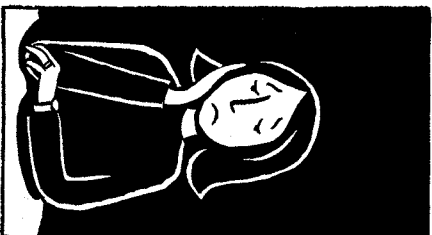
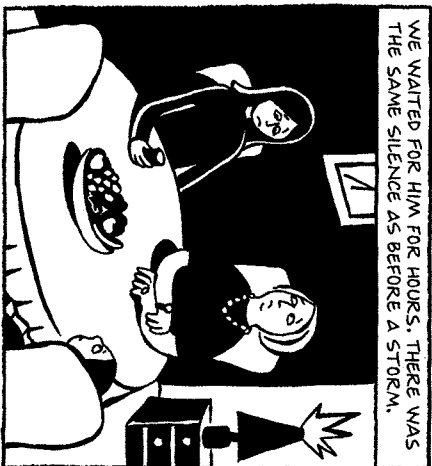
I AM THE LIGHT OF THE ARYANS. I WILL MAKE THIS COUNTRY THE MOST MODERN OF ALL TIME. OUR PEOPLE WILL REGAIN THEIR SPLENDOR.

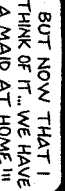
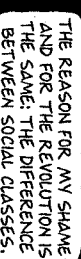
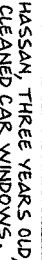
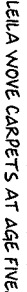
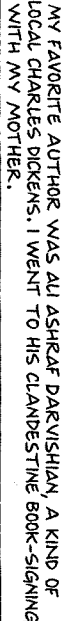
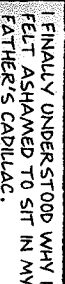
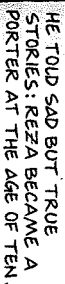
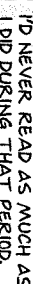
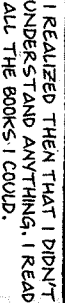
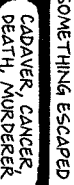
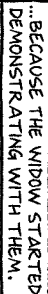
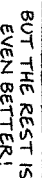
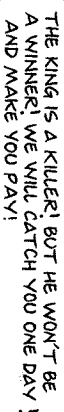


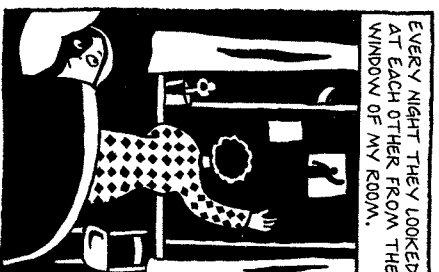
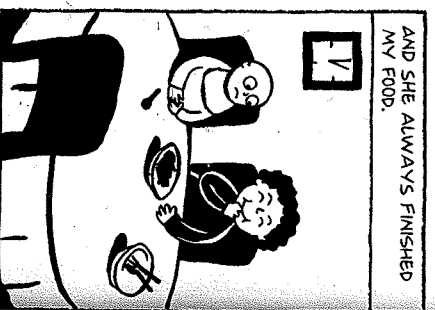
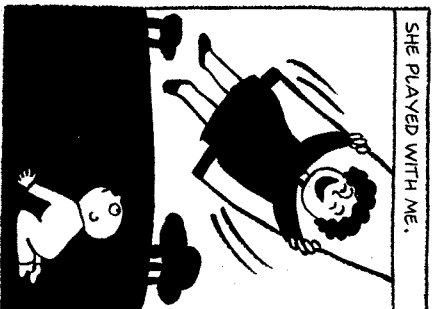
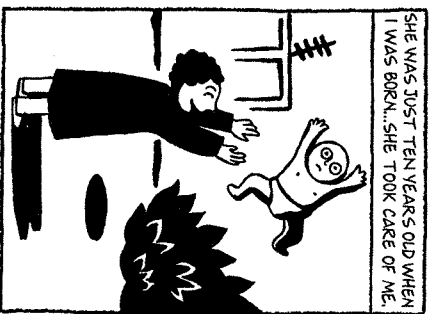
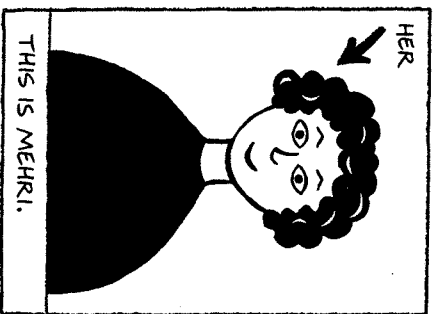


HE TOOK PHOTOS EVERY DAY, IT WAS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN, HE HAD EVEN BEEN ARRESTED ONCE BUT ESCAPED AT THE LAST MINUTE.

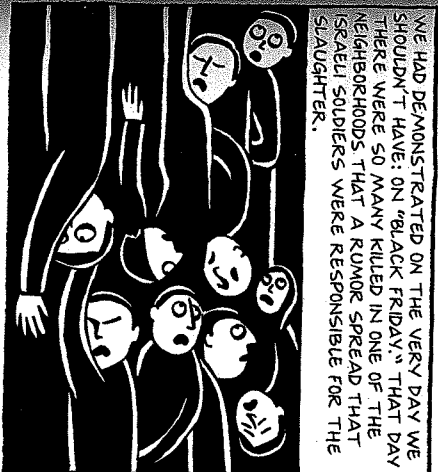
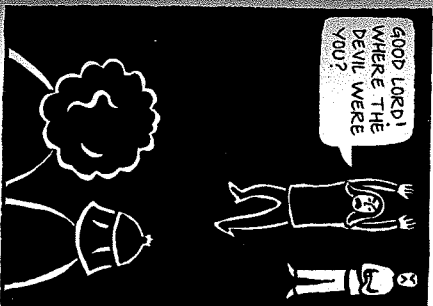
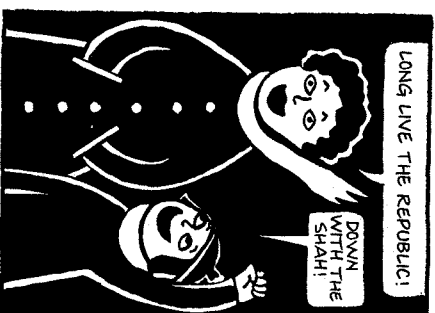




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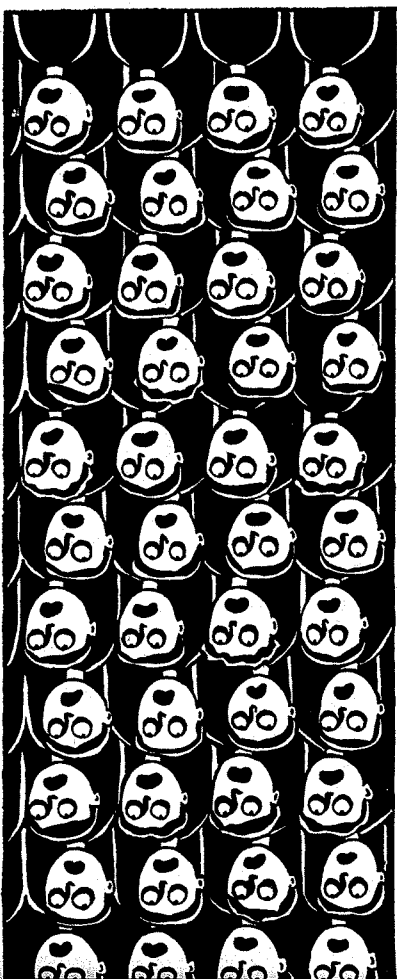




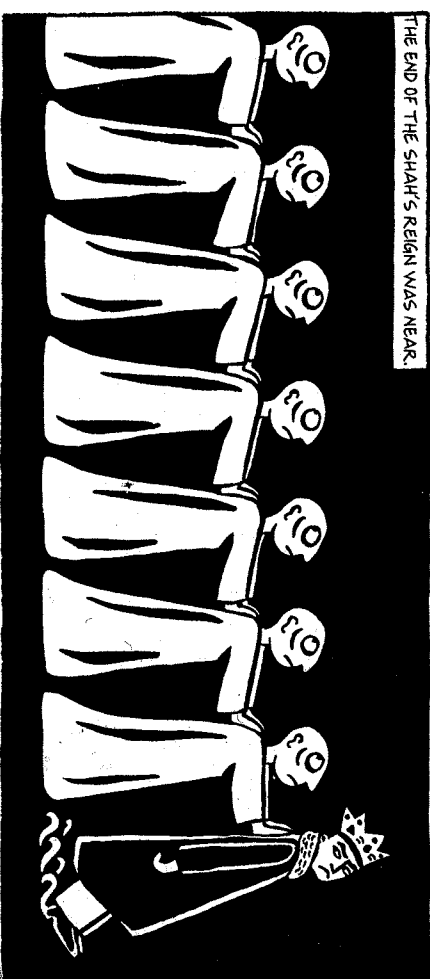


THE PARTY

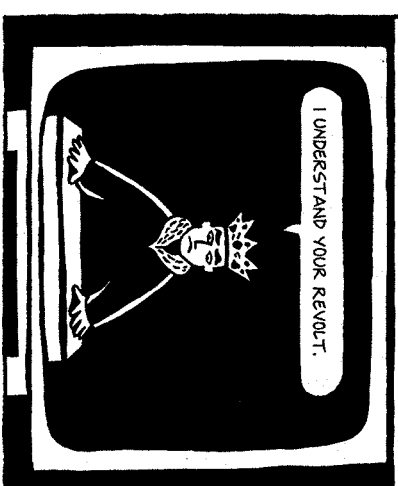
AFTER BLACK FRIDAY, THERE WAS ONE MASSACRE AFTER ANOTHER. MANY PEOPLE WERE KILLED.



THE END OF THE SHAH'S REIGN WAS NEAR.



ONE DAY HE MADE A DECLARATION ON TV.



TOGETHER WE WILL TRY TO MARCH TOWARDS DEMOCRACY.

AFTER ALL THAT HE HAS DONE!

QUIET!



FOR A FEW MONTHS, HE ACTUALLY DID TRY: HE TESTED A DOZEN PRIME MINISTERS.

A FREEMASON? THAT'S NOT SUITABLE.

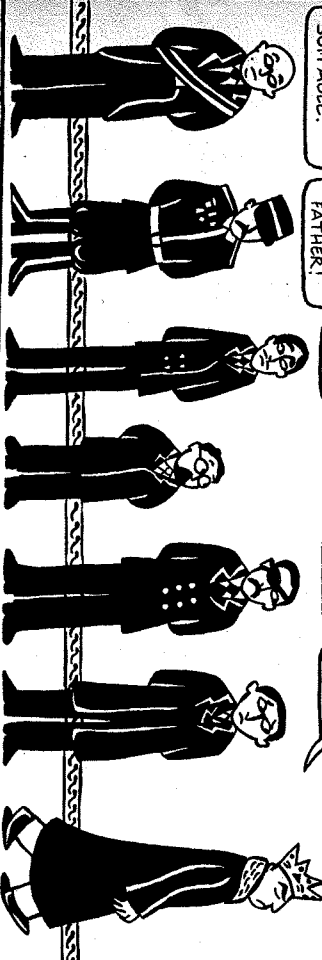
YOU REMIND THEM TOO MUCH OF MY FATHER!

TOO THIN!

TOO SHORT!

ONE-EYED!

...



THE MORE HE TRIED DEMOCRACY, THE MORE HIS STATUES WERE TORN DOWN.



... THEN HIS EFFIGY WAS BURNED.



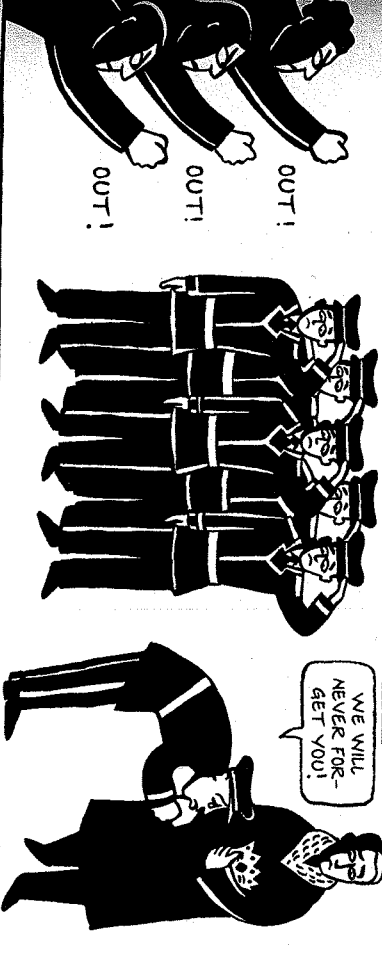
THE PEOPLE WANTED ONLY ONE THING: HIS DEPARTURE! SO FINALLY...

OUT!

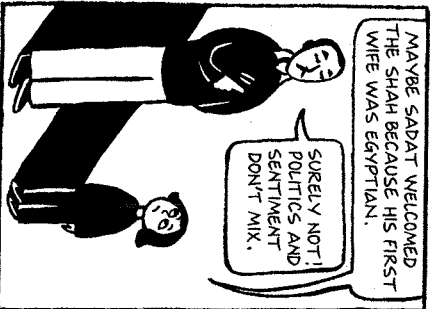
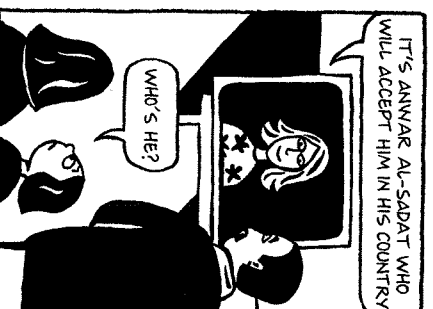
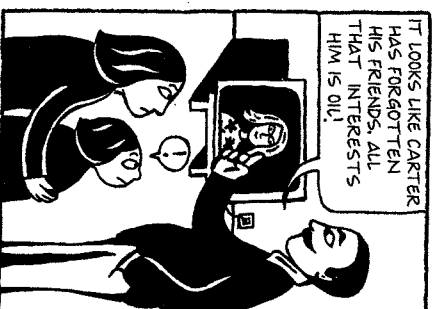
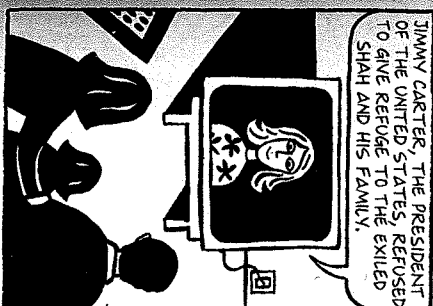
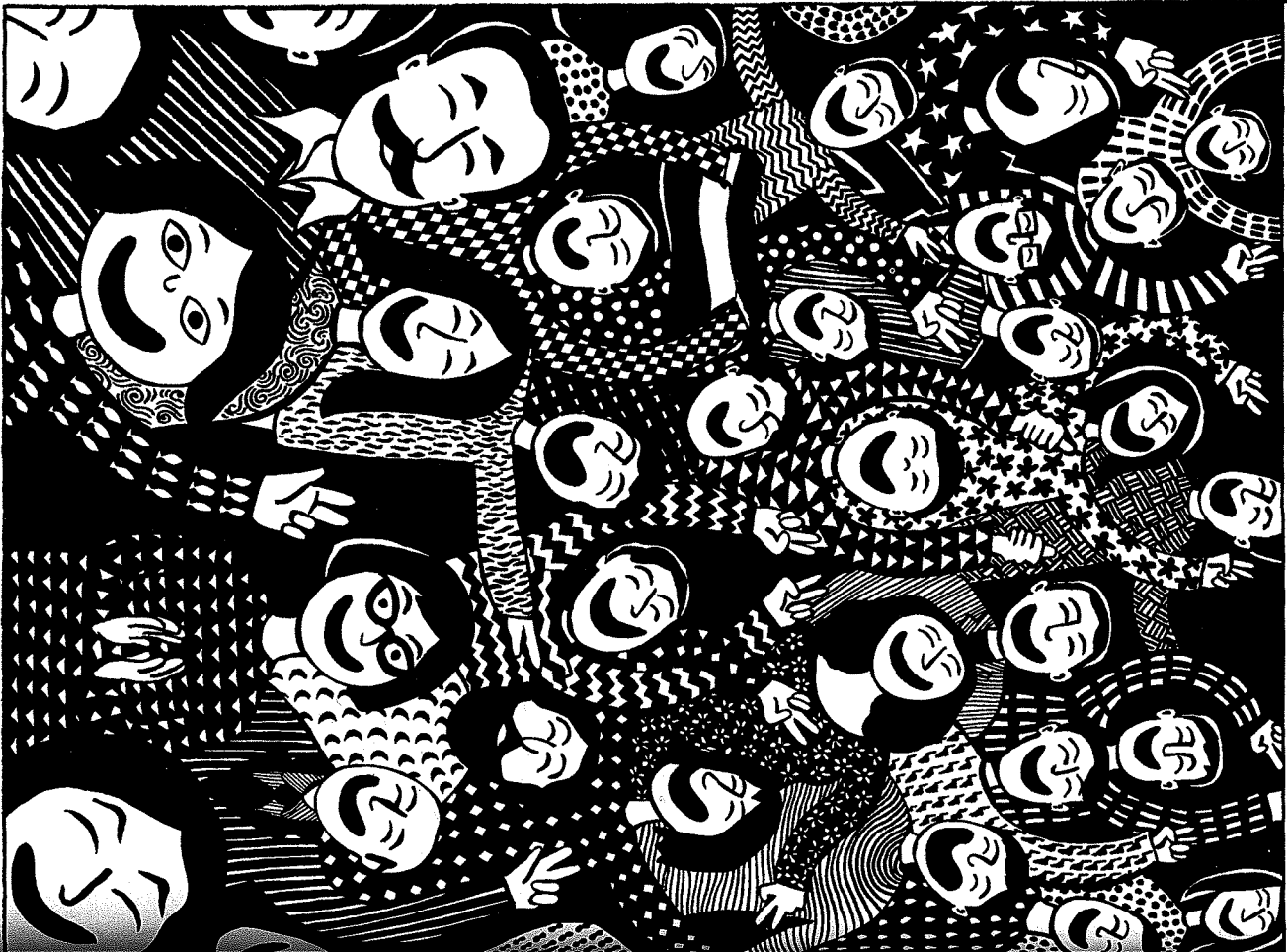
OUT!

OUT!

WE WILL NEVER FORGET YOU!



THE DAY HE LEFT, THE COUNTRY HAD THE BIGGEST CELEBRATION OF ITS ENTIRE HISTORY.



AFTER ALL THIS JOY, A MAJOR MISFORTUNE TOOK PLACE: THE SCHOOLS, CLOSED DURING THIS PERIOD, REOPENED AND...



CHILDREN, TEAR OUT ALL THE PHOTOS OF THE SHAH FROM YOUR BOOKS

BUT SHE WAS THE ONE WHO TOLD US THAT THE SHAH WAS CHOSEN BY GOD!

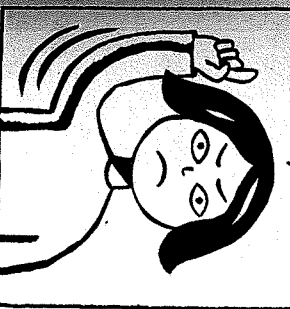


TEACHER! SHE SAYS THAT THE SHAH WAS CHOSEN BY GOD!!

SATRAPI! YOU SHOULDN'T SAY THINGS LIKE THAT. STAND IN THE CORNER!



IN THE NAME OF THE DEAD MILLION, WE'LL TEACH RAMIN A GOOD LESSON. I HAVE AN IDEA...



MY IDEA WAS TO PUT NAILS BETWEEN OUR FINGERS LIKE AMERICAN BRASS KNUCKLES AND TO ATTACK RAMIN.



RAMIN! RAMIN! COME OUT OF HIDING! DON'T BE A WIMP!

THESE STRANGE PHENOMENA WERE EVERYWHERE.



HELLO DEAR NEIGHBORS.

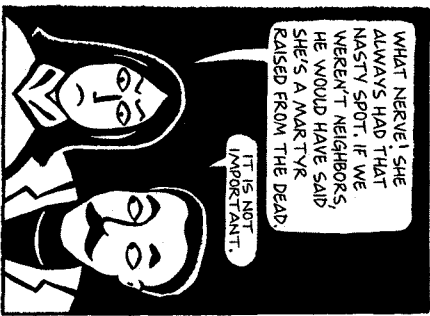
HELLO! ALL THOSE DEMON-STRATIONS WERE REALLY TIRING BUT WE FINALLY SUCCEEDED.

LOOK! A BULLET ALMOST HIT MY WIFE'S CHEEK. LIBERTY IS PRICELESS.



OH!

THE BATTLE WAS OVER FOR OUR PARENTS BUT NOT FOR US.



WHAT NERVE! SHE ALWAYS HAD THAT NASTY SPOT. IF WE WEREN'T NEIGHBORS, HE WOULD HAVE SAID SHE'S A MARY-RAISED FROM THE DEAD.

IT IS NOT IMPORTANT.

MY FATHER SAYS RAMIN'S FATHER WAS IN THE SAVAK, HE KILLED A MILLION PEOPLE.

A MILLION?



* SECRET POLICE OF THE SHAH'S REGIME.

BUT MY MOTHER ARRIVED IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR EUPHORIA...



SO KIDS, WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

MARJI FOUND SOME NAILS!!

WE ARE GOING TO BEAT UP RAMIN! HIS FATHER HAS KILLED A MILLION PEOPLE!

SO THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT TO NAIL RAMIN? GET INTO THE CAR, I HAVE A BETTER SOLUTION.



REALLY? WHAT'S THAT?

WHERE DID YOU FIND THE NAILS?

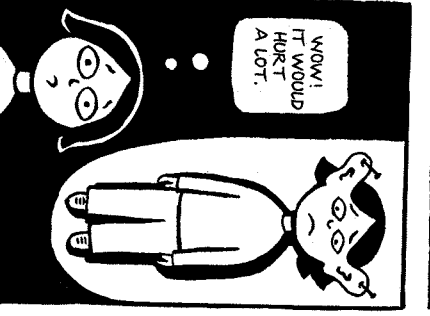
IN DAD'S TOOL BOX!



WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IF I NAILED YOUR EARS TO THE WALL?



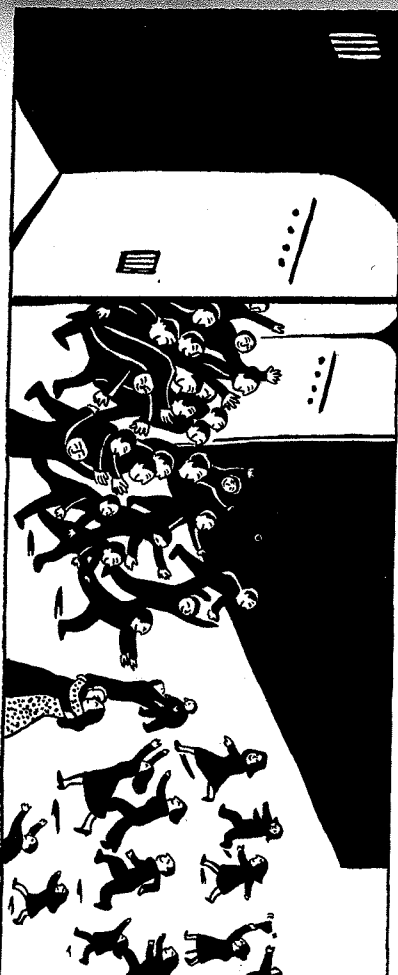
WOW! IT WOULD HURT A LOT.





THE HEROES

THE POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE LIBERATED A FEW DAYS LATER. THERE WERE 3000 OF THEM.



I'LL LET IT GO THIS TIME, BUT DON'T DO IT AGAIN.



BUT MOM, RAMIN'S FATHER KILLED...

I KNOW.



HIS FATHER DID IT, BUT IT'S NOT RAMIN'S FAULT.



ANYWAY IT IS NOT FOR YOU AND ME TO DO JUSTICE. I'D EVEN SAY WE HAVE TO LEARN TO FORGIVE.



YOUR FATHER IS A MURDERER, BUT IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, SO I FORGIVE YOU.



HE IS NOT A MURDERER! HE KILLED COMMUNISTS AND COMMUNISTS ARE EVIL.



MOM, I SPOKE TO RAMIN. HE SAYS HIS FATHER DID THE RIGHT THING IN KILLING COMMUNISTS.

MY GOD! HE REPEATS WHAT THEY TELL HIM. HE WILL UNDERSTAND LATER...

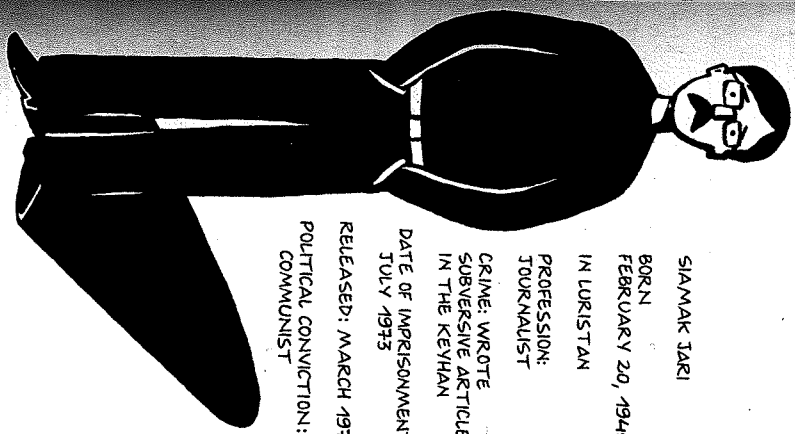


YOU HAVE TO FORGIVE!

YOU HAVE TO FORGIVE!

I HAD THE FEELING OF BEING SOMEONE REALLY REALLY GOOD.

WE KNEW TWO OF THEM.



SIAMAK IARI

BORN
FEBRUARY 20, 1945

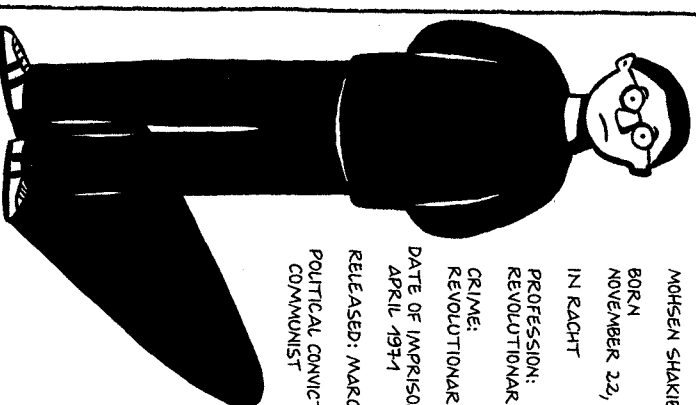
IN LURISTAN

PROFESSION:
JOURNALIST

CRIME: WROTE
SUBVERSIVE ARTICLES
IN THE KEYHAN

DATE OF IMPRISONMENT:
JULY 1973

RELEASED: MARCH 1979
POLITICAL CONVICTION:
COMMUNIST



MOHSEN SHAKIBA

BORN
NOVEMBER 22, 1947

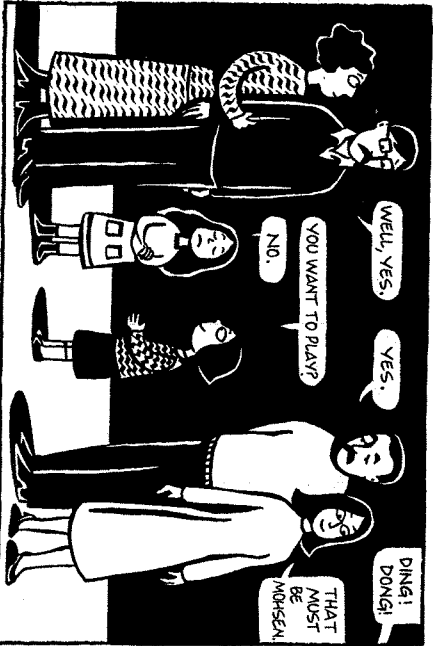
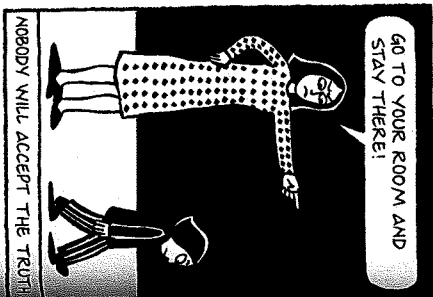
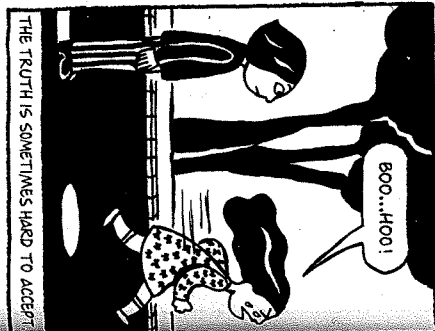
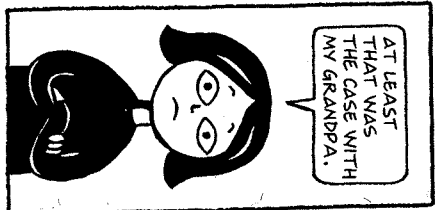
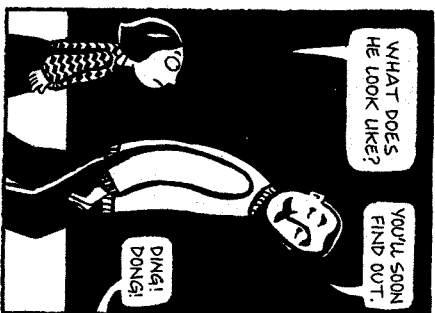
IN RACHT

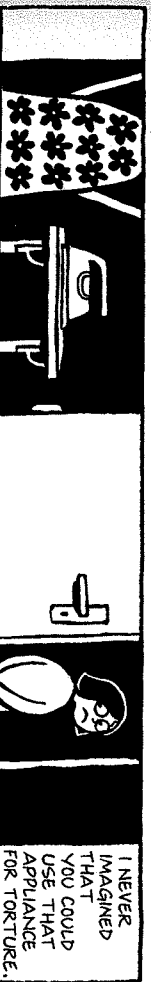
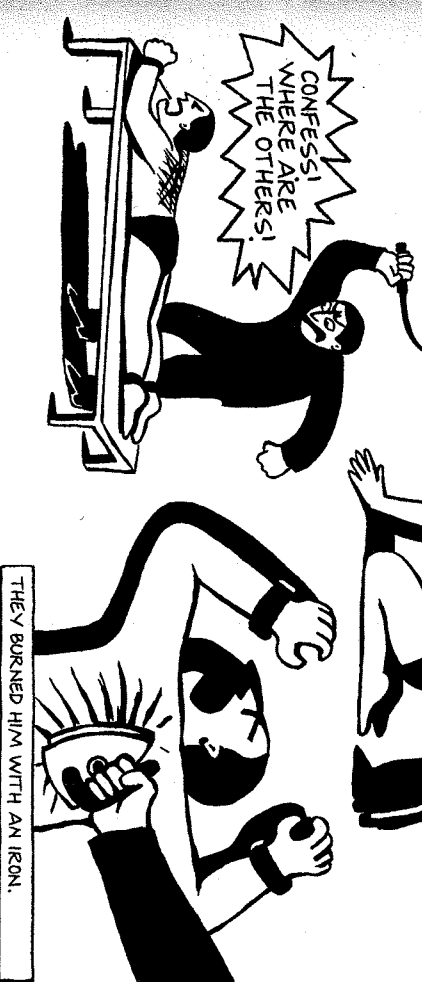
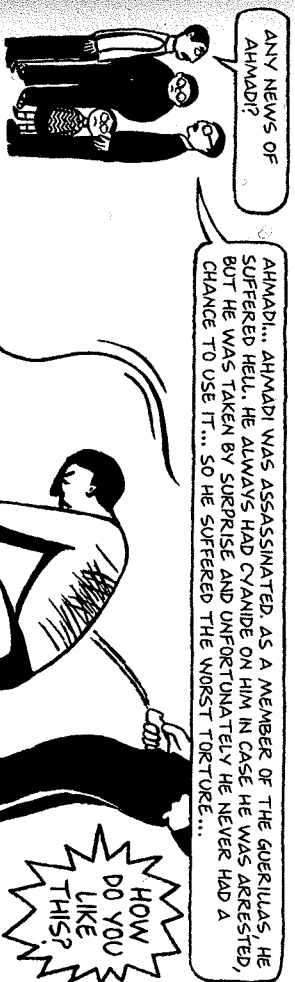
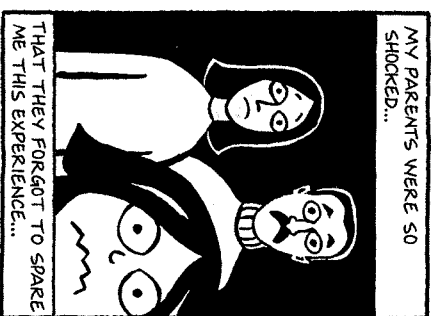
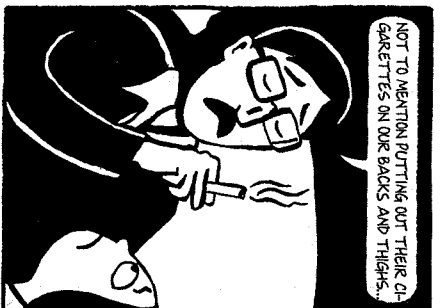
PROFESSION:
REVOLUTIONARY

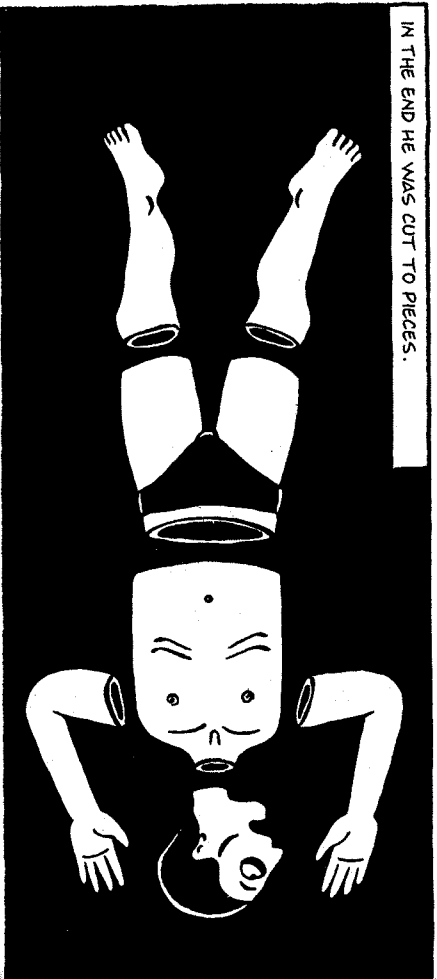
CRIME:
REVOLUTIONARY

DATE OF IMPRISONMENT:
APRIL 1971

RELEASED: MARCH 1979
POLITICAL CONVICTION:
COMMUNIST







IN THE END HE WAS CUT TO PIECES.

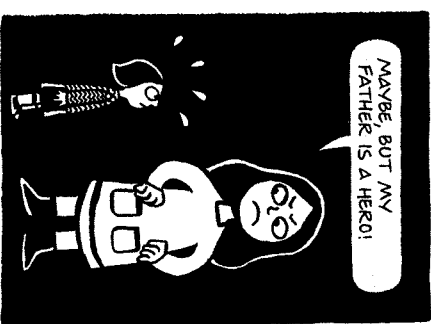


HE WAS IN MY CLASS AT THE UNIVERSITY.

IT'S A GOOD THING THEY DIDN'T KILL YOUR FATHER IN PRISON.



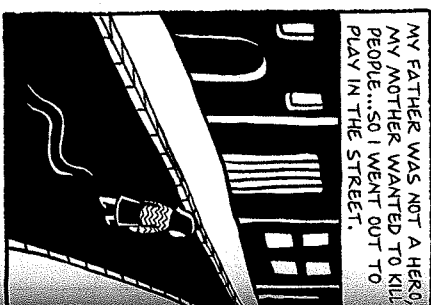
BUT YOU HAVE TO ADMIT I WASN'T COMPLETELY WRONG WHEN I SAID HE WAS NOT ON A TRIP.



MAYBE, BUT MY FATHER IS A HERO!



ALL TORTURERS SHOULD BE MASSACRED!



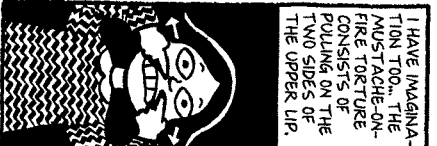
MY FATHER WAS NOT A HERO. MY MOTHER WANTED TO KILL PEOPLE...SO I WENT OUT TO PLAY IN THE STREET.



THE ONE WHO LOSES WILL BE TORTURED

YEAH!

WHAT KIND OF TORTURE?



I HAVE IMAGINATION TOO... THE MUSTACHE-ON-FIRE TORTURE CONSISTS OF PULLING ON THE TWO SIDES OF THE UPPER LIP.



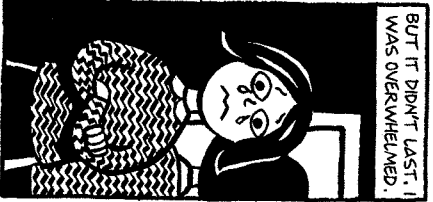
THE TWISTED ARM.



THE MOUTH FILLED WITH GARBAGE.



BACK AT HOME THAT EVENING, I HAD THE DIABOLICAL FEELING OF POWER...



BUT IT DIDN'T LAST. I WAS OVERWHELMED.

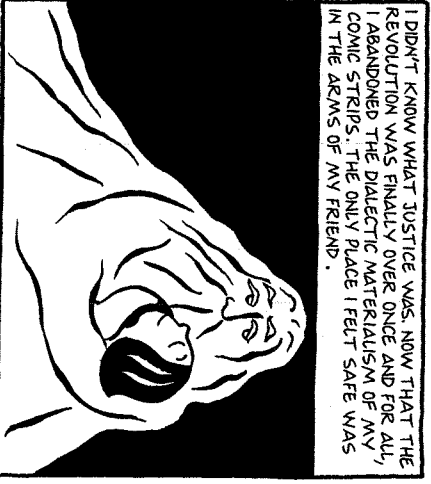


DON'T CRY DARLING, THEY WILL PAY FOR WHAT THEY HAVE DONE.

BUT I THOUGHT ONE SHOULD FORGIVE.



BAD PEOPLE ARE DANGEROUS BUT FORGIVING THEM IS TOO. DON'T WORRY, THERE IS JUSTICE ON EARTH.



I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT JUSTICE WAS. NOW THAT THE REVOLUTION WAS FINALLY OVER ONCE AND FOR ALL, I ABANDONED THE DIALECTIC MATERIALISM OF MY COMIC STRIPS. THE ONLY PLACE I FELT SAFE WAS IN THE ARMS OF MY FRIEND.

MOSCOW

