

Kolja, Son of People's Enemy

Film story

by

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Foreword

It is probably almost impossible to translate a film story which is about the soviet terror of Stalin's regime and of famous members of the Hungarian strata of intelligence. I still venture to try to transpose the atmosphere of the era to Western readers. If they understand or at least get a feeling of those unbearable years, I did something good for humanity.

The book therefore is not a word by word translation, but it is the English version of my "Kolja, a nép ellenségének fia".

I did not believe for a single moment that this story may become a film or performed on a scene in my little homeland. Though two characters of the playwright were victims of two communist systems, the main figure, Kolja lived in the Soviet Union the horrible life of "son of people's enemy" and myself, who got just a small slap from the regime, the book does not intend to nurture hatred between nations and systems, but is trying to help us to forget, to reconcile. And this is an unacceptable attempt in Hungary.

In June 1956 I was returning from Moscow to spend my yearly vacation at home, when a handsome young man opened the door of my double coupe. He politely introduced himself as Kovács, Nikolai Nikolaevich. He turned out to be the son of one of the leaders of the Hungarian Commune of 1919. His father escaped after the defeat of this short-lived regime to Paris, where Kolja was borne. They soon relocated to Moscow to build the father's dream, communism. Kovács – along with 60 other leaders of the Commune – was shot by Stalin's dogs. Kolja's mother escaped, having Austrian passport, but could not take her son with herself. He remained in Moscow. A Russian woman, taking upon herself incredible sacrifice brought him up, defying the terrible stamp that the system baked on Kolja: "son of people's enemy".

After our arrival to his original homeland I was acting as interpreter between mother and child. Thus came into contact with his step-father, Béni Ferenczy, and his circle. The company of the great artist: young poets, Lajos Hatvany and Imre Nagy, who was later martyred, meant delightful, tremendous experience for me. The poets represented opposite political poles, but still peace reigned in their hearts.

This is how my story starts.

Instructions

To the attention of the director:

What is this book about?

It is about the cruelty of the communist dictatorship, and about the mental peace of who had to suffer from it all of his life.

It is about the struggle of mother's love and responsibility with love for a man, about the burning pains and triumphs of love, about the defeat of wealth and freedom to roots and responsibilities.

Accompanying music:

Ballad mood has to be created! I believe the music of the Hungarian band "Vodku v glotku" (Vodka into the throat) and/or songs of Vladimir Vysotsky could well serve the purpose.

The music can be sarcastic, counterpoint of the tragic content, may be limited to the "transitions", or it increases there, perhaps as refrain.

A few words more about the band and the singer:

"Vodku v glotku" is a Hungarian band. They play European Jewish klezmer music mixed with Balkan and ethnic tunes of East and Middle Europe. They are simply amazing! They are definitely one of the best in the field of light entertainment music.

They write about themselves: "The aim of our band is to play the musically very mixed genres of songs, originated from Odessa and Middle-East Europe cosily, enjoyably for everyone, but still in demanding way."

Besides the determining Jewish musical motives and Russian tunes, polyphonic singing emerge Western – swing, Dixieland – and Balkan, Hungarian elements as well, creating excellent atmosphere in pubs and folk theatres equally.

Vysotsky was so popular during my studies in Moscow, that listeners often filled the Luzhniki stadium attending his performance. I quietly call him fantastic revolutionary singer.

But he "burned himself from two ends".

Keep always in mind:

One of my renowned readers pointed out: my story spans over a century, it deals with the Hungarian Commune, with Stalin's terror, with 1956, with the human behaviour, struggles of love and duty, so that a century's history lights in the background.

Actors

Kolja, son of people's enemy

Béni Ferenczy, famous sculptor

Erzsike, mother of Kolja (for him: Mama), wife of Béni Ferenczy

Mammy, Russian stepmother of Kolja (in Russian: Mamochka)

Miklós Kovács, Deputy People's Commissar of the Commune

Imre Nagy, prime minister

Lajos Hatvany, aesthete

János Pilinszky, Catholic poet

László Nagy, "anointed" poet of the regime

Ferenc Juhász, "sorcerer" poet

Author as narrator

Old Russian student

Colonel of KGB

Secretary of the Communist Party

Polish students 1,2,3

Little grandson

and more

First scene

Narrator (here grey-headed, goat's bearded, moustached man):

Grandson was born to me. I watch, I watch as he gallops on all fours, fingers and puts in his mouth everything accessible. Likes the flowers, every bit of him is throbbing curiosity. If he wants to rise to a higher level, he crawls to my legs, draws on his stomach, starts kicking with his legs, rotates his hands: pick me up – says with body language.

I lift him up, kiss him and wonder: the moment is not far, when he is going to ask me to tell him an important story of my life.

Important, extremely important. I ponder what I will be able to say to this rapidly opening brain, when it will be ripe to understand my experiences.

Suddenly I feel as if I was floating, ascend to the clouds, make myself lair on top of a white cirrus cloud(s), I can see half of the world. I caress my little goatee. Lo! There flows the Danube. I can also see the Steel Plant. How is it nicknamed these days? Yes, of course, Danube's Newcity. When I was working there only just was renamed it from Dunapentele to Stalincity, in honour of our Great Father and Teacher.

Then and there started building socialism with these two – not accustomed to physical work – hands of mine. It was expected from us as well – Communist Youth League or what hell, the Party – and you could also earn some money on clothing. As scion of teacher's family I had to work on summer holidays that I could get dressed.

I signed up and went.

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New scene: Dunapentele

Narrator (talk – the grey-headed man; view – high school youngster):

Dunapentele, the small village still existed as one-sided, consisting of hamlets built between the road leading to the town and a loess wall on the hillside. Some inhabited cave dwellings were seen in the loess wall. A few kilometres ahead a new town, Stalincity and a steel plant were being built, the first grandiose investment of the "country of iron and steel". Yes, true: we did not have either iron ore or anthracite coking, only lime. We had to import everything from the great and friendly Soviet Union, via sea, up on the Danube. But the slogan was valid for us as well: we have to catch up with capitalism and it doesn't go without steel industry.

And our Great Teacher advised so, dictated. Rah-rah, hurrah! Go for it all!

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New scene: Stalincity

The usual chaos of socialist great investments: huge mountains of cement sacks, some of them torn apart, everything is covered by dust of cement. Reinforcing iron bundles stacked into piles. Large, deep pit: the fundament of furnace N01 is being constructed. Reinforcing fabric is laid into it by awfully dressed workers. Youngsters are hacking in trenches, ditches laid over the boards. Railway, the rampart of the track is about a meter high. Boys of 14-15 years of age, wearing just jock-straps are carrying through the track bundles of 12 m length, bound off 10-12 thread of reinforcing iron. Three of them put their shoulders under the heavy weight; folded bags protect them from the pressure of the load. Whoever is on top of the track is quaking at the knees under the weight. Parching heat, everybody is dripping with sweat.

Workers, wearing long, ripped trousers, boots, torn, dirty T-shirts and sun protection caps step to the youngsters, digging a trench:

- Where are you from, boys?
- From Budapest.
- On vacation?
- Certainly, why?
- Curb yourselves off!
- What do you mean?
- As I told you: slow down! There is 170% on the board of fame! You return home, we remain here. They are going to raise the norm to your level, and we'll break our back. For damn little money.
- But we earn with this the money we need for clothing.
- Earn it somewhere else. We have warned you. If you do not go down to 100, we'll crush your kidneys. They slowly turn away and toddle off without even looking back. One of them has protective shoulder pad.

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Evening, burnt red and black dog-tired youths loll about in military tents or sit in front of them. Some eat the bread with green bacon they got in the kitchen, others share huge watermelons. They were dirty cheap.

One skinny chap (the narrator) paws his chafed to red, swollen shoulder:

- If we get cement tomorrow, it will bind with the bloody skin again.
- Change your shoulders, let the cement harden on one of them, the hardened surface will wear out in a more easy way. Then, until the other will harden, this one will wear away.

Someone roars with laughter:

- Fuck it! I will better ask for reinforcing iron again, the whole may be inflated.
- Ask if you wish, you will be bowled over anyway. They have plans and schedule, but you'll get what just arrives. They also do not know, send whatever have.
- Where did we get, boys?
- If they deduct lodging and board, we surely will still have enough for a suit.

Wind blows, carries the sand.

Some walk towards the tent of showers, mug, toothbrush, soap in their hands, towels slung over their shoulders. Some take the direction to the tents of girls. One of them, a tall, big-boned, having high, protruding forehead is met by a well-built girl with pretty face. She is running to him, throws herself into his arms. They have a long hug, no end to kisses.

The setting sun drops its red plate behind the residential buildings, already built.

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The grandson looks up at the clouds and shouts:

- But Grandpa, haven't seen you had been deceived? Yours was just the job, others received the glory.
- (Music: caricature of triumphal hymn!)

*

New scene: On the border

Narrator (boy, fresh from secondary school):

For two more years I believed in socialism without doubts. I built it wherever I could, wherever it was necessary. This certainly wasn't enough to continue my studies, even in the free educational system. I had to live as well, needed resources for that. I applied for a scholarship and left for the Soviet Union to attend a university there.

Already on the way I had an astounding experience.

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Border station, on the Soviet side Chop. The narrator gets out of the comfortable sleeping car to take a walk. Poorly dressed (not shabby), unshaven man approaches him, extending his palm, begging in Russian: "Bread, give me a piece of bread."

My good god! He is asking for something to eat! In the glorious Soviet Union. I almost freeze from the shock and quickly jump back in the car. Silently watch the railwayman wearing quite pokey uniform, which controls the wheels of cars with a long-handled mallet. He says, bending to his colleague, in Hungarian: "They also think manna is falling here from the sky."

(Music: sad song in melancholic tone. More musing than deeply painful.)

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New scene: University in Moscow

Narrator (first-year student):

Hardly warmed up at the university, the memorable Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union took place, where Khrushchev had delivered his famous speech unveiling our Great Father and Teacher.

My university was a low, shabby, two-story building; it may still look the same. The event took place in the main lecture hall, on a Komsomol-meeting. The hall had thick walls, vertical-shaped windows, deep recesses. Heavy rayon curtains. The usual scenery: on the podium the table covered with red baize, a pitcher with water and glasses. A bust of Stalin is on a separate podium. He is shown wearing generalissimo uniform with a lot of braiding, tinkling medals. On the wall behind the podium large portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin are hanging. Next to the table stands the speaker's podium, microphone. Students, board members of the university's Komsomol organization alternately, sipping water read out three hours from the 12-hour speech of Khrushchev, delivered on the congress about Stalin's terror. (It would be important to search for these three hours; it should not be complicated to find in Russian archives. It would be nice to quote exact passages of those sentences.)

Some details of the speech:

– The killer of the secretary of party of our hero city, Leningrad was transported to the court by truck. There were besides the killer a six-member guard and the guard commander sitting in the truck. It crashed into the wall of a building. The killer died on the spot. Neither the guard, nor the driver was injured.

– The party secretary of another town wrote a letter to Stalin with his own blood. He warned that the enemy had overwhelmed the prison. He is being tortured, though is absolutely innocent, and had been fighting for the victory of communism with every thought of his. The next day he was executed without trial, verdict. And then a city was named after him. Because the people loved him. Let them love him. Thus, frozen in stone.

– X. Y. was tortured in such a cruel way, that both his hands and legs were broken up, and when the fractures kit, they broke the bones again.

– Stalin himself made out countless lists of people to be executed.

At the end of the meeting the narrator – as a student – huddles up in one of the corridor's window-recesses. He is stunned for a while, staring in front of him, and then takes notice of the way the students leave the auditorium. They are jogging along as the column of defeated army's prisoners: bent backs, chins dropped on chests, blank gazes, rarely raised faces. Most of them climbed up roofs in a hurry to say goodbye to the Father of their Motherland at the giant Red Square.

(If we can find archive of the funeral, recordings, made from above, they may be floated in... The narrator may comment on that this was the experience of students leaving the meeting.)

(Music: Vysotsky, or in his style, screaming pain.)

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New scene: the train

The day of this scene is gloomy, rain is dripping, the humidity is high. Intensifying wind sweeps up the mixed garbage to the curb. Unusual in June in Moscow, at this time of the year the dry heat wave used to tarnish the town leaping over spring. A gypsy-like brown, lean young man drags along a large suitcase in the "Vostochnyj vokzal" (East Station). He is going home for summer holidays, after having completed six semesters. Stops for a second, switches hands, and beats about the ill-dressed crowd. Grey monotony, the crowd is dominated by old women wearing headscarves. The station is of West European size, huge glass roof, asphalt walking surfaces. Long trains are waiting to depart, heavy built green sleeping cars.

The sleeper has almost upscale amenities, wood panelling everywhere, colourful carpet in the hallway, brass handrails, and cushioned seats in the double coupe, in which the young man settles himself.

Hidden speakers broadcast folk music and marches.

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Same scene, in other words

Moscow, East Station. The grand hall is illuminated only by filtered light, the usual early heat wave in late June failed to hit the town, the weather is tending to rain, when a young man, apparently student toils hurriedly to the Budapest-Belgrade express, carrying a heavy suitcase. Stuffiness. The station is not dirty, but it is also not shining, black-grey, creased people, rush for their train, colliding with the oncoming flood of humans.

The clean, green trains stand out of the greyness. The sleeping car's door is open, every inch of it radiates heavy force. The ticket-inspectress in black cap with red striped sun-visor in herself is major power, although blond curls flip from below the cap. Examines at length the ticket and puts in her satchel after careful classification and then gives way: "Please, the third coupe." The coupe is almost elegant, it's equipped with mat, shiny handrails, a sink in the corner of the cabin, hidden by curtain. The cleanliness is pleasing.

The suitcase is lifted to the shelf by a work-hardened hurl.

A tall, lanky man fills the door-opening. I am your sputnik – continues with an almost noble gesture –, let me introduce myself: Kovács, Nikolai Nikolaevich.

Soft music is radiated by the radio, something folk-type. He switches off the "noise box" with a decisive flick. The train departs and does not crackle, the modern rail connection provides smooth ride. Industrial sites, tin roofs characterize the outer districts of the city.

Though the two men's fate has not intertwined, the narrator was several times surprised on their meetings: life has brought him together with a man of incredible fate.

– Narrator: Where is your name from, are you Hungarian?

– Kolja: Yes, my parents were born in Hungary. My father was Deputy People's Commissar during the Commune. After the defeat of it had to escape.

They clarify that he does not speak Hungarian. And he talks slowly and thoughtfully, sometimes flushed with anger.

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New scene, dissolving picture: Budapest

Sorting papers without haste, the Deputy People's Commissar, is packing in a briefcase. A car is waiting for him outside; his wife is sitting in the back seat. Nice features, buxom (not fat) charms, short-cropped black hair. Her eyes are scared, anxious. She gets out, goes to the commissariat's building with forced quietness, but with rapid strides, the armed guard, wearing peaked cap marked with red asterisk still salutes her, knows her.

– Comrade, what is the latest news? – Asks her – Is it true that they are not far?

The woman hearing the question loses her composure, just with a nod indicates yes and hastens her steps then runs up the stairs. She tears up the distinguished door of the Deputy People's Commissar, the lady secretary notes with frightened eyes the fear, now radiating of the woman's face. Opens her mouth, but is just gaping, takes over the fright with faint cry.

The Deputy People's Commissar looks up and continues the packing. However, the wife grabs his arm.

The man looks up at her questioningly.

– Stop it; they reached the edge of the city. We cannot get out.

– These are people's lives! – pointing to the clusters of paper packed in cartons. We mustn't leave a single list, they kill, torture everyone.

– How can you be sure that they will do the same as you did in Transdanubia?

– They are already doing. As soon as they catch a leader, they hack him to pieces, or hang him on the spot. I have to destroy every document, wait a little bit, we shall throw them into the furnace of the slaughterhouse; I shall be ready within minutes. His movements become speedy, they became hot haste.

– Tell the driver to come up! – asks the Commissar his lady secretary.

Lugging, rush, they stop somewhere, the building is not guarded any more, but someone is behind the oven. He watches with piercing eyes as the driver and the Commissar cast the papers in the furnace. He does not help, slowly withdraws further back and vanishes in the shadow cast by the furnace.

(Music: tragedy, flight...)

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New scene: the coupe

And after a short stay in Vienna and thereafter in Berlin they settled in Paris. I was born there. I must have been three-four years old, when my parents returned home. They were hiding, using pseudonyms in a kind of artists' colony.

(In the cab-scenes, of course, the picture is changing, the two actors may have breakfast – the tea cap in metal support, cakes – the ticket-inspectress may pop her head in at the door and ask something. Lunch could be a scene or two in the wagon-restaurant: vodka, thick soup, roast lamb, beer. Wooded landscape may slip occasionally in the window of the coupe and, surprisingly, the municipalities are not poorer, but richer, as the train moves away from Moscow.)

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New scene, dissolving picture: salon of the Ferenczy family

We see the salon of the Ferenczy family's home in Nagybánya (now Baia Mare). It may be reconstructed from photos, paintings: the home of a wealthy dynasty of artists, expensive furniture, comfy rugs, pictures, statues and greenery.

Béni Ferenczy, Miklós Kovács with his wife and Imre Nagy sit in easy chairs. They talk. Niki Kovács – at the age of four – plays, occasionally goes to his father and asks something. He lifts the child, rocks him on his knees, pats Niki's head, but then releases, he disturbs the conversation.

Discussion develops about the defeat of the Commune, the right system that replaced it and possible solutions of escape. The issue to be solved: should the Commissar surrender or flee to the Soviet Union?

– Béni Ferenczy: Yes, I agree, there was no time to unfold and immediately came the attack. But we should not have to include terror into the means of implementation of social plans. You also obeyed the pressure and gave your blessing to use harsh methods. And critical tones cannot be suppressed without paying attention to them. A good housewife does not bind the lid on the soup pot, but leaves a gap to let the excess steam go. If you do not release, it swells to a huge force to and results in an explosion.

– Kovács: Afterward it is easy to see everything clearly. We didn't have experience; we were overly caught by the possibility to implement principles, good principles. We thought wide gates were opened, but we could walk in and out of the strong fortress through a small side door. We must have been blind, but let those cast stones on us, who will not speed up the pace when dreams are becoming a reality. And then there was the overwhelming burden of war on our shoulders. We hurried too; felt that the great powers and neighbouring countries got scared. Well, not so much from us as from the developments in Russia, but we meant the possibility of being just the first link of a chain, it was clear, if they start attack the system, they'll try to cut us from the maternal body.

– Erzsike, searching for the eyes of the artist and imperceptibly smiling: Come now, even then you shouldn't have noticed the cesspool and climb into it up to the waist. You lost your right mind. You wanted to achieve extremist ideas with even more extreme means. To kill in the name of Lenin? It was crazy. And for what was good to prosecute priests and believers, it just enraged the simple people for whom you wanted to do well. My good God!

– Kovács: You are partly right, partly not. It was not the internal resistance that crushed us, the international forces of reaction would anyway strangle the revolution. The capitalist rulers of the world always and everywhere deploy all their forces to protect their oppressing power and looted wealth, wherever they are threatened by danger. They glue nice catchword to their cause: private property is sacred and inviolable. No matter what methods they were using and how many people they had maimed to get it.

– Erzsike: Saint Rebellion, but now we are in a pit. They are searching for you! OK, we came back, could not stand the pressure of capital. – Another half-suppressed smile. – But we won't have peace for a single moment. You have to turn yourself in. Who knows, you might get away with a year or two suspended!

– Imre Nagy: Oh no, this is a serious mistake, a dream. Whoever (turning to Kovács) is caught on your level, may be sure to be jailed for years. And think of it: there are red-handed hangmen among the executioners of power. You may be tortured. How many names do you know, relating to whom all the documents could be destroyed? They will try to beat all those out of you. No, forget the idea of self-surrender! You should find a different path.

– Kovács: What are you thinking of?

– Imre Nagy: It should not be difficult to reach the Soviets northwards. They welcome every red revolutionist; provide work, bread and peace of mind. And for none of us cannot be uninteresting to take part in the experience of generating the progress that has failed here. To build our dreams, I definitely will choose this path. I shall definitely return. Join me. Here you could obtain relative peace

only at a price of great loss of blood. And here is the child too. What will happen to him if you would be jailed? Raising a boy without father is almost impossible. Come on, let's leave for Moscow.

– Ferenczy (looking at Kovács's wife, Erzsike): I do not think it would be sensible step. You could not endure even the West why do you think it will be easier in the East? OK, world-redeeming ideas, I also watch the news with enthusiasm. But strange world, struggling with awful hardships. You may get inured to the situation, but with a woman and a child? In no case, you have to think over a thousand times.

(Music: slow, love song, – Russian or Gypsy)

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New scene: the coupe

– Kolja: We settled in Moscow. My father got a job there, in the office of Comintern. I was eight years old when he was executed, along with many other Hungarian communists, who had fled after the defeat of the Commune. He completely “freaks out” and is swearing using gaudy language, scolds our Great Father. Can you imagine? Haven't you heard yet about his infamy? Millions were exterminated in concentration camps, prisons. It did not matter if the chosen victim was foreign national, especially if he or she was participant of a failed revolution. Dad was also executed. To this day I do not know exactly when, where? Disappeared suddenly, without any warning, Mummy cried for days, was running around, looking for him. Then they threatened her: it's about time you stopped; your life-partner is the people's enemy. She should better not to dwell on anything. Her turn may also come, and her cub's as well! This curse villain, the beloved idol!

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New scene, dissolving picture, court

Confined spaces, shabby furniture, no podium, three officers sit behind a long table; the table is covered with red cloth. Kovács, treated as people's enemy is sitting behind a small rickety table, there are no signs of beating on him, but he is terribly haggard, pale, dark circles are around his eyes that are red and swim in tears. He is not wearied by the prison, but by the preceding of his arrest, the news, the awareness of persecution. He was arrested two days ago, at night and was taken here, in the main prison of “political enemies”. His prison garb is worn. He is handcuffed (but this can be omitted). Beside him stands a prison guard who looks to nowhere during the entire process. The “trial” takes just a few minutes.

(Here questions and answers follow. It would be excellent to get a genuine protocol of the trial, or any of such “trials”).

– Judge: What kind of relationship did you have with the Social Democrats in Berlin?

– Kovács: I met some people, but didn't maintain close contacts. We made some attempts, first of all, to analyse the causes of the setback in the communist movement.

– Judge: Are you aware that the Social Democrats are traitors to the working class movement?

Then the sentence is delivered: Because of the betrayal of the first non-Soviet communist revolution, the Hungarian Commune and machinations against our system the penalty is death by shooting.

(Music: wailing of Vysotsky or similar deep pain)

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New scene: the coupe again

– Kolja: My Mama could escape, because she had foreign passport, but couldn't take me with her, since I was registered in my Dad's passport. She left me with a Russian woman. As you can imagine, what a sacrifice this step was on her part in the given situation! She raised me so that I could become a

man. I was soon forced away from the school, the teachers always called me “the son of people’s enemy”, and the pupils used to teas and mock me. Mammy (so he calls his stepmother) took me out of school and did teach me profession. I used to work as operator of machine tools; I always go to choose the toughest jobs, so as to remain in the plant. I’ve even undertook to go – dressed in protective clothing, made of asbestos – into a furnace, shut off due to mechanical failure, but not completely cooled yet. Even so I wouldn’t be able to endure if I were not sprinkled with intense jets of water.

*

New scene, dissolving picture (if it is possible to arrange it at all): Kolja in the furnace

(The atmosphere of the bell scene in Tarkovsky’s film “Rublev” is to be created.)

The “son of people’s enemy” is being dressed, asbestos clothing, boots, divers’ helmet, tubing. A few test steps, a group of excited people surrounds him, the movements are almost as in slow motion films.

(I don’t know how he could get into the oven; obviously it was necessary to widen the feed opening of the furnace!)

The furnace is no longer glowing, but you can see the grey “ashen heat” on the dark walls.

Before his going inside, they begin watering him, checking how much jet pressure he can withstand. From that point on they keep watering him. He enters the furnace, goes with small steps to the opposite wall, wrenches off something and brings it out. He quits, and is met by quiet greetings, radiant smile appears on every face. Doesn’t sit down, does not feel dizzy. He is stripped off the helmet, the heat virtually explodes from the dress, and sweat is running from his head. Warm liquid is poured into him.

He would be hero of the homeland if he were not “son of people’s enemy”.

*

New scene: the coupe

The train is approaching the border. The passengers are getting ready for the controls. The long wait, the changing process from Russian to normal pair of rails should be overcome by a few words.

At the bridge over the border river Kolja becomes restless, stares out of the window. When the train crosses the bridge and the traverses cannot be seen, he turns back, grows white as a wall, points somewhere out of the window: “cow”. Utters with clean, beautiful accent: “I do not speak your language!” – says stuttering and numbly looks out, paralysed. “House” – says almost crying and apologises again: “I forgot everything, how can I...?” Then again, “tree”. Dismay shows on his face and shakes his head.

He himself does not believe that words, learned in childhood showed up from the depths of memory

(Music: how can one express the return to fatherland?)

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New scene: the coupe

– Kolja (stares in front of himself for a long time, shakes his head again and again): I haven’t seen my Mama for twenty years, and very rarely received any news about her. There were occasionally members of the Hungarian Party who dared to venture mediation. She married an artist.

– Narrator: What kind of artist?

– Kolja: I do not know, I do not know, the messages didn’t really mention it.

– Narrator: Still, is he painter, or sculptor? And yet, you don’t even know his name?

– Kolja: No, I don’t... Probably sculptor... Yes, sure, sculptor... Beni... Beni.

– Narrator: Oh, my good God, Kolja! Are you talking about the country’s most famous living sculptor? Are you sure this is his name?

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And “the train” part of the film ends with this.

* * *

New scene: meeting the Ferenczys

Narrator: For the “son of people’s enemy”, brought up in the Soviet empire, Budapest was the Promised Land. He has asked me already in the train to help communicate with his mother whom he hadn’t seen for twenty years, and with the artist. He gave me the address, next day I jogged to the “bourgeois” house that remained in quite good condition, next to the Margaret Bridge. Stepping out of the lift I was surprised again, that in comparison with the shabby, bearing war wounds houses of the depraved city how well maintained the corridor leading to the artist’s apartment was (a few steps from the lift, good tiles, clean walls and intact light fixtures).

Knowing to what a great artist I ring in, my heartbeat certainly accelerated.

Béni Ferenczy’s apartment was just wonderful for me: antique furniture, comfy carpets, large armchairs, paintings, sculptures, lots of flowers.

Erzsike, showing her fifties, but brisk and beautiful woman opens the door in a hurry, moments later Kolja also turns up, who is hungry to hear understandable words, and then the lean, tall, very intelligent-looking artist appears behind them. Kolja himself addresses a few words to Erzsike: Mama, I travelled with him on the train (Erzsike understands some Russian; they accompany the words with hand-and-foot scrambling and are able to communicate this way.) He is trying with feverish enthusiasm to introduce the narrator to the artist, who acknowledges the effort with a pleasant smile.

– Ferenczy: Do come in, make yourself comfortable.

The narrator sinks into a high-backed leather easy-chair and keeps silent, bewildered.

– Erzsike: Like some coffee? Refreshments?

– Narrator (only mumbles): Yes, thank you!

– Ferenczy: I understand you are studying in Moscow?

– Narrator: Yes, in Moscow.

– Ferenczy: And what is your faculty?

– Narrator: aviation engineering.

– Ferenczy (with raised eyebrows and tilted head expresses his appreciation): And when do you complete your studies?

– Narrator: Three years are behind me, I shall graduate in two years time.

– Erzsike (appears with the coffee and cooler and immediately changes the subject): And tell us, how do you bear the climate? We could not bear it at all, too extreme! Those awful deep frosts!

– Narrator: Quite well, although I almost froze my nose. I went out to see a home movie at minus forty; I was warned on my way back that it became white. They wanted to rub it with snow. Fortunately, I was maybe a hundred meters from a metro station. I ran in and it warmed up. The next day, two vertical incisions opened on the tip of it, but they healed quickly and without a trace.

– Erzsike: Thanks God! And what is the situation with provisions? Can you get enough food?

– Narrator: It’s varying. In the college I can always get something to eat, if nothing else, pickled fish. Though the food is lousy in the restaurant of the students’ hostel, but there’s always something. The

buffet is mostly empty, in good days they have canned food. In shops too, it's a wonder when they sell dairy and meat products. And you have to queue even for nothing.

In the meantime Kolja is walking restlessly up and down. He doesn't understand the conversation, can only guess what it's about.

– Kolja (joins the conversation): Such a rich country, they don't even know what they have. Oil, gas, coal, excellent soil. How come that we live in wretched poverty? We spend everything on arms, eviscerate and kill people! We work like animals and for what?

– Ferenczy: Despite the fact, that dictatorships usually bring development, prosperity. I do not even know whether there ever existed except the Soviet Union great power, in which the dictatorship resulted in the impoverishment of the people. In the thirties the system seemed to be effective, the economy was developing fast, the population was proud of the results, but then we saw that hellish carnage was gaining ground. The biggest shock was to see that they annihilated their own followers, as it happened with Miklós as well.

– Narrator: Yes, they remained proud to this day. Proud of having won the war, that they became a big power, you can rarely hear complaints.

– Kolja: How could it be otherwise, when half of the empire is stooge? And if someone is denounced, there's no excuse, they brutally kill him, or is hauled to forced labour camp. And people rarely turn up again from there. Maybe now that Stalin was unveiled, the loop loosens, people start slipping back, but all are silent, like a fish.

– Erzsi: Well, let it now! (To the narrator:) It would be nice if you could come time and again to help us to chat. And you could also show something of the city to Kolja.

– Narrator: Of course, we have already agreed on this with Kolja. Maybe tomorrow?

(Music: No further instructions are necessary; "Vodku v glotku" will definitely find the mood.)

*

New scene: dissolving pictures, Mount Gellért in the middle of the city, forest Citadella

Though the time is early afternoon, Kolja declares that he is hungry; he would like to eat something. Hotel Gellért is here, at the foothills, there, on the terrace of the wave pool we may have a snack – I suggest. The terrace is empty; we accommodate ourselves at a table. Sunshine, down, in the pool people enjoy wave-bathing with loud cheerfulness.

– We would like to have a snack. – I tell the waiter.

He brings two menus in no time. We do not open them. Kolja orders a bottle of vodka with my assistance. I convey the request to the waiter:

– A bottle of vodka, please. Well chilled.

– Waiter (clears his throat): Two ponies, isn't it?

– Me: – No, please, as I said: a bottle.

The waiter leaves us, and then quickly comes back, waiting for the order. I tell Kolja, that I see in the menu wooden platter steak that I love, and I can recommend it. I explain: A dish for two, served on wooden plate, consist of a variety of meat, I think, four slices, potatoes, pickles, lettuce, bacon and at better places small jack knife inserted on top of the meat.

– Kolja: Fine – with broad smile – One plate for me!

I realize with whom brought the life together. I address to the waiter:

– Two plates of wooden platter steak, please.

The waiter gets definitely embarrassed. Politely leans forward:

– This is a plate for two.

– Me: We know very well, don't hesitate to bring.

The waiter goes away having astonished gaze on his face.

Well-dressed people occupy two tables. The boss of day of the sun-terrace appears and starts polite conversation:

– How do you like the hotel, the terrace, what a lovely time we have, and then asks, where my guest came from?

All I disclose is, from the Soviet Union. We order during the conversation fish salad per head to accompany the vodka and two bottles of beer.

The waiter brings within minutes the vodka, the salads and two flags, Hungarian and Soviet.

Soft whispering is heard, interest is shown at the newly occupied tables.

We peacefully consume the salads and vodka, and then our attention turns to the wooden plates. We empty the bottles of beer in no time, order two bottles more and then another one for Kolja. I am full, as we express it, the beer is “pouring out of my ears.”

Meanwhile, of course, the conversation continues: What amazing is the difference between the two worlds! You live quiet, peaceful life, you are wealthy, and everything is available. Everything is clean. And no policemen around, at us you would run in a “patrol” on every street corner.

After some quiet siesta I ask for the bill, the waiter quickly brings it and remarks with broad smile: “I have met a lot of guests in my life having good appetites, but never like the two of you.”

Leaving the scene we feel the appreciative gaze of our neighbours in our spines.

*

New scene: residence of Ferenczys, same as above

Now lively discussion is taking place. Illustrious company is sitting in leather armchairs, elbow-chairs at different distances around a round table. The late afternoon light highlights the artist's face from the right. To his right sits Pilinszky, the Catholic poet, flanked by Nagy, the anointed poet, Ferenc Juhász, the “sorcerer” pulled over a little further back, in the corner sits a young poet, who sometimes closes his eyes. Vis-à-vis to the artist, pulling himself a bit out of the circle sits Lajos Hatvany, a prominent aesthete (plump, jovial gentleman).

Between them we see the narrator in a little awkwardly position. He is quietly listening to the conversation of these – not only for him – great men.

The conversation for some time is lead by the artist and Pilinszky. The thin, bright-eyed poet laughs: Petőfi? Everyone loves him as an idol, the simplest people also like to read his verses, they know who he was, what he meant for the revolution of 1848. What's the secret? He used simple language. The native exponents of poetry before him used complicated phrases, versification techniques, ordinary people could not cope with them, and they might not understand what litterateurs were talking about. When he stood on the stage and recited a poem, even ploughmen understood him. This is the greatest merit of him. He was acting like a clip, linked the literature with the people.

– Ferenczy: And with this simple, almost primitive language he effectively instigated people to revolt. As far as policy terms are concerned, his merit is, that everyone understood immediately, which sore point is he thinking of, against what he agitates. And for what does he impel. The task of poetry today should also be to draw attention to the drawbacks, rascality.

– László Nagy (stocky build, he wears his blondish, greying, barely combed hair on the forehead of his Calvinist head, his voice harsh, raspy): Oh but uncle Béni, you cannot be serious about that today, that anyone could tell just as straight into the eyes of the system that they derailed it, that they blatantly blaspheme the principles of socialism, as he could have done it a century ago. The power was also

rude at that time, but the waves of information vibrated slowly. While the waves of mud in which the poet had thrown a stone reached the ears of competent officials on one hand, died down, on the other hand the power knew immediately that it did not particularly tamper the mood of people to whom it was addressed. Nowadays? If I wrote three accusing stanzas and read at Pilvax, there were so many spies, the gendarmes would come the next day and locked me up for a few months. What we need today is proper situation, concentrated action, otherwise... (Waves with his hand dejectedly).

– Hatvany: The situation – I believe – is close. We hear less and less about the debates within the Party, but what leaks out, points to deepening conflicts. We have reached the threshold of remorse era. The end of how many dictatorships was heralded by repentance! We hear more and more about Imre that he should be pulled out of mud and give ways to his thoughts. But your arguments are mistaken otherwise as well, László! If all the men of letters would waiting for a whistle to let look at it, start induce people, we would never create the situation expected by you. Though cautiously, you have to wake up the nation, since you are the best sensors of its artery. You must be able to bring to the surface the rumble of sea currents from the depths. It's your job! That is why you were born, why you have received the extraordinary talent to arrange thoughts into poems, to get feelings dressed into rhymes. Our brother Béni's statues, and not even small sculptures, drawings can be born every day and only the most refined strata of the nation sees them. I may write my pamphlets, but my language is not understood by many, and forums where they appear, do not reach the masses. This is your field, you have to plough, sow, and irrigate it. To harvest will come others as well, who understand how beautiful and important your crop is.

– Young poet from the corner: By the way, uncle Béni, you don't work lately? I have not seen anything new from you for quite some time.

– Ferenczy (muses only for a moment): No, son, I do not work. Work was invented for stupid people, smart people create!

– Erzsike (to divert attention from the small uneasiness): Ferenc, I have just read your poem, "The power of flowers". I confess you frankly; it was for me as Endre Ady's "Black Piano" or Fellini's "8 and 1/2". Wonderful, sometimes eerily beautiful, but even heck doesn't understand. But don't say, like Endre did, when he was asked what he had wanted to say with this verse: "When I'll be in the same mood next time, I'll tell you."

– Juhász: But, my dear Erzsike, each and every row has profound sense! Wanderings, dressed in the nature, in the maze of tentacles, villi, canals of the mind. References to the incomprehensible, to the aberration of the brain, the bumpy roads, dislocations of the power. Really, please read it again, taking into consideration what I just said. Everything will become clear immediately.

– Hatvany: You are exceptional talent, Ferenc! And you see, Erzsike has discovered Endre's razor-sharp mind, and still didn't understand you. Maybe you should simplify yourself a little bit so, as to be able not only ruffle the feathers, but also to become torch as well.

– Pilinszky: Oh, I really enjoy Feri's lavish turns, piling of attributes, and endless orgy of his streams of words! I wish I too could express myself in such rays above clouds!

– Ferenczy: Yes, there is some truth in that you compare him to Ady. But Ady is different, almost opposite pole! He was rock solid, always grasped the essence, but his language was also lavish, flowery. It is a pity he wasted so much energy on women. They loved him so much, they wanted to devour him, to mould him in them, what did not work, certainly. Bull, he was a real bull!

– Pilinszky: The Great Bull!

– Hatvany: The point is, of course, that he was not waiting for applause: as outlined for him some swinishness, as soon as he could draw a picture of the disease, he did not hesitate to immediately draw it. He was a true revolutionary. It were not the women, who ruined him, the matter with him was that he was lazy. He was frequent visitor, came to lunch with us on Sundays and more often than not had not written anything in weeks. In such cases, we shut the door to the lounge after dinner and did not let him out until he didn't show up at least one verse. It is characteristic of his immense talent that he had written two or three poems during the 1-2 hours he spent in detention.

– Pilinszky: I believe you overrate the role of poetry. It educates, arouses thoughts, inflames feelings, but revolution?... Revolutions must be prepared and headed by politicians, professional revolutionaries having theoretical grounding and inflammatory rhetoric, and capable to organize mass movements. They must have extraordinary brain, capable to scan and govern the mood of crowds, to be able to scent the arrival of the decisive moment and have the courage for hard enforcement. Lenin might have had all these capabilities; it could be the key to the success of the Russian Revolution.

– Hatvany (turning to the narrator): By the way, Lenin. What is your opinion, the writings of Lenin and Stalin are readable at all? Their language is impossibly diffuse.

– Narrator (with clouded face, what can one answer?): I can read them and I find them understandable. True, Lenin's language is not easy, but it is very clear, precise. He doesn't seem to be politician, if we scratch the question, but rather scientist. Stalin writes perhaps too simply, he sometimes seems to be primitive, artificial. He is full of figments from thin air.

– Hatvany: Well, but these theories did not lead anywhere. Or, as we see now they led to dictatorship, rampant terror, internal and external oppression. How do you see over there?

– Narrator: These questions cannot be the subject of debate in the Soviet Union! Subject-matters, one must learn them, the way the authors have written. And the fact that now the lousy tricks committed by Stalin have been revealed and they are working on reforms; there is hope that human socialism will be created.

– Hatvany (with restrained whisk): Never, young man, never, dictatorships always and everywhere have such deep roots, that the course of the world can only be changed by radical revolutions. Or wars, as it happened with Hitler and company: they have been wiped out from the face of the earth by their own war.

– Pilinszky: Wiped out? Who knows how deep the roots are in Germany and perhaps in our country as well?

– Erzsike: Slap on the wrist, do not deal with politics! So many artists and they trouble their heads on this, rather than deal with arts?

– Ferenczy: In our country the arts – perhaps because the people is tuned to it, perhaps because great masters were born in this land – play particularly important role. Yes, indeed, arts are able to influence and have to influence policy. And who said that? “Who do not deal with politics, politics will deal with them.”

*

Little grandson: Papi, did you seriously believe that anything would change?

*

New scene: still the residence of Ferenczys, but new situation

The guests are Imre Nagy and his wife. Hatvany is also there, sitting in a high-backed armchair. Nagy is just in his “excommunicated” period. A few years ago – having conceived that the forced collectivisation of agriculture has turned away peasants from the power and that the intensive industrialization has exhausted the resources – the Party drew forth the politician plucking the strings of reforms and appointed prime minister, then, after less than a year and a half he was forced to resign and was expelled from the party.

Kolja is also present, vividly watching the discussion. As foreplay Nagy marvels at Kolja whom hasn't seen for more than twenty years. What a thing! Such a fine, strong man has grown up from the little boy who used to scramble around in my lap!

– Imre Nagy (turns again back to the other guests, to the narrator): What is the mood now in the Soviet Union? Do the people trust the new leadership? How do they see the new prime minister? Do they express opinion about him at all?

– Narrator: No, of course not. At least in the range in which I move people are ossified. They are still afraid, not resolved yet. Do not dare to express their opinion about leaders. At best they scold the shortages. Yes, they grieve at it more loudly lately.

– Imre Nagy: The supply position has not improved?

– Narrator: No, not a damn. The shortages rule over the whole economy. Grandiose plans are made, the execution always breaks down somewhere and no improvement is seen.

– Imre Nagy: And the new prime minister? What can one feel about the democratisation of the system?

– Narrator: At first new voices could be heard in the press, even critical opinions were published. Now, however, he is also called slowly only Great Father, Beloved Leader. And it is completely incomprehensible to me, that firewall sized portraits of him appeared again. Apparently, the Russians cannot do without some idol towering above them. They give birth to them even if they are not forced to accept a dictator. Who knows what the psychology of this phenomenon is?

– Wife of Imre Nagy (she puts her hand on his arm, quasi preventing him): As I hear he is more informal than his predecessors.

– Narrator: Could be. Although someone told me about a strange incident. He visited an exhibition of federal level, stood at a non-naturalistic statue, watched, watched, then kicked off from the pedestal and started shouting that such invective is not needed in this country. And the same applies to the creator of it. The sculptor stood next, turned purple, tore open his shirt and showed his chest full of scars and shouted back: “I fought for this country four years on the front, nobody can chase me away from here! Everything binds me here, these wounds too!”

– Imre Nagy (muttering): Unbelievable, how can... (The wife squeezes his arm, he falls silent).

– Narrator (sensing that the wife of the ex-prime minister protects him from expressing his opinion): I have to leave. I shall come to pick Kolja up and take him to the railway station. Then I won’t be for two weeks, I will go to the island Mohács to work as labourer. I will help to reconstruct a village that had been devastated during the spring floods.

*

Little grandson: Of course, for free, isn’t it, Papi?

*

New scene: Keleti (Eastern) railway station

The narrator-student escorts Kolja to the train station.

– Narrator: (in the taxi or while waiting for the start asks): Think over well, Kolja, you should stay here or come back with your family and settle down. Your profession would be needed here as well and Mama too, would be able to support you. You do not have to suffer from the Soviet poverty.

– Kolja (just shakes his head): I’ve lived there twenty-five years, my heart pulls me there. When would I learn the language? And Mammy is still alive, I am obliged to help her, return something of her extreme goodness. And what would my wife and my daughter do here; they would not understand a word. No, my place is there.

It is sad to see, but he is captured by nostalgia. He can hardly wait for the whistle, warning that the time of departure arrived. The two young men embrace, and then wave to each other until the train is seen.

*

New scene: Island Mohács

Camp of volunteer students working as unskilled workers looks exactly as it was in Stalincity.

The narrator works and lives mainly among young people, he gives helping hand to the masons, who build houses up to the crown mould for fix payment. For free, driven by “social sensitivity”. It can be understood to be Lenin’s “Communist Saturday”.

The sight of the hamlet is saddening, the walls of a few houses have already been “pulled up”, but the village consists of two rows of rooftops lying on the ground. The ice has simply cut the walls of houses; the roofs sat down and in relatively integral (recognizable) condition showed that house existed on their place. Hard work is performed under the hot sun. The masons have been “enlightened,” laughed at the “Communist Saturday”. “We get at least something, but why on earth do you spend your time here?” – And the like.

The “commander” of the camp unexpectedly invites students for a meeting. He informs the students of comrade Rákosi’s resignation.

– Camp commander (sadly, eyes cast down, his voice theatrically trembling): The leader of our party and government, comrade Rákosi resigned yesterday. This is a sad event for our country’s life. Great leader left the wheelhouse. I request you not to lose your faith for single moment; the construction of socialism will be continued at the same pace. Our country stands before gorgeous development, your future is secure.

Some of the youngsters toddle off giggling; some of them are leaving with bowed head.

*

Little grandson: Papi, did you really believe in bright future?

*

New scene: the residence of Ferenczys

The narrator-student pays a short visit again before the end of the holidays to the Ferenczys; they send a package to Kolja. He is presented by a book by uncle Béni: Daudet: Tartarin of Tarascon. He had drawn the illustrations. The inscription: To the kind “travelling companion”, our young friend Antal, uncle (Ferenczy) Béni in September 1956.

*

New scene: Kolja’s flat

It was a moving experience to see Kolja in Moscow under the Soviet conditions. He was living in a co-tenancy, where four or five families lived in small rooms that had access to a shared hallway-kitchen-bathroom block. The room of Kolja, of a three-person family was so narrow that I reached both sides if I outstretched my arms and the length was not more than three meters. He has chosen this instead of secure welfare.

He met me alone, with surprisingly richly laid small table and well chilled vodka.

– Kolja (taking over the package): Thank you very much for having dragged it. Sure there is a letter too from Mama in it. How is she?

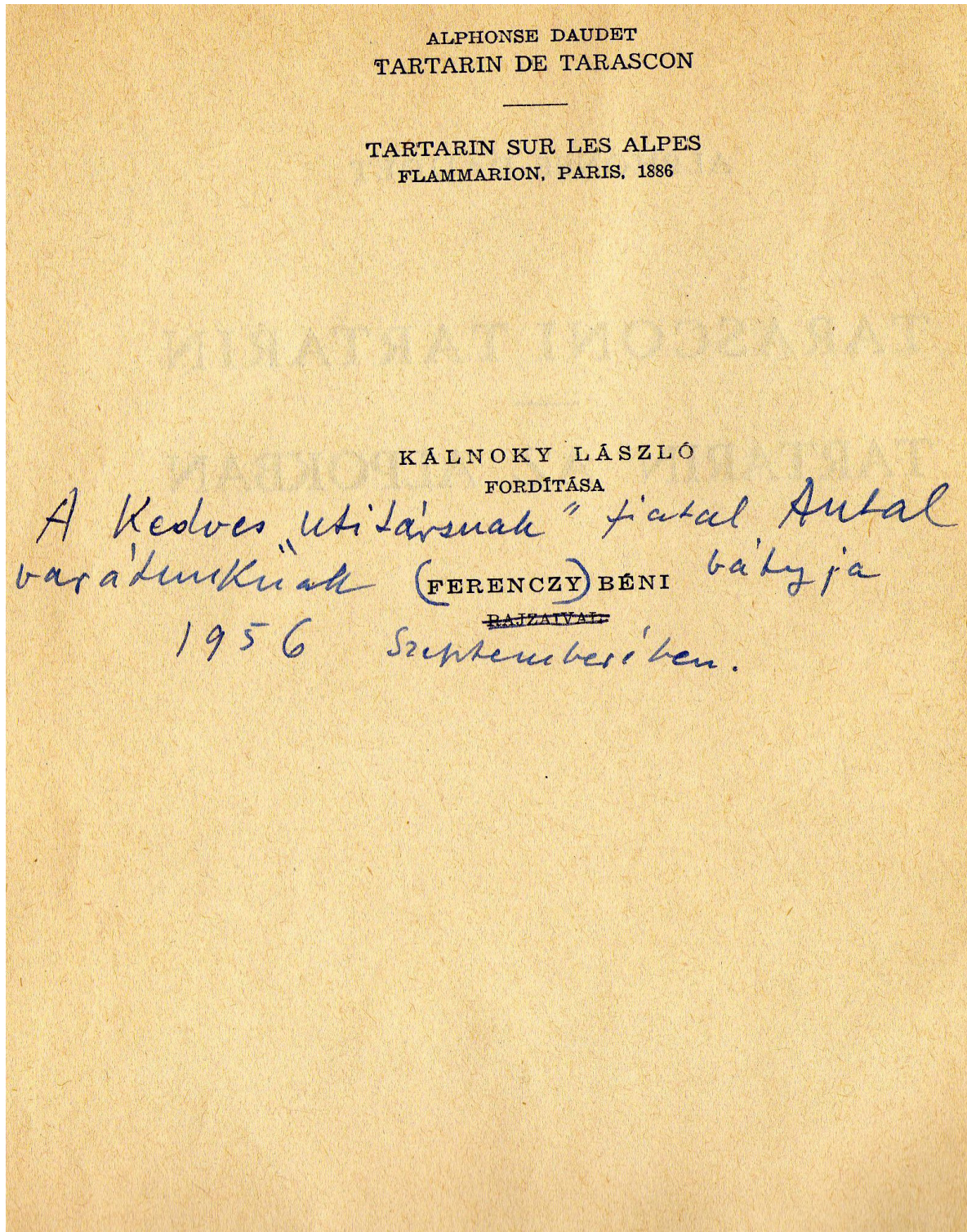
– Narrator: She looks extremely well, you can be proud of her. She could easily deny ten years. Warm kisses from her.

– Kolja (slightly embarrassed): So we live. In scarcity. We adults can somehow manage that, but our daughter cannot get a move. As soon as she is ready with her tutorials, goes down to the street to enjoy some fresh air and to run around with her buddies. We are lucky, the neighbourhood is nice, and tidiness, cleanliness is kept. Only with one of them is difficult, an old man over 70 often forgets to switch off the gas-cooker.

*

Little grandson: Papi, how can people of such a rich country be so poor?

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The inscription: To the kind “travelling companion”,
our young friend Antal, uncle (Ferenczy) Béni in September 1956.

*

New scene: hostel in Moscow

The scene is a room of the hostel. Its look isn't deplorable, but the furniture is pretty Spartan. The furniture consist of four normal wooden beds, bedside tables next to them, a simple table, four wooden chairs, flanked by built-in cabinetry near the door. Under the beds there are suitcases, cardboard boxes. Small shelves are on the walls, lots of books on them, books on the table as well. Tray with a jug of water and glasses is on the table. The windows are white-framed, in one of the wings "fortochka", the size of two palms window in the window, the duty of which is ventilation, since the window itself is insulated against the cold. Stretched heavy curtains cover the windows. Outside heavy rain pours, gloomy cloud cover, the wind dashes the precipitate against the windows.

On one of the beds an aged blond student is sitting. His face is spunky with deep wrinkles, despite of his thirties. Keeping a little stooped. Wears deplorable warm slippers, the rest of his dress is acceptable, pants, sweater. A curious grey eye, looks examining the student-narrator who sits at the table, leaning on it, nibbles something that was offered by his companion.

– Old student: What is going there in Hungary?

– Narrator (searching for words): Upheaval.

– Old student: And what is going to happen?

– Narrator: If there won't be any serious problem this year, then never.

– Old student: What do you mean, insurgency?

– Narrator: Yeah, something like that.

– Old student (thinking for a few seconds, then first with some sadness, then with increasing anger, chewing the words): We won't let it happen... It was enough, that we had lost so many people in the war... If seat of fire, threatening with war would occur in the neighbourhood, we will crush down!... At any price we shall stamp out!

*

New scene: the already known auditorium of the university

An officer in uniform with wide epaulets gives lecture (has to look as high-ranking KGB colonel!) about the Suez Canal and the "events" that started in Hungary the day before. He already knows that "counter-revolution" broke out and calls the Hungarian people fascist!

– Colonel (sometimes glancing on his scratch pad): Counter-revolutionary events are taking place in Hungary. The objective is clear: they want to overthrow the socialist system, to take power from the hands of the people, and they want to restore the fascist regime. The course of attacks clearly show that well trained people with long experience in the military stand at the forefront of anti-democratic forces that had revolted. Yesterday the Radio was attacked and captured, the defence personal was executed. Demonstrations are held in front of army barracks and police stations demanding surrender and handing over the arms. The resignation of the present prime minister and the appointment of Imre Nagy to that post are claimed. It's no coincidence that the counter-revolution broke out in Hungary. Before the shameful for them loss of World War II for 24 years fascist regime raged in the country, which created a dark provocation in search of reason to declare war and attack us.

Only 11 years have passed since the collapse of the fascist system. Fascism has deep roots in Hungary. We monitor the events. The socialist camp has to prevent that such infamous forces reclaim the power in the country.

*

New scene: same auditorium, but after some time

– Colonel (picks up a slip of paper from the table): Finally, here's a question ... um ... that is too long to answer it now, and there isn't enough information available to me. I just want to clarify who denies that fascism has deep roots in Hungary?

– Narrator (stands up): Me.

– Colonel: And where do you take from the information about the foundation of workers' councils?

– Narrator: From the central radio station of Budapest and from the radio station of one of the provincial city's workers' council.

– Colonel: And you can receive here?

– Narrator: Yeah, pretty well, although sometimes they are suppressed.

Those sitting on the dais whisper together.

– Colonel: I cannot answer this question, maybe I shall come back to it later.

Leaving, in the thick crowd of students a tall blond boy slinks to the narrator-student and whispers: "It was stupid to stand up, you won't get away with it. We had been brutally murdered, why don't you pay attention to what they do with small nations?" And as if had not stopped, hastily leaves the auditorium.

One of those, who came down from the podium addresses to the narrator-student, who hesitatingly collects himself for departure: "Come with me, let's talk a little bit."

*

New scene: office of the Party's secretary

On the door, to which they arrive, board: Party Secretariat – Party Secretary. There is no entrance hall, lady secretary; they step straight into the small office. No pomp, on the contrary. Bookcases, hanger, small, simple desk, in front of it small meeting table, chairs. A lamp is on the table. Images of Stalin and Lenin, Marx and Engels hang on the wall behind the desk. The chair behind the desk is also simple. Relatively large number of green plants decorates the room. The curtains are weighty here as well. The party secretary is a short, stocky man, his hair properly combed and his straight trimmed moustache barely covers the upper lip.

– Secretary (shows to one of the chairs at the table): "Sit down, please!" Calm, deep voice, his eyes more sorrowful than angry. He doesn't occupy the chair behind the desk, but sits on the opposite chair, leaning forward. "No need to rush things ... we have to digest the happenings more calmly ... I have been to your country, fought through the whole war ... May I offer you a glass of water? (The narrator nods, he fills a glass)... Hmmm ... How to express it? ... I think the reporter is right ... We took the southernmost big city ... um ... well ... Pécs ... am I correct?... We have spent three days there ... We barely begun to organize the civil administration ... You reoccupied the city ... (caws) ... I don't say, our guys were also not angels ... No, no ... But what greeted us two days later, when took the city again ... It's difficult to talk about it ... Hanged people ... Some were hanged upside down in the main square, but they were beaten before half dead ... Among those who were recognisable some had started to work with us, but nobody could tell what was committed by others killed ...(again caw, sips some water ... They were simple people, in poor attire ... Krrr ... Really workers' councils are organized?" (He shakes his head in disbelief.)

– Narrator: Yes, it seems that such councils are being established in every major city. And it is understandable, because serious errors led to this. In a country where shortage was known only in wartime, which led to rationing only in the last few months of the war, famine is raging now in the villages for the last two years ... And urban wages are not enough for most families even to satisfy food needs. At best to buy some clothes for the kids.

– Secretary: Well, now, don't say me that everything was going well in the fascist system, I've seen slum areas too in your country. They didn't grow out of the ground during the war. Let's wait quietly for a while, we'll see what happens. Calm down, don't hurry. I'll get in touch with you...

*

New scene: narrator again in the clouds

We were listening to the news from home, infinitely thrilled. It was amazing that the radio stations of the revolution were not jammed. We were afraid; of course we were afraid... What will become of us, believers in the system? The chosen ones.

However, the majority was aware that the fury of the masses was absolutely justified. To be successful in the armed struggle? However, we doubted it very much. We knew – besides what was demonstrated on the Red Square parades – quite well the Soviet military industrial potential and the tremendous power of the military. I myself have seen on the middle double page of an American scientific journal the map of the USSR, indicating aircraft-, missile- and propulsion factories. I have counted more than 200 of them. The background only of the air force in the fifties: 200 giant-establishments. We were aware of the dictatorship's hardness, determination. Therefore we didn't really understand the withdrawal of the Soviet troops.

We were not alone! Students of the biggest ally, Poland requested a meeting with us at the students' hostel. Their intention was to declare sympathy, offer aid.

*

New scene: room of the hostel (as above)

The room is congested: ten Hungarian students and representatives of Poles seeking the meeting. The majority relies on walls, furniture. Initially only questions are raised.

– Polish student 1: What do you know of the situation that evolved? Did they manage to oust the dictatorship's leaders of the government? What do you know of Imre Nagy? Will he be able to stabilize the situation?

Silence.

– Polish student 2: Are you aware that decisive fight is being fought? You provide an example for us and for everyone who is fed up with the dictatorial leadership and cries for reforms!

Silence.

– Polish student 3 (vehemently): If you win, we'll follow you.

– One of the Hungarian students: It's still too early to deal with anything as definite. Though the Soviet troops retreated to their barracks, not a single soul has left the country. If they receive a command, they can eradicate our teams in a few days. Just a matter of decision.

– Polish student 3: I hope that the Soviet leadership will also come round. They have to finally realize that socialism cannot be built on Russian bayonets.

– Narrator: Excellent drafting of the sad fact that this is how it is being built. Everywhere in the camp. And nobody knows what's going to be the end. We hear strange, scary news about massacres, hangings. I don't see that this process will be stopped. The beginning was very nice and just, but it's getting out of hand, it seems to be distorted now... And Imre Nagy is apparently cissy, spineless, inept to manage the revolution, to suppress extremism. He is just drifting.

*

New scene: same room, but the evening lights infiltrate through the window

The ceiling light has already been turned on. The students are lying on their beds listening to Budapest. Crackle, shorting noises, but the news can be understood: “Our soldiers freed from the captivity the archbishop and he was taken triumphantly to the archbishop’s palace in Esztergom. He declared: I am going to gather information and will soon appeal to the nation.”

– Narrator: My God, now just Horthy and Szálasi are missing... Boys, we may not expect anything good in the hereafter. What is all this? We may have to stay here?

– Another student: Don’t be silly! I have heard that around forty students are holding sit-down strike on the steps of the embassy demanding that they be let leave for back home immediately. They want to take part in the revolution.

*

New scene: same room, the only change is in the composition of students

Many of us sit stiffly and listen to Imre Nagy’s blurred-fuzzy call to the nation. When he turns to West, asking for support, someone almost screams: To think that for the last ally of Nazi Germany the United States will intervene against the Soviet Union? That would embroil in world war the whole world!... More soft-spoken disagreements and nonsense too: but yes they do, it will be important to them when the system breaks down...

– Narrator: We are a small point; they are not going to move a finger for us!

*

New scene: train to Hungary

Introduction by the narrator: After having completed the test series after the defeat of the revolution permission was given to visit home.

The scene is a sleeping car in the already known train. The train pulls into the main station of Kiev. Many people board, almost all are young officers: lieutenants, among them some high-rank, non-elderly officers, majors, colonels. All of them in brand new uniforms. I follow with curious attention, what are they doing? The majority boards the next car; some of them go even further; into my car four or five young officers. They may feel free to move about, and no restrictions have been imposed on the rest of passengers. They soon go out to the front of the car, for smoking cigarettes. I follow them, light a cigarette and enter immediately into conversation with them. They don’t like to pick up the line of conversation, but rather utter single words, still they are not really impolite; I would say they are just puzzled.

– Narrator: Where the journey takes you, young man?

– Lieutenant: To Hungary.

– Narrator: On long-term mission?

– Lieutenant: Yes, probably for 3-4 years.

– Narrator: You just completed your studies?

– Lieutenant: Yes, military academy, this is our first “deployment”. And in such an unpleasant situation.

– Narrator: What do you mean?

– Lieutenant: We shall be closed to the world; we can leave our barrack only if ordered so.

One of the majors steps out of the corridor of the car.

– Major (turning to the lieutenants): Tell me your names and show me your weapons. He writes – one by one – the names on a block fixed on a plastic sheet. He carefully checks the pistols, removes the magazines and counts the bullets. He writes down the serial number of the gun and the quantity of bullets.

I find it surprising, but he does not ask me to leave. I sidle away myself, saying good-bye to the officers.

*

New scene: Budapest

At home I found my parents, brothers and sisters in health, but struggling in doubt.

I have been wondering a lot in the city, it was in ruins like at the end of World War II. At least some of the streets, buildings were seriously demolished.

I have visited uncle Béni as well. I learned from Erzsike during the check-in phone call that he had been hit by stroke. Erzsike received me at the door. She looked worn, but composed.

So good you have come! Tell us about Kolja, how are they? Come in, feel free to talk. Béni understands everything, but cannot speak. (Meanwhile, they proceed with small strides into the living room.) When he learned that the Soviet tanks are rumbling back into the city, he suffered blood stroke. Additional misfortune that the stroke hit his right side, he is unable to work. He is learning anew to draw and write, but with his left hand.

The artist is sitting in the far corner of the room, in an armchair, propped. Half of his face is rigid; his right eye also seems not to move. As if it was glass eye. He greets me with hardly noticeable gesture of his left hand. I see in his intact eye that he recognized me.

*

New scene: residence of the narrator

– Narrator (again down, on the ground, sitting in an armchair, in front of the crouching teenage grandson): Imagine, my son, I was fired from the university. No one told me why. I was waiting for the aircraft structure professor to start the first examination of the spring semester. He said later to the ones who stayed there that he would take me for candidacy. It would have been great deal, since he was at the same time leader of an experimental research institute. I might have participated in designing moon rockets as well.

So I was waiting for my turn, when the cute little secretary to the dean came to me. She was an interesting little woman; there had been rumours about her aristocratic descent. She was always very nice and polite as the short Jewish math professor who used to greet everyone – even his pupils – in advance. Well, she asked me to go up to the dean after I passed the exam.

I went up and was immediately met by the dean.

– Dean (looking at me with searching eyes): “Why do you want to leave us?”

– “Me? (I sort of ask him back, of course): I don’t want to leave. Why?”

He pushes a list of paper in front of me. I watch, I watch, command of the Soviet Union’s Ministry of Education to the rector: to exclude me with immediate effect.

– Dean: “What’s this then?” – He asks me, looking straight into my eyes.

I knew immediately that I got this marching order because of my written remarks to the colonel. I tell him.

– Dean: Explain the essence of it.

I summarize the event for him. I expected him to lash out at me defending the system, protecting socialism. Instead, what happens? He thinks a bit, and then asks: "How many more exams remained for you to pass?"

– I reply: "Four."

– Dean: "For how long would you be able to complete them?"

– Me: "Well, maybe I'll need slightly more than two weeks." (I calculated three or four days by exam.)

– Dean: "That's too much. I should exclude you now, here, and I play with my job if I do not."

Upon my word! He said this to me, to the excommunicated one there, in the Great Soviet Union. In the centre of terror! You see, you see, yet there are people ... brave, true men.

– Dean (he says in low voice): "I can give you ten days, consult with your examiners. And try to look up the case. Inquire in the ministry. Discuss with our secretary of the Party, he is of sound mind, will try to help you."

I could not believe my ears; my head was going round on the way out. Well, this is what happened. I indeed completed my exams of four difficult technical subjects in ten days in a foreign language.

In the meantime, I went into the ministry. I was received by a low level official: "Yes, we have to exclude you."

– There is no way to revise the decision?

– No, it was the request of your organs.

– To exclude? Which organs?

– Your ministry of education.

What the hell, where do I go?

I did not have to knock to the party secretary; he sent a message with the students' group leader: after the next exam he would welcome me.

He received me, offered to sit down. Didn't scold me much, just remarked. "There you go; you should not have acted without thinking."

Then he sat down at his desk, and began to make phone calls. At the second call he jumped up and raised his voice. Thereafter he just stood there and fumed with rage. He was trying at some three more places, but was brought to heel or even warned. Angrily waved his hand, and just said to hasten with my exams; and then escorted me out.

The leader of my Russian study group disclosed that they, "a three-member delegation," have also intervened in the ministry. Their heads weren't stroked there.

My Hungarian scholarship-holder colleagues informed me that a "delegation" examines at the Embassy the affairs of those who had misbehaved, had been ranting. Go to see if ... Although they spoke with the "delegation" and said, they didn't do anything more than I did. They were warned that this was said last time, if anyone of them repeats this declaration, will also fly...

I just finished the last exam. I was trying to get appointment, but failed. Walked in, was waiting for more than an hour, then the "couple" met me as if they were dumb fishes. I had to ask them, but even so they remained silent. The "delegation" consisted of two persons: a woman from the Party's Central Committee and a man from the Ministry of Education.

– Why did you kick me out?

Silence.

– I continue: because of that particular paper?

A nod.

- You had made this decision?
- No, the ministry here. (It was difficult to press out of them.)
- And what will be my fate?

(The man said succinctly, it was the first time that more than a few words came out of them):

- You have to seek the permission of comrade minister to continue your studies at home. Your further fate will depend on the staff managers.

At least he told me the truth.

I was a lucky man. My fate was shaped by a lot of stupid, stubborn, hard-line leaders on the economic line, cringing, ass-kisser party secretaries, but the cadre officials were almost always having own thinking, and proved to be human beings. You see how weird life is. Today everyone thinks that they were the worst.

Now! After having received some silent information and instructions I went to the dean. I thanked him for the salvaged year and asked for the exclusion “command”. The tearful secretary brought in the prepared document and the dean carefully signed his name. He folded it up and put it in an envelope. He handed it over as a medal. “I hope you manage to complete your studies, you have good brain, we were fond of you.”

I stepped out of the building, as if the outside surroundings represented a darkroom.

I was expected to return home immediately, but spent a month more there. I got married.

*

New scene: at Kolja

I paid a visit to Kolja. Barely a year has passed since he entered the sleeper cabin.” I’m your companion.” He has perhaps sensed then that we will be companions throughout our lives? Two outcasts. One because of his father’s “sins”, the other because of his own “stumble.” Both carry since decades some ballasts on our back, far more serious, as sensed by our environment.

It’s something that could be called “life without destiny”.

We didn’t have to talk much.

He put a bottle of vodka on the small table, and pickled herring, cucumbers next to it. “And do not forget, remember those who were nice to you!” It wasn’t the people who derailed your life, but a system. Think sometimes of Mammy, what sacrifices she made for me... He mused: “I cannot tell you how many people have risked their fate of the future to help me ease my troubles.” He was deep in thought for a few minutes, then we drank a glass, sniffed cucumbers to it: “ Have a look at Mama, if she was alright, I don’t have any news for quite some time... Perhaps Béni doesn’t feel well? She would send a message.”

New scene: accident

We make a big jump in time.

The narrator is in his forties, sports moustache, beard; his hair is greying at some places. He is sitting in a car, drives briskly on a highway. The picture darkens for a glance, and then becomes clear again. The car runs at the same pace at 30-degree angle towards the railing. A glimpse of speedometer shows around 120 km/hours (he does not remember lately if the pointer was below or above this figure?).

The continuation of the event may be drawn as one of the two following alternative pictures.

The first alternative:

Enormous crackle, the car rises on two wheels. The driver ducks his neck, and also pulls his head from the asphalt surface, which is close to him. The car manoeuvres itself away from the railing, but silently falls back on it. From there the car is ejected back again onto two wheels.

Swaying, the car is moving away from the railing and – only the viewers hear it – thumps with a huge bang on the pavement. The driver attempts to brake, but the brakes don't work. The car is rotating slowly, surely with sharp creaking (the narrator doesn't hear anything) turns more than 180 degrees slips on the gently sloping embankment and stops against the traffic. The narrator-driver notices petrol and oil stains and turns off the engine. He is looking for a few seconds to the quietly speeding traffic, then the inside and the intact windows of the car. He picks up the (then) bag-sized cell phone, talking to his wife. He is trying to get out of the car; the door gets stuck in the grass, but under pressure finally opens to large enough gap to squeeze him out.

(Starting from here reality is mixed with fantasies in the continuation.)

*

The second alternative:

The same sequence of scenes, but there is no sound, just some quiet whoosh like flying in a glider. After stopping stays sitting in the car with his head leaned on his shoulder. A young couple appears, coming slowly out of the surrounding bushes. Afraid of the situation the man pries open the door, but doesn't dare to move the driver, just is leaning to him listening if he breathes. He notes that the victim is alive. Run back and call an ambulance! – requests the lady. He turns off the engine. Wailing sirens are heard: ambulance, police cars arrive.

(From here the story continues in dreams, visions.)

Dull light steals through the veil of a hospital room, dotted with pale yellow spots. On one of the beds, propped with pillows lies the narrator, one of his temples bonded.

Suddenly, he sees a strong beam of light out of which floats a teenage boy, the same young grandson, who appeared above and sits down on the bed. He takes the hand of the narrator and whispers: "Papi, don't leave us! I will be your grandson. You'll see when I shall have been born, we shall to be together a lot and we'll love the world and life. And now I shall be talking to you until you have healed. Listen carefully and see if you can learn something from me, since I can see ahead into the future. Into your future, the way you would like to see the world. You'll see, we shall conceive it, and then shape it together. At least half of the world is going to help us!"

The narrator mumbles something that the viewer cannot understand, but the little grandson answers: "Of course, of course, the round-table discussions will be completed soon and the meadows are going to be full of flowers. Independence, freedom, democratic state will be proclaimed. We step out of the CMEA and we'll never join military groupings again. We'll be like Switzerland. You know, everyone has had enough of carnages, massacres and who the hell whet his teeth at us? We are a small speck of dust, you know: acne on the louse's prick – my god, I am talking dirty. The Soviet Union has weakened; it will be busy with itself. Maybe it may even fall apart. Our neighbouring nations also want to break off; they will be busy with their attempts. If we won't tamper with them, they will reconcile with us. You'll see, a few hundred soldiers in gala dress remain, all the lot of goofs having red double tracks, and also all who wear broad shoulder-straps will be sent somewhere, will get a small piece of land, tractors, they may plough and sow. There won't be anyone, who would break his head on what plane and tank, or any other symbol of power should our money be spent. You really should not hurt your head because of all these."

Creak of the door, again sudden gleam of light beam and it sucks the little grandson out of the room.

*

New scene: back to the closing scene of the accident

A western car stops on the exit road. A young couple comes out of the bushes that cover the distance between the two roads. The young man asks the narrator if there was anything wrong with him, and if he should call for a car carrier. The narrator walks slowly to a small mountain pine, chews and spits out a few needles. Hardly gets back to the car, when to police cars, using sirens arrive from the branch road. The policeman arriving first just looks around, casts a glance into the narrator's eyes, then spats and drives away. The other put questions, toiling in the meantime with a vial:

– Don't you have injury?

– No, I don't.

– Have you been alone?

– Yes, alone.

– Did you use the seat belt?

– Yes, I did.

– Have you consumed alcohol?

– No, I haven't...

– Blow this vial really hard.

He looks at the vial and throws it away.

– How did it happen?

– I have fallen into micro-sleep.

– I have to penalize you for careless driving, HUF 2000

– You will be laughing; I don't have even a farthing.

– No problem, sign here, I shall take care of it.

– Will it cost you money?

– Doesn't matter, I shall recover it.

Got into his car, the narrator sits down beside him, but the policeman just passes him the papers, when the car of the Road Maintenance Company appears. Two men in uniforms jump out. One of them starts measuring with tape measure the damages suffered by the railings, the other is looking, looking at the car:

– What a crap, – he says – the rear wheel has ripped! You may celebrate your second birthday.”

The guy doesn't understand that this is what saved the narrator, everything “gave itself”, the car is not a rigid system as it is usually the case with the products of socialist states. Those cars would have made a somersault and the hearse should have been called. Comes the other one:

– 8 m railings, two poles felled, and a mileage post ruined. Sign here, the insurance company has to finance it.

And he goes away. For him this is important.

*

New scene: service workshop

Car carrier, the narrator sits next to the driver. They arrive at the familiar service. The master congratulates him for his second birthday, and invites him: “Come to the basement and have a drink on it, couldn't be simple. Smooth out your nerves.”

He leads the narrator to his beautifully decorated small basement, furnished with rough-planed table with benches, and a line of small barrels on one side. “Don’t say anything, I can see. But have you heard that the government wants us to join NATO? Referendum will be held. And the sheep population will vote for it, we have just been released from one sheepfold and are ready to be impounded into another. I am dumbfounded!

The father of the master steps in. He is in his fifties, but looks youthful, has greying hair, sharp features, hard hands of a worker and they shake hands. He is smiling: “Is this wreck yours?” He doesn’t expect answer. “And nothing’s wrong with you? You must have a great guardian angel! I understand you scold the NATO.” – turns to his son. – “This world is abnormal, politicians are blind or bribed. Not to notice that the Soviet Union is a sinking ship and for decades cannot deal with anything else than to round up its running away in disorder sheep, is stupidity. Long resigned from the satellite states, therefore further proliferation means to bag our money out the window. And I wonder if anyone thought about that a bullet cannot remain in the old armours, we’ll be forced to replace everything. It is cock-and-bull story that they are going to provide the new weaponry free or on credit! At most shit. They are not cattle, like us, but tough capitalists, they are going to mercilessly iron all the blood out of us in exchange for good guns “- Spats and is about to leave. “The job will remain as it was ever, I am leaving. Oh, yeah, cheers!” – And drains his glass.

*

New scene: the room in the hospital, everything is the same

A nurse comes in, casts a glance at the narrator lying with closed eyes, shakes her head and exits.

The door just closes in, when a sharp beam of light shines up in the window and the little grandson spins out of it. Stands beside the bed, looks at the patient, smiles, because realizes that his eyelids flickered. He sits on the bed, grabbing the narrator’s hand.

“Very well, Papi, you’re going to be fine. What could I tell you now?”

Some whispers can be heard.

– OK, you are right. The economic community of socialist countries should be reformed so that instead of hard negotiations, market mechanisms operate the trade among its members, but we must join the European Economic Community as well. We have to procure new technologies first of all from them, mainly establishing joint ventures. Yes, of course, you said that we need to let in the capital of developed countries... Yes, carefully, so that the key factories, important banks remain in our hands. We will grow at lightning speed. We’ll use our relations with the Soviet Union, if we do it right, we will be able to act as paved way for the West. Well, somebody comes again, I’ll be right back.”

Beam of light, which sucks out the little grandson.

A physician steps to the bed: “The injury is actually unimportant, shock might have caused the deep unconscious state. Let us raise the dose of sedatives, he should improve by tomorrow.”

*

New scene: holiday home

Three workers, the master and two labourers are working at the garden gate. They are filling a pit with previously excavated soil, accumulated on the edge of the pit. It’s being pushed down into the pit by vanes, and then they water and ram the earth. In the meantime, they stop now and then and chat with the narrator:

– Master: What do you say that entrepreneurs are killed in series? They get shot like dogs. Awful lot of money must be at stake. The country is being robbed apart; they earn a lot on bleached oil. Who would have believed that this would be brought by the new system? The red oppression at least affected everyone equally, but now?...

– Narrator: Change of gangsters, master, Change of gangsters. I just call it that way. In the socialist system people could be murdered, at us only hundreds were killed, tens of thousands crippled, humiliated. Horror! That at least may not happen any more, we live in a safe jurisdiction. But those who use it are mostly crooks, swindlers, embezzlers. They steal and rob. The stupid ass-kissing leaders have been replaced by slick, greedy, power-hungry villains. For those flutters the flag. Change of gangsters at its best. They shook us through several stages. First freedom, independence was promised, then they were talking about social market economy. Where is the social part of it today? Nowhere. We live now in hard, barbaric neocapitalism, wild capitalism.

It's a new dead-end street, leading out of the dead-end street of socialism. He sadly spats.

– Labourer 1: Good lord, could you get machine guns, hand grenades for us?

– Narrator: How would I be able?... For what would you use them?

– Labourer 2: Well ... we were just talking about it ... there would be people who – if we would get guns – would dash to the Parliament!

– Narrator: Jeez, what are you talking about? I didn't hear anything!... This is not an option ... There is no solution...

Waves his hand again and goes to the house.

*

New scene: same hospital room

A Gypsy gets up from the opposite bed, goes to the narrator and looks at him for quite some time. He shakes his head. The nurse enters the room.

– Gypsy (to the nurse): “He could be ours. And why not? After all, his skin is like ours, surely the eyes also, his hair is black.” He goes back to his bed. The nurse gives an injection to the narrator and leaves the room.

Light beam, the little grandson spins out of it. He sits down on the bed and grabs the narrator's hand. Broad smile appears on his face, seeing that the patient's hand moved and his head slightly tilted towards the boy:

– “Very well, Papi, soon we'll run around, you'll see. I just have to learn to walk. You'll help me, right? What do you mean? Oh, yeah, of course, gypsy is on the other bed. Must be leader of a band, at least his visitors call him so. And his hands are fine. Yes, of course, their social standing will change. Of all of them. They will be assisted in learning; will get jobs, benefits for housing. And nobody will hate, besmirch them, call names, and mock them. The whole world will change around them.

*

New scene: a flat of medium level (in Hungarian terms)

We enter the living room from the hall without a door. A set of fabric-covered sofas, glass-topped coffee table, oriental rugs, white MDV (made in GDR) furniture around, full of books and Eastern, African antiques in wood, brass, ivory. The entire length of one wall is a door-window combination. One doesn't feel any pomp.

A couple in their sixties, who have arrived from the USA, enter the living room. The man is tall, still looks to have athletic build, completely grey-haired, shaven, blue-eyed, his wife is American, but her slanted eyes, blue-black hair and short stature betrays Chinese origin. They are followed by a man, just a little higher than the Chinese lady, he is balding, but still blond, agile, Camille, the oldest member of the Belgian family, who have rescued the “starving child”. He is accompanied by his charming wife. The narrator has spent half a year with the family after WWII, some 50 years ago. The four guests know each-other.

The line is followed by the hosts, the narrator and his wife and – towering above them – Kolja. The chat for the hosts is linguistic stunt, interpretation in three languages.

(After a few sentences the film has to be shifted to Hungarian or must be labelled.)

Cheerful moments of American style exchange of the usual “flowers-drinks-bird seen” gifts and getting acquainted without excessive pleasantries. The party immediately switches to calling each other on first-name; the American could be Peter, the Chinese lady Su. It is time to reveal the name of the narrator: Tony (Anti for Camille, Tolja for Kolja). His wife is Márta. Everyone goes to the windows; Camille takes out his video camera, steps out to the balcony and furiously films, excitedly wailing: “What a view! If I show this at home, nobody will believe that I captured it here! Anti, I can only congratulate you!

Peter and Su also join Camille and enthusiastically praise the city.

– Kolja: I was also fascinated. When did you move here, Tolja?

– Narrator: Before we left for India in ‘74. That was the beauty of it, we didn’t have to save up in India, scrape as the majority had to, for having be able to access to housing. (Noticing Su’s interrogative gaze): It would have been hard to get an apartment on our home income, I tried to ask the council, was received by the district chairwoman, who’s only question was: “What is your occupation? Engineer? Than you will earn enough to buy or build a flat for yourself.” At that time I was earning half as much as the manual workers in the factory. “

– Kolja: I was working with my hands for a living, but I also didn’t get an apartment. The “son of people’s enemy” was not entitled to get even as worker. I was working like horse for years, doubled my income by moonlighting, and at last I could put down my share in a cooperative housing. That is also beautiful. It’s smaller than this, and is situated in a huge house, but consists of two rooms with all modern conveniences. We can live normally in it. We spend our pants financing it, but still, this is life.

– Camille: Okay, Kolja, how do you live now? Since you got rid of your shackles, your Dad being rehabilitated, and the market economy certainly has improved already the supply position, must be better. I guess you asked for and received moral and material compensation as well!

– Kolja: You aren’t familiar with the Russian relations! Now the destruction and pillage of what have been built by the old system is going on. Production fell far below the bottom of cesspool. There aren’t military orders, half of the industry and research lived on that. The Union disintegrated, and the trade relations are being realigned by the internal thieves and foreign big capital. The availability of goods on the market is certainly better, because small toiling people scrape together a little more of their land, but where this is not where it is not. The prices are rising to stars in the heavens; the ordinary working man like me cannot afford them. While we can export oil and gas, the country won’t collapse. True, the oil industry is also being robbed; half of it is already in private hands.

– Narrator (interrupts): I’ve also succeeded in importing crude oil, the executives of the exporting public company demanded private, black commission. Such kickbacks were not put down in written in our contract, it was just known that Russian suppliers expect some amount, nicknamed commission, and then when the 30 000 tonnes have flown over Druzhba pipeline, they demanded 10% of the returns – prick well your ears! – of the revenue. Threatened – ex-communists – that others pay this much, I’ll hit my ankles if I don’t pay the same amount. This was a fraction of the profits from the purchase price we received from the official Hungarian channel. It was also demanded that I need to quickly establish an offshore company and transfer their “commission” there. I learnt from them, that-as they said – the remaining fraction of the Soviet Union’s oil industry in 1993 already could not account for 11 billion dollars. That much had been “saved” abroad. And after all these they proved to be exceptionally untalented, busted somewhere else and were lowered for years.... Wait, I continue because this is not all! I get a phone from an agent in Moscow, to offer crude oil, under exactly these conditions: 10% kickbacks. I tell him it doesn’t work; I can offer a fraction of it. How is that, he asks, others do pay it without batting an eyelid. I almost screamed to him: in that case they pay neither duty, nor turnover tax... What does he say to that? It’s not his concern, so long as there are customers ready to pay, they will receive the goods offered, you may close your shop. One has heard about this and that, about thousands of billion forints, that oil traders, gangsters steal from the state and build their

castles, drive Mercedes 500-ers, 600-ers, invade the casinos and brothels, carouse abroad. But anything like that? I indeed closed my small firm. I would rather live modestly than in jail or eternal agony of remorse.

– Peter (gasping for air): Incredible, shocking! I was convinced that the foulnesses of the communist system have ended once and for all, and you see. Does law enforcement, justice exist here at all?

– Narrator: (ahead of Kolja, who would like to speak): Of course there is. Our legal system is great! Eureka, seriously eureka! Just one has to be able to use it, to make use of it. Ordinary people already know: chicken thieves are immediately caught and punished hard. The major determinant of impunity is the size of the amount stolen, robbed. There is a limit above which the punishment is no more than to spend a few months under house arrest, and then politicians will gloss over the issue. Oh, I forgot to say, that in addition to the substantial amount essential condition is that every important politician or party must receive its satisfactory share. That's all... If both conditions are met even the meanest son of a bitch is washed snow white.

– Kolja (continues from the last word, almost interrupts): Those, who don't adhere to agreements with the mafias, and of course law enforcement people and politicians, if they are not careful enough are executed by criminals like mangy dogs. National robbery is going on... The country is being set in rights. The creation of mafias' order is on the agenda.

– Su: Interestingly enough, we don't get similar news from China, though indeed, things work differently there... Since the communist government softened and opened to the rest of the world, allowed the establishment of domestic private enterprises, we develop lightning-fast, and the reduction of state ownership has not worn the character of robbery, it is being done on systematic way. And constant attention is paid, that the crucial tools for process control of privatisation remained in the hands of the centre. Why could you not use similar regularity and maintain a strong central government to implement the creation of a market economy here?

– Narrator: Su, it is very simple. We have a saying: one has fallen through to the other side of the horse. One side of the horse is market economy having controlled management. The other side of the horse is neoliberalism or libertarianism or what the hell it is christened now? An economic system, from which smart economists and bastard capitalists too, yeah, a couple of stupid politicians also state, that it functions best if it isn't controlled by anyone or anything. And that private property works better than public. Because the owners treasure their properties, therefore run them well, while the state is negligent, and what the hell else is stuck to it. Eye-wash, tomfoolery! After all, in the capitalist world, hardly remained serious company that is managed by the original owner. The leadership of joint stock companies are the same people, made sit there, like the leaders of socialist state-owned enterprises. Managers lead, not owners. So, from this approach then develops the open robbery. During the privatisation process and further, endless process of growing corruption. Thus, the capital swallows greedily everything in its path. The plotted picture may be a bit primitive, but this is the truth. More and more experts and countries realize that this cannot go on. The big problem is that no weapon remained in our country, that is to say minds who would draw this on the country's skies... they are smearing all sorts of nonsense: privatisation, only the private enterprises perform well, the state not, gas prices and other bullshit. Hell with all this! You'll see, it will turn out that a considerable part of the large private companies will be interested in this "I run better" only until they will have robbed everything that can be robbed, they'll take the abducted money to Switzerland or save it in offshore companies, will file for bankruptcy, sell the wreckage to Westerners or force uncle state to purchase back and with that the deal will be finished. And they'll continue to pose as the nation's big entrepreneurs!

– Camille: But, once more, you, Kolja, how do you live? I believe you have got a decent job? And your salary must have been put in order?

– Kolja: Ah, who cares about those now, who had been persecuted? And neither chest-pounding nor begging are my bread. As long as I have two hands, I can live fair life. I install, repair, serve... Right now I'm guard at a defence service company. Private enterprise, the owner is a pal of mine, so I am well paid; I get \$ 100 a week. And nobody hurts me... I extend loans to the owner, and he turns me back 50% more.

- Narrator: You won't get fooled? Are the loans secured by papers?
- Kolja: By no means, then there won't be 50%. I told you, he is friend.
- Camille: And why fell apart the Soviet Union? When the whole world is globalizing? Bigger and bigger economic blocs are created just because only they can keep up with the bests, with America.
- Narrator: Because they have been using the most barbaric methods of repression. Methods that they've virtually inherited from the anointed rulers of Russia, who were shoved down from their throne by people's anger. The methods are quite common, the U.S. is also using them in our days: armed annexation, that is called liberation by the oppressors since ancient times; occupation forces stationing there in garrisons, of course, it is also friendly gesture that they are there, searching for army of ass-kissing slaves and corruption, intimidation of them, in case of expanded and durable resistance, sometimes small donations, saying you can see, we are true Great Friends. Let me not to continue. In the "damned era" I was involved in commercial tours; they were called at that time "shopping delegations". The name was partly correct. Low level bosses could wager some money: they purchased cheap, useful stuff, took it home avoiding paying duty, and then sold them at multiple prices. But this is not the important side of the question! As member of such "delegations" I have visited for example small countries, Baltic States, conquered before World War II, and released only in the days of the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was incredible. In Estonia, the passers overlooked over my head when I asked for directions in Russian. We visited nice, clean factories. The bosses were Russian in all of them, the chief engineers local people. The latter poor creatures were bowing and scraping, my heart has broken, could not look in their eyes. And now too, the Russians are trampling into ruins the small Chechnya, who had demanded freedom... Terrible!
- Camille: But Anti, you had also got a big slap in the face during the revolution, you haven't asked for compensation?
- Narrator: No, I'm also not carved off such wood. And well, the whole matter is disgusting. First, who is going to pay for the compensation? The rest of the population, the taxpayers. What's the sense? On the other hand, I do not want to belong to the gang, which is proliferating like mushrooms. Like the Partisan Association after World War II. There were – say – around 60 resistance fighters, declaring they have been partisans – thousands. And finally, memorial was erected in this country for a bloody killer and it is almost sure that someone, who was involved in animal-type massacre, now decorates the benches of Parliament. Revolutionaries? I do not join them!

*

New scene: hospital

Light beam, the little grandson spins out of it. He sits down on the bed and grabs the narrator's hand. He smiles watching the patient's head, flutters on his face, faint smile on the edge of his lips.

– "Okay, Papi, a few days more and I am going to lead you out of here. I just remembered, I must be born before that, slap on the wrist, how is it?"

Tell me Papi, and what is your idea about equality? You suggested something yesterday, but I am not sure that I got the message well. General equality? But it never existed, right? I am trying to think over the history, but in vain, and I also foreshadow the future with my little brain, and it doesn't want to hold together! What do you say? That at least the efforts should become more stable and last forever? It really is ridiculous that these days a few capitalists offer more money to help the lowliests, and to eradicate terrible diseases than the whole world community! They come and then they go, the problems cannot be solved with their money! What to do? And where do you get from that racial and ethnic differences can be eliminated? How should it be done? You must be right, if it appears in your dream. Wait a minute; I'll look around, what is the reality today? "

Ray of light, the little grandson dissolves in it.

The narrator raises his head at the same time and is tossing it. He is moaning, murmurs barely audible and understandable words:

– “Oh, no need to look around, I know very well... one-third of the population is trampled, put in shame...it is not enough ... that they are starving, many of them don't have cover over their heads,... on top of it all they became targets of mud-slinging ... when honest citizens see homeless people or beggars in this country... yes, the citizens get nauseous and almost spit... do not want to work, it is stinky for them... and if get some work, squander their money on drink – almost everyone says – if they see Gypsies they right away adhere some ugly adjective: they use fucking abusive language about them,...and this is going on all over the country ... and the Jews also became a target again... if something is wrong, it is immediately smeared on the stinking Jews... 60 years after the Nazis burned them in the millions ... my God, my God, woe is me...”

The Gypsy patient from the opposite bed goes to him and strokes his hand, then rings the nurse. She receives with pleasure the good news that he began to speak and gives him an injection.

He calms down slowly, but continues murmuring: “And guess what, the émigré patriots carried with them this condescension and hate. Peter told me. “

*

New scene: the flat, the conversation continues

– Peter: In a school of Florida, where education is going on in our mother tongue, three waves can be identified: those who emigrated after the war are educated people and tend to live well; the post-revolutionary political refugees were spoiled because of political fanfare, they got everything; the recently emigrated ones, the nouveau riche are offended because they are barely tolerated. At the same time, however, from one point of view they are the same: in case they blaze up against each other, hate, and disfellowship someone, the event has three stages. The mildest is, that he or she is called commie. If the hatred is deeper, the person is nicknamed Gypsy, finally comes the dirty Jew.

And of course, during the altercation the Hungarian society in the U.S. was split, the clubs are split in two factions: those who believe to belong to the elite may enter the “gentlemen's club”, those who find themselves trapped out of this clubs may join the club, wearing defamatory name: “peasants-club”. This is similar to castes, rigorous castes. Typical, isn't it?

*

New scene: the hospital again

The narrator is sitting on the bed, fumbles on the bedside table, takes off a newspaper and reads it. Enters his daughter, Amrita: beautiful, slim, sports dark brown “Cleopatra” hair wreath, has oval face, deep brown eyes, Greek nose and wears glasses. Seeing her little tummy the narrator widely opens his eyes:

– “Gee, you haven't told me that you are pregnant! Well, then he came to me in my unconscious dreams. What a great boy is he ... or will be ... he used to sit here, on the edge of my bed and encouraged me that I'll be fine. And we were thinking about the future together. Used to say that had to be born yet.”

Amrita's eyes nearly pop out:

– “What are you talking about? You were dreaming about this? I came here whenever I could. You could observe since a few days that I was here, and used to mumble incomprehensible things. You opened your eyes for the first time yesterday, but couldn't really see. Muttered something about hate, and castes, but I was unable to follow you. I was told that you would be better soon, the shock would pass. Maybe you'll be let out on Friday.”

– Narrator (looking in front of himself): “Thought transmission, already? What can be in that evolving tiny brain? Or is it that just the connection was established, the rest was created by my fantasy? Maybe I will be able to communicate with him too, as I could with those two women who felt as if they were struck by lightning the moment I had the accident in Tripoli, where storm winds brushed off my car from the road and it made three quarter turn around its longitudinal axis. One of them was 1000 km

afar, but knew instantly that I was in trouble, the other lived 2000 km away, caught a finger of her in a ski lift, because distracted by fear didn't pay attention. My brain must radiate wild impulses in extreme circumstances."

– Amrita: Take it easy, the whole matter was pure imagination. He is just starting to kick. Just put your hand here! Do you feel it?

– Narrator: Yeah, gee, how lively he is. And tell me what's out there? I just noticed that you have put here a newspaper, but have not read it yet. Is it allowed at all?

– Amrita: Yes, but be careful, do not get tired. The world is brewing, the Round Table talks are going on and it's likely that general election will be held soon. Multi-party system will be allowed, and there are talks about social market economy... Oh, and Kolja might come.

*

New scene: the narrator talking to his grandson

We jump back to the above scene when the narrator sitting in an armchair talks to his teenage grandson, huddled in front of him.

– Narrator: So the personnel managers were nice, I could reach something. – I could have been even trade commissioner in India, guess what? In that terrible, yet wonderful world. I didn't have to beg for it, I was esteemed for not hiding my having been kicked in my pants. I used to jump a lot, changed my jobs like gentlemen change their drawers, mostly because my nerves could not stand the stupidity of managers. And I had to carry out jobs that weren't even in nodding acquaintance with my aviation engineering diploma. Of course what I had to do, I did well, so I could not be easily provoked. But I suffered ultimately shock, twice in a row: I was offered to occupy the post of deputy commercial counsellor in India, in Delhi, I did not accept – knowing that I burn with that step the bridge behind –, because my boss would have been a bigoted ass. The second shock I received when – returning from India – I was invited to be commercial director of an international firm. To my surprise the general manager left and the new one over my head again proved to be a Stalinist moron.

I packed up and left the socialism, I established a so called small cooperative. We quickly evolved until I haven't begun to deal with the Soviet Union. An incredible amount of dirt spilled on me. He is thoughtfully stroking his little grandson's head, and continues:

– But this is not what I wanted to talk about now. At home the system moved toward bankruptcy with the speed of express train. The opposition entered the stage with opened helmet and the rotting started picking up the speed inside the system as well. Especially the level of middle managers – who have travelled abroad and have seen how people of the same level live under capitalism – was aware that a market economy can yield them golden rain. Quickly gave the name of "parliamentary democracy" and "social market economy" to the future, so as the people ate it up as noodles. They did so. On the general elections – as I had predicted – the Communist Party that had split in two not quite reached 13%, the country fell into the hands of a less than nothing party and its less than nobody leader. The country's economy was quickly looted; the process was grandly called privatisation. We didn't have to wait long for the syllable civic that was casually placed in front of the simple "parliamentary democracy". Of course, no one explained to the people that the word civic isn't equal to citizen, but means bourgeois. As it is generally used in English. Few want to perceive this important distinction. It limits the circle of people who enjoy the benefits of democracy in the same way as people's democracy limited them till the change of gangsters, just with opposite signs...

Well, I'll just have a doze, and you head down to the garden, run around a bit.

*

New scene: Horváth garden

The Narrator and Kolja are walking in the Horváth garden:

– Narrator: This statue is of your Mama. Masterpiece! Remote location, few people know that this is the work of Béni and that it portrays your Mama.

Kolja makes a few strides aside, doesn't look for a moment on the statue, then walks up, sits on the pedestal, rubs the figure with his eyes.

– Narrator: Tell me, Kolja, I have often wanted to ask... What memories of your Dad do you preserve?

– Kolja (still looking at the statue): Much is only hazy memory. Mama and Béni have known each other already in the colony of artists, it dawns that from there they spent a lot of time together. My Dad's image almost dies away; most probably he couldn't be a lot with me. I know they met in Paris, it was advisable for Béni too to flee after the Commune, and he also did something on cultural lines...

*

New scene: dissolving picture, love

The scene now is the leafy, park-like garden of the house of Ferenczys in the artists' colony. In one of the corners of the walkway Erzsike and the artist are seen. Hand in hand, they don't embrace, but the closeness of bodies also reveals the feelings.

– Béni: Erzsike, don't go with him, I assume the responsibility for the child. You don't feel how much I love you? It will kill me if you leave! My every moment is yours, I live with you, all my dreams are of you. It's crazy; I cannot break away from you! I would not make it the other day. I beg you; I know you love me more than him. What's more important, love or duty? Don't burn our love on the altar of obligation!

– Erzsike: He must escape. And doesn't abandon the child, he loves him too much. I don't have other choice than to accompany them. Can't you also come; you want to see anyway what's going on there? The arts have also blossomed, you know, a new world, a revolutionary new painting and poetry is unfolding. It's your world!

Cries from the house: Erzsike, we have to start!

The image is being blurred, slowly.

*

New scene: Horváth garden

We are back in the Horváth garden.

– Kolja: When Dad and Mama headed to the Soviet Union, Béni immediately went after them. Everyone knew that he was left-leaning, but all friend were surprised – said Mama later –, when he asserted that he is curious about the communist reality and leaves. I am sure he was already blindly in love with my Mama! Out there Mama and Dad broke up about two years later. Mama moved to Béni, Dad – remaining alone – moved together with a Russian woman, Mammy.

Mama and Béni soon decided to return home, they perceived the turpitude of the soviet system. They were “massaging” Dad for quite some time to go home with them. “They are going to kill you here.” – augured. When he said no, I was brought to a crossroads. Both parents stood in front of me, didn't sit down, none of them took me on their lap, just asked me if I wanted to go home with Mama?.. I clung to my Dad's pants ... I always liked him more ... Since then when I think about it, always this picture lights up: Dad, who is so tall I cannot see his face and his pants. Yes, his wide brown pants.

– Narrator (almost stammering): Kolja, I first hear this from you!

The statue of Erzsike is mute, the air freezes in between those, who chat, too.

– Narrator (to relieve the horror): Come, Kolja, let's go and have some snacks at the wave pool terrace again.

– Kolja (with gleaming eyes): It's high time for another bottle of vodka, and for eating a platter full of meat! And what flags will they bring us?

– Narrator: You are cute, Kolja, but it doesn't go this time, I drive and my appetite is also not the same. You eat and drink what you want, now I'm the host, not Béni, but I'll have only a slice of cake and drink some juice.

They walk slowly to the western brand middle-class car, drive over the bridge and park in front of the hotel.

– Narrator (continues during their walk): The second free election was approaching. It was really free, as it was supposed to be, but it proved awfully difficult to decide for whom to vote. Those in power were excluded for me; they had played their toddlers' games during their three years. They proved to be demagogues, the privatisation was carried out with stupid mistakes, their "paraselene" was looting, the economic life was devastated, and a lot of other troubles. At first I thought I would vote for the party of the youth, established a few years earlier: they seemed to be peachy, free from the sins of communism. If the election was a year earlier, – swear to God – I would have voted for them. I didn't mind their long hair, ostentatiously casual wear that disturbed the older generation. Then – thanks God – I sensed the stink. It was their leader, who stunk: he began to exterminate those around himself, who didn't implement his ideas without debate. I anticipated that he was heated by dictatorial tendencies.

Do you know the mechanism of the birth of dictators? Don't? I specify, scientists, historians, psychiatrists drew the formula, summarizing experiences of thousands of years. My summary: they have proved with infallible certainty that the technique, choreography of obtaining power, of victory of becoming dictators had been evolved over thousands of years, assumed uniform forms and proved that it's macabre game with human stupidity of crazy, sick power-hungry persons.

In a little more details:

First and foremost he, rarely she has to believe in himself, notably with violent, immense self-confidence and has to be able to identify himself with the masses.

The second condition is: only those can become dictators who have the required cunning, brutality and adequate dexterity.

Hitler admitted: "The man who was born to be dictator becomes dictator because he wants to be, not because he is forced to rise to it. Nobody stands behind him, he encourages himself. "

If he possesses these qualities, the dictator candidate only needs to take action as a sign of that particular form, graphic symbol or live image of the power to which the people secretly long to surrender. He has to build from himself unique personality, which really evokes an impression of a mythical figure that is always present and powerful, ubiquitous and capable of tangible action everywhere...

The third is: capability of acting at stepping on the scene and during the possession of it. Dictator candidates will only be able to rule over the masses, if they can express the mystery of "incarnation", of "choosiness" and with ranting role-playing to conjure their vicious self. Great acting skills were / are in need!

It was established that Mussolini was extraordinary "actor, malingerer, exhibitionist", for whom the governance was mainly focused on becoming the Duce, and to be seen as such. To be the leader, chief, or "circus tamer" whom the Italians sought!

Hitler also had extremely striking, captivating power, mainly due to the expectations of his public.

Hitler was able to convince the majority of the Germans that in his person they found a prominent individual, the matchless Führer. He could achieve this, because a messiah figure was expected to appear.

They arrive at the lodge, quietly walk by the swimming pool and up the stairs to the terrace, where admire the view and the swimmers for a few minutes, and then settle down at a corner table.

– Narrator: What was I talking about? Yes, that the dictators and the candidates have immense acting talent. One could count here their ability to lie too: they must be able to lie with great vigour as if what they claim was sacred truth. And they must be able to reverse this with conviction within a few days. What has been their assertion a few days earlier, becomes a lie, what has been a lie, is elevated to be holy truth. Maybe sometimes they even believe what they are saying. Autosuggestion! And the bigger the lie, the more “unheard-of the effrontery”, the greater the chance that people would believe! The masses in their emotional, primitive simplicity let themselves be exploited, and “will be easier victims of a big lie than of a small one.” The Greek authors long time ago understood, and ascertained that “it is not the oppressor who creates the slaves, but the slaves create the tyrant.” The explanation lays in the wish dreams of the masses. Finally, in order to gain power, and especially to retain it, they must constantly “hoodwink” the masses. These nefarious hoodwinking methods have been developed historically, dictators and those coming to power, who are heated by unscrupulous ambitions do not have to invent new ones, it is enough just to adapt the “normal tools” to the current situation and vary them well. The success is secured! Should I tell you some tricks that are used by them for dizzying the people? Just that suddenly come to my mind! The power of symbols is enormous: signals, figures, stars, emblems, crosses, badges, flags and colours. Yes, since very ancient times flags lead the masses who desire to surrender or had already yielded to the battles, party meetings, temples, places of pilgrimage. I count on: coats of arms, animal figures, eagles, kites.

Hitler’s Third Reich from the very first moment is the product of omnipotent symbols that governed the events.

And John the Baptist is also holding a flag in his hand. Fakirs, boasting with exceptional performance – otherwise not struggling from dictatorial desire, just wanting to achieve outstanding reputation – are not satisfied with their own performance, they hire bearers of flags as well, to draw more attention with that to themselves.

A dictator or a nominee with the intension to stylise his stature to “heraldic” figure organizes grand pageants, gigantic ceremonies, and colossal parades with the aim that “the participants immersed in the lust of ecstasy of masses.”

Singing together! You must have seen the film Cabaret which portrays the great suggestive effect of singing.

I return to the flags! The flag of the revolution of 1956, having a hole in the middle is exorbitantly used and misused by the Hungarian rightists!

And I stress: meetings, ceremonies, grandiose parades, which were of high fashion mainly in Hitler’s Germany and in your country are real magic, spells that enchant people.

Consecration of flags! The youth leader, whom I found suspicious, when he came to power five years later, did nothing else than consecrated, made others to consecrate, donated, and carried around the country colours! All these means influence, mobilize huge crowds, enchant their sight, fascinate their imagination, and cripple the reviewer or critical spirit. The ritual makes the dictatorship more solid.

– Kolja: My God, Tolja, how much truth is in what you say! Too bad that it is hard to digest. You should write it down and proclaim far and wide: People, be careful when you meet such persons!

– Narrator: Wait, I have not finished yet! The “fake language” is no less effective device. The use of metaphorical language – according to linguistic researchers too – may successfully be implemented for political purposes. “Words have magic power” – professes Hitler in Mein Kampf.

For a person who wants to force its will on the masses, it’s easy to distort the meaning of the words, to tamper the language. Develops the “appropriate” discourse and uses specific language techniques to rape the commons. The aim is to overcome the resistance fighters. This is used by our young candidate and his circle by terrible force, taking over from the far right false attributes, accusing those, who don’t surrender: they are the nationals and citizens, the opponents are denunciators, anti-nationals, and traitors. The tyrannical, hateful words, the words of the Lords’ language are not innocent, they enjoy killing. They murder, curse, bark, snap, deafen, shock, shoot, betray, cheat, persecute, oppress, destroy, “crush the world,” instil hatred; replace light, beauty, life, love. And here, step by step they

hang on themselves false clothing as well, the clothing of the upper-class of the past world, the clothing of fake ancient legends, in addition to the symbols and false language. True, the hatred evolved against the murderous communism that captivated the whole world is a great help to them.

Good breeding ground!

– Kolja: What you say makes it clear to me that the circulating legends are true: Stalin was insane!

– Narrator: Not only he, Hitler as well. And everyone who was, is, or wants to be dictator. Everyone who touches these devices. Including our little dwarf. Oops, now that I uttered the dwarf, I thought: surely there is great truth in the opinion that they intend to compensate their stature with the political greatness.

– Kolja: Indeed, Stalin was also a short man... And tell me, Tolja, never arose in you the intention to leave this country? For me – if even I wanted to – it was impossible to escape till the fall of the Soviet Union; any attempt would have meant certain death!

– Narrator: Sure, how on earth wouldn't have arisen? When Czechoslovakia was invaded with our glorious armies, I was just on the way to spend my first holiday abroad. By car, in the company of my sister and brother in law. Just crossed the border into the country of the "dog, wearing chain", they began to throw things at our car from vans, from road edge, tomatoes, eggs and sometimes even stones, it was pure luck that the latter did not hit us. I got fed up with everything. I told my brother in law that I have enough money to board a ship to sail through the Adriatic Sea in Italy and spend 2-3 days there, until I can find where and how to ask for asylum. He opened his wallet: just leave me enough so that we could ride home, be able to purchase petrol. I went to the port of Split, stopped a few steps in front of the cash register, and calculated if I really had enough money. But I could not take the few steps to the cash box, my legs rooted to the spot. I thought of you, how long-forgotten words popped up in you at the border. I also recalled two stories about homesickness.

One of them was my own experience: I was talking to a "dissident" on one of my official trips who was living in America and boasted that didn't have homesickness. I thought to try, if told me the truth? I was rummaging in his long-play discs, and put up one, Gypsy music. I was not surprised to see that crocodile tears are trickling down on his face. I haven't asked him any more, if had homesick?

The other one was told by a writer on a meeting of Hungarian students in Moscow. He served in your army during World War II, together with a friend. The front was idle for a few days; they decided to have a walk at the end of the village on an acacia tree line. He spoke to him, but suddenly realized that he was talking to empty air. He turned to his friend who was crying with his head down, just a few paces behind. "What is wrong? – asked.

"The acacia has the same fragrance as in our village at home" – was the soft reply. He was a tough military officer, who served on bloody front...

I knew about myself too that after two or three weeks abroad homesickness will eat the heck of me. I walked back slowly to the camping like a beaten dog. To this day I don't know if I took the right decision?

– Kolja: And after that how could you endure, that you had to represent socialism abroad? It could not be easy.

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New scene: the narrator, once again on the throne of clouds

In thinking posture says: The news that Imre Nagy during his exile in the Soviet Union was working for around ten years for the KGB and the blood of some 25-26 victims might stick to his hands, catapulted me here.

Provocation? Intrigue of the new power? Undoubtedly. The bewilderment still ejected.

Yet I am convinced that he was the greatest figure of the twentieth century in Hungary. Not because of what he did or just was trying to do helplessly during the revolution of 1956, but rather because he was ready to accept death, rather than to legitimise with a single signature the soviet repression and the puppet regime.

I was also influenced by one of the members of Nagy's defence counsel, who had been the president of the Supreme Court (Curia) in Horthy's regime, with whom fate brought together.

It was compulsory for him to be present at the execution...

*

New scene: dissolving picture, civilian housing

The scene is now a flat of an old couple, furnished with antique furniture, comfy rugs, heavy curtains, a small coffee table in the corner, high-backed armchairs. The lighting is dim, evening lights are flickering through the slots of the suspended blind addition to the still youthful narrator three old persons of more or less the same age are sitting around the table. The hosts: retired lawyer and his wife, both are smoking, the man without anything, she using a long cigarette-holder. The third – the ex-president of Curia – is of medium height, thin, sharp-eyed gentleman, with intelligent face.

Coffee cups. They are quite rhapsodically jumping from subject to subject. After a few words it's clear that – to put it mildly – none of them believes in socialism.

– Ex-president: If anyone would have tried at that time to intervene in the justice system! Only once I got a call from a minister, who gently touched the string that it would be great to pass acquittal in the case of X. I picked up the direct phone of the prime minister and reported that the minister had tried to win my confidence. He submitted his resignation the next day.

– Host: We had several times asked you to tell us an account of the trial and execution of Imre Nagy, but always eluded the subject. Now maybe you'll tell our friend Tóni, he still believes in many ways in what this damned system is doing.

– Ex-president: Okay, let's get on it! The lawsuit itself is not worth much time to waste. In spite of the crazy security measures the intention was to perform a show trial for the public. The proceedings were filmed, hoping that one of the accused collapses and will renounce everything. Even there they were trying to incite them to each other. I don't think or rather don't know if they suffered any physical harm. They've had enough of years of tension, of course, extremely worn, haggard men stood in front of their primitive judge.

The task of defence was hopeless, all sentences were pre-determined, perhaps even made in writing. We suggested to Nagy that at least resorted for the President's mercy it would have saved time for him, we hoped that international protests will occur, and he would have escaped from the rope. It was shocking when he immediately dismissed the possibility of grace.

He behaved as a real hero, didn't humiliate himself even for a moment in front of the illegitimate power.

The execution itself was horrible... It's difficult to talk about it... Maybe he didn't know that the sentence would be executed right away, on the next day... Completely collapsed!... Already on death row... From there they dragged him to the gallows so as his feet slid helplessly on the ground... Could not stand on his feet below the gallows too, he was held by two prison guard, while the noose hadn't been dropped around his neck...

Horror!...

But even in such state didn't utter a single pleading word...

Collapsed, yet (with emphasis) true hero! – And the eyes of the matured man filled with tears.

– Narrator (as a narrator calls out from the company, or may step out from them): We were sitting in profound silence, in shock, for several minutes. I remembered Kolja, who had met Imre Nagy at Ferenczys after years of exclusion as if he had been his uncle. What could he feel when he got the news of his having been hanged?

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New scene: corner of Váci Street – Kígyó Street

Narrator: I haven't seen Kolja for years. I was working day and night; he had to find his place in the new – neocapitalist – system. I have already retired, and was close to seventy, he to eighty when he visited his Mama's place for transferring or taking home the small portion "allocated" him from the wreckage that remained from the legacy of Ferenczys having been robbed by a foundation before his mother's death.

We were wandering in the city a couple of times, talked a lot. This time we walked around the statue of Kolja, sculpted by Béni when he was a small boy and set down on the pedestal of it, the downtown public warmly swarmed around, the late summer sun was shining nicely when we were trying to make out of our memories of the past some questions believed to be important.

– Kolja: I received the closing report about my Dad's fate. I learnt only now the full truth: he was executed in the jail in the middle of the city, you know, right there, next to your university, at the distance of around 100 steps, if you walk towards the statue of Marx. On the left, the medieval-looking red building. Two days after he was taken there, haven't lived. A so called troika, a three-member tribunal sentenced to death, in one short trial meeting.

– Narrator: Just now? Nearly 70 years after his death, and eleven years after the birth of democracy? Terrible!

– Kolja: What democracy? You used to say that gangster-change, isn't it? This system has nothing to do with democracy. Mafias dominate the system. Everything, starting from the business world over the judiciary, to the government circles is in their hands. The elections are circuses, the present top boss, who for many years was head of the KGB, is now regular participant of festive holy masses, and crosses himself like best of believers. Pharisee of the highest level!

– Narrator: It is funny though, how on earth can happen that most of dollar billionaires of the world are living in Moscow, and the people live in misery?

– Kolja: Well, so that for example the energy sector is supervised by a man who was a street-corner florist till the gangster-change. Now his mind suddenly enlightened, he knows everything, can do anything. Son of a bitch, bastard. All of them are such, steal, cheat! They charm themselves into dollar billionaires in a few years, stealing away huge plants, systems that have been built by the people's sweat, blood. Just one example: What do you think, how many km of long-distance gas pipelines have been built in the Soviet Union during the communist regime? You will not find out! 400000 km, what a fantastic achievement! Superhuman accomplishment. And now it is robbed by nobodies who never moved a little finger when it was being built.

– Narrator: You know, when I was a student I worked all summer to earn for dress up. Twice in Stalincity. I built it with my hands. Thousands have been working, building it for starvation wages, still many of them had the feeling of ownership. And now those who intend to privatise quarrel over it as the jackals over bloody spoil. And so it went on for 15 years, by now almost nothing is left of the common national wealth.

– Kolja: And what is your opinion that America took over our place? The new and only bastion of state terror. Horrible what they're doing in Iraq, along with Britain. And you also took the side of these despicable powers! You are fighting, as fought – with opposite sign – against those who didn't bow their head to the power of the currently reigning violence. Can you explain this?

– Narrator: Sound minds cannot understand this. It's complete fiasco! Once I'll write a review on this neocapitalism, civic democracy, I'll try to collect my thoughts well. All I can tell you right now – oh,

you know – that the reason I became “blackbottom”(1) was that I dared to say in ‘56 that fascism hasn’t got deep roots in our country. If I were asked now, I would admit with deep, sad bow of head: I was wrong, but YES, INDEED the roots are deep! Extraordinarily, it seems indestructibly deep.

The spectre of my life has landed on my neck because of my mistake!

It’s almost laughable that years before the change of gangsters, I, the “blackass”^{*} was threatened just because they knew I had been studying in your country. I was told to stick a red star to my cap to make it easier for them to take me off... And who was that person? The main ass-kisser of the stupid Stalinist general manager!

*

New scene: a small, but well furnished kitchen

The narrator and his little grandson, who grew up to be a young man are sitting at the kitchen table sipping something. He ponders, delivers a monologue:

“I think it can be safely stated that the neocapitalism and the bourgeois democracy of the former socialist countries is a failure... It did not arrive to failure, but it is a failure from the moment of its birth, the failure originates from the methods it uses, from the looting, repulsion of significant proportion of its citizens, of squandering of the national wealth.

The question that the whole capitalist system must be reformed or overthrown is of secondary importance for us at the moment In spite of its highest ever effectiveness – although it might not be true any more, think about China – and despite that 8-10 countries became very rich, the fact that half of the human race plunged into or retained in poverty and the system mercilessly exploits them, represents serious failure. First I used to say and write jokingly that neocapitalism is an impasse leading out of an impasse, but now I am earnestly convinced that my aphorism expresses serious truth. We are floundering again in an impasse; in fact we arrived to the bottom of the bag...

Our great politicians fight for power while the most important lessons cannot be drawn from the fact that 16 years after the change of gangsters, having emptied our sack of national wealth we are at the same point of indebtedness than we were then.

If this system is not rogue, then what is?...

They do not realize that the ever-regenerating financial holes have been cleared of foreign inpayments from privatisation and now that the property assets are empty, we are at the end of the one way street!!!...

If we don’t grab as the last resort the skirt of the European Union, the country will definitely fall flat... Only hanging on the boobs of the European Union can survive the disaster, which had been brought together again, during the 16 years of independence by our chiefs of robbers... An acceptable plan was finally completed which could serve as a trailer, but the political struggle was utterly biased to the level of explosion by the fierce power struggle, launched by a lunatic who runs amok...

What is the result?

The semi-fascist and even fascist forces once again emerged from their gopher holes; wave the flag of the ultra-fascist mob which for the last time at the end of World War II had killed hundreds of thousands, howling in unison the catchwords of that era, fuelling racism. For me the negative peak of the last few days was when three of the criminals, ordinary criminals who had occupied a public institution, got released from prison and were taken only under house arrest, the crowd applauded them and sang the national anthem in their honour... And all this is done on the grounds that the Prime Minister had lied? ... On the West they laugh at the naivety, being aware of the old definition: “What is politics? It’s high art of lying!”...

^{*} Hungarian expressions for marking those who are treated as outcasts.

My dear boy, you live in a dark country, be very careful!

The rumour that Imre Nagy formerly was soviet informer is very depressing for me...It's interesting, that the ex-president of Curia didn't mention anything like that. Maybe this question just didn't come up during the trial?...What would Kolja's opinion be about this?? May he suspect anything?...

I was deeply shocked!...

How would affect him, if he found out: it is possible that his father also belonged to the victims of Imre Nagy?... I wonder if the slightest suspicion could be hiding in him that Nagy was the actual killer of his Dad?

Christ almighty, in what kind of world we lived, we live, we shall live?? I hope all this is just a silly, serious provocation, undermining attempt!

I don't know whether we'll see Kolja at some point any more? Is he still alive at all? Could he reserve peace in his heart? Yes, I'm sure he would hug me with broad smile... And not a single word of complaint would leave his lips!...

For you I have a piece of advice, think it over. It's wiser to live accordingly: Create eternal peace with yourself, to be able to accept this evil world as it is. And don't be ever afraid to assume and proclaim your truth, you'll have to look in the mirror sooner or later.

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