

Enki Bilal / Pierre Christin

THE HUNTING PARTY



Humanoids Publishing

BIAL

Enki Bilal / Pierre Christin

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THE HUNTING PARTY (1983)

TRANSLATION BY JUSTIN KELLY

"YOU'VE ACQUIRED A TASTE FOR POWER,
LIKE THE TASTE FOR RARE MEAT."

GYORGY KONRAD

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THE HUNTING PARTY

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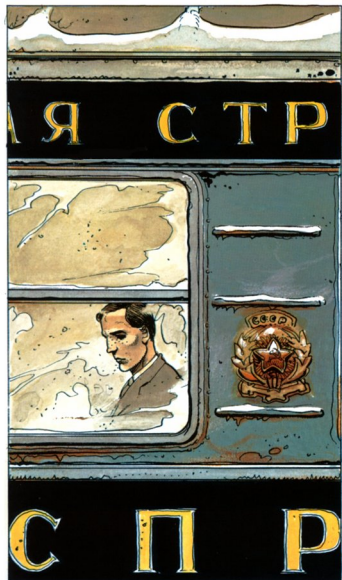
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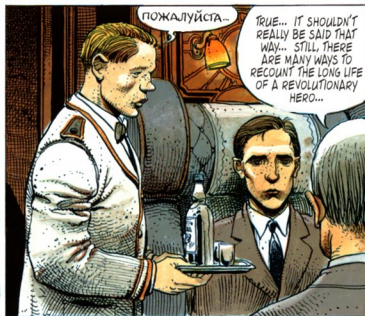
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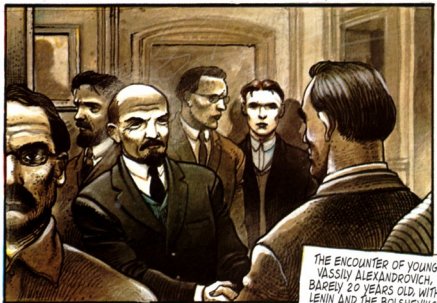
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HIS INVOLVEMENT WITH THE
PETROGRAD SOVIET, AND THE SEIZING
OF THE WINTER PALACE ON AN
AUTUMN EVENING IN 1917...



THE FORMATION OF THE FIRST
RED ARMY UNITS, WHICH
SPRANG UP TO FIGHT THE
OPPONENTS, BOTH INTERNAL
AND EXTERNAL, OF THE
REGIME...



VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH
SPOKE TO ME OFTEN OF HIS
BRAVEST SOLDIER AT THAT
TIME, AN AGELESS MUZHIK
NAMED ZHUCHENKO...





THE STRUGGLE AGAINST FAMINE, WHILE SUPPLY TRAINS WERE BEING ATTACKED AND LOOTED BEFORE EVEN ARRIVING IN THE TOWNS...

ПОМНИ ГОЛОДАЮЩИХ



THE CREATION OF A NEW NATION UPON THE RUINS OF THE TZAR EMPIRE...

THE INCREDIBLE EFFORTS OF AN ENTIRE COUNTRY PREPARING FOR INDUSTRIALIZATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT...



THEN, A GOOD DEAL LATER, THE HEROIC
BATTLE AGAINST THE GERMAN
INVADERS...



IT'S TRUE, ALL OF IT. AND YES,
VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH WAS AT
THE FOREFRONT OF IT ALL...



BUT YOU KNOW VERY WELL. MY
YOUNG COMRADE, THAT THE SAME
THINGS CAN BE PRESENTED IN
A DIFFERENT LIGHT...

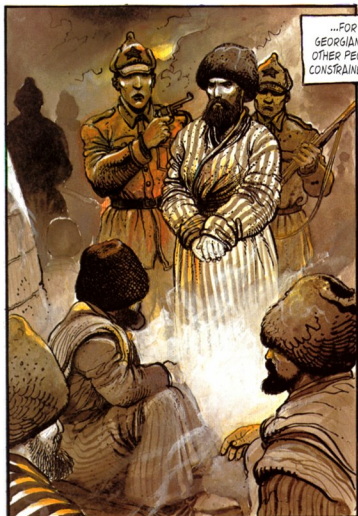


THE CHEKA, THE GPU, THE NKVD, THE KGB... TO YOU WESTERNERS
THESE ARE JUST NAMES OF SECRET POLICE GROUPS, NAMES THAT
FASCINATE OR HORRIFY YOU...



BUT FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY
SAILORS OF KRONSTADT WHO
ROSE UP IN 1921 AGAINST THE
NEW REGIME WITH THE
TERRIBLE CRY OF "DEATH TO
THE BOLSHEVIKS, LONG LIVE THE
SOVIETS!"...

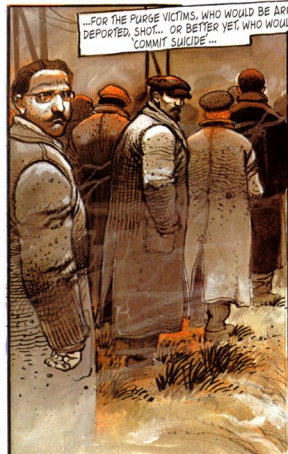




...FOR THE INDEPENDENT
GEORGIANS AND FOR THE MANY
OTHER PEOPLES COMPELLED AND
CONSTRAINED TO JOIN THE UNION...



...OR FOR THE MUZHIKS, MOWED
DOWN AFTER THEY BECAME
DESPERATE ARSONISTS IN ORDER
TO RESIST COLLECTIVIZATION...



...FOR THE PURGE VICTIMS, WHO WOULD BE ARRESTED,
DEPORTED, SHOT... OR BETTER YET, WHO WOULD
COMMIT SUICIDE ...



...FOR THE OLD GUARD REVOLUTIONARIES
WHO WERE ASSIGNED ROLES OF
TRAITORS DURING THE PUBLIC SHOW
TRIALS OF THE 1930'S...



FOR ALL OF THEM, AND FOR THE COUNTLESS OTHERS WHO DISAPPEARED, FORGOTTEN FOREVER, HISTORY HAS A DIFFERENT COLOR...



AND VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE PAINTING OF THAT HISTORY TOO...



YOU USE HARSH WORDS...

PERHAPS YOU'RE AFRAID THAT HE'LL HEAR THEM?



DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THAT FRENCH WAS THE ONE FOREIGN LANGUAGE HE ENJOYED?

THAT'S RIGHT... AND HE CERTAINLY UNDERSTANDS US... BUT SOMETIMES ON NIGHTS LIKE THIS WHEN WE DRINK TOGETHER, WE'D SPEAK IN HIS LANGUAGE...



BESIDES, SINCE HE BECAME CONFINED TO SILENCE, HE LIKES TO HEAR ME TALK FOR HIM. I KNOW IT.

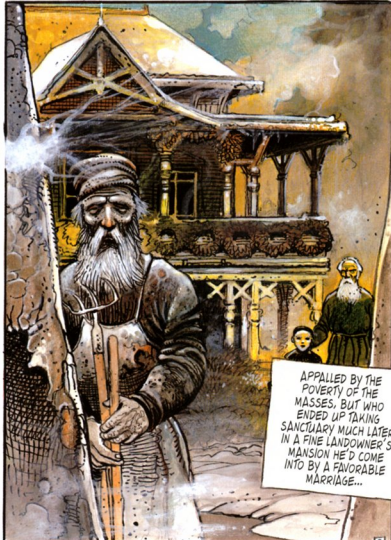
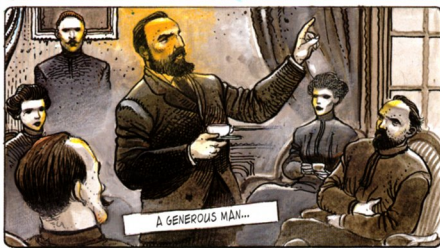


AND IN ANY CASE, THOSE ELEMENTS MIGHT NOT BE THE MAIN POINT IN A LIFE LIKE HIS...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



THE PARTY'S ONE THING, AND THE LIFE OF A PARTY MAN'S ANOTHER...





...WHICH DIDN'T PREVENT HIM FROM LENDING SUPPORT TO THE RISING SOCIAL DEMOCRACY, OR CONTINUING TO TELL STORIES TO VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH, WHOSE FATHER OR DISAPPEARED PREMATURELY...



STRANGE STORIES INDEED, LIKE THE ONE ABOUT OUR DISTANT ANCESTORS WHO APPARENTLY WOULD IMPALE THE WHOLE COURT UPON THE DEATH OF A KING...



JESTERS, KNIGHTS, AND LADIES, PERISHING IN THEIR NOBLEST FINERY, LIKE PIECES IN A GIGANTIC CHESS GAME...

A GAME THAT MAXIM MAXIMOVICH TAUGHT HIS GRANDSON IN THE QUIET GARDEN AT HIS DACHA IN THE CRIMEA...



JUST AS HE TAUGHT HIM TO HUNT HARE AND WOLF ACROSS THE VAST MUDDY PLAINS...



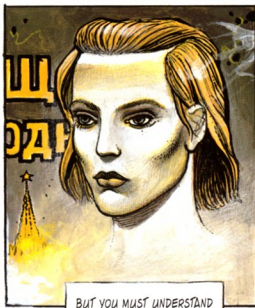
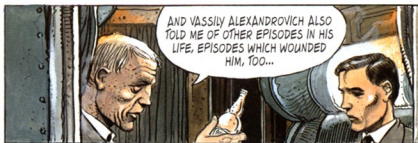
YOU SEE? HUNTING, AND CHESS. VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH'S TWO GREAT PASSIONS, BESIDES POLITICS. ALTHOUGH...

ALTHOUGH WHAT?

ALTHOUGH IT REALLY ALL COMES DOWN TO THE SAME THING — POWER.

POWER WHICH SOMETIMES MEANS CONQUER OR BE CONQUERED, KILL OR BE KILLED...



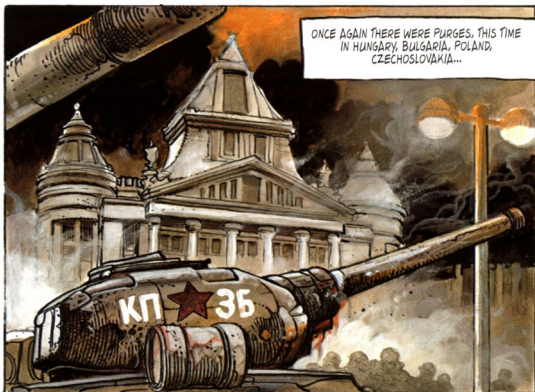




HE AND I OFTEN TRAVELED TO THE PLACES CONNECTED BY THE TRAIN WE'RE RIDING FROM MOSCOW...



ONCE AGAIN THERE WERE PURGES, THIS TIME IN HUNGARY, BULGARIA, POLAND, CZECHOSLOVAKIA...



VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH BELIEVED THEY WERE NECESSARY, AS DID I. AS DID MANY OTHERS, IT SEEMS...

AND NOW?



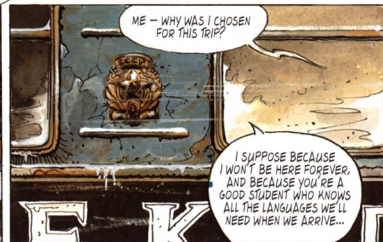
I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE BELIEVES ANYMORE... HIS LIPS ARE SEALED SINCE THE FACIAL PARALYSIS, AND HIS EXPRESSION NEVER CHANGES...

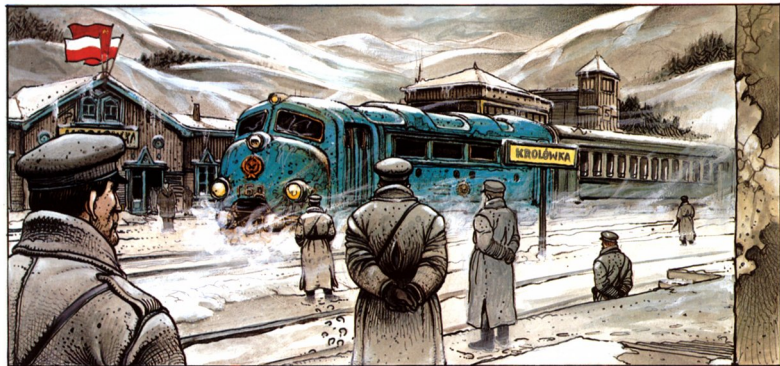


BUT HIS FACULTIES ARE ALL INTACT, AREN'T THEY?

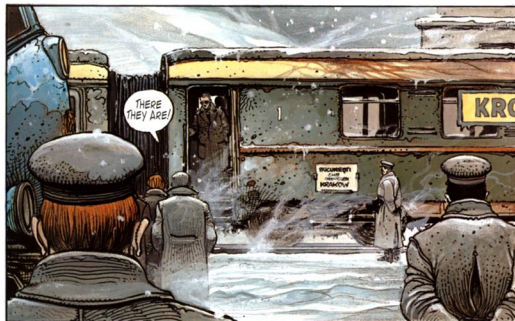
COMPLETELY. AS IS MOST OF HIS POWER, ALTHOUGH NOW HE'S JUST AN ORDINARY MEMBER OF THE PRESIDUM, AND A FEW OTHER PRESTIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS...











THERE THEY ARE!



THE ONE IN FRONT'S ION NICULESCU, MEMBER OF THE ROMANIAN CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND HEAD OF THE PARTY POLICE...

THE OTHER ONE, BEHIND HIM, IS JANOS MOLNAR, VICE-MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR IN BUDAPEST...



TO THE CARS, MY FRIENDS! COMRADE VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH IS WAITING FOR US...



HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE WE LAST MET? LET'S SEE... THE HUNT IN THE CARPATHIANS, WASN'T IT?

THAT'S RIGHT...

?! WHAT'S GOING ON OVER THERE?!



WILL YOU LET GO OF ME!

KIM JEST TEN MEZCZYZNA? CZEGO ON CHCE?

TO JEST FRANCUZ TWIERDZI ZE JEST TURISTA... WYDAJE NAM SIE, PODEPRZANY






YES, BUT WHAT WAS HE BEFORE THAT? HIS NAME SOUNDS FAMILIAR...

THAT'S ENTIRELY POSSIBLE... HE PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN POST-WAR WARSAW...




AND... UM... HE'S JEWISH, ISN'T HE?

CORRECT. UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM, I'M AFRAID. HE SUFFERED A LOT OF VERY NASTY THINGS IN 1967 AND POLAND LOST ONE OF ITS FINEST STATESMEN...



DON'T WORRY. YOU'LL HEAR A LOT MORE ABOUT IT, AND VERY SOON... COMRADE TADEUSZ HAS BECOME QUITE TALKATIVE SINCE BEING RELIEVED OF POLITICAL DUTIES. ISN'T THAT RIGHT, COMRADE?

AND YOU, EVSENY, STILL THE SAME OLD GOSSIP-MONGER, I SEE...



BUT RATHER THAN DEFAMING MY REPUTATION, WHY DON'T YOU GO AND FIND VASIL, WHO'S ARRIVED ALREADY, AND SHOULD BE WAITING SOMEWHERE INSIDE...



...THAT WILL GIVE YOUR YOUNG CHARGE THE CHANCE TO KNOW HIS WAY AROUND WHILE I SHOW THE NEW ARRIVALS TO THEIR ROOMS...

WHATEVER YOU SAY, MR. CARETAKER ...



COME... FOLLOW ME!

THIS PLACE IS FABULOUS!



AH YES... THE DECADENT AND EXPLOITATIVE ARISTOCRACY OF THESE PARTS DIDN'T NECESSARILY HAVE BAD TASTE...



... AND EVEN IN THE SCIENCES... THAT SHOULD BE THE DOOR TO THE OBSERVATORY...



NOW, LET'S SEE, I THINK I'M GETTING AN INKLING OF WHERE WE MIGHT FIND THE GOOD VASIL STROYANOV...



THEY TOOK AN INTEREST IN THE ARTS, AS YOU CAN SEE...

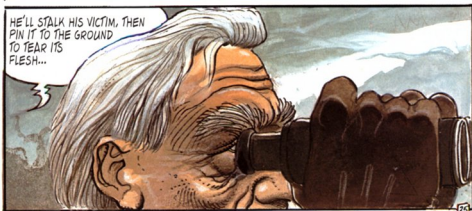


...I'LL BET YOU ANYTHING YOU LIKE, COMRADE, THAT HE'S ALREADY LEANING ON THE BAR...

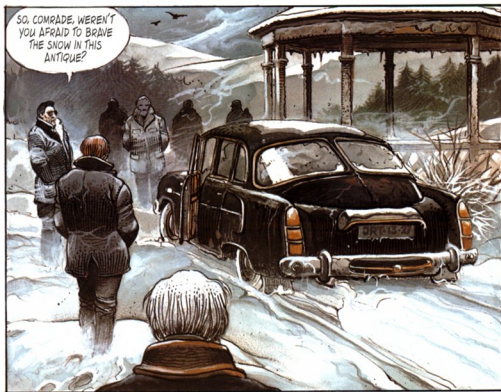














YES, VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH, IT'S THE VERY SAME OLD TAIRA THAT YOU RODE IN TIME AND TIME AGAIN WITH ME...



OF COURSE, IT ISN'T THE SAME ONE YOU PUT AT MY DISPOSAL WHEN I WAS STILL A SOCIAL DEMOCRAT, BEFORE THE PARTY TOOK POWER IN '48...



COME ON, TELL ME LIKE IT IS, PAVEL! HOW YOU PLAYED WITH SUBMARINES IN THE KREMLIN BEFORE THE PRAGUE COUP WHICH ENDED UP MAKING A RESPECTABLE PARTY-LINE MINISTER OUT OF YOU!

IF YOU LIKE, TADEUSZ, IF YOU LIKE...



BUT I'LL REMIND YOU THAT I DIDN'T RECEIVE ONLY HONOR BY FOLLOWING THE PARTY LINE...



IN FACT, IT WAS IN THE SAME MODEL CAR THAT I WAS ARRESTED FOR BEING AN IMPERIALIST AGENT AND BOURGEOIS NATIONALIST IN '54, DURING THE SLANSKY TRIAL...



AND THEN WHEN THEY REHABILITATED YOU, IN '63?

YES, JANOS, THAT'S EXACTLY WHEN I CAME BY THE CAR I HAVE NOW...

VODKA, PLEASE!

A FOND MEMORY... BUT PERHAPS THE WHOLE ERA CONSTITUTES A FOND MEMORY, ISN'T THAT RIGHT, VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH?



REMEMBER WHEN YOU CAME WITH ME TO THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE TO NEGOTIATE A RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE INTELLECTUALS AND THE PARTY?



EXCEPT FOR THAT FOOL VIZEK WHO SPENT ALL HIS TIME ASKING WHO WAS INFILTRATING WHO, THINGS PROGRESSED BEAUTIFULLY.

BUT I'M SURE YOU ALSO REMEMBER OUR MEETING NEAR THE BORDER, ON AUGUST 15TH, 1968...



...IT WAS ON THE SEAT-CUSHIONS OF THIS VERY CAR THAT YOU WARNED ME OF THE RISK OF INVASION BY THE PACT TROOPS...



I DIDN'T BELIEVE IT ANY MORE THAN DUBCEK DID, AND WE DROVE IN SILENCE FOR A LONG TIME ALONG THE TINY NEARBY MOUNTAIN ROADS...





BUT ON THE 21ST, I WAS FORCED TO ACCEPT IT, WHEN I ENCOUNTERED RUSSIAN TANKS IN THE STREETS OF MY HOMETOWN...



ЖИВАН / ВЕРНИСЬ ДОМОЙ !!!

USA - VĚRNA
OSTR - CSSR



HOJ KAMARADE! KOHO JSTĚ VY PRISLI ZABIT? SVOBODU?

ČRCH



AND LIKE THE PRAGUE YOUTHS SAID TO YOUR SOLDIERS, WHAT YOU HAD COME TO CRUSH WAS NOTHING MORE OR LESS THAN FREEDOM... AND YOU WERE THE FIRST ONE TO REALIZE IT...



HAH, I'VE ALWAYS SAID THAT YOUR 'SOCIALISM WITH A HUMAN FACE' WAS A GROSS TACTICAL ERROR...

NAIVE AND PREMATURE, ANYWAY...



BUT FOR SOMEONE WHO WAS A VICTIM IN AN EARLIER ERA, YOU EMERGED FROM THE TROUBLE WITHOUT TOO MUCH FUSS, DIDN'T YOU?

YES, IN A WAY...



FOR I HOPE IN ANY CASE THAT THIS OLD TATRA, HAVING SEEN SO MANY REVERSALS OF HISTORY, CAN SERVE A PURPOSE OTHER THAN HELPING COMRADES WITH BLOWN COVERS DEFECT TO THE WEST...
RIGHT, VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH?



AHEM...



YES...

WELL... SHALL WE GO NOW?

ALL RIGHT, FRIENDS! THE DOGS ARE READY...



YOU'RE RIGHT, LET'S NOT WASTE TIME ON IDLE REMINISCENCE... I'LL GO CHANGE.

GET READY, EVERYONE! WE LEAVE IN FIFTEEN MINUTES...



HERE, TAKE THIS...

WHAT, YOU EXPECT ME TO USE ONE OF THOSE?!

YOU'RE SURE GOING TO HAVE TO LEARN TO, KID.

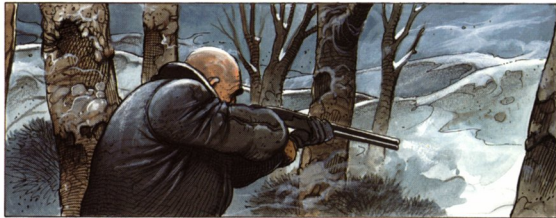
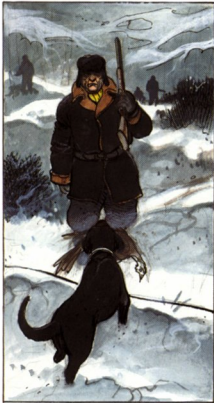
WE'LL HUNT INDIVIDUALLY TO START WITH, LIKE VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH PREFERS... BE VERY SURE TO ALWAYS WALK INTO THE WIND...



INTO THE WIND?... BUT I CAN'T EVEN TELL WHICH WAY THE WIND IS COMING FROM, AND...



SILENCE, YOUNG COMRADE... VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH DOESN'T WANT TO HEAR A SINGLE UNNECESSARY WORD WHEN HE'S HUNTING...



MISSED, COMRADE!









WHERE ARE THEY COMING FROM?

AKADEMGORODOK, WHERE THERE WAS A SUMMIT CONFERENCE ON INDUSTRIAL TRADE BETWEEN UNION-REPUBLICS!!!



BRRR... I'LL NEVER LIKE SIBERIA, UNION-REPUBLICS OR NO UNION-REPUBLICS!

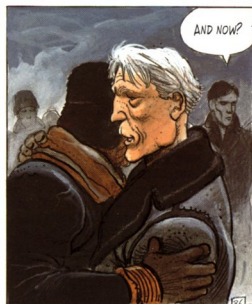
AFTERWARDS THEY TOOK A PLANE TO THE MILITARY AIRSTRIP AT CHERNIGOV, AND THE HELICOPTER BROUGHT THEM HERE...



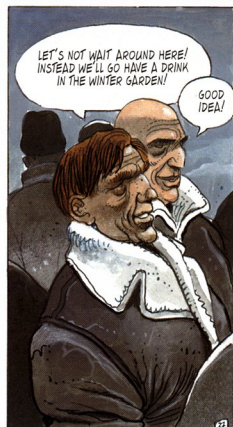
YOU SEE THAT ONE, WHO LOOKS LIKE ONE OF THE EFFICIENT EXECUTIVES SO NUMEROUS IN YOUR PART OF THE WORLD... THAT'S GUNTHER SCHULTZ, BORN IN BERLIN AT THE SAME TIME AS NAZISM...



BRILLIANT STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY, THEN ECONOMY... SIGNIFICANT THEORETICAL ACTIVITIES, AND INNOVATIVE CONCEPTS IN MATTERS OF PRODUCTION, SO HE WAS QUICKLY NOTICED BY VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH WHO APPOINTED HIM A CONSULTANT TO THE EAST GERMAN POLITBURO BEFORE HE DIRECTED THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S UNIVERSITY IN THE GDR.



AND NOW?





I EVEN SUGGEST THAT WE INAUGURATE THE HEATED POOL THAT THEY HAD ME SET UP IN THE BASEMENT...

WHY NOT... IT WILL RELIEVE THE FATIGUE OF THE HUNT...

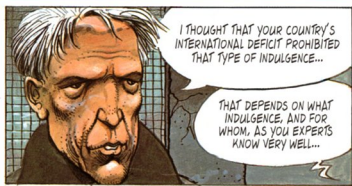


AND THE FATIGUE OF TRAVELING, GUNTHER, WHAT DO YOU SAY...



ELEGANT INSTALLATION...

YES, NOT BAD... THE WHOLE SYSTEM WAS IMPORTED FROM THE UNITED STATES...



I THOUGHT THAT YOUR COUNTRY'S INTERNATIONAL DEFICIT PROHIBITED THAT TYPE OF INDULGENCE...

THAT DEPENDS ON WHAT INDULGENCE, AND FOR WHOM, AS YOU EXPERTS KNOW VERY WELL...



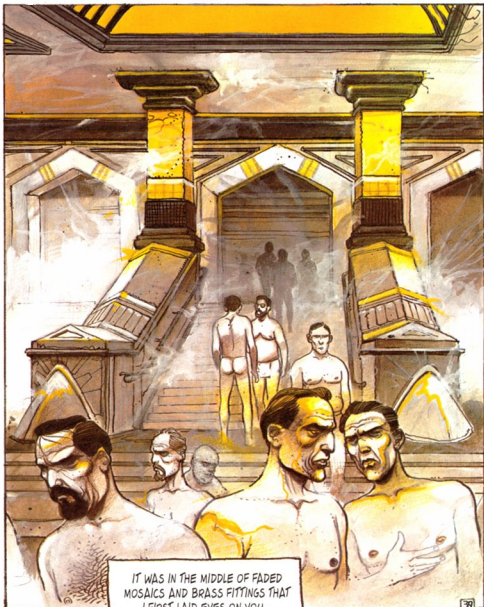
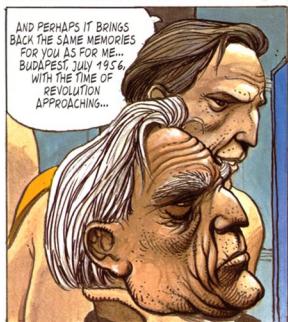
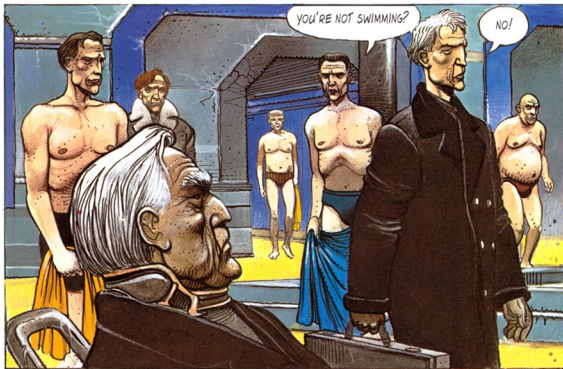
I SHOULD REMIND YOU OF MY WRITINGS, TADEUSZ. I DON'T APPROVE OF ANY TYPE OF LUXURY SPENDING...


WELL, I ONLY CARRIED OUT THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE FORMER MANAGEMENT. BESIDES, THEY WON'T BENEFIT FROM IT NOW, SINCE...



YES, THAT'S RIGHT, PRIVILEGE COMES AND GOES... AND IN THE END, IT'S THE PERMANENT ONES LIKE YOU WHO BENEFIT FROM LUXURY EXPENSES ... RIGHT, GUNTHER?

HMPH...






YOU, IN THE HOTTEST OF THE THERMAL BATHS
THAT WE HUNGARIANS ARE SO FOND OF...




AND I, IN THE LUKEWARM WATER OF THE OTHER
BATH RESERVED FOR THE MINOR CITIZENS... I WAS
JUST A YOUNG JOURNALIST FOR 'SZABAD NEP',
VOICE OF THE PARTY...



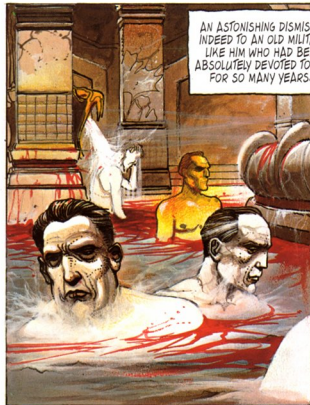
WE COULDN'T MAKE OUT
WHAT YOU WERE SAYING...
THE RUSH OF WATER
SPOUTING FROM THE ANIMAL
FOUNTAINS WAS THE ONLY
SOUND WE HEARD...



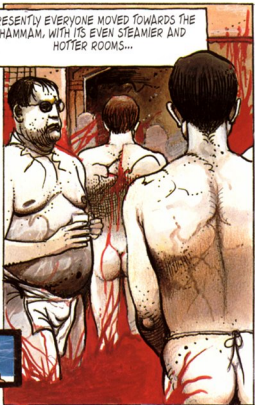
BUT WE ALL KNEW THAT YOU HAD COME TO
DEPOSE THE STALINIST HOLDOUTS WHO
HADN'T UNDERSTOOD THAT A CHANGE WAS
REQUIRED AFTER KHRUSHCHEV'S RISE TO
POWER...



...AND BENEATH THE
RUSHING FLOW THAT HID
HIS FACE, I COULD TELL
THAT TIBOR ILIYES WAS
CRYING AS HE HEARD
YOUR DISMISSAL...

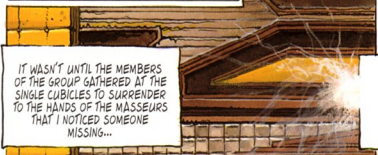


AN ASTONISHING DISMISSAL INDEED TO AN OLD MILITANT LIKE HIM WHO HAD BEEN ABSOLUTELY DEVOTED TO YOU FOR SO MANY YEARS...



PRESENTLY EVERYONE MOVED TOWARDS THE HAMMAM, WITH ITS EVEN STEAMIER AND HOTTER ROOMS...

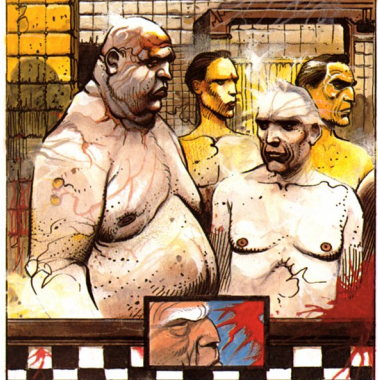
SILENCE REIGNED, EACH MAN CONTEMPLATING THE OUTCOME YOU WERE TRYING TO PREVENT BY REMODELING AN ADMINISTRATION LOATHED BY THE PEOPLE...



IT WASN'T UNTIL THE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP GATHERED AT THE SINGLE CUBICLES TO SURRENDER TO THE HANDS OF THE MASSEURS THAT I NOTICED SOMEONE MISSING...



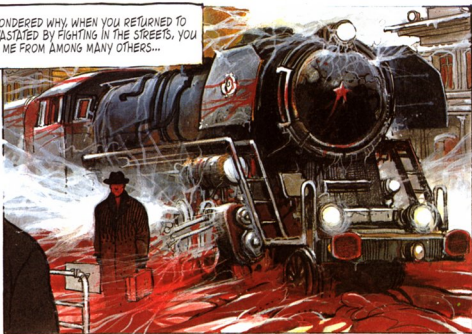
TIBOR, YOUR FALLEN DISCIPLE... I RETURNED TO THE EMPTY BATHS, WITH THEIR ODOOR OF MALE SCENT AND PERHAPS ALSO OF UNDERLYING DECAY...



...AND I WAS THE ONE WHO DISCOVERED THE BODY, FLOATING ON THE ONLY SLIGHTLY RIPPLING WATER... SUICIDE, OR HEART ATTACK? NO ONE EVER KNEW...

WAS IT PERHAPS BECAUSE I WAS THE FIRST ONE TO ALERT YOU TO THE INCIDENT THAT YOU STRUCK UP A FRIENDSHIP WITH ME?

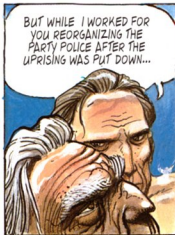
YES, I OFTEN WONDERED WHY, WHEN YOU RETURNED TO OUR CAPITAL DEVASTATED BY FIGHTING IN THE STREETS, YOU SELECTED ME FROM AMONG MANY OTHERS...



OF COURSE, I HADN'T TAKEN PART IN THE UPRISING, AND MY NON-PARTICIPATION MIGHT HAVE COME ACROSS AS A SUBTLE STRATEGY...

BUT WHILE I WORKED FOR YOU REORGANIZING THE PARTY POLICE AFTER THE UPRISING WAS PUT DOWN...

AND LATER WHILE I STAYED BY YOUR SIDE IN MOSCOW, COMPLETING MY POLITICAL TRAINING...

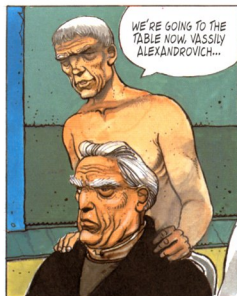


I OFTEN MUSED THAT IT WAS ONLY MY CHANCE DISCOVERY OF YOUR ASSOCIATE'S DEATH THAT CAUSED ME TO BECOME A REPLACEMENT FOR HIM...



DINNERTIME, GENTLEMEN!

TIBOR ILLYES 1891 - 1956



WE'RE GOING TO THE TABLE NOW, VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH...

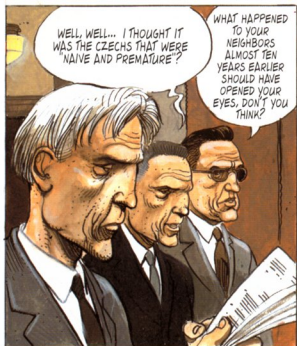


SO WHAT WERE YOU TALKING TO HIM ABOUT THAT MADE HIM LOOK SO PENSIVE AND SERIOUS, JANOS?



I WAS TALKING ABOUT BUDAPEST, IN 1956...

UTTER FOOLISHNESS, YOUR 'PEOPLE'S GLORIOUS UPRISING' ...



WELL, WELL... I THOUGHT IT WAS THE CZECHS THAT WERE 'NAIVE AND PREMATURE'?

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR NEIGHBORS ALMOST TEN YEARS EARLIER SHOULD HAVE OPENED YOUR EYES, DON'T YOU THINK?



JUST A MOMENT, COMRADE NICOLESCU. IN '68 IT WAS OUR PARTY ITSELF NOT THE SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS, THAT WAS STRUGGLING TO REFORM SOCIALISM...



SUBVERSIVE? I ASK YOU, PAVEL. WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU MEAN BY SUBVERSIVE, EH? ...ANYWAY, THERE'S NO NEED FOR ME TO TIRE MYSELF OUT LIKE THIS...



INTERPRETER!

YES, COMRADE...

PLEASE, SIT DOWN!

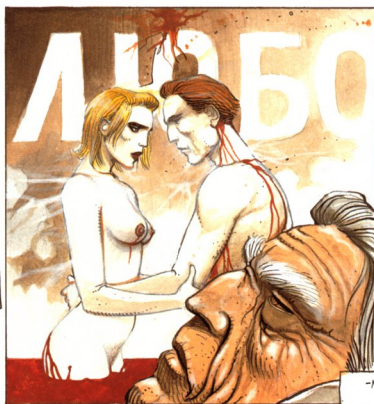
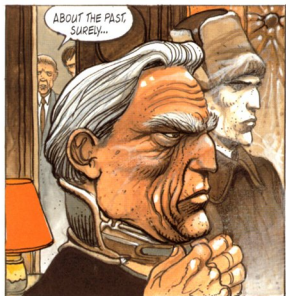


KINDLY EXPLAIN IN THEIR RESPECTIVE BARBARIAN TONGUES WHAT I THINK OF OUR TWO ILL-INFORMED COMRADES AND THEIR NOTIONS OF HISTORY...

LOOK, JANOS, I'M HERE TO TRANSLATE, BUT...

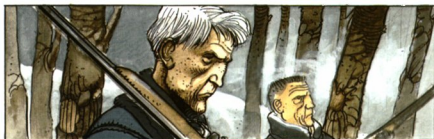






-NOW, GOODNIGHT, MY BOY...
-GOODNIGHT, EVGENY...



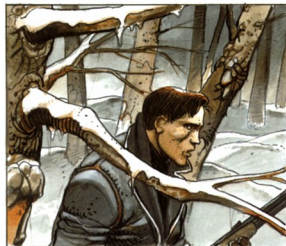




VICIOUS CREATURES, MY YOUNG FRENCH FRIEND, BELIEVE ME... AND THEY'VE GOT THEIR BLOOD UP THIS MORNING... I BELIEVE I'LL STAY RIGHT HERE...



I'M GOING TO GO ON A BIT FARTHER...



NA POMOC.....

YOU HEAR THAT? WHAT IS IT?



SOUNDS LIKE TADEUSZ'S VOICE...

AND IT SOUNDS LIKE HE'S IN TROUBLE...

I WAS WITH HIM NOT TOO LONG AGO...



FOLLOW ME!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND... NOTHING WAS SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN TODAY...

YES, IT'S STRANGE...



WAIT NOW I'M NOT SO SURE WHERE...

I DON'T LIKE THIS...

ME NEITHER...



STILL, I'M CERTAIN THAT...

WHERE IS VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH, BY GOD!

...DON'T KNOW...



AND SHAVANIDZE?

ONE OF THE GAMEKEEPERS TOLD ME HE'S FAR UP AHEAD... ON A KILLING SPREE...



ВАУТЕ ЧУДО

WHAT'S HE SAYING?

HE'S TELLING US TO FOLLOW HIM...



DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?

THAT'S WHAT WE'RE WONDERING...



OH LORD - WHAT NOW?

TOO RISKY TO SHOOT...

IT'S GOING TO CHARGE...



BLAM



WHO FIRED THAT SHOT?

IT WAS VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH!

WHAT AN INCREDIBLE SHOT!



WELL DONE, VASSILY!

YOU OKAY, TADEUSZ?

NOTHING SERIOUS. MY FRIENDS... BUT THAT WAS JUST IN TIME...



THIS CALLS FOR A DRINK! YOU SCARED US, YOU IDIOT! WE THOUGHT THE PLANS HAD BEEN CHANGED, AND...

SHUT YOUR MOUTH! YOU'RE THE IDIOT!



470 ГАММАУОС. ?



EXPLAIN TO HIM WHAT HAPPENED.

OH PAHEH?

АА, ЭТО КАЕАА...

...ЭТОТО СМЕОБАМО
ОЖИДАТЬ ...

SERGEI SHAWANIDZE SAYS THAT...
IT WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN, YOU
DON'T GO WALKING AROUND
UNARMED WHEN THERE'S
A HUNT ON...

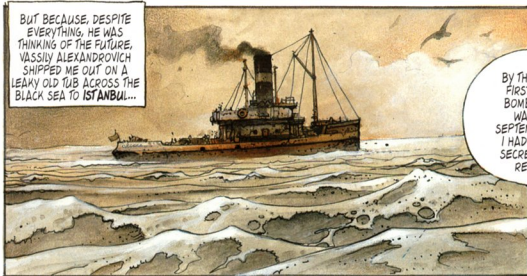
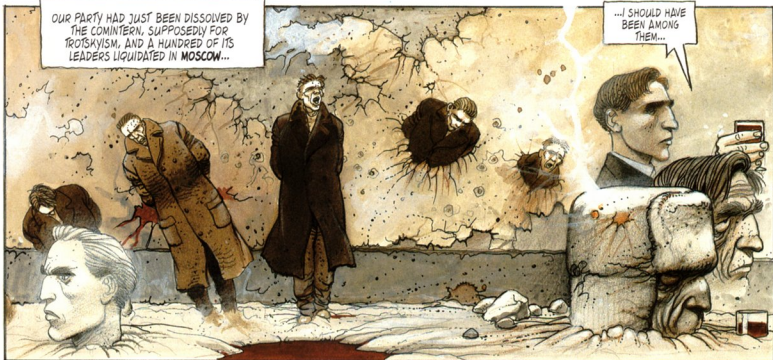
OH YEAH?
WELL YOU
JUST TELL HIM
THAT...

...YOU JUST TELL HIM NOTHING! WE'RE
RIGHT NEAR THE HUNTING LODGE,
WHERE LUNCH IS WAITING FOR US...




...THE FIRST LIFE I OWE HIM HAPPENED WHEN HE CAME TO JOIN ME
IN ODESSA IN 1938, WHILE I WAS RECOVERING FROM A SERIOUS
WOUND INFLICTED BY THE POLISH POLICE AS I WAS ESCAPING
JUSTICE...









THE GHETTO! FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND PEOPLE... THERE WOULD ONLY BE TWO HUNDRED SURVIVORS, MYSELF AMONG THEM...



CORPSES CARTED AWAY DAILY IN BARROWS, THE SMELL OF DEAD FLESH PREVAILING IN THE RUINED CITY, I LIVED THROUGH IT ALL...



IN 1943, AT THE TIME OF THE GHETTO UPRISING, WHILE THE SS WERE BLOWING EVERYTHING UP WITH DYNAMITE, IT WAS THROUGH ANOTHER INTERVENTION BY VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH THAT MY ESCAPE WAS PLANNED... THE LEADERLESS PARTY HAD TO BE REFORMED AND THEY WANTED ME ALIVE RATHER THAN DEAD...




AFTER THE WAR I WALKED WITH HIM THROUGH THE IMMENSE SLAUGHTERHOUSE REEKING OF ROTTING BODIES FROM UNDER THE RUBBLE. FULL OF PASSION, I DREAMED OF THE RECONSTRUCTION OF MY RAVAGED NATION...



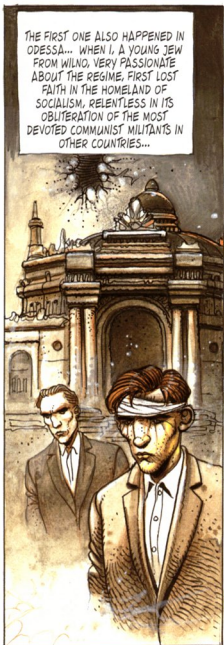
AND FINALLY
TODAY, AS YOU
ALL SAW...

...VASSILY
ALEKSEVICH
ONCE AGAIN
RENEWED MY
PERMIT TO LIVE ON
THIS EARTH...



HERE'S TO THE THREE
LIVES I OWE HIM!

AND THE
THREE
DEATHS?




THE FIRST ONE ALSO HAPPENED IN
ODESSA... WHEN I, A YOUNG JEW
FROM WILNO, VERY PASSIONATE
ABOUT THE REGIME, FIRST LOST
FAITH IN THE HOMETLAND OF
SOCIALISM, RELENTLESS IN ITS
OBTERATION OF THE MOST
DEVOTED COMMUNIST MILITANTS IN
OTHER COUNTRIES...



THE SECOND GOES
BACK TO THE END
OF THE WAR...

I HAD BECOME
A RANKING MEMBER OF
THE WARSAW'S
POLITBURO, AND AMONG
MANY OTHER DUTIES I WAS
IN CHARGE OF OVERSEEING
THE CONSTRUCTION OF
A CULTURAL CENTER
BEQUEATHED UPON THE
MARTYRED POLISH PEOPLE
BY THEIR SOVIET
BROTHERN...



I QUICKLY REALIZED THE PRICE
THAT HAD TO BE PAID TO OUR
GENEROUS BUT DEMANDING
PROTECTOR, TO OUR 'BIG
BROTHER', SO SURE OF HIMSELF
SO RIGID, TO THE CRUEL OGRE
THAT DEVOURER ITS OWN
CHILDREN... THAT WAS WHEN
I KNEW SHAME...



BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL 1967, UNTIL MY THIRD DEATH, MY POLITICAL DEATH, THAT I REALLY UNDERSTOOD. IT WAS VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH HIMSELF WHO CAME TO GIVE ME THE NEWS IN THE SAME CULTURAL CENTER THAT I MYSELF HELPED BUILD...

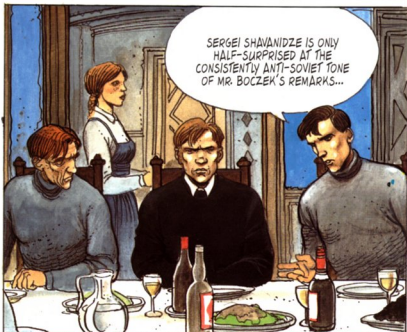
THE REGIME NEEDED SCAPEGOATS TO ACCOUNT FOR ITS FAILINGS. AND WHO DID THEY PICK, MIGHT I ASK? THOSE RARE JEWS WHO HAD ESCAPED THE GERMAN GENOCIDE, SYSTEMATIC AS IT WAS...



OUTSIDE, PEOPLE WERE SHOUTING DOWN THE "MOSZKI DO PALESTINY" -- THE MOSESSES OF PALESTINE. AND I, TADEUSZ BOCZEK, WAS DISMISSED, ALTHOUGH THANKS TO THE INTERVENTION OF VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH, I WAS FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE WHISKED AWAY TO THIS FAR-OFF COUNTRY...



THAT'S THE STORY OF MY THREE LIVES AND MY THREE DEATHS, MY FRIENDS...

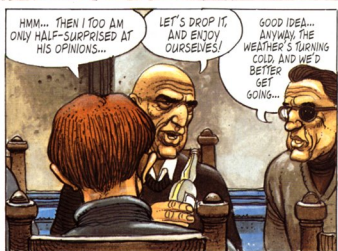


SERGEI SHAVANIDZE IS ONLY HALF-SURPRISED AT THE CONSISTENTLY ANTI-SOVIET TONE OF MR. BOCZEK'S REMARKS...



...AND HE POINTS OUT THAT VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH NEVER DID HAVE GOOD LUCK WITH HIS MEN IN WARSAW...

VERY TRUE...









NO SWIMMING
THIS EVENING?

NO. IN THE TIME BEFORE
DINNER I'D RATHER TAKE A
LOOK AT THE OBSERVATORY...

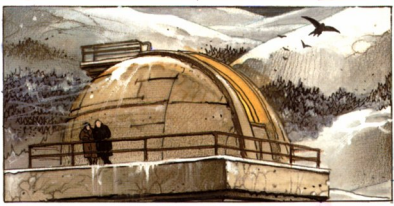
NOW, THAT'S
AN
IDEA!

ARE YOU COMING WITH
US, VASSILY
ALEXANDROVICH?

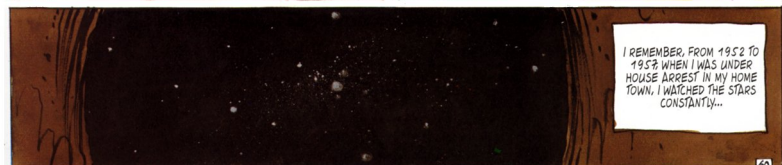


SO, HOW DOES
THIS THING WORK?

WELL, YOU HAVE
TO OPEN THE
DOME FIRST!



...[I'VE ALWAYS LOVED
WATCHING THE STARS...

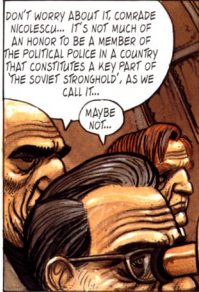


I REMEMBER, FROM 1952 TO
1957 WHEN I WAS UNDER
HOUSE ARREST IN MY HOME
TOWN, I WATCHED THE STARS
CONSTANTLY...



WAS THAT WHEN YOU HAD FALLEN FROM FAVOR, DESPITE YOUR ROLE IN THE SECURITATE DURING THE PURGES?

THAT'S RIGHT, EVGENY. THE SAME TIME THAT ANA PAUNKNER, THE RED TIGRESS, WAS STRIPPED OF HER FOREIGN AFFAIRS DUTIES...



DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, COMRADE NICOLESCU... IT'S NOT MUCH OF AN HONOR TO BE A MEMBER OF THE POLITICAL POLICE IN A COUNTRY THAT CONSTITUTES A KEY PART OF 'THE SOVIET STRONGHOLD', AS WE CALL IT...

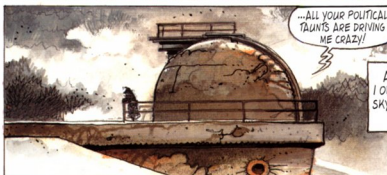
MAYBE NOT...



LET'S JUST SAY THAT'S HOW WE LEARNED TO BE CAUTIOUS, US ROMANIANS...

OH, THANKS... THAT'S A SLAP IN THE FACE TO US HUNGARIANS...

COMING THROUGH LOUD AND CLEAR ON THE CZECH SIDE TOO, BUDDY...



AS I WAS SAYING, I OFTEN WATCHED THE SKY, BY MY MOTHER'S SIDE...



AND DESPITE MY MISFORTUNES, A RECURRENT DREAM FROM MY YOUTH KEPT COMING BACK TO ME. I HAD IT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1945, ON THE RETURN TRIP FROM RUSSIA WITH GEORGHIU DEJ'S GROUP...





I SAW MYSELF AS A STORK, THE BIRD OF FORTUNE AND FERTILITY, ARRIVING ABOVE MY VILLAGE WITH ITS COLORFUL COTTAGES...



OR SOMETIMES AS A PELICAN, FULL OF WISDOM AND GENEROSITY, LIKE THOSE THAT LIVE IN THE DANUBE DELTA AND FISH FOR THEIR VERY POOR MASTERS...



OR EVEN AS A POWERFUL, UNNAMED BIRD, BEARING A MESSAGE OF STRENGTH AND JUSTICE ON ITS WAY THROUGH THE ETHER...

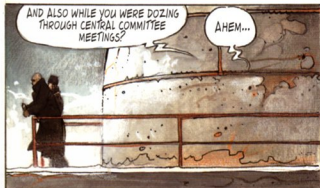


AND THROUGHOUT MY HOUSE ARREST, BEFORE VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH CAME BACK TO LOOK FOR ME, I WANTED AT ALL COSTS TO HAVE THAT DREAM AGAIN...



...AFTER THAT, DID YOU HAVE IT AGAIN ALONG YOUR NUMEROUS TRAVELS SPREADING THE GOOD WORD FOR ROMANIAN DIPLOMACY?

SOMETIMES, VASIL, SOMETIMES...



AND ALSO WHILE YOU WERE DOZING THROUGH CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS?

AHEM...



WELL, YOU WERE LUCKY TO HAVE SUCH A DREAM, ION NICOLESCU...



BECAUSE I NEVER DREAM OF THE TIME THAT I WAS A PARTISAN LEADER OF THE FIRST UNDERGROUND FORCES IN THE RHODOPE MOUNTAINS...

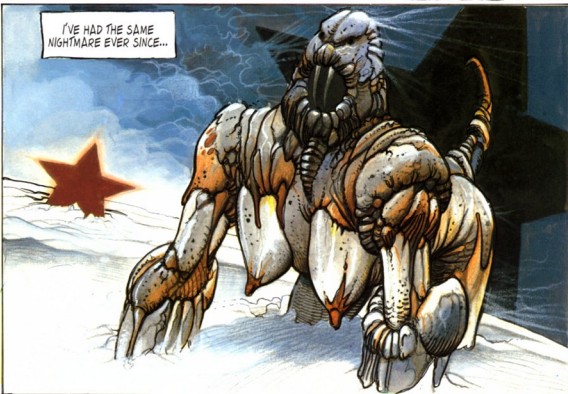
NOR OF THE TIME WHEN I FORMED PART OF THE FIRST DIMITROV ADMINISTRATION, WITH VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH'S BLESSING...



IT TOOK MY NEAR ESCAPE FROM HANGING, ON THE APPARENT CHARGE OF TITOISM, TO START ME DREAMING...



AND ALTHOUGH VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH SAVED MY REPUTATION BY APPOINTING ME THE ARCHITECT OF THE BULGARIAN PEASANTRY'S 'GREAT LEAP FORWARD', AS WE CALLED IT IN '52...



I'VE HAD THE SAME NIGHTMARE EVER SINCE...



...ABOUT A SHAPELESS AND OBSCENE MONSTER COME FROM I DON'T KNOW WHAT COLD AND FROZEN PLANET... AND IT OCCURS TO ME THAT THIS MONSTER MIGHT BE ME, VASIL STROYANOV, OR ELSE IT'S THE PARTY ITSELF AND I'M JUST ITS FOUL MOUTH, OR ONE HORRIBLE CLAW...



OH, COME NOW! YOU'VE JUST HAD TOO MUCH TO DRINK SINCE ATTENDING TO YOUR DUTIES FOR THE FATHERLAND FRONT, EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE ONLY HONORARY ONES...

IT WOULD BE EASIER TO PUT HIS REMARKS DOWN TO SIMPLE DELIRIUM...



OH, I DIDN'T SEE YOU THERE, GUNTHER...

YES, AND I'VE BEEN LISTENING TO YOUR RAMBLINGS FOR SOME TIME...



AND?

AND I MUST SAY I DON'T HAVE ANY REGRETS ABOUT SPEAKING OUT AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME, AGAINST REHABILITATING KAFKA...



BECAUSE I ALWAYS KNEW THAT HE WAS NOTHING BUT A BOURGEOIS AUTHOR, CORRODED BY PESSIMISM...



BUT I WOULD NEVER HAVE BELIEVED THAT FORMER HEROES OF THE REVOLUTION LIKE YOURSELVES WOULD BE CAPABLE OF SUCH CHILDISH IDEALISM...



PARDON ME FOR INTERRUPTING YOUR DISTINGUISHED LITERARY CONVERSATION, MY REFINED FRIENDS...



...BUT IT'S TIME TO ENJOY SOME GOOD FOOD!

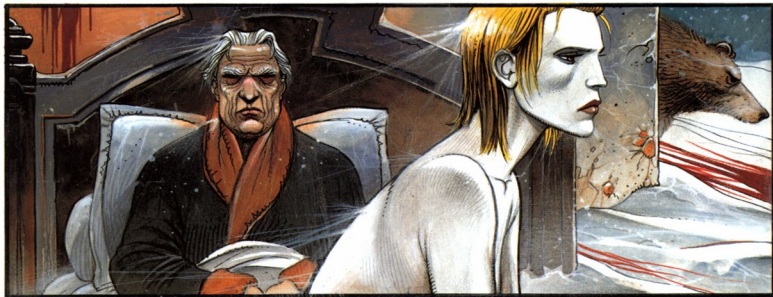
ANYTHING'S BETTER THAN LISTENING TO THIS NONSENSE...



GUNTHER'S BECOME MORE AND MORE FANATICAL EVER SINCE HE STARTED CONSORTING WITH SHAWANIDZE...

YES... YOU'RE RIGHT...





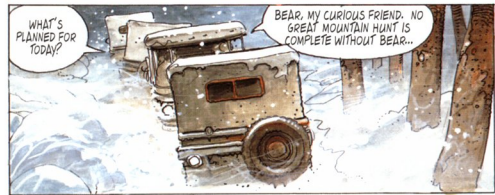


OKAY. HAVE WE GOT EVERYTHING? RIFLES, AMMUNITION, BINOCULARS?

AND VODKA?

IT'S SUCH A COLD DAY TODAY...

IT WILL BE EVEN WORSE UP ABOVE...



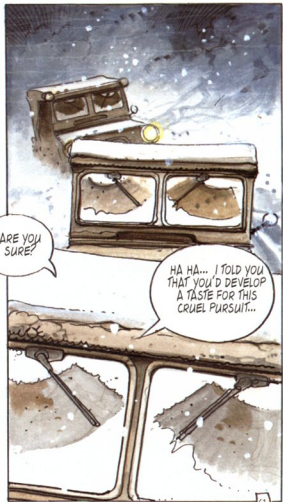
WHAT'S PLANNED FOR TODAY?

BEAR, MY CURIOUS FRIEND. NO GREAT MOUNTAIN HUNT IS COMPLETE WITHOUT BEAR...



WON'T THE SNOW GET IN THE WAY? YOU CAN'T SEE ANYTHING...

IT DOESN'T MATTER! I GOT A CALL ON THE SHORTRANGE AT DAWN. THE BEAST HAS GONE TO HIGHER GROUND, BUT HE'LL BE BACK...



ARE YOU SURE?

HA HA... I TOLD YOU THAT YOU'D DEVELOP A TASTE FOR THIS CRUEL PURSUIT...



HE'LL COME BACK,
VERY SIMPLY,
BECAUSE HE'S
CAUGHT THE SCENT
OF BLOOD...

I DON'T
UNDERSTAND...



YOU SEE THOSE CROWS
CIRCLING ENDLESSLY UP
ABOVE?

UMM...
YES...

JUST LIKE THE BEAR, THEY'RE DRAWN BY
THE DEAD FLESH OF THE HORSE THAT'S
BEEN THERE FOR
A FEW DAYS
ALREADY...

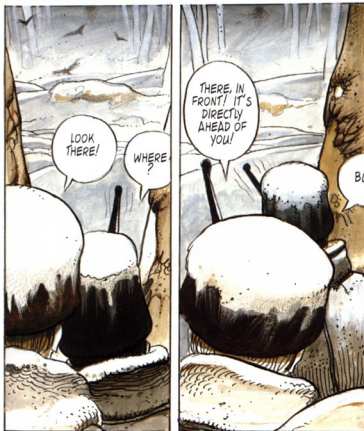
SHALL WE
HEAD ON UP?

LET'S HEAD
ON UP!













IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, GUNTHER... A TRAGIC ACCIDENT...

AN ACCIDENT?!?! YOU BAND OF ANTI-PARTY TRAITORS... YOU KNOW VERY WELL IT WAS A POLITICAL ASSASSINATION!



HEY, JUST CALM DOWN THERE, MR. GUNTHER-KNOW-IT-ALL! IT SEEMS TO ME THAT SERGEI SHANAVDZE DIDN'T FOLLOW VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH'S INSTRUCTIONS, AND...

ENOUGH OF YOUR BULLSHIT, VASIL!!!



IT WAS ALL PRE-ARRANGED! YOU ASSIGNED HIM A BAD POST KNOWING FULL WELL THAT HE WOULDN'T STAY THERE, AND THIS YOUNG FRENCH IDIOT WAS SHAMELESSLY MANIPULATED TO...

ME? BUT... I... I ASSURE YOU THAT...



I'LL DENOUNCE EVERY ONE OF YOU! DON'T COUNT ON MY FORMER FRIENDSHIP TO COVER UP THIS FILTHY MURDER!!!



DON'T COUNT ON OURS EITHER, GUNTHER...

...DON'T COUNT ON IT AT ALL...







BEST GAME WE
EVER BAGGED.
HA HA HA...

SPARE US
YOUR
GALLOWS
HUMOR, VASSIL,
PLEASE...

I'M IN A HURRY TO
LEAVE... WITH ALL
THIS SNOW I'M
AFRAID THAT MY OLD
TATRA WON'T MAKE IT
TO PRAGUE...

...HMM... THIS NEWS WILL CREATE
AN UPROAR EVERYWHERE.
WE'LL HAVE TO TURN IT TO OUR
ADVANTAGE QUICKLY...

DON'T WORRY, MY
FRIENDS. I'VE GIVEN
THE ORDER TO HAVE
YOUR BAGS PACKED,
AND SPECIAL TRAIN
SERVICES ARE
WAITING...

THAT'S WHAT WAS PLANNED,
JANOS... AS FOR THE BODY,
IT WILL TRAVEL WITH VASSILY
ALEXANDROVICH...



AND I WISH I WERE
ALREADY IN
BUDAPEST...

SO WE'LL DROP OFF
PAVEL AND THEN HEAD
TO THE STATION...

ALL VERY
LOGICAL,
TADEUSZ...

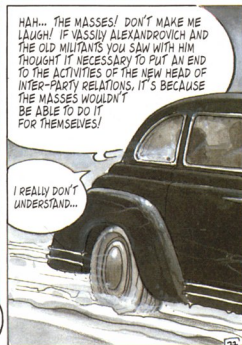
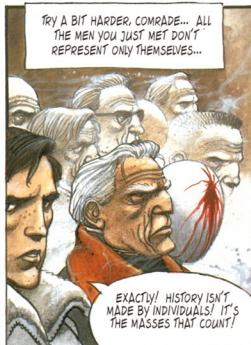


GET THE BAGS
INTO THE CARS!
WE'RE LEAVING!

FAREWELL, VASSILY
ALEXANDROVICH...
I HOPE WE'LL SEE
EACH OTHER AGAIN...

IS THAT CAR
COMING OR
NOT?!

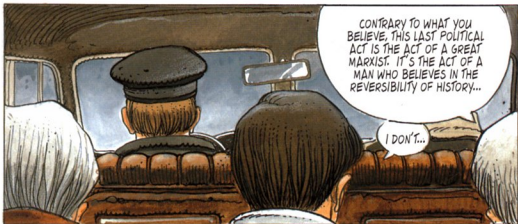




THEN YOU'RE AS NAIVE AS EVER. BUT VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH LOST HIS NAIVETE A LONG TIME AGO...



WITH THE DEATH OF VERA NIKOLAEVNA TRETIAKOVA PERHAPS?



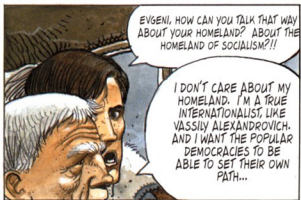
CONTRARY TO WHAT YOU BELIEVE, THIS LAST POLITICAL ACT IS THE ACT OF A GREAT MARKIST. IT'S THE ACT OF A MAN WHO BELIEVES IN THE REVERSIBILITY OF HISTORY...

I DON'T...

I KNOW... YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND... BUT JUST TRY! DON'T YOU SEE THAT VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH, PRECISELY BECAUSE HE'S ALWAYS THINKING OF THE MASSES AND THEIR SUFFERING, BECAME AWARE OF THE DANGEROUS STAGNATION THAT HIS OWN ACTIONS AND THOSE OF MANY OTHERS WERE INFLECTING ON THE EASTERN BLOC NATIONS...

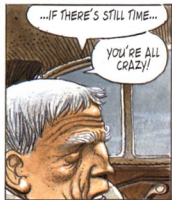


AND BEFORE DYING HE WANTED TO LIFT THE LID, THE LID THAT SERGEI SHANAVDZE WOULD HAVE KEPT HERMETICALLY SEALED IN THE NAME OF THE MOTHER RUSSIA'S INTERESTS...



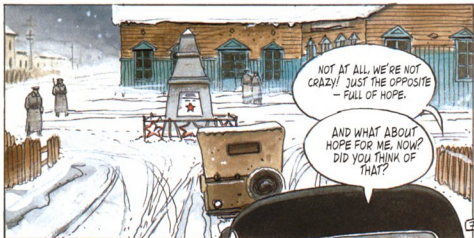
EVEN! HOW CAN YOU TALK THAT WAY ABOUT YOUR HOMETLAND? ABOUT THE HOMETLAND OF SOCIALISM?!!

I DON'T CARE ABOUT MY HOMETLAND. I'M A TRUE INTERNATIONALIST, LIKE VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH. AND I WANT THE POPULAR DEMOCRACIES TO BE ABLE TO SET THEIR OWN PATH...



...IF THERE'S STILL TIME...

YOU'RE ALL CRAZY!



NOT AT ALL, WE'RE NOT CRAZY! JUST THE OPPOSITE — FULL OF HOPE.

AND WHAT ABOUT HOPE FOR ME, NOW? DID YOU THINK OF THAT?



AHEM... YOU'LL HAVE TO STAY IN MOSCOW A BIT LONGER THAN YOU PLANNED, LONG ENOUGH FOR THINGS TO SETTLE DOWN...



...AND YOU'LL HAVE TO LEARN TO LIVE WITH A BLOODY SECRET, LIKE SO MANY OF US...

...YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, IN FACT, BECAUSE AS FAR AS YOU'RE CONCERNED IT REALLY WAS AN ACCIDENT... WE TOOK ALL THE NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS...



EVERYTHING'S PROCEEDING PERFECTLY WELL, COMRADES. I ALREADY TELEPHONED OUR OLD FRIENDS IN WARSAW TO LET THEM KNOW ABOUT THE... UH... DEMISE. THEY'RE TERRIBLY SORRY, OF COURSE...



IN ANY CASE, WE ALL KNOW WHO'S GOING TO BE THE NEXT HEAD OF INTER-PARTY RELATIONS IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE... RIGHT, EVGENY GOLOZOVI?... MY SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS...



THE UNFORTUNATE SHAVANIDZE AFFAIR IS NOW CLOSED. FAREWELL TO THE LIVING...

...AND TO THE DEAD.

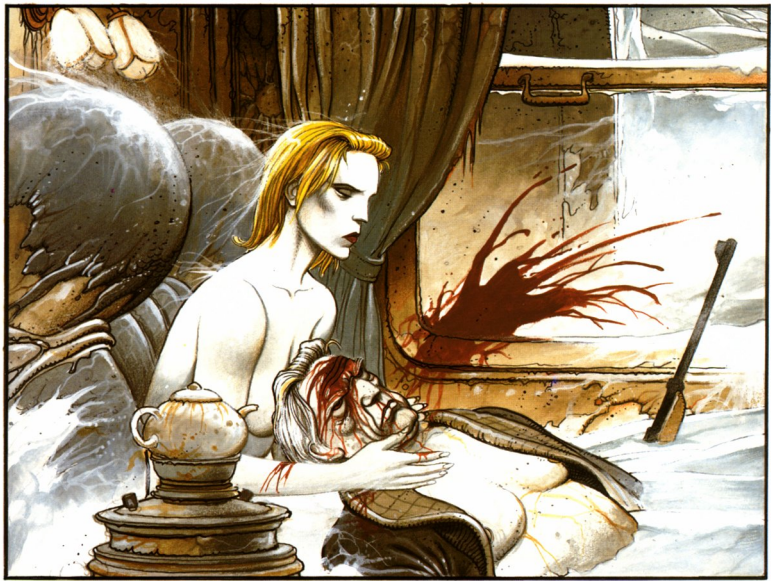






BLAM

K C П P



**THE
END**

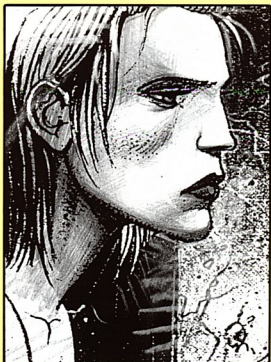
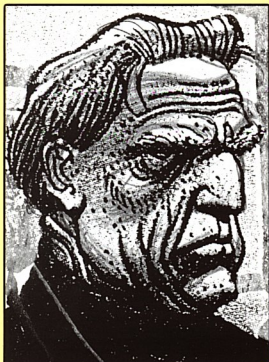
Vera Nikolaeвна Tretjakova (1895-1937).

Daughter of a great Tsar family, studies in Vienna. Rejoins the Bolsheviks upon her return to the USSR, and plays foreground roles in the politics of both family (abolition of marriage) and culture (prohibition of the avant-garde). She falls victim to the Great Punge in 1937. Mrs. Tretjakova's best-known work, jointly published in German and in Russian, *Psychoanalyse und Dialektischer Materialismus* (1926), is now banned in the Soviet Union, where the body of her numerous writings has disappeared from libraries.

Vassily Alexandrovich Chevchenko

(1895-1983). His grandfather is the Pan-Slav theoretician Maxim Maximovich Chevchenko (1828-1909). Mr. Vassily Chevchenko forms part of the Petrograd Soviet and fights with the Red Army before assuming a high position in the CHEKA and later the GPU. Appointed general during World War II, he becomes one of the most influential members of the Cominform (1947-1956) and afterwards remains in charge of relations between various Communist Parties in power. The 20th Party Congress and de-Stalinization (1956) do not affect his position in the Central Committee. At the conclusion of the 21st Party Congress, he is named a ranking member of the Politburo, which he remains until 1980, at which time his name disappears without explanation from the portrait gallery during the Polish crisis. Mr. Chevchenko, who in his last years remains a member of a number of prestigious institutions in the USSR, perishes mysteriously during a return trip to Moscow. It is not until afterwards, and in a somewhat unexpected fashion, that his memory will be hailed in the USSR by Communist restorationists, and even by former dissidents.

Sergei Shavanidze (1939-1983). Born in Georgia. Mechanical engineer by training. Directs the Party apparat in Dniepropetrovsk, then in Sverdlovsk from 1966 to 1973. After that he apparently crosses over to the KGB and travels to various countries within the Communist bloc. Appointed alternate member of the Politburo, he replaces Mr. Vassily Chevchenko as ranking member in 1980 and, according to the Kremlinologists of the period inherits the bulk of his powers. Although Mr. Sergei Shavanidze, at forty-four years old, is the youngest member of the Politburo, he meets a tragic and premature end in a hunting accident.



EPITAPH (1990)

"ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, THE SONS OF OUR MASTERS
WILL BECOME MASTERS OF OUR SONS."

A RUMANIAN WOMAN



WE HAD THE GROUNDS TO DO THE THINGS WE'VE DONE,
BUT NOTHING NOW COULD KEEP US FROM BEING IN THE WRONG.

IN AN AGE WHEN I STILL BELIEVED
IN THEORETICAL INVINCIBILITY, AND DIALECTIC MATERIALISM,
I CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE SPOKEN OF INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS.

THAT'S RIGHT...
CONTRADICTIONS...

THERE IS A WIND OF SALT WHICH WHIRLS INSIDE MY HEAD, SOMETIMES...

LIKE OUR HYDRAULIC ENGINEERS, WE WOULD HAVE LIKED TO MAKE
THE RIVERS RUN BACK, TOWARDS THEIR FERTILE SOURCE.
LIKE OUR ENGINEERS OF SOULS, WE WOULD HAVE HOPED TO PREVENT
HISTORY FROM CONTINUING TO FLOW ALONG ITS SAVAGE BENT.

THE RIVERS ARE DISEASED. AND HISTORY, TOO...

YES, WE HAD THE GROUNDS TO DO THE THINGS WE'VE DONE,
BUT NOTHING NOW COULD KEEP US FROM BEING IN THE WRONG.

THERE EXISTS, IN THE OLD HOMETOWN WHERE SOCIALISM WAS REAL,
A SEA, NOW ALMOST UNREAL.

THERE, THE FISHERMEN'S BOATS ARE NOTHING MORE THAN EMPTY HULKS
ABANDONED ACROSS THE RUBBLE.

NO LONGER DOES THE MEMORY OF FRESH WAVES CARESS THE GROUND
THE PARCHED, CRACKED, STERILE AND POISONED GROUND.

THE SALT-CORRODED SHRUBS ARE NOW NOTHING MORE
THAN SCORCHED AND SKELETAL REMAINS.

THE FISH WITH ROUND BELLIES AND SILVER BACKS
ARE NOW NO MORE THAN FOSSILS.

EVEN THE MEN BECOME FOSSILS.

EVEN THE CHILDREN ARE BORN FOSSILS.

ONLY A WHIRLING WIND, AS SALTY AS DEATH, BLOWS ACROSS
THIS RUIN.

THAT WIND OF SALT BLOWS WITHIN MY HEAD SOMETIMES...

THE RIVERS ARE DISEASED. AND HISTORY, TOO.





WHAT RUSTED EMPTY HULKS BUMP AGAINST EACH OTHER WITHIN YOUR ANCIENT HEADS?

REAL SOCIALISM ITSELF, HAS IT NOT BECOME SOMETHING LIKE
AN UNREAL SEA?
THAT'S WHAT I TELL MYSELF SOMETIMES...
WHERE NOTHING REMAINS BUT RUSTED EMPTY HULKS, THE MEMORY OF
WAVES, ABSURD STATUES WAYLAID IN THE DESERT,
RED STARS LYING WITHOUT MEANING
UPON THE STERILE AND POISONED GROUND.
EVEN IF MY NOSE NOW SMELLS THE FRESH SCENT OF EARTH
DURING THE TIME OF THAW...
EVEN IF MY EYES NOW BEHOLD THE FIRST CROCUSES
IN THE SOFT GRASS BENEATH THE SNOW...
EVEN IF MY HANDS NOW UNDERSTAND THE RAISING OF YOUNG SHOOTS
OF SPRINGTIME VEGETABLES...
AS FOR MY HEAD, IT'S FULL OF RUSTY STATUES WAYLAID ACROSS A STERILE
GROUND, WITH THE WIND WHOSE SALT IS AS BITTER AS DEATH
THAT BLOWS, AND BLOWS...

WHAT IS THERE WITHIN THE HEADS OF MY ANCIENT COMRADES?
THEY FORCED ME TO DO WHAT WE DID.
OR RATHER, THEY FORCED ME TO ACCEPT WHAT THEY DID.
BUT THAT DID NOT KEEP THEM FROM BEING IN THE WRONG.
WHICH DID NOT KEEP ME FROM BEING WRONG FOR THINKING THAT THEY
WERE IN THE WRONG, I MUST ADMIT.
COMRADES...
THAT WORD HAS BECOME ALMOST OBFUSCATE TODAY...
MY COMRADES, WHAT RUSTED EMPTY HULKS
BUMP AGAINST EACH OTHER WITHIN YOUR ANCIENT HEADS?
I MEAN, FOR THOSE WHO STILL HAVE THEIR HEADS.
EVEN IF, LIKE ME, THEY DID NOT KEEP THEIR HEADS WHOLE,
AS IT SEEMS.
I UNDERSTAND MYSELF...

AND SOON YOU TOO WILL UNDERSTAND...



TADEUSZ... HE AT LEAST CHOSE WELL. HIS
HEAD IN THE SHADOW OF THE CHERRY TREES... HIS FEET
IN THE WARMTH TOWARDS THE VEGETABLE GARDEN...

THIS WINTER, I SCRAPED AWAY THE STINGING ICE
TO MAKE READABLE HIS NAME.

IN AUTUMN, WHEN THE LEAVES
COVER AGAIN HIS GRAVE,

I'LL SWEEP THEM AWAY TO MAKE
READABLE HIS NAME.

NOBODY WILL EVER COME AND READ HIS NAME,

BUT I DO IT ALL THE SAME.

I OWE HIM AT LEAST THAT MUCH, MY COMRADE TADEUSZ BOCZEK.

TOO BAD FOR HIM THAT BY HEART ATTACK HE DEPARTED
JUST WHEN WARSAW, PASSED INTO THE HANDS OF PRIESTS, WAS

CALLING HIM BACK TO HIS DUTIES.

THE LITTLE JEW FROM WILNO MISSED A CHANCE FOR HIS FOURTH LIFE.

BUT HIS DEATH SEEMS PEACEFULLY LOGICAL, HERE.

I OFTEN LAY DOWN MY TOOLS TO SIT BESIDE HIM.

THEN THINGS STOP FOR A MOMENT WITHIN MY HEAD.

THAT'S RIGHT, THE CONTRADICTIONS STOP FOR A MOMENT.

AS DOES THE WIND OF SALT...



OUI, MY COMRADE NICOLSCU!

THE GRAVE OF ION NICOLSCU IS NOT
HERE. IN TRUTH, I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF HE
HAS A GRAVE.

EVEN IF HE DOES, I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S A
MARTYR'S, A HERO'S, OR
A TRAITOR'S GRAVE.

SOME SAY HE WAS BROUGHT DOWN
IN A CORRIDOR,
WHILE THE REVOLUTION

RAGED OUTSIDE THE PALACE WALLS.

OTHERS TELL US IT WAS HIS OWN MEN

OF THE SECURITATE WHO TOOK HIM DOWN, TO THWART HIS PLANS.

STILL OTHERS MAINTAIN THAT HIS DISAPPEARANCE WAS NOTHING BUT A
COVER-UP.

EVERYONE CONCURS IN SAYING THAT HIS ROLE

WAS CRUCIAL TO EVENTS.

YES, BUT WHAT WAS HIS ROLE?

OUI, MY COMRADE NICOLSCU, PERHAPS ONCE AGAIN YOU

HAD THE GROUNDS TO DO THE THINGS YOU'VE DONE,

BUT NOTHING NOW COULD KEEP YOU FROM BEING IN THE WRONG,

IT IS MY IMPRESSION.

I UNDERSTAND MYSELF...

Nobody will ever come and read his name...





JANOS AND VASIL, TWO BELIEFS OF REVISIONISM.



PAWEŁ HAWELKA, AN ANTIQUE.

THE OTHERS, WELL, IN TRUTH
THE OTHERS SEEMED OLD TO ME.

PAWEŁ'S TATRA HAS BECOME A TRUE ANTIQUE AND IT
WON'T BE LEAVING HERE, IN MY OPINION.
PAWEŁ HIMSELF HAS BECOME AN ANTIQUE, ALMOST
OVERNIGHT. AND HE TOO WILL NOT BE LEAVING HERE.
BUT WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE? HIS NAME IS NEVER UTTERED
ANYMORE IN PRAGUE. PERHAPS IT NEVER WAS UTTERED
BEFORE, EXCEPT IN OFFICIAL CONVERSATIONS IN WHICH AFTER ALL
THEY HAD TO SPEAK ABOUT SOMETHING.

PAWEŁ HAWELKA WILL HAVE VANISHED FROM HIS COUNTRY'S HISTORY WITHOUT EVEN
A GRAFFITI TO UTTER HIS NAME ALL ALONG THE VLTAVA. SO MUCH
EFFORT JUST TO COME TO THAT,
I WOULD FIND IT FRUSTRATING, IF IT WERE ME.
NO WONDER HE'S AGED, PAWEŁ HAWELKA...

VASIL AND JANOS ARRIVED TOGETHER IN THE CAR
BELONGING TO THE ESTATE.

THEY NEVER LIKED EACH OTHER BEFORE, THOSE TWO. BUT THEIR
COMMON DECLINE MUST HAVE DRAWN THEM TOGETHER.
OUSTED FROM POWER IN SOFIA ALONG WITH ALL THE OTHERS OF THE
OLD GUARD, THE HEARTY BULGARIAN DRUNKARD STROYANOS! HE'S
NEVER SOBER, FROM WHAT I UNDERSTAND. BETTER FOR HIM. ONE LAST
TIME, HE WON'T BE AWARE OF ANYTHING. AND THAT WILL BE BETTER FOR HIM TOO.
JANOS MOLNAR ALWAYS THOUGHT HE ARGUED WELL. BUT WHAT GOOD
DID IT DO HIM TO BE RIGHT BEFORE THE OTHERS? IT MADE HIM
IN THE WRONG, EVEN DOUBLY IN THE WRONG.

BETTER TO BE DEAD, AND WITHOUT A PARTY, UNDER A CHERRY TREE LIKE TADEUSZ
BOCZEK, THAN DIGGING A GRAVE FOR ONE'S OWN PARTY LIKE JANOS
MOLNAR. IN HIS FORMER JOURNAL, IN THE PLACE OF
CENTRAL COMMITTEE ACCOUNTS, THERE ARE NOW NAKED
WOMEN WITH HUGE DISGUSTING CAPITALIST BREASTS. HE'S COME FAR,
THE REFORMIST MOLNAR.

OIL, THEY HANG ON WHERE THEY CAN, OUR TWO BELIEFS
OF REVISIONISM, AND NOT ONLY TO EACH OTHER. VASIL BREAKS HIS
BACK TO RECREATE A SŁAV LEGITIMACY FOR HIMSELF AND JANOS PLAYS
THE LIBERAL IN THE HOPE OF RECOVERING HIS SEAT IN THE ELECTION.
TO WHAT PURPOSE? THEY TOO MUST FEEL THE WHIRLING
WINDS OF SALT WITHIN THEIR THRED HEADS.

INEVITABLY, THEY MUST...



EVGENY ARRIVED LATE. EVEN IF WE NOW
DECLARE THAT ALL PEOPLES OF THE FORMER BLOC ARE EQUAL,
THERE ARE ALWAYS THOSE THAT CONSIDER THEMSELVES SLIGHTLY MORE
EQUAL THAN OTHERS.

HE CLIMBED OUT OF A MERCEDES, THE LATEST MODEL.

IN GOOD SHAPE DESPITE THE PASSING YEARS,
OUR COMRADE EVGENY GOROZOV,
COULD HE HAVE INHERITED HIS POLITICAL LONGEVITY FROM
HIS FORMER MENTOR VASSILY ALEXANDROVICH CHEVCHENKO?

TOO BAD HE DIDN'T INHERIT HIS SILENCE.

FOR EVGENY TALKS, AND TALKS,

HE TALKS JUST LIKE HIS NEW MASTER IN THE KREMLIN.

HE TALKS IN MOSCOW, HE TALKS IN ERIVAN,

HE TALKS IN THIRSI, HE TALKS IN LONDON, HE TALKS IN NEW YORK,
AND IF HE COULD TALK ON THE MOON, IF THAT WERE STILL THE FASHION,
HE'D DO IT, WITHOUT A DOUBT.

EXCEPT, COMRADE GOROZOV, WHEN THE WIND OF SALT PICKS UP,
THERE'S NO LONGER ANY POINT IN TALKING. ESPECIALLY WHEN THAT FATAL WIND
IS ONE YOU'VE BROUGHT UPON YOURSELF!

SOON ALL THAT WILL REMAIN, BECAUSE OF YOU,
BECAUSE OF ALL THOSE MEANINGLESS WORDS, PRIESTHOOD, GLASSHOE,
AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT OTHERS,

ALL THAT WILL REMAIN IS AN UNREAL SEA SHRINKING DAY BY DAY,
ALL THAT WILL REMAIN ARE ABSURD STATUES
WAYLAIN IN THE DESERT...

THAT'S WHY WE'VE ALL GATHERED TOGETHER HERE ONCE MORE,
DEAD AND ALIVE, AND THOSE WHO ARE THE MOST DEAD
ARE NOT NECESSARILY THE ONES WE WOULD THINK.



IN GOOD SHAPE, EVGENY GOROZOV.

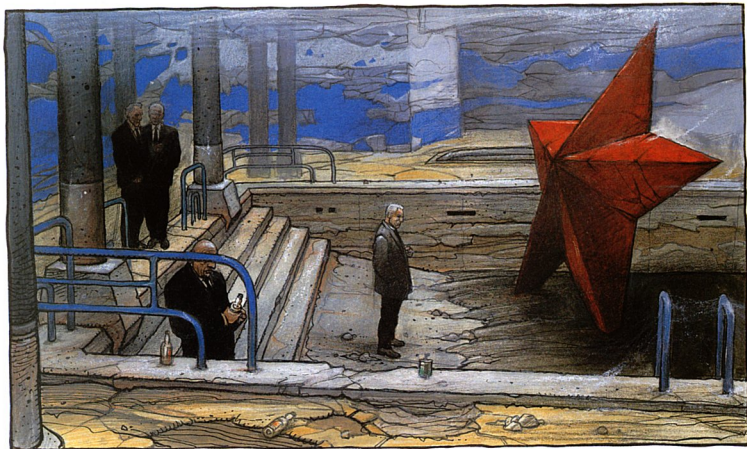
THE POOL IS RUN DOWN AND EMITS A
PUNY SWEET SMELL. THE SMELL OF A STARFISH DYING.
THE OBSERVATORY DOME NO LONGER OPENS, AND THE EMBROIDERY HAS
GONE TO SEED.

IN ANY CASE, THERE ARE GRAND PLANS TO CONVERT THE
ESTATE INTO A COOPERATIVE TOURIST ATTRACTION, OR GOD KNOWS
WHAT, AS LONG AS IT IS PROFITABLE.
ANOTHER OF THOSE NEW WORDS IN VOGUE TODAY.

THE ONLY THING REMAINING IS ROUGHLY WORKING ORDER IS
THE BAR. THE STOCKS WERE EXTENSIVE, BUT SPEAKING FOR MYSELF, I
NEVER TOUCH THE STUFF.

THE WIND OF SALT IS ALREADY TOO MUCH TO HAVE IN MY HEAD. IN WHAT REMAINS OF MY
HEAD, I HEAR THEM SAY...

THE SMELL OF A STARFISH DYING.



WHY DID YOU ALL RETURN? WERE WE EVEN FRIENDS AT THE SAME TIME AS WE WERE COMRADES?

ME, I HAVE MY REASONS FOR BEING HERE.

WHEN HE FOUND OUT I WAS OFTEN BORED, TADEUSZ CALLED ME IN LEIPZIG. IT WAS JUST BEFORE HIS DEATH.

HE TOLD ME: "COME AND LOOK AFTER THE GARDEN, IT WILL DO YOU SOME GOOD."

THEY LET ME LEAVE THE HOSPITAL.

WAS IT PERHAPS TO BE RID OF ME?

OR WAS IT TO BE RID OF MY FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES THAT I STILL HAD THERE, AND ELSEWHERE?

SO HERE I ARRIVED. AND STARTED LOOKING AFTER THE GARDEN.

INCLUDING THE AREA OF THE GARDEN THAT CONTAINS

TADEUSZ'S GRAVE. IT DID ME SOME GOOD.

BUT YOU, WHY DID YOU ALL RETURN? WERE YOU LOOKING FOR SOMETHING THAT WOULD DO YOU SOME GOOD? WHAT ABOUT YOU, THE LONG-WINDED POLYGLOT GOROZOV, YOU WHO TALK SO MUCH, LIKE YOUR MASTER IN THE KREMLIN?

THERE IS SOMETHING THAT WILL DO YOU SOME GOOD, AND ME TOO.

I IMAGINE ALL OF YOU SITTING AROUND THE BAR.

VASIL IS DEAD DRUNK, AND THERE REMAIN ONLY FOSSILS WITHIN HIS HEAD.

JANOS IS WONDERING WHETHER HE WAS RIGHT TO COME AT MY REQUEST, AND OF COURSE WONDERING THAT MAKES HIM IN THE WRONG.

PAVEL IS THINKING ABOUT HIS FORGOTTEN NAME, BUT HE DOESN'T KNOW JUST WHAT



ME, I HAVE MY REASONS...

BEING FORGOTTEN CAN BE, BECAUSE HE HIMSELF HASN'T FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING.

EVGENY TALKS, TALKS, TALKS... BUT WHAT GOOD IS IT TO TALK WHEN

THERE IS NOTHING MORE TO TALK ABOUT, BECAUSE EVERYTHING HAS BECOME A STERILE DESERT?

THE NIGHT IS STILL AND CALM. IT'S JUST A REUNION OF OLD FRIENDS.

PERFECT, REALLY. I'VE JUST COME OUT TO THE GARDEN WHERE THERE IS STILL SOME WORK TO DO.

ASIDE FROM THE BAR, THERE REMAINS ONLY THE BUILDING'S SELF-DENIGRATING MECHANISM THAT IS STILL IN PERFECT WORKING ORDER.

THERE.

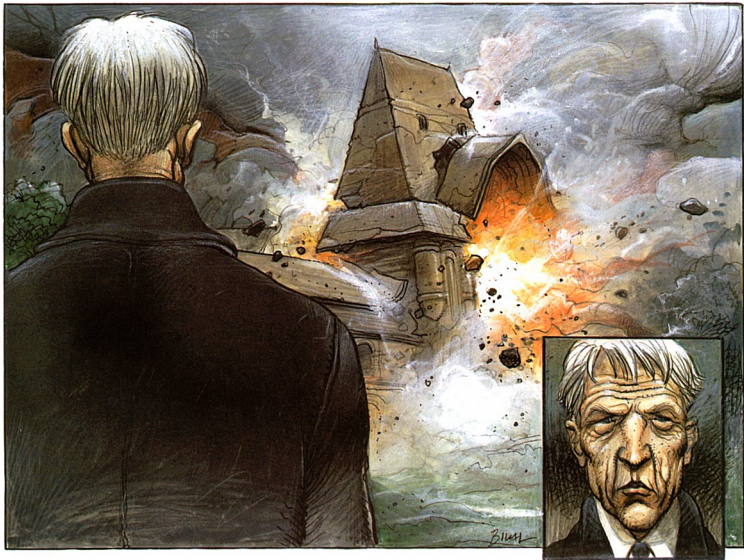
I IMAGINE ALL OF YOU SITTING AROUND THE BAR.

...THERE ARE ALREADY SHADOWS ALL AROUND YOU...



IT'S JUST A REUNION OF OLD FRIENDS...





There!

YOU COMPELLED ME TO SILENCE, IN THE NAME OF A PRESUMED FUTURE TO BE BUILT.
NOW, IT IS I WHO COMPEL YOU TO SILENCE, IN THE NAME OF A REAL FUTURE TO BE REBUILT.
YOUR HOLLOW WORDS, YOUR FEVERISH COMMOOTION, YOUR SHAMEFUL PACTS,
ALL OF IT SERVED NO PURPOSE EXCEPT THE SYSTEMATIC DESTRUCTION OF OUR FORMER IDEALS.
BECAUSE OF YOU, THERE REMAIN ONLY RUSTED EMPTY HULKS, THE MEMORY OF WAVES, AND AIMED STATUES WAYLAIN IN THE DESERT,
RED STARS LYING MEANINGLESSLY ON THE STERILE GROUND.
A WIND WHOSE SALT IS AS BITTER AS DEATH THAT BLOWS, AND BLOWS, ACROSS THE NOW UNREAL SEA OF SOCIALISM.
BUT TODAY, THE NIGHT IS STILL AND CALM AGAIN AFTER THAT LOUD NOISE JUST A MOMENT AGO.
PERFECT FOR A REUNION OF OLD FRIENDS, REALLY.
PERFECT THAT THEY REST, THERE, BY THE SIDES OF OUR COMRADE
TABIEZ, HIS HEAD IN THE SHADE OF THE CHERRY TREE, HIS FEET IN THE WARMTH TOWARDS THE VEGETABLE GARDEN.
NOBODY WILL COME AND READ YOUR NAMES, CORRODED BY OBLIVION.
YOU TOO WILL BECOME NOTHING MORE THAN FOSSILS.
BUT AS FOR ME, I BELIEVE IT'S POSSIBLE TO MAKE THE RIVERS RUN BACK, TOWARDS THEIR FERTILE SOURCE,
AND PREVENT HISTORY FROM FLOWING ALONG ITS SAVAGE BENT.

I UNDERSTAND MYSELF...



Günther Schütz. Born in Leipzig, 1930, son of a military man. Studies in philosophy, then economy. Known since 1955 for his scientific articles. Mr. Schütz emerges in particular as one of the most fervent supporters of the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961. Appointed a consultant to the East German Politburo, he distinguishes himself by taking positions in favor of the purges of the Writers' Association, and he stands against the rehabilitation of "bourgeois" artists. Starting in 1965, he directs the Party's university in the GDR. In 1970, he is appointed to COMECON, an organization with which he serves an essential role from 1976 to 1984, when he apparently becomes a high official of STASI, the secret police of the GDR. The dismissal of Mr. Honecker, with whom he was very close, seems to have had effect on Mr. Schütz's health, and he has now disappeared without a trace.



E. Golozov

Evgeny Golozov. Born in the Ukraine in 1918. Became a worker, and joined the party very early in life. Language studies at the University of Moscow (French, English, German, Romanian, Hungarian, and Slavic languages). Numerous decorations for acts of bravery during World War II, in which he was wounded many times. After that, little is known of Mr. Golozov's career, made entirely in Mr. Vassily Gheschenko's shadow. Mr. Golozov becomes member of the Central Committee when Mr. Gorbachev is elected First Secretary. From that time forward he would be Gorbachev's most trusted (and most secret) advisor on all issues concerning the former Communist Party nations.

Ion Niclescu (1918-1989). Born in the Danube delta. Little is known of his life until 1945, when he returns to Russia with Georgiu Dej's "Muscovite" group. Member of the Securitate, the political



I. Niclescu



J. Molnar

police; he is responsible for the purges of 1951, but is dismissed himself in turn in 1952 and placed under house arrest until 1957. Mr. Niclescu travels frequently and for a number of years is the chief spokesman for the very active Romanian diplomatic service. In 1970 he becomes a member of the Central Committee and resumes a high-ranking office with the Securitate. He is considered by many to be a "rising talent" during the last years of the Ceausescu administration, with which he publicly expresses his differences. His disappearance during the Rumanian "revolution" is one of the stranger incidents of the period, especially since Mr. Niclescu's body has never been recovered.

Vasil Stroyanov. Born in 1920 or 1921, of rural origins. Head of the partisans in the Rhodope mountains and one of the most courageous Bulgarian resistance fighters, he forms part of the first Dimitrov administration from 1946 to 1947. Discredited because of " Titoism", he is rehabilitated in 1956 before being put at the head of the peasantry's "Great Leap Forward". The program is a failure. After serving as ambassador to Switzerland, Mr. Stroyanov holds no office apart from the largely honorific post at the head of the Fatherland Front, an internal propaganda institution. He retains great public favor with the masses until the elimination of Mr. Jekov, who quietly drags him down during his fall, along with the entire body of the Party's old guard.

Tadeusz Boczek (1914-1989). Son of a rabbi. Studies in philosophy. Joins the Polish Communist Party at 16 years old and makes himself a reputation as a theorist as well as a coordinator. When the Party is dissolved in 1938 by the Comintern, Mr. Boczek manages to escape execution. Fights with the underground during World War II. Mr. Boczek then becomes a ranking member



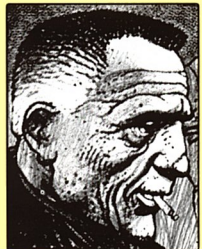
V. Stroyanov



T. Boczek

of the Politburo and plays a dominant ideological role until 1967. At that time, a wave of anti-Semitism, primarily intended to mask the regime's economic shortcomings, brings about his downfall. He then disappears from political life and is born until after Solidarnosc's rise to power that he is offered a minister's post in Warsaw. However, Mr. Boczek dies before being able to resume his duties.

Janos Molnar. Born in Budapest, 1932. Studies in literature. A young journalist for the Party newsletter "Szabad Nep", he becomes involved in the events of 1956. After the Hungarian Uprising is put down, he takes part in the reorganization of the Party Police and more specifically, is responsible for control over the intellectuals. Remains in Moscow from 1959 to 1967. Upon his return, Mr. Molnar is named Vice-Minister of the Interior. According to experts, his role in the machinery of the State appears to greatly



P. Havelka

exceed his official functions, and a grand future is predicted for him. But all of his hopes collapse at the same time as the Party does. After a severe setback with the voters in the region of Lake Balaton, Mr. Molnar abandons all his duties as politician and advisor.

Pavel Havelka. Born in 1915 on the outskirts of Prague. An early social democrat before the "Prague coup" (1948). In fact, he's an insider to the Communist Party, which invites him to take part in the Gottwald administration. Convicted and jailed as an "element of bourgeois nationalism" during the Slansky trial (1951). Freed in 1963 and appointed Minister of Culture, he becomes known as a liberal and active contributor to the reforms of the Prague spring. After the crushing of Czechoslovakia, an unperturbed Mr. Havelka participates in getting the nation under control again, while forming ties with the Party's centrist faction, where he undisputedly plays a key role. However, the "Velvet Revolution" gets the better of him, like so many other leaders, and he founders in total public indifference.



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