

Siniša Kovačević

TIMES HAVE CHANGED

Siniša Kovačević (1954, Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia) playwright and screenwriter. He graduated Dramaturgy at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade. He has written a number of plays for radio, television and theatre, and screenplays for films *The Best Ones*, *Better than Escape*, *The State of the Dead*.

Plays: *Levee*, *Last Handshake Before Closing Time*, *Times Have Changed*, *Ravy*, *Sent Sava*, *Prince Marko*, *Serbian Drama*, *General Milan Nedić*, *Virus*, *Janez*, *Hotel Europe*, *The Fairy Tale About the Comb and the Violin*, *The Greater Drama*, *The Rabbit Levee*.

The most important awards: Sterija Award for the best play of a year (*Times Have Changed*, *General Milan Nedić* and *Janez*); Nušić Drama Award (*Ravy*, *St. Sava* and *Princ Marko*); three awards of Festival of screenwriting in Vrnjačka Banja.

The play *Times Have Changed* was proclaimed selected as one of ten the best Serbian dramas written after the World War II.

The plays of Siniša Kovačević have been translated to Macedonian, Bulgarian, Polish, Russian, Greek, English and German.

Siniša Kovačević has directed most of his own plays.

A Play in 96 Images

To Mother and Father

Dear Director!

Don't be disturbed by the fact that in this play horses are shod and wild pigeons and white oxen appear. I only imagine this in some theatre of my own. I know very well that instead of a horse, a bicycle will be taken to the blacksmith, and I know there will be no wild pigeons, and that the oxen will bellow from offstage. But it's a pity.

S. K.

CHARACTERS:

ILIJA PEVAC, 33 years old, billager, plowman, farmer

NEVENA PEVAC, 30 years old, Ilija's wife

MILOŠ PEVAC, 65 years old, Ilija's father

ILIJA JEŠANOV, 33 years old

DUŠAN GOLIC, 50 years old, the second highest-ranking, and later the highest-ranking man in the new government

PAVLE DOBREN OV, 35 years old, a tradesman before the war

VELIKA BELIC, 25 years old, a good comrade, an enthusiastic activist

BRANISLAV RADA KOVIC, also called

TUJTA and, more recently, DEAF TUJTA

BRANA KOVAČEVIĆ, 22 years old, teacher, nicknamed PAVLE KORČAGIN

RADOJE BELEGIŠKI, blacksmith, 42 years old, known as BIG RADOJA

ĐORĐE BELEGIŠKI, 17 years old Radoja's son, member of the Communist Youth League

FATHER JOVAN, 50 years old, fat and ponderous

ČAVKA, 50 years old, party member and activist

DOCTOR, known as DOC, permanent secretary

GRRANDPA VASA THE REACTIONARY, 70 years old

RADULE, a Bosnian, 40 years old, colonist

CVIJETA, his daughter, 16 years old

JOVIŠA ERAK, 22 years old, also a colonist

HANS, 33 years old, German prisoner of war

... and others, many others. The action takes place in Srem in 1945 and 1946, from July to July.

1.

(The month of July. The broad plain of Srem. The great expanse of grain is turning yellow, the cornfields are green. In the the middle of the fields is a dusty dirt road. Thick layers of dust reveal the long absence of rain. In one grain field there are reapers. The men cut the grain, the women tie it in sheaves. On the horizon two figures come into view. The two horsemen approach the reapers. Both wear English shirts, with remnants of military boots. They have haversacks on their backs. They come up to the harvesters. Both have several days growth of beard, both are 33 years old, both were captured the first day of the war as soldiers from the same unit. After 5 years as prisoners-of-war, they are returning to their homes, to their families. Ilija Pevac and Ilija Ješanov. Fellow soldiers. The year is 1945.)

PEVAC

Good morning. How is it going?

JEŠANOV

You're working hard.

(The reapers gather around the newcomers, answering their greetings.)

PEVAC

Could we get something to drink?

REAPER

Of course. You, little one, give them the jug.

(A young girl jumps up to get the water. She hands it to the unexpected visitors. Pevac takes a long swig from the bottle.)

FIRST REAPER

Oh my God... Ilija, is that you?

(Pevac laughs and nods.)

FIRST REAPER

I thought so, but I'm still not sure. Ilija Pevac and Ilija Ješanov, of course. They always went together like Tuesday and Wednesday. Oh my God.

SECOND REAPER

Well, how was it?

JEŠANOV

It's over. And here?

FIRST REAPER

Don't ask. It's hard to say who was worse, the Ustaše or the Germans.

SECOND REAPER

Well, it's over now.

PEVAC

What about our people?

FRST REAPER

They didn't touch yours. Not a one. The houses where someone had been taken prisoner they left alone.

PEVAC

Thanks for the water. Let's go, namesake.

JEŠANOV

So long.

(The two namesakes start towards the village. They are followed bay a malicious remark.)

SECOND REAPER

I hope Ilija Pevac doesn't find his mare saddled, eh, gramps?

(The old man laughs. The he cuts a wide swath in the grain. Ilija Ješalov and Ilija Pevac move hurriedly towards the roofless white church steeple in the distance.)

2.

(Forgetting his friend completely, Ilija Pevac runs towards the gate of his house. In the courtyard is a white, undamaged house. Ilija Ješanov continues along the street. Pevac opens the door and goes inside. An eight-year-old boy who was playing around the well slips away into the house. A huge grey dog strains at his chain.)

PEVAC

Murat!

(The dog calms down. It howls and tries to wrench itself free of the chain.)

PEVAC

Quiet, Murat. It's me.

(Finally, the chain breaks. The enormous Murat jumps on his master. Blood gushes out. Ilija's young wife, Nevena Peva, runs out of the house. Ilija and the dog are rolling in the dust. The wife shouts.)

NEVENA

Murat! Sit. Into the house!

(Like a lamb, the dog goes into the house. Ilija straightens up. His hands and face are bloody from the bites of the dog. He wipes the dust and blood from his face. Nevena's knees begin to shake, she stumbles and sits comically down in the old metal trough containing water for the chickens.)

3.

(Ilija sits at a table full of food. His mother puts still more food on the already overloaded table. Then she starts to cry uncontrollably. Ilija chews with all his might. In the courtyard, under a huge mulberry tree, old Stojan Ješanov is digging a hole. From it he takes a moldy barrel. Ilija comes out with two large tin mugs. The old man draws the cork, and Ilija holds the mugs under the spout. Wine gushes out. Father and son sit on the pile of earth. They clink glasses forcefully, then drain them. next to them is a large puddle of wine.)

4.

(Ilija Pevac, Nevena, Ilija's father Miloš, and the doctor. The doctor is bandaging Ilija.)

DOCTOR

You got cut up pretty well.

(He prepares an injection.)

PEVAC

And I was lucky.

DOCTOR

Luckier than those who didn't come back. How was it?

ILIJA

Rough. I missed home, my family. The work was hard.

DOCTOR

They didn't beat you?

ILIJA

Never, What about you, Doctor?

DOCTOR

Comrade doctor.

ILIJA

How are your people?

DOCTOR

I don't know.

(Ilija looks at him in amazement.)

DOCTOR

They're all dead.

ILIJA

Oh my god... but how?

DOCTOR

By the knife, my boy, by the knife.

5.

(Night. Nevena and Ilija are in bed. Next to them their son is sleeping. Ilija moves closer, and Nevena responds willingly. Then Ilija gets a cramp. He has waited four and a half years for this night and it is over before it has begun.)

6.

(The stables. Ilija and Nevena.)

NEVENA

We have plenty of poultry. There were three hatchings this spring. (*Proudly*) Twenty from each chicken. The cow is fine. You'll see when Miloš brings her back.

ILIJA

Rumenka?

NEVENA

Her calf. The Ustaše took Rumenka in '43. But I hid the calf in the cupboard.

(*Ilija laughs.*)

ILIJA

And the horses?

NEVENA

Soko and Vidra. Grandpa kept them. What all he had to do in order to keep them, you have no idea.

(*Nevena picks up the pitchfork and digs away the straw in the corner. A square hatch appears, covering a hole.*)

NEVENA

And here's where I hid the comrades.

7.

(Ilija Pevac is cleaning his threshing floor. A neighbour, seventyyear-old Grandpa Vasa, squeezes through a gap in the fence. He comes over to Ilija.)

GRANDPA VASA

How's it going, Iko?

ILIJA

Grandpa Vasa! Hello.

GRANDPA VASA

Welcome home.

(They kiss each other on the cheeks.)

GRANDPA VASA

I'm glad you made it back.

ILIJA

How are you?

GRANDPA

Oh, working hard. It's going all right, huh?

ILIJA

All right.

GRANDPA VASA

Slow and hard, eh? Who had it easy in prison?

ILIJA

There were some who did.

GRANDPA VASA

I'm glad you got back safe and sound. Well, I have to go.

ILIJA

Where?

GRADSPA VASA

To work. I only stopped by to welcome you home. I really have to go.

ILIJA

Tell Đorđe to drop by.

GRANDPA VASA

There's no Đorđe any more.

(Silence.)

ILIJA

And nobody tells me. How long ago?

GRANDPA VASA

Two years ago.

ILIJA

Oh, no. What about Spasa?

GRANDPA VASA

She took the boy and went back to her, family.

ILIJA

Oh, no. I'm sorry, Grandpa Vasa believe me.

GRANDPA VASA

Me too.

ILIJA

A lot of people are dead. And all of them young.

GRANDPA VASA

The young fall. Look at Djordje.

ILIJA

Who killed him? The Germans?

GRANDPA VASA

I'm afraid my Djordje died on the wrong side. I have to go.

ILIJA

Stay a while so we can have a drink.

GRANDPA VASA

I'm going. It's not good for you to be seen with a reactionary.

(Someone shouts to Ilija from the courtyard gate. Grandpa Vasa quickly runs away to his own yard, and Ilija goes to open the gate. A girl of fifteen is waiting for him, all out of breath.)

GIRL

Comrade Pevac, report at once to the local council. Death to fascism!

(She turns and runs up the street. Ilija closes the gate behind her.)

8.

(The office of the new government, characteristically bare except for a few objects, also typical. An induction telephone. Two "desks". There are two men in the office. A policeman conducts Ilija Pevac in. One of the men is a rather short fifty-year-old with a short neck and a powerful build. He is called Golić. The other is Pavle, thirty years old, slender, with a foppish mustache. He strokes it frequently, straightening it along the line of his upper lip in a mechanical, unconscious movement.)

GOLIĆ

All right, Pevac, where have you been? Do you think we've got nothing better to do than wait for you?

(Ilija greets Pavle warmly. They kiss each other.)

ILIJA

(to Golić): I only wanted to change my shirt.

GOLIĆ

Next time don't bother to change it.

(Ilija looks at him in amazement.)

PAVLE

Sit down, Ilija.

(Ilija sits down.)

GOLIĆ

Listen, Pevac. You know why we sent for you.

ILIJA

I can guess.

GOLIĆ

Well, just so you don't have to guess...

(Pavle obviously does not approve of Golić's way of speaking to Ilija.)

PAVLE

Listen, Ilija, we went for you in order to explain a few things to you, in a friendly way.

ILIJA

Well, here I am.

GOLIĆ

I would like to do this in the official way, according to regulations.

PAVLE

That's not necessary in this case.

GOLIĆ

What do I know? I just like to be able to sleep at night.

(He takes a sheet of paper and begins to write.)

GOLIĆ

Last name Pevac, first name Ilija? Date of birth?

ILIJA

May seventh, 1911.

GOLIĆ

Profession kulak?

(Pavle looks at him.)

ILIJA

Farmer.

GOLIĆ

Fathers name Miloš. Now tell us, Pevac.

ILIJA

What?

GOLIĆ

Everything in order. It's very important that what you tell us agrees with what we have here.

ILIJA

(irritated): What is it you want, Golić?

GOLIĆ

Comrade Golić. First of all, I want the truth, because we know everything anyway... Second, I want everything from the day you were captured until yesterday. As for last night, I can imagine it. *(He makes a graphic gesture with his hand.)* Ha, ha, ha, there must be singing around the house this morning.

PAVLE

Ilija, just so we don't have to go through all this – you were called in for a conversation, not an investigation.. and so we could, first of all, explain a few things to you. A lot has changed here, it's a new order...

GOLIĆ

Comrade Pavle, I'd like to go by the rules just the same. So I can sleep well at night.

ILIJA

(Nervously and mechanically): I was captured on the thirteenth of April, along with my whole battalion. Major Vasić Killed himself with a hand grenade. We were taken on foot to Rumania, and from there to Budapest by truck. *(Golić is writing the whole time.)* From Budapest we were taken to Vienna by train, from Vienna to Munich by truck, and from Munich to a prisoner-of-war camp on foot. Is that how you want it, boss?

GOLIĆ

That's fine.

(Pavle turns towards the window.)

GOLIĆ

Go on.

ILIJA

What else?

GOLIĆ

What was the name of the camp?

ILIJA

Stalag A2.

(Someone knocks on the door. Pavle is grateful for the interruption.)

PAVLE

Come in.

(A villager enters.)

VILLAGER

Death to fascism, comrades. Well, here's Ilija. When did you get back?

(Ilija does not answer.)

VILLAGER

Comrades, I need two men today, I'm making a pigsty.

GOLIĆ

Go see Čavka.

VILLAGER

Thanks, comrades. So long.

ILIJA

Ilija Ješanov and Gligor.

GOLIĆ

How did they conduct themselves there?

GOLIĆ

Like everybody else.

PAVLE

Let's speed this up, in spite of the fact that comrade Golić wants to sleep well. Ilija, big changes have taken place here. For the better, of course. Right now things are still difficult, but it will get better, do you see? The people have taken things into their own hands. That's how it should be, right? Among other things, the biggest plot of land you can own is twenty hestares, which is enough, don't you think? Even too much. That means that your 52 hectares have been divided among comrades who have no land. Some land has not been divided up and has been left fallow. You'll find out thy when the time comes. That's the fairest way, right? We know you're an honest man...

GOLIĆ

As far as a kulak can be.

PAVLE

No interruptions in the future, is that clear, Comrade Vice-president?

GOLIĆ

It's clear.

PAVLE

Pardon me?

GOLIĆ

It's clear, Comrade Captain.

PAVLE

That's better. *(To Ilija)* We know you didn't compromise yourself in Germany and we expect you to be a loyal member of this new society and to help as much as you can and to be a good comrade, for Christ's sake. Now let's go have a beer.

(The two of them go out. Golić finishes his meticulous notes. There is not a single letter on the paper. Instead there is a crude sketch of Ilija Pevac. Someone knocks on the door.)

GOLIĆ

Come in!

(Ilija Ješanov enters.)

JEŠANOV

Death to fascism! You sent for me, Comrade Golić?

9.

(Ilija Pevac and Pavle in the street. A group of captured Germans are working on one of the buildings, unguarded. Ilija and Pavle pass close to them. Ilija looks closely at the unshaven faces. Pavle notices this.)

PAVLE

They're repairing the school. They can fix everything they fucked up.

(Ilija does not answer.)

PAVLE

There are 200 of them in our village alone.

(They arrive in front of the Cooperative. In front of it several people are squatting around some bottles of beer. When they notice Pavle, they start to get up. Then they recognise Ilija and greet him.)

PAVLE

What are you doing, comrades?

VILLAGER

We're waiting for Germans.

PAVLE

(to Ilija): We didn't tell you that. Whenever you need some help, go see Čavka, OK, and you'll get two or three Germans. Of course, on condition that you return them in one piece.

ILIJA

Are we still going to have that beer?

PAVLE

Sure. They've rationed us beer now, and who knows when it'll be our turn again.

ILIJA

Who's tending bar here?

(The proprietor comes over.)

ILIJA

Bring us beers all around.

(The proprietor brings several litre bottles of beer from behind the improvised bar, and gives one to each of them. Ilija pays.)

WILLAGER

Well, how was it?

ILIJA

How do you think it was? Like it is for them.

(He nods towards the Germans.)

(At that moment a man of Ilija's age passes on the other side of the street. Ilija jumps up.)

ILIJA

(Shouting): Tujta! Tujta! Isn't that Brana Tujta? Brana!

(The man goes through the door of the church.)

PAVLE

You can shout until tomorrow, for all the good it will do you.

ILIJA

Has he gone crazy?

VILLAGER

Deaf. Deaf as a post.

PAVLE

A mine exploded a metre in front of the trench he was in.

VILLAGER

He's completely changed. Avoids everybody.

ILIJA

(looking at Tujta for a long time): The hell.

10.

(The church door. There are neatly piled pieces of the roof. The roof of the bell tower lies on the ground. A large cross which once stood on the peak of the bell tower is leaning against the wall. The walls are scorched, the windows contain only a few fragments of stained glass. Tujta goes into the bell tower. On the floor, almost buried in bricks, beams, and tiles, is a huge bell. Tujta carefully inspects it. He tries to move it, but does not succeed. He looks it over again, centimetre by centimetre. He does not find any cracks. Then he starts to remove the debris from the bell. The broad hulk of Father Jovan blocks the doorway of the bell tower.)

PRIEST

How goes it, Branislav?

TUJTA

Don't bother, Father. I can't hear you at all.

PŠRIEST

(shouting): How goes it?

TUJTA

Could be better.

(The monk laughs:)

TUJTA

We have to raise the bell.

PRIEST

It won't work. The tower will collapse.

(Brana shakes his head.)

PRIEST

(Gesturing): The tower will fall. It's cracked. It won't hold the bell.

(Brana finally understands. He stands there for a few moments, then bends down and continues his work.)

11.

(Ilija Pevac with an old couple. On the wall is an icon and the picture of a twenty-year-old youth in the uniform of the old army.)

OLD MAN

Please don't lie to me, Ilija.

ILIJA

I'm not lying, Uncle Sreta, I swear.

OLD MAN

If he's dead, it's better if you tell me, tell me right away.

ILIJA

He's not, I tell you.

OLD MAN

But then why... for the love of God.

ILIJA

They always told us everybody was fed in communal kitchens, that they set fire to the churches, that the women belonged to everybody...

OLD MAN

But none of that is true. Except for the churches. And those were set on fire by the Germans.

ILIJA

He wasn't the only one who believed it. Quite a few left.

OLD MAN

Oh.. what's happening to us, Spomenka?

(The old woman does not move.)

ILIJA

The Americans liberated our camp Whoever wanted to could go with them.

(For a few moments no-one speaks. Then Ilija stands up.)

ILIJA

That's how it was. He said he'd get in touch as soon as he could. Goodbye.

(Ilija goes out. The old woman finally breaks down and begins to wail. The old man hides his tears in his white mustache.)

OLD WOMAN

Who, will light candles for me, Gligor?

12.

(A building site. Captured Germans are at work. Golić stands in the shade with another man. Brana Tujta comes up to them.)

TUJTA

Hello.

GOLIĆ

Hello.

TUJTA

Can you give me three Germans tomorrow?

GOLIĆ

Sure. Eh, Čavka?

(Čavka nods.)

GOLIĆ

What are you doing?

TUJTA

I can't hear.

(Golić asks again, gesturing and shouting. Tujta understands.)

TUJTA

I'm going to raise the bell.

GOLIĆ

For that I won't give you any. I can't. I won't!

(Tujta turns and starts to go. Golić grabs him by the sleeve.)

GOLIĆ

And I wouldn't advise you to do that, either. And you an ex-soldier. Shame on you.

TUJTA

I don't hear a word you're saying.

(He turns and leaves.)

(A grain field. The sun stands high above three reapers. They finish a swath and go off towards a tree and shade. We recognise Ilija Ješanov. He approaches the tree. Two German military jackets are hanging from it. The reapers sit down. Ilija takes a bottle and some food out of his bag. He takes a drink, then offers some to the Germans. He takes a loaf of bread out of a white towel and divides it into three equal parts.)

14.

(Dusk. Nevena is driving the last chickens into the coop. Her son is helping her. Ilija comes out of the stable. He closes the door behind him. He takes the washbasin which is leaning against the wall and fills it with water from a can. Old Miloš Pevac is patching a harness. Nevena goes into the house.)

ILIJA

Come on, Miloš, pour for me.

(The boy takes a tin pitcher and starts to pour water over his father.)

ILIJA

Faster.

(The boy obeys, almost fearfully. Nevena comes out of the house. She has put on a new apron and is wearing a new scarf on her head.)

ILIJA

What are you all dressed up for?

NEVENA

I'm going to a meeting.

ILIJA

Where?

NBEVENA

I'm a WAF. The president.

ILIJA

WAF?

LITTLE MILOŠ

Women's Anti-Fascist Front. W. A. F.

ILIJA

Do you know what time it is?

NEVENA

Seven-thirty.

ILIJA

What will people say? Out in the town at eight in the evening!

NEVENA

What's wrong with that?

ILIJA

To hell with W. A. F! You're not going anywhere.

NEVENA

But the comrades will...

ILIJA

To hell with the comrades. Take off your things.

LITTLE MILOŠ

Go ahead, mama.

ILIJA

You be quiet, shrimp. *(In a tone that does not permit any argument)*
Nevena, take off those things at once.

15.

(Ilija Pevac is cleaning out the stables. With a powerful motion he throws forkfuls of refuse a long ways. From the neighbouring courtyard the blows of an axe can be heard. Old Vasa is mending his barn. He works like an old man, awkwardly and with great effort. Ilija goes through a gap in the fence.)

ILIJA

How's it going Grandpa Vasilija?

GRANDPA VASA

The way it does when you're old.

ILIJA

Here, give me that. I'll do it. *(He takes the axe from Grandpa Vasa.)*

GRANDPA VASA

(disconcerted): It's all right. Don't. It's all right.

ILIJA

What do you mean it's all right? Let me do it.

GRANDPA VASA

Get out of here, boy. Someone will see you.

ILIJA

So what? Let them see me.

GRANDPA VASA

Go on, Ilija. I'm being boycotted.

ILIJA

You're what?

GRANDPA VASA

I'm being boycotted. Now go. You'll get into trouble.

ILIJA

Forget about your goddamn boycott and give me that board.

(Grandpa Vasa hands him the board. Ilija quickly hammers it into place with a few powerful and skillful blows.)

(The courtyard of Ilija Pevac. Ilija Pevac and Ilija Ješanov are at work, transferring bags of grain from a wagon to the barn.)

JEŠANOV

How much do you have, namesake?

PEVAC

Eleven cubic metres and acre.

JEŠANOV

Not bad.

PEVAC

That's nothing. In Germany we harvested twenty from land that wasn't as good.

JEŠANOVA

It's still not bad, namesake. Next year we'll get that much. And why didn't you get two or three Germans to help you? Wouldn't Golić give you any?

PEVAC

I didn't ask for any.

(Ješanov laughs.)

JEŠANOV

I remember when he wasn't such a big shot.

(They continue in silence.)

PEVAC

Golić the top man in town. Good God.

JEŠANOV

We were away for a long time namesake. In five years the first can be last and vice-versa. You know how long five years is, don't you?

PEVAC

OK with Pavle. I can understand that. But Golić. The lowest man in the village. Nothing but a day-labourer and a sharecropper, and a bad one at that.

JEŠANOV

You'd be better off not thinking like that.

PEVAC

He didn't even have enough fat on him for a dog to bite.

(Again they continue in silence.)

JEŠANOV

Does it bother you about the land?

(Pevac laughs.)

PEVAC

Does it hurt when they pull out one of your teeth?

It's not the money that bothers me, it's the land itself, do you understand?

JEŠANOV

What do you have to complain about? You have enough left.

PEVAC

For Christ's sake. You see someone else plowing your land, it bothers you.

JEŠANOV

Who got yours?

PEVAC

Jova Koviljac, Djordje Belgiški, Mika Belov, who knows, a lot more. Some is still fallow. The probably keeping it for someone... yesterday I was in the fields. Jova Koviljac had his team in there plowing. Plowing my grandfather's land, for God's sake. I said, "Hello, Jovan, are you plowing?" He doesn't say anything. he doesn't speak to me anymore. He's offended – as if they'd give me his land.

(Ješanov laughs. He looks around him. Then in a whisper.)

JEŠANOV

Do you ever think of Greta?

(Silence. Pevac answers after a long pause.)

PEVAC

And how.

(They stop working.)

JEŠANOV

That was a woman! In every sense of the word!

PEVA

Do you know how close I came to staying there?

JEŠANOV

I know, namesake, I know.

17.

(The office of the new government. Pavle and Golić are in their places. Ilija Pevac is sitting before them.)

ILIJA

Listen, Golić...

GOLIĆ

Comrade Golić.

ILIJA

Listen, comrade Golić. This is my business and nobody else's. It's no skin off your ass if I don't let my wife go wandering around at night.

GOLIĆ

Pevac...

ILIJA

Comrade Pevac.

GOLIĆ

Pevac, I've got three things to say to you. First, this isn't some cheap dive; you've been swearing about a hundred years too long. Second, comrade Nevena is a real comrade, a hardworking activist, and that's not just your business. Third, a meeting of the W. A. F. isn't wandering. If this happens again, we'll bring you up before a meeting, in front of the whole village. Just so you know.

ILIJA

(irritated, people from Srem would say furious): Why would you bring me up before a meeting? Why? Why would you do that? What does the village have to do with my family affairs?

PAVLE

Comrades, we can talk about this calmly.

(At that moment, an uproar is heard outside. All three look out the window. Two rather old men are fighting violently. Pavle runs outside.)

ILIJA

That's Mladja and Milenko. What are they fighting about, for Christ's sake?

GOLIĆ

Sensible people, aren't they? There was a war on here for four years, comrade Pevac. We were slaughtering, each other, you know?

(In the meantime Pavle has separated the two antagonists.)

GOLIĆ

And I don't want to hear again – "That's my business." Those times are past, brother, understand? And another thing – Vasa Koviljac is a reactionary and he's being boycotted.

ILIJA

First you'd better explain to me, comrade Golić, what a reactionary and what a boycott is.

GOLIĆ

His son is a traitor.

ILIJA

Then his son is a reactionary, so boycott him.

(Someone knocks. A youth of about 17 enters, with the marks of his first shave.)

YOUTH

Death to fascism! Comrade vice-president, Youth Brigade National Hero Pinki has completed its mission. Grandma Koviljka's kitchen has been whitewashed.

GOLIĆ

Have all the mothers of soldiers who died in action been taken care of?

YOUTH

Yes. What should we do now?

GOLIĆ

Now you can rest a little. You've earned it.

YOUTH

Give us a job to do. We don't want to rest.

GOLIĆ

You don't have to overdo it. Rest a little.

YOUTH

No. Uncle Golić, give us something to do. We're not tired.

(Golić laughs.)

GOLIĆ

OK. Report to Čavka.

YOUTH

(Happily): Yes, sir, comrade vice-president. *(He goes out.)*

GOLIĆ

Do you know whose son he is?

ILIJA

Whose?

GOLIĆ

Radója the blacksmith's.

ILIJA

Big Radoja's. So big already?

GOLIĆ

Kids change. And the times too, Pevac. Shape up while there's still time.

TIMES HAVE CHANGED.

18.

(The interior of the bell tower. Brana Tujta has nearly finished cleaning the bell. All the rubble has been taken out of the tower. The huge bell is turned on its side. Ilija Pevac comes in. Brana notices him. Ilija extends his hand. They shake hands firmly.)

TUJTA

The door is too narrow. I'll have to make it wider.

19.

(The office of the new government. Pavle and Golić are in their usual places.)

PAVLE

He's an honest man, so treat him that way.

GOLI

I treat him the same way I'd treat any comrade.

PAVLE

I'm not so sure. Make sure nothing like that happens again.

GOLIĆ

There won't be any more of it, Pavle, word of honour.

PAVLE

You know it would be bad if anyone said anything.

GOLIĆ

I don't understand at all.

PAVLE

Try a little harder. I don't want any more quarreling between you two. You know that the whole village...

ĆOLIĆ

... knows that before the war I was a hired hand for Ilija Pevac.

PAVLE

Very good!

GOLIĆ

I'm proud of that, Comrade Captain.

PAVLE

As you should be, Comrade vice-president.

GOLIĆ

Just let me tell you one thing, Comrade Captain. If he tries anything at all, he'll get what he deserves.

PAVLE

And what might he try, for example?

GOLIĆ

I don't know. I'm only warning you.

(Pavle gets up and starts to leave.)

PAVLE

A little more tolerance and everything will be all right. The man was away for five years. You have to understand it if he acts a little strange.

(Golić is silent.)

PAVLE

And one more thing. I want you to recommend Comrade Nevena for party membership. Is that clear?

GOLIĆ

It's clear, Comrade President.

(Pavle goes out and leaves Golić alone.)

20.

(The courtyard of Ilija Pevac. The door to the courtyard opens. A girl from the Communist Youth League and a German come in.)

GIRL

Pevac!

(Murat starts to bark. Old Miloš comes out.)

GIRL

Grandpa Miloš, is Nevena or Ilija here?

MILOŠ

They're up on the threshing floor. They're stacking hay.

GIRL

Here, they sent this fascist to help you. And tell Nevena and Ilija they have to come tomorrow, without fail. There's a meeting at 8. Goodbye.

MILOŠ

Goodbye!

(The girls leaves.)

MILOŠ

(Gesturing): Go up there.

GERMAN

I understand everything. I'm a farmer too. Hans.

(The German starts towards the threshing floor. Miloš continues mending sacks.)

(The courtyard of Ilija Ješanov. A metal drum is attached to the large walnut tree in the courtyard. Ilija taps a little around the barrel. Then he climbs down the ladder. He takes a pail already filled with water and climbs back up. He pours the water into the barrel. He comes down and stands under the barrel. He pulls the wire. Water falls onto his head. An improvised shower. Ilija's father Stojan appears.)

STOJAN

What are you doing, you idiot?

ILIJA

This, father, is called a shower.

STOJAN

Take it down, the whole village will laugh at it.

(Ilija laughs Water runs down his face.)

STOJAN

It's understandable that you have to make this kind of junk, when you don't have anyone to pour water on you when you come back from the fields. Get married, then you won't need that shower of yours anymore.

(He goes away across the courtyard, laughing. Ilija Ješanov is standing under the shower. He is laughing.)

*(Ilija Pevac stands in front of the Cooperative with another farmer.
They are tipsy.)*

ILIJA

Let's go to Jocika's for some wine now.

(The farmer shakes his head.)

ILIJA

Let's go. Jocika always has the best wine in town.

(The farmer again shakes his head.)

ILIJA

We'll go for one at my godfather's and then home, eh?

FARMER

I haven't spoken to him for two years.

ILIJA

Why not?

FARMER

Don't ask.

ILIJA

Jesus Christ, are there three people in this village who talk any more?

(The overcrowded hall of the Cooperative. On the rostrum sits the presidential committee. The table in front of them is covered with a rug. There are slogans on the walls. The son of Radoja the blacksmith shouts: "Long live Comrade Stalin! The hall thunderously takes up the cry. "Long live Comrade Tito!", shouts a Young Communist near the door. Again the hall echoes the cry loudly. Golić stands up. Pavle look at him.)

PAVLE

Wait. I'll do it.

(Golić sits down.)

PAVLE

Quiet, Comrades. Here is the agenda for today's meeting. I will report on the renovation and rebuilding of damaged houses. Comrade Golić will report on land distribution and agrarian reform...

VOICE FROM THE ASSEMBLY

Long live agrarian reform!

PAVLE

And then, the third item on the agenda – the receiving of new members into the party. Followed by miscellaneous business and then dancing. *(Applause.)*

PAVLE

I can proudly say that in our village there is not a single mother of a fallen soldier who has not been taken care of.

VOICE FROM THE ASSEMBLY

Long live the fallen soldiers!

(Only a few voices take it up. There are a few long moments of silence. Pavle is also confused. Then someone shouts: "Long live Marshall Tito!" the hall echoes with the cry: "Long live Tito!")

THE SAME VOICE

We don't want the king! The king isn't worth a damn!

THE ASSEMBLY

No king!

(Applause.)

VOICE

Tito faught, the king got married!

THE ASSEMBLY

That's right!

PAVLE

Young people, farmers, and...

24.

(Brana Tujta passes beside the Cooperative. Across his shoulders is a pickaxe. He enters the portal of the church. From there he goes into the bell tower. He swings the pickaxe in powerful movements. He tears

the door apart and widens it. A flock of pigeons flies out of the bell tower. An agitated Father Jovan rushes out of the church.)

PRIEST

What are you doing that for, you wretch?

TUJTA

(Not answering, continuing to swing the pickaxe.)

PRIEST

You'll kill both yourself and some innocent bystander.

TUJTA

I don't hear you, Father.

PRIEST

What are you doing that for, you fool?

(He begins to shake Tujta.)

PRIEST

The tower is shaking, it's going to fall.

(Tujta swings the pickaxe some more.)

PRIEST

Every time you hit it, it shakes right down to the foundations. On e of these times will be one too many and you'll kill somebody.

TUJTA

Get out of here, Jovan. Don't bother me.

(He starts to swing the pickaxe again. Father Jovan is frightened and runs out. Tujta continues to make the door wider, the bell tower indeed shaking dangerously with every blow.)

25.

(The meeting room of the Cooperative. There is an ovation. Golić sits down.)

PAVLE

Following that detailed report by Comrade Golić, let's pass on to the third item on the agenda, the receiving of new members into the ranks of our honoured party. You all know what a communist and revolutionary should be like. Please, Comrades, who will report from the committee on candidates for the party?

(A girl of around 25 or 26 stands up. We have already seen her as a Young Communist in the courtyard of Ilija Pevac, conversing with old Miloš.)

PAVLE

Go ahead, Comrade Velinka.

(Velinka climbs onto the platform.)

VELIKA

Unfortunately Comrades, today we have only one candidate to recommend. And that is Comrade Nevena Pevac.

(Ilija, astonished, looks at Nevena.)

VELIKA

You all know how during the war Comrade Nevena was active in aiding our struggle. You all know how she kept wounded fighters in her own house, you know that in her house, at the risk of her life, she sheltered many members of the underground, couriers, and even some very important comrades.

We also believe that Comrade Nevena Pevac has matured politically, and has broken completely with religion and other remnants of the unenlightened past.

(Applause. Pavle leads it.)

VELIKA

So much for that, Comrades.

PAVLE

You have heard, Comrades. Now we shall vote. All for, raise your hands.

GOLIĆ

Only Communists can vote. No one else should raise his hand. Only communists.

PAVLE

Is anyone against?

(No-one raises his hand.)

PAVLE

Then it's unanimous. Comrade Nevena, please come onto the stage.

(A little confused, Nevena goes onto the stage.)

PAVLE

Congratulations. You know what a responsibility is now yours.

(Congratulations are given. After Pavle, Golić and the others. Then Nevena leaves the platform and goes back to Ilija, excepting congratulations on the way.)

PAVLE

Now on to new business, Comrades. Doesn't anyone want to speak?

(Behind Pavle, a tamburitza orchestra begins tuning their instruments.)

ILIJA JEŠANOV

I would like to speak, Comrades.

PAVLE

Go ahead.

ILIJA

Comrades, yesterday was in the forest. It's terrible how many gypsy moths there are. One caterpillar after another. Comrades, our forest is going to be completely ruined. Just look at the mulberry trees around the village. There's not a single leaf left on them. It's a shame that our forest is being ruined, Comrades. I suggest that we form a brigade to combat these gypsy moths.

PAVLE

(To the doctor, who is keeping the minutes): take that down, Doc. Comrades, I agree completely with Comrade Ješanov.

JEŠANOV

But we can't afford to wait.

PAVLE

And now, young Comrades, clear away the benches for dancing.

(In a few moments the table disappears from the rostrum. All of the benches are placed along the walls. The tamburitza players begin to play "Beautiful Srem." the first couples begin to dance, Nevena and Ilija among them-after so many years.)

26.

(It is a clear night. Nevena and Ilija are walking along the street. The music reaches them from the Cooperative behind them.)

NEVENA

How long has it been since we've danced?

ILIJA

God only knows.

NEVENA

Five years. Even more.

(They continue in silence.)

NEVENA

You know, now I'll have to go to meetings more often.

ILIJA

I see. Follow the crowd.

NEVENA

You're not unhappy that I joined the party?

ILIJA

Why should I be unhappy? But are you going to be able to do everything at home and there too?

NEVENA

Don't worry about that. You know, I'm really happy tonight.

(Ilija smiles.)

NEVENA

I'm proud, you know.

(They go a few steps without a word.)

NEVENA

We haven't been alone since you came back.

(Ilija lights a cigarette.)

NEVENA

Tell me how it was.

ILIJA

In Germany?

NEVENA

Yes.

ILIJA

I've already told you a hundred times.

NEVENA

Go on anyway.

ILIJA

You should see how they work the land there. I spent my last year there on one of their farms, as a farmhand for a German. His sons were in Russia. Quite a few of us were assigned to farmers as farmhands. They way they work, and what they have to work with my God!

NEVENA

But what about the crimes they committed here?

(From behind a gate a dog suddenly bark. Nevena jumps back and grabs her husband's arm.)

ILIJA

Down! Quiet!

NEVENA

My heart missed a beat.

(Hand in hand, Nevena and Ilija Pevac continue down the street. Towards their house.)

27.

(A village street. A row of mulberry trees. In every treetop there is a young person or two. Ilija Ješanov is also there, removing gypsy moths from the trees. The young girls work as hard as the boys. A song resounds as they work.)

At dawn when the sun is rising,
On Tito's boats the sailors sing.
Onward, onward, Tito's sailors.
Onward, onward, partisans.

28.

(The office of the new government. Golić is inside. Knocking before he enters, Ilija Pevac goes through the open door.)

ILIJA

Hello.

GOLIĆ

How's it going?

ILIJA

Fine. Listen, can you give me another German today? I'm spreading manure.

GOLIĆ

Take two, brother.

ILIJA

One's enough.

GOLIĆ

Go see Čavka.

ILIJA

I'd like to get that little one I had before, if that's possible. Hans, his name was.

GOLIĆ

Ask Čavka about it. If someone hasn't already taken him.

ILIJA

He's a good worker.

GOLIĆ

No problem.

ILIJA

See you.

GOLIĆ

Bye.

ILIJA

Thanks.

GOLIĆ

Don't mention it.

(Without closing the door behind him, Ilija goes out and heads for the construction site.)

29

(A long line of diggers stretches across the entire village. They are digging a drainage ditch. Ilija Ješanov is working with all his might. Velinka passes by him with a water can.)

ILIJA

Give me some, Velo, let me drink my fill.

VELINKA

You're not from our group. You've got your own water carrier.

ILIJA

Yours is colder and sweeter.

VELIKA

It's all from the same well.

ILIJA

Well, you can't tell. Give me a cup.

(Vela gives him a cup. Ilija drains it in one gulp and holds out the cup for more.)

VELIKA

No more for you.

ILIJA

Come on, give me some. I'll pay you back a litre this evening.

(Velika laughs.)

ILIJA

(Whispering): Come out in front of your house at 8 tonight. I'll bring you the water.

(Velinka nods her head. Then she runs off with the water. Ilija strikes a powerful blow with his packaxe.)

30.

(A vineyard. The sun is high over the vines. Ilija and Nevena are under a cherry tree, making love slowly and tenderly. Then they both come at the same time, together. Nevena gets up. She shakes the dirt from her apron. She laughs and look at the sun.)

NEVENA

It's past noon, and we haven't pruned the vines yet.

(They both burst into laughter.)

31.

(Ilija Ješanov's courtyard. Ilija is there holding two pails of water. Old Stojan comes out.)

STOJAN

Where are you going with that water, you idiot?

ILIJA

(Through his laughter): Father, I'm going to get married.

STOJAN

Who is this madman I'm living with, for God's sake?

(Ilija leaves the courtyard, leaving his astounded father behind him. It is dusk.)

32.

(Ilija Pevac's courtyard. Ilija and Hans are at work. Ilija stops and lights a cigarette. He offers one to Hans.)

ILIJA

You're a good worker, Hans. Very good.

HANS

Thank you, Mr. Pevac.

(He lights his cigarette from Ilija's.)

ILIJA

Where are you from?

HANS

Jena. From a fillage near 'dere. I'm farmer too. I work 'da lant.

ILIJA

Are you married?

(Hans nods his head.)

HANS

I have left a bik family at home. Wife, children, brodders, mutter...

ILIJA

Are they still alive?

HANS

I don't know, sire. I don't tink so. *(He speaks with certainty.)* The Russians are there.

ILIJA

So what?

(Hans looks frightened.)

HANS

I didn't mean anything bad, Mr. Pevac.

ILIJA

You don't have to be afraid of me, Hans. Not at all.

HANS

The prisoners from the American occupation zone receive letters. We odders don't. "Dere families write to 'dem 'dat 'dere are massacres, 'dat 'dere iss no more marriage... tchuss' 'tink, Mr. Pevac, 'dey burn 'da chuch and hung 'da priest.

33.

(Ilija Pevac is walking down the middle of the street, leading a horse by the halter. On the horse is Ilija's son Miloš. They arrive at the blacksmith's. Ilija shouts.)

ILIJA

Radoja!

(Out of the blacksmith shop comes an enormous man with sooty cheeks and mustache.)

ILIJA

Where have you been, big fellow?

RADOJA

Ilija!

(They greet each other warmly. Ilija takes his son off the horse.)

RADOJA

How the hell are you?

ILIJA

The two hind shoes came off while I was spreading manure.

RADOJA

We'll take care of that. So how ar things?

AMILOŠ

Daddy, can I go to the playground?

ILIJA

What for? We're going right home.

MILOŠ

There's a football match between us and the Germans.

ILIJA

Go on, then.

(The boy runs off. Ilija and Radoja begin to work on the horse. They work quickly and skillfully.)

ILIJA

I never see you at the Cooperative, and you're never at the cafe.

RADOJA

I don't have anything to do with that bunch.

(Ilija says nothing.)

RADOJA

It's all nothing but bullshit. Golić and that gang. Those bums want to build a country-ion two years they'll ask the king to come back.

(Ilija raises the horse's leg. Radoja puts down the hot shoe. Then he starts to haarden the hoof.)

RADOJA

I hear that your wife is one of them. Listen, Ilija, it seems to me that you don't know about anything.

(Ilija looks at him questioningly.)

RADOJA

I'm going to tell you something, because I'm more honest than all of them put together. I'll be surprised if you have a better friend than me in this village.

ILIJA

So tell me.

RADOJA

There's not much to tell. Your wife was unfaithful. To say the least.

(A long pause. All that can be heard is the horse's hoof being hardened. Perspiration appears on Ilija's face.)

ILIJA

Radoja, this isn't anything to joke about.

RADOJA

I had to tell you. And it's the truth, I swear. Your father knows about it, too.

34.

(Ilija Ješanov is going along the street. In his hands he has the jugs of water. It is dusk. Then in the shadow of a gate he sees Vela and Pavle in intimate, almost tender conversation. Velinka gently straightens the medal on Pavle's chest. Ilija hides behind a mulberry tree. He stands there a few moments. Then he pours out the water and goes away. Vela notices him, but says nothing to Pavle.)

35.

(The house of Ilija Pevac. Nevena is at the stove, cooking supper. Ilija rushes in through the open door, bewildered and frantic.)

ILIJA

So that's how it was.

(He begins to strike Nevena immediately, as soon as he comes, through the door. He hits her with both his hands and feet, paying no attention to where the blows land.)

NEVENA

Ilija, what's wrong with you? Ow! *(She starts to wail loudly.)*

ILIJA

What's wrong with me, you motherfucking whore, what's wrong with me?

(He hits her wildly, as if he were beating himself as well. Nevena falls, and Ilija continues to beat her.)

NEVENA

Ilija, don't please.

ILIJA

Yu hid comrades... Goddamn it...

(He stands astride her and continues to beat her. Little Miloš comes to the door. He starts to fight with his father. Ilija shoves him away roughly and the boy falls. Then he runs outside stricken with fear. Ilija begins again where he left off. He grabs Nevena by the hair and begins to beat her head against the floor. Just then the boy runs in with an axe. He swings it. Nevena cries out.)

NEVENA

don't, Miloš.

(Ilija turns around, then raises his arm. The axe glances off his arm and strikes him on the shoulder. Ilija whimpers. He slaps his son with all his might. The boy falls. Blood gushes from his nose and mouth, splattering the floor.)

MILOŠ

I'll kill you. I'll kill you one day.

(Ilija picks up the axe and begins to yell. He swings the axe, striking the stove with all his might, frantically. Bricks, ashes, and coals fly about the room.)

36.

(A party meeting at the Cooperative. Present are Pavle, Golić, Velika, the doctor, Čavka, and a few farmers whom we have already met in earlier scenes.)

PAVLE

Comrades, I call this meeting of the Mandjelos cell of the party to order. Doc, keep the minutes as usual. Now don't frown. Who's missing?

VELIKA

Only Nevena.

PAVLE

I propose the following agenda.

GOLIĆ

We should check and see why Comrade Nevena isn't here. Write that down, Doctor.

PAVLE

So I propose the following agenda. The arrival of our comrades the colonists, meeting the teacher, and miscellaneous business. Agreed? then you know, Comrades, what kind of people are involved here, right? They are hardened fighters and Communists. There aren't any smugglers of that sort of socalled revolutionary. These are the people who bore most of the burden of our revolution. I think it is fair to say that the largest share of that burden, figuratively speaking, was on their shoulders. Of course, I don't mean by that to belittle the contribution of people in other parts of the country, but it's well'known what role Bosnia played in the war, especially the Bosnian borderlands. And so we must welcome these people accordingly. To quote Comrade Kidrič "resettlement colonisation is one of the basic tasks in the reconstruction of the country. It is a shortcut to socialism". End of quote. (*Applause.*) All that for my editorialising? Thank you. (*More applause.*) Excuse me, Comrades, but I have one more thing to add. We have to do everything in our power to welcome the colonists. I suggest that Comrade Velinka take upon herself everything concerning the cultural and artistic programme. We should mobilise the young people, get them to put on a sketch or something, or a patriotic reading, by Branko Ćopić, for example, and folk music and dancing...

GOLIĆ

I definitely think we should get an accordion player from Mitrovica. People from the borderlands don't like our tambouritzas... And we should definitely practice a few Bosnia songs, like... well, I don't know. There are plenty of them.

PAVLE

All those in favour, Comrades.

(Everyone raises his hand.)

PAVLE

There are 26 houses in our village which belonged to Germans and four belonging to Ustašas, isn't that right? That means thirty families will arriving in Mandjelos. Most of them are from villages around Banja Luka.

GOLIĆ

There's one that goes, "OP Banja Luka, you have burned down and the girl has gotten pregnant..." We could learn that one.

PAVLE

We'll distribute the houses and land according to the number of members in each houshold. Families with officers will get an extra acre. One acre more, I think. You'll do that, Comrade Vice-president. Keep accounts-the bigger the family, the bigger the house, and vice-versa.

GOLIĆ

I'll take care of it.

PAVLE

And as for the welcoming party, everything should be festival and happy. With singing. We should definitely put up a stage. We've got red crepe paper. Velinka, choose the sketch from Socialist One-Act Plays. There are 23 of them there. And at the end we'll dance a kolo. That's obligatory, Comrades.

GOLIĆ

We all know that, brother.

PAVLE

Any questions?

(Velinka raises her hand.)

PAVLE

Yes, Comrade Vela?

VELINKA

None of the young Communists are going to want to play capitalists or fascists in the sketch. I guarantee it.

PAVLE

Just explain to them that it's a party assignment and there'll be no problem. So much for that, Comrades. That means, number one, Comrade Golić will assign the houses. Two, the stage and posters. Three, folk dancing and music and the sketch. I'll say a few words of greeting to the colonists at the beginning.

GOLIĆ

And the accordion and tamburitza players.

PAVLE

Right. And we have a picture of Comrade Tito. What about Stalin?

GOLIĆ

I'll bring one from home.

PAVLE

Doctor, have you written that all down?

DOCTOR

Yes.

PAVLE

Is there anything else in connection with the first point, Comrades?

(Everyone is silent.)

PAVLE

Then let's go on to the second. So, the arrival of the teacher. You all know that we're getting a teacher. When exactly?

GOLIĆ

The 29th of September.

VILLAGER

Is that definite? the children are already a month late starting school.

PAVLE

It's definite. *(To Golić.)* When did you say?

GOLIĆ

The 29th.

PAVLE

And the Bosnians?

GOLIĆ

The twenty-seventh.

PAVLE

Fine. That means we can use the same strage. You know, Comrades, in the new socialist school, the children are going to be taught new things: integrity socialist morality, the value of work, optimism, and so on. To teach those things you need the right person. Well, we've got such a person, Comrades. In fact, we've got the best. What's his name?

GOLIĆ

Brana Kovačević.

PAVLE

Also known as Pavle Korčagin. And when someone has a nickname like that, Comrades, you know what he's like, don't you?

VELINKA

Right.

GOLIĆ

We've all read Tempered Steel. Korčagin, eh?

PAVLE

Comrades, the person we've got is a young communist from Belgrade, a member of the underground before the war. We have to give a proper welcome to a man like that, don't we?

VILLAGER

There's no problem there, Comrades. Even before the war the village teacher was all-important, let alone now. Before the war half the village met him at the edge of town, and the other half waited for him in front of the school. Don't worry about the welcome.

GOLIĆ

The comrade teacher is a communist from before the war, one of the first to fight, do you see, man?

PAVLE

One of the young people should prepared a speech, You can help with that, Velinka.

(Velinka nods.)

PAVLE

Which of them could do that?

DOCTOR

Radoje the blacksmith's son.

PAVLE

We have posters and a stage. Everything is taken care of. Great. Is there anything else in connection with the teacher?

VELINKA

Lodgings.

PAVLE

Good thinking, Vela. Čavka, send some Germans over tomorrow.

ČAVKA

Right.

GOLIĆ

The comrade teacher is single. Send a couple of young people to get a bed and table from some German house... whatever they find. But moderately. And everything else that's needed.

PAVLE

Is there anything else, comrades.

(No one speaks.)

PAVLE

Then on to miscellaneous business. Speak up.

(All are silent. Then, after a few moments, the doctor raises his hand.)

PAVLE

Yes, Doc?

DOCTOR

I have something, Comrades –the mistreatment of Comrade Nevena Pevac by her husband.

(The blacksmith shop of Radoje Belegiški, also known as Big Radoje. Radoje is working at the forge. His son enters. We have already met him at Golić's office, after the whitewashing of Grandma Koviljka's kitchen. His name is Djordje.)

DJORDJE

I'm going.

RADOJE

Is that so? You could say that a little less often – "I'm going."

DJORDJE

I'm going to help make the stage for the welcoming party for the colonists.

RADOJE

Really, for the colonists?

DJORDJE

For the colonists.

RADOJE

Those are those Bosnian hicks?

DJORDJE

You might watch what you say a little.

RADOJE

Oh? Why?

DJORDJE

Those Bosnian hicks made this revolution.

RADOJE

Well, screw them and their revolution.

DJORDJE

Watch what you say or you'll be sorry for it later.

RADOJE

To hell with them and the revolution and the stage and everything else.

DJORDJE

Comrade Belegiški, you can get thrown in jail for that.

RADOJE

No, I can't.

DJORDJE

You'd better believe you can.

RADOJE

I can't, because they're already full. Jammed.

DJORDJE

Watch what you say.

RADOJE

And who will send me there. You? You aren't going to report me yourself.

DJORDJE

I will, personally. Even if you're my father a hundred times over.

RADOJE

Well, fuck you all one more time. The revolution, the Bosnians, Stalin...

(A slap is heard. The son strikes his father a sharp blow. There are a few second of silence.)

RADOJE

Here you go.

(He returns the blow even more fiercely. The son answers it. Then Radoje. Then his son. Then Radoje again. They stop.)

DJORDJE

Reactionary!

(He goes out, slamming the door.)

RADOJE

To hell with everything. And the ones who made the revolution, too. When they throw away their clodhoppers and start getting too big for their britches...

(The office of the new government. Pavle is sitting at the desk. Ilija Pevac comes in.)

ILIJA

You sent for me.

PAVLE

(not raising his head): Yes.

(Ilija stands silently for a long time. So long that he begins to shift his weight from one foot to the other. It is as if Pavle is keeping him waiting intentionally. This continues. Finally Pavle begins to speak.)

PAVLE

You know why I sent for you.

ILIJA

No, I don't.

PAVLE

You know all right. Don't play the fool with me.

(He falls silent again.)

PAVLE

Sit down. *(Ilija sits. Pavle takes out a cigarette. he offers one to Ilija. Ilija shakes his head. Another pause. Pavle lights up.)* don't do it again *(Again neither of them speaks.)* A family man. It doesn't become you. And in front of the child. You've been here before and you've seen that I don't approve of Golić's methods. but you ought to know that I can be three times as bad as he is. A

hundred times. *(He becomes more and more incensed.)* Don't do it again, If you value your head. That's all finished, my friend. Forever. A tight rein and the whip. Women aren't the same anymore, either, understand? Those are remnants of a dark past, and we've broken with that. I know it's not easy for you. You have the biggest burden of all. It's as if you were dropped here from an airplane. But it's time you finally realised how things are. You're no fool, for God's sake. Look at Ilija Ješanov, he is in the same situation and he's a model comrade. But with you it's one fuck-up after another. Golić told you that times have changed. Get that through your head, brand it there if you have to. Don't let me hear that you even raised your voice to you wife, let along anything else. Do you realise, you blockhead. That you hit a member of the party? do you know what that means, Pevac? The party knows how to defend its members, don't doubt that for a minute. Not for a minute. Get that into your head once and for all. Two can play this game, Comrade Pevac. *(He stops, out of breath, and gets control of himself. He reaches for his tobacco again. Again Ilija shakes his head.)* Don't do this again. Remember that, Ilija. Don't be a fool. You can consider this either a friendly warning of a threat, whichever you prefer. *(He stops again. Both are silent. Pavle again picks up the package of cigarettes.)* Go ahead and light up, for Chirst's sake. *(Ilija takes a cigarete. Pavle holds out a match for him.)* And all this because of what – village gossip. Who knows why they told you all that crap. If I knew who it was, I'd skin him alive, you know what I mean?

(The village square. A stage is decorated with red crepe. There are pictures of Tito and Stalin side-by-side. The words Tito-Stalin, Stalin-Tito, are pinned to the stage in white letters made of paper. There are posters of welcome all over Mandjelos: "Welcome, Comrade colonists", "Bosnia-Srem", "Welcome Heroic Bosnia", "Socialism Through Colonisation." The tamburitza band are tuning their instruments and practicing "O Banja Luka, you Have Burned Down". The folk ensemble is on the stage, along with Pavle Golić, Čavka, and the doctor. Velinka is listening to the speakers practicing their speeches. Then someone shouts: "They're coming!" the tamburitza players strike up "O Banja Luka, You Have Burned Down and the Girl Has Gotten Pregnant". Shots and shouting can be heard in the distance.)

PAVLE

First. Vela will propose members for the honorary presidential committee. Second, I'll say a few words and Golić will read the house assignments. Third, the youth group members will take everyone to their new houses and get them settled. Then everyone will come back for the cultural and artistic programme. Vela, it's Tito, Stalin, Marx and Engels, in that order. Then dancing.

40.

(The house of Ilija Pevac. Nevena and Ilija are not speaking to each other. Nevena is putting on a new scarf. Ilija is setting the burners in the newly rebuilt stove. Grandpa Miloš Pevac comes in from outdoors. He sits down. Everyone is silent. Outside shouts can be heard.)

NEVENA

(to the old man): Dad, I'm going to the reception. Goodbye.

MILOŠ

Goodbye, daughter.

(Nevena goes out without looking at Ilija.)

41.

(A prisoner of war camp on the edge of town. The sound of gun shots and music reach it from the distance. Accordion music, naturally. The captured fascists are resting. Some are lying in the sun, others are playing a game that consists of joining hands and turning in a circle until one member of the pair becomes dizzy. Hans is shaving, his face covered with lather and a folding mirror in front of him. Čavka goes by and notices the mirror.)

ČAVKA

Hans.

HANS

Yes, Mr. Kafka.

ČAVKA

Where did you get that mirror?

HANS

I don't understand.

ČAVKA

Spiegel. Yours?

HANS

Mine. From Jena. From home.

ČAVKA

Lend it to me, Hans... for a couple of days.

(Hans, not yet finished shaving, hands the mirror to Čavka. The lather is still on his face.)

ČAVKA

I'll return it you... soon.

HANS

I don't doubt, Mr. Čafka. I don't doubt at all. (*"Bastard"*, he mutters in German.)

42.

(Djordje Belegiški, the son of Big Radoje, conducts the family of Radule Erak into a house. We will meet Radule on several occasions later. That is, Radule and his wife, small children, and the grandmother...)

DJORDJE

Leave the goat outside, granny. There's plenty of room for it there.

(They go inside, confused and frightened. The room is huge, with a parquet floor, a tile stove in the corner, and a chandelier above their heads. The old woman starts to cry, then wail loudly.)

DJORDJE

Here you are, Comrades. Make yourselves at home!

(He opens the doors to the remaining rooms.)

WIFE

All this?

DJORDJE

(Laughing): Everything. Well, Comrades, don't forget to come back, you know. I have to be going. Get settled in and then come to the celebration.

(He goes out. The Eraks stand there, lost amidst all the rooms. Then the wife opens a window and then the shutters. Light pours into the room. Radule Erak slowly takes off his cap, as if he were standing before an icon.)

43.

(Night. The house of Ilija Pevac. The child is asleep. Old Miloš and Ilija are sitting in the darkness. The light of a bonfire shines in. They are silent. Outside there is the sound of singing and gunshots.)

MILOŠ

Someone's going to get killed tonight. The people have risen in Bosnia, the people have risen. They are led, they are led by Simel Šolaj.

MILOŠ

They're not singing, they're bellowing, for god's sake.

(Rain begins to beat against the window, then falls harder and harder. In a moment it becomes a real summer shower. "Hold it. Where are you going? What's a little rain to a real man", is heard outside. "Cousins, let's make the circle bigger." The rain lashes against the window and the bonfire grows dimmer and dimmer.)

MILOŠ

They're rough and tough. It's a different world from ours.
(They fall silent again.)

MILOŠ

We're not going to have it easy with them, nor them with us. Well, good night.

(He gets up and goes out. As soon as he closes the door, Nevena rushes in soaking wet. She does not greet Ilija. Ilija gets up from his chair, undresses and goes to bed. Nevena also undresses. She lies down next to her son. Neither Nevena nor Ilija speak, but they do not sleep, either. In the distance can be heard: "Look little one, the paper's turning white, where we ate caramels last night." For a long time yet these echoes of Bosnia will resound over the farmland of Srem. The rain lashes against the window.)

(The door of the church. Tujta is working. He is trying to take out the huge church bell. He is trying to move it from the bell tower to the door, unsuccessfully. His shirt is soaked with sweat. He has obviously been working at this for a long time. Then he puts a beam under the bell, as a lever. The bell moves a little. Father Jovan appears with all his 100 kilograms.)

PRIEST

How is it going, Branislav?

TUJTA

(Looking at Jovan): I don't understand a word you're saying, Father.

PRIEST

(Laughing): Could be better, huh?

TUJTA

(Reading the priest's lips): That's about right.

PRIEST

Just be careful you don't wreck the bell tower-

TUJTA

You have to speak slower if you want me to understand.

PRIEST

(Indicating what he means): Be careful!

TUJTA

Don't worry.

PRIEST

(Taking off his coat): Together we can do it. Everything is easier with two.

(He puts his shoulder to the bell. The bell moves.)

PRIEST

OK, now push. It's moving, it's moving. It's hot to trot now. *(He laughs.)* There's something I have to tell you, Radaković.

TUJTA

Could be...

PRIEST

(Laughing): ... better.

(He takes Tujta's hand.)

PRIEST

I'm glad you came back to the fold.

BRANA

I don't understand, Father. *(He looks the priest in the eye.)*

PRIEST

(Speaking distinctly): I'm glad you returned... to the church.

(Silence. A long pause.)

TUJTA

Get out!

(He seizes the pickaxe. The priest backs away.)

TUJTA

Move! Get out!

(He starts towards Jovan, and the priest beats a hasty retreat.)

BRANA

Don't let me see you around when I'm here. Not even accidentally.

(He goes back to work. As if shrinking from his wrath, the bell moves more easily. Then a ten-year-old girl enters the bell tower. She puts her hand on Tujta's shoulder. He turns around.)

GIRL

(Softly, syllable by syllable): Daddy, let's go home.

TUJTA

Go ahead, I'll come later.

GIRL

Come on, daddy. Please. Let this be and come. You've been here the whole day. The fields aren't plowed and everyone's laughing at us. You've dropped everything because of this stupid bell. *(She starts to cry.)* Let's go, daddy. They're all laughing at us. I can't do everything by myself... Please... We're way behind everyone else. *(She stifles a sob.)*

(Brana puts the pickaxe on his shoulder and puts his arm around the child.)

TUJTA

Let's go, daughter.

45.

(Big Radoje's house. Radoje's son is in front of the mirror. he has a copy of his speech in his hand.)

DJORDJE

Honoured Comrade teacher. Welcome to Mandjelos, a rich and fertile revolutionary village... You've overdone it, vela. We are happy to have in our village a stalwart Communist, a member of the Belgrade underground, a man whose nickname says it all... al... *(He looks at his copy of the speech.)*... Pavle Korčagin. Applause. Comrade teacher we wish you a pleasant stay in our village... our revolutionary village and we hope that all your pupils will be honour students. Long live General Stalin, long live Marshall Tito, death to fascism, freedom to the people. Applause.

(He breathes a sigh of relief. Then he tries out some poses in the mirror. On the last few words he raises the clenched fist of his left hand. Then he tries it with the right. That seems like the best way to do it.) Long live Marshall... Long live General Stalin, long live Marshall Tito. (another sigh of relief. That's it.) Honoured Comrade teacher. Welcome to...

46.

(The stage already seen at the welcoming of the colonists. The whole village has again assembled. In the villages of Srem, the teacher has long been more than just a servant to the community.)

DJORDJE

(to himself): Long live Comrade Stalin, long live Comrade Tito!

(Velinka is next to him.)

VELINKA

Just read it loudly and distinctly.

(Someone shouts: "Here comes the carriage! Here's the teacher!" Excitement, applause, shouts... then the teacher gets out of the carriage. It is a girl, barely more than a child, dressed in the uniform of the partisans, with a cigarette in her hand. When she steps out of the carriage and the villagers see that she is missing a leg, shock takes the place of silence.)

VELINKA

(Nudging Djordje with her elbow): Go ahead... *(Djordje does not react.)*

VELINKA

(Whispering): Begin.

(Silence. Djordje fails to begin. Golić urges Vela on with a look. Vela shrugs her shoulders. Pavle gives her a questioning look. There is a long, uncomfortable silence.)

THEACHER

Well...

PAVLE and GOLIC

(Simultaneously): Comrade schoolmaster.

(Another pause.)

PAVLE

Comrade Brana, welcome.

47.

(A classroom of the village school. Or more simply, the lawn in the schoolyard. The teacher, Pavle Korčagin, is standing in front of the pupils.)

TEACHER

That's how we'll vote, Comrade Pioneers. That way and no other. Why am I telling you all this? You don't vote yet, but sometime you will, and you'll vote in a new, socialist country. This doctor Milan Grol, who is not even a real doctor, doesn't have a chance. Not the slightest. And why not? Because he doesn't have the people behind him. Instead he has the English and other capitalists and the despicable king. But the people know who has given them freedom. They will vote for those who bled during the war and not for those who spent the war in hotels, castles, and mansions, surrounded by servants and lackeys. And that, Comrade Pioneers, is why that miserable Doctor Grol has no chance at all. We'll shop the world where we stand and what we stand for. Isn't that so?

KIDS

Yes! Yes!

TEACHER

The whole world is watching us. The rotten capitalist are already spreading rumours that the elections will be rigged. Do you know what rigged means? They're sending observers. Well, let them come. There'll be something to see, all right. They will see the triumph of truth and the defeat of the reactionaries.

LITTLE MILOŠ

And what is triumph?

TEACHER

Victory, Miloš, victory. And that's why we're all-I mean your parents-are going to go to the polls with the slogan "Class consciousness now." Comrade Pioneers, get up that morning earlier than your mother and father, wake them up and say: "Go and carry out your duty as citizens".

MILOŠ

Why citizuens? We're villagers.

(Pavle Korčagin laughs. She ignores the question.)

TEACHER

There's no going back to the old ways, Comrade Pioneers. For us the king is dead. Long live Josip Broz!

KIDS

Long live Josip Broz!

MILOŠ

Excuse me, teacher, I have a question.

TEACHER

Go ahead, Miloš.

MILOŠ

Why are you called Pavle Korčagin, when you're a woman?

TEACHER

Do you know who Pavle Korčagin was?

KIDS

No.

TEACHER

Well, then your teacher will tell you about that now.

48.

(Night. The house of Ilija Pevac. The Pevaces are sleeping. Then little Miloš jumps out of bed. He starts to shake old Miloš.)

LITTLE MILOŠ

Grandpa get up. Wake up dad and mom!

ODL MILOŠ

What is it, little pal? What's the matter?

LITTLE MILOŠ

Get up, grandpa. It's time to carry out your duty as a citizen.

(Old Miloš looks at the clock on the wall.)

OLD MILOŠ

Go back to sleep. It's not time yet.

LITTLE MILOŠ

Then when will it be time?

OLD MILOŠ

Just go to sleep. It's not even midnight.

LITTLE MILOŠ

Don't be late, grandpa, please.

OLD MILOŠ

Go to sleep. It's the day after tomorrow, not tomorrow. We'll be the first ones there, don't worry.

49.

(A pre-election meeting. The presidential committee is the usual one, and there is one new party member, the teacher, Pavle Korčagin. There are posters and the usual slogans: "Long live Marshall Tito", "Long live General Stalin", "Everyone to the polls", "No Monarchy-

we want a republic". Someone in the crowd shouts, "We want King Peter". the crowd answers, "String him up.")

GOLIĆ

There's no reason to hem and haw, Comrades. They'd like to pass him off on us, but we're better off without him. Let him stay in London and spend our gold that he took with him. We don't need that, either. While we were bleeding he was screwing Elizabeth and sending messages to his beloved people. This is the final attempt by the rotten capitalists to dictate the wishes of the people. Never again. We're all going to go out-comrade Pavle said it well with the slogan "Class consciousness now" - and show everyone what the wishes of the people are. As for the results of the elections, I'm not worried about that - they are already known...

VOICE FROM THE CROWD

Tito fought the king got married! We don't want the king—he's no good!

(The crowd answers in unison: "Hear! Hear!")

GOLIĆ

Comrades, this is the final attempt of English capitalists to go back to the old ways. If they need another king, they can have ours. Let him join hands with Elizabeth. They're birds of a feather. So let's not hesitate, Comrades. Let's go to the polling place as early as possible-no exceptions. The youth group will bring older people and those who can't get around. Let's show the reactionaries who we are and what we're made of.

(Ovation and slogans.)

PAVLE

And now the comrade doctor has the floor.

DOCTOR

I'll be brief, Comrades. I would rather not speak today, but I must. And this is why. Comrade Ilija Pevac beat his wife so badly that I wanted to send her to the hospital in Mitrovica, but she refused. I have never in my life seen anyone beat his wife so badly. I therefore suggest that we publicly condemn this deed of Comrade Pevac as a throwback to the unenlightened past, and that if he does it again we boycott him.

GOLIĆ

Call him onto the platform. Come up here and be a hero like you were when you beat up your wife.

(Ilija turns and hurries away.)

GOLIĆ

(after him): Now you run away. But when it was a question of...

TEACHER

(In a tone which silences everyone): That's enough!!!

50.

(The voting. The office of the new government, festively decorated and hung with slogans. "Class consciousness now" dominates. It is dawn. Pavle and Golić, the doctor, Velinka-and of course the teacher, Pavle Korčagin-are present. People enter and vote in silence. The

atmosphere is celebratory. The voters each take a ball, put a closed fist in each of two boxes, the blind and the correct one, and then immediately display their empty fist. Ilija Ješanov puts diately shows his empty fist, without his hand in the correct box and immeputting his other hand in the blind.)

PAVLE

Don't do it that way, Comrades. We explained clearly how to vote, for God's sake. Otherwise your vote doesn't count. Write that down, Doc. Ilija Ješanov's vote in invalid. He didn't cast his ballot properly. Don't do it like that, comrades. Please. *(The villagers continue to vote. A long column of people votes in silence. Two men carry in an old woman on a stretcher.)*

51.

(The office. Ballots are being counted. Golić, Čavka, Velinka, the teacher, Pavle, and the doctor are present.)

GOLIĆ

No other place will finish counting before 8 o'clock, or I'm the thinnest person here.

PAVLE

Let's count, Comrades!

GOLIĆ

And there's no other place where 100 percent of the people voted, I guarantee it.

PAVLE

(He takes the correct box and begins to break the seal.)

GOLIĆ

What are you doing there? Why don't we count this handful in the blind, then you'll know right away what the outcome is.

(He picks up the blind and breaks the seal. He shakes out the balls. There are nine of them.)

GOLIĆ

Nine.

(Silence. No one speaks.)

VELIKA

Nine out of one thousand and twenty voters. That's an insignificant percentage of reactionaries.

GOLIĆ

Screw those nine. *(He sits down.)*

VELINKA

That's not bad, is it, Comrades?

GOLIĆ

(Picking up a ball): This yours, isn't it, Pevac. it is, it is. *(He puts the ball aside. The teacher Korčagin opens her mouth to say something, then changes her mind and goes out.)* And this is his father. *(He puts this ball next to the first.)* And this one is our Father Jovan, and this one is Big Radoje. And deaf Tujta.

PAVLE

How do you know all that?

GOLIĆ

In this village I know more than just the time of day, Comrade Captain. You can hang me if those aren't the ones. And this one is Grandpa Vasa. No, no, it's not him. It's Mika Parćaš, and this is his wife. I'll shit my pants if it's not, I promise you. Write this down, Doc. Report of the Commission of the Mandjelos Electoral District. One hundred percent of the voters turning out. Nine for the ticket of Milan Grol, 1011 for the Popular Front.

PAVLE

1009. Ilija Ješanov's vote doesn't count.

GOLIĆ

And send that to the Committee in Mitrovica right away.

PAVLE

No, don't. I'll take it. OK, Comrades, you're free to go. You stay, Comrade Golić.

(The others leave. Pavle and Golić remain.)

PAVLE

Are you sure that those are the ones?

GOLIĆ

I guarantee it.

PAVLE

Then put a little pressure on them. On condition that you're sure. See you.

GOLIĆ

Something else is bothering me.

PAVLE

What?

GOLIĆ

(Picking up the remaining balls): Whose are these two, for Christ's sake?

PAVLE

I'll see you.

GOPLIĆ

Say hello to the comrades on the Committee.

(This sentence throbs with a strange sort of irony.)

(Pavle goes out. Golić remains with the balls in his hand. He looks at them for a long time. Čavka enters.)

ČAVKA

He went to skim off some cream.

52.

*(The house of Ilija Pevac. Ilija and the Bosnian Radule are present.
Ilija pours drinks.)*

RADULE

No more.

ILIJA

This won't give you a headache.

RADULE

Don't pal. That's enough. And the same goes for you, Ikan. We have to get off our asses and do some work.

ILIJA

That's easy to say.

RADULE

If we could stand it in Germany everything else should be easy.

ILIJA

It's hard. Didn't you see? You were there. In front of the whole village. What does the village have to do with my stove and my bed? I wanted the earth to swallow me up. In front of a thousand people.

RADULE

Why don't wait for him somewhere?

ILIJA

Who?

RADULE

In the dark somewhere... a few words, you know?

ILIJA

The doctor?

RADULE

Oh, the doctor. Your troubles aren't coming from that direction, Pevac. You know who I mean.

ILIJA

As if that would change anything. I can understand that there won't be a king anymore, OK, and that the government has changed, that's OK, too. But even the language is different, for God's sake. We weren't away for a hundred years. Boycott, reactionary, obstructionist... they talk different. You left somebody a shepherd, you come back and now he's driving around in a jeep like a goddamn general. Half your friends are dead, the other half are in prison Brothers don't speak to each other. Twin brothers. The teacher couldn't even tell them apart.

RADULE

Who's that?

ILIJA

Mitar and Pitar Čamprag. They don't speak to each other.

RADULE

There was a war here, for Christ's sake.

ILIJA

I left behind a wife and came back to a comrade. My son avoids me like the plague. I left behind two hundred acres of land and returned to get thirty-five, which is a lot, they say, a lot. I'd like to adapt, but how, for the love of God?

RADULE

My friend, I have to put up with all that, too. But I've got a new house and new neighbours – and new custom... and a new country. Everything. You can see who has it worse. Pour another one, goddamn it.

(Ilija pours. They drink in silence.)

ILIJA

Erak, listen. *(He continues in a whisper.)* Don't say anything about Greta to anyone, for god's sake.

RADULE

Pevac, what are you talking about? What do you take me for, goddamn it? It's safe me, I swear it on the heads of my children. Don't mention it again.

(Ilija pours another drink. He empties his glass without clinking glasses.)

(The office of the new government. Pavle, Golić, Čavka and another villager are present. We have already seen the latter at a party meeting.)

PAVLE

Comrades, I have to pass along to you the compliments of the Committee in connection with the organisation and the results of the elections. The comrades are very satisfied. Second, it may be quite some time before the property records are in order. We are a young nation but a nation nevertheless. And a nation with no taxes isn't worth a shit. So a directive has come down which says that until the property records are complete taxes will be determined not by units of land but by production. that is, approximately. The comrades higher up, since they have the greatest confidence in you, have appointed you three to the tax commission. *(She gives them some papers.)* Here are the quantities of foodstuffs which are to be supplied by Mandjelos. That's how much the tax has to raise. Keep accounts so that tax brackets can be determined according to property, in other words fairly and within tolerable limits. Is that clear? You may go. Just two more things. Keep accounts so that no-one's personal quarrels or disagreements affect the tax assessments. Is is clear what I'm talking about?

ČAVKA

And the second thing?

PAVLE

The second thing is that it wouldn't be bad if Mandjelos contributed a little more than its share, would it, Comrades?

54.

(The cafe. There are several people inside, some from Srem, some Bosnians. Some of those present are Ilija Pevac, Big Radoja, Tujta, Ilija Ješanov... Tujta is alone at the bar. A Bosnian, we'll call him Joviša, comes up to him.)

JOVIŠA

Hey, deaf guy.

(The Bosnians laugh at Tujta. He doesn't hear. Joviša repeats his words behind Tujta's back. More laughter.)

RADOJE

Do you think that's something to joke about?

JOVIŠA

What are you butting in for? Nobody asked you to. Deaf guy, have you raised that bell yet?

TUJTA

I don't hear a word you're saying.

(Joviša begin to gesticulate.)

JOVIŠA

Are you still trying to lift that bell? Pull on this. *(He grabs his penis.)* Maybe it will ring. What are you staring at, you jerk? Huh?

ILIJA

Boy, leave the man along.

JOVIŠA

Nobody asked you, kulak. *(To the café owner.)* Listen, you. How long are you going to serve everyone who comes in here? You can't let just any kind of trash drink with people who were the first to fight and free the country.

TUJTA

What are you saying?

JOVIŠA

Whatever I feel like saying.

(The Bosnians make signs of approval.)

JOVIŠA

I'm telling you we're fed up. Who told Jablan Dukić that his tile stove was a monument to Hitler, so that he wrecked it with a pickaxe? Who gave Mila Erak popcorn seed to plant instead of ordinary corn? Who told that same Mila that the wheat he planted should be plowed under again? Fuck the lot of you. *(He gets angrier and angrier.)* Who told me that you build a fire in the oven of the range, so that I almost set fire to the house? Who, so I can tell you to go fuck your mother. Don't make me put half of the village in mourning...

RADOJE

Whose mother are you talking about?

JOVIŠA

All of yours, and yours most of all, you and that pious deaf guy, and Pevac...

(He seizes Tujta by the ear.)

(And so it begins. Tujta slaps him hard, and in a moment it turns into a melee. They all jump up and reach for chairs, bottles, and a few knives. Someone catches a chair on the lamp and the fight continues in darkness. The fight is heated and long. Ilija Ješanov jumps onto the bar.)

JEŠANOV

Peace, people, have mercy. What, wrong with you? Are you crazy? Calm down. *(To the café owner.)* Run and get Golić. You're not children, what's wrong with you... *(The café owner runs out. No one pays any attention to Ilija Ješanov or his words. The fight doesn't let up, but continues more violently and furiously.)*

55.

(The office of the new government. It is night. Present are Paole and Golić, still sleepy and bewildered, along with the café owner and an excited Ilija Ješanov.)

JEŠANOV

Then Tujta hit Joviša, and first one and then another jumped in.

CAFÉ OWNER

Nothing is left in one piece, not even a salt-shaker.

GOLIĆ

We should call a meeting right away, tomorrow.

PAVLE

There won't be any meeting at all. Go get them right now, get them out of bed. Every last one of them. Get them all here in 10 minutes. I don't want anyone to say a word about this. Anyone who opens his mouth is in the shit, I promise you. Is that clear?

CAFÉ OWNER

Yes.

GOLIĆ

Yes.

PAVLE

This imply didn't happen. Are you aware of what this means, Comrades? Of what political consequences it could have? We can't let a word of this get out. Consider that your duty to the party. Got it?

JEŠANOV and GOLIĆ

Got it.

CAFÉ OWNER

What about the café?

PAVLE

It has to be as good as new by morning.

CAFÉ OWNER

But how?

PAVLE

I don't know and I don't care. Let the brawlers worry about that. OK; let's go. I want them all here in 10 minutes. In their shorts.

56.

(The bell tower of the church. Brana Tujta is at work. He is polishing the bell with sacking and ashes until it gleams. Outside a north wind is howling. Tujta blows on his frozen fingers.)

57.

(The house of Ilija Pevac. Dinnertime. All four of the Pevaces are at the table, old and young Miloš, Nevena and Ilija, who is carving slices from a huge loaf of breis carving slices from a huge loaf of bread. He cuts slices out of the whole loaf. He hands slices to both Milošes. Then he cuts a piece for himself. he puts the bread and knife on the table. Nevena starts to reach for them. Ilija changes his mind, cuts off a slice of bread and offers it to his wife. For a few long moments, Nevena hesitates. Then she puts out her hand and takes the slice of bread from her husband.)

58.

(In a huge room with a parquet floor an old woman sits in front of the fireplace spinning. Joviša, in the corner, is getting dressed and ready to leave. He straps on his pistol.)

OLD WOMAN

Are you going? That's a bad business, son. You're always drunk. Don't do it anymore.

(Joviša does not answer.)

OLD WOMAN

It's no good. We have to live here, Joviša.

(Joviša still does not answer.)

OLD WOMAN

Stay here, Joviša. And protect me from nasty neighbours. How long are you going to carry that pistol? Don't be rough and arrogant, son. And leave the brandy alone.

JOVIŠA

But mother, when I'm sober, I'm scared to death of them.

59.

(The house of Ilija Pevac. It is night. Ilija and Nevena are in bed. They are talking.)

ILIJA

I don't know how to tame him.

NEVENA

You have to be patient.

ILIJA

That a child of eight years should remember things for so long...

NEVENA

Go slowly. Little-by-little it will take care of itself.

ILIJA

Tomorrow I'll send him to invite people to our saint's day celebration.

NEVENA

Go ahead. Who are you thinking of inviting?

ILIJA

The usual people. Godparents, neighbours, friends, the priest the teacher.

NEVENA

Do as you like. But I'm not sure you're doing the right thing.

ILIJA

What's wrong with it?

NEVENA

I don't know. I'll get everything read, but I won't be around that day, just so you know.

ILIJA

Where will you go?

NEVENA

I don't know, to Velinaka's or I'll go out somewhere.

ILIJA

Well, if you have to...

NEVENA

I don't have to, I want to. If I said in front of a thousand people that I've broken with all that then I've broken with it. If I'm a party member, and if those things are relics of the past, then they don't go together. And don't get mad about it.

(Ilija laughs resignedly. Nevena gets up. She starts to get dressed.)

ILIJ

It's still early.

NEVENA

It will get light while I'm doing the milking. And I have to go see Pavle.

ILIA

What about?

NEVENA

About the taxes. Enough is enough. Even half of that would be a lot. You just can't do it that way.

ILIA

Like a tyrant who decides on the shares.

(Nevena is already fully dressed. Ilija starts to get up too.)

NEVENA

Don't. Sleep a little longer.

(She starts to leave. At the door she turns around.)

NEVENA

I think I'm pregnant.

60.

(The courtyard of Brana Radaković, know as Tujta, and more recently as deaf Tujta. The three-member tax commission comes in. They shout for the household. Tujta's daughter Ceca comes out.)

GOLIĆ

Is your father here, Ceca?

CECA

Yes

GOLIĆ

Call him, will you?

(The child goes inside. Shortly afterwards Tujta comes out.)

TUJTA

What do you want?

GOLIĆ

As a veteran, you ought to be ashamed of yourself, Radaković. If we had to visit everyone three times, we'd never finish. Can't you see that?

TUJTA

I can read your lips, but you'll have to speak a little slower.

GOLIĆ

I don't have to do anything. (*Angrily*) Don't hold us up, do you hear?

TUJTA

I told you nicely. Reduce the tax to a reasonable amount and I'll pay it. The way it stands I won't pay.

GOLIĆ

Who do you think you are not to pay it, are you out of your mind? When I say that's how much it is, that's how much it is. I want to have that tax by morning, or else I'll take it myself. I'll take the roof tiles off your house if I want to. Do you hear me, you deaf, crazy fool? I'll take the tiles from your roof, and the blankets from you and your kid.

TUJTA

Want a second.

(He turns and goes into the house. The members of the commission become uneasy. Čavka grabs his pistol.)

ČAVKA

Let's go.

GOLIĆ

Are you afraid, Comrade Čavka?

ČAVKA

No, I just think...

GOLIĆ

All we need is for him to come out with a rifle. If he does, we'll shove it up his ass for him. *(To the child.)* Go and call him. We haven't got all night.

(The child goes inside again. At that moment Branislav Radaković, also known as Tujta, and more recently as deaf Tujta, appears in the doorway in the uniform of a major in the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia. He is armed with a pistol and is wearing his medals. There is silence.)

TUJTA

Commission for Apportioning Taxes, attention!

(Hesitation on the part of the commission.)

TUJTA

I called you to attention.

(After a moment the commission falls into line.)

TUJTA

Daughter, open the gate. The big one.

(The child runs to do so.)

TUJTA

Right, face!

(The commission turns.)

TUJTA

Now beat it!

61.

(The house of Ilija Pevac. A lamp is burning beneath an icon of Saint Nicholas. The scene is the living room, in which stands a large table covered with a white tablecloth. The table is set for 16, and there are an equal number of chairs. At the head of the table is Father Jovan, to his right is old Miloš, and to his left Radoje. No one else.)

PRIEST

And where is the lady of the house?

MILOPŠ

(clumsily): Her mother is a bit ill she went to see her.

RADOJE

(Ironically): Today of all days.

(A rather long pause.)

MILOŠ

Well, guests, cheers!

(They drink up. Then Radoje stands up.)

MILOŠ

Where are you going?

RADOJE

To get Ilija. He can wait all day, no one else is going to come.
I'm sure of it.

(He goes out.)

MILOŠ

Cheers, sir!

PRIEST

This is good. Strong.

MILOŠ

From Banija.

(The fall silent again. Ilija and Radoje come in. They sit down.)

RADOJE

It's no use, brothers! No one else. You can spit in my mustache
if anyone else comes.

(Ilija is a bad mood.)

MILOŠ

Welcome, guests.

(They clink glasses.)

RADOJE

In the time when God walked the earth, the house was always full. I remember it as if it were yesterday.

MILOŠ

Times change. What can you do?

PRIEST

But there has never been a time like this one.

RADOJE

You don't know how it was under the Tatars.

MILOŠ

(to Ilija) Go on, bring out the food.

ILIJA

Someone else still might come.

RADOJE

Who all did you invite?

ILIJA

The usual people.

RADOJE

Those who would have come are afraid to, and those who aren't afraid don't believe any more.

PRIEST

I'm afraid that's just how it is, Radoje.

RADOJE

You can be sure there's someone hiding out there, watching who goes into this house.

(They are silent once more. Then they reach for their glasses. Drinking justifies the lack of conversation.)

RADOJE

They get you coming and going. That tax, it's as if Aganlija and Kučuk-alija each took a bite. What one doesn't get the other does.

PRIEST

For the love of God, let's not talk about that.

RADOJE

Why not?

PRIEST

Don't spoil this holy day. Belegiški.

MILOŠ

Why don't you talk to Pavle about it?

RADOJE

What for?

MILOŠ

Nevena talked to him and they let is off without paying.

PRIEST

I went. It didn't work.

MILOŠ

Of course, they only let us off because of Nevena.

ILIJA

(To Radoje): Why don't you send Djordje?

RADOJE

He went on his own. If it weren't for him, I'd have paid half as much. My son. He's no son, he's a qudas. He went to complain that the tax was too little.

PRIEST

I don't know what I'll do, brothers. Even the bishop of Novi Sad doesn't have as many marriages, funerals, and christenings as they put down for me. I just pray to God to send down a plague. Either that or I'll take a machine-gun and shoot them myself.

ILIJA

What?

RADOJE

You'll hear about it. There'll be a stink like you never seen before. I promise you that. They'll ring it from every church bell.

ILIJA

Ha Tujta raised the bell yet?

PRIEST

He's waiting for spring. But he comes every day to polish it. With ashes. It shines like new.

RADOJE

And him one of the first to fight, en? Before the war where was no bigger communist than him, and now he's turned into a turkey and gone back to the church.

PRIEST

It's not a question of that.

RADOJE

Then what is it?

PRIEST

I don't know, but it's not that. that's for sure.

MILOŠ

(to Ilija): Let's start, son. No one else is coming, can't you see that?

(Ilija gets up.)

MILOŠ

When I remember how it used to be on days like this. My God.

(Ilija comes in with the saint's day cake in one hand and a serving bowl full of soup in the other.)

RADOJE

What a good housewife, only her apron isn't starched.

(No one laughs. Ilija approaches the table. He stumbles, drops the cake and spills the soup.)

ILIJA

Fuck this whole goddamn world.

MILOŠ

Forget it. It's all right.

RADOJE

All we need now is for the icon lamp to go out.

(He stoops to help Ilija. He takes the pieces of the cake off the floor and puts them on the table. Ilija gathers the fragments of the serving bowl. He stands up.)

PRIEST

Our Father who art...

(All four stand and murmur the Lord's prayer. The atmosphere is unpleasant, as if all of them are conscious of the bad omens. Then two or three seconds later the teacher, Paole Korčagin, appears in the doorway. Everyone falls silent. The silence drags on.)

TEACHER

Hello.

(The teacher stands in the doorway. No-one invites her to enter.)

TEACHER

Happy saint's day.

(The confusion among the men continues.)

TEACHER

Well, I was invited to a saint's day celebration, for God's sake.

MILOŠ

Daughter, I'll remember this forever, even in the grave.

(And as if they arrived with the teacher, Branislava Kovačević, also known as Pavle Korčagin, rays of sunlight enter the room.)

62.

(The office of the new government. There is a telltale creaking and heavy breathing. It ends. Pavle gets up from behind the desk. He buttons his fly and his uniform, then picks up his pistol from the table and buckles it on. A woman also gets up buttoning her clothes. Only then do we recognise her as Vela. They finish dressing. Silence.)

PAVLE

Say, Comrade Belić, would you be willing to change your name?

VELINKA

(Thrilled): Pavle?!

PAVLE

What would you think of Dobrenov? Velinka Dobrenov, eh? It doesn't sound too bad.

VELINKA

Pavle!

PAVLE

In a month or two. But don't tell anyone.

(Velinka just nods. If she has ever been happy, it is at this moment.)

PAVLE

A nice small wedding. Without any hoopla or anything. Just you and me and the witnesses. No reactionary relics. We'll go to Mitrovica for a day, then to work.

VELINKA

My Pavle.

PAVLE

No drums, no gypsy bands, no carousing.

VELINKA

Do you know how much I love you?

PAVLE

(Spreading his arms like a small child): This much.

VELINKA

Almost as much as I love Comrades Stalin and Tito, Pavle dear.

(She tenderly straightens the medals on his chest.)

VELINKA

Take them off next time, will you. They all dig into me.

(Both of them burst into laughter.)

63.

(Radoje is in some sort of office. There is a man behind a desk.)

MAN

I still don't understand what you want, Comrade.

RADOJE

I want to sign everything over to my son.

MAN

A will?

RADOJE

Not a will. I want to sign it over right away, tomorrow. Today, if possible. I want everything to be his.

MAN

A contract for a gift, then?

RADOJE

That's it, brother.

MAN

What's your name, Comrade?

RADOJE

Radoje Belegiški.

MAN

And your son?

RADOJE

Djordje Belegiški.

MAN

From?

RADOJE

Mandjelos.

(The man notes everything officiously.)

RADOJE

Twelve acres of land, a vineyard, a plum orchard, and a house.
Everything except the blacksmith shop.

MAN

All right, Belegiški.

RADOJE

How much do I owe you?

MAN

Quite a bit. But the giver doesn't pay.

RADOJE

That's OK: I'll pay, I'll pay.

MAN

All right, Belegiški, then we'll take care of it Monday, when everything is ready.

RADOJE

So on Monday everything will be his?

MAN

On Monday.

RADOJE

Right down to the last fucking nail.

(Radoje exults and the clerk is completely dumbfounded.)

64.

(The office of the new government. Golić is at his desk. Čavka enters.)

ČAVKA

Yu sent for me?

GOLIĆ

Why is Joca Stepanov wearing a German jacket?

ČAVKA

Well...

GOLIĆ

Where did Joca's wife get a German jacket and where did Mila Erak get German boots?

(Čavka bows his head.)

GOLIĆ

Where did Ljuba Radičević get the blankets that he uses to cover his horses so they don't get wet, huh, Čavka?

ČAVKA

From the prisoner-of-war camp.

GOLIĆ

Yes, from the prisoner-of-war camp. You should be ashamed of your self, Čavka. A communist, or rather a former Communist.

ČAVKA

Don't do that, Dušan. I beg you.

GOLIĆ

Return your party booklet tomorrow...

ČAVKA

I didn't sell any of it. I swear.

GOLIĆ

Settle your accounts at the camp and turn it over to Ilija Ješanov. I don't want to send you to prison for lying.

ČAVKA

I didn't sell anything, you have my word as a party member. I took from the fascists and gave to the people. Joca was barefoot and the fascist was wearing boots.

GOLIĆ

Shame on you.

ČAVK

Don't disgrace me, Dušan. I swear by the party. Those criminals destroyed everything you had they burned your grandsons in the cradle, so I took that stuff from them.

GOLIĆ

Go outside.

ČAVK

Go and ask. If I took a single dinar, send me to prison. I won't say a word. Don't, Dušan, for the love of God...

GOLIĆ

It's too late, Čavka. Get out. This is a decision of the entire party and I have to enforce it. Starting today you're boycotted by order of the party.

ČAVKA

What about your soul, Golić? Is this my thanks for...

GOLIĆ

(Interrupting): Get out.

ČAVKA

Just let me tell you one thing. Until today you had a cousin. At least you had someone for your whole life. Well, as from today you don't have that cousin any more.

(He takes his booklet out of his packet and throws it on the desk. he goes out. Golić buries his head in his hands and stays like that for a long time.)

65.

(The house of Big Radoje. Radoje and his son Djordje are there.)

DJORDJE

You're the only one in the whole village. Not counting the priest, he's a professional reactionary. He was there as an official duty. No one else's father went to the saint's day celebration of the biggest kulak in the village, only mine. Obstructionist dupe! Taken in by a deliberate provocation. Deliberate.

RADOJE

Then the teacher was taken in too.

DJORDJE

Leave her out of this. Completely, do you hear? She can do that. Only she, nobody else. She's different.

RADOJE

I've been going to saint's day celebrations at that house for 30 years.

DJORDJE

And this was the last one, I'm telling you.

RADOJE

Do you intend to abolish saint's day celebrations, too?

DJORDJE

No we don't, but that was the last one for you.

RADOJE

You've abolished everything but the air.

DJORDJE

You really are a fool and a reactionary. You're surrounded and you don't even see that you're beaten.

RADOJE

And you and Golić have won. And Pavle Dobrenov.

DJORDJE

That's right, we have. Don't you see that we want everyone to be equal. For Ilija Pevac to be just like Radoje Belegiški. Do you understand that?

RADOJE

Why don't you make Radoje Belegiški just like Ilija Pevac? There's a job for you.

(They are both silent for a moment. Then Djordje begins again, slowly.)

DJORDJE

You know that the village hasn't got any other blacksmith but you.

(Radoje is silent and laughs sneeringly.)

DJORDJE

You know that the village can't get along without a blacksmith.

(Radoje again is silent.)

RADOJE

Why don't you open the blacksmith shop again?

(Radoje gives a cluck of refusal. Djordje again explodes in anger.)

DJORDJE

You'll open it, all right.

RADOJE

The hell I will.

DJORDJE

You'll open it up like a good boy. As a member of the Young communists, I have the job of making you open it, and open it you will.

RADOJE

I will if you and Golić are the first to come and be shod.

DJORDJE

You'll open it, you'll open it. Comrade Stalin also had this kind of problem and he solved them. And worse ones as well.

RADOJE

And just what problems did he solve?

DJORDJE

He solved them, he solved them. And war come and he defeated his internal enemies, and he built socialism and the economy and everything.

RADOJE

(Ironically): Is that so?

DJORDJE

It is, it is. From one hive they got 200 kilos of honey, and potatoes two or three to a kilo.

RADOJE

And cooties as big as turtles.

(Someone bangs on the door.)

RADOJE

Who is it?

VOICE FROM OUTSIDE

Grandpa Vasa's house is on fire. Quick!

(Both Belegiškis run out pell-mell.)

66.

(The house of Ilija Pevac. It is evening. Little Miloš and old Miloš are present, along with Nevena, who is bandaging and treating a singed and sooty Grandpa Vasa the Reactionary. From outside on uproar of people shouting reaches them, and the flames are reflected in their faces and on the window panes. Grandpa Vasa is sitting next to the window and Nevena is crouching next to him. They are all looking out the window. Everyone is silent.)

VASA

Everything is going up.

(He starts to cry.)

OLD MILOŠ

Look at him, the old man crying. Everything will be all right.

VASA

Why didn't I stay I that house.

(They fall silent. Outside something collapses with a shudder.)

OLD MILOŠ

A good house-raising party in the spring and in a couple of days the place will be like new.

(Grandpa Vasa the Reactionary continues to cry.)

MILOŠ

There's hardly anyone in this village who hasn't been burned out, if that's any consolation. *(To little Miloš.)* Come on, scamp, pour us one.

(Little Miloš obeys, bringing Grandpa Vasa a glass of brandy. Vasa shakes his head.)

OLD MILOŠ

Drink it, it will give you strength. And why did you cry, like some kid? You'll spend the winter with us, and in spring we'll have a work party and fix everything up...

VASA

What do you mean a work party, with me boycotted?

OLD MILOŠ

The whole village is here putting out the fire, there's no one who didn't come running. The boycott is over. What boycott?

VASA

I hope you're right. Do you know what it means to go eight months without speaking to anyone, Miloš?

67.

(The café. The two Ilijas.)

JEŠANOV

How did the fire start?

PEVAC

He piled the straw too close to the house. He did it himself this summer, he couldn't drag it into the garden. A spark from the chimney fell on it, the straw caught fire and it spread to the house.

JEŠANOV

When there's a fire, straw is always closer than the well.

(They fall silent. They sip their drinks.)

PEVAC

Where have you been? I haven't seen you in a long time, for Chirst's sake.

JEŠANOV

Oh, hell, I don't know.

PEVAC

Couldn't come on Saint Nicholas' day?

JEŠANOV

Have we ever lied to each other, namesake?

PEVAC

Not as far as I know.

JEŠANOV

Well, then, do we have to talk about your saint's day celebration?

PEVAC

No, we don't, namesake.

(Both are silent.)

JEŠANOV

Bartender, what do I owe you? *(To Ilija)* I should be going.

PEVAC

(Laughing ironically): the teacher was there.

(Ješanov does not answer.)

PEVAC

I'll pay, You can go. I don't want to keep you.

(They are silent again.)

PEVAC

I haven't congratulated you.

JEŠANOV

What for?

PEVAC

You've been accepted into the party.

JEŠANOV

How do you know?

PEVAC

Nevena told me last night.

JEŠANOV

Is it for sure?

PEVAC

I don't know. That's what she said. On Pavle's recommendation. Last night at the meeting.

JEŠANOV

Bartender, drinks all around!

68.

(The village square. Joviša and Djordje are riding Father Jovan and old Miloš Pevac. A number of young onlookers are laughing. The teacher, Pavle Korčagin, comes up. The laughter stops. Djordje and Joviša get down.)

TEACHER

(Beside herself): What is this supposed to mean?

DJORDJE

(Trying to be witty): The new order has reined in the old. It's symbolism, Pavle. Religion and Capital...

(He does not finish. The teacher begins to rain blows on the two of them, using both her cap and her fists. Djordje and Joviša stand there motionless, as if rooted to the spot.)

69.

(The house of Big Radoje. Djordje is alone. Outside someone shouts, "Is anybody home?" Djordje opens the door and lets in Cvijeta, the seventeen-year-old daughter of Radula, the Bosnian.)

DJORDJE

Come in, Comrade.

CVIJETA

My father sent me to ask if Radoje will shoe our horse.

DJORDJE

Sure.

CVIJETA

Has he started to work again?

DJORDJE

Not yet, but he will. Tell Radule he'll do it. Because of you.

CVIJETA

(Laughing): Why because of me?

DJORDJE

Like that.

(They are silent.)

DJORDJE

What is Joviša doing?

CVIJETA

How would I know?

DJORDJE

If his girlfriend doesn't know, who does?

CVIJETA

I'm not anyone's girlfriend.

DJORDJE

Joviša says you are.

CVIJETA

Let him say what he wants, but it's my affair.

DJORDJE

OK, Cveta.

CVIJETA

I'm Cvijeta, not Cveta.

DJORDJE

And whose are you, if you're not Joviša's?

CVIJETA

Nobody's.

DJORDJE

A girl like you, nobody's That can't be.

CVIJETA

Oh, you...

DJORDJE

Would you like to be somebody's?

CVIJETA

That depends.

DJORDJE

On what?

CVIJETA

On whose.

DJORDJE

Mine, for example.

(They both fall silent. After a few moments, Cvijeta laughs, turns around, and runs out.)

70.

(The jail in Sremska Mitrovica. A man in a prison uniform and the teacher, Pavle Korčagin, stand facing each other. A step or two behind the teacher is a guard with a pail in one hand and a spoon in the other.)

TEACHER

You don't recognise me.

(The man shakes his head.)

TEACHER

In Belgrade, in '41, when you made me eat salt, I said' I'd make you eat shit.

MAN

(Terrified): Korčagin.

TEACHER

That's right, Crepajac, it's Korčagin. I came to keep my promise.

(Both of them are silent. Then Crepajac goes down on his knees and clasps his hands in supplication. He begs mutely, like a cocker spaniel. Korčagin looks at him for a long time.)

TEACHER

So, after four years of waiting, the pleasure isn't there.

GUARD

Excuse me, I didn't hear.

TEACHER

Nothing, nothing. Let's go.

(She turns and leaves, with the puzzled guard behind her. They leave Crepajac on his knees in front of the bucket of shit.)

712.

(The office of the new government. Golić is at his desk. Nevena enters.)

GOLIĆ

Sit down.

NEVENA

What do we have to do?

GOLIĆ

Just make yourself comfortable and listen closely. Negotiations are underway with Germany for the payment of reparations and the repatriation of German prisoners-of war and who knows what all else. I won't bore you with all that now. But they asked us about the conduct of their prisoners, the ones we

have here, you know, and we requested the same information about ours. We've already got something from the Russians and the Americans, and we had already received something from our own people even earlier. Then we asked the Germans for something. This morning it arrived. *(He takes three dossiers from a drawer.)* This is Gligor's, this is Ješanov's, and this one I have to read to you, as a comrade of the party. I'll report it at the meeting tonight. I have to. But I wanted you to hear it first...

NEVENA

Go ahead and read it.

72.

(A woman, or rather an old woman, is at the stove. Someone knocks. Nevena enters.)

NEVENA

Hello.

WOMAN

Hello.

NEVENA

I've heard that you know how to do abortions.

WOMAN

I've changed my ways. Who told you that, poor child?

NEVENA

That's not important.

WOMAN

These days it's strictly forbidden. I wouldn't do it for 100 dinars.

NEVENA

And for a thousand?

(Pause.)

WOMAN

What month are you in?

73.

(The Cooperative, overflowing with the people of Mandjelos. The same table is on the stage, the same carpet on the table, the same people on the table, the same slogans and shouts in the hall. Djordje and Cvijeta are side-by-side.)

GOLIĆ

Comrades, today I will open the meeting, not Pavle, although he is here. This is there reason. Our Comrade Pavle is going on to new duties, with the Committee in Mitrovica. He has been promoted, you might say, so I congratulate him, both on my own behalf and on behalf of all of you. *(Applause.)* I give the flor to Comrade Pavle.

PAVLE

My dear fellow citizens of Mandjelos, let me just say a few words of farewell to you. It has been easy to be the leader of this village and to govern people like you. You all know where the Committee is, and Mitrovica is not far, just down the road. So just drop in, my door will always be open to you. I would like to stay here with you, but I am a soldier of the party-my-place is where the party sends me. let me conclude with a few lines from one of our poets. "I will always keep you in my heart, I will always think of you with pride."*(Applause.)* Comrade Golić has been appointed in my place, and Ilija Ješanov has been named vice-president. Thank you once more.

GOLIĆ

Just a few more words before the dancing, Comrades. I want to express public thanks to the youth brigade, who in just two days time fixed up a temporary room here in the town hall for Grandpa Vasa Brnjaš. They have promised to repair his house sometime in the future. *(Applause.)* Just a little more, Comrades. We still have among us some hidden reactionaries, but we also have some who are out in the open. One of these, Comrades, is Ilija Pevac. Comrade Pevac was a prisoner-of-war, and suffered horribly. He was a servant for a German whose sons were at the Russian front. Is Pevac here?

VOICE FROM THE HALL

No.

GOLIĆ

That's too bad. He wasn't in fact a servant for a German whose sons were at the Russian front, but for one Greta, whose

husband was in Russia. And he stayed there, Comrades, under Russian soil. While we were spilling our blood here, Comrades, Pevac was warming the back of a German woman. I don't need to tell you what else he was keeping warm. There's even a suspicion that he has a child there. Just so we know who is who and who is what. I give the floor to Comrade Ilija Ješanov.

ILIJA JEŠANOV

Comrades, I propose that the youth brigade bulld sidewalks throughout the village. There's mud up to your knees, you can't walk. Volunteers should report to Djordje Belegiški and Joviša Erak. And now for some dancing.

74.

(The office of the new government, in half-light. As soon as our eyes are accustomed to the darkness, we recognise Pavle and Vela. Pavle is sitting on the floor, leaning against the wall. Vera is beside him, her head on his chest. They are silent.)

VELINKA

You spoke well tonight. Very well.

(The sound of music playing reaches them from the Cooperative. Basses are heard playing "Beautiful Srem.")

PAVLE

I have something to tell you, Velinka. Look at me.

(Vela looks at him.)

PAVLE

The most important thing in the world for me is that you understand completely what I have to say. *(Pause.)* I've been thinking about the two of us for a long time. We're Communists and revolutionaries, right?

(Vela looks at him doubtfully and simply nods her head.)

PAVLE

And Communists have to build a new state, not a family. We are soldiers of the revolution, Vela. You're a good comrade and a good Communist, you can understand your Pavle.

75.

(The house of Ilija Pevac. From the Cooperative can be heard the sounds of "Beautiful Srem." Nevena is delirious. She is lying in bed. Ilija is beside her.)

ILIJA

Should I go for the doctor?

(Nevena does not answer. Ilija takes a cloth, moistens it, and puts it on Nevena's forehead. She throws it aside.)

ILIJA

What's the matter with you?

NEVENA

You beat... the hell... out of me because of... gossip, and you... and you.... had a child... there Shame on you. I don't want... to see you... any more... ever.

(Ilija suddenly understands and uncovers Nevena. The sheet beneath her and her nightgown are soaked in blood.)

ILIJA

So you...

76.

(The café. Ilija Pevac is drinking. It is apparent that he has been doing fo sor some time. Radule Erak comes in and sits down at the table.)

RADULE

I've been looking for you. I just want a word or two with you. i didn't tell her, I swear to God, Ilija?

(Ilija does not answer. Radule sits uncomfortably on his chair.)

RADULE

I want you to believe me. More that anything. How is Nevena?

ILIJA

She's all right. She is up and around.

(Big Radoje rushes into the café.)

RADOJE

Hey, everybody. Gligor has arrived from America. He's back.

RADULE

When?

RADOJE

Last night. He brought some Indian.

RADULE

He wasn't in India, you dope. He was in America.

RADOJE

So what? If there are Serbs there, why can't there be Indians? She's an immigrant, too, no doubt. They came into the house last night, the girl kissed her mother – and father-in-law on the hand. I kiss the hand of my father, I kiss the hand of my mother, she says, and in Serbia. But he can't say a word in American. I just talked to them. Uncle Sreta brought a barrel up from the cellar. Half the village is already drunk. The gypsies are playing on the roof. It's a madhouse...

RADOJE

Should we go home, Ilija?

(Ilija shakes his head.)

(Nighttime in the roofless church. Many candles are burning. Father Jovan, four old women, and Ilija Pevac are present. Elderly sopranos and two male voices are singing a song about the nativity. They finish.)

PRIEST

Merry Christmas.

(The old women approach him to kiss his hand. Then they go out.)

PRIEST

Christ is born!

ILIJA

Verily.

(They kiss each other on the cheeks, then fall silent.)

ILIJA

I'll go to bring in the straw.

PRIEST

Radoje left.

(Snow is falling, extinguishing the lighted candles around the altar.)

GOLIĆ

Comrades, he was in church again this morning. Only him and four old women. Excuse me, Comrade Nevena, this has nothing to do with you, of course.

NEVENA

As far as I'm concerned, he's dear. For good.

TEACHER

Do you have something against Ilija, Golić? I mean personally.

GOLIĆ

(Loudly and assertively): Nothing personal, Comrade Kovačević.

TEACHER

Then why don't you leave him in peace for once? And where did you get all this information? How do you find things out so quickly, for God's sake? Who tells you?

GOLIĆ

That's my business.

TEACHER

It's not your business. There is no my business, Comrade Golić. Everything is our business. There's no mine-yours any more, Comrade Golić.

GOLIĆ

We still haven't discussed your visit for Saint Nicholas, either.

TEACHER

And you won't, Golić. And it wasn't a visit for Saint Nicholas, it was a visit to Ilija Pevac on Saint Nicholas. You seem to be trying to make an enemy out of an honest man.

GOLIĆ

An honest man?!

TEACHER

Certainly. *(She turns to a villager.)* What are you cooking today?

VILLAGER

My wife is cooking beans.

TEACHER

Beans? On Christmas? Too bad, I would have like to go somewhere for Christmas dinner.

GOLIĆ

You can't behave this way, Comerade Korčagin, no matter who you are, regardless of your revolutionary past and everything... *(He becomes angrier and angrier. At that moment, a man bursts in, agitated and completely out of breath.)*

MAN

Typhoid and dysentery at the camp, the Germans are dying like flies.

GOLIĆ

What... are you sure?

MAN

If there's one thing I learned to recognise during the war, it's those two things.

(There is some confusion among the party members. Golić is the first to collect himself.)

GOLIĆ

Fence the camp in right away and post a guard. Don't let anyone in or out, on pain of death. What else, Doctor?

DOCTOR

Get drums for boiling water, quicklime, medicine, and some people. Nothing else.

GOLIĆ

Ilija, go to Mitrovica right away. First to the Committee, then to the hospital. How many people do you need, Doctor?

DOCTOR

They can't give us as many as we need to quarantine 200 people. We'll need volunteers.

VILLAGER

To help fascists? That will be hard.

TEACHER

No, it won't.

(She raises her hand. Nevena and Vela do the same without hesitation. The rest then follow suit.)

79.

(The door of the church. The righted bell shines in the sun. Brana Radaković, also known as deaf Tujta, is setting a huge post in the ground. For a moment, it seems that the post will be too much for

Radaković to handle, but he nevertheless succeeds in raising it and placing it in the hole. The post sways and then stops moving. Radaković starts to fill in the hole with earth and stamp it down. Several children, picking their noses, watch from a distance.)

80.

(The house of Ilija Pevac. Old Miloš, young Miloš, and Ilija are present. Ilija refills his glass.)

OLD MILOŠ

You've been reaching for the bottle pretty often lately.

(Ilija does not answer.)

OLD MILOŠ

That never took care of any problems and it never got any work done. *(He nods towards the glass.)*

(Ilija refills his glass again.)

OLD MILOŠ

Do as you like, son, but brandy won't make you any stronger.

ILIJAJA

Cot out the proverbs, dad.

OLD MILOŠ

They're acting high and mighty but they'll come back down to earth. In the end, everything will be all right. It's like water, like

a flood. Fools drown themselves, but wise men wait for the waters to go down and then they put up a mill.

(He goes to the window.)

OLD MILOŠ

You just have to be patient. What's suffocating me, for Christ's sake?

(He unbuttons his shirt.)

OLD MILOŠ

Every government is severe at the beginning. *(To Miloš)* Get me a glass of water. *(The boy goes for the water. Miloš grabs the knob of the window to close it. His legs give away beneath him and he falls. Ilija jumps up.)*

ILIJA

Dad!

(Miloš gasps for breath on the floor, struggling for air.)

ILIJA

Dad, what's wrong?! *(To little Miloš)* Run for the doctor.

LITTLE MILOŠ

It's no use, he's at the camp with the Germans.

(Ilija realises that his father is dying.)

ILIJA

(To Miloš): Get me a candle, quick, a candle.

LITTLE MILOŠ

I won't.

ILIJA

Get a candle. He's dying!

LITTLE MILOŠ

I won't.

(The old man's legs jerk strangely once, then once more. Then he is still. Ilija gets up and crosses himself. Little Miloš runs up to old Miloš.)

81.

(A party meeting. Korčagin is absent. Nevena is in mourning.)

GOLIĆ

Go ahead, Doc.

DOCTOR

I won't be long. First, without the help of the teacher, Nevena, and Velinka, it would have been difficult to do anything by myself. That's one thing. These three comrades spent thirty-six days with me there. I'm sure it is obvious to you what an effort that was, especially for women. We had eighty-four deaths, and without these women there would have been a lot more. Two.

The teacher, Pavle Korčagin, is seriously ill. So sick that she should be in the hospital. She has refused to go, and I suggest that she be ordered to go to the hospital, as her duty to the party.

JEŠANOV

What's wrong with her?

DOCTOR

All kinds of things. The police beat her and tortured her, she was wounded in the war, she has a disease of the blood vessels as a result of her amputation, and her heart is weak, also a result of the amputation without anaesthesia. Everything is wrong with her...

GOLIĆ

I'll take care of that.

DOCTOR

How?

GOLIĆ

I'll take care of it.

DOCTOR

As long as you take care of it quickly.

ILIJA JEŠANOV

(In a whisper): I still owe you that water.

VELA

You're taking your time about it.

GOLIĆ

And now, Comrades, I have to read you this material about the collectives. You all know that these farmer's collectives, called kolkhozes and sovhozes in the Soviet Union, have yielded exceptional results. Comrades, why not profit from the experiences of the great, fraternal Soviet Union? We have received directives from higher up to prepare gradually for the establishment of our kolkhozes. To tell you the truth, it's high time...

82.

(The room of the teacher, Brana Kovačević, also known as Korčagin. The teacher is lying on the bed, obviously ill and exhausted. Someone knocks.)

TEACHER

Just a moment. I'll be right there. *(She gets up, adjusts her clothing, brushes her hair, and alters the expression on her face.)*
Come in!

(Ilija Pevac enters.)

TEACHER

Oh! What are you doing here? Hello!

ILIJA

I heard you were sick, but look at you sunshine. I didn't need to bring these quinces. *(He takes five or six quinces out of his pockets and puts them on the table.)* Well, how are you?

TEACHER

Never better. And you?

ILIJA

Oh, I'm all right.

(They fall silent.)

TEACHER

I can see you're fine.

ILIJA

How is the little one doing in school?

TEACHER

You know, I haven't been at school for thirty-six days. You're only saying that to make conversation. I heard that Grandpa Miloš died.

(Ilija nods.)

TEACHER

I want you to know that I'm very sorry to hear that. And that I would have come to the funeral. Was anyone there?

ILIJA

Two old women and the priest. No-one else. When he saw the priest little Miloš didn't want to carry a cross or walk behind the coffin. Oh, yes, and Radoje. But he met us at the cemetery.

TEACHER

Send Miloš to me this afternoon.

(Ilija nods.)

TEACHER

What can I offer you? There's no alcohol in my house.

ILIJA

(Laughing): There's too much in my house. Everything happens to me.

TEACHER

It will all pass. Just be patient. Golić isn't a bad fellow, and he isn't stupid either. He's just too impulsive. Rash, you know? He doesn't think anything over, he just goes on his first impression. Do you see? He says what's on his mind. And his principles are inflexible. Last night young Djordje Beleigški and Joviša Erak got into a fight, over that pretty little one, Radula's...

ILIJA

Cvijeta.

TEACHER

Right away he wanted the party to punish them, to bring them in front of the meeting, you see what I mean? He doesn't understand that we should be happy, you know what I mean?

For eight months the Bosnians have lived in a ghetto, isolated. You don't accept them and they don't accept you. Both groups are good people. With that fight it's started to get better, do you see? A boy from Srem fought with a Bosnian over a Bosnian girl. Well, that's fine, you see. You take them aside, scold them a little, don't raise a big fuss. Sometimes you have to do things that way, do you see what I mean? He threw Čavka out of the party without batting an eye. On principle. All right, but now Čavka wanders around the village like an idiot. Boycott. The man has taken to drink and abandoned his home and children. You people from Srem are a strange lot anyway. As soon as you have some kind of troubles or a problem, you reach for the bottle. Whew, I haven't got carried away like that in a long time. How is Nevena?

ILIJA

To tell you the truth, I don't know.

TEACHER

You're still not speaking.

ILIJA

No.

TEACHER

She talked to me in the camp. Just be patient and don't press her. You've gone beyond your rights. That's called a double standard. But I'll explain that the next time you come.

ILIJA

How was it up there?

TEACHER

Horrible. There was every kind of shit you can imagine-those people with rifles all around, quicklime, typhoid. They were dying on us two or three a day. Terrible.

ILIJA

Do you know that little Hans?

TEACHER

A villitch not far von Jena.

ILIJA

That's the one.

TEACHER

He was our right-hand man until he got sick. One morning we found him in the latrine, already stiff. That's how we had to bury him. We couldn't even straighten him out. Poor guy. *(They fall silent. Ilija notices that the teacher is not well.)*

ILIJA

Don't you feel well?

TEACHER

You know, I think I will lie down awhile. I really don't feel too well. Look, be a pal and don't tell anyone. And send your son to me this afternoon, without fail. And that business with Golić. We'll take care of that. Just be patient and sensible. We'll set things right with both him and Nevena. He's not a bad guy at all.

ILIJA

Isn't your name Branislava Kovačević? It's like a balm.

83.

(The house of Joviša Erak. Joviša and his mother are present. Joviša is just finishing packing a small knapsack.)

JOVIŠA

Here.

(He hands his pistol to his mother.)

JOVIŠA

Keep that for me. I hope I won't need it. Just so you won't worry.

MOTHER

You don't have to go back. It's not too late to stay.

JOVIŠA

I can't stand it here any longer, mother. You have to join the collective. Brother and sister will be there to help you. Tell them to write.

MOTHER

Think it over some more.

JOVIŠA

Mother, it's a lot to lose in one year-Bosnia and Cvijeta.

(He kisses his mother, turns, and goes out.)

84.

(Vela stands hidden behind a tree, leaning on a man's black bicycle. She is watching. From the building across the street comes an elegantly dressed man-Pavle. The woman on his arm laughs loudly and lays her head against his upper arm. They go off. Velinka gets on her bicycle and rides off in the opposite direction.)

85.

(The Youth League is at work, building a sidewalk. Golić calls out to them in passing.)

GOLIĆ

Hey, boys, when you come back from the girls, you won't be coming home dirty.

(Laughter. Song.)

For the worker and the farmer
There's no going back, no stopping.
They are joined by a powerful force,
Stalin, Tito, work, and sweat.

(Vela goes up to Ilija Ješanov.)

VELINKA

Do you intend to return that water or not?

ILIJA

I do!

86.

(A large black limousine is parked in front of the school. The whole village is out in front, the children are crying. Pevac appears and goes up to Radula.)

ILIJA

What's all this?

RADULE

Her father came to take her away. She can't walk anymore, she's wasted away. A general. Jesus Christ.

(Lieutenant-general Kovačević comes out of the school carrying his daughter in his arms. Little Miloš Pevac throws a stone at the general.)

ILIJA

(Running forward): Excuse me, Comrade General, the boy...

GENERAL

That's all right. But would you bring me the stone and put it in my pocket.

(Ilija does as the general asks.)

GENERAL

If I can be proud of anything in this life, it's this stone.

(General Kovačević carefully lays his daughter in the car, gets in himself, and gives a sign to the driver. The black Čajka disappears in a cloud of dust.)

ILIJA

(To himself): She's gone.

87.

(The blacksmith shop. The church door. Brana Tujta is present, with his daughter beside him. He is putting another post in the ground. A crossbeam connects the two posts at their upper ends. This wooden structure forms a serviceable bell tower, strong enough to support a bell much heavier than Father Jovan's.)

88.

(The house of Big Radoje, or more precisely, the house of Djordje Blegiški. Djordje and Radoje are present.)

RADOJE

Watch out. Not so fast.

DJORDJE

Watch out yourself. Don't shoot off your mouth. Don't make a fool of me.

RADOJE

I won't shoot off my mouth any more, but in this house we'll still cross ourselves and icons will hang on the walls, you know that.

DJORDJE

That's what we agreed. And you'll look out for my girl. And join the collective, without fail, do you hear?

(Radoje nods his head. Father and son exchange a long, firm embrace. Djordje picks up the wooden chest from next to the door and goes out.)

RADOJE

(In a voice that trembles slightly): Goddamn snotnose little bastard.

89.

(Cvijeta and Djordje are alone. Djordje is holding the wooden chest.)

DJORDJE

Just don't crying?

CVIJETA

Who's crying?

(They are silent.)

DJORDJE

It will go fast.

CVIJETA

Three years.

DJORDJE

I'll have leave.

CVIJETA

Write.

DJORDJE

And you behave yourself.

CVIJETA

Don't say things like that.

DJORDJE

It's three years.

CVIJETA

Even if it were three hundred and three, I'd wait for you.

(They are silent again.)

CVIJETA

And be careful.

DJORDJE

What's there to be careful of? I'm not going to war.

CVIJETA

You'll be on the border.

DJORDJE

Some border. With Bulgaria. What do I have to fear from the Russians and the Bulgarians? They're our people. Just take care of yourself, so I can marry you when I get back. Will you?
(Cvijeta nods her head.)

DJORDJE

And go around and see Radoje once in a while. Take him some hot food.

(Cvijeta nods.)

DJORDJE

And, don't cry.

CVIJETA

Who's crying?

(A song reaches them from somewhere in the village, from another leave-taking.)

Oh thirty-six months is a long time.
Comrade Tito, cut it in half.

90.

(The office of the new government. Ilija Ješanov, Golić, and Ilija Pevac are there.)

GOLIĆ

You've been called here about a very serious matter. You know that certain new taxes have been announced. Ilija is taking care of these for our village. When will they be ready, Ika?

JEŠANOV

In two or three days.

GOLIĆ

This is only the first step. The second is the formation of village collectives. You've heard of those?

PEVAC

No.

GOLIĆ

That's real socialism, brother. Everybody in the collective, everything is communal, except for house and yard. Well, it's paradise. You'll see.

JEŠANOV

Joining the collective is voluntary, of course. Whoever wants to, joins, whoever doesn't want to, doesn't have to.

PEVAC

Wait a second. That means that no-one has anything of his own?

JEŠANOV

You have your house and yard...

GOLIĆ

You know what kind of results this has got in Russia, brother. And it will here, too, I guarantee it. But that's enough farting around. What we called you in for is this. You're a prominent man in the village. If you were to join the collective... you understand?

PEVAC

No.

GOLIĆ

If you joined the collective, you'd pull others in behind you. People would say, "It's not only have-nots and Bosnians who join the collective, you see? Ilija Pevac joined too." Do you understand?

PEVAC

I do.

JEŠANOV

And?

PEVAC

I don't want to.

GOLIĆ

Pevac....

PEVAC

(Shaking his head): I don't know about all this. I don't understand all this nobody's everybody's. As I understand. It, a household needs one head and a lot of hands.

GOLIĆ

Pevac, you'll regret this...

JEŠANOV

Think it over a little more.

PEVAC

I won't give my land. You do what you like. You already took 52 hectares and I didn't say a word. I'm not giving the rest. It's my grandfather's land, and I have to leave something to my grandchildren...

GOLIĆ

You'll learn, you'll learn...

JEŠANOV

All right, namesake. You can go.

(Pevac goes out.)

GOLIĆ

You know what you have to do.

JEŠANOV

I know.

91.

(Three people are carrying sacks from the barn of Ilija Pevac. Pevac is standing to one side. They carry out the last sack. Radule approaches Pevac.)

RADULE

You still owe us six cubic metres of grain.

ILIJA

From where? You've cleaned out my barn, there's not even a speck of mouseshit left. Where am I supposed to find six more metres.

RADULE

You'll manage. Look, Pevac, I don't have anything to do with this. I'm only following orders, understand?

ILIJA

Oh, I understand everything.

RADULE

Take care of this by tomorrow somehow. Don't make trouble for both of us. Please, as a friend. Well, I'm going. Aren't you going to the opening of the collective?

PEVAC

No.

RADULE

It might be better if you went.

PEVAC

Maybe.

RADULE

Get those six metres by tomorrow, OK, pal?

WORKER

Why ask him so nicely, the lousy kulak? He's got plenty stashed away. Let him get it out. What are you taking his side for? I've plucked plenty like him clean before.

RADULE

OK, He'll get it. Let's go. See you tomorrow, Ilija. *(They leave. Ilija Pevac sits on the floor, his head and back against the wall. He remains sitting like that. Nevena comes into the barn. When she sees Ilija, she turns and starts for the door.)*

ILIJA

Nevena!

(Nevena goes out without looking at him.)

92.

(The door of the church. Tujta is there with a team of oxen.)

TUJTA

Giddup, giddup.

(The oxen move, slowly raising the bell. The flag on top of the improvised bell tower sways a bit, then settles into its holder.)

93.

(Ilija Pevac gets up, takes a rope from the wall and throws it over a beam. He turns a basket upside down and climbs onto it.)

94.

(Branan Radaković gives a powerful tug on the rope. The bell starts to ring. Then Tujta stops. He doesn't hear. He begins to pull furiously on the rope. It doesn't do any good. There is still silence. He rages, jerks on the rope, and shouts.)

TUJTA

I don't hear!

(So all of his enormous efforts have been in vain.)

95.

(Ilija Pevac puts the noose around his neck and kicks the basket out from under him. His legs jerk a few times and then are still.)

96.

(A meeting. The entire village is present. Ilija Ješanov and Golić are wearing new leather coats.)

GOLIĆ

Today will go down in the history of our village, and we can be especially proud that Mandjelos has the honour of establishing the first workers' collective in the new Yugoslavia....

(The ringing of a bell resounds over Mandjelos, more and more loudly and furiously. Only Tujta and Ilija Pevac cannot hear it.)

E p i l o g u e

The teacher, Pavle Korčagin, would die on April 7, 1949, at the Military Medical Academy in Belgrade. News of her death did not reach Mandjelos for a long time. She was declared a national hero on November 29, 1953.

Velinka and Ilija Ješanov married soon after the death of Ilija Pevac, in a civil ceremony conducted by Golić. Ilija later become head of the municipal administration in Mandjelos. There he remained until his retirement. Both he and Velinka are still living, and have two children and four grandchildren. When the decisive moment of 1948 arrived, Dušan Golić did not hesitate for an instant. He did not return from Goli Otok. Pavle Dobrenov went a long way. Today he is retired and lives in Novi Sad. He is a member of the Federal Council. On Sundays he takes his grandson for walks along the Danube bank. Djordje Belegiški was killed on December 17, 1948, on the Bulgarian border, near the village of Batušno, while a soldier of the Yugoslav National Army. He was killed by a Bulgarian or Russian sniper, shot like a clay pigeon, in the temple. He thus became one of the 1700 Yugoslav border guards who lost their lives on the border during those years.

His father, Radoje, did not long survive his son. he died of grief less than a year after his son's death.

Brana Tujta died in 1967. His daughter married Miloš, the son of Ilija Pevac.

Nevena has survived to the present day. She lives with her son and daughter-in-law in Mitrovica.

the grandson of Ilija Pevac is the author of this play.

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Translated by Richard Williams