

The Time; It Was Red, Furious and Much Blue

I am attending such a tour for the first time in my life. Early hours of the morning and the rain is pouring slowly. I think, the silent movement of our bus affects me, too. Black Sea coasts with harsh waves passes before my eyes. Wooden houses are scattered along the evergreen steep slopes on the other side. In addition to the question of how to reflect the ideas in my mind on the paper, I also think how you can reach those houses resembling hawk's nest. There will be two days left until the end of the contest after I come back. But, I still cannot think of "Why should we be European?" In the worst case scenario, I will not join, says my inner voice. Additionally my brain makes a connection between the contest topic and my grandfather's coup history which begins with, "The time; it was red, furious and much blue."

With this sentence, my grandfather started. He called me to his room which we used to call his sacred temple. We could not enter this room without permission. There was a mirrored case with an antique lock hanging on it, a hunting rifle on the wall, his prayer rug, his always open Koran on an engraved wooden stand, his computer on his desk, his books... It seemed as if the old and the new were always fighting each other in that room. I was lost in those thoughts when my grandfather said this sentence as he raised his white, thick eyebrows.

"The time; it was red, furious and much blue."

"I was a hotheaded young boy who had just entered the university," he went on to say.

"Our youth always strolled in groups on the streets. We were in a fight with everybody who did not think like we did. Each young was building a country of freedom in his way. Confrontation becomes inevitable when

there are so many countries. There was such confusion that nobody knew who was the enemy and why of it. Then came the deaths. Everyday someone was dying the death toll was rising. One September morning, we started the day under the shadow of tanks with their barrels directed towards our homes. It was the coup.

I told you, the time; it was red, furious and much blue.

It was my first day at the university. We sat on the balcony until the early hours of morning that night with my uncle who was almost the same age with me. We had just entered inside suddenly when banging on doors started with noises, ruckus, and sirens. They broke down the door before we had the chance to open it. Armed soldiers held me down harshly and handcuffed me from behind. Handcuffs gave me so much pain. Because freedom was everything to me. A dirty, leather cloth was tied over my eyes. I was in the dark. I could not hear any voice other than the sound of the vehicle that I was put in. My mind blocked itself to the external world. After an unknown, dark journey filled with fear, I was pushed into a cell with a wooden door that it was hard for even one person to fit in. Blindfold over my eyes was untied as they bowed my head. In a squatting position, I tried to work my perception with the light and noises coming through the wooden door that was closed on my face. Rats as big as a cat wondering under my feet, a milk bottle which I were to use both for urinating and drinking water, a soldier whose silhouette was seen occasionally through the iron bars... Those were the first things I perceived." Afterwards the questioning room that I was taken to between two soldiers with my eyes blindfolded and without knowing which hour of the day it was. Accusations, beating, and torture. Days after, my coming out of the coffin, which I entered as an innocent, as the perpetrator of events that I never knew or

heard of. Ongoing trials, broken dreams, and a lost youth, a youth...”

I listened to my grandfather a little bit in tears, and in worry that day.

In my mind the European Union together with my grandfather’s words...

A storm of feelings that turns me upside down during the trip. What shall I tell? How shall I tell? And what is its relation to my grandfather?

My friends are wondering among local splendour and having fun. I am mournful with my head between my hands. What shall I write? I raised my head just to distance myself from those thoughts even for a bit, towards that endless green. A feeling of relief immediately filled me. I thought “Either we enter the EU or not, those splendour is mine, is ours.” Then I began watching my friends and my teachers. They were fooling around, laughing, and enjoying unmatched scenery. I wanted to join them. I went near them. But just as I joined them, our teachers told that it was time to go back to the place where we were staying.

A deep worry filled me. Suddenly I went back to my recent thoughts and remembered that I still couldn’t find an idea for the competition. Because we were close to the end of our trip, my pessimism was deepened even more. I tried to pack my things for return with those worries.

As it was the custom in each school trip, we came together to evaluate the trip. Even though I was reluctant, I joined my friends. First, our literature teacher, who was responsible for ensuring discipline in the trip, began speaking by saying “I wanted to talk to you about an incident that took place during our trip, which seemed to be unimportant but was basically very important.” “As you know, before the trip started, our trip leader Mr. Mehmet proposed to have a small punishment system in order to ensure order and we approved it. If we were to have difficulty in deciding on what the punishment would be, we were going to vote. The duty of imposing

the punishment was given to me. According to this system, people who made the group waiting or hindered the trip would be punished with some amount of fine. Naturally, some of our friends who broke that rule were sentenced by your votes to pay some fine. Until now everything was fine but our trip leader, who organized this trip and loved by all of us, created an incident that would make him pay a fine. In the name of adding some fun to it, I proposed to fine our leader. Not stopping with that, I wanted you to support that fine with your applause. You found that decision, which was taken with that influence, very funny. We implemented the decision. We got ten liras from our teacher with applauds and laughter.”

I remembered the incident that our teacher was talking about with a smile. Some kind of excitement, from where it came I didn't know, filled me. The cloud in my head was as if dispersing. I focused even more on our teacher's talk.

“But there is a mistake exactly here” he went on. “Yes, it might seem as a right decision but it was not a decision taken under right conditions. Because in this instance, I interfered and made you look at it biased and with your feelings. In fact, don't you think that I was the main culprit here?” he asked. “That's why I am punishing myself with a record fine of twenty liras” he said smiling. No sound was coming from the group. Everyone was lost in thought in order to evaluate what teacher has said. Unknown nervousness in me was increasing, too. Then the teacher went on. “Children, you see. When you look at the issue from this side many things changed. Now think about issues around you by considering what I said now. Don't we see examples of this everywhere? Not only recently, but also for our history wasn't

it like that? We affected each other and we held our selfish feelings before everything else. We took our most important steps under the influence of our feelings without knowing the direction of them. Isn't that so?"

I was trying hard not shout. What my grandfather told, what my teacher told about justice, and the subject of story competition were coming into daylight from among the fogs in my mind. All of them were there from the beginning; I was waiting only for a breeze that would clear the fogs.

Now I know why we should become a member of the European Union. We have hurt each other's feelings too much, and far too much affected each other's decisions. It is time for us to make a just decision. We have to elude red, furious and much blue spectre of my grandfather, build a just future. Isn't even this reason enough to become a member of the European Union?

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