Broken Records

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It was a wonderful time to be young in [State]. [Dead President no. 1’s] [Former State] was finally allowing and even encouraging [Ethnic People] to be part of the promising future in multiethnic [Former State]. And we took that green light in droves. Schools were full of children and the University of [Capital] where I went to study was among fastest-growing universities in that region.

Our country, we felt, was heading in the right direction toward prosperity and we wanted to be part of it. One thing was obvious: even though [Different Ethnic Persons] were less than one-tenth of population they refused and ignored anything that had to do with [Ethnic] language and culture. In the famous [Capital] Promenade they walked on the other side.

If you dated a [Different Ethnic Female] you were expected to speak [Different Language] and almost never expected her parents to know. I remember once, a mayor’s daughter falling in love head over heels with an [Ethnic] musician. Unable to break it up, the [Different Ethnic] mayor took her out of school and sent her to [Former State’s Capital] to live with relatives.

Once I was visiting [Former State’s Capital], and a girl, a bank teller that I spoke to for a while, asked me to take her out. I was so excited. Upon seeing my ID, I could not miss the disappointment in her face. She took her offer back. As I sat on a park bench on a beautiful spring day in [Former State’s Capital], a
retired teacher who overheard me speak [Language] to a friend, came and asked me if it was true that [Different Ethnic] kids learn [Language] as part of the curriculum in [State] schools. Upon learning that you could, he walked away shaking his head in disgust.

My father who fought [Enemy] as a young partisan had many [Different Ethnic] friends. Our families helped each other through thick and thin. That all changed when [Dead President no. 2] started to radicalize [Different State]. All of a sudden my father’s friends were organizing huge anti-[Ethnic] rallies in [State] towns that were 90% [Ethnic].

I remember my now deceased father, watching his [Different Ethnic] friends on TV in disbelief as they spoke words of hatred. My dad could not understand why these decent people that he had known for so long and respected and loved were on this path of destruction eroding the few human bridges that were still left standing.

As he lay in his bed, sick, I saw him crying one night after he watched the news. After that, we kept the TV off.