**The Plot**

“'The Witness' takes place during the height of the Rákosi Era, which was closely modeled after the ruthless and brutal Stalin regime. The film follows the life of an ordinary Dike Keeper, József Pelikán, who has been caught for illegally slaughtering his pig. Instead of doing hard time for his "heinous" crime, Pelikán is elevated into an important position, generally reserved for the communist “elite”. Of course, Pelikán is utterly clueless about his newfound luck, not to mention his new job. Even his new benefactor, Comrade Virág, is reluctant to reveal the real reason behind Pelikán's preferential treatment. Thus, begins Pelikán's hilarious adventure deep within the "sophisticated" communist society. One failure after another the incompetent Pelikán is elevated higher and higher on the communist echelon, all the while remaining completely clueless about his promotions. Until one day, when he gets called for to return the "favor" by falsely testifying against his long-time friend in a mock-up show trial.—[Zoltan Furedi](https://www.imdb.com/search/title/?plot_author=Zoltan%20Furedi&view=simple&sort=alpha&ref_=ttpl_pl_1)

Pelikán, being "ideologically under-educated", fails magnificently in all his assignments, visiting the prison regularly, until they ultimately succeed with the orange research institute and are awarded. As it turns out, all this was arranged to force Pelikán to be the witness in a [show trial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Show_trial) against his old friend, Zoltán Dániel, who fell out of the favor of the communist regime.”

To understand this better you need to consider that Hungary is between 44° and 48° North latitudes and 16° and 22° East longitudes. Orange is not a native fruit to Hungary due to subzero temperatures in the winter. Growing oranges was symbolic, attempting the impossible and make it a success. However, communists did try and the result was millions starving after the Second World War as native plants were ripped out and replaced by plants that would not grown in the fours seasons (like New York state).

**In Depth – the Hungarian orange**

**“When tens of thousands of orange trees were planted around Lake Balaton**

It didn't work, but at least we really tried. In addition, they even put together a fake harvest for Comrade Rákosi in Fertőd.

If we only look at the extent of the damage caused, then Hungary got away rather cheaply with the rampage of Trofim Liszenko, the **untrained agricultural scientist of the Soviet Union,** since in the case of Big Brother, **the starvation of millions of people is attributed to agricultural fever dreams**. Although neither planting more densely (the same varieties do not harm each other, so it is possible to sow two or three times more than usual) nor pre-freezing (the seeds were soaked in ice water to get used to the cold) was not widely spread here, Balaton , the idea of ​​orange and lemon plantations around Lake Fertő and Villány was not far behind Liszenko's most famous nightmares.

Thanks to the encouragement of the Soviet system, already in the spring of 1948, the idea arose that the Hungarian people's southern fruit needs should be produced at least partially at home. It is true that during this period they were still planning to create plantations around Békéscsaba and wanted to use Italian, specially grown seedlings. Even then, however, the principle came from Lisenko, and through him from Micsurin (his predecessor and spiritual leader): plants can withstand the cold, you just have to get them used to it! In addition, the "trained" southern greens pass on this new knowledge to their descendants.”