

LUBA. We don't, chief. I swear it.

GENS. Then what are you smuggling? Hungarian salami? Sugar? Coffee?

YANKEL. Nothing! God strike me if I'm lying!

LUBA. The ghost of the dead, chief. That's all.

GENS. His sins weigh very heavy. Tomorrow nine a.m., my office. You'll give five thousand roubles to the school for delinquents.

GEIVISH. Five?

LUBA. It's usually three.

GENS. Five, damn you! Right, come, pay it now.

LUBA. Tomorrow nine a.m. Five. I swear it.

GENS *grabs* LUBA.

GENS. She'll sit in my office till you pay! Jacob Gens can be pushed only so far.

GENS *pushes* LUBA *out*.

ELIA. And now?

YANKEL. We can't let her sweat all night.

GEIVISH. And the five thousand? It will fall from the sky?

YANKEL. I can't just stand here.

GEIVISH. Just stand there. Weiskopf will come, fetch his order, pay what he owes. We give Gens his tax and she's free.

ELIA. And now?

Silence. Then ELIA starts to sing.

SONG NUMBER EIGHT.

YANKEL. Hey! Someone's there.

The HASSID comes on.

GEIVISH. Are you from Weiskopf?

HASSID. Good evening.

YANKEL. Him!

GEIVISH. Are you working for Weiskopf?

PART TWO

Prologue

Members of the company form a human chain. They throw German uniforms from one to another and pile them into a huge heap. As they work they sing 'Yiddishe Brigades'.

SONG NUMBER SEVEN.

Scene Thirteen

Night. Four young people, three men and a woman, climb through a hole in the ghetto wall carrying a coffin. GENS appears, shines his torch on them.

GENS. Luba Grodzinski!

LUBA. Who wants her?

GENS *(of the coffin)*. What's that?

LUBA. Someone died. We took him out, buried him. We can't waste a coffin.

GENS. But why through a hole in the wall? What's wrong with the gate?

GEIVISH. This way – it's quicker.

GENS. If you bastards are smuggling weapons –

LUBA. Weapons?

GEIVISH. For who?

YANKEL. He thinks we belong to the underground!

All four laugh.

GENS. Belong? No, you don't have the guts to join anything. But you'd supply them.

HASSID. Me? I'm a reader of palms.

YANKEL. *Piss off!*

HASSID. Mister, you don't know what's coming. By next summer, your whole life will be revolutionised.

GEIVISH. He said -

ELIA. Wait. *(To the HASSID:)* How do you know that? You haven't even looked at his palm.

HASSID. I also read ears. The palm gives more detailed results.

ELIA. Is that so?

He holds out his hand. The HASSID looks at it.

HASSID. So, what do we find here? This circle makes a right angle, you see it?

ELIA. Go on.

HASSID. The circle makes the letter 'G'. The right angle an 'F'. On your palm a 'G' turns into an 'F'. 'G' stands for Germans. 'F' for Freedom. In the time of three we'll be free of the Germans!

ELIA. What the hell is the time of three?

HASSID. Three weeks, three months, three years. Twenty roubles. *(He holds out his hand.)*

ELIA. How about three seconds?

HASSID. Fine. Thirty roubles.

ELIA draws a knife with his right hand.

ELIA. OK. One, two, three.

He stabs the HASSID. The HASSID falls. ELIA pulls out the knife, goes through the HASSID'S pockets.

GEIVISH. Are you insane?

YANKEL. Why the hell did you do that?

ELIA counts money he's taken from the HASSID.

ELIA. One thousand, three thousand, here's our five thousand!

GEIVISH *(of the coffin)*. Empty this, put him in.

They open the coffin. A figure wrapped in shrouds sits up, then stands.

The three men are terrified. They run off. The dead man gets out of the coffin and starts removing his shrouds. KRUK enters. As he dictates, the unseen typewriter rattles away.

KRUK. For the second time a murder has been committed in the ghetto for the sake of money. I've found out what I can. Both crimes were tied up with our flourishing blackmarket. Our rich splash out on every kind of luxury the underworld mob can provide.

He sits and writes.

Scene Fourteen

When the dead man removes the last of his shrouds he is revealed to be KITTEL. He takes a few thick books from the coffin, puts glasses on his nose and becomes DR PAUL, a professor of Judaica.

PAUL. Do I have the honour of addressing Mr Hermann Kruk?

KRUK. With whom have I the pleasure?

PAUL. Dr Ernst Paul. From the Rosenberg Institute for the Study of Judaism without Jews. You know of our researches?

KRUK. Vaguely . . .

PAUL. We have a mission. To analyse and document the spiritual and intellectual components of the Jewish cultural experience. We gain entry for our scholars to selected field sites. This is one. If anything of outstanding merit is uncovered - what we term cultural assets: songs, embroidery, religious artefacts, literature - these are deposited at our Institute recently established in Frankfurt. Our hope is to complete our investigation before all bearers of this complex heritage are, *hélas*, taken from us. I am sure you and I will quickly develop the mutual trust and respect scholars habitually enjoy. I see you've never heard of me. I'm prepared for that. All my published works.

He hands his books to KRUK. KRUK pages through one.

KRUK. Commentaries on the Talmud . . .?

PAUL. The Jerusalem Talmud is my particular study.

KRUK. How did you find me?

PAUL. By the opposite route to that used by Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai.

KRUK. You'll have to explain.

PAUL. Ah? I thought . . . When the besieged city of Jerusalem was on the point of destruction, four of the rabbi's disciples put him in a coffin and smuggled him out. When I wished to enter your Jerusalem, I used the same means to be smuggled in.

He laughs. Silence.

But perhaps you don't like to use German. We can speak Yiddish. Or Hebrew.

KRUK. My language is Yiddish.

PAUL. Fine! Both Hebrew and German are so formal, don't you find? As the wise man said: Hebrew you talk, Yiddish talks itself. Let's try to relax.

They sit.

KRUK. I'd like to ask, how . . .

PAUL. Did I, a non-Jew, learn Yiddish? Is that it? Or did you think I was Jewish? Even in Palestine they thought so. At the time of the Arab revolts I was there on a mission. A bunch of Arab bandits tried to throttle me. Jewish underground fighters chanced by - strong, lively fellows - or we wouldn't be sitting here now.

He laughs in an abrupt frightening manner, then snaps back into his usual sombre mood as if his laughter had been cut off with a knife.

Of course you know Jerusalem.

KRUK. No.

PAUL. A grave loss.

KRUK. I've never set foot in Palestine. I'm not a Zionist.

PAUL. Rather a communist.

KRUK looks at PAUL. *He realises PAUL knows everything.*

KRUK. That's a long time ago.

PAUL. Are you ashamed to recall it?

KRUK. 'Ashamed'. (*He thinks about this.*) At that time, the October Revolution, I was wild with excitement. Anticipation! I believed

- we all believed - justice, universal justice, the end of persecution of all minorities, even we Jews . . . Ashamed? Not at all!

PAUL. But you resigned from the party. Why? The Stalinist terrors?

KRUK. Not at all. I resigned years before! No, it wasn't Stalin who drove me out of the party. It was the Jews. They were so quick with criticism, no, worse, contempt for their own people's culture, literature, philosophy. They mocked their fathers' language, their fathers' beliefs.

PAUL. So you were religious?

KRUK. I'll rot in the earth and that's the end of it. None of us were, few of us are. But I couldn't come to terms with their scorn. Until now.

PAUL. Now?

KRUK. Now I have. Thanks to you.

PAUL. Me?

KRUK. You Germans.

PAUL. Now *you'll* have to explain.

KRUK. Jacob Gens, a Jew, carries out the orders of the Germans, rules this ghetto. Dessler, a Jew, is the local agent of the Gestapo. Levas, a Jew, guards the main ghetto gate, keeps us imprisoned. Who can be trusted to beat Jews most brutally? I could write you a list. All Jews. The Jewish Council, charged with administering our day to day lives, their office - it's a pit, debauchery, corruption. Our Jewish police drink with your officers, crawl onto their beds, share their Jewish whores. Why do we hate ourselves? Why? Oppression, two thousand years. It does great damage. I see that now. Thanks to you.

PAUL. And seeing all that, you still belong to the Bund?

KRUK. Go on.

PAUL. Well, sitting where we are, can you really imagine a socialist state here in Europe where Jews will be equal and free?

KRUK. If I'll see it, I don't know. It will come.

PAUL. There's a Hassidic legend. Once there was a king. One day he flew into a rage with his son and threw him out of the

PAUL stands, takes a list from his pocket.

PAUL. This selection of manuscripts is required for the Frankfurt Institute.

He gives the list to KRUK.

I want them packed and ready by morning. We'll talk more another time.

The noise of a crowd. GENS, a judge and a doctor come on. GEIVISH, ELIA and YANKEL, their hands tied, are led in.

PAUL. Look! The other Jews. Our Jews. The damaged who understand power!

He laughs in his characteristic way and disappears.

Scene Fifteen

When the JUDGE, the prisoners and the others have entered, men in butchers' clothes bring in two large wooden frames, each ten foot high, with meat hooks inserted into their upper cross pieces. Three nooses are dangling from the hooks. Three chairs are placed against the frames. A rope is attached to each chair. While this is happening, GENS speaks:

GENS. Your Honour!

JUDGE. On June the fourth, 1942, the Jewish court of the Vilna ghetto heard the case of Yankel Polikanski and the brothers Yitzhak and Elia Geivish, hereafter known as the defendants.

The charges against them were as follows: that on the night of June the third they stabbed to death one Yosef Gerstein. In addition it was revealed to the court that the defendants had also murdered one Herzl Lieder who was found buried in a basement in Strashun Street. On both counts the defendants were found guilty and sentenced to be hanged by the neck.

KITTEL appears and stands near GENS. *They salute each other.*

GENS. Your honours, members of the Jewish Council of the ghetto, officers of the police, Ladies and Gentlemen. At one time in Vilna there were seventy-five thousand Jews. Now there's sixteen. It is the duty of you sixteen thousand to live honest lives, to work hard. If you fail, you will suffer the same

palace. Time went by. The king's heart grew cool. He shouted for one of his servants. 'Go find my son. Tell him he has three wishes. Come back, tell me what they are.' The servant travelled and searched. At last he found the prince. He'd grown thin. He had filthy rags on his back. He slept on the ground by an open sewer. The servant woke him. 'If a king offered you three wishes, what would they be?' The prince replied without thinking: 'Bread, clothes, a roof over my head.' When the king heard this he fell to his knees and wailed. 'My son is lost forever.' You see, if he'd remembered who he was he'd have made only one wish, to return to the palace. Everything he could want would be there. You dream of - what? Cultural autonomy. A bill of rights. Why not return to the palace? In Palestine you'd have everything now, not at the millennium when good triumphs over evil.

KRUK. You're recruiting for Zionism?

PAUL. Mr Kruk, you say you despise the way Gens uses Jews as police.

KRUK. He makes the best of the situation you put him in.

PAUL. Why defend him? Or his cronies? I don't. I can't bear to look at them. They imitate us but they fail. Repulsive fairground caricatures. But we heard that you weren't like that. You've kept your integrity, your courage. So we're prepared to drop Gens, appoint you. You run the ghetto.

Silence.

KRUK. Take power from you? It's not possible.

PAUL. So you'd rather have Gens?

KRUK. In your legend, it seems to me that what the prince understood is what's crucial and what's not. It's not power that matters.

PAUL. So you'll stay in the diaspora powerless and leave Zion, leave Palestine to the likes of Gens who'll grab it with both brutish hands? You're just like the Jews you despise. You too hate yourself.

KRUK. Wherever I live my culture is my homeland. Betray your culture, in your own home you're an exile. Then it's one step from humanism to nationalism. One more? Bestiality. I'll stay as I am.

fate as these three, these Jews who took the lives of fellow Jews. Our Jewish police will string you up with their own Jewish hands. A group of actors including JUDITH and OOMA start to sing 'Isruulik'. The crowd joining in.

SONG-NUMBER EIGHT.

When the song is finished, GENS orders:-

GENS. Begin!

Two policemen escort the three to the scaffold. They climb onto the chairs, Nooses are placed around their necks. GENS raises a stick, gives a signal. The ropes are pulled, the chairs come away, the three are hanged.

KRUK. One of the ropes broke. Yankel Polikanski fell to the ground. Gens wanted to free him. Kittel turned his thumb down. Pick up the chair, prepare a new rope. This time it didn't fail.

In the centre of the stage, KITTEL takes out a letter sealed with wax, breaks the seal, reads:

KITTEL. We have just witnessed the inception of autonomous and responsible Jewish government in the Vilna ghetto. Whereas the present Jewish Council has failed in its duties, requiring for even the simplest decision time-wasting discussion and vote after vote after vote, the Jewish Council is hereby dissolved. Whereas for all practical purposes Mr Jacob Gens has been running the ghetto for some considerable time, in recognition of his dedication and efficiency I hereby appoint Mr Jacob Gens ruler of the ghetto.

Applause.

His assistant will be Mr Fried.

Applause.

Replacing Mr Gens as chief of police will be Mr Dessler.

Applause.

GENS. I assure you I will do everything in my power to serve my people as best as I can. All senior police officers, dignitaries and officials are invited to a ball.

KITTEL. Thanks for inviting me. I'd love to come provided there's music and cabaret.

GENS. I'll see to it.

KITTEL. And your wonderful singer? She owes me a song. Tonight seems the right time to pay. (He is about to go, stops.) In your honour, I give permission to bring flowers into the ghetto. (He goes. The jazz band enters playing sentimental music. The bodies and scaffolds are removed.)

Scene Sixteen

The stage is filled with actors who decorate it with large bouquets of flowers. Rugs and cushions create an atmosphere of ease and relaxation. Large quantities of refreshments - wine, salamis, roast chickens - are brought in and displayed. WEISKOPF comes in, runs up and down, supervising the preparations.

WEISKOPF. Where are the flowers? Bring more flowers! I want the room full of flowers. No! This is the cold meats buffet. Roast chickens over there. Wait! The sauce, does it go on the chicken? Then it goes by the chicken. And the cholent? Where's the cholent? Yes, we want it when everyone's gone home. Bring it! Idiot.

Bottles over there. No. Put bottles all over. Make it easy to find a bottle. Open them. All of them! Every single bottle! Don't fuss about what's left over. It goes to charity.

We'll show them a Jewish celebration. We'll show those swine! The *kvas* here! I said open them all! Are you trying to save me money? Why? Does it belong to your father? It's mine. I'm going to make such a deal with them what I spend today I'll make back tomorrow ten times, fifty times!

More actors and musicians come in.

The orchestra is here! Where's the stage? Oh. Fine. The stage is ready. That's how you decorate a stage? Put on flowers! Lots of flowers! Make their eyes pop out their sockets, run into their cheeks. That's it. More flowers! Let them see what a Jew is made of. Take their breath away.

I wish them every one of Pharaoh's plagues. Yes, and Job's leprosy. Arrange the meat so it looks nice. They'll take a look and stuff themselves. I hope they choke! I hope their tongues grow boils! Let them eat till they're stuffed, till they're blocked up front and back. Shit it out. They can't. It won't budge.

They're stuffed up good and solid but they can't stop shoving it in.

Rice by the meat, potatoes by the rice. I want them bursting with shit! Let them fart out their guts and tie them in knots round their necks. That's beautiful! Beautiful! So, are we ready? Orchestra, music. One and two and three!

The orchestra plays. Guests enter. GENS, DESSLER - who is fat and bald with a thick black moustache - Jewish members of the ghetto police, KITTEL, Gestapo officers, Jewish prostitutes come in half drunk, singing a German song: 'Ich bin di fesche Lola'. SRULIK and his DUMMY and HAYYAH wearing a beautiful evening gown. WEISKOPF greets them and offers them an aperitif and hors d'oeuvres.

As they eat HAYYAH sings.

SONG NUMBER NINE.

While HAYYAH is singing, the orgy begins. Sex is only between the Jewish police and the prostitutes. Most of the Germans watch. One or two take girls behind a curtain or under a table. When the singing ends, the audience applauds. KITTEL raises his hand. Silence. He goes to HAYYAH, takes her hand, kisses it. Applause. KITTEL raises his hand again.

KITTEL (to HAYYAH). Close your eyes.

She does. He produces a long string of pearls, shows it to the guests. They gasp. He puts the pearls on HAYYAH's neck.

Open.

HAYYAH opens her eyes and is appalled by the pearls.

KITTEL. They're only pearls, I'm afraid. But if you knew where they come from . . .

HAYYAH tries to pull off the pearls. KITTEL stops her.

You wear their shoes, why not their pearls? Keep them. That song - ten grams. You still owe fifteen.

DUMMY. Ten grams? That's all you're worth now.

KITTEL goes to the DUMMY.

KITTEL. Our funny little friend. Still sticking out your neck?

DUMMY. Just my tongue. It's my Jewish *hutzbah*.

KITTEL. Give me an example of Jewish *hutzbah*, if you've got the nerve.

DUMMY. Not now.

KITTEL. Why's that?

DUMMY. You don't look well.

KITTEL. It's true. I've got rather a headache.

DUMMY. Take a sequence of head baths. You'll never suffer again.

KITTEL. A sequence of head baths?

DUMMY. Yes! The sequence is: put your head in water three times, take it out twice.

KITTEL laughs. Everyone else interrupts the orgy to laugh as well. He signals them to stop. They do, holding their breath. Suddenly KITTEL laughs again.

DUMMY. Do you know why Germans laugh at jokes twice?

KITTEL. Tell me.

DUMMY. The first time: politeness. The second: they've just got the point.

KITTEL laughs, falls silent, laughs again, falls silent again.

KITTEL. And that's as far as you're prepared to go?

DUMMY. Uh uh.

KITTEL. I bet it is.

DUMMY. How much?

SRULIK (to the DUMMY). That's enough.

DUMMY. He wants to gamble. It's my head on the block. (To

KITTEL.) Your stake: fifty thousand.

KITTEL pulls out a banknote.

KITTEL. I've only got one.

WEISKOPF appears beside KITTEL with a stack of notes.

WEISKOPF. Mr. Kittel, be my guest.

KITTEL. Who's got a pen? I'll sign a receipt.

WEISKOPF searches for a pen.

DUMMY. What for? We all know Germans are honest. After all, you took Leningrad, you gave it back. You took Stalingrad, you gave it back. You'll pay him back, penny for penny.

KITTEL is stunned into silence. *Everyone else is silent too.*

KITTEL holds out WEISKOPF's money to SRULIK.

KITTEL. You win.

SRULIK splutters, tries to hand the money back to KITTEL.

SRULIK. No! Keep it! Please!

KITTEL has already turned away.

DUMMY (to SRULIK). Fool! To steal from a thief isn't stealing.

KITTEL (to SRULIK). Enough! (He shakes the DUMMY.)

WEISKOPE. Mr Kittel, have you sampled my cognac? It's first-class French.

He gives KITTEL a glass. They both throw off their drinks in one gulp.

KITTEL. Ahhh! Paris . . . Paris . . .

The orchestra plays a French song. HAYVAH sings.

SONG NUMBER TEN.

While they sing, WEISKOPF leads KITTEL a short distance away.

WEISKOPE. Mr Kittel, have I got an offer to make you.

As he talks to KITTEL, the orgy and the singing continue. One of the German officers gets carried away, pulls a prostitute from one of the Jewish policemen and attempts to enjoy her himself. Another German officer quickly separates them, threatens the German, pushes the prostitute back to the Jew. The Germans continue to enjoy the orgy as observers. When the song is over, WEISKOPF claps for silence.

WEISKOPF. Ladies and gentlemen! Have I got news! Mr Kittel and I have just hammered out the fine points of the biggest deal in the history of our factory. Four hundred railcars of uniforms! Four hundred! Which means work for you all! And there's more. I've been given a promise, I can't say from who, of a meeting with Göring. In Berlin. I will personally negotiate with Mr Göring a five year contract. Manufacturing, mending - uniforms, fatigues, combat boots. We'll build a new plant.

Whatever they want from us, we'll turn it out. So, my friends, it's a happy day. Fill your glasses! *Lehayim!*

SONG NUMBER ELEVEN.

During the song, the drinking and the orgy grow more frenzied.

KITTEL. Gens. Gens!

GENS goes to KITTEL who puts his hand on his shoulder and walks up and down with him.

You're not enjoying yourself?

GENS. I am. Immensely.

KITTEL. Dessler is having a good time. Mushkat is having a good time. Look at Levas. He's having a good time. You don't enjoy parties. Organise them, OK, no problem. But enjoy them? You can't. Why? You can't stop calculating. Your eye's always peeled. A party's just a chance to work a whole roomful of us at the same time. Something from this one, something from that. I can't stand it. If you don't relax I can't. Be happy, Gens. Won't you? For me. (Sings:) 'I want to be happy but I can't be happy till I make you happy too.'

GENS. I'll try.

KITTEL. I'll give you a hand.

He raises his hand. Silence.

Gentlemen. Ladies. I wish to inform you of an expansion in the empire of our good friend Gens. From this moment, the ghetto at Oshmene is annexed to this one. Mr Gens, with the help of the Jewish police and the revered Mr Dessler, you are now the ruler of the Jews of Oshmene as well.

Applause. DESSLER stands, takes a bow. Silence.

Inevitably, there's a problem. In Oshmene today there are four thousand Jews. That's twice too many. So, Mr Gens, you've got the whole night. Your police, Dessler in charge -

DESSLER. At your command!

KITTEL. - will go to Oshmene and select half the population. Of course we could send our own men, or, indeed, Lithuanians. What would come of it? Panic. What good would that do? Your people speak Yiddish. If people understand each other they stay calm, everything happens smoothly, efficiently. Police!

The Jewish officers stand. They are half or fully naked.

Well, you're getting new uniforms anyway. In honour of the Oshmene campaign! Russian boots, leather coats, hats once worn by officers of the Czar. Uniforms!

A German officer brings in some uniforms. While the Jewish police put them on, GENS and KITTEL confer.

GENS. Half the population? They can't all be non-productive.

KITTEL. They can't?

GENS. Impossible. In our experience it's never more than twenty-five per cent.

KITTEL. Gens, I want you to be happy. Let them select only twenty-five per cent.

GENS. On the other hand, if we held a census, it might turn out there were only eight hundred non-productives.

KITTEL. 'Non-productive.' It's relative! You Jews, you'd argue for some eighty year old. Attach a dynamo to his wheelchair, he'll generate power wheeling himself to the toilet.

GENS. No. Age is an absolute. Anyone over eighty, no arguments.

KITTEL. Seventy?

GENS. It's a deal.

KITTEL. But not less than seven hundred people.

GENS. Not less than five hundred, not more than seven.

KITTEL. What's a hundred more or less between friends? Six hundred. What do you say?

GENS. Done!

KITTEL turns to the policemen who have finished dressing and picked up their clubs.

KITTEL. Eight Lithuanians from the Ipatinga militia will go with you. Everyone over seventy, pick them out, hand them over to them. Dessler!

DESSLER. Sir! Right face! Forward march! Left right left, left right left . . .

As the police march, everyone leaves except GENS.

GENS. Dessler!

DESSLER comes back.

What you're about to do, it's unspeakable. So try not to drool, at least in front of them.

DESSLER. If my heart breaks will I get into heaven? Nor will you. I'm going on your orders. Don't preach to me.

He goes. GENS spits after him.

GENS. Scum! *(He drinks.)*

KRUK enters. For once his typewriter is silent.

KRUK. They made the selection. Four hundred and ten old and sick Jews were lined up in the square. An old man recited a prayer for the dead, 'El Malch Rahamim'. Everyone started crying. Some of the Jewish police who had made the selection broke down and wept. The four hundred and ten were driven in a cart a distance of eight kilometres. When they arrived, the Lithuanians took charge of the execution in the presence of the Jews Dessler, Nathan Ring and Moshe Levas, all three armed with pistols. During the selection, they and the Lithuanians had emptied over one hundred bottles. They roasted a lamb, a gift of the Jewish Council, ate it, went home. Inhabitants of the ghetto lined the streets. Unmoving, unblinking, they watched them go. One of our police, Mr Drazin, started to sing:

'We came to warm your heart.

Good night. We now depart.'

While engaged in this massacre, Isaac Averbuch, another policeman, had a nervous collapse and had to be treated by a doctor.

GENS, *drunk, stands*

GENS. Hermann Kruk is an honest man. And a brave one. Who among us dares to say what he says, even wants to hear the things he dares to talk about? Almost no one. But there are more than a few of us who inside feel as he feels.

More than a few of you consider me a traitor. And you're wondering how it is that I'm still here among you with your innocent, your unsullied souls. I, Jacob Gens, who gives orders to blow up the hideouts you prepare. The same Jacob Gens who puzzles out way after way to save the lives of Jews.

I calculate in Jewish blood not Jewish dignity. The Germans

want a thousand Jews. I hand them over. If I don't, they'll come here and take them by force. And then they won't take a thousand. They'll take thousands. And thousands.

You with your morality. There's dirt, there's filth, you look away. If you survive you'll show your hands - clean. Whereas I, Jacob Gens, will be, if I am anything, drenched in blood, dripping with slime.

I'll submit myself to Jewish justice! I will stand trial! I'll tell them: what I did was done to save Jews, as many as possible, to lead them to freedom. To do this I had no choice but to lead some to death. With my own hands I did it. For the sake of your clean conscience I plunged into filth. I couldn't afford a clean conscience. Could I?

Scene Seventeen

KRUK's library. HAYYAH is searching among the books. KRUK comes in.

KRUK. Can I help?

HAYYAH. I can manage.

KRUK. I've noticed you.

HAYYAH. Yes?

KRUK. You come every day, spend hours searching the shelves. You're not browsing. You're looking for something special.

HAYYAH. Just something to read.

KRUK. I've seen you.

HAYYAH. In the street.

KRUK. I think in the theatre.

HAYYAH. It's possible we've met in the theatre.

KRUK. You perform in revues. Am I wrong?

HAYYAH. I play small parts.

KRUK. You're ashamed of being an actress?

HAYYAH. No. But not proud.

KRUK. Why?

HAYYAH. What's the point of it? For us?

KRUK. I used to feel the same. Now I can see I was wrong.

Fascism turns human beings into animals and uses them for its own ends. How to resist? Preserve your culture, stay human. Look, they banned flowers from the ghetto. What did we do? We gave each other autumn leaves, the most beautiful flowers in the world.

Silence.

Books on the theatre? Let me see.

HAYYAH (*produces a newspaper*). Look. (*Reads:*) 'The young actor Gabriel Geivish need only improve his diction, and he is sure if a successful future on the stage.' *Ghetto News*, 20th March 1943. Where is he now? . . . 'Diction!' (*She throws away the newspaper.*) I want a chemistry text book. Something simple.

KRUK *smiles*.

KRUK. Why didn't you say days ago?

He climbs a tall ladder, finds a thin pamphlet.

HAYYAH. Is it in Russian?

KRUK. It's a Soviet army manual. I found it in the library of technology at the university.

He climbs down the ladder, gives it to her.

The only book I ever stole in my life.

HAYYAH. I can't read it.

KRUK. I'm sure one of your new friends can.

HAYYAH. I'll return it.

KRUK. My eyes are closed. Take it, go. To steal from a thief isn't stealing.

HAYYAH. Thank you. (*She starts to go.*)

KRUK. Wait!

He takes two or three other books from the shelf and gives them to her.

In case you're stopped.

She kisses him on the cheek and, going, sings the lullaby 'Birds are sleeping on the branches'.

SONG NUMBER TWELVE.

Scene Eighteen

KRUK *remains among his books. HAYYAH's singing is interrupted by a powerful flashlight shone into her face. She freezes. It is KITTEL.*

KITTEL. I can't believe it. Still singing!

HAYYAH. We're rehearsing a new programme.

KITTEL. Your singing at the party was *magnifique*.

He takes the books from her, glances at them.

Russian?

HAYYAH. Can you speak it?

KITTEL. *Nyet!* *(He laughs.)* Is it a play?

HAYYAH. 'Man Under the Bridge.'

KITTEL. So you'll have it translated?

HAYYAH. Of course.

She reaches for the books. He holds on to them.

KITTEL. Excellent. So you're dancing through the war with a song in your heart.

HAYYAH. When I'm happy, I laugh. When I'm sad, I sing.

KITTEL. *(laughing)*. A perfect answer. *(He gives her the books.)* When the war is over, perhaps we'll perform together. We'll be quite a double act.

HAYYAH. Wait until you see my next performance.

KITTEL. This time you'll pay off your whole debt, I'm certain.

HAYYAH. I hope so. *(She hurries off)*

KITTEL. What strange people. *Extraordinaire* . . .

He goes.

Scene Nineteen

KRUK *is in the library. KITTEL enters, puts on his black horn-rimmed glasses, becomes DR PAUL, enters the library, meets KRUK.*

PAUL. I've brought you a new task. Here is a list of all the monasteries in Vilna. I want you to catalogue their libraries.

KRUK. What for?

PAUL. I'll supervise you. I am trying to protect you. As long as you work for me you're safe.

KRUK. My life means nothing.

PAUL. No? With our eastern front crumbling? The Russians will be here within weeks.

KRUK is excited by the news but pretends indifference so as to squeeze out more information.

KRUK. Within weeks? No, we've heard that before. The war goes on. I haven't the strength for your work. Within weeks! *(He laughs)*

PAUL. Listen to me. To hold back the Russians, our army is sending non-combatant officers to the front.

KRUK. Aren't you keen to join your friends? This stupid job will keep you here.

Silence.

PAUL. We are both intelligent people. You do this job, I supervise you. Is that clear? Besides, I have authorization from Berlin.

KRUK. No. No, sir. You murderers! You killed my wife, my sister. My mother! You slaughtered my whole family. You want me to save you?

PAUL. Mr Kruk, there is an armed underground in this ghetto. I know that. You have close connections with them. I know that. Think again before you refuse me.

KRUK. An underground? Are you crazy? You conquered the whole of Europe in weeks. How can we, isolated, starved, unarmed in a small defeated ghetto, hope to resist you? No, honestly, we are too clever to even try that.

PAUL. You really stretch out your neck.

KRUK. Kill me. Do it now. I don't care. Kill another thousand - ten thousand! It'll work out the same.

PAUL. What do you mean?

KRUK. The ending was determined long ago. When you fools fired your first shot on Russian soil you wrote the last act. You will play it to the very last line.

PAUL. Which is?

KRUK. I will send a fire which will devour palaces. Then the king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together. Your cities will be burned, your people dispersed, driven into exile, scattered over the face of the earth. So saith the Lord.

PAUL *laughs*.

PAUL. A world ruled by God. Divine justice. Wishful thinking. Who is there to punish us, destroy us, scatter our people?

KRUK. The civilized nations.

PAUL *laughs*.

PAUL. The civilized nations have persecuted you for two thousand years. Who's lost his country? Who's been sent into exile for killing Jews? Believe me, Mr. Kruk, the only difference between us and the rest of Europe is that we actually do what they only dream.

KRUK. Speculate all you like. Nothing can justify your crimes.

PAUL. It's speculation? Then why don't the Allies bomb the camps? Do you think they don't know what we're doing? Face reality. You are alone. No one cares about you. The world is ruled by men, by pure naked interest. When the war's over they'll need us, our technology. And the rest? Quickly forgotten.

KRUK. We'll see.

PAUL. Yes, we will. But in order that we do, we must survive. So - the monasteries, their libraries. You work, I supervise.

KRUK *nods*.

And afterwards, if our scientific and spiritual collaboration can continue, I'll be honoured. We have a great deal to offer each other, now and in the future. Goodbye.

PAUL goes. As KRUK dictates, the typewriter is heard in the background.

KRUK. A new factory for mirrors has been opened at nineteen * Rudnitzka Street. Another has been started for grindstones, a third produces combs. The thermochemical laboratory is being expanded. The bookbinders have spread onto two floors. The sewing workshop grows every day. Two hundred miles from Vilna stands the Red Army, the German sword dangles over our necks, we carry on building our tower of Babel. Will the Russians come in time? Will we survive longer than our enemies? More than ever I cling to my chronicle, my diary, the hashish of my life in the ghetto . . .

Scene Twenty

May Day in the ghetto. Members of the underground resistance rush across and decorate the stage with large red paper flowers, red flags, red banners reading: 'Spring in the Ghetto' and 'May Day - Hurrah!' and 'Yesterday nothing, tomorrow the world!' As they go off, the band enters playing.

HAYYAH sings a song of the resistance, others dance. They wear white or dark blue shirts and red scarves.

SONG NUMBER THIRTEEN.

HAYYAH. Yesterday Zalman Tiktin, a young member of the resistance, was shot trying to steal weapons. At this very moment he's lying in the Lukishki Prison Hospital wrestling with death. He is not yet eighteen.

KRUK. At this moment while we celebrate May Day, our brothers in Warsaw are fighting. Fierce fires are burning! The day will come when we too stand up, guns in our hands. Warsaw will be our example! We'll resist to the last man!

SONG NUMBER FOURTEEN.

GENS *rushes in*.

GENS. Stop it! Stop playing!

The music and singing stop.

Where do you think you are? You put the whole ghetto in danger. If they hear that song -

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- KRUK. You ordered them to start this theatre.
- GENS. Not to rub salt in our wounds! Not to spark off rebellion! Listen to me. At long last, things have calmed down. You've never been safer. Why provoke them? Put on plays. Let's have satires. Make them bite. Attack the parasites who won't work. They're the ones who make trouble. But to call our Jewish police traitors? We will lead the ghetto to freedom, not you idiots who spout politics.
- KRUK. Mr Gens -
- GENS. I forbid you to argue with me. Who in this ghetto has genuine national feeling? Me. Who's the real Jewish patriot? Me. From tomorrow we're going to talk Hebrew. It will be taught in the schools. The bible in Yiddish. An abomination. Hebrew! In junior schools, in nurseries. We'll teach Palesinography! Is anything wrong? I'll tell you what's wrong. There's too little nationalism in Vilna. (To SRULIK:) Put on Hebrew plays. I want Hebrew recitations. A blue and white evening, the poems of Bialik. Any actor who rejects the national line is out on his ear.
- KRUK. You're learning fast.
- GENS. What did you say?
- KRUK. Nationalism breeds nationalism.
- GENS. This meeting is over. Everyone home!
- Everyone goes except SRULIK, the DUMMY and HAYYAH who stands alone. KRUK returns to his library.*
- DUMMY. Hurry! No time to spare. Hurry home, study Hebrew.
- SRULIK. Leave me out of it.
- DUMMY. It's a famous moment in history. Hurry home, study Hebrew.
- SRULIK. I'm too upset for your nonsense.
- DUMMY. You call Hebrew nonsense? Mr Gens!
- SRULIK. And you? You can't speak a word of it.
- DUMMY. I can.
- SRULIK. Go on then.
- DUMMY. Palesinography.

SRULIK. That isn't Hebrew.

DUMMY. Then what is it? Hurry home, study Hebrew.

HAYYAH *comes to* SRULIK.

HAYYAH. I'm leaving.

DUMMY. And going where? Palestine? (To SRULIK:) Let's go with her. Hurry home, study Palesinography.

HAYYAH. This isn't a joke! The Russians aren't far away. Everyone knows that. It's time. I'm joining the underground, leaving tonight through a sewage duct. Will you come?

DUMMY. Your chance to be a hero! She'll fall at your feet! Take me to a sewage duct! Where is the lavatory?

HAYYAH (to SRULIK). Will you never be serious?

SRULIK. You know what I think. You want to go? Go. We'll pay the price.

HAYYAH. Not if everyone comes!

SRULIK. How can they? People have families! Grandparents, children. How can they go?

DUMMY. Maybe she's fallen for one of the partisans.

SRULIK. I'm staying.

SRULIK and HAYYAH *look at each other, then they embrace.*

DUMMY. At last! She's playing grand opera. But who'll die in the last act?

As HAYYAH goes, the DUMMY's mood changes.

Hayyah!leh! Don't leave us! Don't leave me! Hayyah!leh!

SRULIK and the DUMMY *go off. OOMA appears from the dark and addresses* SRULIK.

OOMA. Finita la commedia.

The weight of this sad time we must obey.

Speak what we feel not what we ought to say.

Make all our trumpets speak

Give them all breath

We cannot shape our life

Let's shape our death.

SRULIK *the DUMMY and OOMA go out.*

Scene Twenty-one

GENS *enters with WEISKOPF.*

GENS. This hall is thirty metres by twenty-five. Almost a thousand metres square. You need two square metres for each sewing machine. Am I right?

WEISKOPF. But this is your theatre!

GENS. I'm finished with that. As a theatre it can save only forty families. You can put five hundred sewing machines here.

WEISKOPF. But what do I need them for? Five hundred more workers? Mr Gens -

GENS. You're about to receive four hundred carloads of uniforms. We'll get a licence for another workshop, no question.

WEISKOPF. I don't need another workshop!

GENS. The Soviet army will be here by December. My duty is to meet them with as many survivors as possible.

WEISKOPF. Listen, squeeze fifty more workers into the old workshop, fifty. I'll polish off those carloads like that.

GENS. You're wrong.

WEISKOPF. I worked it all out.

GENS. Then you worked it out wrong.

WEISKOPF. Mr Gens, this is Weiskopf. You know how long this wise kopl's been in business? Worked it out wrong?

He pulls out a large sheet of paper.

GENS. What's this?

WEISKOPF. My plan. One worker's productivity rate: so and so. See what I mean? Simply add two hours to the working day, then add fifty workers - are you following? - multiply, you get the output. Can I honour my contract or can't I?

GENS *takes the paper, examines it.*

GENS. You're very methodical.

WEISKOPF. I have to be.

GENS *tears up the plan.*

WEISKOPF. What are you doing?

GENS. Wipe your arse with it.

WEISKOPF. What are you saying?

GENS. Be glad it's not stuffed down your throat! All we need is for Kittel to get hold of this. Employ five hundred workers, you save five hundred families. Will I never get through to you?

WEISKOPF. What am I? A charity commissioner? I'm a business man. I guarantee my workers a living which they earn plus a little extra for me.

GENS. A little extra. You've become a millionaire. And you're welcome! I'm no socialist. You work, you've got imagination, you deserve to flourish. But when does success become blood sucking? Mr Weiskopf? You will open a workshop in this theatre. You will employ five hundred workers selected by our labour exchange.

WEISKOPF *(laughing)*. So that's what you're up to. You're going to offload your cripples on me.

GENS. What are you running here? The Olympic Games? It's just a shitty workshop fixing shitty uniforms for the shitty Nazis. For that, Jewish cripples are too good, but if it will help save their lives . . .

WEISKOPF. Don't you dare call my enterprise shitty! It's my life. It's my soul. It's me! I won't let you destroy it with shitty philanthropy.

GENS. You start work here tomorrow.

WEISKOPF. I won't do it.

GENS. You refuse?

WEISKOPF. N spells N, O spells O.

GENS. Then I order you. That's that.

WEISKOPF. You know what to do with your orders.

GENS. What's happened? All of a sudden you don't care about orders?

WEISKOPF. Why should I? You're not in charge.

- GENS. No?
- WEISKOPE. There's somebody senior.
- GENS. You, perhaps?
- WEISKOPE. Kittel.
- GENS. Weiskopf, you take this to Kittel -
- WEISKOPE. Go on! If I do?
- GENS. Weiskopf, you take this to Kittel -
- (KITTEL *appears out of nowhere and stands between them. He pretends to be surprised.*)
- KITTEL. Gens! What's up?
- GENS. This is Weiskopf's new workshop.
- KITTEL. A new one? Here? But what's wrong with the old one?
- GENS. Too small. He needs five hundred more machines.
- KITTEL. What are you sewing? Shrouds for every corpse in Europe?
- GENS. You arranged four hundred carloads. We have to gear ourselves up.
- KITTEL (to WEISKOPE). But five hundred?
- WEISKOPE. Uh . . . Mr Kittel, sir, you see . . . five hundred . . . I could manage . . . it depends . . . five hundred? No . . . I could do it with . . . possibly . . .
- GENS. Don't make promises you can't keep.
- KITTEL. So there's disagreement.
- WEISKOPE. No . . . different approaches . . . see what I mean? . . . (He explodes in a coughing fit.)
- KITTEL. What are you hiding, Weiskopf?
- WEISKOPE. Me? Of course, nothing.
- KITTEL. That's lucky.
- WEISKOPE. Even so -
- KITTEL. 'Even so'? Is there disagreement? Yes or no?

- GENS. No }
WEISKOPE. Yes. } *together*
- KITTEL (grinning). Well, at least that's clear.
(*Seriously, to WEISKOPE.*) How many workers do you say you need?
- WEISKOPE. Mr Kittel, give or take -
- KITTEL. Precisely!
- WEISKOPE. Fifty.
- KITTEL. Not five hundred?
- WEISKOPE *shakes his head.*
- KITTEL. So why inspect this barn? (To GENS.) What are you up to?
- GENS. He needs five hundred. Believe me.
- KITTEL (to WEISKOPE). Where's that plan you showed me?
- WEISKOPE *points at GENS. KITTEL turns to him.*
- GENS. I tore it up. It was a fantasy, a crazy delusion. Look at him, puffed up with importance, thinks he can fool anyone. It was a bad joke.
- KITTEL (to WEISKOPE). You wasted my morning with a trick?
- WEISKOPE. Mr Kittel, I swear on the lives of my children . . . Listen, if you extend the working day by two hours, if you let me choose my own fifty workers, if -
- KITTEL. If and if and if. Three so far.
- WEISKOPE. If I can do my own planning -
- KITTEL. Four.
- WEISKOPE. If no-one interferes -
- KITTEL. The next is your last. If you see what I mean.
- WEISKOPE. If I could only meet Göring.
- KITTEL. If I couldn't see who's talking I'd think it was that doll with the tongue. But *his* impudence made me smile.
- WEISKOPE. If I may remind you, you promised a meeting with Göring.

KITTEL. What kind of Jew are you? Don't you recognize a joke? People without humour, I hate them.

WEISKOPF. Mr Kittel! I swear! Fifty more workers! I'll get the job done!

KITTEL. Now he's hysterical.

WEISKOPF. I'll make a new plan, I'll work it all out again -

KITTEL. Gens says: no go.

WEISKOPF. But he's head of the ghetto . . .

KITTEL. So?

WEISKOPF. Everyone has their own reasons . . .

KITTEL. You're running with sweat.

WEISKOPF. If I am -

KITTEL. If!

WEISKOPF. Sorry, sorry. Only, please, if you'd . . . sorry . . .

DESSLER *enters holding a bottle of cognac and a salami*.

DESSLER. Sir!

GENS. Yes?

DESSLER. These were found under Weiskopf's bed.

KITTEL *takes them*.

KITTEL. French cognac, Hungarian salami. Where were they bought? Weiskopf?

DESSLER. Also half a bag of sugar, ten kilos of rice, five litres of olive oil.

WEISKOPF. These are leftovers from the ball.

KITTEL. God, I love it when people apologise. More!

WEISKOPF *grabs KITTEL*.

WEISKOPF. Mr Kittel, I want to explain exactly why he wants the five hundred.

KITTEL. (to GENs). Get this leech off!

GENs. Dessler.

DESSLER *slaps WEISKOPF across the face*. WEISKOPF *protects his*

face with his hands, fleeing KITTEL. With one swoop, DESSLER pulls all the buttons off WEISKOPF's trousers. They fall to the floor

WEISKOPF *pulls them up with both hands*. Meantime DESSLER has put on the knuckledusters hanging from his belt. As WEISKOPF pulls up his trousers, DESSLER hits him in the face with the knuckledusters.

WEISKOPF *screams, falls to the ground*. DESSLER picks him up. His face is running with blood. DESSLER hits him again. He falls again and lies still.

GENs (to DESSLER). Lock him up.

DESSLER *lifts up WEISKOPF, starts to drag him off*. While watching,

KITTEL *has opened the cognac and taken a drink*.

KITTEL (to GENs). Congratulations. My prize pupil.

He hands the bottle to GENs who drinks

Call back your baboon.

GENs. Dessler!

DESSLER. Sir!

GENs. Over here!

DESSLER *drops WEISKOPF, goes to GENs*.

KITTEL. Call the actors. I can't wait any longer. I want a preview of what they're rehearsing.

DESSLER. Sir!

KITTEL. Now!

DESSLER *does an about-face, picks up WEISKOPF, drags him out*.

KITTEL. Something serious. People are escaping from the ghetto. GENs. That's not possible.

KITTEL. A train was blown up, fifteen German soldiers killed. Forty villagers have paid with their lives. I don't weep for them. They were saints. Their souls are singing where neither yours nor mine ever will. But the truth is, the bomb was made by amateurs. Our experts believe by someone who broke out of here. I did research. In the past two weeks, thirty people have vanished from their work teams. (He laughs.) Tell me, Mr GENs, I'm right, am I not, to think you Jews familiar with the doctrine of mutual responsibility? What do your wise men say? 'One hand washes the other.'

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GENS. Each Jew is responsible for all others.

KITTEL. I want to try that around here. If anyone disappears, his family will be killed. If a whole family disappears, all who shared their room. If everyone from a room gets away, we dynamite the building. Divide your workers into groups of ten. If one runs off, nine will be slaughtered. Have I interpreted your doctrine correctly? And no new workshops. Weiskopf wasn't lying. I went through his plan in great detail. It was brilliant. So, what will you do now?

Silence.

Speak up.

GENS. Reappoint him.

KITTEL. To do what?

GENS. Run the workshops . . .

KITTEL. Every time I think I've finally penetrated your Jewish brains, I hit a bone wall. And you're supposed to be geniuses. You understand nothing of the world. Gens, there are no second chances. If a person trips, bury him. In the quarrel between you and Weiskopf I was interested only in whose will was stronger. The second he started to sweat it was over. He's a worm. Stamp on him. You played your part like a master. So get on with it. Appoint a new director of the workshops. There's the four hundred carloads and no extra labour. Come on, Gens, don't disappoint me. I've taught you all I know. Where are the actors? I want to see them now.

Scene Twenty-two

Light comes up on stage. Empty Nazi UNIFORMS rise out of the pile of clothes. They are bullet-ridden and stained with blood. They assemble as though at a Nazi mass meeting to listen to the Führer who is represented by a UNIFORM of the kind Hitler wore when addressing a military parade. This UNIFORM is worn by SRULIK. The faces and limbs of all the actors are concealed. Only the face of the DUMMY, manipulated by SRULIK, is visible among all the empty UNIFORMS. It wears the same costume as before.

HITLER UNIFORM. Comrades! Look around you! What do you see?

ALL (*looking around*). What do we see?

HITLER UNIFORM. We're surrounded by Jews!

ALL. By Jews.

HITLER UNIFORM. Go anywhere, look anywhere - nothing but Jews. Turn to the right.

He brings the DUMMY violently to his right.

A Jew.

DUMMY. My mother was Aryan.

HITLER UNIFORM. Shut up!

DUMMY. I'm not Jewish! Ask any Rabbi.

HITLER UNIFORM. I decide who is Jewish.

DUMMY. You'll get into trouble.

HITLER UNIFORM. Turn to the left.

He flings the DUMMY violently to the left.

Another Jew!

DUMMY. Hey! It's me! I'm the same one!

The HITLER UNIFORM flings the DUMMY in all directions.

HITLER UNIFORM. And another, and another, yet another! You go to the opera, nothing but Jews. To the theatre, Jews. The concert hall, Jews. The newspapers, the banks, the pimps, the doctors, the lawyers, the dentists. So you start wondering, is this a Jew? Is this a Jew? Is this also a Jew?

ALL (*ad lib.*). Is this a Jew? Is this a Jew!

HITLER UNIFORM. Comrades!

Silence.

We are asking the wrong question. What should we ask?

He pulls up the DUMMY and displays it to his audience.

We should ask, is this a German?

All the UNIFORMS laugh.

HITLER UNIFORM. You should ask, is this a human being?

UNIFORM 1. How can we know?

HITLER UNIFORM. Good question. Any suggestions?

UNIFORM 2. Can it stand on its legs?

HITLER UNIFORM. Let's find out.

He lets go of the DUMMY. It collapses in a bundle. The UNIFORMS roar with laughter.

UNIFORM 3. Does it have a backbone?

HITLER UNIFORM. Let's see.

He makes the DUMMY bend and twist in all directions. Laughter.

UNIFORM 4. Hath a Jew eyes?

HITLER UNIFORM. Eyes?

The DUMMY seems to become all eyes, rolling its eyes in all directions, squinting, doing everything to draw attention to its eyes. As the UNIFORMS have no eyes of their own they can't see those of the DUMMY.

Does anyone see eyes?

ALL (*ad lib.*) I can't see anything. I see nothing.

UNIFORM 5. Hath it limbs?

HITLER UNIFORM. Limbs? Does anyone see limbs?

Now the DUMMY becomes all hands and feet, to no avail.

UNIFORM 6. Hath it senses, affections, passions?

The DUMMY acts out its passions, affections, senses as best it can.

HITLER UNIFORM. It doesn't look like it.

UNIFORM 7. Is a Jew fed with the same food?

UNIFORM 8. No, it drinks our blood.

UNIFORM 9. If you prick it, does it bleed?

HITLER UNIFORM. What an intelligent question. Let's find out.

He stabs the DUMMY, slashing open its costume. A flood of coins pours out onto the ground. Wild laughter.

UNIFORM 10. If you nickle it, does it laugh?

HITLER UNIFORM. Everyone, try!

The UNIFORMS produce whips. They 'nickle' the DUMMY with the edges of their whips. The DUMMY does its best to produce a laughter-

like noise. It sounds like suppressed anguish and pain.

UNIFORM 11. One more question. If you poison it, does it die?

HITLER UNIFORM. Bravo! That's the question. Let's see.

All the UNIFORMS produce pre-war DDT pumps and spray the DUMMY. Silence. The DUMMY is paralysed for a moment, then it starts quivering all over, twisting in all directions, starting its long death agony. The UNIFORMS recoil.

UNIFORM 1. We've done it!

UNIFORM 2. We've done it!

UNIFORM 3. We are rid of this creature who boiled us in boric and chloric.

UNIFORM 4. And wrenched us and drenched us.

UNIFORM 5. And wrung us and hung us.

UNIFORM 6. And starched us.

UNIFORM 7. And ironed us.

ALL. We are finally free of the Jew!

HITLER UNIFORM. Comrades, dear comrades, I proclaim the Kingdom of new freedom. We are free of this blood-sucker. Our freedom will last a thousand years! Musicians, to your instruments. One, two, three -

The HITLER UNIFORM starts singing Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' from the Ninth Symphony. All the empty UNIFORMS join in the singing while the poisoned DUMMY performs its dance of death.

KITTEL. Bravo! Bravo!

As he applauds he whispers to GENS. GENS goes out.

Line up facing me.

The UNIFORMS form a row facing KITTEL.

As saire, that was outstanding. And I'm an expert. I used to perform in satirical cabaret in the thirties.

He sings.

'Und wenn dann der Kopf fällt, sage ich:

Hopplal!

Und ein Schiff mit acht Segeln und mit

funfzig Kanonen wird beschossen die Stadt . . .

He laughs nostalgically.

Yes, I certainly appreciate satire. I'd like to see the actors.

DUMMY. What actors? We're nothing but uniforms.

KITTEL (*stirred*). I asked to see the actors. Hurry up!

Slowly and uncertainly, the faces of the actors emerge from the clothes.

First one head, then another. Gradually they all appear. Only one remains empty. KITTEL approaches it.

You too! Let's have a look at you.

KITTEL. *looks inside. He is astonished.*

It's empty. But that singer was in there! I heard her voice! How did you do it? What a fantastic piece of staging! She's really not there. Who did the voice for her?

Silence.

(*To SRULIK.*) It must have been you.

DUMMY. It was me! It was me!

KITTEL. A brilliant effect. Magical. Bravo, gentlemen. I let you use watches. Even fountain pens. I allowed the cats, the symposia on cultural subjects, the orchestra. Above all the theatre! And why? Because you owed me sixty grams of beans! This is how I'm repaid. I asked to see the full company. One actress, who still owes me fifteen grams, has disappeared. Have you heard the new orders concerning people who escape from the ghetto? 'One hand washes the other.' Well, you've dirtied yours. Satire! I'll give you satire! Faces to the wall!

All the actors face the wall.

Machine gunner, over here!

The sound of the squeaking hinges of a cart. The screeching noise is blood curdling. GENS enters pushing a cart. On it is a large pot labelled 'Jam'. Next to the pot is a large basket with a sliced loaf of challah. KITTEL commands:

Position the gun there! Load gun! Ready! (*He himself cocks the Schmeisser.*) Everyone - about turn!

The actors turn round with expressions of horror on their faces. They are

astounded to see the jam and the bread. KITTEL roars with laughter.

You thought I was going to shoot you. That's so funny! After your marvellous performance? In these very dark days, our armies retreating, the Russians about to break through, you've given me pleasure, real elation, true joy. Your artistry has saved your lives. This expresses my appreciation. A pot full of jam, fine white bread. Help yourselves (*KITTEL takes bread, dips it in the jam, eats.*) Delicious. It's blackcurrant. Won't you join me?

Hesitantly, the actors approach the pot. Gradually they relax and fall on the food ravenously. They crowd round the pot. As they eat the DUMMY sings.

SONG NUMBER FIFTEEN.

After a while, KITTEL moves away from the actors. He watches them, then lifts his Schmeisser and gags them all down, including GENS, in one long round. Only SRULIK remains still tearing his uniform, facing KITTEL like a mirror image. The DUMMY fixes itself from SRULIK's hold; it advances towards KITTEL as an independent person and for the first time sings in its own voice impudently to KITTEL's face.

SONG NUMBER FIFTEEN (*last verse.*)

KITTEL shoots the DUMMY. The DUMMY sinks slowly to the ground. SRULIK's arm is bullet-ridden and torn to shreds. He struggles over the bodies of the dead actors and becomes the old NARRATOR from Scene One.

NARRATOR. Our last performance? Our last performance . . . Wait a moment . . .

End