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SF PERUSALS

Fear and Misery in the Third Reich

by Bertolt Brecht

English version by
Eric Bentley

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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AUTHOR'S NOTES

Fear and Misery in the Third Reich is not a history play. The historian writes with the perspective of a later time. In the 1930's Brecht was reporting news of the day or, rather, he was looking behind the news of the day to the lives of ordinary people as reported to him in his exile from Germany either directly face-to-face or by phone or letter. So there is nothing in the play of the horrors to come, the Holocaust or World War II, but the seeds of all that were being planted, and Brecht shows the plantings. While the mask of fascism is fearless and happy-happy, the face behind the mask is the face of Fear and Misery.

The sequence ends on the day in 1938 when Hitler invaded Vienna in triumph, Austria had said yes to him. Some workers in Hamburg hearing this on the radio ask the world to say No to him before it is too late. We in the 21st century could not possibly see things in that perspective. But we have to acknowledge that, in 1938, Bertolt Brecht could.

E. B.
February 1, 2013

ONE

THE BETRAYAL

(When the lights go up, we see a staircase. Above the scene is written in large black letters: BRESLAU 1933.)

(A **MAN** *and a* **WOMAN** *stand listening. They are very pale.)*

WOMAN. Now they're downstairs.

MAN. Not yet.

WOMAN. They've smashed the banister. He was already unconscious when they dragged him out of the apartment.

MAN. But the only thing I said was that the radio with the broadcasts from Russia wasn't in *our* apartment.

WOMAN. That wasn't the *only* thing you said.

MAN. Yes it was.

WOMAN. Don't look at me like that. It serves them right. Why must they be Communists?

MAN. But they didn't have to tear his jacket for him. None of us are *that* well off.

WOMAN. The jacket has nothing to do with it.

MAN. They didn't have to tear his jacket for him.

TWO

THE CHALK CROSS

(When the lights go up, we see the kitchen of a well-to-do house. Above the scene is written in black letters: BERLIN 1933.)

(An **S.A. MAN**, *a* **PARLOR-MAID**, *a* **COOK**, *and a* **CHAUFFEUR** *are talking.)*

PARLOR MAID. Have you really only half an hour?

S.A. MAN. Night drill.

COOK. Why are you always drilling?

S.A. MAN. Top secret.

COOK. Is it a raid?

S.A. MAN. Wouldn't you like to know? Nobody will get anything out of me. Start fishing if you want: you'll catch nothing. I'm as deep as a well.

PARLOR MAID. And you still have to go to Reinickendorf?

S.A. MAN. Reinickendorf or Rummelsburg or maybe Lichterfelde, huh?

PARLOR MAID. *(rather bewildered)* Won't you have something to eat before you leave?

S.A. MAN. Sure, wheel in the field kitchen, I wouldn't like to disappoint you.

(The **COOK** *brings a tray.)*

There'll be no blabbing. Always surprise the enemy! Always come at him when he sees no cloud on the horizon! Just watch the Führer when *he* prepares to strike! Impenetrable! Beforehand you don't know a thing. Maybe beforehand he doesn't know, himself. And then it comes. Lickety-split. Colossal things! That's what makes them all fear us.

(The **S.A. MAN** *has tucked the napkin in at the neck and taken up his knife and fork.)*

Sure the boss won't blow in, Anna? And me with my mouth full of high-class mayonnaise? *(speaks as if with his mouth full, in an exaggerated way)* Heil Hitler!

PARLOR MAID. No, they'd ring for the car first. Am I right, Herr Franke?

CHAUFFEUR. Beg pardon? Oh, sure.

(The **S.A. MAN***, reassured, busies himself with the food.)*

PARLOR MAID. *(sitting next to him)* Aren't you tired?

S.A. MAN. Terrifically.

PARLOR MAID. But you still have Friday free?

S.A. MAN. If nothing happens in between.

PARLOR MAID. Look, I paid four marks fifty to have the watch repaired.

S.A. MAN. It's a scandal.

PARLOR MAID. The whole watch only cost twelve.

S.A. MAN. Is the boy in the drugstore still making passes?

PARLOR MAID. Oh heavens!

S.A. MAN. You've only to tell me.

PARLOR MAID. I tell you everything. Have you got your new boots on?

S.A. MAN. *(listlessly)* Yes, why?

PARLOR MAID. Minna, have you seen Theo's new boots?

COOK. No.

PARLOR MAID. Show them to her, Theo. That's what they get in the S.A. now.

(The **S.A. MAN***, still chewing, stretches out his leg for inspection.)*

Lovely, aren't they?

(The **S.A. MAN** *looks around inquisitively.)*

COOK. Something missing?

S.A. MAN. It's a bit dry.

PARLOR MAID. Want some beer? I'll get some. *(She runs out.)*

COOK. She'd run the legs off her body for you, Herr Theo!

S.A. MAN. With me things gotta go lickety-split.

COOK. You fellows may be taking too many liberties.

S.A. MAN. Women like it!

(as the **COOK** *takes up a heavy kettle)*

Why wear yourself out like that? It's my business.

(He carries the kettle for her.)

COOK. That's good of you. You always find something to take off my hands. They're not all so obliging. *(with a glance at the* **CHAUFFEUR***)*

S.A. MAN. Oh, we're glad to do it.

(There is a knock at the back door.)

COOK. That's my brother. He's bringing the radio tube. *(She lets in her brother, a* **WORKER**.*)* My brother.

S.A. MAN & CHAUFFEUR. Heil Hitler!

(The **WORKER** *murmurs something which could be interpreted as "Heil Hitler.")*

COOK. You have the tube?

WORKER. Yes.

COOK. Want to put it in now?

(They both go out.)

S.A. MAN. Who's he?

CHAUFFEUR. Unemployed.

S.A. MAN. Comes here often?

CHAUFFEUR. *(shrugs his shoulders)* I'm not around much.

S.A. MAN. Well, the fat lady is okay. Heart of gold–in the patriotic sense.

CHAUFFEUR. Right.

S.A. MAN. At that, the brother may be another story.

CHAUFFEUR. Any grounds for suspicion?

S.A. MAN. Me? Never. I'm never suspicious. Suspicion is practically the same thing as certainty. And then things start moving.

CHAUFFEUR. *(mumbles)* Lickety-split.

S.A. MAN. Exactly. *(He leans back and closes one eye.)* Did you understand what he was muttering just now? *(He imitates the* **WORKER***'s "Heil Hitler.")* Could be interpreted as "Heil Hitler." Doesn't have to be. These fellows appeal to me. *(he laughs loudly)*

(The **COOK** *and the* **WORKER** *return.)*

COOK. My brother is so clever with radios. But he hardly ever cares to listen. If I'd time I'd always be turning it on. *(to the* **WORKER***)* And you do have time, Franz.

S.A. MAN. Really? You have a radio and don't turn it on?

WORKER. Music. Now and then.

COOK. He knocked together a wonderful radio out of nothing.

S.A. MAN. How many tubes?

WORKER. *(with a challenging stare)* Four.

S.A. MAN. Tastes differ, I see. *(to the* **CHAUFFEUR***)* Right?

CHAUFFEUR. Beg your pardon? Oh, sure.

(The **PARLOR MAID** *comes in with the beer.)*

PARLOR MAID. It's been on ice!

S.A. MAN. *(He lays a friendly hand on hers.)* My, you're quite out of breath, my girl. You didn't have to run like that. I could have waited.

(She fills glass from the bottle.)

PARLOR MAID. That's all right.

(She shakes hands with the **WORKER**.*)*

Have you brought the tube? Why don't you sit down for a minute? You've walked all this way again! *(to the* **S.A. MAN***)* He's living in Moabit.

S.A. MAN. Hey, where's my beer? Someone's taken it! *(to the* **CHAUFFEUR***)* Have you been drinking my beer?

CHAUFFEUR. I certainly have not! What gives you that idea? Has it gone?

PARLOR MAID. But I just poured it out.

S.A. MAN. *(to the* **COOK***)* So you've been taking a quick one! *(He laughs loudly.)* Well, don't get excited. That's

what we learn in the S.A. A little trick. Drinking beer without anyone noticing. *(to the* **WORKER***)* You wanted to say something?

WORKER. An old trick.

S.A. MAN. Maybe you'd like to pull it, too. *(He fills glass from the bottle.)*

WORKER. Sure. Now: here is the beer. *(He holds up the glass.)* Now comes the trick. *(Quite calmly and with evident enjoyment, he drinks the beer.)*

COOK. But everybody can see that.

WORKER. *(wiping his mouth)* Really? It must have gone wrong.

(The **CHAUFFEUR** *roars with laughter.)*

S.A. MAN. Think that's so funny?

WORKER. You couldn't have done it any other way. How did you do it?

S.A. MAN. How can I show you when you've finished the beer?

WORKER. Correct. You can't do the trick without beer. Know any other tricks? You fellows must know more than one trick.

S.A. MAN. What do you mean, "you fellows"?

WORKER. You *young* fellows.

S.A. MAN. Yeah.

PARLOR MAID. But Herr Lincke was only joking, Theo.

WORKER. *(He judges it better to smooth things over.)* You won't take offence?

COOK. *(to* **S.A. MAN***)* I'll bring you another beer.

S.A. MAN. Not necessary. I had enough to wash my food down.

COOK. Herr Theo understands a joke.

S.A. MAN. *(to the* **WORKER***)* Why not sit down? We don't eat people.

(The **WORKER** *sits down.)*

S.A. MAN. Live and let live. And why not a joke now and then? We're only strict about political convictions.

COOK. You got to be strict about *them!*

WORKER. How *are* convictions these days?

S.A. MAN. They're fine. Or don't you agree?

WORKER. All I mean is: nobody tells you what he thinks.

S.A. MAN. How's that? They tell *me*.

WORKER. Really?

S.A. MAN. Of course they don't come to you to *explain* what they think. You go to them.

WORKER. Where?

S.A. MAN. Well, let's say in the breadline. In the morning we're in the breadline.

WORKER. Yeah, there's still some grumbling, that's correct.

S.A. MAN. Right.

WORKER. But that way you make one catch, and you're known. And they won't talk any more.

S.A. MAN. Known, am I? Shall I show you why they *don't* know me? You're interested in tricks. It won't do any harm to show you *one*, we have so many. And what I always say is this. As soon as they realize what we have on the ball, as soon as they realize they won't get by in any circumstances whatsoever–why, maybe they'll give up.

PARLOR MAID. Yes, Theo, tell US how you do it.

S.A. MAN. Fine. Let's assume we are in the breadline on Munz Street. Let's say *(looking at the* **WORKER***)* you're next in front of me. But first, I must make a few minor preparations. *(He goes out.)*

WORKER. *(winks at the* **CHAUFFEUR***)* Well, let's see how they do it.

COOK. The Reds will all be found out. Subversive activities will have to stop.

WORKER. Well.

(The **S.A. MAN** *returns.)*

S.A. MAN. Naturally I'm in civvies. *(to the* **WORKER***)* Okay, start grumbling.

WORKER. What about?

S.A. MAN. Oh, skip it. There's always some chip on your shoulder.

WORKER. On mine? No.

S.A. MAN. You'd put up with anything. You surely can't claim everything's perfect already?

WORKER. Why not?

S.A. MAN. Listen, this won't work. If you won't cooperate, it won't work.

WORKER. Okay, I'll shoot off my mouth for once. *(He starts acting.)* They let you stand around here as if your time meant nothing. It takes me two hours to come in from Rummelsburg. Then the waiting starts.

S.A. MAN. Aw, that's nothing. Rummelsburg is no farther away under the Third Reich than under the Weimar Republic.

COOK. Try again. It's only play-acting, Franz. We know what you say now isn't what you really believe.

PARLOR MAID. You're only kind of pretending to be a grumbler. You can trust Theo not to take it wrong. He only wants to show us.

WORKER. Good. This is what I say then: you can take the whole goddamned S.A. and shove it. I'm *for* the Reds and I'm *for* the Jews!

COOK. *(shocked)* Franz!

PARLOR MAID. That's going too far, Herr Lincke.

S.A. MAN. *(laughing)* Man, I'd have you arrested by the next cop. Haven't you any imagination? You must say something you can turn around later, something somebody might really say.

WORKER. Then do me a favor: provoke me.

S.A. MAN. That doesn't work any more. Suppose I say: Our Führer is the greatest man that ever moved upon the surface of the earth, greater than Jesus Christ and

Napoleon put together. You reply at the most: quite right. Then I try it the other way and say: they are great talkers. All propaganda. They're masters of that. Know the joke of Goebbels and the two lice? No? Very well: two lice make a bet–which could get from one corner of Goebbels' mouth to the other first. They say the winner was the one that ran around the back of his head. They say it's shorter that way.

CHAUFFEUR. Oh.

(They all laugh.)

S.A. MAN. *(to the* **WORKER***)* Well, pull yourself together and talk.

WORKER. What can I say to such baloney? It's a joke. But you could still be an informer.

PARLOR MAID. That's correct, Theo.

S.A. MAN. You people are yellow. I'm through with you. No one will risk saying a thing.

WORKER. Do you really mean that? Or is it just for the breadline?

S.A. MAN. For the breadline as *well*.

WORKER. If you're saying that for the breadline, then I'm saying to you on the breadline: discretion is the better part of valor. I'm scared. I have no revolver.

S.A. MAN. I'll tell you something, my friend, since you're so careful to be careful, you can go on being careful till you wake up in the Voluntary Labour Corps.

WORKER. And if you're not careful?

S.A. MAN. You end up in the Labour Corps just the same. I'll grant you that. The *Voluntary* Labor Corps.

WORKER. Now listen. Suppose you S.A. men are standing near the breadline looking at one of us. The man you're looking at with your blue German eyes is a pretty daring fellow and he gives you a piece of his mind about the Voluntary Labour Corps. Now, what could a man in his position say? Maybe something like this, "Fifteen more left yesterday. I often wonder

how they get them to go. After all it's voluntary. In camp they need more to eat, but they get no more for doing something there than for doing nothing here." Then there's the story of Dr. Ley and the cat. It made everything clear to me, of course. Do you people know the story?

S.A. MAN. No, we don't.

WORKER. Okay. Dr. Ley is on a little business trip for *Kraft durch Freude* and he meets one of the old bosses from the Weimar Republic. I'm not sure of the name and maybe it was in a concentration camp, but, no, that's impossible, Dr. Ley, he has too much sense, well, the first thing the boss said was: "The workers sit down under it now. In the old days they'd never stand for all this. How do you do it?" Dr. Ley points at a cat lying in the sun and says: "Suppose you want the cat to take a good dose of mustard whether she likes it or not. How would you go about it?" The boss takes the mustard and smears the cat's mouth with it. The cat spits the mustard right back in his face. The cat swallows nothing, the boss is scratched all over for his trouble. "No man," says Dr. Ley in his most winning manner, "that's not the way. Watch me." He sweeps the mustard off the table and in a split second daubs it all over the cat's ass-hole. *(to the ladies)* Pardon me, but it belongs to the story. The cat is stunned and dizzy. The pain is terrible. So she starts licking off all the mustard. "You see, my dear fellow," says Dr. Ley in triumph. "Now she's eating it! And voluntarily at that!"

(They laugh.)

Yes, it's very funny.

S.A. MAN. Now we're getting somewhere. Voluntary Labour Corps. A favorite subject. *(He starts acting again.)* The worst thing is, no one has the guts to fight back any more. They could give us dirt to eat and we'd say "Thank You."

WORKER. No, that's not true either. The other day I was standing on the Alexanderplatz wondering whether to

join the Voluntary Labour Corps on my own steam or wait till they shove me in. Out of the grocery store on the corner came a little, thin woman, obviously the wife of a proletarian. "Wait," I said. "Since when are there proletarians in the Third Reich, where all Germans are brothers, even Fritz Thyssen not excluded?"

"Look," says she. "Margarine is going up like a rocket. From fifty pfennings to a mark. D'you mean to tell me we're all brothers?"

"Mother," I said, "you'd better be careful what you say. I'm a Nazi to my very bones."

"Bones," she said, "and no meat–and bran in the bread. That's what they're using now."

It took my breath away and I mumbled: "Why don't you buy butter, it's healthier? But don't cut down on food, it saps the people's health, and we can't afford that, because we're encircled by enemies, even our big shots live surrounded by enemies. We've been warned to be on our guard."

"Oh no," she said. "We're all Nazis till our last breath, which can be soon, what with wars and rumors of wars. The other day," she went on, "I was going to give my best sofa to the Winter Relief, 'cause I heard Goering had to sleep on bare boards, with all the trouble they're having over raw materials. At the office they said to me: "We'd rather've had a piano for *Kraft durch Freude*, you know." There's no real flour now. I took my sofa back from the Winter Relief and went straight to the second-hand shop 'round the corner. I'd been wanting a half pound of butter for a long time. In the butter shop they said: "No butter today, Fellow German, would you like a cannon?"

"'Sure, give me one,' I said…"

I interrupted her: "What's that? Why a cannon, mother? On an empty stomach?"

"No," she said. "If I have to starve I'll shoot up the whole damn show, the whole filthy gang, and let Hitler lead the way…"

"What's this," I said. "What's this," I shouted in her ear…"

WORKER. *(cont.)* "Let Hitler lead the way and we'll conquer France too," she said. "Why, already we make wool out of gasoline!"

"And the wool?" I said.

"The wool," she said. "We make it from gasoline nowadays, and we need wool too. But if a real good piece from the good old days finds its way into the Winter Relief, the big boys grab it for themselves," she said." 'If only Hitler knew it,' they say. He knows nothing. They tell me he didn't even go through high school." Well, I was speechless at such subversive talk.

"Young woman," I said, "wait here a minute. I'm off to the Gestapo!" But do you know, when I came back with a Gestapo man, she hadn't waited for us! *(He abandons the game.)* Well, what do you say?

S.A. MAN. Me? Oh yes, what do I say? Maybe I give you a disapproving look. *(He takes up the game again.)* Maybe I say: "To go running to the Gestapo! Nobody'll dare open his mouth when you're around!"

WORKER. You're right. Not when I'm around. If they confide in me they're done for. I know my duty as a German. If my own mother whispered something in my ear about margarine going up I'd go straight to the S.S. I'd betray my own brother if he grumbled about the Voluntary Labour Corps. And as for my girl, if she wrote me they've got her pregnant in the Labour Camp with their "Heil Hitler" I'd take out after her. And no abortion! If we won't take a stand against our own flesh and blood, the Third Reich which we cherish above all things would cease to exist… There, is that better? Satisfied with me?

S.A. MAN. Yes. I guess that'll do. *(he takes up the game again)* Now you can go and get your card stamped. I understood you, we all understood you, didn't we,

boys? But you can rely on me, my friend, whatever you tell me, I'll be as silent as the grave.

(He slaps the **WORKER** *on the shoulder and stops acting.)*

Okay, and now go to the employment-board and they'll arrest you–pronto.

WORKER. Even if *you* don't leave the line and follow me?

S.A. MAN. Right.

WORKER. Without you winking at anyone? That would put me on my guard.

S.A. MAN. Without any winking.

WORKER. How do you do it?

S.A. MAN. Yeah, wouldn't you like to know? Stand up a minute and show me your back.

(The **S.A. MAN** *takes the* **WORKER** *by the shoulder and turns him around so that all can see his back.)*

(to the **PARLOR MAID***)* See that?

PARLOR MAID. Heavens, it's a cross, a white cross!

COOK. Right on the shoulder.

CHAUFFEUR. It's a fact.

S.A. MAN. And how did it get there? *(He shows the palm of his hand.)* Well there's the little white chalk cross on his shoulder in life-size reproduction.

(The **WORKER** *takes off his jacket and studies the cross.)*

WORKER. Neat job.

S.A. MAN. Pretty good, huh? I always have the chalk on me. Yes, you need a head on your shoulders. Instructions aren't always enough. *(satisfied with himself)* And now for Reinickendorf. *(he corrects himself)* I've an aunt there–well, you don't show much enthusiasm? *(to the* **PARLOR MAID***)* Why are you looking so silly, Anna? Didn't you understand?

PARLOR MAID. What do you think? I'm not *that* stupid.

S.A. MAN. *(As if the joke were now spoilt for him, he holds out his hand to her.)* Wipe it off.

(She wipes his hand with a towel.)

COOK. We gotta use these methods if they try to upset everything our Führer has built up, everything that makes us "the envy of other nations!"

CHAUFFEUR. Beg your pardon? Oh. Yes. *(He takes out his watch.)* I'll go wash the car. Heil Hitler!

(He goes out.)

S.A. MAN. What's wrong with that guy?

PARLOR MAID. He's all right. Just not interested in politics.

WORKER. *(getting up)* Yes, Minna, I must be on my way too. *(to the* **S.A. MAN***)* And don't be sore about the beer. I'm glad you convinced me once again that if people plot against the Third Reich, they won't get away with it. That's quite a comfort. As for me I never come in contact with subversive elements, though of course I'd be glad to give them what they deserve. Only I'm not as quick on the trigger as you. Okay, Minna, thanks a lot. *(clearly and distinctly)* And Heil Hitler!

THE OTHERS. Heil Hitler!

S.A. MAN. If I can give you a good piece of advice: don't play it too innocent. It attracts attention. You can give yourself a little leeway with me. I understand a joke. Well, Heil Hitler!

(The **WORKER** *leaves.)*

They left in a bit of a hurry, those two. It must have struck home. I shouldn't have said that about Reinickendorf. They're on the lookout like a couple of watchdogs.

PARLOR MAID. I had something to ask you, Theo.

S.A. MAN. Fire away.

COOK. I'll go sort out the linen. I was young once.

(The **COOK** *goes out.)*

S.A. MAN. What is it?

PARLOR MAID. But I'll only say it if you'll not get sore at me again. If you're sore, I won't say a thing.

S.A. MAN. Sounds pretty bad.

PARLOR MAID. Then I won't say it. You're talking the wrong way.

S.A. MAN. Come on, out with it.

PARLOR MAID. It's only that…but I really don't like to say it…I need some of the money. Twenty marks.

S.A. MAN. Twenty marks?

PARLOR MAID. Look, you *are* taking it the wrong way.

S.A. MAN. Twenty marks from our savings account at the bank. I don't like to hear it. What do you want twenty marks for?

PARLOR MAID. I'd rather not say.

S.A. MAN. So you don't want to tell? Seems funny to me.

PARLOR MAID. I know you don't agree with me and that's why I'd rather not tell you, Theo.

S.A. MAN. If you don't trust me…

PARLOR MAID. But I do trust you.

S.A. MAN. Then you mean we should drop our joint account.

PARLOR MAID. How can you think that? When I take out the twenty, I still have ninety-seven left.

S.A. MAN. You don't have to give me the figures, I know how much we have. I'm beginning to wonder if you're planning to break with me. Maybe you're flirting with someone else. Maybe you want *him* to look over the books.

PARLOR MAID. I don't flirt with anybody.

S.A. MAN. Then tell me what the money's for.

PARLOR MAID. But you won't give it to me.

S.A. MAN. How do I know it's not for something bad? I regard myself as responsible.

PARLOR MAID. It's nothing bad, but if I didn't need it, I wouldn't ask for it, you know that.

S.A. MAN. I know nothing. I only know the whole thing sounds screwy to me. What would you suddenly need twenty marks for? That's big money. Are you pregnant?

PARLOR MAID. No.

S.A. MAN. Are you sure?

PARLOR MAID. Yes.

S.A. MAN. If I heard you intended something illegal, if I got wind of anything like that, I'd be through, I can tell you that. You may have heard that meddling with the seeds of life is the worst crime you can commit. If the German people doesn't multiply, it's all over with our historic mission!

PARLOR MAID. But Theo, I haven't a clue what you're talking about. It's nothing of *that* sort. I wouldn't have kept a thing like that to myself. After all it would have concerned you. But if that's what you believe, I'll tell you the truth. I want to help Frieda buy a winter coat. That's all.

S.A. MAN. How is it your sister can't buy a coat herself?

PARLOR MAID. She can't make it on a sick pension of 26.80 a month.

S.A. MAN. How about the Winter Relief? But I see what the trouble is. You've no confidence in the National Socialist State. I can tell that from the talk in this kitchen. Think I didn't notice your reaction to my experiment just now?

PARLOR MAID. How do you mean?

S.A. MAN. Very cool. Just like those two fellows who suddenly left.

PARLOR MAID. If you want my honest opinion, I don't like that kind of thing.

S.A. MAN. What kind of thing don't you like?

PARLOR MAID. The way you set traps for those poor devils with tricks and pretending and all that. My father's unemployed, too.

S.A. MAN. That's just what I wanted to hear. Anyway I had my suspicions, talking with that Lincke.

PARLOR MAID. You mean you'll round him up for that? He did it to please you and we all egged him on.

S.A. MAN. I'm not saying a thing, as I said before. And if you've anything against what I'm doing in the way of duty, you can read in *Mein Kampf* that the Führer himself wasn't too good to try out the temper of the people. As a matter of fact that was his job for a long time when he worked for the Reichswehr. And just look at the consequences for Germany!

PARLOR MAID. Oh, how you talk, Theo! Tell me, can I have the twenty marks or not?

S.A. MAN. I can only say I'm not in the mood to shell out.

PARLOR MAID. What do you mean "shell out?" Is it my money or yours?

S.A. MAN. You've started talking in a very funny way about *our* money. Maybe we've driven the Jews out of the nation's life to have our blood sucked by fellow Germans?

PARLOR MAID. You can't say that just because of twenty marks!

S.A. MAN. I've enough expenses already. The boots alone cost me twenty-seven marks.

PARLOR MAID. They were provided, weren't they?

S.A. MAN. Well, we thought so. That's why I took the better brand, the ones with the leggings. Then they came for the money. There was nothing we could do.

PARLOR MAID. Twenty-seven marks just for some boots? And what other expenses do you have?

S.A. MAN. *What* other expenses?

PARLOR MAID. You said there were expenses.

S.A. MAN. I don't remember. What's more, don't ask questions. You can rest assured I won't deceive you. As for the twenty marks, I'll think it over.

PARLOR MAID. Theo, it surely isn't possible you'd say the money was in order and then it wouldn't be? I don't know what to think any more. There must be twenty marks left in the bank out of all that money!

S.A. MAN. *(tapping her on the shoulder)* But who says we've

nothing left in the bank? No, no. You can rely on me. Trust me with something, it's as good as locked in a safe. Now do you trust Theo again?

(She weeps without replying)

It's just nerves–you're overworked. Well, I'll be going to my night drill. Come for you Friday. Heil Hitler! *(he goes out)*

(The **PARLOR MAID** *tries to stop crying and walks up and down the kitchen in despair. The* **COOK** *returns with a laundry basket.)*

COOK. What's the matter? You been quarrelling? Theo is such a fine person. We could do with more like him. It can't be anything serious?

PARLOR MAID. *(still weeping)* Minna, couldn't you go to your brother and advise him to be careful?

COOK. What for?

PARLOR MAID. Well, I just thought…

COOK. Because of this evening? You can't mean that? Theo wouldn't act that way!

PARLOR MAID. I don't know what to think any more, Minna. He's so changed. They've ruined him. He's not keeping good company. We've been going together four years and now it's just like…I'd almost want to ask you to look at my shoulder and see if there's a cross there!

THREE

PRISONERS MIX CEMENT

(When the lights go up we see a concentration camp. Above the scene is written in large black letters: ORANIENBURG 1934.)

(Four prisoners are digging below a dam.)

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT. *(quietly to a non–political man)* Keep away from Dietz, he's not kosher.

THE NON-POLITICAL MAN. *(loudly)* Dietz, Lettner says to keep away from you, you're not kosher.

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT. Swine!

THE COMMUNIST. You say that, you Judas! How did Karl get into the bunker?

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT. Are you suggesting I had anything to do with it? Have I ever gotten cigarettes from who knows where?

THE COMMUNIST. When have I gotten cigarettes?

THE PASTOR. Look out!

(An **S.S. GUARD** *walks along the dam above.)*

THE S.S. GUARD. There was talking here. Who was talking?

(No one replies.)

If it happens again, the bunker for everyone, understand? I'd like to know what you have to say that's so important. Start singing!

(The **PRISONERS** *sing the first stanza of "Song of the Bog Brigades":)*

AS WE MARCH WE LOOK AROUND US
HEATH AND BOG ON EV'RY HAND
NOT A BIRD TO BREAK THE SILENCE
WITHERED, BARE, THE OAK TREES STAND.

WE ARE THE BOG BRIGADES AND
WE'RE MARCHING WITH OUR SPADES
TO THE BOG.

*(***THE S.S. GUARD** *walks on.)*

THE PASTOR. Why are you men forever quarrelling?

THE NON-POLITICAL MAN. Never you worry, Little Minister, you wouldn't understand. It's about the question whether the united front against the Nazis should have come from above or below.

THE PASTOR. What do you mean "below?"

THE COMMUNIST. Without the bosses.

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT. That is, without your bosses.

THE NON-POLITICAL MAN. *(to* **THE PASTOR***)* The Social Democrats suspected the Communists of trying to steal their members, understand?

THE PASTOR. *(to* **THE NON-POLITICAL MAN***)* What were you?

THE NON-POLITICAL MAN. I stayed outside.

THE COMMUNIST. And now you're inside–this concentration camp.

THE PASTOR. Look out!

*(***THE S.S. GUARD** *appears again. He notices them.* **THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT** *begins slowly to sing the second stanza of the song:)*

UP AND DOWN THE GUARDS ARE PACING
NO ONE, NO ONE CAN GET BY
WALLS AND WIRE ALL ROUND THE FORTRESS
TRY TO FLEE AND YOU WILL DIE.
WE ARE THE BOG BRIGADES AND
WE'RE MARCHING WITH OUR SPADES
TO THE BOG.

*(***THE S.S. GUARD** *walks on)*

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT. *(throwing down his spade)* When I think I have to be here because you people made a united front impossible I could break your skull.

THE COMMUNIST. Go ahead.

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT. If your crowd hadn't been baiting us, Hitler would never have come to power. You were responsible.

THE COMMUNIST. You even *wanted* to let him get to power so he'd discredit himself.

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT. You can't call a general strike if the workers are unemployed.

THE COMMUNIST. Your crowd can't. You betrayed the people!

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT. *(He furiously seizes the spade and lifts it to strike* **THE COMMUNIST**, *who already holds his own spade.)* I'll show you!

THE PASTOR. Look out!

*(***THE NON-POLITICAL MAN** *starts to sing the last stanza of the song:)*

BUT AWAY WITH DESPERATION
AFTER DROUGHT WILL COME THE RAIN
ONE DAY COMES OUR LIBERATION
AND OUR HOMELAND'S OURS AGAIN
WE ARE THE BOG BRIGADES AND
WE'RE MARCHING WITH OUR SPADES
TO THE BOG.

(As they sing, **THE S.S. GUARD** *appears and makes a sign to a second* **S.S. GUARD** *to come over.)*

THE S.S. GUARD. *(with quiet asperity)* You people have learnt nothing. Who was it shouted "You betrayed the people," just now?

(Nobody answers.)

THE S.S. GUARD. *(to* **THE PASTOR***)* What was it?

*(***THE PASTOR** *is silent.)*

THE S.S. GUARD. *(to* **THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT***)* Who was it?

*(***THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT** *is silent.)*

THE S.S. GUARD. We'll shove you in the bunker till you pass out. I'll give you five seconds. Then…the bunker!

(The prisoners stare in front of them without a word.)

FOUR

THE WORKING MAN ON THE AIR

(When the lights go up, we see a Foreman's booth in a factory. Above the scene is written in large black letters: LEIPZIG 1934.)

(A Radio announcer with a microphone is holding a conversation with a middle–aged **WORKER**, *an* **OLD WORKER**, *and a* **WOMAN WORKER**. *In the background are a* **GENTLEMAN FROM THE OFFICE** *and a* **THICKSET MAN IN S.A. UNIFORM**.*)*

THE ANNOUNCER. We are standing in the midst of the bustle of power wheels and driving belts, surrounded by our cheerful and industrious working folk, compatriots who are doing their bit to provide our beloved Fatherland with everything it needs. This morning we are in the textile works of The Fuchs Company. And although the work is hard, and every muscle is strained to the breaking point, we see around us only perfectly contented and gay faces. But we want to have our fellow Germans speak for themselves. *(to* **THE OLD WORKER***)* You have been employed here twenty-one years, Herr…

THE OLD WORKER. Sedelmeier.

THE ANNOUNCER. Herr Sedelmeier. Well, Herr Sedelmeier, how does it happen that we see here only such joyous and cheerful faces?

THE OLD WORKER. *(after reflecting)* They always make cracks about things.

THE ANNOUNCER. *(suspiciously)* Oh. Yes, and thus with lively words of jest, the work goes on apace, does it not? Pessimism is hostile to life itself, and National Socialism has no room for it, you mean? It wasn't like this in the old days, was it?

THE OLD WORKER. *(non-committally)* Oh no.

THE ANNOUNCER. Under the Weimar System there was nothing for the workers to laugh at, you mean? Then they said, "What are we working for?"

THE OLD WORKER. Well, there are still a few who say that.

THE ANNOUNCER. I beg your pardon? Oh, I see, you refer to grumblers. They crop up occasionally, though, of course, they're getting fewer all the time because they realize they'd get nowhere. They realize that in the Third Reich, now we have a firm hand at the helm, we're going steadily forward. That's what you *(turning to the* **WOMAN WORKER***)* are trying to say, isn't it, Fräulein…

WOMAN WORKER. Schmidt.

THE ANNOUNCER. Fräulein Schmidt. Which of our giants of steel do you work at?

WOMAN WORKER. *(reciting by rote)* And then there is the work at the beautification of the workroom which affords us much joy. The Führer's picture was purchased by means of voluntary subscriptions and how proud we are of that. We are also proud of the geranium plants which bring the magic of color into the grey workroom, an inspiration of Fräulein Kinze.

THE ANNOUNCER. And so you beautify the workroom with flowers, the lovely children of the field? And a good many other things in the factory have been different, haven't they, since Germany's destiny took a new turn?

GENTLEMAN FROM THE OFFICE. *(prompting)* Wash rooms.

WOMAN WORKER. The wash rooms were the idea of Herr Direktor Bauchle himself, for which we would like to offer our heartfelt thanks. Whoever wishes may wash in the beautiful wash rooms *(adding an afterthought of her own)* if there aren't too many, and no pushing.

THE ANNOUNCER. Yes, everyone wants to be there first, isn't that so? Always merrily jostling each other?

WOMAN WORKER. Only six faucets for five hundred and fifty-two workers. There's always a squabble. Some of them are awful.

THE ANNOUNCER. But everything proceeds with perfect smoothness! And now, Herr…what is his name again… wishes to speak to us.

THE WORKER. Mahn.

THE ANNOUNCER. Yes, Mahn. Herr Mahn. Now tell us, Herr Mahn, have the numerous newcomers to the factory affected the temper of their fellow workers?

THE WORKER. What do you mean by that?

THE ANNOUNCER. Well, do you all rejoice that every wheel is turning again and every hand has work to do?

THE WORKER. Oh yes.

THE ANNOUNCER. And that every man can take his pay envelope home at weekends? We wouldn't like to forget that either.

THE WORKER. No.

THE ANNOUNCER. It certainly was not always the case. Under the Weimar System many a German had to suffer the indignity of public relief–had to solace himself with alms!

THE WORKER. Eighteen marks, fifty. No deductions.

THE ANNOUNCER. *(with a forced laugh)* Ha! ha! ha! Wonderful joke! There wasn't much to deduct from!

THE WORKER. No. Now there's more.

(The **GENTLEMAN FROM THE OFFICE** *steps forward. So does the* **THICKSET MAN IN S.A. UNIFORM**.*)*

THE ANNOUNCER. Yes, in this way, everyone is getting bread and employment once more, in the Third Reich. You are quite right, Herr…what was your name again? …Our wheels are no longer still, our arms need no longer go to rust in the Germany of Adolf Hitler.

(With a brutal gesture he pushes **THE WORKER** *from the microphone.)*

Those who work with their brains and those who work with their hands, advance together in joyful cooperation to rebuild our beloved Fatherland. Heil Hitler!

FIVE

THE BOX

(When the lights go up we see a worker's living room. Above the scene is written in large black letters: ESSEN 1934.)

(A **WOMAN** *and two* **CHILDREN** *are in the room. A young* **WORKER** *and his* **YOUNG WIFE** *are paying a visit.* **THE WOMAN** *is crying. The sound of footsteps is heard on the stairs. The door is open.)*

THE WOMAN. But he only said they pay starvation wages. And it's true. Our eldest has a spot on the lung and we can't afford milk. But they can't have done anything to him.

(Two **S.A. MEN** *come in, bringing a big box, which they place on the floor.)*

ONE OF THE S.A. MEN. Now don't make a song and dance. Anyone can get pneumonia. There are the papers! Everything in perfect order. Now don't do anything silly.

(The **S.A. MEN** *leave.)*

THE CHILD. Mother, is father in there?

THE WORKER. *(He has walked over to the box.)* It's made of zinc.

THE CHILD. Can't we open it up?

THE WORKER. *(furiously)* Yes we can. Where's your tool box?

(He looks for tools. His **YOUNG WIFE** *tries to stop him.)*

THE YOUNG WIFE. Don't open it, Hans! They'll come for you too.

THE WORKER. I want to see what they've done with him. They're afraid of anyone seeing or they wouldn't have used zinc. Let me alone!

THE YOUNG WIFE. I won't let you alone. Didn't you hear them?

THE WORKER. We can surely take a look at him, can't we?

THE WOMAN. *(She takes her* **CHILDREN** *by the hand and goes to the zinc box.)* I still have a brother they could come for, Hans. And they could come for you too. The box can stay shut. We needn't see him. We shall not forget him.

SIX

PHYSICISTS

(When the lights go up we see a room in an Institute of Physics. Above the scene is written in large black letters: UNIVERSITY OF GOETTINGEN 1935.)

(Two scientists, **X** *and* **Y**, *are talking together.* **Y** *has just come in. He has a conspirational look.)*

Y. I have it!

X. What?

Y. The answer to the questions we sent to Mikowsky in Paris.

X. About the gravitation waves?

Y. Yes.

X. Well?

Y. The letter gives exactly the information we need. Do you know who wrote it?

X. Who?

*(***Y** *writes a name on a scrap of paper and hands it to* **X**. *When* **X** *has read it,* **Y** *takes the scrap of paper back, tears it in very small pieces, and throws it into the stove.)*

Y. The questions we sent to Mikowsky. He handed them on to *him*. Here's the reply.

X. *(He grabs it greedily.)* Give it to me! *(He suddenly restrains himself.)* But suppose we get caught through corresponding with him.

Y. We mustn't. On no account.

X. We can't get any further without writing. Please give it to me.

Y. You can't read it. I wrote it in my own shorthand system. It's safer that way. I'll read it out loud.

X. You have to be careful!

Y. Is Rollkopf in the lab? *(He points off to the right.)*

X. *(pointing to the left)* No, but Reinhardt is. Come and sit *here.*

Y. *(reading)* It has to do with two arbitrary countervariant vectors, *phi* and *nu*, and a counter-variant vector *t.* With the help of these the component parts of a mixed tensor of the second degree are formed and their structure is *E lr* equals *C1* over *h i*…

(He continues in an undertone.)

X. *(who has been taking it down, suddenly signals him to stop)* Just a moment!

(He stands up and walks on tiptoe to the wall at the left. He apparently hears nothing suspicious and returns. **Y** *goes on reading, but is occasionally interrupted in the same manner. Then they examine the telephone, quickly open the door, and so on.)*

Y. For static incoherent matter, without any interaction of tension, T equals *mu* is the only component of the tensorial density of energy which is different from zero. Consequently a static factor of proportionality 8*pi* is added gives *delta* f equals 4 *pi chi mu.* If the coordinates of space are rightly selected the deviation of *c2 dt2* is very small…

(Whenever a door is heard closing they start to hide their notes. Then it seems hardly necessary. They get deeper and deeper into the material and seem to forget the danger of their undertaking.)

(reading on) …on the other hand the masses in question are very small in relation to the static masses which produce the fields, and consequently the movement of the body drawn in the field of gravitation is given by a geodetic worldline in this static field of gravitation. This is as such sufficient for the principle of variation. *ds* equals zero whereby the ends of the fragment of the worldline in question remain fixed.

X. What does Einstein say about…

*(***Y** *is horrified.* **X** *realizes what he has said and sits rigid with horror.* **Y** *snatches the notes he has just written out of his hand and puts all the papers in his pocket.)*

Y. *(facing the left wall, speaking very loudly)* Yes, typical Jewish sophistry! What has that to do with physics?

(Feeling relieved, they take up their notes again and silently proceed with their work, with the utmost caution.)

SEVEN

THE JEWISH WIFE

(When the lights go up we see a comfortable, bourgeois bedroom. Above the scene is written in large black letters: FRANKFURT 1935.)

(It is evening. A woman is packing. She is picking out the things she wants to take with her. Sometimes she takes an article out of the bag again and puts it back in its place so that she can pack something else. She hesitates a long time over a large picture of her Husband which is on the dressing-table. In the end she leaves it where it is. Getting tired of packing, she sits for a few moments on a suitcase, her head propped on her hand. Then she goes to the telephone.)

THE WIFE. Judith Keith speaking. Is that you doctor? Good evening–I just wanted to call and say you'll have to be looking for a new bridge partner. Yes, I'm going away – No, not for very long, but not less than a couple of weeks. I'm going to Amsterdam. – Yes, they say the spring is lovely there. – I have friends there. – No, friends, in the plural, unbelievable as it sounds. – How can you play bridge now? But we haven't played for two weeks. – Certainly, Fritz had a cold too. When it gets so cold, bridge is impossible, I said so too. Oh no, doctor, how could I? – Thekla had to accommodate her mother. – I know. – How should I suppose *that?* – No, it really didn't come suddenly at all, it's just that I kept putting it off, but now I must… Yes, we'll have to call off our movie date. Say hello to Thekla for me. – Perhaps you'll call him sometimes on Sundays? So long then. Well, gladly, of course. – Good-bye.

(She hangs up and calls another number.)

Judith Keith speaking. I'd like to speak to Frau Shoeck. – Lotte? – I wanted to say a quick good-bye, I'm going

away for a time. – No, I'm quite well, I just want to see a couple of new faces. Yes, what I wanted to say was that Fritz is bringing the professor here for the evening next Tuesday, and perhaps you could come too. As I said, I'm leaving tonight. – Yes Tuesday. – No, I only wanted to say I'm leaving tonight, that has nothing to do with it, I thought you could come then too. All right, let's say: although I'm not there, O.K.? Of course I know you're not like that and, even if you were, these are troubled times, and everybody's careful. You'll come then? – If Max can? Oh, he will be able to, the professor'll be here, tell him. – I must hang up now. Fine. Good-bye.

(She hangs up and calls another number.)

Is that you Gertrude? This is Judith. Sorry to disturb you. – Thanks. I wanted to ask you if you can look after Fritz, I'm going away for a couple of months. – I think that you as his sister… Why wouldn't you like to? – But there's no likelihood of that, not in Fritz's case. Naturally he knows that–er–you and I didn't get on too well together, but… Then *he'll* call *you* if you wish it. – Yes, I'll tell him. – It's all pretty much in order though the apartment's a bit too big. – His study? Oh, Ida knows how to look after it, just leave that to her. – I find her quite intelligent, and he's used to her. – And another thing, please don't misunderstand me, he doesn't like to talk before dinner, would you remember that? I've always avoided it. – I don't want to discuss it now, my train leaves soon and I've not finished packing, you see. – Look after his suits and remind him he has to go to the tailor – he's ordered a coat–and take care that his bedroom's well heated, he always sleeps with an open window and it's too cold. – I don't believe he should "become inured" to it, but now I must stop. – Thank you so much, Gertrude, and we'll write to each other. – Good-bye.

(She hangs up and calls another number.)

THE WIFE. *(cont.)* Anna? This is Judith. Look, I'm leaving right away. – No, it has to be, it's getting too difficult–too difficult! Yes, no, Fritz *doesn't* want it, he knows nothing. I simply packed. – I don't think so. – I don't think he'll say much. – It's simply too hard for him, I mean, too many technicalities. We never discussed it. – We never even spoke about it, never. – No, he was *not* different, on the contrary – I want you to be good to him a little at first. – Yes, especially Sundays, and advise him to move. – The apartment is too big for him. – I'd like to say goodbye to you, but you know–the superintendant? – Good-bye then. No, don't come to the station, by no means. Good-bye, I'll write. – Surely.

(She hangs up and calls no more numbers. She has been smoking. She now burns the little book in which she looked up the telephone numbers. She walks up and down a couple of times. Then she begins to speak. She is trying out the little speech which she wishes to make to her husband. One sees that he is supposed to be sitting in a certain chair.)

Yes, I'm going now, Fritz. Perhaps I've stayed too long already, you must forgive me, but…

(She stands thinking and then tries again.)

Fritz, you shouldn't keep me any longer, you can't… It's clear that I'll be your undoing. I know you're not cowardly, you're not afraid of the police–but there are worse things than the police. They won't take you to a concentration camp but tomorrow or the next day–they'll exclude you from the clinic. You won't say anything then, but you'll be sick. I won't see you sitting around here turning the pages of magazines. I'm going out of pure selfishness and nothing else. Don't say anything.

(She stops again. And tries again.)

Don't say you're not changed. You are! Last week you found – "quite objectively" – that the percentage of Jewish scientists is after all not so great. It always begins

with objectivity. And why are you always telling me I was "never such a nationalist as today". Naturally! It's so catching! Oh Fritz, what has happened to us?

(She pauses.)

I didn't tell you I wanted to go, and *have* wanted to go a long time, because I can't talk when I look at you, Fritz. Talking seems so futile. They've fixed everything. What's wrong with them? What do they want actually? What do I do to them? I've never meddled in politics. Was I for Thaelmann? No, I'm thoroughly bourgeois, a housewife with servants and so forth, and now suddenly only blondes can do this sort of thing. I've often thought lately how you said years ago: "There are valuable people and less valuable people. The valuable people get insulin when they have sugar in the blood, the less valuable don't." I agreed with you. Well, now they've made new categories of this sort, and I belong to the less valuable. It serves me right.

(another pause)

Yes, I'm packing. You mustn't act as if you hadn't noticed it in the last few days…Fritz, everything is tolerable except one thing: that we're not looking each other in the eyes during the last hour that remains to us. That they shall not achieve the liars who set everyone lying. Ten years ago when somebody thought no one could tell I was Jewish you quickly said: "Oh, yes, they can tell." And I liked that. It was clear-headed. Why evade the issue now? I'm packing because otherwise they'll take away your position as chief surgeon at the clinic. And because they already cut you there to your face and because already you can't sleep at night. I don't want you to tell me not to go. I'm going in a hurry because I don't want to have you tell me I *should* go. It's a question of time. Character is a question of time. It lasts for a certain length of time, just like a glove. There are good ones that last a long time. But they don't last forever. Incidentally, I'm not angry. And

yet: I am. Why should I always be so understanding? What's wrong with the shape of my nose and the color of my hair? They want me to leave the town where I was born lest they should need to give me butter. What kind of men are you all? What kind of a man are you? You people discover the quantum theory and let yourselves be bossed by half-savages; you have to conquer the world, but you're not allowed to have the wife you want. Artificial respiration and every shot a hit! You're monsters or the bootlickers of monsters. Yes, this is unreasonable of me, but what use is reason in such a world? There you sit, watching your wife pack and you say nothing. The walls have ears, don't they? And you all say nothing? One lot listen and the other lot hold their tongues. God! I should hold my tongue too. If I loved you, I'd hold my tongue. I love you, really. Give me that underwear. Those have sex appeal, I'll need them. I'm thirty-six, that's not too old, but I can't do much more experimenting. It mustn't be this way in the next country I come to. The next man I get must be allowed to keep me. And don't say you'll send money, you know you can't. And you shouldn't act as if it were for four weeks. This business doesn't last a mere four weeks. You know it and I know it. So don't say, "Well, it's only for a couple of weeks," as you hand me the fur coat I won't need till winter. And let's not talk about misfortune. Let's talk about shame. Oh, Fritz!

(She stops. A door is heard opening. She hastily puts herself to rights. Her **HUSBAND** *comes in.)*

THE HUSBAND. What are you doing, tidying up?

THE WIFE. No.

THE HUSBAND. Why are you packing?

THE WIFE. I want to get away.

THE HUSBAND. What do you mean?

THE WIFE. We've talked sometimes about my going away for a time. Things are not too good here these days.

THE HUSBAND. That's a lot of nonsense.

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