

Germania Death in Berlin

by Heiner Müller, 1971

Translation by Dennis Redmond © 2002

THE STREET 1
Berlin 1918.

MAN That was the War. He kept the arm.

WOMAN You're all out, man. Nothing's changed. Children, there's bread, father's back.

MAN When the bread and the factory belong to us.

Exit. Darkness.

VOICE THIS IS THE GENERAL STRIKE

CHILDREN Baker!

The baker appears in his shop-door, larger than life-size.

CHILDREN Bread.

BAKER My bread doesn't grow from Heaven. Where's your money?

Don't have money, don't go hungry. It's not my world, is it?

Distant shooting.

VOICE THAT IS THE REVOLUTION

The baker scrambles to close his shop.

CHILDREN Hey, baker.

They "shoot". Dead!

Run in the direction of the shooting. Enter the sign-painter, likewise larger than life-size, with signs. The signs read DOWN WITH SPARTAKUS.

SIGN-PAINTER What's brewing there isn't your beer.

One man one penny. Four times one makes four

If you carry my sign down your streets.

If anyone asks, say it's for Germany.

CHILD 1: I'm not coming, my father's over there.

SIGN-PAINTER Number one is full. Four minus one makes three. *He puts away one penny.*

CHILD 1: My hunger is coming along, not me.

SIGN-PAINTER You or it. He's only got your face. [Hat er nur dein Gesicht.]

Children demonstrate with signs. Shooting stops.

DIFFERENT VOICE

LAW AND ORDER. RESTORED.

Light. The baker re-opens his shop. The children rush to the sign-painter and hold their hands out.

SIGN- PAINTER What do you want.

CHILDREN The penny.

SIGN- PAINTER What does the dog get for barking.

Laughs. In his shopdoor stands the baker and laughs as well. Laughter continues after the curtain.

THE STREET 2

Berlin 1949.

LOUDSPEAKER

LONG LIVE THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

THE FIRST WORKERS-AND-PEASANTS STATE ON GERMAN SOIL

Applause from the loudspeaker.

MAN The Russia-state.

OTHERS *knock him down.* You watch your mouth.

MAN *stands up, bleeding:* You watch yours too.

Staggeres away.

There are trees and branches enough in Germany.

We'll meet again, Russki, when you hang.

VOICES After the swine.

Get him.

Where?

There.

Gone.

OLD MAN *with child on back:*

Here we tore the rags from Berlin's
bloated belly, that whore of the Kaiser
and the Prussian gilt from the empty teat.

For one night, the Kaiser-whore
was a proletarian bride, naked in November snow
Overwhelmed by hunger, panicked by the general strike,
washed with proletarian blood.

We stood here again in January
The fog rising, hands freezing on rifles
the snow fell seven hours straight.
The bonzes sat warm in the palace, negotiating.
We waited in the snow, coming down white as never before
No smoke or chimney to blacken it.

We became fewer. In the eighth hour
This one and that threw away their rifles, left.

In the palace the bonzes rode on their chairs
And stood Karl and Rosa up against a wall.

We threw the rifles on the cobblestones
Crawled back into our holes in the wall
And rolled up our Heaven once again.

The President. A worker like us.

VOICE 1 A President like us. Where's my palace.

VOICE 2 They wouldn't know their own mothers anymore.

ONE-ARM You'll put up with anything from them.

MAN 1 Not from just anyone.

Pause.

ONE-ARM Are you still Germans?

MAN 2 Do you have
one arm too many?

Pause.

ONE-ARM Smolensk, buddy. Next time better.

Pause.

MAN 3 It's his head. He's got one head too many.

MAN 2 Funny-looking bird.

MAN 1 He's looking for a cage.

MAN 3 You've got to have luck. Birdie, you're in luck.

There goes a cage which needs a bird.

Exit one-arm. Trenchcoat.

TRENCHCOAT Where'd he split.

MAN 1 Who?

MAN 2 Was someone here?

MAN 3 Noone.

Exit trenchcoat. Men in windbreakers on bicycles.

WINDBREAKER 1 That'll get around. You on foot. Anything free?

MAN State holiday, son, got a problem with that?

WINDBREAKER 2 You call this a state.

MAN 2 Not yours.

WINDBREAKER 2 You see any kind of state around here?

Tears down a flag and dances on it. Two trenchcoats.

Man: They're drunk.

TRENCHCOATS *tear the windbreakers off.*

Leaflets flutter out: On that.

Lead the windbreakers away. Two gentlemen with suitcases.

GENTLEMAN 1 Do you hear the grass growing? That's the steppe. The steppe is coming. It tickles the soles of the feet. Look at my shoes: green. Quick, before the grass catches up with us.

Pass by. Three whores. A pimp.

PIMP Street's full of customers. Why aren't you working.

WHORE 1 State holiday, sweetie.

PIMP The fucking goes on under every Government.

WHORE 2 Not with me much longer. Before spring I'm getting out.

Pimp tries to hit her.

WHORE 1 The cops.

Exit pimp. The whores laugh.

WHORE 1 The fat one's for me. A shirt-mill in Saxony. He hasn't had it for awhile, got busted three times by the militia. The wife's getting in the way. I'm still out to get a mink coat.

WHORE 3 *scornful:* That I'd like to see.

WHORE 1 The blond in the bunko squad told me, he's gonna marry me if I don't get off the street, just so he doesn't have me in his report.

Sings: THERE WAS A BONNY SOLDIER BOY

WHORE 3 Marry. A cop.

WHORE 1 I like the blonde.

WHORE 3 That's the limit.

Spits.

WHORE 1 You're a fine one to talk, tricking since '71.

WHORE 3 Carrion.

WHORE 1 Yourself.

They fight. Police officer.

OFFICER: Problems, ladies?

WHORE 3 Not a bit, Officer.

WHORE 1 You must've mistaken us for someone else.

WHORE 2 If it's the eyes, go to Ansorg.¹

Exit police officer.

WHORE 3 They're everywhere. I'm off to the Ku'damm.

WHORE 1 They're waiting for you, you pile of bones.

WHORE 3 I'll tear you a new one.

A police officer passes by. Whores 2 and 3 are going.

WHORE 2 Aren't you coming?

WHORE 1 I'm staying. I like it here.

Exit Whores 2 and 3. A drunken passerby.

DRUNK *sings*: O FOREST GREEN, FOREST GREEN

Hey, doll!

YOUNG MAN Let the lady go.

DRUNK *stumbles on*: OH HOW LONELY MY HEART HAS BEEN

YOUNG MAN Going my way?

WHORE 1 Today's a holiday. Today I go alone.

BRANDENBURG CONCERT 1

Empty stage. 2 Clowns.

CLOWN 1 I am the King of Prussia. I have constructed a palace in this beautiful district, because it pleases me and because I can serve my people better with it, for I have hemorrhoids and the ague from the wars which I was forced to lead in Silesia, Bohemia and Saxony for the honor of Prussia and which have become famous.

CLOWN 2 I want to be the King of Prussia too.

CLOWN 1 You are the miller of Potsdam.²

CLOWN 2 I've got hemorrhoids, too.

CLOWN 1 *grandiose*:

Have you fought my battles.

Clown 2 *abashed*.

CLOWN 1 Your mill stands next to my palace. It rattles the livelong day. Which of course bothers me whilst I govern. And during my flute-playing, which I dearly love and excel at.

CLOWN 2 It doesn't bother me. I can also play the flute. *Grabs his crotch*.

CLOWN 1 I play only serious music. Of course I can have another palace built in another district. After all I am the King of Prussia. I need only for example conquer England, the merest trifle for me, you'll admit, and I can build my palace in England. But I want it here, in my dearest Prussia, in this district, which so pleases me.

CLOWN 2 That's my mill. I won't let my mill be taken away. If I don't get to keep my mill, I'm not playing.

CLOWN 1 That's fine. I have undertaken to dispel certain rumors which my enemies have spread about me, because they wish to impugn my honor, in the meantime I shall give the world an example, for I speak French and am very enlightened.

CLOWN 2 *slyly*: How does the child get into the belly. That's simple. But how does it not get into the belly.

CLOWN 1 That is a philosophical question. For which I have no time. I am the First Servant of my State.

CLOWN 2 *drops pants*: My state is bigger than yours. Do you do it with the right hand or the left.

CLOWN 1 That's none of your business. Pull your pants up or I'll call the riding-master.

CLOWN 2 *grabs himself, shocked, on the rear and quickly pulls pants up*.

CLOWN 1 In politics I find nothing funny. I am the First Servant of my State.

CLOWN 2 *laughs and holds hand, shocked, over mouth*.

CLOWN 1 That is why, even if it breaks my heart, and it will break my heart, I know it for certain, I will go to you, the King of Prussia to the miller of Potsdam, and give you the order, that you must put your mill somewhere else, because it bothers me whilst I govern and whilst I play the flute. But you will not let yourself be intimidated, but will oppose me like a German man and say to my face that you have a business license and a building permit and that you don't want to put your mill somewhere else even if I were the King of Prussia three times over, because there are still judges in Berlin and your mill will stay put next to my palace, although it clatters the livelong day and bothers my government, for which I require the utmost concentration, because I alone must do everything, for in Prussia not even a dog can piss without my express permission and I

am a great friend of animals, as much as my flute-playing which I dearly love and excel at, but a King is not a person but the First Servant of His State, *Clown 2 laughs and holds hand, shocked, over mouth* and even if it breaks his heart, and it will break my heart, I know it for certain. *Weeps.* Did you get all that.

CLOWN 2 The lion.

Enter lion. Clown 2 hangs from a trapeze, which is lowered from the wings. Clown 1 hangs on Clown 2 and climbs up him. Clown 2 is ticklish and, choking with laughter, lets go of the trapeze. They fall on the lion, which breaks into two pieces, which exit in different directions. The trapeze disappears in the wings.

CLOWN 1 Now we broke the lion.

CLOWN 2 You broke the lion.

CLOWN 1 You let go.

CLOWN 2 Because you tickled me.

Pause. Clown 1 thinks.

CLOWN 1 We'll just say the lion wasn't here.

CLOWN 2 They won't believe us.

Pause. Clown 1 thinks.

CLOWN 1 We'll say, there are no lions at all.

CLOWN 2 Yes, that's good.

CLOWN 1 Now let's begin.

CLOWN 2 And where's my mill.

CLOWN 1 You just have to imagine it to yourself. I'll imagine my palace too. Don't you have any imagination.

CLOWN 2 No. I know how I'll do it. I'll play the miller and the mill.

CLOWN 1 That won't work. Anyone can play a mill, but how am I supposed to play my palace. You can only imagine a palace.

CLOWN 2 And for that it's so much prettier too.

CLOWN 1 *beams:* That's true.

Enter Director with a whip.

DIRECTOR What have you two done with the lion.

Clown 2 runs behind Clown 1.

CLOWNS 1+2: There are no lions.

The Director's jaw drops. He closes it and exits, stunned, while looking about.

CLOWN 1 Now let's begin. First comes the governing. Where's my throne.³

Throne from wings, Clown 1 wants to sit down, Clown 2 sneaks behind him, pulls throne away, Clown 1 doesn't sit down, straightens up.

CLOWN 1 Stop. We've forgotten something. My greyhound.⁴ Without my greyhound I cannot govern.

CLOWN 2 Your greyhound?

CLOWN 1 Yes. Where's my greyhound.

Dog from wings.

CLOWN 2 Haha. That's supposed to be a greyhound. That's a dog.

CLOWN 1 *sternly:* A greyhound is a dog. The throne is too far behind.

CLOWN 2 You're standing too far in front.

CLOWN 1 Yes. The throne is too far back and I am too far in front.

CLOWN 2 I know what we'll do. You go backwards and I'll bring the throne forwards.

CLOWN 1 Good idea.

They do this.

CLOWN 1 Now the throne is too far in front and I'm too far back.

CLOWN 2 We did it wrong. I have to bring the throne backwards and you have to go forwards.

CLOWN 1 Right.

The throne disappears into the wings.

CLOWN 1 The throne is gone.

CLOWN 2 Yes, I don't see it any more either.

CLOWN 1 I shall sit upon you, you are my throne.

CLOWN 2 And who is the mill.

CLOWN 1 One after the other.

Clown 2 gets on hands and knees, Clown 1 sits on him.

CLOWN 1 Now I am governing, and you must clatter.

Clown 2 stands up, Clown 1 falls over.

CLOWN 1 You can't just stand up while I'm governing.

CLOWN 2 Now I'm the mill. You only have to imagine the chair for yourself.

CLOWN 1 Right.

Clown 1 sits in the air.

CLOWN 2 THE MILL CLATTERS ON THE BABBLING BROOK CLIP CLOP CLIP CLOP CLIP CLOP

CLOWN 1 I can't imagine the throne any longer.

CLOWN 2 Why don't you govern standing up.

CLOWN 1 That won't do. I believe I shall stop with the governing. It's too difficult. Now let's do the flute-playing.

CLOWN 2 Do we play with my flute or do we play with your flute. I know how we'll do it: you play with my flute and I'll play with your flute.

CLOWN 1 You don't have a flute, you are the miller of Potsdam. Begin.

CLOWN 2 I am the miller of Potsdam. The King of Prussia is my neighbor. My mill stands right next to his palace. I've heard that my mill bothers the King of Prussia during his governing and flute-playing because it clatters the livelong day, and he intends to come to me, the King of Prussia to the miller of Potsdam, and command me to put up my mill somewhere else. But then the judges will be there. I have, Your Honor, a business license and a building permit too. Yes indeed. *Clown 1 applauds.* Let him just try something, the ratfucker, with his greyhound and his staff, I'll show him what's what. There's judges aplenty in Berlin. Yessir. *Clown 1 applauds.* I'll stuff his greyhound into the shredder and turn his staff into toothpicks. *Clown 1 applauds.* I'll tear him a new asshole, I'm a German man. Yessir. *Clown 1 applauds.* Who needs a king. Anyone can govern –

CLOWN 1 Stop. You have to stay on the grounds of legality.

CLOWN 2 What's that.

CLOWN 1 That is French and means DUMPING ASHTRAYS FORBIDDEN.

Now comes my turn.

Clown 1 trips head over heels on his staff.

CLOWN 2 Do you always have to enter nose-first.

CLOWN 1 I am the King of Prussia, my palace stands next to the mill, and I command you, miller of Potsdam, to put your mill somewhere else, because it clatters the livelong day, which bothers me whilst I govern and play the flute.

CLOWN 2 I'm the miller of Potsdam. *His knees begin to shake. He tries to hold them fast with his hands. I'm a German man. Falls over, stands up before the threatening staff, falls over again.*

CLOWN 1 *with raised staff:* If you don't play your role, I'll tell the Director you broke the lion. I know you. You're only doing this because you want to make me look bad in front of everyone, out of spite.

CLOWN 2 *stands up again, falls down. On hands and knees.* Most certainly not. I'm really trying. Don't you see how I'm sweating. It just comes over me. I can't do anything about it. It knocks me off my feet. It comes from within. It's a force of nature.

CLOWN 1 *angrily:* I'll show you a force of nature. *Strikes him.* I am the First Servant of my State. *Clown 2 licks the staff and begins to eat it. Eating the staff, he rights himself, until he stands ramrod straight. Marching music, which turns into the thunder of battle. The background opens up to reveal a fire, out of which speech-balloons rise: EVERY SHOT A RUSSIAN EVERY KICK A BRIT EVERY STAB A FRENCHMAN and Clown 2 marches into this goose-stepping.*

CLOWN 1 Actually I imagined it a bit differently, because I speak French and am very enlightened. But it works this way too.

The dog, likewise goose-stepping, follows Clown 2.

CLOWN 1 *to the dog:* ET TU, BRUTE!

BRANDENBURG CONCERT 2

Palace. Cold buffet. An Empire-throne. Song in background: WHEN THE POWER-PLANT BECAME THE PEOPLE'S OWN

A COMRADE *steps up*: This is the mason from Stalin Alley.⁵ Hero of Labor since today. Have some caviar, Comrade, you won't find it anywhere else. You've paid for it with Stalin Alley. He gave Frederick the First marching orders from Berlin to Potsdam, because he stood in the sun on Unter den Linden, using four men for three times less money than what the Western experts forecast and in world record time. He's new at the cold buffet. What do you want. If we broke bread with the population, they'd make hamburger meat out of us, this is Germany, comrade. Dictatorship of the proletariat in the kitchen, too. Eating is Party-work. The red is better.

Exit. The mason, with headband, eats. President.

PRESIDENT This is your day of honor, comrade. You look as if it's already gone on too long.

MASON Long enough.

PRESIDENT Your head?

MASON That's the thanks of the working-class.

They wanted to rebuild me into a monument.

The material came from the fourth floor.

And if you hang one more medal on me

You could cart me off to Unter den Linden

as the stand-in for Old Fritz.

PRESIDENT The stones they throw at us today,

Comrade, go tomorrow into the wall [Wand].

Anything else giving you a belly-ache.

MASON: The cold buffet.

PRESIDENT You'll just have to get used to it. I've learned to.

A COMRADE Comrade President

The artists are waiting.

PRESIDENT I'm off to the podium.

Exit. Music. Brandenburg Concert. Worker sits down on the Empire-throne.

MASON This is the right throne for my bottom.

Frederick the Second as vampire.

FREDERICK 2 Wilt Thee not rise before Thy King, cur.

MASON And here I thought he didn't need a throne anymore.

I'll show you where God lives.

Goes after Frederick 2. The latter hits him with staff.

Hey. That's my crucifix.

Breaks the staff across knee. Frederick 2 jumps on him from behind.

Trying to cross me up. Go fuck your dog.

Shakes him off. Frederick 2 leaps for his jugular.

Still thirsty, you beast. Go suck water.

Fight. Enter comrade with tray. Frederick 2 vanishes.

COMRADE The President sends this beer and cutlet

So you don't lose your appetite

Before you've gotten used to the cold buffet.
Worker eats the cutlet and drinks the beer.

HOMAGE TO STALIN 1

Snow. Sound of battle. Three soldiers. Their bodies are no longer complete. Enter a young soldier out of driving snow.

SOLDIER 1 Here comes the chuckwagon.

SOLDIER 2 He still has everything.

SOLDIER 3 Who's turn.

SOLDIER 1 Me.

SOLDIER 2 Where you from, buddy?

YOUNG SOLDIER From the battle.

SOLDIER 3 And where you going?

YOUNG SOLDIER Where there's no battle.

SOLDIER 1 Your hand, buddy.

Tears off his arm. The young soldier screams. The dead men laugh and begin to gnaw at the arm.

SOLDIER 3 *offering the arm:* Aren't you hungry?

The young soldier hides his face with remaining hand.

SOLDIER 1 Next time's your turn. The cauldron has flesh for all.

VOICES Vive l'empereur.

Long live the Emperor.

SOLDIER 1 That's Napoleon. He comes by every third night.

Napoleon passes by. He is pale and fat. He drags a soldier from his Grand Army behind him by the feet.

That's quite right. They're his corpses. Without him they wouldn't be here. And he pays extra, he's got connections. With us it's always mutual respect. Are you sure you don't want anything to eat?

Behind Napoleon Caesar rises up, green-faced, the toga bloody and slashed.

The green one behind him is Caesar. He's got his feed, twenty-three holes.

SOLDIER 2 If you don't count the ass. *Laughter.*

SOLDIER 1 He lives from skirmishes. He has his bodies on layaway: the battlefields lie too deep.

SOLDIER 3 Why hasn't he chopped himself up, the macaroni.

SOLDIER 1 Sometimes Napoleon gives him a leg. *Laughs.* Or an arm. *Throws Caesar the chewed-up arm.* Noone has to go hungry around here. *Caesar picks up the arm and disappears into the driving snow.*

The young soldier runs away screaming.

SOLDIER 3 He'll be back. The cauldron is water-tight.

More and more soldiers stagger and crawl onto the stage, fall, remain lying down. Then the Nibelungs Gunther, Hagen, Volker and Gernot, larger than life-size, enter clad in rusted armor.

GUNTHER *crushing the dead underfoot:* Malingerers. Goldbrickers. Defeatists. Pack of cowards.

VOLKER They think that when they're rotting, they've done everything that can be demanded of them.

HAGEN *sneering:* They think they have it behind them.

GERNOT They're in for a surprise.

GUNTHER Take your swords, O Nibelungs. The Huns are coming back. GOD IS WITH US.

The Nibelungs arm themselves with corpses and pieces of corpses and throw them screaming at imaginary Huns, so that an uneven wall of corpses piles up.

GUNTHER See, Attila, the harvest of our swords.

The Nibelungs sit down on the wall of corpses, remove their helms and drink beer from the horns.

GERNOT Always the same thing. *The others look at him, outraged.* I'm not saying that I don't want to play along any more. But what's it all about really.

VOLKER Have you already forgotten already, in Odenwald, when the Huns –

HAGEN *raises horn:* Revenge for Siegfried.

GUNTHER and VOLKER *likewise:* Revenge for Siegfried.

GERNOT *to Hagen:* But I saw it myself. I mean, everyone knows about you and him.

GUNTHER We all saw how Hagen drew the spear from the wound, the spear which the Huns in their ambush of Siegfried –

GERNOT I saw who threw the spear.

GUNTHER He was a traitor.

GERNOT Who.

GUNTHER Siegfried. I didn't really want to tell you. One should let youth cherish its illusions, so long as they have them. Now you know.

GERNOT I still don't know why we keep messing around with the Huns.

VOLKER Are you some sort of Hun, that you need a reason to fight.

HAGEN We keep messing around with the Huns because we aren't getting out of the cauldron.

GERNOT But we only need to stop, and then there's no more cauldron.

GUNTHER Did he say stop.

VOLKER He still doesn't get it.

HAGEN He'll never learn.

GUNTHER We shouldn't give up hope. He's no Hun.

VOLKER We'll teach him.

HAGEN Anyway we have to start now. Time is money. *The three stand up, arm themselves and approach Gernot. He springs to his feet.*

GERNOT I don't want to die every night. I find that boring. It's no fun for me. I'd like to do something else for a change. Like the thing with the women for example. I've forgotten what it's called.

HAGEN *sneering:* He's forgotten what it's called.

VOLKER That's the youth of today. They have no ideals anymore.

GUNTHER Why do you think your mother gave birth to you. We'll practice it until you can do it in your sleep. *The three Nibelungs cut the fourth into pieces in a lengthier battle. Then they masturbate together.*

VOLKER *masturbating:* "I'd like for once to do something else. Like the thing with the women for example. I've forgotten, what it's called."

The Nibelungs laugh.

HAGEN *likewise:* I don't even know what a woman is anymore. I think I wouldn't even be able to find the hole.

The Nibelungs laugh.

GUNTHER *likewise*: War is a job for men. Anyway the money gets divided up into only three shares. We'll find the hole in the cauldron sooner or later.

The Nibelungs laugh.

Volker tunes his violin.

GUNTHER Leave your violin out of the game. I know your tricks. He wants to soften us up with his song-number. SLEEP MY LITTLE PRINCE SLEEP. And then he hauls off and pinches the loot for himself.

HAGEN We'd better get rid of him right now.

GUNTHER At him.

Arm themselves.

VOLKER Friends.

Cut him to pieces.

GUNTHER Now it's only us two.

HAGEN One too many.

Hack each other into pieces. A moment of silence. The sounds of battle have also ceased. Then the pieces of corpses crawl towards one another and form themselves, with a sound of metal, screams, and snatches of songs, into a monster made of scrap-metal and body-parts. The noise continues into the next scene.

HOMAGE TO STALIN 2

Bar. Sirens. Bell tolls.

Barkeep. Two local patrons, very bourgeois. A shape: the bone-merchant.

PATRON 1 Stalin is dead.

PATRON 2 It took awhile.

BARKEEP Watch out.

Three whores.

PATRON 1 How about us, Madam.

WHORE 3 Go home, little boy. Mama's crying.

WHORE 2 Aren't you up past your bedtime.

WHORE 1 There are no mothers anymore.

PATRON 1 Why aren't you dressed in black, ladies, on a day like this.

WHORE 2 For us it runs deeper. *Shows black underwear.*

PATRON 2 A beer for the widows and orphans.

WHORE 1 We drink only champagne.

BARKEEP This isn't the Kudamm.

WHORE 3 If you insist.

Beer.

PATRON 1 Champagne. Handiwork has a golden spindle.⁶

PATRON 2 A hole, if you ask me.

BARKEEP A golden one.

WHORE 2 *to Patron 1:* We don't work with our hands, my good sir.

PATRON 1 I didn't mean to insult you, Madam. I myself am only a simple handiworker.⁷

WHORE 2 Pfui.

PATRON 1 Easier done with the mouth than with the hand.⁸

Laughs.

WHORE 3 Don't swallow yourself, son.

WHORE 2 *towards shape:* Who's the ghost. Huh!

WHORE 1 *waits for effect, no effect:* It didn't move.

PATRON 2 Maybe it's a statue [Denkmal: monument].

WHORE 1 That's Haarmann. See the sack under the chair. He's taken apart another one, and put the pieces in the sack there. Where the coat bulges is the knife.

PATRON 2 Prices for meat are enough to kill for.

PATRON 1 I don't want to know what-all I ate, not after dinner.

WHORE 3 It can't be Haarmann. He looks different, heavier. I saw him Tuesday. He already had the knife out. Man, I screamed. And then he was gone like a shadow.

PATRON 1 You saw a ghost, Madam. Haarmann is in Heaven.

WHORE 2 He's a deafmute.

WHORE 3 Anyway I'm not going home alone tonight.

PATRON 1 *flips pocketknife open:* Who's it going to be.

Whore 3 squeals.

Enter four construction workers [Maurer: masons].

FAT WORKER He drank his last beer.

GENERAL This calls for a celebration.

YOUNG MASON What're you trying to say, General.

GENERAL What I said. Beer.

HILSE Be happy, General
That the Russians sent you to a construction site.

GENERAL I only did my duty as a German.

HILSE I would've put all of you up against a wall.

GENERAL We'll see who puts who up against a wall.

YOUNG MASON *to Whore 1*: It's her. In October it'll be four years.
I've looked for you all over. How are you.

WHORE 2 Who's biting on your line this time, girl.

PATRON 2 Four years. He was in a hurry.

PATRON 1 *sings*: ROSEMARY, ROSEMARY
SEVEN YEARS MY HEART CRIED FOR THEE.

WHORE 2 Young man

I believe you're barking up the wrong tree.

YOUNG MASON What are you doing let's say this evening.

WHORE 2 He doesn't want to know. Man, love must be beautiful.

HILSE Stay away from that, kid. That's nothing for you.

WHORE 1 I don't believe that I have time tonight.

YOUNG MASON Are you waiting for some capitalist.

WHORE 3 Sure would be nice.

WHORE 1 I have to go now.

YOUNG MASON Let's go together.

Exit Whore 1 alone.

PATRON 1 She's still a virgin. *Patron 1 and 2 laugh.*

YOUNG MASON *to whores 3 and 2*: Does she have someone else.

PATRON 1 You ought not ask questions, Lohengrin.

PATRON 2 He can't count past one.

WHORE 3 *weeps*: Ah, that's love.

Young mason leaves. Hilse tries to hold him back.

YOUNG MASON I don't need your advice

Young mason pushes him back.

General laughs.

FAT WORKER It's none of your business.

GENERAL The team leader.⁹

Team leader with head-band sits down at masons' table. The construction workers move to another table.

GENERAL A handsome head.

FAT WORKER Yeah. They say some people
can't walk past buildings
without it raining stones.

ACTIVIST What's it to you.

PATRON 1 *drunkenly*:

I'm telling you, it's war. What do you say.

PATRON 2 *just as drunk*: Fine by me.

WHORES 3 + 2 *sing*: WE'RE COMING EVERYONE EVERYONE INTO HEAVEN

Exit whores and patrons, singing.

GENERAL Could be, a lot around here is going to change.
And a lot of people will have nothing to smile at.

Pause.

FAT WORKER Germans put up with a lot. But not everything.

Pause.

HILSE What are you trying to saying, General.

GENERAL I smell human flesh, said the giant.

Exit. After him the fat worker.

TEAM LEADER Fine company.

HILSE Not as fine as yours.

TEAM LEADER They told me you're a Red.

HILSE A rat I'm not.¹⁰

Exit.

TEAM LEADER Give me another schnaps. I can use it

When I go home. I can't even relax

at home anymore. Every day something new.

Yesterday the carpet. Today the BUFFET.

They even gave me a medal.

Since then my wife is playing the lady, because

I was in the papers.

BARKEEP Noblesse oblige.

TEAM LEADER If I'd only known what the price was.

Pause. A drunk.

BARKEEP You've had enough.

DRUNK I'm a free man.

BARKEEP And this is my bar.

DRUNK I was a Leftist

When your bar was a hangout for stormtroopers, brown with SA.

Sits down with team leader.

Order me a schnaps, buddy.

You're a working man [Prolet], I'm a working man [Prolet].

We have to unite against capitalism.

Against socialism too. I was

in the Young Communists since '24.¹¹ Noone

told me what to do. In the cauldron at Stalingrad

they hard-boiled me. It wasn't a war anymore.

We would've eaten grass, but I didn't see any grass.

We didn't ask the bones if they came from a horse or I

ONCE HAD A FRIEND [Kamerad: buddy]

But people get used to anything. Who's sitting here.

I was the only junior officer left in the company.

The captain bit the dust, the lieutenants too.

We got out of the cauldron.

We were twenty-four, down to ten.

I got 'em out. I was okay.

And my boys were okay too.

TEAM LEADER You should know.
 DRUNK Yeah. Just today
 I met one. Works at the Ministry.
 State secretary or whatever it's called now.
 The kid had gone far: straight to the top.
 But he knew me right off the bat. Is it really you, Chief.
 The same as ever, I said. Then he said, come on, let's
 Pour ourselves a glass or two. I went along. His wife was furious
 When we tried to reconstruct the cauldron
 on the floor, our cauldron.
 He locked her in the kitchen.
 Then we reconstructed the cauldron.
 And after the fourth bottle I asked him:
 Can you still do the belly-flop, Willie, you old bastard.
 So what can I say, you wouldn't believe it:
 he still could do it. That's how good my training was.
Pours beer on the table.
 That's the Volga. Here's Stalingrad.
 TEAM LEADER That's my beer.
 DRUNK Not interested, huh.
 The war isn't over. It's just starting.
 Doesn't bother me. I know the asshole of the world
 from inside and out. *Exit.*
Young mason and Whore 1.
 YOUNG MASON *to activist:* That's some girl.
 Hey, Team Leader. Your pockets are full
 of our money for your Red Work Quota.
 TEAM LEADER You still have a lot to learn.
 YOUNG MASON Not from you.
 We need an apartment.
 WHORE 1 You're in a hurry.
 YOUNG MASON I can't waste my time on the construction site anymore.
 Could be, I'll build my own house.
 TEAM LEADER Like I said, you've got a lot to learn.
 YOUNG MASON I don't need you for that.
 TEAM LEADER There's others for that.
 WHORE 1 *sings:* SO BEAUTIFUL THIS DAY SO SHOULD IT ALWAYS BE
 I think I've had too much to drink.
 YOUNG MASON Come on.
 I'll take you home.
 WHORE 1 I've gotta work.
 YOUNG MASON Night shift?
 WHORE 1 Yeah, I'm always on night shift.
The bone-merchant has stood up, picks up his sack and approaches, swaying slightly.
 WHORE 1 What's he want.
 YOUNG MASON That's Santa Claus. Missing something?

SKULL-SELLER A lovely pair. Permit me to offer you a small souvenir. *Draws a human skull from the sack. Whore 1 screams.* A memento mori for the new home. IN THE MIDST OF LIFE WE ARE / SURROUNDED BY DEATH. I dug him up myself. And boiled three times. A clean specimen. 18th century according to the gravestone. And it's a good skull, feel the temples. The earth brought it to light. Here is where one thinks, my good sir, the theodicy of the great Leibniz had its place in this hollow realm. Materialism is a mistake, I assure you.

WHORE 1 *laughs*: He's funny.

SKULL-SELLER You could also have a skeleton. A philosophical coat-rack. Take off your coat, Madam. How much, my good sir? Of course skeletons are expensive. You rarely find a complete skeleton. Who knows what the dead get up to with their bones. *Giggles.* Though I have my suspicions. But enough of that. Fifty for the skull.

WHORE 1 I'm afraid.

YOUNG MASON Just what we always needed.

SKULL-SELLER A bargain, my good sir. It's not a question of Reichsmarks. I'm just trying to pay for the groceries.

YOUNG MASON Pack up your gift-bag, chief.

WHORE 1 I'd like to go.

SKULL-SELLER I beg your pardon.

Exit Whore 1 and Young Mason. Pause.

SKULL-SELLER I'd be happy to drink one or two glasses of your most excellent schnaps, but unfortunately I'm not liquid anymore. Take the skull on commission.

BARKEEP And be reimbursed at the Second Coming, sure. Whether you drink one or two is your business, but here you pay cash.

TEAM LEADER Do you also kill them yourself, my friend?

SKULL-SELLER *sits down at team leader's table*:

I work deep underground. So to speak. We transport cemeteries far from the prying eyes of the public. Rebury, as it's called in the language of the bereaved. I'm one of the bereaved, I rebury. ONDER FLOW'RS ONDER GRASS.¹² We work at night. With alcohol, because of the danger of infection. TREMBLE DARLING BEFORE THE DEAD TOO. For me an activity of some piquancy: I was a historian. A slight error in the periodization, the Thousand-Year Reich, you understand. Since history has referred me to the cemeteries, to their theological aspect so to speak, I'm immune to the corpse-poison of temporal temptation. The Golden Age lies behind us. Jesus is the afterbirth of the Dead. Do you know Virgil.

WITH A NEW BREED OF MEN SENT DOWN FROM HEAVEN

THE IRON SHALL CEASE, THE GOLDEN RACE ARISE

AND FREE THE EARTH FROM NEVER CEASING FEAR.

THEY SHALL REIGN OVER A WORLD AT PEACE

FIRST SHALL THE EARTH, UNTILLED, POUR FREELY FORTH

CARESSING FLOWERS. THE PLAIN BY SLOW DEGREES

WITH WAVING CORN-CROPS SHALL TO GOLDEN GROW

FROM THE WILD BRIAR SHALL HANG THE BLUSHING GRAPE

AND STUBBORN OAKS SWEAT HONEY DEW. NO NEED

SHALL LURK THERE, BIDDING TEMPT THE DEEP WITH SHIPS

GIRD TOWNS WITH WALLS, WITH FURROWS CLEAVE THE EARTH.

BARKEEP Gentleman, get your asses in gear. Closing time.

THE HOLY FAMILY

Bunker of the Führer. Hitler, frozen in one of his poses. A bell strikes midnight. Hitler stirs, yawns, takes a couple steps, strikes his poses, drinks gasoline from a small gas-tank etc.

HITLER Josef!

Goebbels, with clubfoot and huge breasts, in late stages of pregnancy.

GOEBBELS My Führer!

HITLER *knocks on belly of pregnant Goebbels:* How's our progeny doing. Is he moving? Excellent. Are you drinking your gasoline? *Pulls Goebbels by the teats.* Is the uterus pulled tight, as it should be for a German mother? Good. Bodily nutrition, wartime fruition [Nährstand Wehrstand].

GOEBBELS We have gasoline for only three more days.

HITLER Hurry up with the birth. Guard!

Guard in black uniform with the head of a boar.

HITLER *while he gooses the giggling Goebbels:* Breakfast!

Exit guard. Soldier. Hitler eats him, the head last of all. Sneezes, spits and claws hairs from his mouth.

I gave orders, that my men be completely shaven before I eat them. Disgusting!

Sneezes and drinks gasoline.

GOEBBELS May I call to your attention, my Führer, to the necessity of keeping the secret to the smallest possible group. The German people reveres you as a vegetarian. We're having problems with the kitchen help, the barber can't provide proof of Aryan blood. The previous one was detailed to another post, he shaves Mr. Stalin. The ways of the prophecy are indeed wondrous.

HITLER *shrieks:* Conspiracies! Treachery! Betrayal! I'm surrounded by traitors. They want to kill me. They put bombs in my bed. They pour knives into my food. They put poison in my gasoline. I'll chop their heads off. I'll hang them from piano wires. I'll draw and quarter them. *Howls, gnaws at the carpet, still howling. Crawls to Goebbels, lays head on his breasts, grimaces.*

GOEBBELS *strokes and comforts him:* You are the greatest. You are the strongest of all. They can't do anything to you. You'll punish them.

HITLER *still in same pose:* Yes. Chop off their fingers. Hands. Arms. Legs. Lop off the ears. Cut off the nose. *Giggling and fidgeting.* Tear off the peepee.

GOEBBELS *warns with finger:* One doesn't say peepee.

HITLER *throws himself to floor, thrashes about:* You said peepee. Admit it, you said peepee. Traitor. You're a traitor too.

GOEBBELS *quickly:* I said peepee. I admit it. Forgive me, my Führer.

HITLER *stands up, assumes Napoleonic pose:* Now you see. For that you have to lick my boots.

Goebbels dives on Hitler's left boot.

HITLER The right one first. *Goebbels dives on the right boot.*

Guard!

Guard.

Report.

GUARD A dog ran by overhead.

HITLER Hear that, Josef. They're in disguise. They don't dare to face us in the open anymore. But I see through them. I see through everything. A dog. Pathetic! Continue.

GUARD He pissed in the grass. That is all, my Führer.

HITLER Keep your eyes open. The enemy is everywhere.

GUARD Jawohl, my Führer.

Exit Guard.

HITLER I will now turn to my people. My people.

Goebbels grabs at his belly, screams, tumbles screaming to the floor.

HITLER A German mother does not scream. Guard!

Guard.

HITLER Fetch the midwife. It's time.

Exit guard.

Those are the labor pains. The labor pains have set in. I know that from my first marriage. *Goebbels gesticulates hysterically.* Still jealous of good old Ernst, eh?¹³ Yes, he was a traitor. He too. Do you know the look he gave me when I showed him my revolver. He hadn't counted on that. The little slut. How his cheeks trembled. He was a little overweight towards the end. I shot the entire magazine into him. My hand didn't tremble. You held him down, you know. You and Herrmann. Also a traitor. I'm surrounded by traitors. My back is a single scar. Dagger-thrust after dagger-thrust. They're lying in wait for me everywhere. There. And there. *Moves faster and faster to and fro, constantly whirling around.* They're behind me. They don't dare face me. They're hiding behind me. Don't you see. But I'll get them all. The prophecy holds its guiding hand over me.

Guard.

GUARD The dog ran by again. He pissed again. The midwife.

Germania, enormous, with midwife's kit.

GERMANIA *butts Hitler's belly, pulls at his teeth etc.* How's it going, my boy. Are you drinking your gasoline? Eating your men? Excellent.

She grabs him by the balls.

HITLER *cooly:* Mama!

GERMANIA Still with your Oedipus complex? *Laughs.*

HITLER That is a filthy Jewish lie –

GERMANIA I don't want to hear about it anymore. I've had enough trouble with your Jewish stories. People are going around pointing their fingers at me. Even today. Some don't even bother to say hello.

HITLER The Jew –

Germania slaps him. Hitler bellows.

GERMANIA The pelvis is too narrow. It's going to be a forceps delivery. Don't worry, it's not my first. But we still have some time. No pain no gain. Legs up. And breath out. And push. And so. And one. And two.

Guard.

GUARD The Three Magi of the Occident.

HITLER Did you hear, Josef. They're interested in us again. We're someone again.¹⁴ The world –

GOEBBELS DO YOU WANT THE TOTAL –

GERMANIA Shut your trap.

HITLER *to guard:* The honor guard!

GERMANIA *to Goebbels*: You could've at least put on some make-up.
HITLER A German mother –
GERMANIA I have to follow the times, if I want to get back into business. *Paints prostitute-mask on Goebbels*. There. *To Hitler*: Just don't screw things up. Do the men know their texts?
HITLER The prophecy –
GERMANIA I'd rather know it for sure.
The honor guard. Dog-heads, white crepe on black uniforms, blood-spattered boots, angel-wings, they take their positions.
GERMANIA They could've at least polished their boots. Do I have to do everything myself. A goddamn mess!
The three Magi march to the front.
MAGI 1 Our seed has sprouted.
MAGI 2 I don't like the boots.
MAGI 3 Ditto. I don't like them either.
MAGI 1 We shouldn't forget what it's all about.
MAGI 2 Communism is a terrible threat.
MAGI 3 Especially in the spiritual aspect.
MAGI 1 Just think of the children.
HONOR GUARD *yells*: FREEDOM DEMOCRACY THE WEST PEACE THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME BETTER DEAD THAN RED THE ONLY GOOD INDIAN IS A DEAD INDIAN TO EACH HIS OWN UNITY IN PURITY
GERMANIA *exhaling*: It worked.
MAGI 1 What was I saying.
MAGI 2 Truly. A new spirit.
MAGI 3 Of course one can always polish the boots later.
GOEBBELS *bellows*: DO YOU WANT THE TOTAL –
HITLER In this historic moment –
Goebbels releases a gigantic fart, spreading a stinking cloud which knocks over the three Magi.
HONOR GUARD Sieg Heil Sieg Heil Sieg Heil.
The three Magi pull together, hold their noses, stand up.
GOEBBELS My Führer.
GERMANIA *to Hitler*: Hopefully it's not just hot air. You never were much in bed.
Hitler growls.
MAGI 3 It doesn't smell good, you know.
MAGI 2 It doesn't smell good at all.
MAGI 1 One shouldn't be discouraged by details.
MAGI 3 After all it's only natural.
MAGI 2 Nothing human is foreign to me.
MAGI 3 Perhaps it's time for the presents.
MAGI 2 We don't have to stay until the end.
MAGI 3 Ultimately everything takes its course.
MAGI 1 The gifts!
Soldiers of the Magi bring the presents and then leave.

MAGI 3 One set of instruments of torture. I've tried them out myself. I believe you have a saying, BEND THE HOOK AS IT WILL.

MAGI 2 A historic toy for the dear babe. I grew up with it. Strengthens the self-confidence. The instructions are simple. You stand the cannons up, load them, bind your man to the muzzle, and kaboom! Plus one set of colored men.

MAGI 1 A small addition to your kitchen. He's a fresh specimen. Practically undamaged. The hunt was yesterday. We all have our little weaknesses.

HITLER *grandiose*: I eat no colored men.

MAGI 2 Embarrassing, this fanaticism.

MAGI 3 There's no way around him.

MAGI 1 We can't afford to alienate him. God knows when we'll need him again.

GERMANIA *To Hitler*: We've got to follow with the times. You too. Thank their Lordships.

Hitler growls, but licks the shoes of the Three Magi, growling all the time. Long scream from Goebbels.

GERMANIA Your Lordships, it's time. Where's my forceps. Hold on to the ends.

Germania applies the forceps, pulls, Holy 1 pulls on Germania, 2 on 1, 3 on 2.

HITLER My people!

HONOR GUARD GERMANY ARISE! SIEG HEIL!

THE THREE MAGI Hallelujah! Hosannah!

A wolf howls. Germania and the Holy Three fall on their backsides. Before them stands a Contergan-Wolf.¹⁵

THE THREE MAGI *stunned*: Oh!

Germania stands up, takes a family-sized pack of SUNIL from the midwife kit and pours it over the wolf.¹⁶ White light. The wolf stands in sheepskin.

GERMANIA *to the three Magi*: Did you say something?

The wolf tears the Negro-doll apart. Hitler tortures Germania, who is held fast by the honor guard. Goebbels dances like one possessed.

GERMANIA *screams*.

HITLER *laughs*.

HONOR GUARD GERMANY ARISE! SIEG HEIL!

GOEBBELS *still dancing*: HOW GOOD THAT NOONE KNOWS /

RUMPELSTILTSKIN IS MY NAME-O

WOLF *howls*.

THE THREE MAGI: *in the position of the three apes:¹⁷ HALLELUJAH! HOSANNAH!*

Hitler loads the cannon. Germania is bound to the muzzle by the honor guard. The curtain falls simultaneously with the detonation.

THE WORKER'S MONUMENT.

Construction site.

FOREMAN A new guy. Minister till yesterday. *Exit.*

FAT MASON The higher they go, the further they fall.

THE NEW GUY Better here than jail.

GENERAL Now you'll be able to see the state from underneath.

HILSE General, you're called to work.

GENERAL Your cross, Minister.

Tosses backpack to Minister. A clerk hangs a slogan up TOGETHER WE RAISE OUR QUOTA.

YOUNG MASON Did you see that.

GENERAL We always wanted to work even harder.

FAT MASON And for less pay.

GENERAL Not for much longer.

YOUNG MASON You're the hero.

HILSE *to General:* Scratch a General, find a Stormtrooper¹⁸

GENERAL Heil Stalin.

HILSE I'll kill you.

GENERAL I've learned that too.

The clerk returns and takes the slogan away.

HILSE What's that supposed to mean.

FAT MASON Into the chips, out of the chips.

CLERK How do I know. I just do what I'm told.

MINISTER It's the new line.

I was against it. Now I'm for it.

GENERAL Am I supposed to spell it out for you? They're shitting in their pants.

FAT MASON Something's going down.

HILSE What sort of new line.

MINISTER Democracy

The quota will be discussed before being raised.

GENERAL This isn't Russia. We're not coolies.

FAT MASON Germans will put up with a lot. Not everything.

HILSE You're not being paid to make speeches, General. You neither. There's work to do.

GENERAL *balls fist:* Don't you remember, Thälmann.

IF YOUR MIGHTY ARM SO WILLS.¹⁹

HILSE Get to work or take a hike.

Sirens.

YOUNG MASON Did someone die again?

HILSE What's going on?

GENERAL Nothing yet, my boy.

FAT MASON *to Hilse:* You have three guesses.

VOICES Hey everyone, put down your tools. Strike.

GENERAL *to Hilse*: Now that I think about it, I'll take that hike. *Throws trowel at his feet.*

VOICES Hey everyone. Into the streets. We're marching to the Ministry.

GENERAL Now we'll talk German to the comrades.

FAT MASON They only speak Russian.

Laughs at his own joke.

GENERAL They'll understand American.

HILSE This broadcast by RIAS Berlin. [Radio CIA?]. **Armed Forces? Or FRG?**

MINISTER Hey, that's going a little too far.

GENERAL *to Hilse*:

Who's asking you, Russki stooge.

FAT MASON *to Hilse*: The game's up, Franz.

GENERAL Follow me, if you don't want to be a strikebreaker.

Exit.

FAT MASON Are you shitting

In your pants.

YOUNG MASON *to Hilse*: Are you going to keep working by yourself.

HILSE You're not going to fool me.

FAT MASON What's with you,
Minister. Are you coming with the working-class?

A word of advice: whoever isn't with us

Is against us.

YOUNG MASON My first strike. A sailor
has to sail the seven seas.

Goes, with trowel.

HILSE Don't you know who you're running after.

YOUNG MASON Hang on to the trowel, until I come back.

Presses trowel into his hand. Hilse stands, a trowel in each hand.

Exit Young Mason.

HILSE And you call yourselves workers.

FAT MASON *laughs*: Who? Me?

MINISTER The Russians
are still here.

FAT MASON Yeah, and the Americans too.

Exit.

MINISTER I don't know if anything good will come of this. But it can't
go on like this either!

Drops his knapsack and exits.

HILSE You won't fool me. *Sorts the broken masonry, replaces them, takes up the knapsack.*

What a waste of bricks. And they want to strike.

Works. Youth, smooth-shaven, with bicycles.

FIRST YOUTH Are you stone-blind, Gramps? Today's a holiday.

SECOND YOUTH He's not talking.

THIRD YOUTH Watch out you don't get a hernia, Dad
piecework is murder.

FIRST He's missing some marbles
 SECOND While Daddy's away Mommy will play.
 THIRD It goes faster this way, Gramps.
Throws a stone at Hilse, who is carrying stones.
 HILSE Little punk. Get outa here.
 SECOND Gramps
 is getting on in years.
 THIRD This is your last warning.
 Afterwards comes live ammunition, Dad. Drop it.
 FIRST Go with the rest of 'em, otherwise you're in trouble, Gramps.
 HILSE What do you know, you little snot.
 FIRST *enraged, throws a stone:* Stupid old fool.
 Cement is coming out of your ears.
 Man, he's so fossilized you couldn't even
 boil him down to limestone.
 SECOND Quick to the grave,
 Gramps, or there won't be room for you. Your
 comrades are already lining up in the cemetery.
 HILSE *enraged:*
 We have enough for you. And you. You –
 THIRD *cold:* I know a few
 Sitting around today. But not tomorrow.
 FIRST Gramps is turning red. Gramps is ashamed.
 SECOND Gramps is always red. Gramps is red
 To the bone.
 FIRST *quickly:* That I'd like to see.
Throws a stone.
 SECOND Missed.
 FIRST And now. And now.
Throws and hits. The old worker bleeds.
 SECOND What'd I tell you.
 FIRST To the bone.
 Hey.
Sudden idea. Can you dance, Gramps?
Improvises a ROCK, throws in rhythm. The others join in.
All three throw stones in Rock-Rhythm at the worker.
 ALL THREE Yeah –
 SECOND Raise a leg
 ALL THREE Yeah –
 THIRD You're catching on, Gramps.
 FIRST And faster, Gramps.
 SECOND No falling asleep.
 THIRD Hey.
 No quitting on us now.
 SECOND Gramps is doing it.
 THIRD Gramps can do it all.

FIRST Gramps is the kicks
in the marathon.
SECOND Gramps is the greatest.
Hail of stones and finale. The mason collapses.
SECOND Looks like a Worker's Monument.
FIRST *steps towards worker:* Man.
He's gone.
SECOND I didn't see anything, did you?
THIRD On the job accident.
SECOND Yeah, piecework is murder.
Exit three quickly.

THE BROTHERS 1

There was nothing now to separate the Romans from the Cheruskans but the waters of the Weser. Arminius took his stand upon the further bank with his chiefs around him and inquired if Caesar had arrived. On being informed that he was there, he craved permission to speak with his brother Flavus, a man of noted loyalty, who had lost an eye while fighting under Tiberius some years before, and was now serving in the Roman army. Permission having been granted, Flavus stepped forward and was saluted by his brother. Dismissing his own attendants, Arminius requested that the bowmen posted on our side of the bank might be withdrawn. As soon as they had retired, he asked his brother how he had got that ugly wound upon his face. Informed of the place and occasion of the battle, Arminius inquired, what reward had he got for it? Flavus enumerated his increase of pay, his necklace and crown, and other military distinctions. Arminius scoffed at these as the trumpery rewards of slavery.

Then began a colloquy in opposing strains. The one dwelt on the power of Rome, the wealth of Caesar, the heavy punishment meted to the conquered, the kindly treatment in store for his brother if he submitted: even his child and wife had not been treated as enemies. The other spoke of the sacred claims of country, of their ancestral freedom, of the national Gods of Germany, of their mother who added her prayers to his: let not Flavus choose to be the deserter and betrayer, rather than the leader, of his own kindred and his country. By degrees they fell to reproaches; and not even the intervening river would have kept them from coming to blows, had not Stertinius run up and held back Flavus, who was full of wrath, and crying out for horse and arms. On the other side Arminius was to be seen, threatening and challenging to combat: he used the Latin tongue freely in his discourse, having once commanded a force of his countrymen in our army.

Tacitus, Annals 0016 (trans. C.G. Ramsay) [This may need a new and better translation... references to nation are a crock]

THE BROTHERS 2

Prison.

WARDEN Into the guest-chamber. First-class accommodations
Toilet etc. *Gestures towards cell-window:* We even have television.
If you don't like the channel, anyone can ask for what they want.

SABOTEUR We like today's.

WARDEN Did you say something?

SABOTEUR Why was today's walk cancelled.

WARDEN You could catch a cold. The barometer
Is at variable since yesterday. Here.

Gives the new inmate a pack of cigarettes. Exit.

SABOTEUR He's so cold, he shits ice.

NEW INMATE: *glances at cigarettes:* What's going on outside.

GANDHI Fork it over. The cigarettes.

Gandhi divides the cigarettes, skips over the Nazi.

NEW INMATE And him?

GANDHI The Nazi doesn't smoke.

SABOTEUR What are you in here for?

GANDHI He's a political.

SABOTEUR *to the new inmate:* Sozi?²⁰

GANDHI Communist.

SABOTEUR Did you find a hair in your soup?

A mustache? Or was it a goatee. *Silence.*

GANDHI Why did you ask, what was going on outside.

COMMUNIST Because

I just wanted to know.

GANDHI Did you come from the moon.

COMMUNIST What's that.

GANDHI You ask too much. We don't like that.

SABOTEUR You want to see the stars?

NAZI *steps forward:* He's my brother.

SABOTEUR The Red?

GANDHI *laughs:* HOME SWEET HOME

WE'LL MEET ONCE AGAIN

COMMUNIST My brother the traitor [Spitzel: traitor, stoolpigeon].

Silence.

You've gone far.

NAZI As far as you.

Pause. Noise of crowds from outside. Chorus of knocks in prison, which continues during the following.

SABOTEUR *at window:*

It won't be long now.

COMMUNIST *at window:* What is it?

SABOTEUR It's the uprising.

COMMUNIST They're drunk.

SABOTEUR Say that one more time, you Red scum.
 COMMUNIST From free beer.
The saboteur knocks the Communist down.
 NAZI He blows up bridges. Saboteur.
 Working-class. He can tell you
 What the underbelly of your worker's paradise looks like.
 SABOTEUR And once I get out of here, I won't dirty
 My hands any more. Then I'll be for it.
The Communist wants to knock the Saboteur over, Gandhi interposes himself.
 NAZI And that's Gandhi. Life-sentence. Murder one.
 Gandhi operates with the knife. Too bad
 He doesn't have it with him right now. Tomorrow
 He'll have it again. A new beginning.
 The Night of the Long Knives. Do you still remember.
 I stood at your door. I was your brother.
Holds hand out. The brother doesn't respond.
 But my brother had no hand free.
 I'm your brother.
 COMMUNIST I have no brother.
 NAZI Better turn out the lights, brother. The Reichstag
 Burns bright enough and today is the Night
 Of the Long Knives.
 COMMUNIST And what does the bloodhound get in the end?
 Do your dirty work. You'll get my bones
 once your butchers are done with me.
 Where are they. Did you bring them with you.
 NAZI I brought them. Do you want to see them.
 There they are. *Tears jacket off, shows his back, covered with old scars.*
 Do you recognize their handwriting. It's
 Still legible. It was a little faded
 After twenty years, but your friends
 Freshened them up, from the old maketh the new
 So that my brother has something to read
 On the vacation they ordered him to take
 To cure him from Communism.
Gandhi and Saboteur laugh.
 COMMUNIST We don't beat people.
 NAZI Who is we?²¹
Nazi, Gandhi and Saboteur laugh.
 Do you still remember how one becomes a traitor.
 The short course in the Gestapo torture-chambers.
 Long enough for me. You have it easier,
 On Monday a Communist, on Tuesday no more
 Because the Party says you never were.
 They worked me over for three weeks
 I spit blood but not a single syllable.

Then the discharge. Then the dungeons again.
 My flesh was a heap of bloody rags, and no names.
 I got out, nobody wanted to know me anymore.
 One arrest and I was a traitor.
 Who knew that I hadn't spilled the beans.
 And when I went into the dungeons again
 At my back still only my back
 I went alone, for you only a traitor.
 When I came out, it was the traitor who
 Came out, on his back his corpse
 Which bore other corpses on its back
 Hacked to pieces like mine and hacked to pieces by me.
 COMMUNIST You can put your jacket back on, traitor.
 SABOTEUR Should I show the Red who's boss.
 NAZI He'll figure it out when we're outside.
Noise of crowds louder. Word-salad out of FREEDOM GERMAN KILL THEM HANG THEM.
 COMMUNIST Why don't they shoot. That can't be true.
Pounds on door.
 Comrades, hold the prison. Shoot.
 GANDHI I don't believe my eyes. You can't be serious. Do you want to sit here and rot, you idiot.
 NAZI Your comrades are running for cover.
 SABOTEUR We'll find them soon enough. And then
 We'll hoist the comrades instead of the flag. Up with the colors.
 Room enough today on every flagpole.
 NAZI *to his brother:* You we'll hang at half-mast.
 COMMUNIST Why don't
 I have the revolver which I
 didn't shoot you with twenty years ago.
 If only I could turn the clock back.
 GANDHI Try a knife.
 It works with the hands, too. But first you
 Have to take lessons. If you want, I can give you the short course.
Puts hands around Communist's throat.
 NAZI It's too late for regrets. You only die once
 And I have that behind me. I died.
 When I left your door and went into the
 Night of the Long Knives and the revolver
 Fell from your hand onto the floorboards
 Louder than any shot I've heard before
 Or since, and the bullet for the traitor
 For whom your brother fell on his knees
 Was still being fired.
 COMMUNIST I'll break every bone in your body
 NAZI I was a specialist in bone-breaking.

Men, women and children in Orel.²²

COMMUNIST I didn't want to get my hands dirty.

NAZI And now blood sticks to them. That's the way of the world.

Don't worry, it's a slaughterhouse, brother.

If you want to see something around here which has a future

Better go to a coffin-factory.

Do you know how your socialism looks from the outside

There where the people's hearts strike so freely.

SABOTEUR Because they're just skin and bones, that's why.

COMMUNIST You beasts. You filthy beasts.

GANDHI

Watch out

Comrade, you're a minority here.

NAZI Hopefully it'll come off before the Russians attack.

SABOTEUR So what. The Americans won't let us down.

GANDHI They're all in cahoots against the Germans.

SABOTEUR They'll be surprised to find out what Germans are made of.

COMMUNIST Could be, that nothing will surprise you anymore, when it comes out.

SABOTEUR Scum. Traitor to the Fatherland. Russian stooge.

COMMUNIST I've heard that once before, my friend.

We were being transported down the Rennsteig

From one concentration camp to another

On trucks, guarded by Stormtroopers

Handcuffed in the beautiful German homeland.

It was spring. All the German birds

Were on active duty, and the German forest

Was green as only the German forest can be, and only

The wind had no Fatherland, nor we.

Our guards were thirsty. They stopped

At every third town, downed a beer

Took a piss and drank again.

For us they cooked up something special.

At every stop they led us before the people

To be spat on. See the traitors to the Fatherland.

They want to rob the German mothers of their children

And the German men of their women.

And so on in the songbook. And they came

Children in the belly and children by their side

And spit their saliva into our faces

We couldn't wipe it off with the handcuffs.

And we had to kneel in front of the children,

By the third stop I could no longer see

The beautiful German homeland through the German spittle.

Gandhi and Saboteur laugh.

And with closed eyes I saw more.

I saw the German birds shitting

On the green German forest in formation

And their shit exploded and
 The forest green turned to ashes beneath their trail.
 The German children crawled from the bellies
 Of the German mothers, tore the pricks
 Of their German fathers out with their teeth
 And pissed on the wounds, in song.
 Then they fastened themselves to their mothers' breasts
 And drank blood, so long as the supply lasted.
 And then hacked each other to pieces
 At last drowning in their own blood
 Because it overflowed the German soil.
 NAZI Still singing the same old song. What do you see now.
Spits into his face. Noise of crowd ebbs and quickly fades away. Rumble of tanks.
Knocking stops.
 SABOTEUR Hey. Did you hear that.
 NAZI Goddamnit.
 GANDHI What is that.
 COMMUNIST Those are the tanks. The ghost has vanished.
 And all of you are staying exactly where you belong.
 NAZI With you.
 Do you like the tune of the Internationale
 When it's sung by tank treads.
 COMMUNIST I've never been happier to hear it
 Than sung by tank treads, traitor.
 SABOTEUR And soon you'll be hearing the angels.
 At least one of them ought to believe in that today.
 GANDHI He doesn't want it any other way. Otherwise
 He'll never live to see his Communism.
 COMMUNIST Who am I.
The three attack him.

NIGHTPLAY

A person stands on stage. He is larger than life-size, perhaps a puppet. He is wearing posters. His face is without a mouth. He regards his hands, moves the arms, tests his legs. A bicycle, from which the kickstand or pedals or both or kickstand, pedals and seat have been removed, rides quickly from right to left over the stage. The person, who is perhaps a puppet, runs after the bicycle. A wave rolls out from the stage-floor. He stumbles over this and falls. Lying on his stomach he sees the bicycle disappear. The wave disappears unseen by him. When he stands up and looks around for the cause of his fall, the stage-floor is flat again. His suspicions fall on his legs. He tries to tear them out in a seated position, on his back, standing up. The heel against buttocks, holding the foot in both hands, he tears the left foot off, and then having fallen on his side the right one. He's still lying on his stomach when the bicycle rides slowly from left to right over the stage. He notices it too late and can't crawl fast enough to catch it. Pulling himself up and supporting his swaying trunk with his hands, he makes the discovery that he can use his arms for locomotion, if he moves his trunk in unison with the swing of his arms, swinging back to front, reaching forwards with the hands, etc. He practices the new mode of locomotion. He waits for the bicycle, first on the right side of the stage, then on the left. The bicycle doesn't appear. The person, who is perhaps a puppet, tears off his left arm with his right and his right with his left, simultaneously. Behind him the wave rises from the stage-floor to his head, so that he doesn't fall over. From the wings comes the bicycle and remains standing before him. Leaning on the neck-high wave, the person, who is perhaps a puppet, regards his arms and legs, which are strewn far and wide across the stage, and the bicycle which he can't use anymore. He cries a single tear with each eye. Two Beckett-spikes at eye-level close in from left and right. They stop at the face of the person, who is perhaps a puppet, he need only turn once to the right, once left, the spikes take care of the rest. The spikes are withdrawn, each with an eye on the tip. Out of the empty eyesockets of the person, who is perhaps a puppet, crawl a swarm of lice, spreading themselves black across his face. He screams. The mouth originates with the scream.

DEATH IN BERLIN 1

The pauper's graveyard rises, black, stone upon stone
The dead watching for the red doom
From their holes. It tastes like strong wine.
They sit knitting caps of soot along
the wall on the naked skull-bones
To the Marseillaise, the old battle song.

(Georg Heym)

DEATH IN BERLIN 2

Cancer-ward. Hilse. The Young Mason.

YOUNG MASON How are you doing, old man

HILSE If you're asking me,

Not good. But I'm only half

Of myself, cancer ate the other half.

And if you're asking my cancer, things are just fine.

YOUNG MASON I didn't know that. I thought

It was the stones they dropped off on your bones

At the construction-site, fourteen days ago,

Because you didn't go on strike.

HILSE I thought so too. Now I know better.

Once you talk to the folks in white coats.

They'll find you out. They don't miss anything.

YOUNG MASON To hell with the cancer. It'll stop growing.

HILSE You're no doctor. You don't have to lie.

We're a single party, my cancer and I.

My hand here won't hold a trowel any more.

My last beer stinks at the Rieselfeldern

Should I tell you what I'd still like to do, just one more time.

That's the one thing in the world, kid

Which you never get enough of. My word of honor.

You can take it from me. I've been through it all.

YOUNG MASON Yes.

So what am I supposed to do. She's a whore.

I thought she was the Virgin Mary.

And went on about her like an idiot

And noone said anything to me and everyone

Knew about her, you too, and you laughed

Yourselves silly over the idiot, who

Fished a whore from the gutter

And set her up as the Holy Virgin.

Did you all get it on with her.

Do you know what it feels like, old man

When you walk through Berlin with an angel

You think she's an angel, beautiful like no other

You've had before, and I can't count them

On the fingers of one hand, but none of them

Was like her, just seeing her legs

Is enough to knock you out, and

Now you walk through Berlin with her and anything

With a prick turns around and looks at her and

You think, everyone who turns around

Maybe he got it on with her.

If someone said to you for instance your
 Party, for which you scraped yourself raw
 And let you scrape yourself to bits, since you know
 What left and right is, and now someone says to you
 That it doesn't look like itself anymore
 Your party, from the filth up to its neck
 You'd hit the roof with no elevator.
 COME TO ME FROM THE GUTTER. Yesterday she told me.
 Everything. And I didn't know
 Until yesterday, how long a night can be. And now
 Comes the crazy part: nothing's changed.
 I'm knocked out just by looking at her.
 COME TO ME FROM THE GUTTER. Only sometimes
 A knife turns, slowly, between my ribs.
 COME TO ME FROM THE GUTTER. I asked her
 If she could lay a pipeline
 WATER FOR CANITOGA prick on prick.
 Ask me why. You know what she said?
 "I didn't count them." – So what am I supposed to do.
 She's pregnant. She says, it's mine.
 HILSE Did you bring her along.
 YOUNG MASON She's waiting outside.
Exit. Heartbeat. The dying begins. The Young Mason returns with the Young Woman.
 HILSE The Red Rosa. We meet again.
 Did the Spree wash the blood from your face.
 You look pale. Did they attack you
 The rats in the district canal. The dogs,
 The cowardly dogs. They're worse than
 The rats. And I'd wager anything you
 Preferred the drainage ditch from
 The meatpackers, where everyone knew you, than to
 EDEN. Yes, that's what their Paradise looks like.
 The Paradise of thieves and butchers.
 YOUNG WOMAN What's he talking about.
 YOUNG MASON I'll tell you later. Just listen.
 HILSE The water didn't hold you, Rosa.
 And if they boil us all down to soap
 No soap will wash away your blood.
 Was it cold in the movie-house. Did you know, Comrade
 That I first saw you so close
 I mean as close as now, in January
 When your eyes were blind, on the bier.
 We walked past twelve hours straight
 Then behind your coffin through Berlin
 Not a single word, and the skies were like lead.
 Now you look younger. *Mischievous*. I know why.

Do you recognize me. I am the Eternal Mason.
The pyramids in Egypt, a fortress
Against time, are my handwriting.
I built Rome, too, on seven hills
Anew after every fire and anew after every war.
The Capitol for example and the pillars
On which Caesar bled to death
The twenty-three stabs of the knife in the ribs.
And the skyscrapers in New York.
And it was always for the capitalists
Ten thousand years long. But in Moscow
For the first time I was my own boss:
The metro. Have you seen it. And now
I've walled up the capitalists
One stone one mortar. If you still had eyes
You could've seen the red flags
Through my hands, shining over Rhein and Ruhr.
YOUNG MASON Say something. Anything.
He's dying now.
YOUNG WOMAN I don't need you to tell me that – *The Young Mason prompts her.*
YOUNG WOMAN Comrade.
The red flags – *The Young Mason prompts her.*
Over Rhein and Ruhr. *The dying mason smiles.*
HILSE Is it too quiet for you out in Friedrichsfelde.
YOUNG WOMAN No. Sometimes we hear the children play.
They play capitalist and mason.
HILSE *laughs:* And noone wants to be the capitalist.
YOUNG WOMAN Yes. *Heartbeat stops. Silence.*

Footnotes

1. Ansorg is the name of a generic eyeglass store.
2. The German word for miller is “Müller”.
3. “Stuhl”: seat or chair, but used here in the sense of the throne.
4. “Windspiel”: greyhound, a pun on “Flötenspiel”, flute-playing.
5. “Maurer”: mason or bricklayer, also a pun on the German word for a free-standing wall or rampart, “Mauer” (the interior wall of a room is referred to as “Wand”).
6. “Handwerk”: craft-labor.
7. “Handwerker”: craftsman.
8. “Mundwerk ist besser als Handwerk” means literally, working with the mouth is better than working with the hands.
9. The character’s literal name is “der Aktivist”, or “the activist”, but Müller is alluding to the Eastern bloc institution of the model worker, the rough equivalent of the US or Western European company man.
10. The word he uses is “Arbeiterverräter”, literally “traitor to the working-class”, much more pungent than “rat”.
11. It’s important to remember that to an East German audience, the Communist Youth League (in German KJV, or “Kommunistischer Jugendverein”) would be as familiar and superficially unideological as the Boy Scouts would be to a US audience.
12. The line is deliberately misspelled, i.e. the Skull-seller mimics someone reciting the lines drunkenly.
13. Ernst Röhm, head of the paramilitary Stormtroopers, purged by Hitler in the infamous Night of the Long Knives.
14. “Wir sind wieder wer”: “we’re someone again”, a post-WW II German expression meaning that Germany is a normal, ordinary country again.
15. “Contergan”: German name for Thalidomide, a popular tranquilizer which was found to cause birth defects.
16. “Sunil”: popular German detergent.

17. The “apes” refer to Hear-No-Evil, See-No-Evil and Speak-No-Evil.
18. Hilse actually says “Juckt dich dein braunes Fell”, “Go scratch your brown hide”, an untranslatable political pun: the Stormtroopers wore brown uniforms, and for decades after WW II, the color brown was identified with the Far Right in Germany.
19. Ernst Thälmann (1886-1944) was a leading German trade unionist who became a leader of the German Communist Party in the 1920s. He was arrested in 1933 by the Nazi regime, and killed at Buchenwald in 1944. “Wenn dein starker Arm es will” is a quote from a 19th century saying of the German unions: “Wenn dein starker Arm es will/ alle Räder stehen still”, which means, “if your mighty arm so wills / all the wheels and gears stand still”.
20. “Sozi”: shorthand slang, not necessarily an epithet, for “Sozialdemokrat”, i.e. Social Democrat.
21. “Wer ist wir?”: inversion of expression, “Wir sind wieder wer”, as per footnote 11 above.
22. Orel was a Russian town near Kursk, southeast of Moscow. The Kursk-Orel salient was the site of some of the bloodiest battles of WW II between the German Wehrmacht and the Soviet Red Army in 1943.