



Judas

A Workers' Drama in Five Acts

Erich Mühsam

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1920

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Dr. KARFUNKELSTEIN: Yes, I would be very grateful for most precise details.

LECHAROV: Good. Write this! — The German proletariat has spilled the first blood for the triumph of peace and freedom. — It has entered down the via dolorosa of social revolution and has sealed with its blood the alliance with its fighting brothers in Russia.

Curtain

Dedicated to
Martin Andersen-Nexö
Poet, Friend, Comrade

CHARACTERS

Mathias Seebald
Raffael Schenk, typesetter
Frau Schenk, his mother
Flora Severin, student
Stefan Klagenfurter, iron-turner
Marie Klagenfurter, his wife
Trotz, worker
Dietrich, worker
Braun, worker
Färber, worker
Fischer, worker
Ernst Lassmann, blinded in the War
Mathilde Lassmann, his wife
Rosa Fiebig, worker
Fritz Rund, soldier
Fedor Vladimirovich Lecharov
Rudolf Tiedtken, man of letters
Strauss, Social Democratic editor
Tessendorff, police superintendent
Werra Adler, divorcée
Klara Wendt
Dr. Bossenius
Prätzold, innkeeper
Dr. Karfunkelstein, journalist
A streetcar driver

SCHENK (*he watches how Dietrich's corpse is laid on a stretcher and carried away. He stands in front of the staircase of the tavern and sees how medics set down a stretcher by Flora, too. Only over there are people still standing. Further back one still sees dead bodies lying. Schenk takes his revolver out of his pocket, exits toward the front right. Immediately thereafter a shot is fired.*)

FLORA (*recovers consciousness*): Raffael! — Isn't Raffael there?

LECHAROV: He'll come back maybe.

TIEDTKEN (*from the right, out of breath. Flora is hidden from him by those standing around*): It's terrible! Terrible!

FÄRBER: What's happened?

TIEDTKEN: Professor Seebald has been beaten to death by the soldiers, — and Schenk immediately killed himself right in front there.

FLORA: He's dead? — Raffael! — I would have so liked to kiss him one more time!

TIEDTKEN: Flora! — You?! —

FLORA: Get out of here! — Go! — What do you have to do with my death!

LECHAROV: Go! — She doesn't want to see you now! (*Tiedtken steps back.*)

Dr. KARFUNKELSTEIN (*enters from front right, notebook in hand, to Lecharov*): Please excuse me! Can I ask you for information?

LECHAROV: Be quiet, man!

FLORA (*sits up*): Don't lose the faith. — Revolution is coming. Communism — — (*dies.*)

LECHAROV: She is gone.

Dr. KARFUNKELSTEIN: Well, can nobody give me information?

FÄRBER: Blast it all, what do you want from us then?

Dr. KARFUNKELSTEIN: My name is Dr. Karfunkelstein. I am a correspondent for the Berlin morning paper. I must submit my report before six. Otherwise it won't get into the paper on time.

LECHAROV: You want to hear from us what happened?

TESSENDORFF: There, take the old one and the one with the bandaged head, and the female there. (*Trotz, Braun and Rosa are lead away.*)

SCHENK: Stop! You promised me no one would be arrested.

TESSENDORFF: The police does not feel obligated by such pacts. Only written agreements count.

TROTZ: We don't need your advocacy. Be ashamed, if you still can.

FISCHER: Judas! (*With signs of disgust and abhorrence all make way for Schenk, who staggers toward the right. From the background come medics with stretchers. One sees soldiers with bayonets still driving off individual groups.*)

LASSMANN (*comes on his wife's arm from the background on the right toward the foreground*): Tell me, Tilde — are many dead?

FRAU LASSMANN: I don't know either. Just come, come! — Oh, it's terrible. — And tomorrow the apartment as well.

SCHENK (*draws her aside in front of the tavern, signals to her to be quiet*): Here, take this, Frau Lassmann, for the landlord and for the coming days. (*Takes out his wallet, gives her the money.*)

FRAU LASSMANN: Well, but no — so much money! (*Schenk puts his hand to his mouth. Exit Lassmann to the front right.*)

SCHENK (*laughs out loud*): The thirty pieces of silver! (*He comes to the group of soldiers, in whose midst Seebald is standing.*)

SOLDIERS: Smash his skull right in, the traitor to the people.

SEEBALD: I am no traitor. (*He is jabbed by gun butts and stumbles.*)

SCHENK: Don't hit him — take me in his place! — He is the noblest and best!

SOLDIERS: What does the bloke want? — Oh, that's the one who betrayed his own comrades. (*Laughter and howling.*)

SCHENK: Mathias Seebald! — Forgive me!

SEEBALD: You wanted it to be different — I know, Raffael. (*He is shoved to the right amidst screams. He is seen to fall under a jab from a rifle butt. He is dragged away.*)

SERGEANT (*to the prisoners in the middle of the square*): Hands up! (*They exit, with hands raised, to the back right.*)

A streetcar conductress

A lieutenant

A sergeant

A waitress

Working men and women, Gentlemen, Ladies, Soldiers, Medics, People.

The action takes place on the 28th, 29th and 30th of January 1918 in a large German city.

ACT ONE

Stefan Klagenfurter's apartment. Large room. On the right, two windows. In the middle of the back wall, the door. Between the door and the wall with the windows, a cooking stove; next to that, the tap. Between the two windows, a simple chest of drawers; on top of that, a pair of photographs and a meager bookshelf. Beneath the near window, a rather large trunk. Over the stove, a rack for dishes, spice jars, etc. In the right-hand corner, a kitchen cupboard, from which hang hand- and dish-towels. At the near left, a black sofa with blankets. In front of that, a round, covered table and two black upholstered chairs. To the left against the back wall, the double bed protrudes into the room; next to it on the right, a night stand and chair; on the left, a primitive washstand (of sheet metal) and mirror. In the middle of the room, a large kitchen table with an oilcloth covering, along with a sewing machine and a couple of kitchen stools. Under the sofa table, a simple rug. On the left wall and above the sofa, a wall clock with pendulum. In the middle of the wall, prints of oil portraits of Marx and Bebel. Beyond those, framed photographs. Above the bed, a house-blessing. The windows have fine tulle curtains; in front of them, a pair of flowerpots. Over the large table, a petroleum lamp hangs down from the ceiling. The embers in the stove are glowing. Linen fabrics are spread out on the kitchen table.

It is about 3:30 in the afternoon. Frau MARIE KLAGENFURTER is working at the sewing machine; she pauses for a moment and breaks off the thread. Smiling, she lifts up the child's jacket, which she has sewn, in front of herself towards the light. She then stands up. The signs of advanced pregnancy can be plainly seen. She looks at the clock, shakes her head, goes nervously to the window, pokes around

Hold on for a short time yet — and trust in your leaders! Then there will soon be peace. (The workers slowly disperse. A couple of flags lean against the fence, others lie on the ground. In the foreground to the left a few, among them Rosa and Braun, busy themselves with the wounded Flora.)

TROTZ and FISCHER (*walk up to them. Lecharov stands nearby against the fence with arms crossed. Seebald, in the middle of the square, is mocked and threatened by the soldiers, Schenk in the middle alone.*)

STRAUSS (*goes up to Seebald*): That is your own doing, Herr Professor Seebald!

SEEBALD: Let us not argue about that.

TESSENDORFF (*goes about with some soldiers, points to different individuals who are arrested and lead to the middle of the square. There is already a whole line of them standing together; one notices many wounded and soldiers, including Rund.*)

SCHENK (*looks about absentmindedly, suddenly startled, rushes up to Flora*): Flora! — What's the matter?

FLORA (*weakly*): I think it's all over!

SCHENK (*sinks down next to her*): Flora! — My — —

STRAUSS (*to the soldiers*): There, — the red-haired one, he's one of the main agitators, arrest him!

TESSENDORFF: Stop! Nothing happens to Herr Schenk. — He is in the service of the police.

SCHENK: That's not true!

TESSENDORFF: Should I show the receipt?

TROTZ (*recoils in horror*): But that — can't be possible?

SCHENK (*bends sobbing over Flora*): Flora — do you understand me?

FLORA: I might not understand you. Why didn't you trust me? (*She faints.*)

ROSA: Is there no doctor coming? — We can't just leave her lying like this.

TESSENDORFF (*toward Seebald with 6 – 8 soldiers*): Here. That's him! — He's responsible for all of it. That is Professor Seebald. I pronounce you under arrest. (*Shows his identification. Soldiers grab Seebald, shove him back with the butts of their guns toward the center.*)

SEEBALD (*to Schenk*): Raffael! Raffael! — You shouldn't have done that!

SCHENK: Come here! Come here!! — They're dragging off Seebald!!

DIETRICH: Free him! — Free Seebald!! (*One can hear orders being shouted. The soldiers aim their rifles. The crowd slowly yields.*)

DIETRICH: Grab hold, whoever isn't a coward! (*Grabs Seebald, tries to tear him loose.*)

LIEUTENANT: Fire! (*Salvo. The crowd flies wildly apart, most into the factory yard, many between the trees and into the background. The soldiers continue to fire. Dietrich falls. One sees fleeing people collapse. Flora slumps down in front before the fence. From the background comes Strauss, waving a white cloth. The shooting stops.*)

STRAUSS: It's enough! No more shooting! (*Seebald is shoved back out from the circle of soldiers. Dietrich's corpse lies in front to the right. Trotz and Fischer step up to it, Schenk sways about alone utterly bewildered.*)

TROTZ (*takes off his hat, Fischer likewise*): Dietrich! — He died for my cause. — Why couldn't it have hit me, an old man? — He looks to heaven as if he doesn't comprehend at all that we've lost.

FISCHER: I'll close his eyes. (*Does it.*)

STRAUSS (*has in the meantime negotiated with the lieutenant*): Let me through! — I must speak!

TROTZ: Is he still here, too?

STRAUSS (*climbs up on the stone*): Comrades! You need have no more fear. I have seen to it that there will be no more shooting. The guilty will naturally be called to justice. The rest of you were incited. The Party will arrange so that no one who returns to work tomorrow will be disciplined. Go home now in peace. Now you have seen that this is not the proper means to end the war.

in the stove and takes a look into the pot of water which sits on top of it. She suddenly listens attentively. Footsteps outside become audible. The door is opened energetically. STEFAN KLAGENFURTER enters wearing a hat and overcoat.

MARIE (*arms around his neck*): Finally! They sure kept you for a terribly long time.

KLAGENFURTER (*kisses her*): Kitten! — were you very impatient?

MARIE: Tell me: How was it? Did they take you?

KLAGENFURTER: You'll hear all about it. — The vermin!

MARIE: My God! — First make yourself comfortable. (*Helps him out of the overcoat.*) Give it here! I'll put it outside.

KLAGENFURTER: I think not! — You take it easy in your condition, understand? And don't go running willy-nilly out of the warm room. I can certainly hang my own things in the closet. (*Goes out, leaving the door open.*)

MARIE: But tell me, Steffi, you're not fit for combat?

KLAGENFURTER (*back in the room*): Don't get worked up, precious. I'm not in the trenches yet. (*Sits down.*)

MARIE: But, tell me already!

KLAGENFURTER (*pulls off the rubber collar from his neck*): Just let me get my neck free first. It was a total waste getting dressed up extra nice in order to show the fools my naked throat. — Here, take my collar. Iron it again for Sunday.

MARIE (*sets the collar in the table drawer*): Alright, then, Steffi — how did it go?

KLAGENFURTER: Yeah, well, they gawked and poked at me. — Can I get a coffee, kitten?

MARIE: Certainly. It's ready. (*Busies herself at the stove and takes dishes out of the kitchen cabinet.*) But you're torturing me, dearest. Let me know, finally!

KLAGENFURTER: Ah, yes. Well, good: Ultimately, you'd have to know. Well — fit for active field duty.

MARIE (*to him*): Steffi!

KLAGENFURTER: Just take it easy, kid! Don't get upset, — now you know. — And still things aren't so far along yet. They won't be coming for me right away.

MARIE: You think so? — But think about it, for such a long time they had no use for you — and now all of a sudden: — in spite of the heart defect.

KLAGENFURTER (*laughing*): Yes, war is an even greater miracle worker than the holy mother of Lourdes. In time, it makes a hero out of the lamest cripple.

MARIE (*pours the coffee*): I have better coffee substitute now. There's sweetener. How does it taste?

KLAGENFURTER: Oh, yeah — it's alright. Think we'll live to see bean coffee with sugar and milk again? If we keep on "persevering" like we have so far, then our little one will eventually think that before he was born Germany was the land of milk and honey.

MARIE: Look, Steffi, what I made. (*Shows him the little jacket.*) The swaddling is finished, bonnet, too. Tomorrow I start with the knitting: shoes and socks.

KLAGENFURTER (*to her*): How happy we could be! — And now this nonsense. (*Kisses her.*) — If only one still believed in this sham, — but it's all so disgusting! — Old Trotz is already working on the crib, — and I might never be able to rock my little one in it!

MARIE (*hugging him*): Steffi! My Steffi! — Maybe there'll be peace soon — ?

KLAGENFURTER: Yes, peace! — We are fighting 'til "the last drop of blood", — namely, ours. The proletarians can bleed to death — and the great gentlemen make the most excellent profit from it. — Listen there! (*From the street comes the sound of soldiers singing; one can understand the words: "We will crush France triumphantly."*) — Ugh! One can begin to lose all hope when the soldiers themselves even — — . Ah, well, they have to sing. On command.

MARIE: Steffi! Don't you think that the factory could get you exempted?

Schenk, Flora, Trotz, Dietrich. The soldiers stand at the ready, positioned in front of the row of houses. To the right, behind the streetcar, countless helmets can be seen. The lieutenant stands with Tessendorff at his side in front of the car.)

TROTZ (*goes toward the soldiers*): You wouldn't shoot your own fellow countrymen!

SEARGEANT: Back off! — There's no negotiating here!

FLORA: Do you want to attack unarmed people!

SOLDIERS: Shut up, filthy pig!

SCHENK (*pulls Seebald aside*): Now's the time to risk it!

SEEBALD: What! You want to drive the crowd against this hoard?

SCHENK: No — you must do it. That will make an impression!

SEEBALD: Never! (*Schenk continues talking at him; they are screened by others.*)

DIETRICH (*jumps onto the stone at the entrance. To those gathered in the courtyard*): Comrades! You have dared to unleash soldiers on the unarmed work force!

CRIES: Boo! — Put down you weapons!

DIETRICH: But they won't dare shoot at us, if the red flags wave before us. Think of Comrade Klagenfurter! — Do you want to leave him to the claws of the military beast?

CRIES: No! No! — Klagenfurter must be freed!

FLORA (*walks up next to Dietrich*): To the armory, comrades! — We must have weapons!

CRIES: To the armory! — To the armory! (*The disorganized crowd presses forward and now stands in part in the middle of the square, opposite the soldiers. In the middle toward the front are Schenk and Seebald.*)

SCHENK (*pulls the revolver out of his pocket*): Look, you can't hold the crowd any longer. — Take this! Take the lead!

SEEBALD: Keep your weapon! — I don't carry weapons!

SCHENK: I beseech you, Mathias Seebald! (*Puts his hand on his shoulder.*)

SEEBALD: No! Not under any circumstances!

FLORA (*steps forward*): Raffael, finally! — Why are you people standing around here? It's high time! (*Marie walks off with many others.*)

SCHENK: Where is Seebald?

FLORA: I just saw him. — How are you feeling?

SCHENK: Thank you, I am fully rested.

FLORA: What do you make of it that there's no police here?

SCHENK (*looks at the clock*): The military will be here shortly.

FLORA: How do you figure?

SCHENK: At 3:30 sharp they will march up. They could be here any moment.

FLORA: But how is it that you know that?

SCHENK: I just know.

FLORA (*looks at him sharply*): Raffael! — You're scaring me. (*One hears a clock strike twice. The workers walk from the trees out over the square.*)

WORKER: The military is coming! — The military!! (*Great commotion. Workers stream out from the factory courtyard. Seebald, Lecharov, Dietrich, Trotz become visible. Lassmann, lead by his wife, carries a red flag.*)

LASSMANN: Follow me, comrades! (*No one pays any attention to him.*) Follow me! (*Is pushed aside.*)

DIETRICH: Forward, comrades! Overturn the streetcar!

MANY: The streetcar! — Barricades!

LECHAROV: They're out of their minds! What do they want with barricades, if they don't have any weapons!

SEEBALD: I will go to meet the soldiers, — talk to them.

SCHENK: No, professor! — Let them be! (*A mass of workers attack the streetcar, attempt to lift it from the tracks. The steps of soldiers marching up can be heard from the street to the back right. A lieutenant steps forward by the streetcar. Behind him, Tessendorff appears.*)

LIEUTENANT: Get back!! (*The mass flees into the factory courtyard. A few stand in front of the fence, among them Seebald, Lecharov,*

KLAGENFURTER: I've already thought about that. Only, they won't do it. They've got a steady supply of turners. And they're not too hot for me, anyhow, — they know my views too well. What's more — exemptions for A-1 people are almost always pointless.

MARIE (*in tears*): Oh, dearest! — I'm so scared!

KLAGENFURTER: Nonsense, precious! Be brave! — It'll all work out alright. I haven't been drafted yet. (*He takes a wooden pipe out of his pocket.*) — From 10 o'clock in the morning they left me standing around; there are many who still aren't finished yet.

MARIE: Better smoke a cigar today — after that torment.

KLAGENFURTER: You're right. I've already taken the day off work; it can be just like a Sunday. (*Takes a cigar from the chest of drawers and lights it.*) Disgraceful: 35 cents for the wretched mulch. For that much I used to have a cigar a day the whole week through.

MARIE: Bread's also gone up to 2 cents. And thread is hardly to be found anymore. It's terrible how everything's going up! (*Knock at the door.*)

KLAGENFURTER: Come in! (*Enter RAFFAEL SCHENK. Red hair, pale with chaotic freckles, a bit of a limp.*)

SCHENK: Good day, Stefan! Hi, Frau Klagenfurter! (*Extends his hand to both.*)

KLAGENFURTER: Greetings, Schenk! — Get out of your things!

SCHENK (*takes off his coat*).

MARIE: Just put it on the bed. — Steffi, the cigar!

KLAGENFURTER: Oh, yeah! (*Sets the cigar aside on the tray under a flowerpot by the window.*)

SCHENK: Nonsense! Smoke away! (*Coughs.*)

KLAGENFURTER: It's not important. The smoke's not for you. I won't lose the cigar.

SCHENK: How'd it go?

KLAGENFURTER: Just as it had to: A-1.

SCHENK: Dammit all! So they took you after all. — And your heart?

KLAGENFURTER: The heart! The doctor says: It'll hold for a couple of assaults.
MARIE: He said that? Ugh, how harsh! (*She cries.*)
KLAGENFURTER: Take it easy, kid! Think of your condition! And I'm not in the assault yet. Many things could change before then.
SCHENK: You wouldn't go, would you, Stefan?
KLAGENFURTER: How's that — not go?
SCHENK: I mean, if you're drafted?
KLAGENFURTER: I still have to think about it. Ultimately, I assume I'd have to.
SCHENK: It depends if you want to.
KLAGENFURTER: Yeah, yeah, — in theory —
SCHENK: In theory? Well, I think when something gets practical, it comes down to the application of theories.
KLAGENFURTER: So you seriously think I should refuse?
SCHENK: I would.
MARIE: For God's sake. Then they'd lock him up!
SCHENK: Probably. — Would you rather have your husband in the trenches or in prison?
MARIE: And what if they shoot him!?
SCHENK: That, too, would go faster out there than on the inside. — Or do you fear the shame?
MARIE: Oh, God, no. — But I don't know. — Oh, Steffi!
KLAGENFURTER: Calm yourself, precious! The matter still has to be considered.
SCHENK: What's there to consider? On the one side, there's capital making demands of you, of your life, your health, your happiness and your conviction, — on the other side, there's you, your wife and the child you're going to have. —
KLAGENFURTER: Good God, yes, yes.
SCHENK: And more important still: Your convictions, your proletarian honor, Stefan! You're a fighter and you know where we have to make our fight. And you want to let the enemy issue you

TESSENDORFF: At that moment I'll send forward soldiers to arrest him. And then you can call on your friends to help.
SCHENK: They won't fail.
TESSENDORFF: So I can count on you.
SCHENK: But please don't get it into your head that I am now one of yours.
TESSENDORFF: The police places no value on your sympathies. — But I would like to draw your attention to one more thing: Should you act contrary to the agreement, that is, should you yourself begin to doubt your courage, or however one calls it — get a guilty conscience —
SCHENK: Please, don't trouble yourself about my soul.
TESSENDORFF: Not in the least. I only want to say to you, there's enough military coming to surround the whole square. The intention is to use only small arms. If things should not go as desired, however, then there are in any case also machine guns and, worst comes to worst, flame throwers. Whatever escapes with its life will then be arrested. Now you know.
SCHENK: That's fine. (*Exit Tessendorff into the street behind, to the right. Schenk crosses over the square toward the factory. A number of workers meet him, among them Marie Klagenfurter.*)
MARIE: I just heard about it an hour ago. My God, if they just don't shoot him!
SCHENK: It's you, Marie!
MARIE: Thank God, Schenk! — You know that they have arrested Stefan?
SCHENK: Yes, just calm yourself. We'll get him out.
WORKER: That's right. We're marching to the military prison. — Klagenfurter must be free! (*More gather around the group.*)
MARIE: Don't you think that something could thereby happen to him?
SCHENK: Nonsense. — Just rest! — Go home and don't worry yourself unnecessarily.

SCHENK: What am I supposed to think?
TESSENDORFF: Let's not play around. At 3 o'clock sharp the military will move in. The arrests will be made by soldiers.
SCHENK: What arrests?
TESSENDORFF: Well, Seebald — and what do I know!
SCHENK: You assured me that aside from him no one was to be taken into custody.
TESSENDORFF: You made yourself potentially available, as well. You must signal the appropriate moment to move against Seebald.
SCHENK: Me? What's that have to do with me? — Kindly do your dirty work alone!
TESSENDORFF: Herr Schenk, I have a receipt from you with me.
SCHENK: And so you think you have me in your hand? You can have the money back, Herr Police Superintendent!
TESSENDORFF: The police does not undo completed business. Incidentally, you yourself were of the opinion just this morning that in the event of Seebald's presence we must agree on a new plan. Now, do you want him to send the people home? Surely there's no question in what vein he will speak. He will smooth things over.
SCHENK: That is not at all certain.
TESSENDORFF: You'll just have to find that out in advance. If he himself calls to action, so much the better: Then we won't even need to arrest him. Then we could only do harm with his arrest. You must, therefore, speak with him beforehand and give me a sign if he intends to put on the breaks.
SCHENK: What kind of a sign?
TESSENDORFF: Any kind. — You could, for example, put your hand on his shoulder.
SCHENK: I could also just straightaway give him a kiss.
TESSENDORFF: If you prefer.
SCHENK: No, no! — It just came to me, by comparison. Good then, I will put my hand on his shoulder.

a rifle and send you off against your own conscience and against your own class fellows?
KLAGENFURTER: It's all true, what you're saying. I've heard it myself often enough — from you, from Seebald, and said it to myself as well. Yet —
SCHENK: I'd like to know your Yet.
KLAGENFURTER: They'll make me.
SCHENK: Make you? One can make me refrain from something when one forcefully prevents me from doing it. But one cannot make me do something that I don't want to do.
KLAGENFURTER: They'll haul me off to the barracks.
SCHENK: They'll do that. And what else?
KLAGENFURTER: Well, then they'll put me in a grey jacket.
SCHENK: If you hold still.
MARIE: How terrible! — No, they'll restrain you if you resist.
SCHENK: If they restrain him, they won't be able to have him drill.
KLAGENFURTER: You're right, Schenk, it's the lesser evil.
MARIE: But I'm so scared of it all. — They'll torture you.
SCHENK: Don't get yourself excited before you need to, Frau Marie. For the moment they haven't even got him yet.
MARIE: What do you mean by that?
SCHENK: Very simple. When the notice comes, Stefan vanishes from the scene.
MARIE: And me? — And...and...when the time comes? —
KLAGENFURTER: That's still two months away, darling. But I won't be able to be with you then under any circumstances. Either they haul me away, then after four weeks training I'll be at the front; or they lock me up, — or I just go into hiding. Only — what would you live on?
SCHENK: Let us worry about that. What would she live on when you're a soldier? What Father State would give her for welfare, we members of the "Federation of New Men" will provide in a heartbeat.
KLAGENFURTER: Deal, Schenk. — I'll take the risk.

SCHENK (*shakes his hand*): You're taking less of a risk than all the millions who don't wish to risk it themselves.

MARIE: I'm terribly scared.

SCHENK: There's no reason for that. Besides, I'm definitely counting on the workers finally stirring.

KLAGENFURTER: Any new developments?

SCHENK: Russia is making an impression. Just think — , they've quit the war.

KLAGENFURTER: But they've paid a steep price for peace.

MARIE: But if they have peace!

SCHENK: That's what I say, too. We can't just leave them in the lurch now.

KLAGENFURTER: You mean because of the conditions of peace?

SCHENK: Yes, and because of the advance into the defenseless country.

KLAGENFURTER: It's disgraceful. I'm just afraid we won't get the masses to their feet because of that.

SCHENK: Something is supposedly about to happen in Berlin. Here Seebald must do it. He is the only one they listen to. — The others should be here soon, by the way.

KLAGENFURTER: What others?

SCHENK: Well, Trotz, Dietrich, Severin, Rosa and the rest.

MARIE: Coming here, — to our place?

SCHENK: Sure, I thought I had already mentioned it. I've asked for them to meet here.

MARIE: Then I'll need to go put on a different apron. (*Takes a white apron out of the chest of drawers and puts it on.*) And that mess there! (*Cleans the sewing materials up from the kitchen table.*)

KLAGENFURTER: But why to our place?

SCHENK: Because you weren't at work today. The comrades at Wachsmann are ending their shifts extra early today. There is already a feeling of strike in the air.

KLAGENFURTER: Do you believe that it'll come to a general strike, then? And when can things get that far, do you think?

of one's enemies, in short, things that all lead to setbacks and thereby to the unlimited extension of the war, then their blood begins to boil. I can tell you that.

TIEDTKEN: Most of them, though, don't believe in victory anymore.

STRAUSS: Some, who are befogged by these phrase-slingers. But the others — the vast majority! My dear fellow, they come to us, they have trust in us. Why, I've heard more than once: If we ever get that bloke, that Seebald, in our clutches, — he'll never escape in one piece! (*From the right, enter Schenk; notices the two, stands still.*)

TIEDTKEN: No — , but I wouldn't have imagined that.

STRAUSS: Sure, cursing the labor leaders is easy. But one of our sort, who from his youth on has done the detail work in the Party, who has taken part in helping to build the organization from its meager beginnings, — he knows the proletariat, he knows where the shoe pinches. You can believe that. We have the experience. We know now , too, how we get the people through this confusing time. — Realpolitik, my esteemed fellow, — that's what it comes down to; not rhetorical turns of phrase and such absurdities like that there! — Are you coming? I'd like to listen around a bit.

TIEDTKEN: Shall we go straight into the factory?

STRAUSS: I'd be careful. No, the moment will come yet. (*Takes Tiedtken's arm. Both exit into the background.*)

SCHENK (*comes slowly forward, past the tavern. Tessendorff steps out of the tavern, inconspicuously dressed.*)

TESSENDORFF: Herr Schenk!

SCHENK (*turns around*): Oh, it's you.

TESSENDORFF: Let's step forward here, where no one will see us. (*They stand in front of the stairway, which covers them.*) Seebald is here!

SCHENK: I know.

TESSENDORFF: Well, what do you think?

STRAUSS: Is that so? And we're the ones betraying the proletariat!

TIEDTKEN: Honestly, I have to tell you, I didn't at all like the call of the party and the unions on the same page as the threats of General Lychenheim.

STRAUSS: We must make it totally clear to the workers that they cannot in the slightest count on their organizations in this outrageous game.

TIEDTKEN: As far as I've heard from the workers, they were extremely indignant.

STRAUSS: How many workers then have you spoken to altogether? — And I'm familiar with the type you sympathize with. I know just what threads bind you to proletarians.

TIEDTKEN: Oh, what you you're getting at is no longer true. I've torn these threads.

STRAUSS: That was wise. But you should also give up your association with Seebald. He is a downright charlatan.

TIEDTKEN: But I beg you, Herr Strauss. — An individual of such standing!

STRAUSS: What do you know? Who does he have behind him? A couple of gullible literary men, — don't take my candor the wrong way; a couple of unsatisfied hysterical women and a couple of neurotic workers. And each admires him for something different: You aesthetes, for his philosophastery; — the old bags, because he tickles their fancy with his mystical eye-rolling; and the muddle-headed workers, because of his anarchistic ringleader's allure.

TIEDTKEN: But every person praises his idealism.

STRAUSS: You think so? — I only wish you could hear the soldiers talk about him.

TIEDTKEN: You mean the officers no doubt?

STRAUSS: No — the soldiers. They know precisely that everything depends now on gathering the remaining forces — and breaking through! You know, they have had it with the war, and if someone comes along now to interfere, right when it's nearing its conclusion, and preaches to them passiveness, desertion, love

SCHENK: In Berlin it seems just on the verge of success. Above all they want Liebknecht set free. Perhaps we'll need to be ready for battle soon.

KLAGENFURTER: You know, — I'm not so sure if Seebald could be won over.

SCHENK: Oh, you don't know him.

KLAGENFURTER: It's true: he has fire and sweeps everyone along. But now he is totally wrapped up in his club with students and artists. I distrust the intellectuals. As far as what matters to the proletariat, they know little.

SCHENK: There are exceptions. Just think of Flora Severin. And the aesthetes in the "Federation of New Men" are repulsive to Seebald himself. If anyone is a revolutionary, then it's him. He wants peace.

KLAGENFURTER: Revolution, too?

SCHENK: How can he get peace without revolution?

KLAGENFURTER: Yes, — but does he know that?

SCHENK: He speaks repeatedly about how only the workers can bring the war to an end, if they don't work for war anymore; — if they refuse to be soldiers; if they begin to think about themselves.

MARIE: Will that happen without violence?

SCHENK: No, certainly not. That didn't happen in Russia without violence, and over here the opposing forces are still greater, especially so long as they imagine that they will win!

MARIE: Then there would be war with our selves?

SCHENK: Without that it won't happen.

KLAGENFURTER: But there Seebald just won't go along any further. Every other sentence of his is: No violence!

SCHENK: He must! — Ultimately, he too will agree. Weapons break only under pressure.

MARIE: I think they're coming now (*footsteps are heard*).

KLAGENFURTER (*opening the door*): Come on in, everyone! (*Enter Braun, Fischer, Rosa Fiebig and Dietrich. Behind them in field grey with the cane of those blinded in war is Ernst Lassmann on the arm*

of Mathilde Lassmann. Greetings among a flurry of voices, out of which Dietrich's instrument resounds sonorously.)

MARIE: Lead your husband to the sofa, Mathilde. (*Room is made for Lassmann.*)

KLAGENFURTER: Well. Sit wherever you find a seat. Anton, go pull up the chest (*with Braun pulls the chest into the middle of the room*). Is this everyone? — Just lay all your things on the bed.

BRAUN: Trotz and Färber couldn't make it.

SCHENK: And Flora Severin?

DIETRICH: She probably needs to pick up her little poet at the café first.

SCHENK: Quit your joking!

ROSA: Isn't Rund here yet?

DIETRICH: Take a look under the bed! (*Laughs mightily.*)

(Everyone has at length taken a seat: On the sofa, Lassmann is on the left; next to him on the right, his wife; on chairs at the table are Klagenfurter and Braun. At the kitchen table, Dietrich and Fischer. Marie is sitting on a stool in front of the stove; Rosa has sat down on the trunk. Schenk stands leaning against the foot of the bed.)

KLAGENFURTER (*to Lassmann*): So, Ernst, how are things looking?

LASSMANN: It's all over with the looking.

DIETRICH: Those bastards, damn them! They can shoot out other people's eyes, instead of themselves going out of their minds from shame!

MARIE: Don't you want to take a seat, Schenk?

SCHENK: I'd rather stand. With Dietrich's bellowing I'd sooner or later fall out of my chair.

DIETRICH: Is it not true, what I'm saying? Did you read the news today? They've captured 40 locomotives and over 1,200 rail cars. And where? In Russia, where no one is fighting back anymore, where they've made peace — the scoundrels. Captured, they

SEEBALD: Yes, friend Lassmann, I am here. (*Grabs his hand.*)

LASSMANN: He is here, Thilde. Yes, let us both lead the way, you and I, — and I will carry the flag. — Today is an auspicious day. For me, it's as if I were getting my eyesight back.

SEEBALD: One must never give up hope.

LASSMANN: Oh, I am happy! — Long live freedom! Long live peace! (*People gather around the group.*)

DIETRICH: Long live revolution!

LASSMANN: And Professor Seebald!

A WORKER: Seebald is here, comrades! — Mathias Seebald! —

MANY VOICES: Cheers for Seebald! Cheers! (*Many come running, crowd around Seebald.*) Cheers for our leader! Cheers!

SEEBALD: I thank you, friends, but it's not a matter of my individual personality. We must work for peace.

VOICES: Long live peace! — Down with war!

FLORA: It's past 3 o'clock. — The people have to take their places.

LASSMANN: My flag!

TROTZ: Yes, we're going now. Come, Mathilde! (*Everyone exits into the factory courtyard. The whole square empties in that direction. Great movement in the courtyard. From the left enter Strauss, who observes the proceedings from the corner. He notices Tiedtken alone in the square.*)

STRAUSS (*approaches him*): Good day, Herr Tiedtken; — here, too?

TIEDTKEN: It surprises me to see you here.

STRAUSS: Duty! I must try to save the people from stupidities.

TIEDTKEN: You consider the whole thing a stupidity?

STRAUSS: Even worse: A crime.

TIEDTKEN: But I think if a man like professor Seebald puts himself in the lead, then it could only be serving the good.

STRAUSS: You are a harmless person, Herr Tiedtken. You live in your world of beauty and art. Seebald's words flow into you like honey. I tell you! The man is a most dangerous schemer.

TIEDTKEN: You likely don't know him. He really has a heart for the workers.

BRAUN: But when he drives right through the middle of the strikers!

SEEBALD: Violence is never the right method. — But what's with your head? Are you wounded?

BRAUN (*laughs*): Yeah, that's where the others used violence because I was standing strike duty.

FLORA: But Rund, in your uniform you should stick closer to the crowd.

RUND: Oh, there's a crowd of soldiers on hand. — Just look.

ROSA: But mostly just the wounded.

RUND: It doesn't matter. If all goes well, they won't be able to do me much harm.

TROTZ (*to Flora*): What's with Schenk, then? Isn't he coming?

FLORA: Naturally. He should be here any minute now. We just wanted to let him rest a couple minutes.

BRAUN: He wasn't in good shape today at all.

TROTZ: The poor fellow. Things just won't get right with his lung. His work is also not right for him. Always at the typesetter's box and breathing the lead dust.

FÄRBER: And then today's excitement, as well.

SEEBALD: Unfortunately, I made it even worse. Hopefully, his grudge won't hold.

FLORA (*aside to Trotz*): Do the people know about Klagenfurter?

TROTZ: Yes. They're all saying he must be freed.

FLORA: That's good. (*Back to the others.*)

(*From the back, enter Lassmann on his wife's arm.*)

FRAU LASSMANN: They are all standing over there.

DIETRICH: Our leader! — Lassmann, where's your flag!

LASSMANN: Yes! — Give me a red flag! (*Feels about.*)

TROTZ: You'll get one, Ernst, we're just about to go into the courtyard. One is already set out for you.

LASSMANN: Has Professor Seebald come?

say! Stolen is what they've done, stolen plain and simple, these damned Boches! In revolutionary Russia. In the land of freedom!

KLAGENFURTER: Not so loud, Dietrich! The walls aren't so thick!

DIETRICH: Naturally, everything's broken, everything's filthy in this country of lies. But the people, they can just hear it. My views are no secret. I hate it, — my so-called fatherland.

SCHENK: That's all well and good, Dietrich. But you aren't at a public assembly here. We have very important things to discuss which for the moment are of no concern to the neighbors. So don't shout, — do us the favor.

DIETRICH (*more quietly*): Sometimes I just can't keep it in, the rage. — That gang! Wretched —

BRAUN (*to Klagenfurter*): Kretsch asked about you, Stefan.

KLAGENFURTER: The foreman? But he knew I was at my medical examination.

BRAUN: He said you still could have come to work in the afternoon.

KLAGENFURTER: When did I get home, kitten?

MARIE: It was exactly three-thirty.

KLAGENFURTER: I wouldn't have gone in anyway.

FISCHER: I let him know it.

SCHENK: What? You, the big silent type, you told him where to get off?

FISCHER: Yeah.

KLAGENFURTER: Well what did you say to him, Fischer?

FISCHER: "You ass!" I said. (*Laughter.*)

ROSA: Kretsch is exempted, you know.

DIETRICH: So are all of them, these louts. To save their scrawny necks they crush the workers underfoot and wet their pants in front of the directors.

LASSMANN: A foreman pushed me out in order to get one of his wife's relatives exempted in my place.

FRAU LASSMANN: And this is how he comes back, — both eyes! And with my six children at home!

LASSMANN: And the other man is ten years younger and healthy and is still working at my position.
BRAUN: Yeah, you've been hit the hardest, Ernst.
LASSMANN: It would've been better, if I'd been annihilated completely.
SCHENK: Nonsense, Lassmann; when things get going we'll still need you.
LASSMANN: What could I still be any good for?
KLAGENFURTER: It's enough for you to just put yourself forward and show the people: This is what war is!
DIETRICH: Those dogs! (*He has sat down on the kitchen table.*)
MARIE: So how are things with you, Tilde?
FRAU LASSMANN: Oh, don't even ask. With the couple of pennies of welfare a person can't even manage the most essential items. And then the rent. I can't very well get a job myself, — with the little children. And who would guide Ernst?
ROSA: Everywhere now such hardship.
SCHENK (*has paced up and down a couple of times*): Yes, on the one hand. But we workers have it much too good. The high wages are spoiling everything.
DIETRICH: So the exploiters, they're supposed to not pay at all, perhaps?
SCHENK: Sure, but the workers' dignity has gone to hell. They're drinking champagne and forget that they have no bread.
DIETRICH: You're right there. They deserve to choke to death on capitalism!
ROSA: It's the worst with the munition workers.
FISCHER: And the women.
SCHENK: That is the saddest part, that women can be found for making grenades. Blood work, — and each one frees up a man for a hero's death.
KLAGENFURTER: Whether they could be won over for a strike — I'm not so sure about that. (*Voices can be heard outside.*)
ROSA: Here they come now. — I hear Rund's voice.

STREETCAR DRIVER: I couldn't have known that my car would be straightaway smashed in two!
DIETRICH: Serves you right. — Who stoops to strikebreaking!
STREETCAR DRIVER: But all the cars are in service today!
FÄRBER: That's sad enough!
STREETCAR DRIVER: A person needs to live.
STREETCAR CONDUCTRESS (*wearing a rosette, pushes forward*): That's nonsense. I know where I belong on such a day. You could have left your car where it stood, too.
DIETRICH: Bravo! — Yes, the women!
CONDUCTRESS: My husband is three years out and already wounded twice and now he's in Flanders again. I've had it with the children!
TROTZ: We are all proletarians! We belong together.
STREETCAR DRIVER: Yeah, well. — It's all the same to me. (*Exits into the background.*)
CONDUCTRESS: That's how they all are. Just so long as the paycheck shows up. (*Those standing around go away.*)
(*From the front right enter Seebald, Lecharov and Flora.*)
DIETRICH: Ah! Here come our friends. —
LECHAROV (*takes a look around*): There are even fewer than I had thought.
TROTZ: It doesn't matter. It's a start.
LECHAROV: It's more than that. If a man who seemed dead moves his little finger, one sees that he still can be revived.
FLORA: What's with the streetcar?
FÄRBER: The people stopped it. The passengers had to get out, and since the driver didn't want to come down, they pulled him out and smashed in the windows.
DIETRICH: That's right! And we cut off his current. That's what has to happen to all strikebreakers, those louts!
SEEBALD: No one should be forced to act against his will.

ACT FIVE

Afternoon of the same day. Square in front of the Wachsmann factory, the facade of which is partially visible to the left of the stage. Large forecourt, encircled from the front to about half-way up by an iron lattice fence built on concrete. The enclosure ends where the gateway should be. The gateway is hinted at through two four-cornered stones, of which one stands free. In front of the background to the left, a street runs at an angle into the open forecourt; lanterns on both sides. Way in the back one can see houses and chimneys. In front to the left, a narrow street leads past the fence. In the background, trees with left-over snow. In the back right, the corner of a house past which a street flows into the square, into which the view is blocked by a streetcar with broken windows and a free-hanging trolley pole. The rails lead over the square. Tram wires are spread out. To the right, houses behind; in front, a tavern, signified by a bunch of grapes, a staircase marks the entrance. The street in front to the left continues to the right, past the tavern. In the forecourt of the factory, many people with red rosettes. One sees red flags and placards. A crowd of people stand about around the streetcar. In the foreground, somewhat to the left, a group of workers, among them Trotz, Dietrich, Färber, Fischer, Braun, Rosa, Rund and a streetcar driver.

BRAUN: Yes, dear friend, you can't complain when you ride on a strike day. —

TROTZ: And then right into the middle of where the workers are gathering!

KLAGENFURTER (*toward the door*): Yes, — just come on in! (*Enter Fritz Rund, soldier, iron-cross, Trotz, white-bearded worker, Färber. Greetings.*)

DIETRICH: The house is filling up!

MARIE: Take off your things and have a seat. There's still room.

KLAGENFURTER: There's still room on the sofa.

ROSA (*to Rund*): Here, Fritz, come have a seat by me on the trunk. (*Trotz takes a place on the sofa, to the left of Lassmann, Rund on the trunk and Färber on a stool at the table.*)

FÄRBER: Well, Schenk, have you drafted a battle plan?

BRAUN: We could get started with the discussion now.

SCHENK: Isn't Flora coming? We have to wait for her.

FÄRBER: Yeah, she just wanted to pick up Tiedtken. She'll probably be here soon.

KLAGENFURTER: I agree, we shouldn't let ourselves be delayed any further.

SCHENK: Without Flora! But Stefan, how could that even occur to you?

KLAGENFURTER: If she just shows up soon! She'll get up to speed just fine.

SCHENK: There can be no talk of that. The best brain, the sharpest eye —

DIETRICH: The prettiest figure — eh?

SCHENK: Shut your mouth! (*Coughs violently.*)

DIETRICH: Hey, now, it wasn't meant like that, Raffael! — Was just a joke.

SCHENK (*excited and coughing*): No more of those jokes, please.

TROTZ: But I agree, too, we must wait for Severin. We all can't tell so precisely how things really stand. What do we know? — The newspapers!

FISCHER: Pure lies!

KLAGENFURTER: I just thought, — we'd have a better view of how things are with the workers.

BRAUN: What are the soldiers thinking, Rund?

RUND: Those who've already been to the front are mostly good.
But the young ones — especially from the country — still believe everything.

DIETRICH: It serves them right if they bite it at the front, — the idiots!

TROTZ: They took you, Stefan?

KLAGENFURTER: Yeah.

TROTZ: Do you think they'll come for you soon?

RUND: They're pulling in everyone now, and what's more, they're keeping lists about people's opinions.

MARIE: My God!

RUND: It's said they want to break through on the Western front.

DIETRICH: Break through from laughing!

FÄRBER: If they free up all the troops in Russia now — millions —

BRAUN: But the Americans —

ROSA: Do you believe then, Fritz, that they can do anything?

RUND: I can't know that.

MARIE: If only there was peace!

SCHENK: Peace? Then? — If they break through, then the war will have only just begun.

FÄRBER: I'm not so sure: — If they get Paris — and the U-boats — ?

SCHENK: And if they get all of France and England as well, then they'll still have nothing. The war will just last three years longer — or even ten years.

FRAU LASSMANN (*jumping up, combative*): Stop, it should just stop! My blind husband! My poor children!

LASSMANN: Calm yourself, Tilde! We must accept things as they are.

MARIE (*cries out*): My God! My God!

KLAGENFURTER (*goes to her*): Don't excite yourself, precious! Think of yourself!

TROTZ (*has stood up*): The women have reason enough for crying. But they have the most beautiful job of all. You must stand by us men when the time comes. If you forsake us, we are forsaken.

SCHENK: Not even if everyone, — even the comrades, — and even Flora condemn me?

FRAU SCHENK: No, never. I know you. — But we don't want to hope for that, right?

SCHENK: Who can see the evening at midday?

FRAU SCHENK: Are you feeling better now, my son? — You were so nervous earlier.

SCHENK (*stands up*): Now I feel better. — Now I've gotten off my chest what was weighing on me. My conscience is clear again.

FRAU SCHENK: He who has a clear conscience does the right thing, too.

SCHENK (*takes a rose from the vase*): There, mom, put that on (*fastens it to her apron string*): it is from the one I love.

FRAU SCHENK (*kisses him on the forehead*): May she make you really, really happy!

SCHENK: Now go into your kitchen and don't worry yourself about me any more, understand? (*Puts on his coat.*)

FRAU SCHENK: I have something good for you tonight — I've got three eggs. (*Nods toward him, exits into the kitchen.*)

SCHENK (*watching her*): You good, dear mother! (*Wants to go, remembers something at the door and returns.*) The weapon! (*With a side glance toward the kitchen door he quickly takes a Browning from the drawer and tucks it away. Exits quickly.*)

Curtain

friend, that he had done what I have done, — then I wouldn't ask him anything more, I would say: The rogue! And never want to have anything to do with him again.

FRAU SCHENK: But, child, you're making me very scared.

SCHENK: But no! I just want to know whether you understand me right. — It's a guilty conscience that makes me ask myself: How would you feel if some one else did it. And I couldn't explain it to anyone at all afterwards either, — I couldn't excuse myself at all.

FRAU SCHENK: Even to Flora?

SCHENK: Flora? — She might have done the same thing in the same situation. — Naturally, she might not have. — But would she nonetheless understand it from me — ?

FRAU SCHENK: Would you understand then, if she had done it?

SCHENK (*after long consideration*): I don't know, mother. I suppose I wouldn't.

FRAU SCHENK: Maybe it would make you feel better if you were to tell her.

SCHENK: When it's all over and has turned out well, then I will tell her, too.

FRAU SCHENK: I'm sure Flora will understand you. — I almost think heaven has sent her to you.

SCHENK: I believe that too. — But if I will ever be able to talk with her about everything like with you, — I don't know about that.

FRAU SCHENK: But why ever not, my boy?

SCHENK: Oh, mother, you don't know how good it is that you never ask about anything.

FRAU SCHENK: You have to decide for yourself how much you want to tell me.

SCHENK: Come, mother, I have to give you a kiss. (*She bends down over him.*) — There. Now I know everything I wanted to know, — you won't ever doubt me, mother — right?

FRAU SCHENK: No, certainly not, Ralf.

SCHENK: First of all, we must not abandon ourselves. Only the proletariat can create peace. And there'll be no peace as long as there's no revolution.

DIETRICH: Bravo! We must rise up! General strike! Revolution!

TROTZ: Revolution — yes! For peace — yes! — But what is peace? Revolution must bring about socialism, otherwise it won't bring about peace as well. Maybe I'm not yet too old to experience it.

(*Knocking. At the same moment the door opens. Flora Severin enters, behind her Rudolf Tiedtken.*)

FLORA (*still in the door*): Comrades! Good that I find you all together. We have no time left to lose. Berlin has risen up. (*General excitement, lively chaos.*)

DIETRICH (*audible through the noise*): Our moment! Now to the masses! Into the street! (*Wants to go to the door.*)

TROTZ (*stepping in his way*): Dietrich! The mind of a child with your 50 years of age! Right now we need to stay here. Right now we need clarity above all!

SCHENK (*loudly*): Quiet! (*General silence.*) Do you know any more details, Flora?

FLORA: A special newspaper edition came out. — Tiedtken can read it aloud.

TIEDTKEN (*pulls the paper out of his pocket*): Here it is. (*Reads.*) "To the people! Mislead by enemy agents and unscrupulous agitators, —"

DIETRICH: Naturally! Those scoundrels!

BRAUN: Keep it down, Dietrich!

TIEDTKEN: "— the workers of several factories in Berlin have laid down their tools. They are making the outlandish demand that the government ask its enemies for peace, and they threaten the government with the institution of workers' councils. —"

SCHENK (*to Flora*): Thank God! No demands about wages.

TIEDTKEN: "Conscious of their duty to their fatherland, the vast majority of the labor force has not heeded the ridiculous request to declare a general strike. Above all, the labor force's appointed representatives, the Social Democratic Party and the labor union commission, have explicitly refused any association with the traitorous elements."

DIETRICH: Aha! Aha! There they are!

TIEDTKEN: "Even so, the extent of the movement cannot yet be precisely ascertained, —"

TROTZ: That sounds a little better.

TIEDTKEN: "— and smaller outbreaks of the criminal undertaking have already occurred in other locations, though largely extinguished in their infancy. — There exists the reasonable suspicion that in our city as well isolated individuals are seeking to bring unrest and resistance into the ranks of the working population. The authorities have precise knowledge of these individuals."

MARIE: Steffi, do you believe that?

KLAGENFURTER: Be calm, darling. That's just to scare us.

TIEDTKEN: "Trusting in the tried and true discretion and patriotic sentiment of the local workforce, I most emphatically warn against any participation in conspiratorial activities. For three-and-a-half years the German people have now stood in a heroic defensive battle against a world of enemies. The exemplary accomplishments of our field grey heroes have kept the borders of our supremely beloved homeland free from the horrors of hostile invasions. The Russian colossus lies shattered on the ground."

DIETRICH: And now they trample about on it and plunder it, the louts.

BRAUN: Quiet! We want to hear.

TIEDTKEN: "The dauntless crews of our U-boats are just about to bring our bitterest and most underhanded opponent, perfidious Albion, to its knees. Hold out just a little while longer — and all enemies, prostrated, will beg us for a peace which will serve Germany's honor and security and will ensure the existence of the

SCHENK: No — no. There's nothing I haven't — I have the utmost trust in Flora. I would like to tell it to her, too. But you should know first.

FRAU SCHENK: Just say it. — It won't be anything dishonorable.

SCHENK: That's what I want to find out from you.

FRAU SCHENK: No, I know that already. You wouldn't do anything dishonorable .

SCHENK: Mother, up to now haven't you always understood everything that I've done?

FRAU SCHENK: As much as I could with my little understanding — always.

SCHENK: What would you say, though, if I committed what thoroughly appeared to be a terrible act?

FRAU SCHENK: Whatever appears so need not actually be terrible!

SCHENK: I think so too, mother! — But can you imagine a person having a guilty conscience over something that he did, regardless of whether or not he thinks it right that he did it?

FRAU SCHENK: Yes, — that depends I suppose on how it turned out. Then sometimes one finds that it was the wrong choice.

SCHENK: No, mother — before; when one doesn't even know the consequences yet.

FRAU SCHENK: Where is this guilty conscience supposed to be coming from? No, I don't think so.

SCHENK: But, mother, it's true.

FRAU SCHENK: A person only gets a guilty conscience when he himself finds his act to be bad.

SCHENK: Listen to me, mom. — I have done something because I had to do it and because I believe that it was necessary. But for someone who doesn't precisely know everything about how one has come to it and why it must be this way, it is maybe the worst thing that a person can ever do.

FRAU SCHENK: Well, my boy I still don't know —

SCHENK: You don't need to know. But you can tell what I'm feeling. — See, if I were to hear from some other person, from my closest

not? Pay attention! I'll tell you: Because I am a proletarian — and you are — a bourgeois!

SEEBALD (*takes his hat*): Farewell, Schenk. I hope you will come to judge me differently — perhaps even today. (*Wants to go.*)

LECHAROV: I will accompany you, Mathias. — (*To Schenk*): A person must not let himself go too far. Perhaps you are right in the matter, but you are wrong to speak that way to Mathias Seebald. How are we to wage war against capitalism if we don't maintain peace with one another? (*Schenk is silent.*) Now — think it over. Good bye, comrade Schenk. (*Gives him his hand.*) Comrade Severin is staying here, I suppose, — right?

FLORA: I think, Raffael, it is best for you if you are alone for half an hour.

SCHENK: You want to leave, too?

FLORA: Lay down for a bit. I'll tell your mother she should call you at 2:30. — Alright?

SCHENK (*gives her his hand*): If you say so. — I'm a little tired. (*Seebald and Lecharov go first out the door.*)

FLORA (*watches them out, then kisses Schenk*): Be strong, my dearest! — We both need to be strong today!

SCHENK (*gives her hand a long kiss*): You're right.

FLORA (*opens the kitchen door*): Mother Schenk!

FRAU SCHENK: Yes, dear child.

FLORA: We'll leave Ralf alone for a bit. But remind him at 2:30 sharp to get going. (*Exits.*)

FRAU SCHENK: Do you want to lay down, my boy?

SCHENK: No, mother, sit with me! (*He opens up the folding chair, so that he sits on it half-reclining. Frau Schenk pulls up a chair next to him.*) I have to say something from the heart.

FRAU SCHENK: And so you send your Flora away and get your old mother?

SCHENK: She might not understand me yet the way you would.

FRAU SCHENK: Yes, my God, — it takes time for love to become trust.

German people for all time. — In this moment, it is necessary that we pull together our remaining forces. Whoever goes on strike now is knocking the rifle from the hands of our brave soldiers and committing treason against the fatherland. I therefore forbid any strike, any gathering in the street, any meeting not registered in writing 48 hours in advance. Whoever calls out for a strike in the factory or elsewhere, whoever distributes fliers, holds rousing speeches, spreads untrue rumors or in any way violates my orders will be prosecuted for treason and immediately arrested. Riotous assemblies will be met with indiscriminate armed force!
Commanding General

Baron von Lychenheim.”

DIETRICH: They can just come, these dogs!

SCHENK: Yeah, then we just need to know what we have to do.

FLORA: Keep reading, Rudolf, there's more.

BRAUN: I'm curious to hear that.

TIEDTKEN (*reading*): “Fellow party members! Organized working men and women!”

FÄRBER: What? On the same page?

TIEDTKEN: Immediately below. — So then: “The Social Democratic Party and the Syndicate of Independent Labor Unions most decidedly disapproves of the attempt by workers, misguided or fed from unclean sources, —”

TROTZ: Unheard of!

TIEDTKEN: “— to stab in the back the proletarians fighting at the front in this moment, in which we are expecting the victorious resolution of the war. We urgently beseech the members to maintain proletarian discipline, not to let themselves be carried away by irresponsible agitators, who are likely in the pay of the Entente, —”

FÄRBER: Again.

DIETRICH: Those dogs.

TIEDTKEN: “— to unauthorized actions, and to immediately bring to attention anyone who undertakes to spread confusion. —”

DIETRICH: Sons of bitches! They must be murdered!

KLAGENFURTER: Keep it down!

TIEDTKEN: "Proletarians! The German government has demonstrated that it wishes to end the war soon as it is possible. Its offer of peace to the enemy was rejected, however, with ridicule and mockery. We must therefore persevere a short time yet. After the war the time will come when we workers will also assert our demands. Now no disunity among Germans! Only the working class itself would bear the harm. Trust in the appointed leaders of the proletariat, — that is the surest and fastest way to bring about the much longed-for peace.

The Social Democratic Party:

By order of: Gerhard Weber.

The Syndicate of Independent Labor Unions:

By order of: Jakob Tamm."

SCHENK (*hands on his back, has paced excitedly back and forth*): We cannot lose any time. In three days everything must be brought to a standstill — at the latest.

DIETRICH: In three days? — Tomorrow morning!

TROTZ: How will you do that then, young man? It must be well organized. Maybe we can manage it by the day after tomorrow.

FLORA: Wait a moment. There are telegrams attached to the newspaper: The number of strikers is estimated at 100–150,000.

SCHENK: If that's what they're admitting to, then it's 500,000.

FLORA: In Leipzig, Halle, Frankfurt and in the Ruhr district movements are supposedly underway.

FÄRBER: The miners! Bravo!

FLORA: Everywhere an intensified state of siege.

DIETRICH: The cowardly gang!

BRAUN: There's nothing there about military interventions?

FLORA: No — apparently it's not yet —

DIETRICH: They should know better than that! The soldiers won't shoot at their own brothers!

TROTZ: Are you so certain about that?

This morning you taught me a lesson about where my place is, since the whole venture was spurred on by me. I accepted this lesson from you and will stand where my duty places me. And there I will act as my duty requires me.

SCHENK: Perhaps then you will also warn the masses about unfavorable influences!

FLORA: Raffael! — I beg you!

SEEBALD: Oh, is that the reason for your anger, — what I discussed with your mother?

SCHENK: He warned of you, Flora! — You are to be my undoing —

SEEBALD: I did not say that.

SCHENK (*in a mighty outburst*): There's no sugar coating it, Herr Professor! But you're deceiving yourself if you think the proletarian can be dragged along on a string wherever one wants. I don't need your instruction, — understand me? I know myself where I belong, and I know better than you what the proletariat needs, — much better.

FLORA: Don't get yourself so worked up, Raffael! — Please don't! (*Puts her hand on his shoulder.*)

SCHENK (*frees himself*): Let go of me! There needs to be clarity between that man and me. — Yes, just take a look at me!

SEEBALD: Calm yourself. — I know you are a good person.

SCHENK: I am not a good person at all. But I know my way. — And it goes straight ahead, Herr Professor Seebald! Straight ahead — even if it leads over corpses! — And even if it leads over you! — Perhaps you'll see for yourself. — I've got no need for your soft chirping about peace, not in the slightest. — If you want to know: I want blood to flow today! I wish they'd shoot into the crowd! — The proletariat should feel that revolution is no walk in the park, — but costs blood — — blood!!

SEEBALD (*strongly*): Stop this gruesome confession, man!

SCHENK: Aha! That's not so sweet to your ears, right! — But you wouldn't understand. You can't understand me at all. — And why

SEEBALD: But you as a woman must recoil from the extreme!

LECHAROV: I understand well your point of view. I understand Flora and Schenk, also. It won't depend on whether you want to avoid bloodshed at any price. It will also not depend on whether the others want to take the ultimate risk. Rather, it will depend on whether the demonstrators will want to fight for their future, or whether they will be cautious. And on that will also depend the behavior of the soldiers.

FLORA: You don't believe that the soldiers will shoot no matter what?

LECHAROV: No person does something no matter what. Are the soldiers not proletarians? They are flesh of their flesh and blood of their blood. Just as the ones are, so are the others. When they see determination, total fearlessness, enthusiasm among the workers for peace and freedom, then among them too the feeling for peace and freedom will come alive, and they will have the courage for solidarity. But if they see hesitation and fear and cautiousness, then that will be a sign that the proletariat is still not free of subservience, and so they too won't be free of subservience and will do what the officers command.

FLORA: That's why it would be up to you, Professor Seebald, to speak to the masses in such a way that they forget their fear and risk it all at any price.

SEEBALD: And I am supposed to call on them to storm the military prison — the unarmed workers?

SCHENK: No, to storm the armory, — and then the armed workers to the barracks and the palace.

SEEBALD (*walks about uneasily*): No! — That — won't do! — I won't be a part of that.

SCHENK: Then you better stay home instead! At least there you'll do no harm.

SEEBALD (*remains standing before Schenk, excited*): But now I must forbid you to speak to me in this tone. You have no right to make the accusation that I could harm the people's peace movement.

ROSA: Fritz says —

TIEDTKEN: Yes, — what do you think, Herr Rund?

RUND: The recruits will shoot, of that I'm certain.

FÄRBER: Couldn't you older soldiers dissuade them?

RUND: That's hard to say. No one has the courage. So what should happen? — Comrade Schenk, you wanted to work out your plan today for such an event, regardless.

SCHENK: I see the situation like so: First we need fliers, — simple handbills. — What's the date today?

ROSA: January 28th.

SCHENK: Good, we have to see that we can already act by the day after tomorrow, if possible. It can't be known what will happen in Berlin in the meantime. — Flora, you write it.

FLORA: Can't Tiedtken do that?

SCHENK: No, you! I personally have no mistrust of you, Herr Tiedtken. But you are a literary type. You are an intellectual.

FLORA: And I am a student, — not then also an intellectual?

SCHENK (*fanatically, before her*): You! No, you belong to us! You have that — that special something. You are a proletarian!

FLORA (*extends her hand to him*): I hope so.

TROTZ: That's true. That's imbibed in the cradle, even when it's a silken one. It can't be learned. — No offense, Herr Tiedtken.

TIEDTKEN: But I thought — , my conviction —

BRAUN: That you can show in the coming days.

KLAGENFURTER: But now down to business!

SCHENK: Then listen. The fliers in short: The war swindle, Brest-Litovsk. The raid in revolutionary Russia, Berlin, the duty of solidarity, — out! — I'll print the story at night in my shop.

DIETRICH: And we'll bring out the bills tomorrow.

FÄRBER: So that you can just sit tight then?

SCHENK: Nonsense. Each one takes a small stack and distributes them unnoticed before work or during lunch break to every workstation. No one can know where the bills came from. After

the distribution nobody can be in possession of more than one bill. Does that work?

FISCHER: Easy.

SCHENK: Good. You're a calm person, Fischer, you can judge. — That happens tomorrow. Furthermore, during midday break, or early before work even, each one must get a few absolutely reliable comrades —

TROTZ: Absolutely reliable, — Dietrich!

DIETRICH: You don't have to tell me.

KLAGENFURTER: Well, you've sometimes been a bit over-trustful.

DIETRICH: Me? — You'll all get to know me!

FLORA: Keep going, Schenk!

SCHENK: So, then — you must make sure that every large factory is gone over with fliers by completely trustworthy people. You must this very evening run and find the relevant comrades. Everything must come off as planned —

BRAUN: Yes — and then?

SCHENK: Just listen. — The most important part is: We need Seebald. No one dares go near him.

FÄRBER: If only you're right about that.

SCHENK: He is a famous scholar. If he makes common cause with the workers, then it will make a powerful impression on everyone. — He must come along into the streets.

DIETRICH: Absolutely, into the streets! That's the main thing!

FLORA: That's my view, too. It must become a large demonstration, — a closed march with red flags —

MARIE: They will shoot into the ranks!

FLORA: Frau Marie, we women must cheer the men on, but not dishearten them. There's shooting in the field too.

SCHENK (*close by her*): That is beautiful, what you're saying; — that's good.

ROSA: I will stitch red rosettes tonight.

KLAGENFURTER: That's right, little roses. — Kitten, there's work for you, too.

SEEBALD: That that which is now taking place is in the end my doing. Therefore I cannot remain aloof. Come of it what may.

SCHENK: And what do you want to say to the workers?

SEEBALD: That they should stand firm in their refusal to work for war. I will show them what payment awaits them when they will have defeated violence with their non-violent deed.

SCHENK: You mean now, when the masses are rising up, you want to give the same popular speech that they've heard from you a dozen times already.

FLORA: Raffael!

SEEBALD: How am I supposed to respond to that?

FLORA: There has been a new development, Professor. Comrade Klagenfurter received the order this morning to report immediately for military service. He fled. They arrested him, however, and wanted to immediately put him in uniform. But he resisted and now he's locked up in a dark cell. You must touch on this in your speech.

SEEBALD: He did that? — Oh, that is beautiful, that is glorious! Yes, I must present that to them as an example!

SCHENK: No, that won't cut it. You must call on them to free Klagenfurter!

SEEBALD: That would be tantamount to preaching violence. I won't do that. I can't do that.

SCHENK: Then you will do it, Flora — or the blind Lassmann will do it.

SEEBALD: Raffael! Don't demand anything impossible. Do you want to bear the responsibility for driving your class comrades, your fellow workers to their deaths? Is it not already enough with the misery and the blood out there in the field? Must there be slaughtering and killing also among those who are still back home?

FLORA: It will hardly be a peaceful stroll through the city then either, if you give the demonstration no specific goal. And do you want to simply leave Klagenfurter to his fate then?

FLORA: Tell me, Comrade Lecharov: — Wouldn't you like to speak instead of Seebald?
LECHAROV: That would be good, with my broken German.
SCHENK: No — Flora must speak.
FLORA: He's got that into his head somehow.
SCHENK: You know what it depends on. The crowd must move against the military.
LECHAROV: If the military will be there. If it doesn't lay in wait for the march along the way.
SCHENK: No, it will come to the Wachsmann factory.
FLORA: Do you know that for sure?
SCHENK: Yes. *(After a pause.)* — The police superintendent told me.
FLORA: The police superintendent was here?
SCHENK: He wanted to search for Klagenfurter.
LECHAROV: The man showed you his cards? Not bad!
SCHENK *(coughs slightly)*: He hinted at it.
FLORA: Well tell us then, what did he say?
SCHENK: He wanted to know whether — Seebald would be there.
FLORA: But you didn't let yourself in for a discussion?
LECHAROV: You wouldn't have given him any information?
SCHENK *(embarrassed)*: No — of course not. But... *(There's a knock at the door.)* Enter!
SEEBALD *(enters)*: You are still here, Raffael. — That is good.
LECHAROV *(approaches him)*: Greetings, Mathias. What's it going to be?
SEEBALD: The gods only know. I don't foresee anything good.
FLORA: Are you going?
SEEBALD: Yes. I've made up my mind.
FLORA *(squeezes his hand)*: That's right, Professor. I'm happy. Raffael, did you hear? Professor Seebald is coming.
SCHENK *(stands with arms crossed near the stove)*: For all I care.
SEEBALD: Raffael Schenk! Let us be friends again. This morning — that was hideous. Let us forget about it. You have convinced me.
SCHENK: Convinced, — of what?

MARIE: But I have to make the baby's clothes.
KLAGENFURTER: Don't you want to help our cause now?
TROTZ: No, let her be. The little one needs to be well received. Marie is working for the future — and that is our duty. — Everyone has his place.
FLORA: Onwards, comrades — onwards! It's evening already. We must get to work!
SCHENK: Tomorrow evening the "Federation of New Men" is meeting in the "Lodge". I will speak with Seebald there. He must be at the head of the march.
LASSMANN *(stands up, ecstatically)*: No, — no! I'll go at the head. I want to carry the red flag. I want to lead the workers. — Me! — That will be like seeing the sun again — .
TROTZ: Yes. He should take the lead. The blind man should be the first to see peace and freedom.
KLAGENFURTER: It's getting dark. Is there oil in the lamp, wife?
MARIE: Yes, there's still enough for today — and tomorrow I get more.
(Klagenfurter lights the lamp, the dim light of which becomes slowly brighter with the vanishing of the daylight.)
FLORA: I'll write two fliers then.
SCHENK: Two?
FLORA: Yes, — one for the workers and one Rund will take along into the barracks.
SCHENK: Right, I'd forgotten that.
RUND: I'll take care of distributing them.
DIETRICH: The fight is on! They're in for it — these bandits!
TROTZ: Dietrich, you're coming along to my place.
DIETRICH: To your place — now?
TROTZ: Yes, you'll help me make red flags and placards.
FÄRBER: I'm going. Have to find at least five comrades, tonight. Who's coming along?

FISCHER: I am.

BRAUN: Me too. The Wachsmann firm will be taken care of, at least.

Now I'm going over to comrades from Bartels and Moser and from the motor company.

ROSA: But we're all going now?

FLORA: Can I just start writing the fliers right here?

MARIE: Certainly. I just need to go out to pick up dinner now, and Stefan won't bother you.

KLAGENFURTER: Me? Do you think I'm staying home, then? I'm going with you, Braun. We must divide up the comrades we visit along the way. I'll go first to Thielmann and then to Schulz. (*General departure. In the dark corner with the bed one can see individuals putting on their overcoats. Chaos of voices.*)

SCHENK: I'll work through the night at the printers. The bills can be picked up at my place tomorrow morning at 6 o'clock.

ROSA (*to Rund*): If you don't have anything to do right now you can always come along to my place and help. (*The two exit.*)

FRAU LASSMANN: Careful, Ernst. — Come — this way — here's my arm. (*Exits with him.*)

(*Amidst loud conversation, exit Braun, Fischer, Färber and Klagenfurter.*)

TROTZ: In my old age will I yet have the pleasure?

FLORA: It must succeed, Comrade Trotz!

SCHENK: It must succeed!

DIETRICH: We'll show them, those dogs!

TROTZ: Come on now! Are you going with us, Schenk?

SCHENK (*with a glance at Tiedtken*): That's probably best. When can I pick up the manuscript?

FLORA: In half an hour at the latest. (*Schenk gets ready.*)

MARIE: I'll get going then, too. — Is it cold outside?

FLORA: Not terribly. But be careful, it might be icy. Rudolf, you'll accompany Frau Klagenfurter, right?

already there, send comrades to meet up with the groups already marching in, so that every worker knows what has happened.

BRAUN: Maybe this way we can still win over a few more for the strike.

DIETRICH: March! March! — To the guns! (*Dietrich, Färber, Fischer, Braun, Trotz, Rosa take the packages and pickets.*)

TROTZ: Come, get ready, Schenk!

SCHENK: Leave me a while! — I'll be there on time.

FÄRBER: Then what did we drag the whole mess over here for?

FRAU SCHENK: Leave him be! He's not in top form. — Stay with him for a bit, Flora!

SCHENK: We're going to go together, right?

FLORA: Actually —

TROTZ: Just stay, Flora. — It's enough if you're there on time.

FLORA: Alright then.

RUND: Let me go first. Come on, Rosa. — Together with all of you I would be even more conspicuous in my uniform.

ROSA: Good bye! (*Exits with Rund.*)

DIETRICH: So. — Does everyone have their bundle? — Off to battle!

TROTZ (*slaps Schenk on the shoulder*): — You have to hang in there this one more day, my boy! We need you. But once we've done it, it'll be time for you to properly recuperate.

SCHENK (*smiling with difficulty*): I will hang in there today.

BRAUN: Well, let's go, comrades!

FISCHER: Be on time! (*Exit Braun, Färber, Trotz, Dietrich, Fischer.*)

FRAU SCHENK: Won't you lay down in bed for a little while, Ralf? You walked too fast outside, I'm sure.

SCHENK: No, mother, it's nothing, really. It's just — the anticipation.

LECHAROV: One has nothing to worry about. It's just stage fright, the excitement before a test.

SCHENK: Yeah, it's probably something like that.

FRAU SCHENK: But now I have to go into the kitchen. I'll look in on you again. (*Exits.*)

RUND: I shouldn't even have gone out on the streets in uniform. It is strictly forbidden. But I had to let you know.

FÄRBER: How did you find out?

RUND: Well, I was in the barracks when he was brought in. Two hours ago already. He refused to put on the uniform. They wanted to get him dressed right away.

BRAUN: And what did they do with him?

RUND: Locked up in a dark cell. — I'm afraid it will be terrible for him.

LECHAROV: You've got a rallying cry there for the workers today.

FLORA: That's true. — Comrades! *(Everyone, including those from the kitchen, form a half-circle around Flora, who stands with Schenk, Frau Schenk and Lecharov in the foreground to the right.)* Comrade Klagenfurter has been arrested and refuses to do military service.

DIETRICH: Bravo, Klagenfurter!

FLORA: He is well known among the workers, right?

TROTZ: Everyone knows him. He is the opposition leader for the metal workers.

FLORA: His case must become known to all. It is incredibly important that a demand of local and immediate significance can be posed thereby.

TROTZ: The workers must declare: Work won't resume until Klagenfurter is free.

LECHAROV: Now the whole action is starting to find its footing!

SCHENK: We have to get him out!

LECHAROV: Get him out is easy to say. One has to know how the soldiers will react.

RUND: That is entirely uncertain. — Many are bad-mouthing the strike and Seebald especially.

SCHENK: But I think that ultimately most of them will come over to our side.

FLORA: Who can predict that? — But there's no time to lose. Take the flags down to the spot, explain things to the people who are

TIEDTKEN: Shouldn't I wait for you?

FLORA: No, I still have to speak with Schenk later.

SCHENK *(already at the door)*: I'll come soon. *(Exits with Trotz and Dietrich.)*

MARIE *(to Tiedtken)*: One moment. *(She goes out and closes the door behind her.)*

TIEDTKEN *(already in his coat)*: You're acting strangely toward me, Flora.

FLORA: My dear, revolution is in the air.

TIEDTKEN: Do you distrust me, then?

FLORA: Not your sincerity. But you must notice, though, how the comrades all see you as an intruder. You really just don't belong.

TIEDTKEN: But until now? — You at least —

FLORA: Until now you were a handsome boy. And I am a woman.

TIEDTKEN: You don't want anything more to do with me?

FLORA: Rudolf, you're asking like a high schooler. Now it's a matter of the people, the proletariat. — See, you don't understand anything about that. You don't know what that is. You only know the words and you marvel at my life within this world as a foreign spectacle. You are an aesthete, a man of letters. — I am from the other world.

TIEDTKEN: But you loved me!

FLORA: Yes, Rudi, — certainly. That was fine up to now. But what is coming demands all of me. I can no longer let my body and my spirit go on living separate lives.

TIEDTKEN *(moving toward her)*: Flora! Give me a kiss!

FLORA *(pulling away)*: Stop that, I beg you.

MARIE *(enters, in a broad cape, which somewhat hides her condition, headscarf)*: Well. I'm all ready. — Here's paper and things for writing. *(Takes a blotter, ink bottle and paper from the chest of drawers.)* See you later!

TIEDTKEN *(lets Marie out the door. Quietly)*: See you later, Flora. *(Exits.)*

FLORA *(likewise)*: Farewell, Rudolf. *(Turns away.)*

(She goes back and forth a couple times in the room, stays by the window. Takes a cigarette case and matches slowly from her pocket. Lights a cigarette. After a couple of steps she goes decisively to the big table, sits down, her face toward the public, and writes. After a short time, footsteps outside. There's a knock.)

FLORA: Yes!

SCHENK *(enters)*: Did I come too early?

FLORA *(laughs)*: So far there's just the heading.

SCHENK *(hesitating)*: Should I come back later?

FLORA: No. We have to talk.

SCHENK: I think so too. *(He coughs.)*

FLORA: You are sick, Schenk? — Oh God, the cigarette!

SCHENK: No, please smoke. It's only momentary. *(He gives a little cough and visibly fights the urge to cough.)* I like to see you smoke.

It suits you.

FLORA: Really? Sit with me.

SCHENK *(throws his overcoat onto the bed)*: Come to the other table. *(They sit at the round table.)* How do you see the situation?

FLORA: We must not be pessimistic.

SCHENK: But you are?

FLORA: N — o! Just at the moment I don't believe it will be successful.

SCHENK: And even so you want to set the masses in motion?

FLORA: Above all. The proletariat must feel with its own body the rulers' animosity toward workers. Until it does, it will be useless.

SCHENK: Blood will flow, Flora!

FLORA: I know that. They will most definitely shoot.

SCHENK: The best men will be locked up.

FLORA: Without a doubt.

SCHENK: How brave and strong you are!

FLORA: Yes, unfortunately the landlord wouldn't agree to anything.

I still have no idea what we'll be able to do.

SCHENK: That's alright. — I've already found a solution.

FLORA: You?

SCHENK: As a matter of fact. — I can help. *(Coughing fit.)*

FRAU SCHENK: What is the matter, my boy? You look terribly uneasy.

SCHENK: It's nothing. *(Pulls himself together.)* How do you judge the situation, Comrade Lecharov?

LECHAROV: What should I say? — One will have to see.

SCHENK: Seebald will likely stay home. — Eh?

LECHAROV: That's what I wanted to hear from you. — I believe he was here.

SCHENK: Yes, — yes, certainly. — No, he didn't say whether he's coming. — I hardly think so.

FLORA: You are so remarkably nervous, Raffael. Are you in a bad mood?

SCHENK: Oh, not at all. *(Coughs slightly.)* Not in the least. — It's just all the people —

FISCHER: Let's go on ahead!

FLORA: Yes? — Would you prefer that?

SCHENK: You? — Not you! — Please stay!

FÄRBER *(calls into the kitchen)*: Finish up! We're going.

DIETRICH *(in the doorway)*: Did you see the placards, Schenk? — Magnificent — no? It will be festive!

SCHENK: Yes, it is all very good. *(A knock.)* Come in! *(Rund enters.)*

FRAU SCHENK: Good day, dear Herr Rund. — Rosa is in the kitchen.

ROSA *(in the kitchen door)*: Be right there, Fritz, we're just packing up.

RUND: I have very bad news.

FLORA: What has happened?

RUND: Klagenfurter has been arrested.

SCHENK: Damn it!

DIETRICH: Just let me finish! We came there together. The little toad of a niece who she had with her last night opened the door. Then she came into the hallway herself, the gracious lady.

ROSA: Didn't she even let you inside?

DIETRICH: Not a step! Well, Stefan came out with it, what he wanted, — merely accommodation at her place until 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Well, the two looked at each other as if Satan wanted to take quarter with them. And then the little one started in first: Oh, but that won't do! — Oh! but that would be dangerous for us!

FRAU SCHENK: Impossible!

DIETRICH: And then the old one! — What could we possibly be thinking! — The police might come into her house. — I really wanted to let her have it, the goat, — but Stefan already had me by the sleeve and then we were glad when we were back outside.

FLORA: A fine lot, these aesthetic ladies!

FRAU SCHENK: But where might he be staying then?

DIETRICH: He wanted to go to Professor Seebald!

FRAU SCHENK: Oh God, he won't have met him, he was here with Ralf.

LECHAROV: Seebald was here? — Did he agree?

FLORA: It seems not. Schenk hasn't been here since. (*The door opens. Enter Schenk.*)

SCHENK (*slight nervous cough*): Well, well. — So many people. — Oh yes, the flags. — Ah, good day, Flora. Nice that you're here! And Comrade Lecharov, you too.

LECHAROV: You've spoken with Mathias Seebald? — Well?

SCHENK (*coughs harder*): But one can hardly turn around here. — Do the work in the kitchen! (*He opens the kitchen door. Rosa, Dietrich, Trotz exit into the kitchen with the placards. The door stays open.*) Are you wounded, Braun?

BRAUN: Small skirmish at the outpost.

SCHENK: Were you at Lassmann's, Flora?

FLORA: The two of us must stand together, Schenk. — Listen to me: The people are still completely blind to everything that's happening. — The war is lost for Germany.

SCHENK: An understanding can no longer be reached?

FLORA: Not after Brest-Litovsk. The question is this: Will the defeat come through revolution, or will revolution be the consequence of the defeat? Revolution out of despair over military failure would be the greatest misfortune for the proletariat. Our revolution would not be taken seriously abroad, and at home they would attempt to appease us with little reforms.

SCHENK: Worst of all would be if we allowed them to get as far as an offensive in the West. If they manage to break through, the war will go on for years.

FLORA: And the rabble lets itself be snookered once again, hangs out flags, signs war loans and cries Hurrah for Kaiser and Hindenburg. There is only one way — the one which Bolsheviks have taken. The war must be sabotaged by the revolution. The German people must force the defeat.

SCHENK: But won't they do a Brest-Litovsk with us?

FLORA: Only if we first lose the war militarily. Then Entente imperialism can do with Germany whatever it wants. The proletariat over there will then have little interest in stopping it, — least of all if we're now allowing the raid into Soviet Russia. Then the war will be started and brought to its end by capitalism, and victorious capitalism will despoil the corpses of the vanquished. That is obvious.

SCHENK: Germany itself provides the example.

FLORA: If we bring an end to the war through insurrection, however, then the victors will refrain from imitating the example the Germans are now showing them.

SCHENK: Their proletarians won't allow them.

FLORA: Definitely not. But then victory for Entente imperialism is no victory any more, — and revolution will break out in all countries.

SCHENK: World revolution?!

FLORA: World revolution! — And the triumph of socialism, of communism. It all depends on the German proletariat.

SCHENK: But you don't believe it will succeed?

FLORA: Not yet. It must yet become a real rebellion, no attempt by a minority which remains stuck in its shell. The moral impression remains the same, even if we are defeated this time as well. The people need the lesson.

SCHENK: Do you believe then that a real uprising will come about?

FLORA: I fear the military less than — the labor leaders.

SCHENK: Yes. That is the poison in the body of the German proletariat.

FLORA: If we should succeed in demolishing the Social Democratic Party and the labor unions, then we will have succeeded, — even if superficially we lose.

SCHENK: We need councils, — workers' and soldiers' councils.

FLORA: These too I will demand in the fliers. — Now the most important thing is that we keep all party leaders away from the movement.

SCHENK: That's exactly why Seebald must be at the head.

FLORA: It would be good, but he is — a pacifist, even if he goes farther, even if he preaches Tolstoyan ideas. I fear, Schenk, he is just a preacher!

SCHENK: No — no! We must speak with him. We will win him over.

FLORA: But how much will be won when he tells the masses: Weapons down!? — We need a man who calls to them: Get your guns!

SCHENK (*takes her hands*): Yes — yes. The strike is useless if it does not become an uprising. — (*Reflective.*) That depends first on getting Seebald into the street. Once we've brought him that far, then we can force him to act.

FLORA: How — force? — He will advise a passive demonstration.

SCHENK: Even when the others become active? His friend Lecharov was there in Russia in 1909. He will push him.

BRAUN: The guy lunged at me with a knife. It could have gotten ugly.

DIETRICH: These gangs of strikebreakers! — Shame I wasn't there!

TROTZ: You probably couldn't have been much help either.

DIETRICH: That's an open question.

FLORA: What's all that you've brought with you?

TROTZ: Forty red flags and twenty placards.

DIETRICH: We can show you a couple. (*He opens up a package with four-sided signs.*) Here! Down with the war! — There — we'll put that one up top on the picket. (*Does it.*) They'll read it there, those men of violence!

ROSA (*opens the fastening of a heap of pickets, the sheets are bound on top in paper*): The sheets for the flags are big enough, right? (*Spreads a flag out.*)

LECHAROV: Very pretty red.

DIETRICH: It will make quite a picture — ha! — Here, look here (*reads off signboards*): Long live free Russia! Peace, Freedom, Bread! Up with the international brotherhood of peoples! (*Färber, Fischer and Braun on the bed and Trotz, Dietrich and Rosa at the table are busy with the things.*)

FLORA: You've done splendid work.

FRAU SCHENK: Ralf will be happy when he sees it. — Where can he be for so long?

FLORA: Did you get Klagenfurter accommodated this morning, Comrade Dietrich?

DIETRICH: Oh, I still need to tell you. — She didn't take him, the damned hag!

FLORA: Didn't take him? — But he is somewhere safe right?

DIETRICH: Hopefully! — We separated after that. He thought it was safer if he went alone.

TROTZ: Dietrich probably cursed the broad so loudly that the passersby started to take note.

into the crowd and arrests what it can grab. — Well, the proletariat will learn with time.

FRAU SCHENK: Oh God, but that would be horrifying.

FLORA: Do you really think that that is intended?

LECHAROV: That they have absolutely no police and absolutely no military in the street is not a good sign. But what do I know.

FLORA: And you wanted to advise Schenk to call off the whole demonstration?

LECHAROV: I didn't want to advise anything. How could I think to? I just wanted to say what I observed. Can I know if they don't perhaps want the undertaking to have this effect? Now I have told you. The rest you must know for yourselves.

FLORA: I don't suppose you know how Professor Seebald has decided?

LECHAROV: I have not seen him yet today. (*There is a knock.*)

FRAU SCHENK: Come in! (*Enter Trotz, Dietrich, Braun, — the latter with bandaged head —, Färber, Fischer, Rosa Fiebig, all with large packages and long pickets. Chaos of greetings.*)

DIETRICH: Here we have the emblems of the revolution! — Where should they go?

TROTZ: The best is probably to set everything on the bed.

FRAU SCHENK: Feel free.

FÄRBER: Where is Schenk, then? Is he not home?

FRAU SCHENK: He should be coming any moment.

ROSA: Hasn't Rund been here yet?

FRAU SCHENK: No, not yet.

ROSA: He was going to pick me up here.

FLORA: It looks like you've been poorly mistreated, Comrade Braun.

BRAUN: It's not so bad. I was standing strike duty at the motor company —

FRAU SCHENK: Yes, Herr — Herr — —

LECHAROV: Lecharov, Comrade.

FRAU SCHENK: Herr (*chokes on the name*) has already told us.

FLORA: There are Christ-types. —

SCHENK (*suddenly*): If I were just a little more healthy, I would freely become a soldier — in order to be on-hand when it goes against the workers.

FLORA: Against the workers?

SCHENK: But, yes! — In order to cross over at the decisive moment.

FLORA: Then you would have to play act the whole time until then?

SCHENK: And how! (*Thinks it over.*) Maybe I should have never been open — about my convictions.

FLORA: Never been open?

SCHENK: To work in concert with the enemy — and then —

FLORA: — betray him!

SCHENK: Yes! The enemy teaches people how to act. — Could be that Seebald too will first need to be brought around to his duty by the enemy: when they lay hold of him personally.

FLORA: They won't do that. — In Russia they didn't do anything to Tolstoy either.

SCHENK: I know. Seebald is the idol of the masses — and his reputation in the whole world. A scholar — a philosopher. —

FLORA: They don't dare touch him. The educated bourgeoisie also stands up for him, — the students.

SCHENK: I believe in them least of all. But all the same. — If it won't work otherwise, Seebald must be sacrificed.

FLORA: Sacrificed?

SCHENK: That means he must be at the most dangerous position. — And he must call for the assault himself. Then they will reach for him too.

FLORA: But you love Mathias Seebald?

SCHENK: Me? — For him I could die at any minute. He is a magnificent person, the purest and best. He is my model, my master.

FLORA: And you would sacrifice him?

SCHENK: If the cause demanded it — naturally!

FLORA (*has stood up, runs her fingers through his hair*): Is there any crime, Raffael, you would refuse the revolution?

SCHENK: Whatever serves the revolution, — how can that be a crime?
FLORA: You are a complete person. We should stick together.
SCHENK (*takes her hands*): That we should! — Flora! — I want to be your friend where you need me.
FLORA: And total trust — always and everywhere!
SCHENK: Total trust! — Only one thing: it's not selfishness — —
FLORA: Just say it! —
SCHENK: Flora, — if you love Tiedtken, — it's your business. But — he should not be your comrade.
FLORA: I've sent Rudolf away.
SCHENK: Completely?
FLORA: Yes. — Are you satisfied? (*She kisses him on the forehead.*)
SCHENK (*pulls her to him*): I have loved you now for a long time — a long time.
FLORA (*frees herself from him gently*): We'll seal the deal —
SCHENK: For life?
FLORA: For the deed, Raffael!
SCHENK: The deed!!

Curtain

LECHAROV: Strauss. He warned against acts of violence, and said the agitators and inciters are certain to find their punishment, they should just not let themselves be misled and should go peacefully about their work. Then the crowd disbursed, and I read one of the yellow bills which were posted on the factory: "Whoever stays home from work without authorization is dismissed."
FLORA: That will be difficult for them if the whole factory goes on strike.
LECHAROV: What more should I say? I went to the "Swan" to get lunch. On the way I saw: Of twenty proletarians one wore the red ribbon. I thought to myself while eating: What is to happen? — and came here.
FLORA: What is to happen? — That's been settled, I should think.
LECHAROV: Yes — on paper. But how do you want to produce a play when the actors don't take the stage?
FLORA: But you don't mean to say that the demonstration wouldn't take place. If at Wachsmann everyone has taken the day off, at Bartels and Moser the half of them, — then you count the smaller and extremely small businesses, as well.
LECHAROV: Certainly the demonstration will take place. But it will be ridiculous, minuscule. The city has four hundred thousand inhabitants, that makes with clerks and lower officials a good hundred thousand proletarians. Let's say at most three thousand individuals participate.
FLORA: Wachsmann alone has over four thousand workers.
LECHAROV: Teach me to know the proletariat! I took part in Russia already in the beginnings of the movement in 1903. They stop working — as far as I'm concerned, they do that and say afterwards they were terrorized. Not even a fifth of those on strike will go into the street. — Believe me.
FRAU SCHENK: But that would be a big disappointment for Ralf.
LECHAROV: The bourgeoisie is again more clever than the proletariat. It waits calmly until it has the few storm troopers of the revolutionary working class all together. And then it opens fire

LECHAROV: It's true. We'll leave it. — So I'll tell. I went through the city at 11 o'clock to see: What is up with the strike? What will the German workers do? — At first it was like I was in the bathtub. As if there was no war in the world.

FRAU SCHENK: How's that?

LECHAROV: Well — normally when one goes out everything is field grey. Soldiers of all ranks and types of weaponry. Today, no uniform in the streets. As if the military had been abolished.

FLORA: And no guards?

LECHAROV: Not a guard, not a soldier. As if extinct.

FRAU SCHENK: But that's funny.

LECHAROV: I went on further to Bartels and Moser. What a difference. Also strike captains, also no police, — but I could clearly discern that work was going on. In front of the entrance, proletarians, men and women — and they were arguing with the strike captains. I made inquiries: Half were working, half on strike.

FLORA: I knew it. There are a lot of Christians and yellows there.

LECHAROV: Good. The people thought after the midday break more will stay away. — I went on to the motor company. The midday whistle had just blown. And people came out just like any other day. In work smocks, with blackened faces. Groups formed and talked excitedly back and forth. Finally, I saw a throng of men standing around a couple of people and they hit a proletarian with a red emblem.

FRAU SCHENK: Hit? — But that's disgraceful.

LECHAROV: As I approached he was lying on the ground and bleeding. I know him. It was comrade Braun. He comes to the "Federation of New Men", too.

FLORA: Naturally. Braun is an exceptional comrade.

FRAU SCHENK: He comes to see Ralf often.

LECHAROV: Then I saw how one spoke to the crowd. It was the editor of the "The People's Herald".

FLORA: Strauss?

ACT TWO

The evening of the next day. Clubroom of the "Lodge". In the foreground, a narrow room spanning the whole width of the stage. Adjoining it, without a door, is a long room leading into the background which breaks through the wall in the middle at a right angle and is approximately half as wide as the the room in front. The entrance to the second room is flanked by two buckets with leafy plants. In the front room to the left, a piano with swivel stool. Against the back wall to the right, a bench with armrests; in front of that, a longer table with a colorful restaurant tablecloth and chairs. To the right, a window covered by wooden shutters. To the left of the exit, a small cupboard with the emblems of student fraternities. Above that, two crossed rapiers. On the walls, images of the German Kaiser, Hindenburg and other military leaders. Over the bench, draped flags in German, Austrian, Hungarian, Turkish and Bulgarian colors. A rug covers a part of the floor. Electric lamps arranged over the piano and to both sides of the entrance. In the back room can be seen through the planters a long, uncovered table with chairs at both sides and all the way in the background a large frosted glass door lighted dimly from behind. In the front room, bright lighting which sets the more weakly lit second room in a vague light. When the glass door in back opens the lighting thereby changes.

The front room is empty, in the second room there is the buzz of voices, the movement of different individuals can be dimly perceived. From them separate themselves Werra Adler, an older, but youthfully attired individual, and Klara Wendt, a young girl, who walk into the foreground arm in arm.

WERRA: And here, you see, after the discussions the innermost circle usually remains together — in completely internal conversation.

KLARA: I suppose Herr Professor Seebald is always on hand?

WERRA: Our master! — Everything comes together around him. Oh, I'm so happy that you will meet him today.

KLARA: Me too, — but, to be honest, I am somewhat nervous. — Such a famous man. —

WERRA: Such a great man, Klärchen! — But you have nothing to fear, — he is not arrogant.

KLARA: One can see that just by how many simple workers are here.

WERRA: You can believe me: Of them I'm often outright jealous. Our sort sometimes gets the impression like one is being tolerated, he so favors the lower folk.

KLARA: But after the lectures — here in the back — I suppose the more educated participants are to be found together?

WERRA: That is different. Sometimes he immediately sends us betters away. — You have seen the lame redheaded one in there?

KLARA: The pale person who is always coughing?

WERRA: That is his favorite; an ordinary journeyman book binder.

KLARA: Just think!

WERRA: He almost always stays with him here; even when there are just piano recitals left, or a young poet, for example Herr Tiedtken, recites poems.

KLARA: So, can these people understand it at all then?

WERRA: The master believes so, yes. — He is so good! (*In the background chairs are pulled; loud talking. The innkeeper Präzold comes forward, behind him ladies and gentlemen, among them Dr. Bosse-
nius and individual workers, including Schenk and Klagenfurter.*)

PRÄZOLD (*looking around*): Herr Professor is not yet here then?

Dr. BOSSENIUS: Must you speak with him?

FRAU SCHENK: But Trotz and Dietrich don't ring our bell. Well, I'll have a look. (*Goes out and returns with Lecharov.*)

LECHAROV: Is comrade Schenk not at home? — Ah, good day, Comrade Severin! I ran over, as much as I could, to find Comrade Schenk.

FLORA: We expect him any moment. — Is there something special?

FRAU SCHENK: Please have a seat, Herr — Herr — —

LECHAROV: Thank you. I won't be staying if Herr Schenk isn't here.

FLORA: But you can tell me.

LECHAROV: Whether there's something special? — Indeed, very something special. The revolution isn't going according to plan — it seems.

FLORA: What's that supposed to mean?

LECHAROV: At the motor company the workers are beating up on each other instead of beating up capitalist society.

FLORA: Who is beating — who?

LECHAROV: From what I've been told, it started when someone wanted to stop the strike captains from performing their duty.

FLORA: Did the police stop them?

LECHAROV: Certainly not. The police are nowhere to be seen, and the military even less so. — And what for? When the good proletarians are doing their jobs for them?

FLORA: Can't you tell us in context what has happened?

LECHAROV: I can that. — I'll sit down first, may I?

FRAU SCHENK: Wouldn't you like to take off your coat, Herr — — ?

LECHAROV: Lecharov, please. — We have already met earlier.

FRAU SCHENK: I know — certainly. The name was just so hard to remember.

LECHAROV (*takes off his coat, sits down on the recliner, wants to take out a cigarette.*)

FLORA: We don't want to smoke. Schenk will be coming home any minute. — You know — his lungs —

FRAU SCHENK: Only, with his illness, — he inherited it from his father. But I always keep thinking he can still get better.

FLORA: Naturally. Why not? He is still young.

FRAU SCHENK: You won't leave him because of his affliction, right?

FLORA: Perish the thought! How could you think that?

FRAU SCHENK: Well, you see — it's happened to him once before. It was over a year ago now. He had a sweetheart, — she was a nice enough girl, Annie. He wanted to marry her, and all of a sudden she threw him over and went off with someone else. She had no use for a sick husband, she said.

FLORA: But that's outrageous.

FRAU SCHENK: Oh, he was so bad after that. He got so worked up that he was coughing for weeks.

FLORA: At the moment it's not so bad with his chest, I think.

FRAU SCHENK: This morning he wasn't well at all — Professor Seebald was here. —

FLORA: Was here?

FRAU SCHENK: Yes, — and he must have gotten terribly agitated. He didn't even say goodbye to him. I had just come home, and afterward the professor spoke with me. I was to put Ralf on guard against you.

FLORA: That could mean anything.

FRAU SCHENK: And when I told that to him he had a horrible attack. And then afterwards there was someone from the police here, — and that must have rather upset him, too.

FLORA: From the police? — Ah, probably because of Klagenfurter.

FRAU SCHENK: I don't know. The man was here a long time, — and then Ralf left right away. He always does that when his chest is feeling tight. Then he walks for a couple of hours in the park, — and that helps him. — But he must be coming back soon now.

FLORA: The comrades wanted to be here by one. Oh, I bet that's them now. (*Doorbell.*)

PRÄZOLD: Maybe it's not even necessary. I would just like to tell the ladies and gentlemen that the today's meeting cannot be.

LADIES: Oh! I see! — Well, why not then?

PRÄZOLD: Well — another new order has just come through that any kind of meeting, even club meetings, are forbidden. I'm sorry about it myself. But what am I supposed to do?

KLARA: Then we have to leave?

WERRA: Oh, Herr Innkeeper, let us just stay long enough until we've greeted the master. — Yes? — please!

SCHENK: Herr Präzold, — it's alright.

PRÄZOLD: How's that? — What do you mean?

SCHENK: I mean you have done your duty and notified us of the prohibition.

Dr. BOSSENIUS (*to Schenk*): You intend to stay here, then?

KLAGENFURTER: But I can still get a glass of beer, Herr Präzold?

PRÄZOLD: But I would like to please ask the gentlemen — — ultimately, I will be held accountable.

SCHENK: What can happen to you then, if you entertain a couple of guests? — Send us the girl, please.

PRÄZOLD: Yes, — naturally — — right away! (*Wants to go, turns around once more.*) Only, please — no lectures can be held under any circumstances. — (*Exits.*)

Dr. BOSSENIUS: But I have misgivings about this circumvention. — Ah, there comes Herr Strauss.

STRAUSS (*stepping forward*): Good evening, all around. What sort of uprising is this then?

Dr. BOSSENIUS: You know, Herr Strauss, of the prohibition against club meetings?

STRAUSS: Oh — I could have guessed it. After the latest reports that arrived at the editor's office. —

KLAGENFURTER: Is there something important, new?

STRAUSS: Yes, well — the strike is spreading. The most disturbing reports are coming from Austria; in Vienna, Graz, Prague, Brünn work has completely stopped.

DIETRICH (*popping up*): Bravo, bravissimo!

KLAGENFURTER (*quietly*): You aren't sensible, man!

STRAUSS: I'm afraid, Comrade Dietrich, you misjudge the situation. I am convinced that at such a moment this movement cannot foster peace, but rather can be harmful at best, — if its effects aren't to be even more considerable still. Leaving the front without munitions —

SCHENK: Yeah, yeah, we don't want to argue that out right now.

STRAUSS: I can only say that that is the opinion of all the leading men of the Social Democratic Party.

DIETRICH (*booming laughter*): That I believe. These — —

KLAGENFURTER: Quiet, Dietrich!

Dr. BOSSENIUS: Well, Herr Strauss, the innkeeper has just explained to me that this sitting of the Federation may not take place under any circumstances. Now, the gentlemen think —

STRAUSS: But of course we must comply with the prohibition.

SCHENK: Each may do as he pleases. My friends and I are at the moment guests in the "Lodge". If the club rooms are closed for sittings, then we'll just use them as pub rooms.

STRAUSS: I cannot under any circumstances go along with any kind of circumvention of the prohibition.

DIETRICH: No one is being forced to stay.

WERRA: I'm only staying until the master comes. I want to at least shake his hand and look him in the eye.

WAITRESS (*enters*): The gentlemen have a request?

SCHENK: Bring me a soda, please — Fräulein.

KLAGENFURTER: And a glass of beer for me.

DIETRICH: A beer for me, too!

WAITRESS: And the others?

Dr. BOSSENIUS: Nothing for the moment. We'll order later maybe.

WAITRESS (*exits*).

WERRA: Oh, the master's coming! The master! — Come, Klärchen, — to meet him! (*With Klara into the background.*) —

ACT FOUR

The same room. Midday about 1 o'clock. The roses are in front of the window. Frau Schenk sits at the table sewing. Next to her is Flora, her cap on her head, sewing a rosette onto her jacket.

FRAU SCHENK: I wouldn't have thought that you could also handle a needle and thread so well.

FLORA: I suppose you took me for a real bluestocking?

FRAU SCHENK: Not exactly that, — but seeing as how you work with your head so much.

FLORA: That's why I make my own clothes myself.

FRAU SCHENK: Impossible! — You made that blouse yourself?

FLORA: Indeed, designed it myself, cut it out myself and tailored it myself. (*Bites off the thread.*) — There, the revolutionary order is on tight.

FRAU SCHENK: Oh, can I take a look at your dress? (*They stand up and go to the window.*)

FLORA: The fabric is pretty, isn't it? An aunt gave it to me for Christmas.

FRAU SCHENK: It's made so simply and so tastefully. (*She takes Flora's face between her hands.*) You're good to my Ralf, dear child, right?

FLORA: Yes, I am very fond of him.

FRAU SCHENK: He is my one and all. You can't believe how good he is.

FLORA: Oh, but I know.

FRAU SCHENK (*comes with the overcoat*): That sure was a long visit.
— You want to go out, Ralf?
SCHENK: Yes, I have not been outside yet at all today. — My chest is feeling a bit tight.
FRAU SCHENK: The air in the room here is a little thick, too.
SCHENK: You don't need to wait for me with lunch. I'll eat something on the way at the community kitchen.
FRAU SCHENK: Yes, go ahead. — You're not to my liking today at all.
SCHENK: I'll be back around one o'clock. — Well, good morning, mother. (*Kisses her.*) I must have air, — fresh air! (*Exits.*)
FRAU SCHENK (*opens the window*): How did it get so stuffy in here?

Curtain

(*The ladies and gentlemen crowd into the back room. Schenk, Klagenfurter and Dietrich remain behind. Trotz then joins them.*)

KLAGENFURTER: It would be best if all these pests would get lost.
DIETRICH: This gang!
SCHENK: I'd prefer they stay here. We need them to keep watch.
TROTZ: We won't be allowed to hold our meeting?
SCHENK: Ah — you've just arrived! — Naturally, we're staying.
DIETRICH: The little doctor already fears for his career — and Strauss, the traitor, would most prefer to call in the police right away!
SCHENK: Have you seen Flora?
TROTZ: That's one splendid girl! She was at my place today, passing by. She just rested and passed on the latest news. All day long she is on her feet agitating. I accompanied her a ways.
KLAGENFURTER: Agitating? How can she do that?
TROTZ: She can do it all. With her, old man that I am, I could still fall in love. — She is in the community kitchen and talks with the people so unassumingly.
DIETRICH: And fires them up all the while — eh?
TROTZ: Clever. In the shops she picks up a head of cabbage and moans: 60 cents! That's downright disgraceful. And then come with the most innocent expression observations on the war, poverty — and then there she is, already on the strike. — I was with her in a store, —
SCHENK: What happened? — Go on!
TROTZ: Yeah, so she bought cigarettes. — Oh, God, the price! And for such horrible quality! Yes — if one could speak! If the people wanted to think about it! — Well, there were two other people there, a worker and a woman. — Yes, go on, Fräulein. What do you mean then? — Well, and then she let loose so that the people's heads warmed up. And I made as if I wasn't with her and helped out.

KLAGENFURTER: And how did the people take it?
TROTZ: When they left they thought only about the strike — and if it would actually come about over here, too.
DIETRICH: It will be glorious! — Everyone is for it!
SCHENK: Aren't you seeing things a little too rosy again, Dietrich?
DIETRICH: Me? — I know my people! No one can tell me what's what!
KLAGENFURTER: From what I could see, I also believe that tomorrow everything will succeed.
SCHENK: Have you heard how the distribution of the fliers went?
DIETRICH: Impeccably!
TROTZ: Comrade Fischer worked best of all. When the people at Wachsmann came in, a couple of pages lay on every seat.
SCHENK: And was the matter well received?
KLAGENFURTER: Exceptionally. — It was brilliantly written, too.
DIETRICH: My goodness! Severin's really sharp! A couple of sentences, — but each word like a club!
TROTZ: Don't scream out names like that, — if Strauss should hear!
DIETRICH: The spy — the filthy spy!
SCHENK: So tomorrow morning you think it will all be closed?
KLAGENFURTER: Wachsmann is good. At the motor company it's not certain. I ran into Schulz. He thinks half of them will go along. I don't know anything yet about Bartels & Moser.
TROTZ: Flora wanted to go get Rund to hear about the outlook in the barracks.
KLAGENFURTER: Yes, that's the most important.
SCHENK: Does everyone know the unreliable ones?
DIETRICH: The spies? They should just try!
TROTZ: Traitors are always there. But who could know them? We already had enough surprises under the Socialist Laws. Those who we held to be the most reliable turned out to be paid agents provocateurs.
SCHENK: I am worried for you, Stefan. They will be especially harsh with those obliged to serve in the war.

SCHENK: I need not tell you what regard Seebald enjoys among the workers. The moment a hand is laid on him will be the signal to break loose. As he will likely not be there on the spot, it is probable that some moderate party leader will conciliate and then the whole action will be sunk. So have him arrested at his apartment as the intellectual author of the whole thing and lead past when the crowd is gathered in the forecourt of the Wachsmann factory. Then you'll have what you want. The way to the prison leads past there anyhow.
TESSENDORFF: You think for certain there will be an attempt to free him?
SCHENK: Just leave that up to me. If they don't do it on their own, I will provoke them to it.
TESSENDORFF (*has stood up*): I believe you are right. — I must then instruct the military not to attempt anything beforehand. — But if Seebald should be there after all?
SCHENK: Then you'll just have to take him into custody from there.
TESSENDORFF: In any case, I will be there on time. We can always come to an understanding then and there.
SCHENK: It will hardly do for me to be speaking with you there.
TESSENDORFF: Oh, rest assured, I won't be wearing the fur coat.
SCHENK: One more thing: Can you promise me that aside from Seebald none of the leading individuals will be arrested?
TESSENDORFF: Of course. — Seebald is quiet enough for us.
SCHENK: Otherwise I'll be there as well, if you should need another ringleader.
TESSENDORFF: We will see, Herr Schenk. So, should he not show up, Professor Seebald will be lead past the Wachsmann factory at 3:15 sharp. — That should be everything then. A right good morning to you, Herr Schenk. (*Extends him his hand, which Schenk ostentatiously disregards.*)
SCHENK: Good morning (*exit Tessendorf*).
SCHENK (*remains standing a while indecisively, then opens the door to the kitchen*): Mother, my jacket, please.

lution is over. Completely over, Herr Schenk, — dead by its own ridiculousness. Then afterwards come the trials. — Do you want that outcome? — Me neither.

SCHENK (*has been pacing about excitedly, stops*): Professor Seebald will not speak.

TESSENDORFF: It is completely irrelevant who is standing there.

SCHENK: No — it is not irrelevant. (*After an internal struggle — with sudden inspiration*), Herr Police Superintendent, I want to give you some advice!

TESSENDORFF: Indeed? Let us take a seat then. (*They sit.*)

SCHENK: You must arrest Professor Seebald!

TESSENDORFF: Please, Herr Schenk — I don't like to be taken for a fool.

SCHENK: I don't take you for a fool.

TESSENDORFF: Then permit me to settle up the business end of things with you. (*Takes an envelope from his pocket.*) First, I have here 500 marks for you. And there is the receipt — please!

SCHENK (*has jumped up*): What! You want to give me money! — Put that away immediately! (*He shakes his fists.*)

TESSENDORFF: I must know that I'm not being duped. I can't just expect that you render me such services because of my good looks. The police must be cautious in all matters.

SCHENK (*laughs aloud*): Well, then — that is quite true. (*Sits down again.*)

TESSENDORFF (*gives him the receipt*): Would you sign here? — Certainly you trust in our absolute discretion.

SCHENK (*ironic*): Thoroughly. (*Signs. Puts the money with an expression of disgust into his wallet. Slight cough.*)

TESSENDORFF: Perhaps it will enable you to take the cure in a lung sanatorium.

SCHENK: Don't bother yourself about how it is used. — So now I can explain my plan to you.

TESSENDORFF: Please do.

KLAGENFURTER: If it doesn't go wrong, then nothing more can happen to me.

DIETRICH: What else could go wrong now, then?

(*Movement in the background. Enter Mathias Seebald, mid-fifties, long hair combed back, black jacket, black tie, ascetic appearance. Speaking to him is Werra, with Klara on her arm. Behind them, Lecharov, wild grey hair, glasses, speaks with a strong Russian accent: Rolling R, audible even in short final syllables, very soft S. Ladies and gentlemen, among them Dr. Bossenius and Strauss.*)

WERRA: Dearest Master! Now you must finally take a look at our youngest disciple, my little ward Klara Wendt. She's a niece of my ex-husband. But despite the whole family she sticks by me.

SEEBALD (*offers Klara his hand*): My pleasure, Fräulein. Today, of course, you won't be hearing much here.

KLARA: Oh, my main concern was really just to meet you in person, Professor, sir.

SEEBALD (*laughs*): That is however not the purpose of the "Federation of New Men".

WERRA: Don't be offended, Master. She is still so naïve.

SEEBALD (*pats Klara on the cheek*): That's alright, dear child. — But the ladies will excuse me now. Ah — there are all my friends together. (*Leaves Werra standing.*) Raffael! Good that you're here. (*Offers Schenk, Trotz, Klagenfurter and Dietrich his hand*): The day is dawning, friends, — the people are waking up!

(*Seebald, Lecharov, Schenk, Trotz, Klagenfurter, Dietrich stand in front of the table to the right, the rest in the entrance and to the left.*)

KLAGENFURTER: Do you have any news, Herr Professor?

SEEBALD: Not much more than the newspaper has. But a new spirit moves through the masses, — one can feel it, and it gives one courage. Berlin — Vienna — Prague — Leipzig — — and, will everything stay as it was over here by us, then?

DIETRICH: Tomorrow — —

SCHENK (*jabs him in the side*): You're insane!

STRAUSS (*pushing forward*): I doubt that the movement will reach over to us here. The attempt has been made through anonymous fliers to rouse the workers to strike. But all countermeasures have been taken.

SCHENK: By you or by the General Command?

DIETRICH: By both in collaboration!

STRAUSS: I don't believe I am obliged to respond to that.

KLAGENFURTER: That's probably for the best.

SEEBALD: Please no fighting. — I just believe, Herr Strauss, that despite all the best intentions of helping the proletariat, you are stacking the deck for its enemies.

STRAUSS: And I believe that a strike at this critical moment would betray to our enemies the helpless soldiers, who are themselves also proletarians.

LECHAROV: Please allow me — please — , you say: Critical moment. Would you tell me — please — what does critical moment mean?

STRAUSS: The war is at its decisive point.

SEEBALD: It will be at its decisive point for a long while yet, if the workers don't bring the decision about.

DIETRICH: Very true! Bravo!

STRAUSS: The workers can decide the war only in terms of a defeat. Right now we stand before the decision which will ensure our existence.

(Flora and Rosa appear in the entrance, they stay put and listen.)

LECHAROV: Please — permit me again — , would you tell me — I ask you — since August 1914, when has the war not stood at the most critical moment? And what does it mean, ensure existence — I ask you? Whose existence, if I may ask? The proletarian existence is not ensured when there's war, and is not ensured when there's peace.

SCHENK: That is very flattering. — But what sort of advice am I supposed to be able to give you?

TESSENDORFF: Herr Schenk! Our wishes for the course of the operation are not so very divergent, naturally out of totally opposing interests. You want a kind of test of strength. — And we, both the police as well as the military, are equally ready to let it come to a test of strength.

SCHENK: I must admit, Herr Police Superintendent, that I find this whole conversation extraordinarily embarrassing. Maybe you would like to finally get to the point.

TESSENDORFF: I am right in the middle of it. If it indeed should come to a bloodletting, then I say it shouldn't turn out all too bloody — and at least for your party, that is, the workers, end up ridiculous on top of it all.

SCHENK: And now the general, so to speak, of the one army comes to the opposing general staff and would like to devise a battle plan together.

TESSENDORFF: Why not a different comparison instead? — Before a chivalric tournament the opposing knights in all camaraderie agree on the conditions and examine the odds.

SCHENK: Just do what you think is good! — I don't have the slightest interest in your frivolous jokes.

TESSENDORFF (*stands up*): As you wish. — I only want to say to you what will happen if we don't come to some kind of an agreement. The workers' marches which arrive from the different factories take up their positions. Red flags are handed out, and someone will perhaps give a speech, presumably Professor Seebald. Then a company of soldiers moves in. The lieutenant very courteously approaches the speaker and says: If you please, Herr Professor, would you please let me through? And before the march is formed, he commands the people to disperse. Behind him stand the soldiers with rifles aimed. Do you believe your workers remain standing? — I don't. — But assuming they don't all leave immediately. What comes then? A warning shot — and the revo-

TESSENDORFF: Above all because of the demonstration this afternoon.

SCHENK: Yes, — but what could the two of us have — (*rising up suddenly*) Sir! Do you suppose to gather information from me?!

—

TESSENDORFF: Information? — Oh no, we don't need that any more. — I would just like to ask you for your advice.

SCHENK: The police want my advice?

TESSENDORFF: I will explain it to you immediately. You see, Herr Schenk, we at the police naturally concern ourselves not merely with facts, but rather above all with individuals, as well. That just comes with the territory. Thus, we are — and this won't surprise you at all — most precisely informed about the actual leaders of the current movement.

SCHENK: That you employ spies is nothing new to me.

TESSENDORFF: Anyway, it would be totally pointless to put on an act for you. So I know a lot about your person, too, which characterizes your views and attitudes. I believe I know pretty well what your wishes are for this afternoon. I believe you wouldn't be too displeased, Herr Schenk, if the government — or let us say, the military, undertook something rather decisive against the workers. I can also very well imagine your line of thinking about it. You think a bloody clash between the military and civilians at this moment could arouse such war weariness at home and at the front that the Reich would have no other choice but — one way or another — to make peace. Perhaps you hope too for the troops to refuse the order to intervene at the decisive moment, which might then immediately bring open revolution after it.

SCHENK: Your informants have told you all that about me?

TESSENDORFF: Naturally, to a large extent it is also my own inference. One does need to be something of a psychologist in my line of work — and I've had you under observation for quite some time now and know many statements of yours.

STRAUSS: If German manufacturing is ruined, then the workers are the ones who will suffer.

FLORA (*steps forward*) (*to Strauss*): You are a Socialist, correct? At any rate, you call yourself one, I suppose?

STRAUSS: I've been an organized Social Democrat for seventeen years, Fräulein Severin.

FLORA: Really? But you don't care for the socialization of the means of production?

STRAUSS: For the moment, its not a matter of socialist ideals, but of the salvation of the fatherland.

Dr. BOSSENIUS (*from the ranks of the bystanders*): Absolutely true.

SEEBALD: But I am somewhat amazed, gentlemen, to hear these views in our circle. We have come together here as a "Federation of New Men". New men, however, must not cling to old prejudices. Fatherland — is there such a thing, when the land of the fathers belongs to the sons of a few individual fathers? I'm afraid that the spirit in our federation still has little in common with the spirit of a federation.

WERRA (*stepping forward*): But, best Master, a little difference of opinion doesn't matter. We all want the same thing: the Good, the True and the Beautiful. — We shouldn't bother ourselves with ugly political matters. Perhaps someone would rather present something: A little song or a pretty poem. — — Is Herr Tiedtken not here then?

SEEBALD: You are in error, honorable Frau Adler. Aesthetic discussions are not the object of our association. At least, when I created the "Federation of New Men", I had something different in mind. Cultivation of art is only one of the means which prepare the spirit for the Good, True and Beautiful. The condition for goodness, truth and beauty, however, is not created through artistic presentations. It is peace and justice.

WERRA: Certainly, dear Master. — Naturally, that is the highest.

SCHENK: For peace and justice one can also say: Freedom and Socialism.

FLORA: And the path to all that is called revolution.
KLARA: O God, how terrible!
Dr. BOSSENIUS: If you mean a revolution of the spirit —
TROTZ: We mean a revolution of the classes, Herr Doctor!
DIETRICH: Precisely, — the class-conscious proletariat —
Dr. BOSSENIUS: Ms. Severin can hardly have picked up a proletarian class consciousness along the way. Her father is, as far as I know, the director of a bank.
SCHENK: And if you were a trash collector, you still wouldn't understand — *(Coughs.)*
SEEBALD: I beg you, Raffael, don't become abusive; and I ask the same of you, Dr. Bossenius. What we strive for in our federation is precisely the internal transformation of the person, which lets him discern the essence of true community.
Dr. BOSSENIUS: The only question thereby is whether we educated people are to transform ourselves into proletarians.
FLORA: That's not the question at all. The bourgeoisie is the most contemptible. — The proletariat has the future. In it all the faculties are still unspoiled. In that respect I will allow the distinction which you draw with the word "educated". — If proletarians and bour — — members of the other class come together here, the workers are not to be somehow "elevated" thereby, but rather the — rest are to examine themselves as to whether they can so completely shed their origins that they are entitled to number themselves among the people.
Dr. BOSSENIUS: Do you concur, Herr Professor?
SEEBALD: More or less. The goal is a classless society, in which for the first time it would be right to speak of the people. If we want to create an equilibrium, then that is only possible in a free federation of separated and therefore new people. These must be people who already carry the new community within themselves, who perceive the degradation of class society, with its exploitation, its violence, its war, its slavery, its imperiousness, to be so unbearable that for themselves they have already com-

TESSENDORFF: Absolutely right — of course. — I only had to fulfill my formal obligation by asking the question. *(Remains seated, focused on Schenk.)*
SCHENK *(taps nervously on the arm rest on which he is leaning. Coughs slightly)*.
TESSENDORFF: You have it in the chest, Herr Schenk?
SCHENK *(gruffly)*: Is my health of interest to you?
TESSENDORFF: But, please. — One is still a person, after all.
SCHENK: Very gracious. The doctor has ordered me to avoid undesirable discussions where possible.
TESSENDORFF: Allow me nonetheless a couple minutes yet. You see, I have come here to you personally even though such arrests as a rule are naturally the business of subordinate functionaries.
SCHENK: If you want to arrest me, please come right out with it.
TESSENDORFF: What are you thinking of? — There's no talk of that.
SCHENK: Then I really can't see what more you want from me. *(Coughs heavily.)*
TESSENDORFF: Herr Schenk, you really should take a couple weeks rest and have your lungs treated in a sanatorium.
SCHENK: I would like to ask you now in all seriousness to tell me what you still want from me and not to waste any more sympathy on me.
TESSENDORFF: You treat me like an enemy, Herr Schenk. I am not that at all. I would like to have an informal chat with you.
SCHENK: But what in the world about?
TESSENDORFF: About a matter which is of equal interest to us both at the moment.
SCHENK: That would be?
TESSENDORFF: Well, I think it's not so remote. — Perhaps it will put you on track if I mention that at police headquarters I oversee the department of public safety. Naturally, that also includes all manner of strike movements and commotions.
SCHENK: So you are here because of the workers' protest strike?

SCHENK: What brings you to me, if you please?
TESSENDORFF: May I have a seat? (*Takes a chair.*)
SCHENK (*remains standing*): Please. You don't seem to be in a hurry.
TESSENDORFF: I admit — I've tired myself a bit in walking and came up here only to do my duty, but without great hope of finding the man I'm seeking.
SCHENK: So you are looking for somebody in my home?
TESSENDORFF: Indeed. I have been assigned to arrest and bring in an iron-turner who is subject to enlistment — , Stefan Klagenfurter, who was supposed to have presented himself at the infantry barracks today, but apparently has become a fugitive.
SCHENK: I don't know what this assignment can have to do with your visit to me.
TESSENDORFF: According to certain information obtained by the police, you are supposed to be a friend of the deserter in question.
SCHENK: I don't need to give any accounting of my friendships whatsoever. In any case, I'm not hiding anyone.
TESSENDORFF: Well, then — that's what I figured.
SCHENK: If you wish to convince yourself. This is the only large room in the apartment. Adjoining is the kitchen and the room where my mother sleeps. That's everything. My mother can take you down to the cellar as well, if you wish.
TESSENDORFF: Oh, please, Herr Schenk. Your assurance that Herr Klagenfurter is not staying with you is thoroughly satisfactory for me. If I had the intention of searching the apartment then I wouldn't have come up here myself. I would have sent the two soldiers who are to carry out the arrest.
SCHENK: Then it seems our business is done here?
TESSENDORFF: I must naturally still pose the question to you: Do you know where the fugitive turner Stefan Klagenfurter is staying?
SCHENK: If I knew I certainly wouldn't tell you.

pleted its renunciation and, without class antagonism, think, feel, and, when necessary, act with the proletariat.
DIETRICH: We need the dictatorship of the proletariat!
STRAUSS: We Democrats reject any dictatorship.
SCHENK: The dictatorship of capitalism, however, you freely accept. Capital has at its disposal all the instruments of power of the State and men whatsoever. It forces all the resources of labor into its service, forces even the exploited man to kill and be killed, in order to let himself be squeezed for even greater profit, and through having in its power all the tools of influence capital brings its victims to believe that everything must be just as it is.
STRAUSS: With your ideas we would end up straightaway with Bolshevism in Germany.
FLORA: Would that be so bad?
Dr. BOSSENIUS: Well, I think so.
LECHAROV: You say: Bolshevism. Do you know what is Bolshevism? I'll tell you: Bolshevism is — Bolshevism is the soul of the Russian people. The soul of the Russian people — that is Bolshevism.
Dr. BOSSENIUS: That's not saying anything at all.
LECHAROV: No? — Nothing at all? I want to tell you — I ask you, listen to me — : That's not saying anything for you. That says a lot — everything for one who knows the soul of the Russian people and of every other people. Look at me, how it is with me: In 1905 I stood on the barricades in Petersburg and was already then not far from 50 years, — and fought consciously for Bolshevism. I had to flee afterwards from Czarism and had myself naturalized in Germany. — Unfortunately! — Were I deported in 1914 to my home, I could be fighting now with Lenin and Trotsky for the great cause of humanity, for communism.
TROTZ: We will need you with us, too, Comrade Lecharov!
LECHAROV: Maybe I can be of some use here, too.
STRAUSS: Germany is not Russia.
SCHENK: We are international socialists, Herr Strauss!

Dr. BOSSENIUS: Humanity's great ideals are no more distant to me than to any one of you. But at the same time I still know a consciousness of national duty.

SEEBALD (*approaches him. Harshly*): Herr Doctor Bossenius! In this federation there is a human consciousness to which every duty is subordinate. If your consciousness of national duty is a special sort which allows murder, violence, crime, then I couldn't know what can prompt you to enter our circle. — In all corners of the Earth at this moment, while we are speaking here, people are being killed by other people who don't know one another and have nothing to do with one another, — at this minute hundreds are being crippled by bullets, throughout the world women and children are being made into widows and orphans. Herein I too have my consciousness of duty — and that means not to be national and take sides for one set of murderers, but rather to apply every, absolutely every means of bringing a halt to the unspeakable outrage. — It is not for us here to discuss whether this or that should happen, but rather what must happen immediately.

DIETRICH: Long live the general strike!

STRAUSS: I would indeed never have shown up here for a political gathering.

SEEBALD: And we're not holding one. We will comply with the prohibition by the military authorities. For my part, I would like to talk only with my closest friends. Shall we find a seat here in the corner, Flora?

WERRA: May the little one and I join you? — It would be so interesting for us.

FLORA: We have to speak with the professor about something which can hardly be of interest to you.

WERRA (*piqued*): Oh, then naturally we wouldn't want to be a burden. — Dearest Master, hopefully next time everything will be the same as always again.

SEEBALD: We will see. Farewell, Frau Adler. — Good night, Fräulein.

SCHENK (*stands still, pounds on the table*): I thought so! (*Walks about again, coughs more strongly.*) I thought so!

FRAU SCHENK (*goes after him*): For God's sake, don't get yourself so worked up, child! How you're coughing again! (*Slaps him on the back.*)

SCHENK: Well now — — to bring in Flora. (*Strong coughing fit.*) To want — — to separate — me — — from — — Flora. (*He collapses onto a chair gasping and short of breath.*)

FRAU SCHENK: For God's sake! — Wait, Ralf — I'm coming — I'll bring you your milk. It will help you right away. (*Into the kitchen.*)

SCHENK (*waives her off. The coughing gradually subsides. He still breathes with difficulty.*)

FRAU SCHENK (*returns from the kitchen*): The milk is gone! — Did Flora drink it all?

SCHENK (*still labored*): No — no, only a small drop. I gave the rest to Seebald.

FRAU SCHENK: But Ralf! You know what the doctor said. That every day you should drink your quarter of a liter of milk.

SCHENK: Alright, mother. — Alright. (*A knock. Frau Schenk goes to the door, opens carefully.*)

TESSENDORFF (*enters: fur coat, round hat*): Am I at the right address for Herr Raffael Schenk?

SCHENK (*approaches him, wants to speak. A coughing fit, which he struggles to contain, prevents him.*)

FRAU SCHENK: Yes. — That's my son.

SCHENK (*with difficulty*): That's me. — What can I do for you.

TESSENDORFF: My name is Tessendorff, — police superintendent.

FRAU SCHENK: Couldn't you come at another time — ? My son is having a terrible time with his lung right now.

TESSENDORFF: So I hear, to my regret. But it is hardly a matter of importance, — my assignment, I mean. —

SCHENK (*has overcome the fit*): Mother, please go out for a moment.

FRAU SCHENK (*anxious*): Yes, if you say so — certainly. (*Backwards into the kitchen.*)

SEEBALD: But you do trust me? You are convinced that I am truly Raffael's friend?

FRAU SCHENK: He would have walked through fire for you, as well. — But what's good for him, Professor, you can't see that any better than I can. For that he is old enough himself.

SEEBALD: Well, I see now that I don't have an ally in you.

FRAU SCHENK: No, Professor. — Don't take it the wrong way.

SEEBALD: Take care. Your love for Raffael is supremely beautiful, and I certainly want to leave it the way it is. Until next time, dear Frau Schenk.

FRAU SCHENK: Good bye, Herr Professor! (*Handshake. She lets him out, shakes her head in wonder, opens the kitchen door.*) Ralf, so — were you hiding then?

SCHENK (*enters*): Is he gone?

FRAU SCHENK: You didn't even say goodbye to him.

SCHENK: I didn't want to. — I suppose he told you you should make me see reason?

FRAU SCHENK: How's that? — Were you eavesdropping?

SCHENK: That wasn't necessary. I can just imagine it.

FRAU SCHENK: Yeah, Ralf, I couldn't really make out what he wanted. And I also told him that I don't mix myself up in your affairs.

SCHENK: Well done, mom.

FRAU SCHENK: He was so odd today, Ralf. — Not at all as open as usual.

SCHENK (*walks about excitedly, coughs slightly*): Yes, mother — sometimes one deceives oneself.

FRAU SCHENK: You're coughing again, child. I suppose your conversation got you worked up?

SCHENK: Rather. — But I would like to hear from you. What else did he say?

FRAU SCHENK: Nothing at all specific. — But at the end he wondered whether Flora didn't have a detrimental influence on you.

(*Seebald takes a place on the bench; next to him to the right, Flora. On the left side, Schenk. To the left of Seebald on the bench, Trotz. Next, on a chair to the right, Lecharov. Klagenfurter, Dietrich and Rosa remain standing.*)

KLAGENFURTER: Ah, there's the girl. (*Waitress enters and brings drinks.*) Does anyone else want to order? (*Waitress takes orders and writes them down. In the meantime the ladies and gentlemen are departing.*)

Dr. BOSSENIUS (*to Strauss*): I don't believe there's anything much for us here today. (*Both exit.*)

WERRA (*to Klara*): Too bad that you could only get to know the master so little today, my little child. But eight days from now, I think —

KLARA: But one can already see what an idealist he is. — So interesting! — (*Both exit.*)

(*In the second room can be seen yet smaller groups standing around which all gradually exit.*)

DIETRICH: This gang!

TROTZ: Now we're amongst ourselves. — But, Rosa, why didn't you bring Rund along?

ROSA: I just couldn't talk in front of those people. I wouldn't have got one word out.

FLORA: Wait a second. (*She makes a sign to Schenk.*)

SCHENK (*after of couple of steps in the other room*): The coast is clear.

KLAGENFURTER: I'd be surprised if Bossenius didn't put the police onto us here anyhow.

SCHENK: No way, the aesthetes won't do anything to us. They are too cowardly for action and too proper for denunciation. But Strauss will definitely attempt something.

SEEBALD: Friends, we have no one to fear. Impure souls stain only themselves. What could he possibly attempt anyhow?

DIETRICH: Gather strikebreakers!
SEEBALD: Let him. Workers with whom he has success are for the moment useless to us. We must first raise them to be new people.
FLORA: May I be open, Professor?
SEEBALD: Naturally.
FLORA: Your federation is not the ground on which revolutionaries grow.
SEEBALD: Revolutionaries! — I can easily have them, when —
FLORA: When the revolution has arrived. — But no revolution is flourishing here.
SEEBALD: I know well what you mean. — And you are right, too. I must shake off these apostles and appendages.
SCHENK: New people can only be made from proletarians. The others must first become proletarians before they can be instructed.
LECHAROV: But I cannot teach a bourgeois to be a proletarian, if conditions don't teach him.
TROTZ: We must talk business, comrades. I am an old man, I have no more time for philosophizing.
SEEBALD: It's true. New people must be people of action. What has happened so far?
FLORA: The workers in all factories have been called on to stay home from work tomorrow. Fliers were distributed everywhere today. The great majority of the proletariat seems to be won over. The strike positions have been organized. In the afternoon a demonstration march is to take place.
SEEBALD: A demonstration?
LECHAROV: How do you imagine the demonstration?
SCHENK: At three o'clock the workers will gather in the square before the Wachsmann factory. Trotz and Dietrich have prepared red flags and placards.
DIETRICH: They're in for the shock of their lives — these bandits!
SEEBALD: And where will the march go?
FLORA: To the palace, naturally!
LECHAROV: What have you done to explain things to the military?

FRAU SCHENK: Must you be leaving again, Herr Professor?
SEEBALD: Yes. — I won't be able to achieve my purpose here after all.
SCHENK (*has listened wordlessly in the background of the room, takes the empty milk glass from the table and carries it into the kitchen, the door to which he closes behind himself.*)
FRAU SCHENK: What's up with Ralf? — He just walked right out of the room.
SEEBALD: Keep an eye on him, Frau Schenk! It's not good what he has planned.
FRAU SCHENK: The strike and the procession today? — No, I can't get through to him there. He must know that himself.
SEEBALD: Don't you have any influence on him at all?
FRAU SCHENK: Yes — I don't know. He tells me everything. We are like good friends.
SEEBALD: Precisely. I've noticed that. — Can't you keep him then from obvious indiscretions?
FRAU SCHENK: Indiscretions? — No, that's not my Ralf, — I don't believe that. And I don't get involved in his politics. I just listen to him. That would be like if he were to concern himself with my kitchen.
SEEBALD: Don't you think it's possible that at this very moment he is perhaps under a dangerous spiritual impression?
FRAU SCHENK: I don't know what you mean, Professor.
SEEBALD: Well — to be direct: He now has a close friendship with Fräulein Severin! Don't you think that detrimental effects could arise from that?
FRAU SCHENK: Professor, I am his mother — and I want his happiness. And this morning I saw him happy for the first time. I wouldn't know what I should find so detrimental in that.
SEEBALD: I mean whether she might push him in directions that he would not go of his own accord.
FRAU SCHENK: Only he can know that. — I can't say that.

SCHENK: Possibly. — Do you still believe that you are protected from state violence by your intellectual armor?

SEEBALD: Don't scoff. The armor covered me as long as I absolved my conscience of violence. Now I feel it falling from me.

SCHENK: Oh, and nothing will happen to you either, if you stay put at home. Don't worry yourself, Professor Seebald. The guilt for what happens won't be yours but the workers' who fall or end up in prison. And the guilt for the war lies not with the capitalists but with the proletarians who are rotting away in filthy holes; the Lassmanns who have had their eyes shot out. But the truly virtuous, those are the consumptives like me, or the idiots in the madhouses, they have their protective jackets, — or so your theory went!

SEEBALD: You're being abusive, Schenk. — You know perfectly well that you're distorting things; as long as you are in this condition I can't speak with you.

SCHENK: It would be superfluous anyway. The demonstration will take place. With you or without you. And I won't send the workers home, but instead call them to battle. You may do what you please.

SEEBALD: Raffael! I am not mad at you for the speech you're delivering against me. You are excited. But later when you are alone consider whether your own bad conscience is making you unjust towards others.

SCHENK: My conscience is clear.

SEEBALD: You think so now — I only ask of you one other thing. Take counsel with yourself one more time and don't do anything which you could later regret. (*He wants to go to the door. Meanwhile Frau Schenk enters.*)

FRAU SCHENK: So, Ralf, I'm back now. — Oh, Herr Professor! Good day, Herr Professor! (*Gives him her hand.*) Have you come to look in on my boy yourself?

SEEBALD: Greetings, my dear Frau Schenk. — Yes, — we had a little discussion.

FLORA: A special flier went out to the military: Rund led the distribution.

KLAGENFURTER: So where is Rund?

ROSA: He made a quick visit to my place at noon. The entire military has to stay in the barracks. They've been placed on high alert.

SEEBALD: And how will the soldiers react?

TROTZ: That's not yet entirely certain.

SEEBALD: If they were to shoot into the masses, — that would be terrible.

FLORA (*has stood up, placed herself behind Schenk's chair*): Raffael, speak!

SCHENK: We must have you there, Mathias Seebald!

SEEBALD: Me? — What for?

SCHENK: You must be at the Wachsmann factory at three o'clock, you must speak to the crowd and place yourself at the head of the march.

SEEBALD: What use could I be?

FLORA: Every use. None of us could express to the workers what it's about and what is at stake. At least, none of us enjoys so much trust as you. — And then the impression on the bourgeoisie. The press and the party and union leaders wouldn't dare to talk of treason and bribery anymore, — and the military would at least have to restrain itself.

SEEBALD (*paces back and forth*): I don't love demonstrative provocations at all. But if I knew for certain that I were needed. — What do you think, Fedor?

LECHAROV: What should I think? — If the demonstration were armed, I would have said: It is useless to talk and march in the lead. In that case, a man should lead who can command and knows precisely about war.

SCHENK: We don't have weapons.

SEEBALD: Otherwise, I would only come along to dissuade.

LECHAROV: If the demonstration is unarmed, — can I know what will happen? I can only know who will be defeated if there's shooting; whether you're at the head of the march or you stay home. And whether there's shooting depends not on the attitudes of the bourgeoisie but rather on whether one feels strong enough to bear the consequences. Maybe — maybe not. — 13 years ago on Bloody Sunday in Petersburg Gapon, the Pope, took the lead; they didn't carry any red flags, but pictures of the Czar, icons, crosses. Capitalism knew that the pious singing translated meant: Bread, Equality, Socialism — and sent Cossacks and carried out a hideous bloodbath.

FLORA: Then. But now, where everything is weary of war, not least of all the soldiers themselves, they will think twice about it.

LECHAROV: Possibly — they will think twice about it. Possibly, they will say to themselves: Mathias Seebald in the lead — good, let them be angry and blow off steam, they'll go back home — Seebald is a good fellow; he will restrain them from doing anything rash, and they won't hurt us then. — It's also possible capitalism will say: Mathias Seebald at the head? That is dangerous. He will get the people to hold out in their strike, he will get the soldiers to disobey orders, he will reveal to the people the swindle of Brest-Litovsk. They may not be eager to lock up the man himself because of his reputation abroad. Will they gun down those who follow him as a cautionary example — I can't know what they'll do.

SEEBALD: So you think then I could maybe provide just the occasion for them to act with violence?

LECHAROV: I don't think anything. Can I know? — If they are sharp enough to recognize the danger you pose to their war, — they will shoot. If they are asses and take you for a harmless fanatic, they'll let it go.

DIETRICH: They are altogether dumb as oxes!

SEEBALD (*excitedly pacing*): I cannot possibly provide the cause for the spilling of blood.

Tomorrow morning it would simply be declared that all exemptions are suspended. Whoever doesn't work will be immediately inducted. — There are already enough strikebreakers as it is.

SEEBALD: And you want to prevent that with the demonstration?

SCHENK: Maybe I can. — The government shall see that the proletariat is a force.

SEEBALD: So — do you want violence then?

SCHENK: If it must be — yes!

SEEBALD: Raffael! Raffael! You are headed down a dangerous path!

You know which side has all the weapons.

SCHENK: And I also know where weapons can be found.

SEEBALD: Come to your senses, man! Do you want to bear the blood of hundreds of peaceful workers, of women and children on your conscience?

SCHENK: I can bear that too. (*Seebald has stood up and is standing with his arms crossed with his back to the window.*) If through our uprising the war is shortened even by one day, then it will save the lives of ten times as many people as will be sacrificed in the worst case.

SEEBALD: What a misguided calculation! — Do you want to play with fate? Is that the fruit of my labors?!

SCHENK: Indeed. Pretty words are of no help to us workers. Whoever tells us: Refuse to work for injustice, — he must know that with that he is calling to battle. — That is a provocation to violence. — But once I have already provoked violence, then I also counter with violence.

SEEBALD: Then I would be the originator of acts of violence? — Raffael Schenk, that cannot be your true opinion.

SCHENK: But I don't blame you for it. We workers have much to thank you for. You showed us the path we have to take. Now, where it has been entered upon, we have to go it all the way, even if you don't accompany us.

SEEBALD: But that is terrible, what you're saying. — Have I been living in a delusion then?

lished among men. — And your leg? (*Smiles.*) Think about it: Does it prevent your enjoyment of the greatest imaginable earthly joy? (*He nods towards the roses.*)

SCHENK: No, — that is true, I suppose.

SEEBALD: So you see, — now you understand too the dilemma I'm faced with by your request that I should take part in the demonstration today. This demonstration is — of this I am very much afraid — in and of itself a provocation to violence.

SCHENK: You can speak to the workers however you wish.

SEEBALD: That wouldn't change anything. It's still playing with fire.

SCHENK: But you know, too, what will happen if you stay away? — Then the union and party leaders will be ready at the scene, Messrs. Weber or Tamm or Strauss, — and they will soothe the masses like they do and send them back into their factory, and the war will continue like it has up to now, and those guilty of war with all their 'tragic guilt' will go on profiting off the people's misfortune.

SEEBALD: I have already told myself just the same things, too. And that's why I am here, to ask you — to beseech you: Prevent the whole procession. The workers should strike, but not provoke violence. Raffael, my friend, my dearest student, — do as I say!

SCHENK: I can't do that. — That's absolutely impossible. (*Coughs.*)

SEEBALD: That's absolutely not impossible. — The Good always works.

SCHENK: The whole thing has been planned down to the tiniest detail. At two o'clock the workers gather in front of their factories.

SEEBALD: Then there are still over four hours left. Go right away to your closest comrades. Place notices on the factory gates that the demonstration isn't taking place, in order to avoid bloodshed. Call on the workers to continue the strike. —

SCHENK (*leaps up*): No! — I will not do that! — I am myself a proletarian, — you're forgetting that. I know what the workers think and want and feel. — What do you think would happen, then?

SCHENK: I am convinced blood will only be spilled if you are not there.

FLORA: I believe so too.

SEEBALD: But you are putting me in a terrible position. Does the demonstration have to take place at all?

TROTZ (*very definite*): The procession must be. — Under any circumstances.

KLAGENFURTER: It has also already been called for in the fliers.

SEEBALD (*at the entrance*): I am entirely at a loss. — — But here comes — good day, dear friend!

(*Enter Lassmann on his wife's arm.*)

LASSMANN: I overslept. When it's always night, one has to sleep a lot.

SEEBALD: To have still come — so late in the evening!

FRAU LASSMANN: He went on and on berating me that I hadn't woken him in time. (*They fuss over the blind man. While this goes on and greetings are being exchanged Flora draws Schenk to the piano.*)

FLORA: Raffael, the march can't lead to the palace.

SCHENK: Rather?

FLORA: To the armory!

SCHENK: What do you mean?

FLORA: From there to the palace, when we have weapons. Understand?

SCHENK: Yes, oh you! (*takes both her hands*). You are right!

FLORA: But not a word about it now, otherwise he definitely won't come.

SCHENK: Do you believe then that he will come at all?

FLORA: That is your job. — You must see that he does. — Come back now. (*He pulls her behind the planter.*)

SCHENK: Flora! (*Passionately*). Flora! My — (*wants to kiss her; she pulls away from him.*)

FLORA: My dear fellow! (*She kisses his hand.*) We must be strong, you and I. (*They return inconspicuously to the table.*)

DIETRICH: At this time tomorrow we will know more!

TROTZ: Some perhaps nothing more.

ROSA: I am terribly afraid for Fritz. If he is ordered along —

KLAGENFURTER: Then he could be the first to prevent shooting.

ROSA: Yes — that is also true!

LASSMANN: Was there no discussion today?

LECHAROV: We have discussed away the whole Federation of New Men.

SEEBALD: Yes, then let us start from the beginning with truly new men.

LASSMANN: With workers!

FLORA: Yes — and such ones as belong to them.

DIETRICH: Without Bossenius and Strauss!

SCHENK: And the hysterical females.

LASSMANN: Then was there also no lecture today?

KLAGENFURTER: It was prohibited by the high authorities.

LASSMANN: You see, Tilde, — so I haven't missed anything after all.

FRAU LASSMANN: And you didn't need to come here at all.

LASSMANN: Oh, no, I am happy that I'm here. — Will everything be set for tomorrow?

DIETRICH: You can believe that. It will be grand!

TROTZ: Let us hope so, Lassmann.

LASSMANN: Yes — and I will be out in front — and carry a red flag.

SEEBALD: You, dear friend? — And if the military marches up?

LASSMANN: Then they can go ahead and shoot me down, blind cripple that I am.

FRAU LASSMANN: Oh, that's all he's been dreaming of since yesterday morning. I already had to put a broom in his hand today and lead him around the room — and the children had to run along after us.

SCHENK: But then I wouldn't know —

SEEBALD: The reason lies much deeper. I need to get maybe a little metaphysical with you here. You understand what that means?

SCHENK: Yes, certainly: Transcendental.

SEEBALD: More or less. — Have you read anything of mine?

SCHENK: I am familiar with your "Philosophy of Altruism". (*Takes this work from the bookshelf.*) Here it is.

SEEBALD: So you know then what my whole world view is based on: rejection of violence, in any form and under all circumstances. When Tolstoy says with Christ: Don't resist violence, so I teach: Never participate in violence and never let violence come near you. — That means: Commit no act which provokes violence! — Now if thus far the authorities have not grabbed me, then I conclude that I have remained true to my own teaching and have not turned the demand for non-violence into an occasion for the unleashing of violence.

SCHENK: But assuming today or tomorrow the authorities think the better of it and arrest you, — then wouldn't your whole theory be disproved?

SEEBALD: No, it would be a proof that I had acted wrongly. I believe that the will for good, when it completely fills a person's soul, creates its own means of defense to ward off evil.

SCHENK: Then everyone would be guilty who suffered misfortune?

SEEBALD: And that's true, if you properly understand the word guilty. In drama, for example, one speaks of a tragic guilt; that's the flawed act, committed with the best of intentions, which brings about the person's downfall. — That you, Raffael, with your great love for humanity and peace, did not have to enter the barracks with the others, I trace back to the means of defense which your will to good has unconsciously created for itself.

SCHENK (*laughing*): Then I suppose I should even be thankful for my game leg and my sick lung?

SEEBALD: I confidently believe that your lung will yet heal when, with your help, decent living conditions will have been estab-

SEEBALD: I am glad that I don't have to defend myself against that. Continuing then: You know that throughout all the persecutions and harassment the authorities have always left me in peace. How do you explain that?

SCHENK: You are too famous. Your works are read around the world. When everywhere everything German is reviled, it's still said: There are exceptions, foremost Mathias Seebald. — You have admirers in all circles, even among the officers.

SEEBALD: They are moving far from me now.

SCHENK: Yes, but always with respect. A couple of days ago I was reading in the newspaper, which turns cartwheels of patriotism, about the regrettable aberrations of our great fellow citizen, whose name however one must nevertheless speak with reverence. If one were to lay a hand on you, the scandal would be tremendous. I won't mention the hostile countries, the generals likely wouldn't much care about that, — but in all of Germany too and especially in the neutral countries. — It would be the same as if in Belgium they were to imprison Cardinal Mercier.

SEEBALD: Not entirely the same, — with Mercier there would be conflicts with the Vatican.

SCHENK: But with you would be lost the last shred of respect for the Germans. And our politicians would be eager to salvage that. — Perhaps they just need extenuating circumstances.

SEEBALD: Raffael, you are an uncommonly smart and educated person. — You are a printer, right?

SCHENK: A typesetter.

SEEBALD: With you I can speak differently than with other workers. I want to tell you my opinion. For the government, all that would still be no reason to let me be. You know the lovely phrase: reasons of state! — That's far more dear to the gentlemen than their pittance of moral standing. They are much less anxious about their good reputation in the world than you think. — Now I don't exactly wish to assume that you take my agitatorial activities for some innocent scholarly quirk. —

LASSMANN: Come, Tilde, I'll show it. (*On his wife's arm he goes through the hall, his cane held high.*) After me, comrades.

LECHAROV: Let's get behind him. He's feeling inspired.

DIETRICH: Yes — come! — Long live the revolution!

(*All get behind Lassmann, who wobbles as he feels his way along; only Seebald and Flora remain at the table.*)

LASSMANN (*singing*): Nor do we count the foe, —

Nor count the dangers all —

A bold course we follow,

Whither led us Lassalle!

(*Rosa and Dietrich join in the refrain.*)

SEEBALD (*quietly*): That is devastating.

FLORA: You see how the spirit is — you must come!

SEEBALD: I have the strongest reservations. — I couldn't go on living if blood were to flow because of me.

FRAU LASSMANN: Watch out, Ernst. — You're running into the cupboard!

SCHENK: That's enough. Come back to the table!

FLORA: Will you come, Professor?

SEEBALD: I still don't know.

FLORA: It's about peace, it's about everything. (*The rest have returned to the table. Some sit down.*)

KLAGENFURTER: Take a seat on the bench, Ernst, — you've exerted yourself.

LASSMANN: Exerted! At Verdun, that was a different kind of exertion, I tell you. We had to advance whether we wanted to or not. In the middle of the barrage — always run ten steps and then on your stomach. It went off like crazy there — sss — boom! — sss — boom!! — The comrades fell like flies, left and right — and always up! Thrown down! — Up! — Thrown down — deep into the muck.

— Yeah, and then it came. I thought it tore my head off — and that would have been better too I suppose.

SCHENK: That would not have been better, Ernst. Then you wouldn't have been able to be there tomorrow.

LASSMANN: Yes, that's true — tomorrow! Yes, and yet — as I came to in the sick bay, and didn't see anything — nothing at all. And until I knew that I would never be able to see again, — I didn't want to believe it, not for many days. And the nurse too said the day would come when I would see again. I believe the staff surgeon is to blame, too.

SEEBALD: No, not the staff surgeon, — the war is to blame, friend Lassmann.

TROTZ: And tomorrow let us rise up against the war.

SCHENK: Ernst, tell us your opinion. Should not Mathias Seebald be there before the Wachsmann factory? Should he not be at your side leading the march?

LASSMANN: Yes, he should! — Oh, Professor Seebald! If you lead the workers, then we must triumph!

SEEBALD: No. The workers can and must triumph only through themselves. Their victory does not depend on my person or any other. Nor can the demonstration bring about victory. Only the refusal to work, the refusal to serve any violence can help. I can take joy at the strike, — not at the procession.

FLORA: The proletariat can only sense its power if it also shows it.

DIETRICH: The bourgeois vermin will tremble when the booming step of the workers' battalion is ringing in their ears!

SEEBALD: You're intoxicated by the gesture. What is essential lies not in superficial appearance. The desolation of the factories will bring more clarity than the most splendid parade. The State collapses, without violence, when the working hands slacken, and the example of passive resistance which you give the soldiers will be greater and more deeply effective than if you go into the streets.

SEEBALD: Milk? — As long as I'm not drinking the last of it.

SCHENK: No, no — just a moment. (*Exits into the kitchen.*)

SEEBALD (*alone, looks around the room. Sniffs the roses. Schenk comes with a glass of milk*): Thank you very much! — Roses in January!

SCHENK: They are from Flora Severin. — Would you like to take one?

SEEBALD: No, I won't take them from you. They are for your health! (*Drinks.*) Ah — that is a rare pleasure now, good milk.

SCHENK: So you have made up your mind after all. — That makes me really happy.

SEEBALD: Listen to me, Raffael. — I have come here to warn you.

SCHENK: Warn me — about what?

SEEBALD: I didn't sleep much last night. Our short conversation last night troubled me deeply.

SCHENK: Me too.

SEEBALD: That's why we must be clear with one another. — You were disappointed in me. (*Schenk is silent.*) — I understand you well. You say to yourself, this man has made the fight against war his life's work. Through this struggle he has won the love and trust of the people. —

SCHENK: Not through that, really, but because you don't demand a negotiated peace between the rulers like the other pacifists, — because you address yourself to the proletariat.

SEEBALD: Good! I have always taught: Whoever suffers under a state of affairs, it is his duty to change it. And I have told the soldiers: If you want peace, don't make war — and the workers: If you want freedom, don't work for slavery! — Now you are faced with a riddle. In the very moment where the workers act according to my words, I appear to pull back. That embitters you towards me. Is it so, Raffael?

SCHENK: Yes, so it is.

SEEBALD: Now tell me: Do you consider me a coward?

SCHENK: Oh, no, — I know that you have no fear for yourself.

FLORA (*sternly*): I beg you. — One doesn't put off such things.

SCHENK: You are right. Forgive me!

FLORA: I'm going straight from here to Frau Klagenfurter's. I'll be back here around noon. — Until then, Raffael.

FRAU LASSMANN: I am so happy that I met you, Flora.

(Exit Flora and Frau Lassmann. Schenk escorts them out. Their voices can still be heard outside, then the closing of the hall doors. Schenk returns. He takes the roses in his hand and touches them with his mouth. Opens the window, pulls up a chair and bends over deeply in order to look down onto the street. Closes the window again, puts the chair back. Busies himself at the stove. There's a knock.)

SCHENK (*jumps up, to the door*): Mother, is that you? You can come on in. Flora has just gone. *(He opens and collides with Seebald.)* You — well, that's a surprise. — You've come to me!

SEEBALD (*gives him his hand*): Good morning, Raffael. Yes — I didn't want to make you feel obliged to pay me a visit. You'll be busy enough as it is.

SCHENK: I wouldn't have come anyways.

SEEBALD: I thought so. — You're really bull-headed.

SCHENK: We had to make all plans by noon, regardless of you. — And if you had made up your mind in our favor, then you would have found your way to Wachsmann's just as well by yourself.

SEEBALD: You are bitter, dear friend. — But you have it nice and warm in here. May I take off my coat?

SCHENK: Oh, I'm sorry! *(Wants to help him.)*

SEEBALD: Thanks, don't bother! *(He takes his coat off and hangs it up along with his hat.)*

SCHENK: Please have a seat. *(They sit down at the table.)*

SEEBALD: What brings me here is — Raffael! We have to talk things out. Yesterday evening must cast a shadow between us.

SCHENK: Unfortunately, I cannot offer you anything. — Wait! Would you like a glass of milk?

SCHENK: We cannot wait until the State slowly collapses. No worker will keep up a strike for that long. And we certainly must not wait until the front goes on strike. They will only do that if the proletariat deploys its entire power back home. The procession must clarify the strike and expand it.

TROTZ: I have been in many a strike in my day. It is not so simple as the workers leaving their machines and staying at home with the women and children. They have to see each other and everyday draw new strength from one another. — Yeah, if it was only over a couple pennies raise! Then one could ask: Who will hold out longer? But we want to strike for our red flags. For that we must also let the red flag wave.

FLORA: Well put, Comrade Trotz. — So says an old proletarian, Professor. Can you then still be reluctant?

(Footsteps in the adjoining room.)

ROSA: Someone's coming.

PRÄZOLD (*enters*): Good evening, ladies and gentlemen! I beg your pardon if I am interrupting. Only — well — this won't be able to go on here any longer.

KLAGENFURTER: Has the police been here already?

PRÄZOLD: Yes — no — not the police themselves exactly. Herr Strauss was here again — along with another gentleman.

SCHENK: With Herr Dr. Bossenius?

PRÄZOLD: No — it wasn't any gentleman who belongs here. It could well have been someone from the authorities.

DIETRICH: There's our spy!

PRÄZOLD: The gentlemen only asked who was still here and drew my attention to the consequences if I were to tolerate the meeting here in back. — Naturally if the gentlemen would like to sit in front in the pub —

SEEBALD: No, thank you. We will be leaving right away.

PRÄZOLD: I would only ask: If perhaps you weren't to all leave together, — so it's not so conspicuous.

TROTZ: You can rest assured.

PRÄZOLD: It's not for my sake, of course. But, you know: One can never know now who can be trusted. And I, Herr Professor, I am totally on your side. Since I lost my son in the field, my eyes have been opened. — So I think — if I might suggest — , if maybe the Herr Professor would stay until last of all.

SCHENK: What for?

PRÄZOLD: Herr Schenk, as long as the professor is there, the police won't dare to come in. But if he were to leave the remaining gentlemen would then be immediately written up.

LASSMANN: They should just go ahead and write me up!

FLORA: We thank you, Herr Präzold. We will go away separately.

PRÄZOLD: Then I kindly take my leave.

KLAGENFURTER: Would you send us the waitress with our bill?

PRÄZOLD: It's better if I send her into the cloak room. It's less conspicuous. *(Exits.)*

DIETRICH: There we have our traitor — Strauss!

SEEBALD: I really wouldn't have thought it possible.

LECHAROV: Much is possible. — Such are the Mensheviks. They are everywhere the same.

SCHENK: Stefan, you must go first. You are the most in danger.

KLAGENFURTER: I am not afraid.

SCHENK: If you are noticed, you'll be drafted tomorrow. It would be best for you to go alone.

ROSA: No, with me. We will be taken for a couple.

KLAGENFURTER *(laughs, takes her arm)*: Yes, Röschen — how's about the two of us?

DIETRICH: Whoa ho ho! What would Rund say?

ROSA: And your wife, Stefan! — Well, adieu, — we're going. *(Exits with Klagenfurter.)*

FRAU LASSMANN: Come on, Ernst! *(Lassmann is lead from the bench, takes his leave.)*

and what's to be had at the markets, a person could just starve on that.

FLORA: It's true. Out exemplary organization of the food supply is something to behold.

FRAU LASSMANN: One has to keep an eye out to snag something under the table and you end up getting fleeced in the process. But what comes first is making sure that the children get enough to eat. And then they need clothes and shoes — and the prices keep going up —

SCHENK: And the quality down.

FRAU LASSMANN: 14 days ago my husband took off his glasses because he wanted to wipe his eye, — and I wasn't around. And when he searched for them again on the table he knocked them onto the floor — and broke both lenses. Now the expensive, black lenses —

SCHENK: But the State has to pay for those!

FRAU LASSMANN: No, they refused because it was the result of carelessness. As if he could help being blind.

FLORA: At any rate, for the moment we have to first think of what can be done to fight the eviction.

SCHENK: What does your husband have to say about it?

FRAU LASSMANN: Oh, there's no talking to Ernst anymore. He says I shouldn't worry myself anymore. Today's the Revolution — and then the landlord should just see who gets tossed out, us or himself. It's like he's gone mad.

FLORA: I think the best thing would be for me to go with you straightaway and set that fine landlord straight.

FRAU LASSMANN: Oh, if you would only do that!

SCHENK: Do you think it could help, then?

FRAU LASSMANN: Indeed. With us proletarians they think they can do anything. But if someone else talks with them, they don't want to appear inhuman. — It's always like that.

FLORA: Good then, — give me my jacket, Raffael, please.

SCHENK: You can't put the trip off?

FLORA: No, — but will I be getting in the way of anything you have to discuss with Schenk?

FRAU LASSMANN: No, certainly not. I just didn't know who to turn to.

SCHENK: What has happened? — You are excited, Frau Lassmann. — Sit down. (*Pushes a chair towards her.*)

FRAU LASSMANN (*sits down*): Oh, God, — you can't help me either — but maybe you can give me some advice.

SCHENK: Tell us. What's it about then?

FRAU LASSMANN: You know how things are for us now, — a couple of marks from the invalid pension, and then the blind husband and the six children. —

FLORA: You're in a tight spot, Frau Lassmann? A solution will be found.

FRAU LASSMANN: Yes, you see — it's the rent money, — our Leni was so sick last fall. And now we're three months behind with the rent. I begged and begged the landlord to have a little more patience, — and today — this morning — we got the eviction notice.

SCHENK: Eviction notice? — Now that just can't be.

FRAU LASSMANN: Oh, it very well can. They always know their way around the new regulations, the rich ones do. And now we're supposed to pay 78 marks by this evening or else leave the apartment tomorrow morning.

FLORA: 78 marks! I'll have to see about scraping it together today. — Wouldn't the landlord agree to a partial payment?

FRAU LASSMANN: I already made him an offer — 20 marks. He said the day after tomorrow is February 1st, that wouldn't even be enough for the new month. He just wants us out — with all the children. Nobody wants to have more children in the building.

SCHENK: These are the refining effects of war.

FRAU LASSMANN: And then when I do have a couple of marks in hand, — well, then my first thought is hardly for the landlord. The children get far too little milk, — the big ones none at all;

SCHENK (*at the same time, aside to Flora*): You're coming with me, right?

FLORA: No, I'm going to join the Lassmanns.

SCHENK: But — why?

FLORA: You have to stay to the very end and keep working on Seebald.

SCHENK: I hoped you would come with me today.

FLORA: Be understanding, Raffael. I'll definitely come to you tomorrow morning, very early. Think of the work and do your part!

SCHENK (*gives her his hand*): Alright, then. Good bye, until tomorrow.

FLORA: Until tomorrow. — Farewell, Trotz and Dietrich!

TROTZ: You too, Flora! You young ones must make it happen!

DIETRICH: Oh, we are still young too, when it matters.

FLORA: Come now, Lassmann! — Good night, comrades. — Into battle! (*Exits with Lassmann.*)

SEEBALD: But don't forget love.

TROTZ: That's a woman. With a thousand workers like that girl, I would turn the world upside down.

LECHAROV: Over by us in Russia — the women provided the best fighters for our revolution. They were the movement's fire — and they went to their deaths, our women students, by the hundreds, as if they were used to dying.

SCHENK: Over here Flora is unfortunately the great exception.

SEEBALD: But she won't remain so. The example fosters emulation. The will to good is not satisfied with one heart. Through the mouth of one it passes into others. The ideal constantly reproduces itself from out of itself.

SCHENK: But only once it has become action.

TROTZ: If only the educated youth would finally understand the hour!

DIETRICH: The students? — Those delinquents! — You can search high and low to find one that's any use.

SEEBALD: That is unfortunately true. The academic youth in Germany has lost its ideals. The cult of violence has ruined them.

SCHENK: They are bourgeois, — that is all.

LECHAROV: I will tell you what is my opinion. By us in Russia the male and female students were the carriers of the great ideas. That was because the intelligentsia were persecuted, because the intellect is always a danger to brutality, and because the Czar's state was built on brutality. In Germany the student body is no longer the champion of intellect, but of interest.

TROTZ: Of capitalist interest.

LECHAROV: Yes, that's what I mean. What I have seen here of students were no students like by us, with the fire of youth and with passion. No — were nothing more than future doctors, future school masters, future judges, future diplomats. That's why the students in Germany don't become revolutionaries.

SEEBALD: I have made such observations myself. The war has spiritually shattered our youth.

TROTZ: Only the bourgeois youth. The proletarian youth is taking their place.

DIETRICH: We will see how many students will go along at the demonstration tomorrow!

SCHENK: And how many of the aesthetic young men and ladies from the "Federation of New Men".

TROTZ: It's probably time for us to get going now. — Come on, Dietrich!

DIETRICH: Through Strauss and company's gauntlet of spies. — This gang!

TROTZ: Are you coming along, Raffael?

SCHENK: I'll wait a bit. Then I'll go alone.

DIETRICH (*taking his leave*): We'll all be seeing each other tomorrow afternoon, anyways!

SEEBALD: Don't count on me, friends!

TROTZ: Yes! I am most definitely counting on you! — Good night. (*Exits with Dietrich.*)

FLORA: Raffael, you're dreaming. That's all nonsense.

SCHENK: Yeah, — yeah, — naturally. — — Have you finished with breakfast, dearest? Can I clean up?

FLORA: Yes, thanks, I'm done with it.

SCHENK (*puts the dishes onto the tray*): One moment. (*Exits into the kitchen.*)

FLORA (*gazes after him, groans heavily*): Oh, my God! (*She stands up, goes through the room, sits down on the recliner, holds her handkerchief to her eyes, sobs.*)

SCHENK (*returns, towards Flora*): Flora! You're crying? — What's wrong? (*Kneels down next to her, hisses her hands.*) Hey!

FLORA (*runs her fingers through his hair*): Forgive me, dear. — I am only just a weak female.

SCHENK: But what's the matter?

FLORA (*crying*): There will be deaths and injuries. Honest men will be thrown into jail. — It's hard to take the responsibility for all that.

SCHENK (*at a loss*): Don't lose heart, darling — please don't!

FLORA (*lays her arm around his neck*): We swore to trust one another, Raffael. You are allowed to see that it isn't easy for me, you alone.

SCHENK (*kisses her passionately*): Oh, I know — you are good, you are soft.

FLORA (*straightens herself, stands*): No, I don't want to be soft. I won't! We must stand fast, you and I. — We must be hard!

SCHENK: You are beautiful, Flora! — You are beautiful! (*Embraces her. Doorbell rings.*)

FLORA (*laughing*): Do you hear? We are being warned for the second time to be sensible. — Go, open the door.

SCHENK: Won't anyone let me be happy for five minutes! (*Exits to the corridor. The door remains open. Still outside.*) It's you, Frau Lassmann? — Yes, please, come in!

FRAU LASSMANN: I'm not disturbing you?

SCHENK: They're working diligently, — one must grant them that.

FLORA: It shows that they still feel safe. It's almost incomprehensible, this blindness. But it's good this way. — It can't be concealed on the front how things are going back home. In any case defeat will be hastened.

SCHENK: Do you believe that the front will revolt when it becomes known?

FLORA: I don't think so. But you know how the men on leave talk; they all set their hopes on the home front. Should something begin to stir here first, then they wouldn't let themselves be so easily convinced anymore that only attacks and triumphs can free them from the misery of the trenches. If our countrymen out there were to read that there was a strike back home and that the workers were being shot at —

SCHENK: And the names of those arrested! Just think if it read: Seebald thrown into prison!

FLORA: Yes, that would make an impression. — But if he withdraws —

SCHENK: It's not cowardice.

FLORA: Certainly not. He thinks of himself last of all. — Do you know what would be good?

SCHENK: What?

FLORA: If they arrest him nonetheless, — even if he isn't on hand?

SCHENK: Do you think that's possible?

FLORA: Probably not. But Strauss hates him — and I believe he and the other so-called labor leaders have the whole game under control.

SCHENK: They'll label him as the ringleader?

FLORA: And that's what he is in principle. Without his activity we wouldn't have gotten the workers out of the factories.

SCHENK: Nevertheless — they won't dare try it. — When I picture him possibly being lead past the workers. — Going from his apartment to the prison they would have to cross in front of the Wachsmann factory. — — Might the attempt be made to liberate him?

SCHENK (*paces back and forth, finally remains standing in front of Seebald*): You still haven't made up your mind?

SEEBALD: If you are forcing me now to make a choice, then I would have to say: I'm not coming!

SCHENK: But that's no final decision?

SEEBALD: I will sleep on it. If you would like to come to me midday tomorrow, then I will tell you what I'm going to do.

SCHENK: What time?

SEEBALD: Come at 1 o'clock, — is that okay?

SCHENK: It'll have to be.

SEEBALD: My dear Raffael, now you're angry with me. — I am sorry for that. — I have never seen you like this. — So terse, so ill-humored. Are you disappointed with me?

SCHENK: Yes. I believed in only one person. That was you. — And now I see that the moment you are faced with a question you aren't even capable of deciding on a clear yes or no.

SEEBALD: You misjudge me. My position on the questions at hand is totally clear. But here I am supposed to carry out a particular action which I have not instigated, — and so I must first take everything into consideration in order to discern whether it serves or harms the work to which I have devoted my life.

SCHENK: Ah, yes — Idea, Sentiment, Perception — that's all there. The vacillating only begins when it comes to Action.

LECHAROV: That's enough. You are each of you talking in different tongues. How could you understand one other? Tomorrow you will hear the verdict and know: Yes or no. — Go home now, Comrade Schenk, and rest until the morning and — Whether Mathias Seebald comes or stays away — either way!

SCHENK: I suppose you will make your attendance dependent on whether Herr Professor goes?

LECHAROV: Me? — Young man, what matters to me your will, what matters to me his will? I have my will, I will be where the proletariat is — and if the proletariat goes into the streets, then I will go into the streets.

SCHENK: Do you not want to show him where his place is?
LECHAROV: Am I his guardian? — Mathias Seebald has his head like I have my head and you have your head. Each thinks only with his own head. Go get some sleep, comrade, and reason things out with your conscience, as he will reason things out with his his conscience. And tomorrow we will see.
SCHENK: But Seebald is necessary for the success of the cause!
LECHAROV: Mathias Seebald is as necessary for the success as you, Raffael Schenk, are necessary, or as I, Fedor Vladimirovitch Lecharov, am necessary. Each must know where he is necessary and how he is necessary. Most necessary of all is the people, the revolutionary proletariat. And if the people itself doesn't know what is necessary then its whole cause is unnecessary.
SCHENK: I see that this whole chattering here is leading no where. Good night. (*Wants to go.*)
SEEBALD: Raffael!
SCHENK: What now?
SEEBALD: Don't you want to shake hands, in parting?
SCHENK: Uh, yeah — certainly. (*Extends his hand to him.*) I hope that tomorrow I still can. — Good night, Comrade Lecharov. (*Gives Lecharov his hand.*)
LECHAROV: Sleep well! (*Exit Schenk.*)
SEEBALD: What passion in that man! — But a fanatic.
LECHAROV: What value would an idea have if fanatics it didn't ignite? On people like Raffael Schenk and Flora Severin rests the future of Germany.
SEEBALD: I ask you now for you opinion. Can I be of use if I speak to the crowd and lead them?
LECHAROV: You can be of use if you have the feeling that you are of use.
SEEBALD: I'm afraid there will be a great misfortune.
LECHAROV: The spilling of blood is always a great misfortune; it can be, however, the greatest of blessings.

DIETRICH: Because I saw the boys in the street talking with a civilian who looked a hell of a lot like a detective. A guy in fur. He opened his book and then apparently gave them another address. Then they went off down Gertrude Street together, probably to Braun's or Färber's.
SCHENK: Yes, my good man, in that case it would likely be best if you kept straight on going so you don't fall into their hands right here downstairs.
KLAGENFURTER: Dietrich can lead the way. He knows them already.
DIETRICH: But where to?
FLORA: We're already agreed on that: to the villa quarter to Frau Adler.
DIETRICH (*laughs mightily*): That's rich! Our Severin naturally cooked that up! Well, anyways, you'll be offered a good wine, old man!
KLAGENFURTER: Say, was my kitten very worked up?
DIETRICH: Yeah, well — she bawled a bit.
KLAGENFURTER: Dammit! The anxiety now, in her condition!
SCHENK: Don't think about your wife now. Nothing will happen to her. Think about yourself and don't let yourself get nabbed.
KLAGENFURTER: If they get me, — I won't get into the grey coat.
SCHENK: Is your mind made up?
KLAGENFURTER: You can count on it. They can put me up against the wall, then at least I'll know what I'm dying for. I won't be a soldier!
FLORA (*shakes his hand*): Well done, Comrade Klagenfurter. — But get going now, Dietrich in front to set the pace. — And I will take care of your wife. That I promise you.
DIETRICH: Then you can rest at ease, Stefan. She's in good hands with her.
KLAGENFURTER: I know. Thank you very much, Flora. — Well, this afternoon, hopefully. (*Exits with Dietrich.*)
FLORA: Nothing seems to me like it wants to go ahead quietly.

SCHENK: At any rate they're not going to go looking for you so soon. Just stay here for the moment.

FLORA: I'm not so sure. But I do think that they've already sent their bloodhounds out after you.

SCHENK: But they will hardly suspect him to be here with me.

FLORA: Maybe that's precisely what they'll suspect. Do you believe there are no lists kept on friendships among the revolutionary workers?

KLAGENFURTER: Where should I go then? What do you advise?

FLORA: This afternoon you will be safest among the crowd.

KLAGENFURTER: Yes — it would be tough to single me out then. — But until then?

SCHENK: The best thing would be if you went to some unsuspecting bourgeois.

KLAGENFURTER: Who could there be who would take me in?

FLORA: I've got it. Go to the divorced woman who's always grating on our nerves in the Federation of New Men.

SCHENK: To the old hysteric! — There's a thought. Wait, I have her address. (*Looks around in his notebook.*) Here: Frau Werra Adler — I'll write it down for you. (*Writes a note, gives it to Klagenfurter.*)

FLORA: But watch out she doesn't catch you in her web.

KLAGENFURTER: Better off straight to the barracks in that case! (*Footsteps outside. Knocking. Enter Dietrich.*)

DIETRICH: Aha! — I thought I'd find the runaway here. — You have to move on right away!

SCHENK: Why? What's wrong?

DIETRICH: I've just come from your wife, Stefan. Two soldiers were just there to pick you up. Then I wanted to go back home to my place. They were just then coming down my stairway, the curs.

FLORA: Did no one confront you?

DIETRICH: They didn't even know me. I turned right around and came here. The police are probably already on the look out, too.

FLORA: Why do you think that?

SEEBALD: No. Violence is of evil. If I went, I could only attempt to prevent violence. But I see the danger that just such an attempt could be the signal to violence.

LECHAROV: That is entirely possible.

SEEBALD: Schenk — that I see clearly — wants violence. He is definitively resolved, — and I believe Flora Severin further strengthens him in this.

LECHAROV: He is a gentle person, but a vicious animal he can be. Now everything has his blood boiling. His sickness lets him disregard his own life. — As it seems to me, he is senselessly in love with Flora — — .

SEEBALD: Did you notice it, too?

LECHAROV: And she returns the love and transports it into the intellectual plane. That drives him out of his senses. For him the struggle of the proletariat against the war and for socialism is at the same time his own struggle to make himself worthy of the woman, and his work for the recovery of humanity is fanaticized by the suffering of his own sickness.

SEEBALD: I am reluctant to become the instrument of his passions.

LECHAROV: If it weren't you, he would find another.

SEEBALD: In his state he would be capable of leading everyone to their doom.

LECHAROV: A person must be capable of that, for whom the Idea is more than his life.

SEEBALD: Strange! Until today he was my truest disciple.

LECHAROV: Do you believe he loves you less now? On the contrary. I saw how worried he was for you, — for your soul —

SEEBALD: Yes, yes. — To save it he would be ready to cold-bloodedly betray me.

LECHAROV (*reflectively*): He could bleed to death for you. He could also watch you bleed to death for your soul's sake. But — betray you? —

SEEBALD: Come, it's time for us to go. (*They stand and go to the exit.*)

LECHAROV (*standing in place*): No — a Judas Raffael Schenk is not.
SEEBALD (*as he leaves*): Judas was perhaps not the worst among
the disciples.

Curtain

SCHENK: He's coming. — He felt we were talking at cross purposes
— Seebald and I.

FLORA: But then who should speak?

SCHENK: There is only one alternative. — You!

FLORA: I don't believe I would be able to. — Wouldn't you like to
— ?

SCHENK: I am no speaker — and then there's my weak constitution.

FLORA: Or Trotz?

SCHENK: He starts to stutter. He can't speak before many people.

FLORA: And Dietrich?

SCHENK: He is a good fellow. But grand slogans aren't going to
help us now.

FLORA: I have never spoken in front of masses before.

SCHENK: But you can. You can do everything. You must do it! (*He
takes her hands.*) Flora — yes?

FLORA: Flatterer! (*She kisses him. There's a knock. They break away
from each other.*)

SCHENK: Come in! (*Enter Klagenfurter.*) Is that you, Stefan?

KLAGENFURTER: Yes — it's me. I've left the house.

SCHENK: What does that mean?

KLAGENFURTER: At 7 o'clock a soldier was there and delivered the
draft notice. At 8 this morning I'm supposed to enter the infantry
barracks.

FLORA: It's well after 8 o'clock.

KLAGENFURTER: They lay in wait for me yesterday evening at the
"Lodge". The whole way home I had spies behind me.

SCHENK: That was Strauss's doing. — He knows you.

KLAGENFURTER: Yes — to render me harmless today. Think about
it: examined only just the day before yesterday.

SCHENK: How the society works! At 7 o'clock your papers and at
8 o'clock report for duty.

FLORA: It's just good that they didn't haul you off on the spot.

KLAGENFURTER: They probably didn't count on me running off.

the strikers will gather at their workplaces and from there go in columns — but without flags — to the Wachsmann factory. There the march will form up. The flags and placards will be brought there at about 1 o'clock — to you. They will only be distributed on the spot.

SCHENK: Why's that?

FLORA: So that no single group will be snatched up prematurely.

SCHENK: That can happen even if they have no flags.

FLORA: But it won't. The bull only goes wild when it sees the red cape.

SCHENK: And what then?

FLORA: The march will form according to workplaces and trades in the large forecourt of the factory. And at the entrance, where the fence stop, there's the tall square stone, — you know the place?

SCHENK: You mean the pedestal that was really meant for the gateway?

FLORA: Yes. From this stone Seebald will speak.

SCHENK: I doubt it, Flora.

FLORA: How so? Did you come to an agreement with him? — I was counting on it.

SCHENK: I did what I could.

FLORA: And he said no?

SCHENK: Neither yes nor no. He wanted to think it over until noon today.

FLORA: That means a refusal.

SCHENK: I'm of the same opinion. At 1 o'clock I am supposed to go see him to hear his answer. — But didn't you say the comrades were coming here at one?

FLORA: Yes, Trotz and Dietrich and Rosa Fiebig with the flags.

SCHENK: Then I won't bother going first.

FLORA: Perhaps I should speak with him one more time?

SCHENK: No, Flora. Let's leave him be. — He means well, — but he is not the person we took him for.

FLORA: What does Lecharov think then?

ACT THREE

In the early morning of the next day. Schenk's room. A small Mansard room. On the right side the roof beams form the room's steep ceiling over the small window from which tidy curtains hang. On the windowsill, an empty flower vase. On the rear wall, to the right, the exit door with clothes hooks. In the middle of the wall, a wardrobe. Further to the left, a simple vanity; next to it, a bucket. Small four-cornered mirror. On the left toward the back, a door to the kitchen. In the left corner, a round iron stove with a long pipe. On the left wall, an iron bedstead. Under the window, a long board with books. In the middle of the room, an uncovered table and a pair of cane chairs. In the foreground to the right, a well-worn recliner. On the table, writing materials and paper. Over the bed hang unframed Jugendstil pictures. Under the table, a straw mat. The bed is a mess.

SCHENK (*in shirtsleeves in front of the mirror. He washes away the last traces of shaving cream, dries his face and puts the razor into the drawer of the vanity*): Mother!

FRAU SCHENK (*from the kitchen*): Yes, my boy! Your coffee is coming. Is the stove warm yet?

SCHENK: Yeah, I made a fire. — Did you sew on the rosette?

FRAU SCHENK (*opens the door on the left*): There — try it on. (*Gives him the black jacket.*) On the left side — is that right?

SCHENK: Naturally, on the left. — But wait. I still have to put on my collar.

FRAU SCHENK: Yes, make yourself look good now for the big day.

SCHENK: But mother, there must be a rosette on the overcoat too.

FRAU SCHENK: Don't worry. Rosa Fiebig passed along two, and I've got your coat in kitchen. So get yourself ready, Ralf, I'll bring the coffee. (*Exits.*)

SCHENK (*puts on the collar and ties his tie. Pulls on the jacket and examines the rosette in the mirror. Calls*): It looks good, mother.

FRAU SCHENK (*brings tray with coffee pot, cups, bread, knife and jam; places it on the table*): Let's have a look at you, boy.

SCHENK: Is the collar on right?

FRAU SCHENK (*plucks the tie into shape*): There. — You look like a real gem. — But come to breakfast now.

SCHENK: Ah, mother, would you perhaps make the bed first? — I'll have a visitor soon.

FRAU SCHENK: So early?

SCHENK: I'll tell you in bit who's coming.

FRAU SCHENK: Well, as you like. (*Tidies up the bed.*)

SCHENK (*takes a look around the room*): Oh, the bucket! (*He pours the wash water into the bucket and carries it out.*)

FRAU SCHENK: What is with him today? (*Smooths out the bed.*)

SCHENK (*returns*): So, mother, now we can drink coffee. (*They sit down at the table.*)

FRAU SCHENK (*butters the bread*): No — jam is another thing. It's pure animal fodder, and even then you have to beg to get any at all for your ill-gotten gains.

SCHENK: Mother, you don't think it's necessary to clean up again — do you?

FRAU SCHENK: But, Ralf, I just swept out your room only yesterday. You're acting like it was Easter. What is it with you today?

SCHENK: Well, mother, if you only knew!

FRAU SCHENK: You — rascal — I'm starting to think you're in love. — Is your sweetheart coming here?

SCHENK: — No — Flora can't be called that.

FRAU SCHENK: Flora? — What an unusual name!

SCHENK: Flora Severin is my — my friend.

FRAU SCHENK: Isn't that the student you already told me about?

SCHENK: Don't worry, mother. Go on.

FRAU SCHENK: Could be that I'll be away a bit longer. I'm going to stop by Frau Pöpke's, as well, to look in on her and the baby. She delivered last week.

FLORA: A neighbor of yours, I suppose?

FRAU SCHENK: No — she lives a good ways off. But she is a god-child of mine. — But I must run now. Good morning, children. (*Exits.*)

FLORA: What a dear mother you have!

SCHENK: Isn't she? — She normally never goes shopping before 9:30. And her going to the woman in childbed is also just to pass the time and not disturb us too soon. — And now a kiss, Flora!

FLORA: One more. (*Kisses him.*) That's enough now. We'll have time for smooching later. Today we have more serious work to do. — Do you know anything new?

SCHENK: The morning paper didn't appear. — Have any telegrams come in?

FLORA: Only notices from the general command and the unions: warnings, reassurances, threats — you know the tone.

SCHENK: And do you know anything more about the factories?

FLORA: I met Fiebig. At Wachsmann everyone has stayed home. At Bartels & Moser a percentage have supposedly reported for work.

SCHENK: And at the motor company?

FLORA: I don't know about that yet. — And how is it at your printing press?

SCHENK: I'm certain of it. I worked it over thoroughly. You see for yourself — no newspaper. The good bourgeois will notice that first.

FLORA: So listen up. I've already been all over town this morning.

SCHENK: Already this morning? — Good Lord, and I'm just getting up.

FLORA: And you should take it easy. I have already been to Trotz's and Fischer's. The matter will proceed as follows: At 2 o'clock

that we have no flowers in the room for you. — Help her with her things, son.

SCHENK: Oh, yes. (*Tugs clumsily on the arm of Flora's jacket.*)

FLORA: Go on! (*Takes off and hands him jacket and cap, which he hangs on the door.*)

SCHENK: Mother, do you have one more cup for Flora?

FLORA: I already had breakfast. — Please don't trouble yourself.

FRAU SCHENK (*runs into the kitchen*): Oh, there's still enough there. Just a moment.

SCHENK: I'm so happy that you are here!

FLORA (*gives her mouth to him*): My dear friend! (*Kiss*).

FRAU SCHENK (*comes in again, remains standing in the doorway, wants to go back*).

SCHENK: Come on in, mother. — Did you see something?

FRAU SCHENK: Me? — No. — What?

SCHENK: It doesn't matter, mom. To you either, right, Flora? — I don't have any secrets from mother.

FLORA: That's beautiful, — and rare.

FRAU SCHENK: As long as he's happy, — you have a beautiful job there, my child. (*Pours her a cup.*) Bread and jam, too?

SCHENK (*pushes his toward her*): Here, eat this, — I didn't finish it. — But mother, bring the milk for Flora.

FRAU SCHENK: From your milk?

SCHENK: Yes, of course. You don't have any other?

FLORA: It's prescribed especially for you, right? — No, my dear, you drink it, but I won't.

SCHENK: I just drink a glass at noon, and if today there's missing as much as you need to lighten your coffee then it will be three times as enjoyable.

FRAU SCHENK (*gets the milk from the kitchen. Meanwhile, Schenk and Flora sit silently holding hands. She returns*): So, now help yourself, and excuse me. I have to pick up a few things. (*Takes a shawl from the wardrobe; while putting it on*): Just put the breakfast dishes on the kitchen table, Ralf!

SCHENK: Yes, mother.

FRAU SCHENK: No — and she is now your — ? — — The two of you aren't getting married?

SCHENK: Who can know what will happen!

FRAU SCHENK: No, you don't say! — Such a thing! — And she is coming here — to our place?

SCHENK: She wanted to be here very early. — Oh, I don't have any flowers in the vase.

FRAU SCHENK: My God, no — in the middle of winter! — But wait, I want to put on my good dress, then. In my work clothes like this — that just won't do.

SCHENK: You stay as you are, mother. Flora should see that she's come to proletarians. And that's what she wants to see, too.

FRAU SCHENK: Is she also going to be there this afternoon then?

SCHENK: Can you believe it? She even wrote the fliers.

FRAU SCHENK: Is it possible? One couldn't guess that they were written by a woman.

SCHENK: Well she's not like other women. — She thinks and lives only with the people. She wants to incite it to an uprising — to revolution.

FRAU SCHENK: But, Ralf — revolution, — isn't that something terrible?

SCHENK: The war won't stop until we have a revolution, mother.

FRAU SCHENK: This hideous war! — Yes, if what you're saying is true, then a person must even wish for revolution.

SCHENK: If what Flora and I want succeeds, then we'll have it before the day is over.

FRAU SCHENK: Oh my God, — but there's no danger in it for you?

SCHENK: Mother! If it wasn't for my game leg and sick lung, I'd be in constant danger. You would have to endure that, too.

FRAU SCHENK: Yes, you are much too casual about your health. You'll get yourself terribly agitated again, — and you know, then you'll be coughing again.

SCHENK: What an imagination you have! — I'm doing much better now. — Last night I hardly coughed. (*He coughs slightly.*)

FRAU SCHENK: You see — you see!

SCHENK: Yeah, well, you shouldn't worry about it. — When I see Flora I forget about my cough entirely.

FRAU SCHENK: It was just the same with your father. When he was still young and totally in love with me, he often went days without coughing. And then when you were born he was almost entirely healthy from joy. But two years later the consumption took him.

SCHENK: Tell me, mother, was father actually a Socialist?

FRAU SCHENK: God, how it was back then. He was in the union, and at election time he always helped out the Social Democrats. But otherwise he didn't concern himself much with the whole business.

SCHENK (*looks at his pocket watch*): It's just about 8 o'clock.

FRAU SCHENK: Yes, naturally. — I didn't wake you earlier since you're not going to work anyway because of the strike. — But you still haven't told me anything about last night.

SCHENK: Oh — I got all worked up.

FRAU SCHENK: About the lady painters and the highbrow gentlemen?

SCHENK: They had to beat it straight back home last night. The General Command forbid everything, you know. — No, about Seebald himself.

FRAU SCHENK: About the professor himself? But how can that be, Ralf?

SCHENK: Yeah, well, he was supposed to speak today before the Wachsmann factory and then lead the march. But then he suddenly had so many misgivings, so many If's and But's —

FRAU SCHENK: So will he be going then?

SCHENK: I am supposed to go to his place today at 1 o'clock to get his final answer. — I wouldn't mind just cutting him loose.

FRAU SCHENK: Is it possible?

SCHENK (*looks at his watch again, shakes his head*): Can I have another slice of bread, mother?

FRAU SCHENK: That'll be hard, Ralf. My ration cards are almost all —

SCHENK: Give me just one more. Maybe I'll turn up a couple more ration cards. But today I have to be in good shape. Today there's still work to be done.

FRAU SCHENK (*sighs*): It's such an ordeal with the bread — and everything else. (*Butters a slice of bread for him.*) What times we're living in!

(*The door bell sounds.*)

SCHENK: It rang, mother. That's her — she doesn't know that the hall door is open. — Stay there, I'll get it. (*He goes out through the door. Frau Schenk quickly smooths out her dress, walks around absentmindedly. Voices can be heard outside. Schenk and Flora enter.*)

SCHENK: Yes, in here — please. — Come, mother. — Yes, this is my mother, Flora!

FLORA (*extends her hand*): So this is how Raffael Schenk's mother looks! — Good morning, Frau Schenk!

FRAU SCHENK: Good day, Fräulein, — — Ah, now I've forgotten the name again.

SCHENK: Flora, mother. — And you don't need to say Fräulein either.

FLORA: Not that, please. — I am a comrade.

SCHENK: Take off your things, Flora.

FLORA: Do you have a vase? I brought a couple of roses. (*She gives them to him.*)

SCHENK (*taking them out of the paper*): Oh, look, mother, how pretty!

FRAU SCHENK (*takes the vase from the window, puts in the flowers, smells them*): Oh, how glorious. And Ralf was just complaining