

## PRESENTATION AIDE-MEMOIRE

### BALLAD OF THE MAN AND THE WOMAN SEEKING EACH OTHER ALONG THE DANUBE

*The characters attempt to find a place for themselves in the spectators' memories.<sup>1</sup> At the back of the stage, three large panels side by side, on which shadows and coloured lights flash past. Fair-ground noises—dodgems, horns, wheels, rifle ranges, music. Two placards left and right marked 'Danube'. In front of each, on opposite sides, Hildegard Frölick and Ilya Moïssevitch are seated. A huge blue ribbon joins the two placards. It is to be unfolded and hung by Ilya Moïssevitch as the curtain opens. Behind Moïssevitch, stage right, a musical robot in which Guinguin has taken up position. Centre stage, behind the blue ribbon, Reuter, the fire-eater, is asleep in the middle of a charcoal circle traced on the ground, surrounded by his petrol cans and torches. Stage left, behind Hildegard Frölick, is the booth of her puppet theatre. On one of the uprights, a clock shows midnight. All at once, Hildegard's attention appears to be attracted by something unusual.*

**FRAU FRÖLICK** (The river!) Herr Moïssevitch—the Danube is bursting its banks.

*Moïssevitch looks to left and right, then turns towards Hildegard Frölick.*

1. The stage directions which follow in part reflect Gatti's interest, at the time, in oriental forms of theatre which he had discovered in the fifties, as well as the influence of Erwin Piscator. However, he has indicated to me, more than once, his own preference for the alternative staging which Jean Hurstel devised for a production in Strasbourg in 1967. In that production, which was presented in a small studio theatre, actors carrying electric torch-lamps entered in darkness onto a bare acting area. The criss-crossing of the beams of light, choreographed to the text, suggested the attempt by the characters to situate themselves and each other in the darkness of memory.

**MOÏSSEVITCH** You should take a husband, Frau Frölick—the Danube wouldn't burst its banks then.

*The musical robot where Guinguin is concealed begins to move. It grinds out a few bars of music, which punctuate its text.*

**GUINGUIN** It was at the fairground at Grein—just before the festivities of the Vienna Carnival—the calm waters of the Danube glimmered in the light of the first few lanterns—The fishing nets curved gently with the current—And yet, on that very evening—Moïssevitch surrendered.

**MOÏSSEVITCH** Frau Frölick! Forgive me (you may be right).

**GUINGUIN** For Ilya Moïssevitch, travelling the fairgrounds (with a trick robot) and Hildegard Frölick, owner of three puppet-soldiers—the river had burst its banks.

*The characters from the past appear, on a moving belt behind the blue ribbon:*

*— Abel Antokokoletz in khaki clothes cut from a blanket, with a blue-and-white striped cap.*

*— A Jew from the pre-war Baltic communities. He has a black frock coat. He is carrying a fish, which he holds over the blue ribbon.*

*— Gregori Kravchenko. He is clad partly in dark green, partly in blue and white stripes.*

*— Another Jew from the Baltic communities, carrying a little barge.*

*— Solange Valette, clad in black, with a chrysanthemum in her hand.*

*— Manuel Rodriguez, in threadbare civilian clothes and a blue-and-white striped scarf around his neck.*

*— A third Jew, carrying a lantern.*

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** Memories have come to the surface.

**KRAVCHENKO** Three thousand four hundred and thirty-five days long—the lights of Tatenberg Camp had danced on the waters of the river.

**MADAME VALETTE** (The call of those dying in despair—and their silence.)

*They disappear in the order in which they appeared.*

**RODRIGUEZ** The river did not sweep them away, it did not scatter them. It had become part of their new lives.

*The musical robot starts to play again. Soldier Johann Steltenkamp, in the white helmet and white dress of the Wehrmacht and with a mask on his face, snaps to attention.*

**STELTENKAMP** Soldier Johann Steltenkamp, 112th Regiment, Motorized Infantry.

*Antokokoletz, Kravchenko, Madame Valette and Manuel Rodriguez reappear on the moving belt.*

**MADAME VALETTE** Solange Valette, thirty-nine years of age, mother of three children (the two twins—my first two! deported and missing).

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** Abel Antokokoletz, sixty years of age, Cracovian Jew, former inmate of Tatenberg.

**RODRIGUEZ** The former camp-mates of Moïssevitch were present that evening, like so many other evenings at roll call.

**KRAVCHENKO** Gregori Kravchenko, thirty years of age, Ukranian, former inmate of Tatenberg (I won five boxing matches there—five knockouts).

**RODRIGUEZ** Ilya Moïssevitch was so used to them that he could no longer tell them apart from his day-to-day life.

*They go off. The robot starts to play again.*

**GUINGUIN** It was at the fairground at Grein—The river flowed on through winter, through spring, through summer—and back to another winter—along an ancestral bed carrying every landscape with it.

*Meanwhile von Basseville, in the winter dress of the Wehrmacht and a mask on his face, comes out of the puppet theatre with a huge white ribbon. He gives one end to Steltenkamp and unrolls it so that it lies along the blue ribbon. First Solange Valette and Manuel Rodriguez reappear on the moving belt, then Wolfgang Frölick, likewise in winter dress and with a mask.*

- RODRIGUEZ** Manuel Rodriguez, half a century of lifetime, a quarter of it spent in the camps and the prisons—in other words, a Spaniard.
- MADAME VALETTE** You remember me, don't you? I told you just now—Solange Valette...
- RODRIGUEZ** (The first one to die in the imaginary life of the camp.)  
*They go off as Corporal Wolfgang Frölick comes on. He points to Hildegard Frölick.*
- FRÖLICK** The widow of Corporal Frölick, shot in front of the Tartares' Wall, facing over the steppe-lands of the Kalmuks—for desertion of his post. (Before they died, the soldiers of the 112th Regiment of Motorized Infantry gazed long across that steppe-land.) That emptiness is their eternity—Hildegard Frölick is trying to find it: the Tartares' Wall and the Danube are no more than names now, lost in the wilderness of Ordnance maps.  
*He goes off.*
- VON BASSEVILLE** (When the night begins to pale, three puppets meet their death here at rifle-point—hardly has the sun appeared, when they set out again to war).  
*Steltenkamp aims his musket at the clock and fires. Although still showing midnight, the clock strikes five o'clock.*
- STELTENKAMP** This is the hour when we were shot.
- VON BASSEVILLE** Private Steltenkamp, if you please—wait for your commanding officer.  
*Von Basseville goes off.*
- STELTENKAMP** Thirty-two degrees below zero across the steppes. (The chaplain could not give us his blessing—his arm had frozen.)  
*Inside the puppet-theatre Corporal Frölick appears, first his helmet and then his mask.*
- FRÖLICK** It was in a land where the cardinal points were called Voroponovo and Petchanka, Barbukine and Stalingrad. The cannon-fire had scattered them far and wide in the snowstorm. We were lost.

- STELTENKAMP** The wild hare of the snows haunted our minds (for two days we had eaten nothing). We set off to hunt. A gunshot wounded the captain—We put up our hands—Corporal Frölick thought it was the Soviets.
- FRÖLICK** It was our own men—we were court-martialled on the spot.
- VON BASSEVILLE** (It was thirty-two degrees below zero.) A ragged firing squad took aim. Just before the volley, the order I had so often repeated rang out—at my command, fire!
- A derisive outburst from fairground rifles. The sound of rifle-fire continues. The three deportees and Solange Valette reappear on the moving belt and come to a halt on a level with the musical robot. Behind them appear the three Jews, lamenting in gesture and voice. Their lament is at once a prayer and a lugubrious chant.*
- FRAU FRÖLICK** Countries are like men—they use the same words. That noise means that a country is trying to find its expression—They are often several trying, and all at once—But speak as they may the same language—they find it hard to understand one another.
- The ticktack of funfair machine guns is heard over the noise of the rifles.*
- RODRIGUEZ** (That noise is a country which has started to think—Spain pondered like that for thirty-nine months—In that phase, thought requires a terrible precision).
- The fairground gunfire becomes fainter.*
- VON BASSEVILLE** The artillery!—Listen!—The tanks are coming up ...
- Firecrackers explode. The fireworks fill the stage. Von Basseville shouts to be heard.*
- VON BASSEVILLE** Now it's love. A love that enflames men, leaves each one standing naked and erect before the universe.
- The three puppet-soldiers mime the attack. They recite the 'Lament of the Three Soldiers Buried on the Kalmuk Steppe'.*

LAMENT OF THE THREE SOLDIERS  
BURIED ON THE KALMUK STEPPE

Our arms are forged  
of night and the earth.  
Our hands are twisted steel.  
They burst and blaze  
so your shadows may fall  
in a spray on our bellies  
so your names may come and sit  
on a corner of our memory  
so our faces may still gleam  
like a fistful of insects  
over the fire.

*The sound of aeroplanes—Shouts from the puppet-soldiers who  
leap over the front of their theatre and disappear. Then silence.*

**RODRIGUEZ** Since then, Tatenberg Camp dies of grief each night on  
the Kalmuk Steppe.

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** The next day, it comes to life again, bristling with its  
former menace.

**KRAVCHENKO** (For them—as for us—it poses problems.)

*The fire-eater wakes up and looks around him.*

**REUTER** What's going on? Can't a man sleep in peace?

*He waits for a reply and as it does not come, he goes to sleep  
again.*

**RODRIGUEZ** Between them—between them and us, at the very  
moment when we think ourselves united, all contact  
becomes impossible.

**GUINGUIN** It was at the fairground at Grein—Were present the per-  
sons from Ilya Moïssevitch's past—and in a sense those  
from the past of Hildegard Frölick—They were travel-  
ling along the line of water which joins Tatenberg to  
Vienna—but which that evening—muddling all coor-  
dinates—had set out in search of the Kalmuk Steppe.

*Meanwhile, deportees and soldiers remove the ribbons and the  
placards. They go off. Before she exits, Solange Valette drops her  
chrysanthemum on the fire-eater.*

## PRESENT TIME I

## A

*Moïssevitch gets up and exits slowly right, as if enjoying a stroll in the early morning sun. The light comes up on stage. Reuter wakes up, sees the chrysanthemum, looks at it first with astonishment, then with suspicion.*

REUTER           A chrysanthemum? Hey—someone must've thought I was dead—bloody clever!

*Meantime, Hildegard Frölick gets up, goes over to her theatre and starts to clean up.*

FRAU FRÖLICK   (friendly) Well then! That fire of yours—you going to swallow it soon?

REUTER           With that robot beside me—it'd stick in my throat.

FRAU FRÖLICK   (astonished) What can have happened? Has Moïssevitch not turned up yet? (It's not like him.)

REUTER           (jeering) You won't fool an old dog like Reuter.

FRAU FRÖLICK   (There's a nasty whiff off you this morning.) What are you trying to get at?

REUTER           Your evening strolls, the two of you, off together at the same time—it's not preparing for your First Communion.

FRAU FRÖLICK   How dare you! My husband was killed in the war.

REUTER           All the more reason—that way, he'll get the pension as well as the woman—He's a Jew, isn't he?

*Meantime, Guinguin has been trying to get out of the robot.*

FRAU FRÖLICK   (offended) I am a decent woman.

REUTER           (lewdly) That needn't stop you having a little fun on the side—I could teach you a thing or two—and then, you don't risk anything with me. I'm clean. (I was given a medal on the Moscova.)

FRAU FRÖLICK   (contemptuously) That's enough!

*She goes behind her theatre. Moïssevitch enters and stops in front of Guinguin who is still entangled in the robot.*

- MOÏSSEVITCH Mind what you're doing. You'll make bits of it. It's our livelihood. Treat it with respect. Pack up our gear. Tomorrow we leave for Vienna.
- REUTER Why not right now—you frighten off the customers with your junk.
- FRAU FRÖLICK (*behind her theatre*) You don't have to stay here.
- REUTER (*shouts*) I've paid for my stall.
- MOÏSSEVITCH So have we.
- REUTER But I gave my blood for my country, I did.
- FRAU FRÖLICK You weren't the only one.
- Moïssevitch prudently withdraws from the discussion. He goes over to Guinguin and helps him put the robot together. Reuter turns to him.*
- REUTER Three wounds—That's more than everyone here can say—One foot frozen, and three wounds.
- Moïssevitch is holding himself back, but with difficulty.*
- MOÏSSEVITCH You're waiting for the fourth?
- REUTER Given a medal on the Moscova—What did you get?
- MOÏSSEVITCH If I were you, I wouldn't boast about it.
- REUTER Aha! I'll go and see the burgomaster.
- Moïssevitch makes a lunge at him. Guinguin tries to hold him back.*
- GUINGUIN Herr Moïssevitch.
- MOÏSSEVITCH (*shouts*) Shut up!
- GUINGUIN (I'm afraid.)
- Guinguin crouches in a corner. Reuter gathers his things together and goes out.*
- REUTER My cans!—You won't contaminate them.
- MOÏSSEVITCH (*contemptuously*) A soldier on the Eastern front!—What garbage!
- FRAU FRÖLICK What's that you're saying? (If my husband were here ...)

MOÏSSEVITCH      You mind your crabs.

FRAU FRÖLICK      (*dumbfounded*) Crabs? My puppets?

MOÏSSEVITCH      With the uniforms they have, they're worth no better.  
*Moïssevitch is suddenly aware of the ridiculous situation he is in.*

MOÏSSEVITCH      Anyway, I've had enough!  
*He goes out.*

## B

FRAU FRÖLICK      Guinguin, are you sad?

GUINGUIN      (*sulkily*) I feel fine.

FRAU FRÖLICK      What are you doing there all by yourself?

GUINGUIN      I'm playing.

FRAU FRÖLICK      What do you think of your boss?

GUINGUIN      That's none of your business.  
*Silence. Hildegard Frölick sighs.*

FRAU FRÖLICK      Oh! I feel so wretched.  
*First Johan Steltenkamp, then Wolfgang Frölick show their heads through the opening of the puppet-theatre.*

STELTENKAMP      Why did we go to our death on the Kalmuk Steppe?

FRÖLICK      For the honour and glory of article 2.

STELTENKAMP      Article 2.—All chickens, ducks, guinea fowl, pigeons which have belonged directly or indirectly to a Jew do not have the right to disseminate fertile eggs.

FRÖLICK      In order to obviate all natural infringement, the wearing of a chastity belt—allowing full freedom of movement—will be obligatory for the above-mentioned fowl.  
*The two puppets disappear.*

FRAU FRÖLICK      Guinguin, do you know what my husband used call me? His partridge (a pretty name, wasn't it?). I was the partridge and he was the fox—Ah, me!

*Moïssevitch enters with a bowl of coffee for Guinguin. He seems to have calmed down. He even appears a little humbled.*

MOÏSSEVITCH Drink this. It's coffee.—It'll warm you up.

GUINGUIN I'm not cold.

MOÏSSEVITCH Drink it anyway.—Frau Frölick?

FRAU FRÖLICK What do you want now?

*Moïssevitch had gone towards her. He hesitates a moment, then goes back towards Guinguin.*

FRAU FRÖLICK The way you speak of the soldiers who fought on the Eastern front is intolerable.

MOÏSSEVITCH So what?

FRAU FRÖLICK You won the war (I was forgetting).

MOÏSSEVITCH You're still young—You didn't know the convoys of trains that ploughed across Europe after the war of 1914. They poured men out everywhere (or whatever was left of them). For everyone, victors or vanquished, it was defeat, and as nobody wanted to admit it, each one invented a victory to suit himself. Each one rummaged through his stock of memories—when there was nothing left, he turned to what others remembered—after that, he made things up. The war had left behind a huge machine for making dreams, and none of the survivors were able (or willing) to go on without it.

Twenty years later the same war started up all over again (in fact, it had never ceased for a single instant). And again the ghosts and the survivors are caught in the same endless round. You are caught with them. For me, it's no better, a camp opened wide before me on the day of the liberation. It will never close.—At Tatenberg, there were those who were going home to their country, and those who were staying because they no longer had a country to go to. For all of them (wherever they might be) an endless wait began before the rusted barbed wire.—They were imitating (we were imitating) life, day after day.

*Meantime, Abel Antokokoletz, Manuel Rodriguez and Gregori Kravchenko fix signs and notices onto the three panels at the back of the stage. These indicate in order of importance: Tatenberg Station, Way Out, Buffet, WC, Waiting Room First and Second Class, Waiting Room Third Class, Ticket Office, Passports, Departures, Arrivals—On the central panel, over the sign Tatenberg Station, a dummy clock is fixed.*

## FIRST FLASHBACK

### A

**MOÏSSEVITCH** (Today, the camp has become an historic site.) It was in a station that the most forsaken among us found refuge. The station was a fake, and the ticket offices, time-tables, restaurants, waiting rooms, all dummies! The clock always showed the same time!—It still does today.

*Wrapped in an army blanket, Abel Antokokoletz is sitting in front of the first panel, stage right. Gregori Kravchenko, in a patched pullover, his hands bandaged, is practising punching a sack of earth.*

**KRAVCHENKO** One, two—One, two, three—The three Poles left tonight. They're going to try and slip across the border into Italy.

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** (What good will that do them?)

**KRAVCHENKO** They say the Vatican is giving out false passports for Argentina.

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** Tcha! The fantasies of displaced persons.—Last year it was the British services recruiting refugees for psychological warfare (you had only to get as far as Antwerp and it was in the bag). In the summer, it was the Americans wanting to resettle Alaska. After that, it was Australian sheep. Tcha! Once you had crossed the frontier, every escape route brought you invariably to prison.

**KRAVCHENKO** You have to do something.—Soon it will be the fourth winter I've spent here.—One, two—One, two, three—I'm in top shape, no mistake about that—One, two.

*He starts to punch all the more, in growing fury.*

- ANTOKOKOLETZ Oh—oi—ho!
- KRAVCHENKO It's not right!—Put a man in front of me, and I'll crush him, I'll hammer him, I'll make bits of him.—It's not right.—To rot away here, and the way I started out.
- ANTOKOKOLETZ (*sarcastic*) (A truly exceptional way.)  
*Kravchenko stops and wipes away his sweat.*
- KRAVCHENKO Five knockouts! The shower attendant used to say—the Ascari has dynamite in his fists. (He knew what he was talking about, that fellow—he used to be a trainer in Warsaw.)
- ANTOKOKOLETZ A boxing champion in a concentration camp, that doesn't impress the experts (and still less the managers).
- KRAVCHENKO I won all the same.
- ANTOKOKOLETZ In a way.
- KRAVCHENKO What's that?—You mean the fight I lost (the only one) against the little redhead? I had to lose it. The redhead was the pet of the sickbay attendant Wenceslas. If I'd won, I'd have been smoke and ashes in twenty-four hours. Wenceslas was all-powerful at the time. You couldn't do as you liked. Ah!—no! Listen Abel, I don't know how to say these things (I'm no brain) but if you wanted to be my manager, we could make money.  
*Abel Antokokoletz is silent. Kravchenko unhooks his sack of earth.*
- KRAVCHENKO I've had enough of this station. (You don't know it as I do.)
- ANTOKOKOLETZ I've known others. They were no better.
- KRAVCHENKO You weren't in the squads that received the prisoners for stripping and removal to the gas chambers. Here, I have seen as much (or more) than all these stones and planks together. You couldn't do as you liked. Ah!—no. Look, there where you're sitting—Are you listening to me?—It must have been at the arrival of one of the convoys in December '43. It was freezing so hard you could weep—To warm himself up, Captain Kahn was trying his hand on us with his whip. Move on! The three thou-

sand who had survived the journey were stripped (And to think that the station had been built for the sole purpose of reassuring them!) And off they set!—In front, a girl (if you'd seen her—It's the only time I saw a girl in this place that looked like a girl—the very devil). Captain Kahn pushed me in the back. I knew what he was on to. (Wham! with one blow of his truncheon!) It was all over and done with. Right there—Where you are—You couldn't do as you liked. Ah!—No.

ANTOKOKOLETZ Oh—oi—ho!

*He changes place.*

KRAVCHENKO They were strange times.—It's a good thing you forget.—When all is said and done, the girl was better off. (After the gassings, it wasn't a pretty sight, I can tell you.)

ANTOKOKOLETZ You are a scoundrel, Ascari, but you filled your role as was right.—You were God's instrument on that day.

KRAVCHENKO For the girl?—Perhaps I was.—It's getting cold. At home they say 'If you want to be warm, take to the forest'.—I'm going to make firewood.—Think about what I said: we should work together.

*He goes out.*

ANTOKOKOLETZ (You wouldn't even get away with it at a fairground stall.)

## B

MOÏSSEVITCH (Abel Antokokoletz—For me, your presence in the station was a heavy burden. You tried to establish false complicities to cover others more grievous to bear. You hounded me—I ran from you. You would look on me with pity. The few conversation we had almost always ended in the same way.)

ANTOKOKOLETZ What do you want from others? Mix with them but do not see them. What have we in common with them? It was said when evil appeared on the face of God—'Be as different among men as is the Sabbath among the days.'

MOÏSSEVITCH Our people are old—and older still their God.

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** What is a stubborn rock, compared to a Jewish child learning the Thora?—All is tears within you and you do not even know it. You fear death, that is why you seek the favour of those who are to give it to you. You fear death, Ilya.—You make me ashamed.

## C

*Manuel Rodriguez enters. He is cold.*

**RODRIGUEZ** Don't stay still, you'll freeze.

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** Soon the snow will fall, and the temperature will ease.

**RODRIGUEZ** If I were you, I'd have packed my bags long ago for Palestine. What's stopping you from going? (It's the one route that works.)

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** What bags? Don't speak about what you do not know. (Eretz-Israel is a vast camp. The dispersed Jews are only gathering there in order to accomplish the Scriptures.) When the time of extermination comes (not before!) I'll go there. (I am not afraid of death.) I am not one to sell my soul for a little peace and quiet.

**RODRIGUEZ** A little peace and quiet is worth more than a soul (believe me).

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** Tcha! An illusion of peace.—Especially here where we are barely tolerated (and for how much longer?) No country.—No passport. No visa.—We do not exist on the earth.—We are supernumeraries.

**RODRIGUEZ** (Spanish prisons, the civil war, French camps, German camps), for more than twenty years I've been a supernumerary. Up to now, the Jews were the only ones to die scattered in dispersion to the four corners of the earth. For twenty years, the Spaniards have been trying to do better.

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** Don't speak of dispersion.—It does not concern you. And even if it did, you would be no more responsible than my blanket is for the weather. The business of God's world is settled between him and his people.

**RODRIGUEZ** You always talk with a leather strap around your arm. (It never gets you very far.) When the inmates at Tatenberg

took to revolt, God took care not to intervene.—If there were arms stolen from the SS, it was not his people who risked their necks to do it.

ANTOKOKOLETZ Tcha! Tcha!

MOÏSSEVITCH They were just the kind to be at each other's throats. One would speak of suffering, the other of revolt. When he had run out of arguments, Antokokoletz would brandish the ghost of the Buna Works at Berkenau.—And then it was no longer Antokokoletz, but a dead star spinning around the station as if wanting to blast it to destruction (or to transfigure it).

ANTOKOKOLETZ You never knew the Buna Works.—You have no right to speak.

It was a factory of silence, the creative brain stripped down, with its pistons, its wheels, its nuts and its cogs, and its lamps that lit up to give faces a glow they no longer had. The machines were working at full tilt. The drums filled with synthetic petrol. It was a silence of shadows dying in thousands—it kept everything going. Each workshop had its steel vulvae, delivering out again ad infinitum the children who perished on the road to Egypt...

*Solange Valette enters.*

MADAME VALETTE Am I disturbing you?

ANTOKOKOLETZ Yes.

MADAME VALETTE I'm sorry.

*She withdraws. Rodriguez goes to follow her. Antokokoletz stops him with a gesture.*

RODRIGUEZ Why do you drive her away?

ANTOKOKOLETZ Why is she here?

RODRIGUEZ She is a mother.

ANTOKOKOLETZ Tcha! A woman—you mean (the Sulamite). I do not judge her. She is living outside reality.

RODRIGUEZ And what about you?

ANTOKOKOLETZ *(unruffled)* A good thing for her, besides—and something to which you have much contributed since she has been here. If anybody were to be judged ...

RODRIGUEZ Do you want my fist in your face?

ANTOKOKOLETZ I would receive it with respect, for in so doing you would be accomplishing the will of the Most High.

## D

MOÏSSEVITCH Each man has his place and his appointed role, in this world. Set your mind at rest, Manuel Rodriguez. If Antokokoletz came to live in this station, it was to confront his angel or his double. (I would not wish to wrong him, but when he speaks of the Buna Works, I'm quite sure that he was never there.) It is true that in those years each place of torment for our people had its Buna. (Whether at Auschwitz or Goldpitz, what difference was there?) At Goldpitz, Antokokoletz (unless it was his double) would pray as he hit us. 'I hurt one to save a thousand', he used to say, 'God has made me the bursar of Jewish blood. You hate me today, but those who survive will be eternally grateful to me.'—Along with him, we were loaded onto the ships that were to be sunk in the Baltic. While we sung soviet and *halutzist* chants at the top of our voices, he stayed by himself reciting passages from Exodus (he groaned them out!—with such distress and confidence and ecstasy in his eyes that he finally imposed silence). We sensed that it was the end. He made it hopeless (it was hopeless for almost all of us). What joy for the prisoners on the three boats that couldn't be scuttled when they arrived in a camp (it was the Stutthof) yes, what joy! Except for the Kapo—he had disappeared. He turned up again at Tatenberg. That's who Antokokoletz was (or else a Polish double of his evacuated from the Buna at Birkenau—at least that's what he said). When the camps were freed, the Balts and the Poles fought over him. (You know the story.) Us: he's a traitor! Them: He's a hero! Us: He beat the prisoners with the utmost brutality. Them: He saved fifteen lives at the risk of his own. In the end, Antokokoletz was taken by the Balts and stoned to death. (I threw my

stone—to this day I can still feel its weight in my hands.) And now he has come back. (Is it he? Is it not?) It's not possible (you understand?) for me to ask him that. Perhaps he only came back to claim the share of gratitude he deserves. How could I give it to him? How could I refuse him?—Manuel!—Can we escape from our past?

**RODRIGUEZ** Why go back over all that? Perhaps that is why the only escape that each one of you found from being caught up in the relentless machine was either resignation or hopeless hatred for your brother in suffering.

**MOÏSSEVITCH** Indeed it is always a painful business, especially when we remember the (let us say sanitary) cordon which the Christian prisoners put up between themselves and the Jews. (And that was in the best of cases!)

**RODRIGUEZ** Me? A Christian?

**MOÏSSEVITCH** You know well what I mean. Was it not you (the Spanish prisoners) who refused to let the Jews take part when the camp rose in revolt?

**RODRIGUEZ** The decisions were taken by the international committee. If you were not contacted, it was because you were the last to arrive and were still unorganized.

**MOÏSSEVITCH** So what? We were the ones who had suffered the most.

**RODRIGUEZ** Can those things be measured?

**MOÏSSEVITCH** In numbers—yes!

**RODRIGUEZ** The numbers only made the reality more savage: intellectuals vying in platitudes, traders out-swindling each other.—One point bound you together: your ferocity in denouncing one another and calling one another filthy Jews!

**MOÏSSEVITCH** All were not like that.

**RODRIGUEZ** They kept themselves well hidden.

**MOÏSSEVITCH** As for those who broke down—the Nazis might never have been able to drive them to it without your participation (indeed your complicity).

**RODRIGUEZ** Mind what you say! my Spanish brothers—are buried within a hundred yards of here.

- MOÏSSEVITCH      Why do you pass judgment on millions of innocents?
- The last two lines are given almost together. Up to this the tone has been high, but without outbursts. Suddenly it falls. The two men look at one another, almost with consternation.*
- RODRIGUEZ      Moïssevitch! The camp is still living on.
- MOÏSSEVITCH      It's true—Wherever we happen to be—it is all around us.

## E

*Moïssevitch turns towards Guinguin. Only Rodriguez remains lit. Kravchenko enters.*

- KRAVCHENKO      Hullo.
- Rodriguez does not reply. Kravchenko comes up to him.*
- KRAVCHENKO      Do you know the idea I had while I was getting the firewood? That I could wrestle with a bear! That would be a fight! And it'd make a fortune. Well? What's the matter? A girl?
- RODRIGUEZ      No! Money.—Wasn't it you who stole a dog and sold it to the district council?
- KRAVCHENKO      Me, a thief? (Watch who you're speaking to.) Whose dogs are they? Nobody's. They belong to the SS.
- RODRIGUEZ      I feed them.
- KRAVCHENKO      They did their share of biting in the camp.
- RODRIGUEZ      Don't think you need try it again.
- KRAVCHENKO      You think you can scare me off?
- RODRIGUEZ      When the camps were freed, Ascaris of your ilk all got what was coming to them. Don't have me make up for the oversight.
- Manuel Rodriguez goes out. Gregori Kravchenko runs after him shouting.*
- KRAVCHENKO      Go back to your own country.—What are you doing here?—Are you waiting for that poor Valette woman to make up her mind some day and throw herself in your arms?

## F

*Kravchenko goes and pounds on the panel marked 'Restaurant'.*

**KRAVCHENKO** Moïssevitch! Priest of the Devil! You're the one who gave me away.—Come out here and I smash your face in.

*Antokokoletz appears. Kravchenko pounds away furiously.*

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** What's going on?

**KRAVCHENKO** (*for Moïssevitch to hear*) I know how to deal with squealers.

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** Do you hear, Ilya? The boxer has come to put you at one with the Scriptures. As they were throwing Jonah into the sea, the sailors said—'Adonai, we are going to kill him. Do not count this act as a murder against us, you have done your will in this matter. We wash our hands of it.'

**KRAVCHENKO** You'll spit your guts out, I promise you.

*Antokokoletz takes Kravchenko by the arm.*

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** Keep your hatred intact.—Come.

*They go out.*

## PRESENT TIME II

*One after the other, the three upstage panels are turned. We are inside the dummy station. The panel stage right is occupied by the stall where Manuel Rodriguez lives. The central panel is divided into two stalls, one occupied by Abel Antokokoletz, the other by Gregori Kravchenko. The stall in front of the third panel—where the boxer has just been knocking—is empty. It is the stall where Moïssevitch lived at the time of the events he is evoking, and therefore it will be the only one lit.*

**MOÏSSEVITCH** With their dismantled machinery  
and their eyes hollowed in concrete  
all the Bunas which stood  
along the route of our ordeal  
continued to function

and those who had known them  
dead or alive  
insistently returned.

GUINGUIN            You remember, Moïssevitch. It was always at this time  
that a frenzy would grip the station.

MOÏSSEVITCH        It wasn't a frenzy, Guinguin. It was the past catching up  
with us. We had to shape ourselves to its demands.

## SECOND FLASHBACK

*Antokokoletz puts on his prayer shawl.*

ANTOKOKOLETZ     The night is about to fall—may your hate sustain my  
prayer, Gregori.

KRAVCHENKO        I mean . . .

ANTOKOKOLETZ     Do not hesitate, I am asking you.

KRAVCHENKO        (*without conviction*) I hate you Abel Antokokoletz (I hate  
you). But I can't find the words to say it.

ANTOKOKOLETZ     The time is at hand  
when it will be said to those  
who are in darkness: appear!  
They will know no thirst  
they will know no hunger.  
The paths will be covered with motionless shadows.  
For them, the stones will burst with joy.  
Henceforth, no-one can come between  
the hours spent in the camp  
and those who survived.  
They breathe the same breath.

KRAVCHENKO        (Am I to say that Jews eat children?)

ANTOKOKOLETZ     It's all in the way you say it.—You should, in saying it,  
give homage to the Eternal.

KRAVCHENKO        I'm only doing it so that you will help me get back in  
the ring.

MOÏSSEVITCH        Where do trains run—when there are—no tracks?

What line of life do they follow  
travelling back  
from the silence of the Bunas  
to the station at Tatenberg?

ANTOKOKOLETZ      Gregori, try to recapture your state of mind in the camp.—Remember the day you saw the girl.

KRAVCHENKO        It's no longer possible.—If I hate you, it's because you ask me to.

MOÏSSEVITCH        You were the Kapo at Goldpitz, Abel? You were, weren't you?

ANTOKOKOLETZ      Only a cripple can dance  
on the far side of things.  
This side is barred to him.  
Can we return  
to the scene where the fire is burning?

MOÏSSEVITCH        So it wasn't you?

ANTOKOKOLETZ      I will become him, Ilya.—I will become him so that I may open your eyes.

MOÏSSEVITCH        Is that an admission?

ANTOKOKOLETZ      So now you want to be judge.—You were so before for the Kapo you liquidated.—If you are so keen to begin his trial again through me, it is because at heart you feel guilty.

MOÏSSEVITCH        A man is always guilty of something.—Is that why you've come back?

ANTOKOKOLETZ      (The tenth day of the seventh month exists only for us.—Aaron stood two goats before the tabernacle and placed two lots on them, one for Adonai, the other for Azazel. Only the one on which the lot for Adonai fell would become expiatory.)

MOÏSSEVITCH        So the Kapo at Goldpitz was you?—Speak frankly, what do you want of me?

ANTOKOKOLETZ      Will you ever know, Ilya?—Will I ever know?

*Blackout on the persons in the station.*

## PRESENT TIME III

## A

FRAU FRÖLICK      Leave heaven grappling with hell, come back among us  
(it is time to go to bed). You are a good man at heart,  
Moïssevitch—but sometimes you frighten me.

MOÏSSEVITCH      That's reassuring! If people who are nothing can fright-  
en, all the more so those who have power in their  
hands.—They have no choice in the matter.

FRAU FRÖLICK      Goodnight, Herr Moïssevitch.

MOÏSSEVITCH      May peace be upon you.

FRAU FRÖLICK      Peace? (What peace?) Take care with words that have a  
double edge.

*Frau Frölick disappears behind her theatre. Moïssevitch lies  
down beside Guinguin.*

## BALLAD OF THE UNBURIED SOLDIER

*The three puppets appear.*

FRÖLICK      Who can recall Corporal Frölick?  
so many dead  
abroad in the world  
when wars are done.  
Who can recall?

VON BASSEVILLE      His wife waited for him.

STELTENKAMP      She thinks she is still waiting.

FRÖLICK      When Corporal Frölick left  
her face was like mint  
or bread baked in haste.  
She clung to the Corporal  
like the leaf to the forest.

VON BASSEVILLE      In winter, the leaves fall.

STELTENKAMP      The wind blows on the steppes.

FRÖLICK      So many dead  
abroad in the world  
when wars are done.

- STELTENKAMP They can hear the voice of the wind blowing on the steppes.
- VON BASSEVILLE They can no longer understand it.
- FRAU FRÖLICK The voice of the wind is blowing too far above them.

B

- MOÏSSEVITCH Guinguin?—Are you not asleep?
- GUINGUIN Not yet.
- MOÏSSEVITCH What's the matter?—You're crying?
- GUINGUIN No, Herr Moïssevitch. (The chrysanthemum we found this morning, you remember, it was my mother's favourite flower.)
- MOÏSSEVITCH Peace to her soul.—You have no cause for regret.
- GUINGUIN No, none. I never meant more to her than the suitcase she dragged around with her. (And besides her suitcase didn't hate her.)
- MOÏSSEVITCH You're tired. (When you're tired, things look blacker than they are).
- GUINGUIN Not those things, Herr Moïssevitch.—My mother had decided once and for all that my two brothers were still alive. Wherever a mass grave was discovered, she was there with a bunch of flowers in one hand and me in the other. When it became obvious that we were not going to find anything, we would go off to inquire around the camps. (One day it would be Buchenwald, the next, Dachau, then Flossenbürg, then Neuengamme, then Bergen-Belsen!) The only let-up we had was in the endless corridors of the Allied commissions where we would ask for passes to go from one occupied zone to another.—Mind you, I even came to believe myself that we would find my brothers in the end. She had a conviction that swept all before her and I admired her for that (until the day I saw her in the arms of that Spaniard. He was the first man who had shown me any friendship. I thought it was real.—He was only doing it because of my mother.)

**MOÏSSEVITCH** Two suffering souls driven towards each other.—The arrival of your mother had caused a great upheaval in our station, in a matter of days, she had resurrected all the dead of Tatenberg. If Manuel put his arms around her waist, it was because he could not help it.

### THIRD FLASHBACK

#### A

*Manuel Rodriguez and Solange Valette enter the stall at the first panel stage right.*

**RODRIGUEZ** The hotel where you're staying is gloomy and depressing. You may have to spend a long time here, before you find anything at all. Why not come and live with me?

**MADAME VALETTE** (*astonished*) In this place?—And what about Guinguin?

**RODRIGUEZ** There's no question of taking you away from him. And it'll put an end to the malicious rumours that are going around.

**MADAME VALETTE** What rumours? You are strange this evening.

**RODRIGUEZ** I owe you a confession (and it isn't easy).

**MADAME VALETTE** You're not going to tell me that all the clues you thought you'd found about my two children are not there at all.

**RODRIGUEZ** To be frank ...

**MADAME VALETTE** The first time I saw you, I pronounced the name Valette and your face lit up. It's a sign you can't mistake.—You had heard that name somewhere before.

**RODRIGUEZ** It's always that way.—The whole of Europe has been through here.

**MADAME VALETTE** It's the same story in all the camps. But here it's different. Remember when I spoke of Georges, the Ukranian said—'A big fellow with freckles'.

**RODRIGUEZ** He said so many other things at the same time.

**MADAME VALETTE** And then he said—Drancy!

- RODRIGUEZ The French convoys all came from Drancy. Kravchenko was well placed to know. (He was in the squad that used to meet them.)
- MADAME VALETTE And what about Pierre then? We used call him Sifflet, like *sifflet*, a whistle. It's a name you'd recognize. I've been talking about him to the maid at the hotel for a long time now. But like everyone from here (they're ashamed) she'd never say anything. This morning she spoke to me on the stairs and without my asking anything she said 'A fine boy, Sifflet'. You'll say I'm reading too much into it, that I'm taking a few sympathetic words to be a lead. Perhaps. But look, they can't both be dead. The Ministry for War Casualties would have them on their lists. I've been to all the offices, to all the Survivors' Associations. They've nothing. I am convinced (it's little to ask) that at least one of them is alive and no doubt even both of them (they were always together). And then there's the Red Army. You know that a great number of deportees joined their ranks when the camps were liberated. With two hotheads like my pair, they may have set off for Russia to see the world. At that age, they can dream of nothing but travel and change (communication with the Soviet countries is so difficult).—Don't think that I'm trying to fool myself. Just let somebody say: you know, your George was in that hut.—We shared a lump of bread.—He was sick.—Your Sifflet remembered you that day—and I will find them again. Don't forget, in that hell many of them lost their memory.
- RODRIGUEZ That's what people always say.
- MADAME VALETTE There are hundreds of cases, I know them all.—But there is more than that.—What about you? You have your family. Why don't you go back to them?
- RODRIGUEZ My family—my family is here. Pedro, Luisillo (they can never go back).
- MADAME VALETTE I mean your real family. Have you tried to find them? Have you sent word to them?
- RODRIGUEZ They were scattered during the civil war.—My village in Murcia is hardly even a dream today.

- MADAME VALETTE You don't know for sure what has become of them.
- RODRIGUEZ Why should I know?
- MADAME VALETTE Dear me! we will never be able to understand each other.—Manuel, why do you discourage me?
- RODRIGUEZ A more clear-minded view of things ...
- MADAME VALETTE Things have greater strength than you might imagine at certain times.—Don't leave me.
- RODRIGUEZ I never thought for one moment of leaving you. We shall look for them together.
- MADAME VALETTE I was sure you would.  
*Rodriguez goes to her and takes her hands.*
- MADAME VALETTE It's not a woman you need—but a fistful of clay from your village in Murcia.
- RODRIGUEZ If I had it, I would make it into a little statue.—It would be in your likeness.

## ALTERNATION

- GUINGUIN That night, I ran away. When I tried to go back, I was lost.
- MOÏSSEVITCH We looked for you everywhere (even Antokokoletz and the boxer joined in). Our disagreements had almost vanished. We felt that it was something which involved us all. Those who had disappeared in the Great Tragedy could not be let get their hands on those who had survived.—That same day, Solange Valette came to live in our railway station.
- MADAME VALETTE It was so as to be kept informed at once of any news of the search (to tell the truth, it was in order to capitulate).—When you have the strength to look at things without closing your eyes, you see a great deal, but give in, close them just once, and everything is lost in the darkness.
- MOÏSSEVITCH Manuel sold almost his entire kennels in order to look after Solange Valette.

**MADAME VALETTE** That sudden bond between them made them feel that they had won a first victory over the dead.—For me, it was too late (I had suddenly come to understand that there are no limits to the cruelty of the dead).

#### FOURTH FLASHBACK

##### A

*Antokokoletz is nursing Solange Valette, who is lying in the stall belonging to Manuel Rodriguez.*

**MADAME VALETTE** You must report it to the police.

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** (You don't know what you're saying.) They're only looking for the first excuse to expel us all. (We are only tolerated here because of the camp).—Besides, the police force is not a system for making people reappear (but much rather for making them disappear).

*Gregori Kravchenko enters.*

**MADAME VALETTE** Still no news?

**KRAVCHENKO** I've been through the camp from end to end, except for inside the crematorium (I don't think that he'd have gone to hide in there).

*Solange Valette sits upright, lies down again.*

**MADAME VALETTE** (A trap?)

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** (*to Kravchenko*) You had better go and see just the same.

*Gregori Kravchenko nods and goes out.*

**MADAME VALETTE** (Two good-for-nothings like their father.) George is the one more to blame (with his madcap ideas). He started by leading on Sifflet, who was only too ready.—With Guinguin, it wasn't possible because of his leg (and then, he was no more than a child at the time). And what more were the other two? They hadn't yet started to shave. Across the years, they made up their minds to get Guinguin. They've drawn us into a trap—and now the twins have taken him away from me. Because of them, I lost him even before they took him away. (I

grudged him being alive—cripple that he was—when the two twins in all their health had disappeared.) They've tortured me to the very last.

## B

*Manuel Rodriguez enters.*

**RODRIGUEZ** Still no news?—I'm going into the town to talk to the police. Perhaps he's in a police station and they don't know what to do with him. Without papers or money, he can't have gone very far.

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** Take care just the same.

**RODRIGUEZ** (*to Madame Valette*) Don't worry.—This evening we'll celebrate his return.

*He goes out.*

**MADAME VALETTE** I'm sure he went into the crematorium, that he died there so as to do like the others. They drew him in on purpose.

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** Tcha! Don't speak about that.—The Ukranian has gone to look. No-one knows the camp as well as he does.

*Kravchenko comes in.*

**KRAVCHENKO** No news? I did look everywhere.

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** In my opinion, Manuel is sure to bring him back.

**MADAME VALETTE** You're right—I'm out of my mind. I'll sleep now. Go and get some rest, Monsieur Antokokoletz. Thank you all.

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** Rest now.—God asked Abraham to give his son in sacrifice because he was a Jew.—*You* have nothing to fear.

*He goes to leave, hesitates, comes back.*

**ANTOKOKOLETZ** Madame Valette—Forgive me for being sometimes aggressive (a bad habit of mine since childhood).

**KRAVCHENKO** It's the same for me, Madame Valette.

**MADAME VALETTE** Thank you.

*They go out. Madame Valette waits for a few moments, then gets up.*

MADAME VALETTE George—Sifflet—Guinguin—we're going to be able to talk—at last!

*She goes out.*

#### PRESENT TIME IV

##### A

MOÏSSEVITCH She was the first to die in the imaginary life of the camp.—When I found you again, stiff with the cold, we set off without looking back. (And here we are now.) You don't have to put up with any rival now.

GUINGUIN (*strongly*) It's not true! It's not true! You love her—Frau Frölick! You follow her wherever she goes.

MOÏSSEVITCH Guinguin, you're out of your mind! (I shouldn't have given you the coffee to drink.)

*Meanwhile, Hildegard Frölick has got up and has drawn aside the curtain of her theatre.*

FRAU FRÖLICK Fox!

MOÏSSEVITCH Look next door.—Do you think it's any better than here?—Anyway, try to sleep.

#### BALLAD OF THE STRICKEN PARTRIDGE

*One after the other, the puppets appear.*

FRAU FRÖLICK Fox, did you sometimes think of your partridge?

STELTENKAMP The fox has scorched his tail.

VON BASSEVILLE The fox is cold, he has burrowed under the snow.

FRAU FRÖLICK Fox, the partridge is stricken tonight.

VON BASSEVILLE Quick, lend a hand, Steltenkamp—By the way, what were you before you were called up?

STELTENKAMP A mason.

VON BASSEVILLE Strange profession.

- FRAU FRÖLICK      And you? Captain?—I never knew.
- VON BASSEVILLE      Me?—I was an army man.—(Unhappy adolescence, not a war in sight.) Fortunately, we needed to conquer living space. The beginnings were none the less disappointing.—The war in Poland? It was like blowing down a castle of cards. The war with France? Like prodding your finger into an overripe melon. When the order came through in July '41, I wept for joy.—A real war at last. And what a journey! The marshlands of Pinsk, the Berezina, the Dnieper, the Desna, the Don.
- STELTENKAMP      And on to the Tartares' Wall.
- VON BASSEVILLE      Ah, yes! (On to the Tartares' Wall.) And you, Frölick, what used you do in civilian life?
- FRÖLICK      I was in show business.
- VON BASSEVILLE      Show business? The devil! You play the piano?
- FRÖLICK      I worked the fairgrounds.
- FRAU FRÖLICK      The Frölicks' Puppet Shows were known throughout Austria.
- VON BASSEVILLE      You're lucky, you're leaving something behind you. As for me—an army man executed is a bit ridiculous.
- STELTENKAMP      And what about us?—You think it's any better?
- Silence.*
- FRAU FRÖLICK      What's the matter?
- FRÖLICK      The fox has lead-shot in his teeth. He feels no more cold, no hunger, no thirst. The blood is congealed in his mouth. He will no longer hunt the winter hare.
- The puppets disappear.*
- FRAU FRÖLICK      The partridge is crying out alone, to drive off the shadow of the day, the shadow of noon, the shadow of illusions, the shadow of night.  
How long can she keep it up?  
The partridge no longer knows the feel of the fox.
- The sound of barking. She stays kneeling in front of her theatre. The barking continues.*

## B

- MOÏSSEVITCH      Are you asleep?
- GUINGUIN        No. Can you hear them? It's the Spaniard's dogs.
- MOÏSSEVITCH      It can't be (what would they be doing here?) Are you feeling better?
- GUINGUIN        But I'm not sick.
- MOÏSSEVITCH      Right. We'll leave at once for Vienna.

## BALLAD OF THE PARALLEL PARADES

## A

*Three bare panels, side by side: we are at Vienna. Centre stage, the fire-eater with his petrol cans and his torches. He is looking in dismay at a little heap before him made up of flowers, a lobster, shoes. He weighs some of these objects in his hand, lets them drop. Abel Antokokoletz enters, leading on the end of a chain Manuel Rodriguez disguised as a bear. Gregori Kravchenko follows. He has on his back a load at least three times his size.*

- ANTOKOKOLETZ    Heigh ho!—We're looking for the Prater.
- KRAVCHENKO     We've rented a stall.
- REUTER           Perhaps it's here. (You know, you have to be careful.)
- ANTOKOKOLETZ    I know—Vienna is the city of illusion. Since yesterday evening, I've been seeing the Prater everywhere and I can't succeed in finding it.
- REUTER           For twenty-nine years I've been a fire-eater. Everytime I come to Vienna, it's a fiasco (the petrol changes into something else). I fill my mouth, take the torch—and instead of a flame, that's what comes out.
- He brandishes the lobster, the bouquets of flowers, the shoes and throws them away from him.*
- RODRIGUEZ        That's odd!
- ANTOKOKOLETZ    (to Rodriguez)—Keep quiet!
- REUTER           Look!

*He pours petrol into a bowl, takes a mouthful, lights a torch and spits. A stream of confetti comes out. Kravchenko bursts out laughing, then in face of the others' silence, suddenly stops.*

- KRAVCHENKO      And the money you earn—is that an illusion too?
- REUTER              The money, maybe not—but there's no doubt about the city and the people who live there.
- KRAVCHENKO      Great.—Let's move it.
- ANTOKOKOLETZ    Yes, you have to be careful with these cities of the imagination—there's a danger that they may never be where we are.
- REUTER              Right.—But watch it, at the very moment you think that, they may well be everywhere.
- KRAVCHENKO      (*trying to understand*) Ah! Ah!—But in that case, we've arrived.
- ANTOKOKOLETZ    Don't tangle everything up. It's complicated enough as it is. With cities like Vienna which are everywhere, you've only to start looking for them, and they're nowhere to be found.
- KRAVCHENKO      All night long you've been walking around in illusion and I've been following you with two hundred pounds on my back.—I'm not going any further.
- He puts down his load. Antokoletz rushes over to him.*
- ANTOKOKOLETZ    Stay cool! If we let ourselves go, we're lost. Vienna spares no-one. There are twelve emperors here, fifteen empresses, hundreds of imperial families. Do you know what they have become? Vowels.
- KRAVCHENKO      Vowels?
- ANTOKOKOLETZ    A.E.I.O.U.
- KRAVCHENKO      Ah! That's a good one ...
- REUTER              Those who celebrate their masses in the wine taverns, within a few hours become fifteen or twenty persons at once. (Sort that one out as you leave!) There are sixty-year-old ministers of state who come out of them like twelve-year-olds. They're given a hoop and brought back to the ministry. There are even bishops who come

back as ski champions and spent nights on end doing giant slaloms down the towers of the cathedral.

*The procession of the Church of the Giant's Door enters. In the middle, a prelate is carrying an enormous femur.*

REUTER

It's the thigh bone of a mammoth.—It only had to come to Vienna, and it instantly became St Stephen's leg.—It even works miracles.

*The violinists enter in turn. They are playing the violin without a single note being heard. Antokokoletz waves to them with open arms as if they were old acquaintances.*

ANTOKOKOLETZ

Wave to them, Gregori! Applaud the performance! No-one has ever heard a single note in Vienna—and yet the whole world is convinced that Vienna lives entirely in music. The Viennese need only make the gesture and they are convinced themselves, more than anyone. Everything is parallel with them: words, gestures, actions—even the ladies. Be on your guard, Gregori.

*Footballers come on stage, toggled out. They are all carrying fearsome arms.*

ANTOKOKOLETZ

Nothing can stand against them.—That's why they always lose.

REUTER

But the instruments at their disposal are such that in spite of defeats, no victory can escape them.

KRAVCHENKO

*(in admiration)* That's real sport for you! They don't even have to appear on the field.

REUTER

Take my word for it, the best thing is to follow them. When they start going round in circles, we shall be at the Prater. (It's a sign that has never yet failed.)

*The fire-eater gathers up his cans. Kravchenko shoulders his load again. Before they go off, the vowel-emperors and empresses appear. Their fine array is suddenly scattered by the musical robot who charges through their midst. Guinguin's voice:*

GUINGUIN

Stop him! Stop him!

*Guinguin comes on amidst the outcry caused by the unruly robot.*

GUINGUIN            My master's disappeared.—The robot has gone off by himself.

*The curtain closes.*

# B

*The different parade groups pass in front of the closed curtain. Among them, Reuter, Guinguin and the robot. All at once, Reuter sees the robot. He makes a sudden turnabout, which throws things into confusion.*

REUTER              Action stations! The Bolcheviks!

*Antokokoletz and Rodriguez try to stop him as he passes.*

ANTOKOKOLETZ    Where are you going?

REUTER              Stand aside. I am defending civilization.

*He goes off.*

ANTOKOKOLETZ    Where is the boxer?

KRAVCHENKO      We've lost him—and all the equipment with him.

ANTOKOKOLETZ    Keep silent!—I've already told you that a bear must never speak, or else our future customers may discover the trick.

*They push their way against the procession and finally are left by themselves.*

KRAVCHENKO      That a bear should speak seems to me, after all we've seen, to be the least of things.—It's rather the opposite that would be suspicious.

ANTOKOKOLETZ    With the Viennese anything is possible. Look over here, for example. The first time I came here, this was the Franz-Josefs-Kai. As a means of joining Vienna to the Danube, they had hit on the idea of building houses. A century of Viennese thinking (parallel thinking) had been necessary to arrive at that. Then one night, all these houses disappeared. As if by magic.—Look—there's nothing left (and the Danube is still flowing on by itself). Even with two hundred pounds on his back, how could the boxer have withstood forces of that kind?

*Kravchenko comes on with his load still on his back.*

- KRAVCHENKO I was watching the women at their windows. I even spoke to one of them. There's not better to be had at Odessa.
- ANTOKOKOLETZ Illusion! Illusion!
- RODRIGUEZ (*agreeing*) Illusion.
- ANTOKOKOLETZ Do you not know that Viennese women skim the ground (like lately sprung branches when the tree stirs)? A stormy tossing of powerful flesh, a sinking into total prostration.—Don't get it into your head to spend a night with one of them, you would flounder with all your possessions. A great surge like on the river. Then nothing left. Neither you, nor the woman.
- KRAVCHENKO Hee! Hee! Abel Antokokoletz, now I know, now I know.
- ANTOKOKOLETZ (*thunderously*) Know what?  
*They go off. The curtain opens.*

## HYPERMNESIA

## A

*The puppet theatre is in the centre of the stage. In front of it, Hildegard Frölick has started her patter. The crowd from the processions enter. Some scatter, others walk around, then become the spectators for the different shows.*

- FRAU FRÖLICK The puppets are optimistic.—They do not know that money makes the poor man, and that no money also makes the poor man. (Here admission is free.) But the puppets know this neglected truth.  
*The three puppets appear one after the other. First von Basseville shows his uniform.*
- VON BASSEVILLE The world is white.  
*Then Frölick shows the inside of his uniform.*
- FRÖLICK Unless it be green.  
*Steltenkamp simply fires his musket.*
- STELTENKAMP We all agree.—The world is blue.

*Military march. Hildegard Frölick goes behind her theatre as if to work the puppets. Abel Antokokoletz, Gregori Kravchenko and Manuel Rodriguez enter.*

ANTOKOKOLETZ Here it is!

*He jostles the spectators, who protest, and drags his bear on behind him.*

ANTOKOKOLETZ Watch it! He bites—out of the way!

*Further protests from the spectators. Antokokoletz clears a space for himself stage right. Kravchenko puts down his load there.*

KRAVCHENKO It's about time.

FRAU FRÖLICK Roll up! Roll up!

ANTOKOKOLETZ Quick! Get the ring up.

*The three of them unpack their booth. As he unpacks, Antokokoletz begins his patter.*

ANTOKOKOLETZ The greatest show since the time of the cavemen.

*All the spectators turn towards Antokokoletz.*

ANTOKOKOLETZ (I've started too soon, we're not ready. Get into costume, Gregori.) The Hurricane Kid! Give him a hand! Will fight six rounds against the Siberian bear Uchatik. Give him a hand!

FRAU FRÖLICK Silence, please: the show is about to begin.

*The spectators all turn towards the puppet theatre. Kravchenko, in boxing gear, throws a few punches, then stops.*

KRAVCHENKO We've been had!

ANTOKOKOLETZ Let the woman get on with her show.—We'll get her public when she's done.—The bear? Where's the bear?

*He fetches back Rodriguez who had gone off among the spectators. The two men finish putting up the boxing ring.*

VON BASSEVILLE We've just come back from the military cemeteries. Did we see a single scoundrel there, a single blackguard?

FRÖLICK and  
STELTENKAMP —No!

- VON BASSEVILLE** The thinkers, the rethinkers, the dancing dervishes, the bonzes of the upper caves, the bonzes of the lower caves, the orthodox believers, the newspaper tycoons, the deviationists, the hashish-eaters, the souls struck by grace, the Pen Clubs, the Who's Whos, the QED's, the anchorites in the desert, the cord swallowers, the fire-eaters, the statues of Angkhor temple, of the Delphic oracle and the Sacré Coeur of Montmartre, the all-in wrestlers of the faith, the Grey Belts of the Holy Ghost, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Society for the Advancement of Coloured People, the Jockey Clubs, the refrigerators, the television programmes, the vegetarian sects, the Christian sciences and the science fictions have sought for centuries to raise man up. They have striven not to level man out, but to rid him of his trivial titles of kitchenboy, farmhand, penpusher, man-on-the-dole or street-singer—to have him live henceforth in Block Capitals. They have not succeeded. Take over Corporal Frölick!
- FRÖLICK** The city cemeteries have tried in their turn. In vain.—Take over Steltenkamp!
- STELTENKAMP** Class privilege is found in the tomb. In spite of the RIP which bedecks every corpse, the mausoleums of the better off continue to prosper and expand to the detriment of common graves for starvelings, Johnnie-lick-my-boots and mopsy molls. Phew! Take over, career Captain, Sir!
- VON BASSEVILLE** Excellent, you have understood.—Military cemeteries reject out of hand man crushed under petty titles or trimmed down by Block Capitals. If humanity has been able to preserve its youthfulness in the fullest sense, it is thanks to them. A soldier firing on the enemy is not properly speaking defending his country's soil. That idea is largely out of date. When he fires, he is doing a service to the country opposing him in allowing it to maintain its youthfulness. If you have once understood that a military cemetery is a cold-store for the flowers of a nation, the ultimate lesson of wars is no longer based on chauvinistic rivalries but on an act of love between

nations. Let us put it immediately into practice. Corporal Frölick, are you ready to carry out the act of love?

FRÖLICK Yes, Captain, Sir.

VON BASSEVILLE Go!

FRÖLICK Bang! Bang!

VON BASSEVILLE Take it seriously, great deeds must be done unstintingly. Private Steltenkamp, take over!

STELTENKAMP There! Bang! Huh!

VON BASSEVILLE More passion, more passion.

STELTENKAMP It's not easy like that, with blanks.

VON BASSEVILLE More passion.

STELTENKAMP Bang-bang! Bang-bang! Ban-ban-ban-bang!

VON BASSEVILLE That's better. We shall shortly take up our position on the steppes. We shall have five Scythian tombs to defend (to the last drop of our blood) and three unimportant hills which have every chance of becoming glorious. Compared to others who must take up position on open plains with ground so hard that you cannot bury a corpse, we are fortunate. If we die, it will not be for nothing. We shall die for three hills which will then be glorious and for five Scythian tombs behind which the stars will glimmer and fade in the mist. (One final point.) All love is not altruistic (as you may guess). There may be circumstances when the higher interests of your country demand that love be resolutely egoistic. We have no air force left, but we do have a little artillery. If instead of showering its shells upon the opposite side, the artillery should turn them against ourselves, be assured that a mistake in aim is an outdated explanation. The truth is rather that our country has need within its organism of a little Spring, which the enemy in its indolence is slow to provide. And now—forward march!

STELTENKAMP (*sings*) The Kalmuk Steppes.  
The skin will fall away  
as it touches the steel.  
The wind will swirl

myriads of crystals.  
We shall stand like snowdrops  
in the middle of your desolation.

**FRÖLICK**           (sings) The rats will have fled.  
We shall be alone.  
The frost will cover us  
and the sky will blaze  
with festive lights.

**VON BASSEVILLE**   (sings) Five Scythian tombs  
and three hills.  
Travel will make a man of you.

**STELTENKAMP**       I'll say to Frölick: you mustn't shut an eye. (If you shut  
an eye, you'll never wake again.)

**VON BASSEVILLE**   Travel will make a man of you.

**FRÖLICK**           We shall grip each other close  
under a huge, red moon.

*A shot is fired. Frölick staggers and falls forward out of the theatre.*

**VON BASSEVILLE**   The rheumy, the feverish,  
the gasping, the blind,

**STELTENKAMP**       The bodies which slowly decompose  
into mucus, blood, catarrh and bile

**VON BASSEVILLE**   Will see their dreams swept away  
behind the red moon.  
And steel will cut into the earth.

*A second shot brings down Steltenkamp.*

**VON BASSEVILLE**   (Already! But it's not yet time.)

*A third shot brings down von Basseville. Silence. The spectators think that the shots are part of the show. Frau Frölick suddenly appears in front of her theatre.*

**FRAU FRÖLICK**       What's happening?—They've been shot for real! (My God! The Tartares' Wall.) Wake up, Corporal Frölick, wake up all of you. (It's time to go hunt the winter hare.)

*She faints. A movement of panic in the crowd: they disperse. Manuel Rodriguez rushes over to Hildegard Frölick.*

KRAVCHENKO Stay back.

*He pounces on Manuel Rodriguez and brings him back to the boxing ring. Abel Antokokoletz ties up his chain.*

ANTOKOKOLETZ A bear must never meddle in human affairs—not even in the city of illusion.

KRAVCHENKO They’ve all gone.

ANTOKOKOLETZ Help me carry this woman to a pharmacy.—If it’s serious, we may be in trouble (even with the police here, who are as parallel as they come).

*They go out. Guinguin enters.*

GUINGUIN Frau Frölick! Moïssevitch has vanished. Frau Frölick, where are you going?

*Manuel Rodriguez breaks his chain and makes towards Guinguin.*

RODRIGUEZ Guinguin?—Guinguin!

GUINGUIN (*frightened*) I don’t like bears. Leave me alone.

*Manuel Rodriguez takes off his bear’s head.*

RODRIGUEZ Do you know who I am?

GUINGUIN (*backs away*) It’s you, Monsieur Rodriguez.

RODRIGUEZ Don’t be afraid. (The bearskin was just a means to get out of the station, to get away from there.) I kept all your things when your poor mother died (I have them!). Do you want them?

GUINGUIN I must find Moïssevitch.—He has vanished and his robot is walking around by itself.

RODRIGUEZ Moïssevitch is here? What have you been living on all this time?—You won’t say?

*All at once Guinguin runs over to Rodriguez and buries his head in his hairy, bearskin arms.*

RODRIGUEZ Nothing must ever separate us again.

*Guinguin steps back, thoughtfully.*

GUINGUIN Did Mama give you any message for me?—No! I must find Moïssevitch.

RODRIGUEZ (You really want to?)

GUINGUIN Yes.

RODRIGUEZ Right! I'll help you (with the Valette family, you're always looking for someone). Where do we start?

GUINGUIN The robot went off that way.

*They go out.*

B

*A shot is fired offstage. Antokokoletz runs on. Moïssevitch's voice is heard offstage.*

MOÏSSEVITCH Abel!—Stop!

*Abel Antokokoletz stops. The huge shadow of Moïssevitch with a gun in his hand looms over him on the panels.*

ANTOKOKOLETZ (You're mad, Ilya.) It's a sin to take a life—even in thought.

MOÏSSEVITCH I've no regrets for the boxer.—The long lines of the imaginary life of the camp killed him; they'll follow him where he has gone. There'll be no past any more, Abel (no past any more). But with you, it is not the same.

ANTOKOKOLETZ (You're not going to kill all the Goys?) Who will sacrifice us to the glory of the Eternal if you do away with them all?

MOÏSSEVITCH You have a smiling shape which would be at ease in the ten spheres, even when they are lamenting.—Fire purifies evil and leaves only the very sanctity of evil. You are a saint—Abel!

ANTOKOKOLETZ What are you going to do?

MOÏSSEVITCH The camps have need of us.

ANTOKOKOLETZ You can kill me, Ilya. You can (what use is it?), I shall always be there. As long as you are there—I shall be there.

- MOÏSSEVITCH** The past is burnt to ashes behind us. Burnt before us too. Let it be! Like the burning light, we too cast out the dead that are within us.
- Moïssevitch fires. Antokokoletz falls. Emanuel Rodriguez and Guinguin enter and stop short.*
- RODRIGUEZ** It's you, Moïssevitch.
- MOÏSSEVITCH** Manuel (Dear Manuel!) You are right not to trust those who perished in the great fire—I am the bearer of their injustice.
- GUINGUIN** Monsieur Moïssevitch, stop!
- Moïssevitch aims and fires. Guinguin throws himself between. Moïssevitch fires twice in quick succession.*
- MOÏSSEVITCH** Guinguin!
- Moïssevitch comes on stage.*
- MOÏSSEVITCH** We are in the city of illusion.—Alas!—Get up and go away together.
- Nobody moves. Reuter rushes on stage, stops, runs off again.*
- REUTER** To arms! The ghetto has risen again in revolt!

## FLASH-FORWARD

### A

*The Prater is empty. Stage right, the boxing ring has been knocked over. The curtains of the puppet theatre are open and Hildegard Frölick is rummaging inside. Firearms, two helmets and a pair of boots lie on the ground. Stage left, Moïssevitch is sitting on the bear's head, lost in thought. Hildegard Frölick is speaking in a low voice, as if to herself.*

- FRAU FRÖLICK** Hildegard Frölick's wedding night—there it is—carried over from one night to the next, as if it had been granted a deferment. (What deferment, will we ever know? Great God, will we ever know?) You marry a man. When he is reported missing, you see him everywhere. You see his face in everything. Then all at once you realize that he is nowhere, that he has never been anywhere.

**MOÏSSEVITCH** First season: the robot and Hildegard Frölick in black tights to run a hoopla stall. Second season: Hildegard Frölick, jugglers, sabres, flaming torches, a dancing cow. Third season: jugglers, an albino contortionist (no!) a performing elephant, a cannon with a human cannonball. Fourth season: the same, with wild beasts and a red-headed woman as a lion-tamer. Fifth season: we sell everything and we mechanize.

*He gets up and goes towards Hildegard Frölick.*

**MOÏSSEVITCH** In five years' time, we could have the greatest circus in Europe with a hundred and fifty robots and more—what do you think of that?

**FRAU FRÖLICK** Nothing.

**MOÏSSEVITCH** We must take one great leap into the future.

**FRAU FRÖLICK** The present is enough for me—without my puppets I feel I have lost all the reasons which gave me the illusion of living.—You have dreams enough for two or even more. What would I have to do with a red-headed tamer?

**MOÏSSEVITCH** (*upset*) It's better to give salary to a red-headed tamer or to a fire-eater than to be bullied by him and not to be able to say a word.

**FRAU FRÖLICK** You'll find other tamers, other fire-eaters paying salaries themselves. They'll be your equals. Do you think that they will spare you?—The world I lived in (the fairgrounds, the Kalmuk Steppe, the Tartares' Wall) was a tiny world. It was in nobody's way. Why fire at my puppets? (Now everything has to be done all over again.)

**MOÏSSEVITCH** The images we have in our minds of those we loved are without the slightest pity—they can be as repressive as any police. They shadow you, lie in wait, slip on handcuffs, beat you and bully you and interrogate you without end.

**FRAU FRÖLICK** Yours perhaps, but not mine. (You didn't have to do away with them.)

**MOÏSSEVITCH** (*in despair*) Frau Frölick!—There was no place for me on the Kalmuk Steppe (and yet it must be immense).

FRAU FRÖLICK

Will there ever be a place for you in this world?

*Hildegard goes into her theatre and draws the curtain. Moïssevitch speaks to the curtain.*

MOÏSSEVITCH

It is a question which I've often asked myself. Up to now I have not found an answer—except once, except perhaps once. (It was at the fairground at Grein.)

## BALLAD OF THE EVERYDAY CHALLENGE

*On the three panels at the back of the stage, shadows and coloured lights flash past. The atmosphere of the fairground at Grein gradually returns. Moïssevitch is still standing in front of the curtain of the puppet-theatre. The musical robot appears upstage. He murmurs his text, accompanying himself on his instrument.*

THE ROBOT

Moïssevitch bore on his shoulders  
the horror of his age  
(his forty years or the century)  
like a patched-up jacket, gone beyond use  
that evening;  
along the edge  
of a waterway old as the world  
he had felt a stir in his heart. Yes.

MOÏSSEVITCH

(I had seen that the leaves were smiling.)

ROBOT

The wild potato blossom spoke.  
The fresh blood of the earth  
was rising beneath the tree-bark.  
Every look in Hildegard's eyes  
was saying: the man I am waiting for will come  
along that line of water  
old as the world.  
He will cry: 'Beware of the foxes,  
The foxes that ravage the vine.'  
The wild vines were in bloom.

MOÏSSEVITCH

I had come to understand  
along the edge  
of the waterway old as the world  
that in spite of Tatenberg  
the leaves had always smiled.  
They were smiling still.

ROBOT

The woman was thinking  
 of a grown man's shadow  
 planted on the water's edge  
 torn but health-giving.  
 She knew that a man was to come.  
 She did not see his smile bruised,  
 but warm as the sun  
 reborn in a loaf of bread.

MOÏSSEVITCH

It was a dream the Danube swept away.  
 What could he do  
 number 173.173 from Tatenberg  
 against the cold images of every day  
 the tightened lips  
 the closed door?

*The robot disappears. The fairground noises increase slightly.*

MOÏSSEVITCH

Against whom could I make my complaint?

## B

*Abel Antokokoletz, Manuel Rodriguez, Gregori Kravchenko enter along with other, nameless persons from the past. They pay no heed to Moïssevitch. They have come to have fun at the fair, and they do so. Moïssevitch does not see them. He carries straight on with his text, after the last sentence of the 'Ballad of the Everyday Challenge'.*

MOÏSSEVITCH

There is nobody left. I have no friends left, they lie on the hills of the Ponar, in the common graves of the Baltic, beneath the blind eyes of the Buna, at the foot of the walls of Tatenberg. They are not in the grip of darkness. Nor of anguish either. They have passed beyond all that—like a car racing on the track passes out another—in a dizzy acceleration. They flash in the full light of the sun. In spite of death, they have not lost the warm and vibrant signs of life.

*He turns towards the newcomers, looks at them without surprise and continues with a slight crack in his voice.*

MOÏSSEVITCH

Flowers will blossom from the bones (I know, Abel!). You are the police of the past and you are carrying out your orders—What do you want of me now? I can give

you nothing.—Each evening, beyond what it was, Tatenberg Camp is present on its terrible marriage couch, where we all sleep (where the murderers are still watchful). You said it yourself, Abel! (What is the use of killing us—we shall always be there.)

*The Jews from the former Baltic communities enter. Moïssevitch goes from one to the other, shyly. As they pay no attention to him, he becomes pleading at times.*

MOÏSSEVITCH

Perhaps it's just Moïssevitch judging—and Moïssevitch answering. But when there's not a person left in the desert, the stones come to life.—Waclaw Kacnelson, is it for the midnight penitence you're here? Or for that hidy-hole (crafty, it was!) where we used shut ourselves in, when the Gestapo were raiding? A single blow of a rifle-butt on the wall would have betrayed the hollow sound and we would have died on that day. Do you grieve for it? Still with your purple braces, Abracha Balaban. (It would have been hard for you to come back without those braces.) You're getting your own back, they tore them off you while you were climbing the slopes of the Ponar, but they have won out in the end—to go through eternity with purple braces, it's quite a feat, Abracha, it's quite a feat.—Look me in the face Ladislas Cajtlin, you blame me that I had a work permit instead of you (so that you were one of the first to be snatched from the ghetto?). That's it, isn't it? No? What is it then? I never paid my subscription for the repurchasing of the land? It's not possible, you're not here to collect a subscription? Do you know the reproach that Mordochy threw in my face (Mordochy Auerbach!) and Sabbatay Zaks? That I was in luck the day they asked: who do you want to save, your wife or your mother? I was alone. And they both sent their mothers off to die. Not you? You sent your wife. How was it that behind the barbed wire of Vaivara I was able to recover from septicaemia while Mordochy and Sabbatay died? (Ah! God inflicts suffering on his people only in the measure they can sustain! Why did you recite the Zohar that day, Sabbatay?) When we began the terrible winter march of '43 from one Estonian camp to the other, we were struck with dysentery and I wanted to lie in the snow.

The dysentery had drained me out. I was at the end of my endurance (I wanted that bullet that the SS kept for stragglers). It was you, Irad (Irad Gibertig, where are you?) It was you who dragged me on for miles on end (we were around the world together many times, during those days). As we came into the last camp, Goldpilz, we were both selected. I was behind you. I shall always see your neck as the blood drained away (it was as white as a candle). We undressed and lined up behind the miraculous Rabbi of Vilna who was reciting aloud the Great Confession. At the last moment an SS doctor pulled me out, saying 'This one can still work'. What could I do for you? Irad! You are not there! Brother Irad, you haven't disowned me?

*Moïssevitch is now on his knees among the persons from the past. Two deportees lift him up.*

**MOÏSSEVITCH** Once again Tatenberg is receiving me in, like at the time of the roll calls (those of '45, the worst of all, Abel!).—And the soup in the bowls of the typhoid victims, Manuel, you remember?—And sleeping among the corpses and the excrement.—It's still going on!

*Moïssevitch frees himself and comes downstage alone.*

**MOÏSSEVITCH** And when they ask me (six million Jews exterminated, how did you suffer that with such passivity?) I reply: (it's the past that killed). When all at once the past comes back—as it's doing now—in the eyes of a man, it's a sign that he's going to die. Imagine the past of an entire people coming back all at once in the eyes of that people (centuries of persecutions!) the instruments of death can only ratify it. The truth is painful (and those who ask me questions after the event want it to be reassuring).

*Moïssevitch goes back to the persons from the past.*

**MOÏSSEVITCH** That does not interest you (it is no longer part of your world. And am I part of that world?—Ah! what chalice of tears must be filled on high before the Messiah may come, the chalice that we must fill.—Fill with what? Tears dry so quickly.—In truth, I say to you today: your chalice is cracked.—Listen to me, don't be hard on me.

Irak Gibertig has not come. Do like him—go away!

*Gradually the characters from the past have gathered around Moïssevitch, who now backs away to escape from the circle. In front of the puppet-theatre, he takes up one of the German helmets lying on the ground, puts it on his head and shouts out.*

MOÏSSEVITCH Clear off!—I am your enemy.

*The three puppets enter in turn and mingle with the characters from the past. Moïssevitch stops and stretches his hands towards them.*

MOÏSSEVITCH Not you! Not you!

*Hildegard Frölick comes out of her theatre and sees Moïssevitch with a German helmet on his head.*

FRAU FRÖLICK What are you doing dressed up like that?

*Moïssevitch takes off the helmet.*

MOÏSSEVITCH (Did I need to add the trials of others to my own?)

*Guinguin enters pushing the robot before him.*

GUINGUIN Monsieur Moïssevitch, I've found your robot.

MOÏSSEVITCH You too, Guinguin!—Now that you've gone off with Manuel, you're coming back with the others.—Guinguin, are you too part of the camp?

*He turns towards Hildegard Frölick.*

MOÏSSEVITCH You can always come to terms with a murder which is only blood, but when there is no trace of anything, there is no way of getting rid of it. (You have to re-enact it every day.) I am no longer able.

*Ilya Moïssevitch is now completely surrounded by the characters from the past.*

MOÏSSEVITCH It is not easy to survive on a scale as vast as yours. Trees die standing. That is their strength. It is also yours.—I surrender.

*He raises his hands. Hildegard Frölick tries to break through to him, through the barrier of the characters from the past.*

FRAU FRÖLICK Ilya Moïssevitch!

*She cannot get through. Moïssevitch picks up the German helmet which he had dropped and throws it to her.*

**MOÏSSEVITCH** Goodbye, Hildegard Frölick.—For a few short moments, I was the man you were waiting for. What irony!

**FRAU FRÖLICK** I am still waiting for you—Ilya!

*Moïssevitch is led off. Hildegard Frölick tries again to break through the barrier, which begins to yield. She pauses to say:*

**FRAU FRÖLICK** Come back among the living, Ilya.—I am waiting for you.