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Brecht

Collected Plays: Three

St Joan of the Stockyards
The Mother
and six Lehrstücke

Edited and introduced by John Willett

BLOOMSBURY

Bertolt Brecht
Collected Plays: Three

Lindbergh's Flight, The Baden-Baden Lesson on Consent, He Said Yes/He Said No, The Decision, The Mother, The Exception and the Rule, The Horatians and the Curiatians, St Joan of the Stockyards

The Lehrstücke or short 'didactic' pieces, *Lindbergh's Flight*, *The Baden-Baden Lesson on Consent*, *He Said Yes/He Said No*, *The Decision*, *The Exception and the Rule* and *The Horatians and the Curiatians*, were written during the years 1929 to 1933, a crucial period of creativity and political experiment for Brecht. Rejecting conventional theatre, they are spare and highly formalised, drawing on traditional Japanese and Chinese theatre. They show Brecht in collaboration with the composers, Hindemith, Weill and Eisler, influenced by the new techniques of montage in the visual arts and seeking new forms of expression.

The Mother, a longer play, again with music by Eisler, based on the novel by Gorky, is a story of dawning political consciousness told with irony and narrative drive. Its central character is one of Brecht's great female roles.

St Joan of the Stockyards, full of pastiche and parody, is a battle of good and evil set in a mythical Chicago. As a big drama for the established professional theatre, it occupies a special position both in Brecht's oeuvre and in the theatre of his time.

The volume, edited and introduced by John Willett, includes Brecht's own notes and all the important textual variants.

Bertolt Brecht was born in Augsburg on 10 February 1898 and died in Berlin on 14 August 1956. He grew to maturity as a playwright in the frenetic years of the twenties and early thirties, with such plays as *Man equals Man*, *The Threepenny Opera* and *The Mother*. He left Germany when Hitler came to power in 1933, eventually reaching the United States in 1941, where he remained until 1947. It was during this period of exile that such masterpieces as *Life of Galileo*, *Mother Courage* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* were written. Shortly after his return to Europe in 1947 he founded the Berliner Ensemble, and from then until his death was mainly occupied in producing his own plays.

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Bertolt Brecht

Collected Plays: Three

Lindbergh's Flight
translated by John Willett
Original work entitled:
Der Flug der Lindberghs

The Baden-Baden Lesson on Consent
translated by Geoffrey Skelton
Original work entitled:
Das Badener Lehrstück vom Einverständnis

He Said Yes/He Said No
adapted from the translation by Arthur Waley
Original work entitled:
Der Jasager/ Der Neinsager

The Decision
translated by John Willett
Original work entitled:
Die Maßnahme

The Mother
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Original work entitled:
Die Mutter

The Exception and the Rule
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Die Ausnahme und die Regel

The Horatians and the Curiatians
translated by H. R. Hays
Original work entitled:
Die Horatier and die Kuriatier

St Joan of the Stockyards
translated by Ralph Manheim
Original work entitled:
Die Heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe

Edited and introduced by John Willett

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Introduction

WEIMAR AT THE END OF ITS ROPE

Both politically and culturally 1929 was a crucial year for Europe and the United States, above all for Germany. The Weimar Republic was a fragile, if vibrant institution, and as soon as the American economy crashed that autumn its remarkable decade of liberal government and Socialist local administration was doomed. German unemployment, from nearly three million at the start of the year, rose to five million by the end of 1930. Increasingly the new Chancellor Heinrich Brüning bypassed parliament and ruled by presidential decree. Hitler's National Socialist Party emerged from the Bavarian fringe, allied itself with the Nationalist Right and began its steep climb to power, first in local and Land elections, then in the Reichstag elections of autumn 1930, when it won the second largest number of seats. The following year there were a number of bank crashes, and the last major Socialist stronghold, the Prussian Provincial government, was seized in a coup by the Right. The Left tamely surrendered.

Already there were signs, too, of a cultural backlash. Part of this was due to economic retrenchment: the closure of Klemperer's Kroll Opera in mid-1931, for instance, and the ending of the great modern replanning schemes in Frankfurt and Berlin. Part was ideological, enforcing the anti-modernist tastes of militant Nazis like Wilhelm Frick and the architect Paul Schultze-Naumburg in Thuringia, Alfred Rosenberg with his 'Militant League for German Culture' and the master builder Adolf Hitler himself. Part however was no longer specifically German but due to the Zeitgeist: the return to conventional forms in Austria, the ending of the Soviet engagement with modern art and architecture, the dissolution of all existing Russian arts organisations and the increasing imposition there of 'Socialist Realism' with its nineteenth-century models. Except in the Scandinavian countries, Holland, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia, the modernist excitement that had prevailed in central Europe for the second, relatively prosper-

ous half of the 1920s was everywhere becoming stifled or at best dying down.

In September 1929, just before Wall Street's Black Monday, there were two notable failures in the Berlin theatre. One was the Piscator production of *The Merchant of Berlin* by the ex-Dadaist Walter Mehring, with sets by Moholy-Nagy and music by the Schönberg pupil Hanns Eisler. The other was the Hauptmann/Weill/Brecht gangster play *Happy End.* Piscator closed his theatre, went on tour with a play about abortion, briefly took over a more downmarket house with an actors' collective, then in 1931 moved to Moscow to make a film. Brecht however was already setting off on a more radical track, where both Weill and Eisler had become involved in what was one of the most hopeful and original movements of an otherwise disastrous time. Perhaps if he had been less committed to this new direction – philosophically as well as artistically committed, that is – the playwright would have worked harder to rescue *Happy End*, whose basic idea, as well as its song texts, seems to have originated with him. But now he was much too interested in his new tasks to rewrite and overhaul Hauptmann's script as he would previously have done. The result was that, for much of the three years (inclusive) from *The Threepenny Opera* to *The Mother*, his primary work was taking place outside the established Berlin theatre. The aim for Brecht, as also for Eisler, was what both men saw as a new or alternative 'apparatus'.

* * *

This apparatus was partly a matter of new cultural technologies, derived from the experiments of previous years, which were now supplementing, if not actually replacing, the traditional 'establishment' of opera houses, subsidised or commercial theatres and what Eisler termed 'the bourgeois concert business'. There was the radio, a 1920s medium which had started to perform specially written plays, song cycles and cantatas under the leadership of some outstanding producers and administrators; already Kurt Weill had been commissioned by Frankfurt Radio to set a cycle of Brecht poems as a *Berlin Requiem* for the tenth anniversary of Rosa Luxemburg's murder in 1929; while other specialists in broadcasting included the conductors Hermann Scherchen and Jascha Horenstein. There was the sound film, and the early synchronisation experiments before the real breakthrough of sound-on-film in 1928/29. And there was also a new concern with the social/educational aspects of the arts; notably the involvement of the amateur singer, actor, photographer or musician who got his pleasure from performing, along with the schoolchildren who were being encouraged to practise an art rather than study art history or music

'appreciation'. All this had begun to stimulate the avant-garde musicians: Milhaud in France; Hindemith, Weill, Eisler and Dessau in Germany; Shostakovitch in Soviet Russia; Antheil in the USA. Its real laboratory or think-tank was not the radical theatre but the German 'Neue Musik', with its festivals first at Donaueschingen, then from 1927 on at Baden-Baden and finally in 1930 in Berlin. Hindemith and Heinrich Burkard were the leaders, Schott of Mainz the interested publishers, 'Gebrauchsmusik' and 'Gemeinschaftsmusik' the catchwords – Applied Music and Community Music, as opposed to music for consumers. The notion of 'Lehre', meaning teaching or doctrine, was inherent in the second.

While what is now seen as the mainstream modernism, represented in the International Society for Contemporary Music, was primarily concerned with new forms and systems, more or less irrespective of accessibility, the 'New Music' was interested in the economic constraints and new inventions that underlay the German 'Neue Sachlichkeit' in all the arts – from architecture to cabaret – while at the same time building on a national tradition of education through art which went back to the Renaissance. It was socially and economically alert, technically curious, although (like Hindemith himself) broadly unpolitical, and among its practitioners before Hitler came to power were such varied partnerships as Hindemith and Gottfried Benn, Ernst Toch and the novelist Alfred Döblin, Wilhelm Grosz and Béla Balázs, Edmund Nick and Erich Kästner. In France too there were the collaborations of Milhaud with Cocteau and Paul Claudel. In 1927 the Baden-Baden Festival turned its ears to the short opera – as against the full-scale 'opera of the times' (or 'Zeitoper') intended for the traditional grand opera apparatus and audience. Weill was prominent among those interested. Through his work as a critic for Radio Berlin he had just begun a collaboration with Brecht, and as a spin-off from their work on a full opera the two men now contributed the jazzy music theatre piece, the 'Little' (or 'Songspiel') *Mahagonny*. This was new in scale, idiom, casting (Lotte Lenya, no diva she), staging (in a boxing ring) and intelligibility of the text.

In 1929 the set subjects (as it were) included works for radio, with Ernst Hardt of the Westdeutscher Rundfunk in Cologne as an interested patron, and a new extension of the Gemeinschaftsmusik developed by Hindemith with the guilds of amateur singers in 1928. This was the origin of an up-to-date cantata-like form. Eisler composed a seventeen-minute 'radio cantata', *Tempo der Zeit*, to a text by 'David Weber' (i.e. Robert Gilbert, a successful writer of lyrics). Walter Goehr set Lion Feuchtwanger's pseudo-American poems *Pep*. And Brecht,

whose initial contribution Hindemith had clearly valued, wrote the texts for two linked works on the topical subject of the first flights across the Atlantic, that of the American Charles Lindbergh in May 1927, which became world famous, and that of the French airmen Nungesser and Coli some twelve days earlier, which had failed. Here was the origin of the modern 'Lehrstück' or didactic piece.

* * *

The first of these, to music by Weill and Hindemith, was *Lindbergh's Flight*, which was presented under the heading of 'original music for radio' and staged and broadcast accordingly. The other, to music by Hindemith only, was called by him 'lehrstück' (with a lower-case 'l'), then published later by Brecht as the *Baden-Baden Lehrstück vom Einverständnis* (meaning consent or agreement, a concept of self-sacrifice that became important to the writer for the next three or four years). Both works underwent substantial revision, as we have tried to indicate in our texts. The Lindbergh piece was to have been composed entirely by Weill, who however ran out of time so that Hindemith – a very rapid worker – came in to fill the gaps. After the performance Weill completed his own setting, which was then published; then Brecht made changes before his text was published separately, now with the subtitle 'A Radio Lehrstück for Boys and Girls'. Prior to this, too, the music of the *lehrstück* had been published (with due notification) by Schott before Brecht made his alterations. In neither case did the composer set all the revisions and additions which the writer made – so that there is not really a 'final' version of either.

During 1929 two new elements entered the story. The first was Brecht's traumatic witnessing of the May Day demonstrations in Berlin, when the police – who were still under the Social-Democratic Prussian administration – intervened forcibly and some thirty demonstrators were killed: an experience that is supposed to have impelled him towards the Communist Party. This was some three months before the Baden-Baden performances, though it may have influenced the subsequent revisions, notably the changing of the individual aviator in each case into a collective plural: 'The Lindberghs', 'The Airmen'. The second was his introduction to the cool formality and detached narrative of the Japanese Nō theatre, which may already have been in the air at Baden-Baden, since Weill knew Milhaud, who was a close friend and collaborator of Claudel. As a French diplomat in the Far East this great poet had seen many Nō productions and had one of his short mime plays staged with Japanese music in the Tokyo Royal Theatre. Now he and Milhaud were planning the production of *Christophe Colomb*, which Claudel had begun to write in 1927, the year

of Lindbergh's crossing. Its première would be in the Berlin State Opera in 1930, and would include some use of film.

The decisive event, however, was Elisabeth Hauptmann's reading of Waley's *The NōPlays of Japan*, a book also known to Claudel, which an English friend gave her in the winter of 1928/29. She was translating some of these when Kurt Weill consulted her about a possible text for a school opera he had been asked to write for the 'Neue Musik' 's 1930 Berlin festival. The play called *Taniko or The Valley-Hurling* seemed to meet his needs, so he then asked Brecht (who apparently had not yet read it) to adapt it for him. Enough of Waley's style and feeling for language remained to determine those of the German version, and as a result our translation sets out from Waley's beautiful English, adjusted to Weill's music as well as to Brecht's changes and additions. Once again however the music has in effect been left somewhat stranded by the revisions of the text. As we show, the text printed in all the main Brecht editions is a modified version which takes account of the objections raised by liberals and the Left to the starkly authoritarian nature of the Consent or Agreement which the original play seemed to propose.

In the earlier version used at the première the figure of the Boy who goes off to the mountains, endangers his companions and has to be killed, struck some critics as being too much the exemplary model of a well-disciplined conformist, a throwback to the Kaiser's army of 1914 (or forward to the Third Reich of 1933). In response, Weill made some effort to assimilate Brecht's revisions, though not all his additional music seems to have survived. But in addition to this revised *He Said Yes* Brecht also made a counter-play with a changed ending, where the Boy says 'No' and refuses to be killed. Called *He Said No*, it is based on the unrevised text and was not set to music at all, with the result that Brecht's suggestion of performing the 'Yes' and 'No' versions together can only be fulfilled if the music is dropped.

* * *

The pairing of *He Said Yes* and *He Said No*, however 'dialectically' it may be interpreted today, was not at all what Brecht had originally intended. For Eisler, whose collaboration with the poet had so far been limited to the odd song (like the 'Abortion Ballad' in 1929), now claimed to be appalled by the 'feudalism' of *He Said Yes* when he read it, and accordingly persuaded Brecht to write a 'concretisation' of the same theme. In this, he later said, he was approaching Brecht as 'an emissary of the working class', in other words a more experienced and knowledgeable Communist. So the plan for the 1930 Berlin 'Neue Musik' was at first that Weill should contribute *He Said Yes*, as ar-

ranged with the organisers, while Brecht and Eisler would submit the 'counter-play' *Die Massnahme – The Decision* (also known as *The Expedient* or *The Measures Taken*). Whether this new work would have been ready in time is far from certain, but in the event its submission was refused, and while Weill then loyally withdrew his school opera for production outside the festival, the writing and rehearsal of *The Decision* took roughly half the year, and they were never actually seen/heard antithetically.

This was in spite of the fact that Brecht now seemed much clearer about what he was doing, and despite all the discussions that took place both with the participants and with the Party critics there was for the first time no radical reworking of the script. It was also the first of this whole batch of works to be labelled 'Lehrstück' from the outset – though a Lehrstück that, according to the note to the *Versuche* edition, set out 'to practise a particular attitude of intervention'. In other words *The Decision* maintained Brecht's interest in 'Einverständnis', which now became the conscious, rational self-sacrifice of an underground agitator, relating to what could be a real political situation. This idea of 'intervention' was conspicuously new. It was linked to that of a proletarian revolution, like the hopes of the growing Communist electorate in the towns.

Eisler was involved, as Brecht so far was not, in the new Communist culture which had been growing up around the activities of Willi Münzenberg, member of the Comintern, organiser of the IAH or International Workers' Aid, master of a whole stable of Left papers and publishing houses, sponsor of the agitprop group Kolonne Links and of Mezhrabpom-Film in Russia and its German distributors Prometheus. Through bodies such as these, the German Communists had started, from 1927 on, to build their own apparatus for the arts under an IfA or committee for Workers' Culture. Eisler was already an active contributor, as composer for the 'Red Megaphone' agitprop group and music critic for the Party press. Attempts were made to capture the huge German Worker-Singers federation, with its half a million members, for the kind of politically militant music which he had begun to write, and three of its big Berlin choral groups took part in *The Decision* under one of its conductors, Karl Rankl. A new Communist leadership actually took over the corresponding Workers' Theatre organisation, the DATB, with Wilhelm Pieck's son as its secretary. A breakaway section of the Volksbühne together with the Young Actors' Group, a professional collective which had emerged from Piscator's collapse, would support Brecht in his work on *The*

Mother and *The Round Heads and the Pointed Heads* after his didactic phase was over.

The Decision was a new experience for its author, in that the rehearsals under the direction of the Bulgarian film director Slatan Dudow (who had been studying in Moscow) involved general discussions of the political issues involved. According to a report by the Soviet writer Sergei Tretiakov, who saw the Berlin production in the winter of 1930/31, Eisler told him that it was

> not just a musical work for performance to listeners. It is a special kind of political seminar about questions of party strategy and tactics. Members of the chorus will discuss political questions at rehearsals, but in an interesting and memorable form. The Lehrstück is not intended for concert use. It is rather a means of striving to educate students of Marxist schools and proletarian collectives . . .

This was substantially different from the 'Neue Musik' 's idea of exercising amateur performers and their audience in the ideas of a community. It reflects a rapidly changing time, when revolution seemed to be around the corner and Hitler a minor problem.

* * *

Largely because of its Eisler songs, which would be sung by the German Left from 1932 on, wherever they might be, *The Mother* is often treated as some kind of sequel to *The Decision*. And certainly the situation in Germany was not improving while Brecht and Eisler worked on it in the second half of 1931, following the somewhat ungenerous reaction of the Party critics to their earlier work. In a sense the background was the same. But this was not a Lehrstück so much as a piece for professional actors which had started out, in its originator Günter Weisenborn's hands, as a project for the Berlin Volksbühne with its 2000-seat theatre. It was never to be a simple platform piece, even if Caspar Neher's 1932 sets, with their dismountable framework of gas piping, were made to be easily moved to wherever the proletarian audience might be. The play was both mobile and 'epic' in that it covered some twelve years of Russian history in a succession of tightly conceived scenes. It came nearer to agitprop than any other of Brecht's works; it centred on an outstanding character, one of the great roles of his wife Helene Weigel; and only a few narrative short cuts seem to reflect the Japanese influence which was so important for the other didactic plays. If in later years the ways of staging the Lehrstücke have become more and more remote from the theatre, productions of *The Mother* on the other hand have moved steadily closer to convention, starting with the 1951 production of the Berliner Ensemble. The

remarkable thing was that following the Prussian government's 1931 ban on agitprop for political meetings its early German performances could take place at all.

One reason for its particular interest for us today is that in 1935 it was performed by Theatre Union, one of the principal Left theatres in New York in the days of the New Deal. Here things appear to have gone wrong all along the line. The theatre board thought of Gorky as a Realist, even a Socialist Realist perhaps, and expected a corresponding version of the play. They seem to have taken Brecht on trust as a progressive and friend of Russia; they clearly had no idea that his adaptation of this Socialist classic had been aimed at a German proletarian audience in a desperate time. Hence he was against conventional dramaturgy, and against being truthful to the Russian background; and if his text appealed for revolutionary action it was not to attack Tsarism, but to overthrow capitalism in its local form. Worse still, he was going to fight for what he regarded as 'his' play, and somehow managed to get himself brought over to New York to do so, although this had not been part of the arrangement. Once there he expected to be able to enforce compliance through the Communist Party hierarchy, not realising how little say they had. He had no idea how to impress and cajole the American theatrical Left, and to make matters worse he seemed to have a dreadful influence on Eisler, who *had* been invited and normally got on well with Americans of averagely liberal views. The damage caused by this interesting exercise not only seems to have put the Theatre Union out of business; it also left scars which would affect Brecht's reception when he arrived in Los Angeles as a refugee six years later. As a study in comparative theatrics the episode is possibly unique.

* * *

Brecht had written two more Lehrstücke by 1935, the year of the two most formative visits of his prewar exile: the one to Soviet Russia and the other to New York. He had left Germany a month after Hitler became Chancellor in 1933, when the Reichstag Fire was a sign to many of the opposition that the last vestiges of the Weimar democracy would now be swept away by the Nazi Brown- and Blackshirts. So, not surprisingly, neither work would be performed where the author could get to it: *The Exception and the Rule* by amateurs in Palestine in 1938, then in Paris in the 1950s; *The Horatians and the Curiatians* not at all. All the same he still labelled the former of these a 'Lehrstück', and counted both of them at one time or another under that head. The better play is surely the first, which is thought to reflect the Chinese theatre rather than the Japanese. The *Horatians and the Curiatians*

however is interesting for two reasons connected with Brecht's 1935 visit to Moscow. One was that he linked it too with the performance which he saw by the Chinese actor Mei Lan-fang, from which he drew some important conclusions for his new theory of 'Verfremdung' or Alienation. The other was that unless Eisler (his intermediary) was pulling his leg, it was written in response to a commission from the Red Army to write a play for children. The fact that Eisler, now a music figurehead for the Comintern, failed to compose anything for either work suggests that he took the commission less seriously than Brecht.

If the excitement of the Lehrstück phase from 1929 to 1932 – with collaborators ranging from the immensely fertile but apolitical Hindemith to the militant Communist Eisler – did not last beyond the work on *The Mother*, the relative isolation of Brecht's subsequent exile in Scandinavia gave him the impetus and the occasion to sort out some of his theoretical ideas. And in the course of so doing he would open the door to confusion, if not conscious mystification. Part of the trouble was that he only now started thinking about 'Lehrstücktheorie', as it has come to be called, when he laid down that 'the' Lehrstück needs no audience, that it teaches by being performed and not by being seen, that it should really be considered a 'Lern-' rather than 'Lehr-' (or teaching) piece, that new scenes can be interpolated in *The Decision* and that the required acting style is the same as for the epic theatre. The drawback to this reconsideration of the term is that what he was aiming to achieve with one piece may be thought today to apply to them all. Principles laid down for specific circumstances at a particular time are taken as general.

Thus the idea that *He Said Yes* and *He Said No* must be performed together was something that he himself never saw realised; it was not what the children involved with the play actually asked for; nor (to judge from Albrecht Dümling's researches) was it in fact a response to the Karl Marx School students as Brecht's notes allege. Again, the ruling on performances of *The Decision* which Brecht sent to the Swede Paul Patera in the days of the Cold War – and which was still being inexplicably applied some three decades later – appears to mean logically that barely anybody in the hundreds attending the première, whether as audience or as performers, can have learnt anything at all from that work. This too is a mystification. On top of that, these general Lehrstück rules are applied by their modern interpreters to incomplete works of Brecht's like the *Fatzer* scheme, which he never classed as such. The essential musical component, the work of great modern composers, is largely overlooked. And from this uneven theoretical pudding

– which never figured in the *Messingkauf* or his aesthetic *summa*, the *Short Organum* – a modern form of learning experience is evolved, remote from its roots and closer to today's Performance Art.

All this is an obstacle to the full realisation of some highly interesting works. The music gets dropped, new music gets written, or maybe improvised. After which the play as conceived by writer and composer is at best only half there. In the case of *The Mother* this may be because Eisler, unlike Weill, never got the use of his music made obligatory for all would-be producers. In the case of *The Decision* it is because full-scale productions prior to the 1998 centenary have been barred throughout the European mainland, turning it effectively into an introspective student exercise or at best a piece of fringe theatre, whereas it should emerge as perhaps the greatest music theatre work of modern times. There is still no commercial recording of it and no score is published. Less deliberately, the Hindemith *lehrstück* was long blocked by both collaborators, and even now is only rarely performed. *He Said No* is without music. *He Said Yes* is played less often than it should be, partly because of the pretence that the two texts are best performed together, partly because of Lotte Lenya's idea that the didactic form was imposed by Brecht on a reluctant Weill. Only *Lindbergh's Flight* is open to an authentic performance, though even here the edge of the work has been slightly dented by Brecht's heavy-handed amendments. The fact is, surely, that this writer's remarkable sense of topicality should not be crudely updated to fit our own situations at the end of the twentieth century. It can now be seen historically, in relation to a turning point in world events which is still of immense relevance to us all. Then, but only then, it speaks to the modern audience with all the originality and force that we find in his greatest poems.

* * *

What we have in this group of works is a concern with new audiences and new means of expression that focused the writer's creativity during the precarious months from the Wall Street crash to the Reichstag Fire. Part of its origins lay in his work with Kurt Weill on *The Threepenny Opera* and *Mahagonny*, pieces which however had been aimed essentially at the Berlin West End and conceived in terms of the stage apparatus as they found it there. Now, thanks to his experience with the 'Neue Musik' and its amateur singers, he proved to be addressing a different public, working with a different collaborator in Hanns Eisler and becoming involved in the very different conceptual world of Communist politics. Could he have made this shift any earlier? Most of the radical, revolutionary-minded German writers, artists and musicians of his generation had been politicised by their

experiences of the First World War and the inconclusive mid-European revolutions that followed Lenin's lead in October 1917. Brecht was too sceptical for this, and the new ideas to which he committed himself in the mid-twenties were theatrical rather than baldly political. May Day 1929 helped to change him, but at the same time it was thanks to his earnings from *The Threepenny Opera* (including its film version, which was about to follow) that he was able to spend most of those four years concentrating on uncommercial tasks. Such windfalls were, he wrote, 'my only means of doing my work, much of which can be shown not to pay (e.g. *He Said Yes*, *The Decision*, *The Baden-Baden Lesson*, *The Reader for Those Who Live in Cities*, the *Keuner* stories and so on) without the damaging influence of the great financial institutions.'

Even while *The Threepenny Opera* was still running, its producer E. J. Aufricht had started pressing for another work of the same kind and for the same theatre; so Brecht, Weill and Elisabeth Hauptmann combined to plan a second light satirical entertainment for completion in the summer holidays of 1929. *Happy End*, with its English title and Runyon-style story, was written by Hauptmann and had memorable songs by Brecht and Weill. But this time Brecht, while providing the plot (which would pit 'the worst criminal in all Chicago' against 'the proverbial Salvation Army lass'), lost interest after the spring and did little or nothing to pull the show together. The result, in the new climate of social and economic crisis, was an almost instant failure: Brecht disowned all responsibility except that for the songs, Hauptmann's role as author was hidden under a pseudonym, and the wreckage might well have been swept under the mat in favour of the new Lehrstücke with their minimal staging. Nevertheless between them the 'Brecht collective' saw enough good material in *Happy End*, even aside from Weill's music, to want to rework it as a major play for the orthodox theatre and some of its most admired actors. And so, while Brecht himself became caught up in the new genre, Hauptmann and their amateur boxer friend Emil Hesse-Burri started to make a fresh assault on the scheme for a full-scale epic on the subject of the 'cold Chicago' of Frank Norris's novel *The Pit*, such as had already underlain Brecht's *Joe P. Fleischhacker from Chicago* project announced in Piscator's book *The Political Theatre* that same year.

The ambience for this play was again that which had served for *In the Jungle* (1923) and Brecht's even earlier 'Epistle to the Chicagoans', with its opening lines

> The laughter on the slave markets of the continents
> Formerly confined to yourselves

> Must utterly have shaken you, the cold in the regions of the fourth depth
> Will have soaked into your skin . . .

Behind this there was *The Jungle* itself (1905), with Upton Sinclair's 'muck-raking', blood-smeared images of that city's meat industry: so much more striking than the wheat market as an object of big business and its manipulations. There were the many biblical allusions. There was the Salvation Army, which had already figured in Georg Kaiser's expressionist play *From Morn to Midnight*, and as the background to Brecht's 'Exemplary conversion of a grog-seller' which Weill and he had used in *Happy End* for the 'Brandy-peddler's Song'. Hauptmann herself had written a Salvationist story, called 'Bessie So-and-so' and set in San Francisco in 1906; she herself was photographed in that Army's uniform. Moreover there were the pastiche Army songs too which might be re-used, such as the Salvationists' opening chorus (into which Weill had woven a snatch of the 'Internationale') and the final 'Hosanna Rockefeller' (a satire on the great millionaires which would later be omitted from *Happy End*'s piano score and from its published text).

* * *

The first, largely complete version of *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* was hammered out in the course of 1930, in between work on the Lehrstücke and the film of *The Threepenny Opera*; and with this the collective's long search for the major play at last became focused on one main project. A year later a revised and duplicated script was made available by Bloch-Erben, the agents; then in 1932 it was published with further revisions in Brecht's series of grey paperbound *Versuche*. The decisive preliminary step here was the merging of the 'proverbial Salvation Army lass' with the classic militant figure of Jeanne d'Arc, canonised by the Vatican in 1920 and now anglo-americised by Brecht as Joan Dark. This idea goes back perhaps to Reinhardt's production of Shaw's *Saint Joan* (at a time when Brecht was a Reinhardt assistant), but also surely to the same author's *Major Barbara*, itself written a year after Sinclair's *The Jungle* (to which Shaw refers more than once), and incorporating an anticipation of the Joan-Mauler relationship in father-daughter terms. As Hauptmann used to say, Brecht was a 'name fetishist', and it may be worth noting that Barbara and Johanna (or Joan) were two of his favourite names.

The radical transformation of this project probably took place in the summer holidays of 1930, which Brecht, Burri and Hauptmann spent in the South of France at Le Lavandou (where much of the work on *The Threepenny Opera* had been done two years earlier); after which the Berlin magazine *Tempo* first publicised the new theme

and its title, along with the name of Carola Neher who would play the lead. Some of the undated early typescripts had featured another noteworthy character – God, who appears in a number of episodes as a slightly querulous old man puffing his cigar, an embarrassing guest of the Salvation Army, whose shadowy presence in the play has been somewhat ignored (some extracts are given on pp. 420–27, and it is just possible that he survives by an oversight as the Old Man of p. 279). Till then the dialogue had been mainly in prose, but now the new passages of austere rhymeless verse – including some fine long speeches and the sequence of Joan's 'Voices' in scene 11 – seem to accord with those in the Lehrstücke.

Around the same time, too, the collective began to introduce the high-flying literary parodies that characterise the quasi-Elizabethan opening scene and eventually come thick and fast at the end. One cause for this ironic change of tone and rhythm is no doubt the relationship with Schiller's Shakespearean *The Maid of Orleans* (of 1801), while another might well be Brecht's work on a version of *Hamlet* – for the same radio producer as *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* – at the end of January 1931. Finally there are Mauler's Goethe allusions following Joan's death, which bear out the play's intention (as a covering note of 1932 has it) to 'show the present stage of development of Faustian Man' – that divided character so often found in Brecht's writings.

* * *

Ever since its release to German theatre managements a mere year and a half before Hitler took power, Brecht's Joan of Arc play has occupied a special, almost mythical position both in his own oeuvre and in the theatre of his time. Here at last was what he had been aiming for, a big drama for the established professional theatre, whose tragic theme was of instant relevance both in Germany and in the depressed Middle West. Touched early on with Brecht's new-found Marxism, it had developed politically in step with its author, first so as to express the cyclical pattern of industry as posited in *Das Kapital* – end of prosperity, over-production, crisis and stagnation – and then (at a late stage of revision) to refer specifically to the Communists; this too was of interest, at least to the writer's admirers. And yet the resultant play was, and even today still is, something of a mystery, for its only recorded performance in Brecht's lifetime was in the much shortened radio version broadcast from Berlin in April 1932. As the radio critic of the (always supportive) *Berliner Börsen-Kurier* put it,

> One day it will rank among the most memorable, and at the same time disgraceful landmarks of modern cultural history that the theatre had to leave

it to radio to communicate one of the greatest and most significant plays of our time.

The recurrent question left behind was twofold: First, how would this play work in performance? And secondly, if it was really such a remarkable work, why were the theatres not falling over one another to put it on?

Some idea of the kind of performance that Brecht had in mind can be got from the unpublished recording of the 1932 broadcast, which featured his two preferred stage protagonists: Carola Neher as Joan and, as Pierpont Mauler the meat king, the powerful Fritz Kortner, who had been the yellow-skinned Shlink of *In the Jungle* in 1924. Here Kortner speaks conventionally (for that time), but Neher adopts a strange, disjointed way of speaking which sounds like the description of Peter Lorre's 'syncopated' speech in the State Theatre's famous but short-lived *Man equals Man*: it must surely have been suggested to her by Brecht. Others in the cast seem likewise to have been his own choice: in fact the list on p. 418 reads like a small roll-call of Brecht actors, including three who would rejoin him after 1948, as well as his wife Helene Weigel. Which composer might have provided the music we do not know, but his designer Caspar Neher (unrelated to Carola) sketched a few sets and incidents for the play: notably a kind of three-sided box on a smallish stage, with a free-hanging banner in mid-stage showing images of Joan and other characters.

This certainly suggests a production envisaged for a specific theatre, and some German directors did put in for the rights despite the imminence of Hitler's Reich. Gustav Gründgens later recalled doing so, though no written record has been found; Heinz Hilpert asked for it for the Berlin People's Stage; Piscator offered to form a special company, making an agreement in April 1932 to link its performance with that of his own adaptation of Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*. Berthold Viertel planned a travelling production based on Vienna; while the Mannheim National Theatre is said also to have applied. At Darmstadt, whose regional (Land) theatre had given the world premières of *Man equals Man* and the revised *In the Jungle of Cities*, Gustav Hartung and Kurt Hirschfeld actually announced a production, only to be overwhelmed by protests both in the press and in the city council; under Hitler they emigrated to Switzerland, where Hirschfeld played an important part in the production of the big exile plays.

In 1934 Sergei Tretiakov in Moscow supervised the publication of three of Brecht's *Epic Dramas* in Russian translation: *The Mother*, *The Decision* (both with Eisler) and *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*; Brecht hoped vainly that this would lead to a Soviet production, and

had already drawn Tretiakov's attention to the availability of Carola Neher, who had just emigrated to the USSR. By the end of 1972 the play had still not been produced there. There was some prospect of a production by the Prague Nové Divadlo in the early thirties, but this fell through, as did Thorkild Roose's proposed production at the Copenhagen Royal Theatre, for which a contract was made in 1935 (though it seems that Ruth Berlau, who was involved in the negotiations, may have performed some scenes with left-wing amateurs). Next a slightly revised text was published by the exiled Malik-Verlag in the year of the Munich Agreement; at one point this was to have been illustrated by George Grosz. From then on the whole project went underground until after the end of the Second World War, when Brecht made his first return to Berlin from emigration. Then, just a week after the triumphant opening of his production of *Mother Courage*, he wrote to Gustav Gründgens (who had been Goering's Intendant of the Prussian State Theatre and was now rehabilitating himself under Adenauer as Intendant at Düsseldorf) to say curtly

Berlin NW7, 18.1.49

Dear Mr Gründgens,
You asked in 1932 for permission to perform Saint Joan of the Stockyards.
My answer is yes.
Yours
bertolt brecht

– to which Gründgens telegraphed back a fortnight later:

SCARED TO DEATH BY LETTER – BUT DELIGHTED YOU REMEMBER AND GRATEFUL DESPATCH BOOK SOONEST
BEST GREETINGS
GUSTAV GRÜNDGENS

This was a generous if slightly wry gesture by the playwright to the original of Klaus Mann's (and Istvan Szabo's) *Mephisto*, and Gründgens reciprocated by warmly praising the play and saying he was trying to get Kortner for the Mauler part and his own wife Marianne Hoppe for Joan. However, it was another ten years before the production – the play's world première – actually took place in Hamburg, to whose Deutsches Schauspielhaus Gründgens and Hoppe had meanwhile moved. One reason certainly was that Kortner, who was anyway less forgiving than Brecht, felt offended at not having been asked to direct his friend's play. In the event Brecht's daughter Hanne Hiob played Joan and got excellent notices. By then Brecht had been dead for nearly three years.

* * *

Given the 'dark times' through which he lived, it was not unusual for Brecht's works to take several years, if not decades, to realise. His poems are perhaps the most striking example; such a high proportion of them remained stashed away among his papers until after his death. But in the case of his plays there is also a clear difference between those which were written quickly, out of a well-formed initial conception, and those which were being continually rewritten, developed, chopped and changed. It is not always easy to guess which of the ensuing works fell into which category, let alone to say that the one is generally 'better' or bigger or more successful than the other. Thus both *Man equals Man* and *The Good Person of Szechwan* took years to evolve from a quite remote starting point, whereas *The Threepenny Opera* and *Happy End* were generated under high pressure, and *Mother Courage* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, for all their scale and length, appear to have been written rapidly in a single draft which took relatively little revision. There was an interesting exception to both categories in the shape of *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*, which was loosely accumulated by stitching together some two dozen separate playlets and sketches.

But *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* was special, in that the years of work devoted to it spanned not only great changes in Brecht's writing style and political convictions but also a transformation of the 'apparatus' for which it was intended. The new Left apparatus that could embrace music theatre, revue and political sketch was right for the new forms which Brecht was evolving with Weill and Eisler, but the great narrative play for the established theatre turned out to be a vain pursuit for the avant-garde at least so long as the 1930s lasted. Thus the next such work, the adaptation of *Measure for Measure* that was begun in 1931 and finished up as *The Roundheads and the Pointed Heads*, could not be performed in Germany, and only briefly elsewhere; *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* not at all. And when the opportunity returned in Switzerland during the Second World War these two plays were already on Brecht's back shelf.

The first-named has remained there, with the exception of Eisler's songs. The second has had a number of productions since Gründgens's première, notably by Benno Besson at different German and Swiss theatres; by the Berliner Ensemble in 1968 (a production that unhappily led to the replacement for a time of Manfred Wekwerth by Ruth Berghaus as artistic director); by Giorgio Strehler at the Piccolo Teatro in 1970; and by the Haiyuza Theatre in Tokyo in 1965. In North America it has had student productions, while in Dublin and London it was produced, also in the 1960s, with Siobhan McKenna under the

direction respectively of Hilton Edwards and Tony Richardson. In the 1970s a production by the Glasgow Citizens with Di Trevis followed. None of them has securely established this work in the world repertoire, and *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* remains something of an unsolved problem.

* * *

The obvious problems throughout have been the size of the cast and the scale of the setting, which virtually confine it to schools and colleges or to the subsidised theatre. At the same time it has been faulted by critics on both sides of the now crumbled Wall, on two main grounds. On the one hand there is no character to personify 'the workers', and Brecht's attempts to built up the husband-eating Mrs Luckerniddle as such by successive small revisions only made matters worse. 'But how can this be changed?' Ernst Schumacher reported the playwright as saying in the last year of his life –

> Suppose I turn the leader of the workers into Joe, A Union Official or Bill, A Communist, and give him a clear-cut personality, won't I be changing my drama about Joan's petit-bourgeois reformism into an entirely different play? And how can I convey the masses except by a chorus? Of course things can't stay as they are if we decide to stage it. The workers' representatives must have a personality, that's obvious. I'll have to do some thinking about that.

Secondly, it was felt, especially in the West Germany of the 'economic miracle', that the play is in any case no longer very relevant to the modern industrial working class (or 'workforce', to use a less question-begging word). And true enough, Chicago around 1900 – the date given on the original stage script and followed by the Berliner Ensemble – or Berlin in 1931, when that script was made, were both of them remote from the relatively well-situated and well-organised, much less class-conscious workers in those cities today, while the great monopolies are becoming more and more international.

Powerful as it is, therefore, did Brecht's vision become out of date? Yes, perhaps, if we think only of its conscious preoccupation with the class war. But there is a lot more to this play, and much of it is vividly conveyed. It reminds us that, even after the various economic miracles, we still have depths in modern society, and people who sink to the bottom of them; there are still the poor and disadvantaged who feel the bitter cold, rejects now of what used to be the welfare state who have been thrown back into an unfeeling 'community' on the make. Animals are still slaughtered under disgusting circumstances, with more and more of the younger generation drawn to protest, whether

by passive vegetarianism or by active concern with animal rights. Factory foodstuffs, battery feeding, artificial additives and adulteration have become topical issues; industrial accidents have changed their nature but are no less dangerous for that; pollution of the environment is a widespread concern that runs across traditional political boundaries. The association of all these things with the profit motive is clear. Meanwhile the ownership of great industries and the continuance or closing down of the companies involved in them is decided by the taking-over and manipulation of shares on the stockmarket.

Religion too has only partly changed its role. If the main branches of organised Christianity are no longer so supportive of the dominant economic order as they once were, there is nevertheless still an active fundamentalist and evangelist fringe that preaches enjoyment of worldly goods in return for social submissiveness. 'Blessed are the consumers', it might be said. And all questions concerning God can always be argued. Such are some of the aspects of our nineties that are still latent in Brecht's Saint Joan story, as well as in the force and irony with which it is narrated. Perhaps they are only waiting to be brought out. True enough, the 'battle between good and evil' is not so simple as its author at first suggested – but was it ever? The divided self of Faustian Man proves to be more confusingly subdivided than most Marxists thought – but isn't it all the more fascinating for that? One way and another the challenge to actors and directors remains, and with it the future of Brecht's most perplexing play.

JOHN WILLETT

Chronology

1898 10 February: Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht born in Augsburg.

1917 Autumn: Bolshevik revolution in Russia. Brecht to Munich university.

1918 Work on his first play, *Baal*. In Augsburg Brecht is called up as medical orderly till end of year. Elected to Soldiers' Council as Independent Socialist (USPD) following Armistice.

1919 Brecht writing second play *Drums in the Night*. In January Spartacist Rising in Berlin. Foundation of German Communist Party (KPD). Rosa Luxemburg murdered. April–May: Bavarian Soviet. Summer: Weimar Republic constituted. Birth of Brecht's illegitimate son Frank Banholzer.

1920 May: death of Brecht's mother in Augsburg.

1921 Brecht leaves university without a degree. Reads Rimbaud.

1922 A turning point in the arts. End of utopian Expressionism; new concern with technology. Brecht's first visit to Berlin, seeing theatres, actors, publishers and cabaret. He writes 'Of Poor BB' on the return journey. Autumn: becomes a dramaturg in Munich. Première of *Drums in the Night*, a prize-winning national success. Marries Marianne Zoff, an opera singer.

1923 Galloping German inflation stabilised by November currency reform. In Munich Hitler's new National Socialist party stages unsuccessful 'beer-cellar putsch'.

1924 'Neue Sachlichkeit' exhibition at Mannheim gives its name to the new sobriety in the arts. Brecht to Berlin as assistant in Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater.

1925 Field-Marshal von Hindenburg becomes President. Elisabeth Hauptmann starts working with Brecht. Two seminal films: Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* and Eisenstein's *The Battleship Potemkin*. Brecht writes birthday tribute to Bernard Shaw.

1926 Première of *Man equals Man* in Darmstadt. Now a freelance; starts reading Marx. His first book of poems, the *Devotions*, includes the 'Legend of the Dead Soldier'.

1927 After reviewing the poems and a broadcast of *Man equals Man*,

Kurt Weill approaches Brecht for a libretto. Result is the text of *Mahagonny*, whose 'Songspiel' version is performed in a boxing-ring at Hindemith's Baden-Baden music festival in July. In Berlin Brecht helps adapt *The Good Soldier Schweik* for Piscator's high-tech theatre.

1928 August 31: première of *The Threepenny Opera* by Brecht and Weill, based on Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*.

1929 Start of Stalin's policy of 'socialism in one country'. Divorced from Marianne, Brecht now marries the actress Helene Weigel. May 1: Berlin police break up banned KPD demonstration, witnessed by Brecht. Summer: Brecht writes two didactic music-theatre pieces with Weill and Hindemith, and neglects *The Threepenny Opera*'s successor *Happy End*, which is a flop. From now on he stands by the KPD. Autumn: Wall Street crash initiates world economic crisis. Cuts in German arts budgets combine with renewed nationalism to create cultural backlash.

1930 Nazi election successes; end of parliamentary government. Unemployed 3 million in first quarter, about 5 million at end of the year. March: première of the full-scale *Mahagonny* opera in Leipzig Opera House.

1931 German crisis intensifies. Aggressive KPD arts policy: agitprop theatre, marching songs, political photomontage. In Moscow the Comintern forms international associations of revolutionary artists, writers, musicians and theatre people.

1932 Première of Brecht's agitational play *The Mother* (after Gorky) with Eisler's music. *Kuhle Wampe*, his militant film with Eisler, is held up by the censors. He meets Sergei Tretiakov at the film's première in Moscow. Summer: the Nationalist Von Papen is made Chancellor. He denounces 'cultural bolshevism', and deposes the SPD-led Prussian administration.

1933 January 30: Hitler becomes Chancellor with Papen as his deputy. The Prussian Academy is purged; Goering becomes Prussian premier. A month later the Reichstag is burnt down, the KPD outlawed. The Brechts instantly leave via Prague; at first homeless. Eisler is in Vienna, Weill in Paris, where he agrees to compose a ballet with song texts by Brecht: *The Seven Deadly Sins*, premièred there in June. In Germany Nazi students burn books; all parties and trade unions banned; first measures against the Jews. Summer: Brecht in Paris works on anti-Nazi publications. With the advance on his *Threepenny Novel*, he buys a house on Fyn island, Denmark, overlooking the

Svendborg Sound, where the family will spend the next six years. Margarete Steffin, a young Berlin Communist, goes with them. Autumn: he meets the Danish Communist actress Ruth Berlau, a doctor's wife.

1934 Spring: suppression of Socialist rising in Austria. Eisler stays with Brecht to work on *Round Heads and Pointed Heads* songs. Summer: Brecht misses the first Congress of Soviet Writers, chaired by Zhdanov along the twin lines of Socialist Realism and Revolutionary Romanticism. October: in London with Eisler.

1935 Italy invades Ethiopia. Hitler enacts the Nuremberg Laws against the Jews. March–May: Brecht to Moscow for international theatre conference. Meets Kun and Knorin of Comintern Executive. Eisler becomes president of the International Music Bureau. At the 7th Comintern Congress Dimitrov calls for all antifascist parties to unite in Popular Fronts against Hitler and Mussolini. Autumn: Brecht with Eisler to New York for Theatre Union production of *The Mother*.

1936 Soviet purges lead to arrests of many Germans in USSR, most of them Communists; among them Carola Neher and Ernst Ottwalt, friends of the Brechts. International cultural associations closed down. Official campaign against 'Formalism' in the arts. Mikhail Koltsov, the Soviet journalist, founds *Das Wort* as a literary magazine for the German emigration, with Brecht as one of the editors. Popular Front government in Spain resisted by Franco and other generals, with the support of the Catholic hierarchy. The Spanish Civil War becomes a great international cause.

1937 Summer: in Munich, opening of Hitler's House of German Art. Formally, the officially approved art is closely akin to Russian 'Socialist Realism'. In Russia Tretiakov is arrested as a Japanese spy, interned in Siberia and later shot. October: Brecht's Spanish war play *Señora Carrar's Rifles*, with Weigel in the title part, is performed in Paris, and taken up by antifascist and amateur groups in many countries.

1938 January: in Moscow Meyerhold's avant-garde theatre is abolished. March: Hitler takes over Austria without resistance. It becomes part of Germany. May 21: première of scenes from Brecht's *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* in a Paris hall. Autumn: Munich Agreement, by which Britain, France and Italy force Czechoslovakia to accept Hitler's demands. In

Denmark Brecht writes the first version of *Galileo*. In Moscow Koltsov disappears into arrest after returning from Spain.

1939 March: Hitler takes over Prague and the rest of the Czech territories. Madrid surrenders to Franco; end of the Civil War. Eisler has emigrated to New York. April: the Brechts leave Denmark for Stockholm. Steffin follows. May: Brecht's *Svendborg Poems* published. His father dies in Germany. Denmark accepts Hitler's offer of a Non-Aggression Pact. August 23: Ribbentrop and Molotov agree Nazi-Soviet Pact. September 1: Hitler attacks Poland and unleashes Second World War. Stalin occupies Eastern Poland, completing its defeat in less than three weeks. All quiet in the West. Autumn: Brecht writes *Mother Courage* and the radio play *Lucullus* in little over a month. November: Stalin attacks Finland.

1940 Spring: Hitler invades Norway and Denmark. In May his armies enter France through the Low Countries, taking Paris in mid-June. The Brechts hurriedly leave for Finland, taking Steffin with them. They aim to travel on to the US, where Brecht has been offered a teaching job in New York at the New School. July: the Finnish writer Hella Wuolijoki invites them to her country estate, which becomes the setting for *Puntila*, the comedy she and Brecht write there.

1941 April: première of *Mother Courage* in Zurich. May: he gets US visas for the family and a tourist visa for Steffin. On 15th they leave with Berlau for Moscow to take the Trans-Siberian railway. In Vladivostok they catch a Swedish ship for Los Angeles, leaving just nine days before Hitler, in alliance with Finland, invades Russia. June: Steffin dies of tuberculosis in a Moscow sanatorium, where they have had to leave her. July: once in Los Angeles, the Brechts decide to stay there in the hope of film work. December: Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brings the US into the war. The Brechts become 'enemy aliens'.

1942 Spring: Eisler arrives from New York. He and Brecht work on Fritz Lang's film *Hangmen Also Die*. Brecht and Feuchtwanger write *The Visions of Simone Machard*; sell film rights to MGM. Ruth Berlau takes a job in New York. August: the Brechts rent a pleasant house and garden in Santa Monica. Autumn: Germans defeated at Stalingrad and El Alamein. Turning point of World War 2.

1943 Spring: Brecht goes to New York for three months – first visit since 1935 – where he stays with Berlau till May and plans a wartime *Schweik* play with Kurt Weill. In Zurich the

Schauspielhaus gives world premières of *The Good Person of Szechwan* and *Galileo*. November: his first son Frank is killed on the Russian front.

1944 British and Americans land in Normandy (June); Germans driven out of France by end of the year. Heavy bombing of Berlin, Hamburg and other German cities. Brecht works on *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, and with H. R. Hays on *The Duchess of Malfi*. His son by Ruth Berlau, born prematurely in Los Angeles, lives only a few days. Start of collaboration with Charles Laughton on English version of *Galileo*.

1945 Spring: Russians enter Vienna and Berlin. German surrender; suicide of Hitler; Allied military occupation of Germany and Austria, each divided into four Zones. Roosevelt dies; succeeded by Truman; Churchill loses elections to Attlee. June: *Private Life of the Master Race* (wartime adaptation of *Fear and Misery* scenes) staged in New York. August: US drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan surrenders. Brecht and Laughton start discussing production of *Galileo*.

1946 Ruth Berlau taken to hospital after a violent breakdown in New York. Work with Auden on *Duchess of Malfi*, which is finally staged there in mid-October – not well received. The Brechts have decided to return to Germany. Summer: A. A. Zhdanov re-affirms Stalinist art policies: Formalism bad, Socialist Realism good. Eisler's brother Gerhart summoned to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee. November: the Republicans win a majority in the House. Cold War impending.

1947 FBI file on Brecht reopened in May. Rehearsals begin for Los Angeles production of *Galileo*, with Laughton in the title part and music by Eisler; opens July 31. Brecht's HUAC hearing October 30; a day later he leaves the US for Zurich.

1948 In Zurich renewed collaboration with Caspar Neher. Production of *Antigone* in Chur, with Weigel. Berlau arrives from US. Summer: *Puntila* world première at Zurich Schauspielhaus. Brecht completes his chief theoretical work, the *Short Organum*. Travel plans hampered because he is not allowed to enter US Zone (which includes Augsburg and Munich). Russians block all land access to Berlin. October: the Brechts to Berlin via Prague, to establish contacts and prepare production of *Mother Courage*.

1949 January: success of *Mother Courage* leads to establishment of the Berliner Ensemble. Collapse of Berlin blockade in May followed by establishment of West and East German states. Eisler,

Dessau and Elisabeth Hauptmann arrive from US and join the Ensemble.

1950 Brecht gets Austrian nationality in connection with plan to involve him in Salzburg Festival. Long drawn-out scheme for *Mother Courage* film. Spring: he and Neher direct Lenz's *The Tutor* with the Ensemble. Autumn: he directs *Mother Courage* in Munich; at the end of the year *The Mother* with Weigel, Ernst Busch and the Ensemble.

1951 Selection of *A Hundred Poems* is published in East Berlin. Brecht beats off Stalinist campaign to stop production of Dessau's opera version of *Lucullus*.

1952 Summer: at Buckow, east of Berlin, Brecht starts planning a production of *Coriolanus* and discusses Eisler's project for a *Faust* opera.

1953 Spring: Stalin dies, aged 73. A 'Stanislavsky conference' in the East German Academy, to promote Socialist Realism in the theatre, is followed by meetings to discredit Eisler's libretto for the *Faust* opera. June: quickly suppressed rising against the East German government in Berlin and elsewhere. Brecht at Buckow notes that 'the whole of existence has been alienated' for him by this. Khrushchev becomes Stalin's successor.

1954 January: Brecht becomes an adviser to the new East German Ministry of Culture. March: the Ensemble at last gets its own theatre on the Schiffbauerdamm. July: its production of *Mother Courage* staged in Paris. December: Brecht awarded a Stalin Peace Prize by the USSR.

1955 August: shooting at last begins on *Mother Courage* film, but is broken off after ten days and the project abandoned. Brecht in poor health.

1956 Khrushchev denounces Stalin's dictatorial methods and abuses of power to the Twentieth Party Congress in Moscow. A copy of his speech reaches Brecht. May: Brecht in the Charité hospital to shake off influenza. August 14: he dies in the Charité of a heart infarct.

1957 *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *The Visions of Simone Machard* and *Schweyk in the Second World War* produced for the first time in Stuttgart, Frankfurt and Warsaw respectively.

Lindbergh's Flight

A radio 'Lehrstück' for boys and girls

Collaborators: ELISABETH HAUPTMANN, KURT WEILL

Translator: JOHN WILLETT

Characters:

CHARLES LINDBERGH [THE LINDBERGHS]
THE RADIO, *also representing*: America, New York City, the Ship, the Fogbank, the Snowstorm, Sleep, Europe, the Fishermen, Sounds (Water, Engine, a Vast Crowd)

Most of this text was set to music by the author's collaborator Kurt Weill. Due to pressure of time, some numbers had been composed by Hindemith, then re-set by Weill. Extra material added by Brecht later to form part of the work, but not set to music, is distinguished by use of a different typeface. Scenes are numbered as in the German published text. Where the musical version differed, its scene numbers are added in round brackets. Square brackets indicate cuts. For subsequent changes, including alterations of the title, see Editorial Notes.

1

CHALLENGE TO EVERYBODY

RADIO:

The world community is asking: please rehearse
The ocean flight of Captain Lindbergh
By all of you, together
Singing the music
And reading off the text.

Look, here is your machine.
Get in!
All of Europe is waiting for you
You'll make your name.

LINDBERGHS:

I am getting into my machine.

2

THE AMERICAN PRESS PRAISES LINDBERGHS' CAREFREE ATTITUDE

AMERICA (RADIO):

Is it true what they say, that all you are taking
Is your straw hat; so you
Embarked like a fool? With that
Old crate you mean to
Fly the Atlantic?
With no companion to navigate you
With no compass and without water?

3 (2)

INTRODUCING THE AIRMAN CHARLES LINDBERGH

LINDBERGH:

My name is Charles Lindbergh
My age is no more than twenty-five

Grandfather came from Sweden
Myself I am American.
As for my machine, I selected it myself.
It flies at rather more than 130 miles per hour
We named it *Spirit of St Louis*
The Ryan Aircraft Works down in San Diego
Took no more than sixty days to build it.
And sixty more days have I spent with maps and sea-charts
As I drew up my flight plan.
I'm flying alone.
And sooner than a second man I'll take more gas.
My aircraft hasn't got any radio.
I'm flying with a first-rate compass.
These past three days I have been waiting on the weather
But I'm afraid that the weather forecasts
Are not good and won't get better:
Fog in all coastal districts and gales over the sea.
I cannot afford to go on waiting.
Now I'm getting in.
I'll take the risk.

[3

DEPARTURE OF THE AIRMAN CHARLES LINDBERGH FROM NEW YORK ON HIS FLIGHT TO EUROPE]

LINDBERGH:

I shall have with me
First a couple of torches
And 1 coil of rope
Then 1 roll of sticking plaster
And 1 knife
And 4 red flares too
Protected by rubber tubing
And 1 watertight container with matches in
1 big can containing water, likewise a service water bottle
And also 5 emergency rations issued to me from US Army stores, each of them sufficient for one day, or longer in a crisis.

I shall have with me
1 large sailor's needle and 1 chopper
And 1 hacksaw and
1 pneumatic raft.
I'm flying now.
It's now twenty years since Blériot
Became a hero, for
Having flown a wretched thirty kilometres
Across the English Channel.
I shall be flying
Three thousand.

4

THE CITY OF NEW YORK INTERROGATES THE SHIPS

NEW YORK CITY (RADIO):
New York City calling:
This morning at eight o'clock
One of our people took off here, heading
Over the ocean
He was flying off to Europe.
For seven hours now he's been on his way
We've had no report from him
So we are asking
All shipping, would they tell us
If he's been seen?
LINDBERGHS:
If I do not get there
I shall never be seen again.
SHIP'S RADIO (*Chorus*):
Calling New York: *Empress of Scotland*
49 degrees 24 minutes latitude north by 34 degrees 78 minutes longitude west:
A short while ago we could hear
Through the cloudbank the sound
Of an engine
Some distance above us.

Due to the fog there, we were
Not able to locate it
But we think it might be
That this was your airman
In his aeroplane
Spirit of St Louis.

LINDBERGHS:

Nowhere a ship, and
Now here comes the fog.

5

DURING MOST OF HIS FLIGHT THE FLIER HAD TO BATTLE WITH FOG

FOGBANK (RADIO):

I am the fogbank and I am feared by
All who would conquer the ocean.
Here comes the first man of our second millennium
Who wants to fly around in the air.
What kind of man are you?
But we are going to make sure that
No one in future flies round in our air here!
I am the fogbank!
You – turn back!

LINDBERGH:

[Like the hell I will!]
What you have just said
Calls for reflection.
If you get denser, maybe I really shall
Turn back.
If there is no prospect
I'll give up the struggle.
If it's do or die
You can count me out of that.
As it is
I shan't turn back yet.

FOGBANK (RADIO):
So far you feel tall, but
You don't know you're dealing with me.
So far you've seen there were waves under you
And known
Your right hand from your left. But
Just you wait another day and one more night
Till you see no waves and you can see no sky
Nor your controls, nor
Your first-class compass.
Best grow older, and you will
Realise who I am:
I am the fogbank.

LINDBERGH:
[I'm not frightened of you.]
Seven men built my machine in San Diego
Often twenty-four hours without a break
Using a few metres of steel tubing.
What they have made must do for me
They have done their work, I
Carry on with mine, I am not alone, there are
Eight of us flying here.

FOGBANK (RADIO):
At present you are barely twenty-five.
What about when you are
Twenty-five plus another night, after just one more day
You'll be more frightened.
For tomorrow and during a thousand years, there will still be this ocean
Air and fogbanks
But you'll not be
There to see it.

LINDBERGH:
So far it's been day. But
The night will fall soon.

FOGBANK (RADIO):
For ten hours I have been fighting a man who
Has been flying round the air. That's something
Has not been seen for these past thousand years. I found

No way of bringing him down
It's up to you now, snowstorm!

LINDBERGHS:

Here you come
Snowstorm!

6

THAT NIGHT THERE CAME A SNOWSTORM

SNOWSTORM (RADIO):

For this past hour I've had in me a man
A man who has an aeroplane!
Sometimes he flew over me
Sometimes so close to the water!
For the past hour I've buffeted him
Down to the water and up to the heavens
Nowhere can he keep steady, but he
Will not be brought down.
First falling upwards
Then climbing downwards.
He is weaker than a tree by the seashore
Flimsy as a leaf off its branch, but he
Will not be brought down.
It's hours since this wretched man glimpsed the moon
Or could see his own hand
But he will not be brought down.
I have been loading his plane with icicles
So the weight may topple it downwards
But the ice breaks off the plane and
He'll not be brought down.

(6b)

LINDBERGH:

I can't go on
I'm heading for the water:
Who would imagine

There were icicles up here!
Three thousand metres at one point my height was, and
Three metres down, skimming the water.
Everywhere the storm rages on
With everywhere ice and fogbanks.
Why was I so foolish as to start this?
Now I'm afraid of dying.
Now I'm being brought down.
Four days before me two other pilots
Started out flying the ocean like me
And since then the water has drowned them
And I too shall be drowned.

7

SLEEP

SLEEP (RADIO):
Sleep, Charlie
The dreadful night
Now is over. The storm's
Blown out. Go to sleep, Charlie
The wind will bear you.

LINDBERGH:
[I must not sleep.
I'm not exhausted.]
The wind is no help to me
The water and the air are against me, and I
Am their enemy.

SLEEP (RADIO):
Only for a minute, just let your head
Droop towards the joystick. Let your eyes close for one brief instant
You've a wakeful hand.

LINDBERGH:
[I must not sleep.
I'm not exhausted.]
Often twenty-four hours without a break

My comrades in San Diego
Built this machine. Let me
Be no worse than them. I
Must not sleep.

SLEEP (RADIO):

So far to go. Best have a rest
Think of the meadows of Missouri
The river, the house
Which is your homestead.

LINDBERGH:

I'm not exhausted.

[8

IDEOLOGY

LINDBERGHS:

1

Many say time is ancient
But I always knew this was a new time.
I tell you it is no accident
That for twenty years buildings have shot up like bronze mountains
People move each year expectantly to the cities.
And on the laughing continents
The word gets round that the great and awful ocean
Is a tiny puddle.
Today I am making the first flight across the Atlantic
But I am convinced: by tomorrow
You will be laughing at my flight.

2

Yet it is a battle against what is backward
And a strenuous effort to improve the planet
Like dialectical economics
Which will change the world from the bottom up.
So now
Let us battle with nature
Till we ourselves have become natural.
We and our technology are not natural as yet

We and our technology
Are backward.
The steamship competed with the sailing ship
Which had left the rowing boat far behind.
I
Am competing with the steamship
In the struggle against what is backward.
My airplane, weak and tremulous
My equipment with all its defects
Are better than their precursors, but
In flying, I
Struggle with my airplane and
With what is backward.

3
So I struggle with nature and
With myself.
Whatever I may be and whatever idiocies I believe
When I fly I am
A true atheist.

During ten thousand years, unimpeded
Where the waters grew dark in the sky
Between light and twilight, there arose
God. And in the same way
Over the mountain tops, whence the ice came
Did ignorant people, incorrigible
Glimpse God, and in the same way
In the deserts he arrived in a sandstorm and
In the cities he was produced by the disorder
Of the different classes, for there are two kinds of men, thanks to
Exploitation and ignorance; but
The revolution abolishes him. Yet
Build roads through the mountains and he disappears.
Rivers drive him out of the desert. The light
Shows up voids and
Scares him away at once.

Therefore take part
In the battle against what is backward

In the abolition of the other world and
The scaring away of any kind of god, where-
Ever he turns up.

Under more powerful microscopes
He collapses.
Improved equipment
Is driving him from the skies.
The clearing-up of our cities
The removal of poverty are
Causing him to vanish and
Chasing him back to the first millennium.

4
Thus there may still remain
In our improved cities confusion
Which comes from lack of knowledge and resembles God.
But the machines and the workers
Will battle against it, and you too
Take part in
The battle against what is backward.]

[9

WATER

LINDBERGHS:
Once more
The water's getting closer.
NOISE OF WATER (RADIO)
LINDBERGHS:
I must
Gain height! This wind
Thrusts me down.
NOISE OF WATER (RADIO)
LINDBERGHS:
That's better now
But what's this? The joystick
Won't respond. Something
Is not right. What's that

Noise in the engine? Now
We're losing height again.
Stop!

NOISE OF WATER (RADIO)

LINDBERGHS:

My God! That
Nearly did for us!]

10 (8)

THROUGHOUT HIS FLIGHT THE ENTIRE AMERICAN PRESS KEPT SPEAKING OF LINDBERGH'S LUCK

AMERICA (RADIO):

All America thinks
Captain Lindbergh's flight
Across the ocean must succeed.
Despite the bad weather forecasts and
The very faulty state of his vulnerable aircraft
Everybody in the States believes
He's going to get there.
'Never', declares one paper, 'has a man
From our country seemed
Such an embodiment of our good fortune.'
When the fortunate crosses the ocean
Even the tempests hold their peace.
If the tempests cannot restrain themselves
The plane will keep going.
If the plane can't keep going, then
The man will win through.
And suppose that he loses
Then good fortune will win.
That's the reason why we believe
That the fortunate get there.

11 (9)

THE THOUGHTS OF THE FORTUNATE

LINDBERGH *speaking quickly and softly, without expression*:
Two continents, two continents
Are expecting me! I
Must get there.
Whom are they expecting?
Even the man they are not expecting
Must get there!
Courage is nothing, but
Getting there is everything.
He who flies out over the sea
And is drowned, is a damned fool, for
One does drown at sea.
Therefore I must get there.
Winds are thrusting me down and
Fog stops me steering, but
I've got to get there.
Yes, my airplane
Is weak, and weak my head, but
Over there they are expecting me, saying
He'll get here, and so
I must get there.

12 (10)

SO HE FLIES, WROTE THE FRENCH PRESS, WITH STORMS ABOVE HIM, SEA ALL AROUND HIM AND BENEATH HIM THE SHADE OF NUNGESSER*

EUROPE (RADIO):
Heading for our continent
Over the past twenty-four hours
Flies a man.
When he gets here

*See Introduction, page xii.