

Chains

By H. Levik

Play no. 13

Opening show: 16/12/1931

Creative team

Hebrew by: I. Vislavsky

Staged by : B.Tchemerinsky

Settings: M. Schmidt

Settings executed by: D. Sheinder

Dances by : F. Liubiz

Musical direction by: Fordhaus Ben Zissi

Cast

Levinsky: S. Finkel

Joseph: A. Baratz

Gregory: TM. Gnesin

Peter: M. Binjamini

Singer: S. Bruk

Nuki: Z. Friedland

Solomon: I. Rubinstein

Daniel: I. Avital

Zazuli: A. Meskin

Kobraznikov: R. Klatzkin

The old man: I. Bartonov

Druzinin, Prison warden: A. Warshaver

The Watchman: B. Tchemerinsky

The Doctor : I. Rubinstein

A Worker

Act 1

In a prison cell in Siberia there are eleven men, eight of whom are political prisoners and have been sentenced to serve hard labour, and three of whom are criminals. Most of them have been sentenced for life. The political prisoners were all mixed up in one political affair; hence they live a communal sort of life, and Singer one of the group, is in charge of this arrangement.

The conditions existing in the prison are such that their brotherly spirit is soon gone. One of them, Nuki, goes mad. Another, Peter, asks the Czar for a grant of pardon. The only thing uniting them is the scheme which they contrive, the scheme of escaping from the prison. They all lend a hand in digging an underground passage right below their place of sleeping and in secret they all keep filing down their chains. But even in this matter of escape there are differences of opinion./ The head of the group, Levinay, in the meantime, gets secret message and reports about a general strike that is to break out Siberian regions. Another fellow is brought in to them; he is Daniel, a dear disciple of Levinay.

This young man is soon made part of the escape plot. Levinay misbehaves during the inspection of the prison warden. Druzinin, and he orders him to be put into a separate cell. But the young man goes for his master so as not to hold back the preparations for the escape. The command "To Sleep" is given and then they all make haste to escape. The wish to grasp the opportunity and therefore do not stop to take their sick friend, Gregory, with them. They leave him. However, they do not succeed in escaping and are caught in the yard by the police in charge of the prison.

Act 2

The political prisoners declare a hunger strike. They ask that they be pardoned and that their demands be fulfilled. Druzinin, however, denies them their demands. He comes with the doctor to feed them by force. Upon finding that this is impossible, he orders good food for the criminal prisoners so as to awaken the appetite of the others. The criminals, however, cannot

eat in the presence of their hungry friends and continue playing cards. From the separate cell there comes the voice of Daniel singing; this awakens Levinay's conscience, for it was for him that Daniel had gone there. All present sense the approach of death. Levinay begs Gregory's pardon. Peter is troubled that he was excommunicated from the group. They all give utterance to despair. Daniel is brought in from his cell. Levinay finds that he is the only one whom he can hand over his last will: to fight for the reconstruction of the world at large without considering anything whatever. Druzinin comes along and mocks bitterly at the hungry strikers. He forces the criminals to eat the meat and soup that was given them. He also compels them to dance their "Chain dance". A sudden noise is heard: it is an ominous noise. The gold miners of Siberia at large have gone out in strike, and they are marching upon the prison to set free all the prisoners. Druzinin attempts to oppose them. They, however, seize the prison, drive out Druzinin and his staff and declare a Socialist revolution in all of Siberia.

Act 3

Ten days later. The ruling hand of Siberia is that of the working party. They are two thousand in number, all armed. At the head of the revolution is Levinay. They are surrounded by the Czar's arm that presses on them. The criminals have gone back to their former occupation: they steal and murder. Among the leaders of the revolution there arouse discussions and arguments as to the manner in which the revolution is being carried on, regarding the reign and rule. Some of them are for leniency and oppose bloodshed. Levinay orders an assault and has his friends, - Daniel, Joseph, and Gregory – who have now turned his adversaries, to be put in prison.

In the meantime Druzinin and his army return. He deals the rebels a heavy blow and puts the political prisoners back into their former cell. Druzinin comes in to punish and torture them. He demands of them that they themselves choose one from their midst to be put to death. If they refuse he is bent upon putting them all to death. Levinay is ready to be the victim for them all. He is put to death and all the rest remain imprisoned. Everything is as it was; the prison is the same; the chains are the same...