

Russian People

By C.Simonov

Play no. 69

Opening show: 03/04/1943

Hebrew version: A. Levinson

Staged by : Z. Friedland

Setting by: Genia Berger

Music by: Fordhaus Ben-Zissy

The Cast

Safonov, commanding officer: A. Kutai

Martha Petronova, his mother: H. Rovina

Valya, his driver: H. Hendler

Vassin, a veteran officer: I. Bertonov

Globa, a medical orderly: S. Finkel

Panin, a journalist: A. Barat

Shura, a stenographer: N. Shein

Charitonov, a doctor: M. Gnessin

Maria Nikolleвна, his wife: T. Robins

Koslovsky (Vasileko): Ben-Haim

Rosenberg, German officer: S. Bruk

Werner, German officer: R. Klatzkin

Krause, a German soldier: M. Benyamini

Morosov: N. Buchman }

Gavrilov: I. Rubinstein }

An officer: N. Buchman } **Russians**

An old man: M. Benyamini }

A stranger: M. Ben-Zeev }

Semionov: M. Ben-Zeev }

Act 1

Scene 1 In the German-occupies area

A Russian provincial town which has been partially occupied by the Germans. The other part is held by a Russian company under the command of Safonov. Martha Petrovna, Saionov's Mother, in conversation with Maria Nikolievna Charitonova, blames her husband's cowardice for permitting himself to be elected Chairman of the Town Council. Koslovsky, a spy acting for the Germans, enters and leaves the room. Valya, an intelligence officer for the Red Army, conveys greetings to Martha from her son. Valya, who is Safonov's driver, reveals to his mother that he is in love with her. Morosov, who has been hiding in Martha's cellar, enters the room, and Valya gives him certain military information. A stranger who has been wounded by the Germans, staggers into the room. He dies before he can reveal his identity.

Scene 2 In the Russian area.

Commander Safonov at his headquarters. He appoints Vassin, an old professor of military science in the Technical School, to be in charge of his headquarters, and the writer Panin as head of a special department. Safonov

is anxious because Valya is late in returning. Then Valya comes in, having completed her task successfully. Koslovsk the spy appears calling himself by the name of Simonenko, and pretending to be a patriot. Safonov trusts him and accept him into the army. Valya, who has heard his voice in Martha Petrovna's house, questions Safonov about him. But he disregards her suspicions. Koslovsky tries to ingratiate himself with Vassin, but the latter does not respond to his advances and vouchsafes him only curt, dry replies.

Scene 3 In the Russian area.

Panin rebukes Koslovsky for permitting himself a shoot at Russian soldiers, in the name of discipline, as it were, and replies sharply to Koslovsky's defeatist observations. Valya again tries to remember where she saw Koslovsky before, but fails. In a talk with Safonov, Vassin's ardent patriotism is revealed. Koslovsky comes in and endeavours once more to win Vassin's confidence, on the pretext of a demand for bullets. Vassin reacts angrily to Koslovsky's free manner of speech. Safonov, coming in, adds his admonitions to Koslovsky's tricky ways. Globa, the medical orderly, an honest, simple, jolly fellow, appears. Globa has faithfully carried out his duties, and reports to Safonov the General's order to hold the position at all costs. Meanwhile three old men, who want to take an active part in the fighting beg Safonov for guns, and he is touched by their request. He informs Globa of his decision to blow up the bridge in the German rear. Alone with Valya, he betrays his tender feelings for her, but has not the courage to declare his love. Tired out with his labours, he falls asleep to the sound of Valya's singing.

Act 2

Scene 4 In the occupied area.

The German officer Rosenberg is billeted in the house of the Russian doctor Charitonov. He tells his friend the German officer Werner about his psychological investigations. As a subject for his studies he is using the doctor, Charitonov, a Russian, who has slavishly surrendered to the Germans, in complete contrast to his wife, Maia Nikolievna, a proud and high-spirited patriot, who courageously opposes them. Maria reviles him for his cowardice and self-abasement. Suddenly Martha Petrovna bursts into the room, crying that German soldier had killed a pregnant woman who had come to ask for the doctor's aid. Rosenberg justifies this act and order Martha to be hanged for defying the curfew. Martha heaps abuse upon the officer. The taunt Charitonov Rosenberg shows him the picture of his son who had been killed on the front and forces Charitonov to declare that he is glad his son is dead. Charitonov agrees submissively, but his wife takes revenge by poisoning him when tea is brought in.

Scene 5 The Russian Area.

Safonov orders Vassin to stand on guard with his detachment. He then sends Valya on an intelligence mission, but urges her to take care of herself. He gives her a revolver to defend herself with. With difficulty he conceals his feelings for her. Vassin discovers Koslovsky in the act of spying for the Germans. At first Koslovsky pretends to be a patriot, but under pressure from Vassin and the threat of being killed, he reveals that he is Vassin's cousin,

and suggests that they should both serve the Germans in order to save his life. Vassin pretends to agree and take him to Safonov's head-quarters.

Act 3

Scene 6 Russian area.

At Safonov's headquarters. Globa offers to go o the German lines in Valya's place, but Safonov tells him that he intends sending him to a place of danger only if Valya is lost. Vassin enters with Koslovsky and denounces his cousin as a traitor. Safonov orders Koslovsky to be hanged. An order is received from the High Command that the bridge is not to be blown up but captured for the use of the Red Army which is approaching the German positions, but it is already too late. To rescue Valya Safonov suggests that Globa should disguise himself as a deserter from the Bolsheviks, coming to the German with information about the Russian's plans. Globa coolly and bravely undertakes to fulfill this dangerous mission.

Scene 7 German occupied area

The German officer Werner examines Valya, now a prisoner. Valya gives him misleading information. Martha Petrovna, also a prisoner inveighs against the Germans for their cruelty and brutality. Werner orders her to be hanged. Globa, acting the part of a victim of the Bolsheviks, "discloses" to Krause, a German soldier, the secret of a coming Russian attack. Krause leaves. In a conversation with Valya and the German spy Simienov, Globa continues to play the traitor. Valya heaps contempt upon him.

Scene 8 Russian area

Vassin attacks with his detachment to create a diversion from the main Russian attack. He is wounded in the chest and dies, but not before he has learned that his tactics have proved successful. Vassin appoints Panin to take his place.

Scene 9 Before the German positions

The Russian approach the German positions. Globa , encouraged by the Russian advance, strikes Simienov in the face, ad divulges his true intentions to Valya. Simienov informs Krause that Globa is loyal to the Russians. Globa is killed defending Valya with his own body. Safonov appears, with a broken heart he learns of Globa's heroic death. Deeply moved, he declares his resolution to fight until the last German has been annihilated from Russian soil.