

Les Cyclones

By Jules Roy

Play no. 146

Opening show: 27/06/1956

Hebrew by: Yaakov Malkin

Directed by: Shraga Friedman

Setting by: Shmuel Bak

Cast

Col. Beaufort, Commander of the Base: Shmuel Rodensky

Matz, Flight Commander: Nahum Buchman

Richard, Flight Captain: Albert Hizkyahu

Vuillaume, Chief Engineer: Israel Becker

The Minister of Air Force: Chaim Amitai

Madame Lecointe: Hanna Rovina

Secretary: Tania Peres

Wireless Operator: Peretz Halevi

Act 1

A base for test flights Somewhere in France. The Commander, Colonel Bofort, is responsible for the test flights of a new type of jet plane called Cyclones. These planes are capable of attaining a speed and height hitherto unprecedented. The test have been proceeding for some weeks and several mysterious crashes have occurred. Three of the pilots have been killed. No one has so far been able to discover the cause of the disasters.

The Flight Captain and his Lieutenant discuss the possible sources of accidents with Colonel Bofort, while a further test is being carried out by three pilots. One of these Lecouante, is killed when his plane crashes.

Matz request that the tests be abandoned.

The Chief Engineer, Villaum, the inventor of the jets, claims that there is no fault whatever in the aircraft, that all this calculations are correct, and that if the pilots are killed the blame is theirs. The others accuse him of callousness and indifference to human life and to the fact that his machines are killing men.

Act 2

The Minister of the Air Force arrives from Paris to investigate the matter at close quarters. The press is full of the "Suicide Pilots". Gloom overhangs the entire Base. The Minister's talk with the officers is interrupted by the sudden arrival of Madame Lecouante. The news of her son's death has so shocked her as to unbalance her mind. She speaks as if he were still alive. The Minister is unable to face her and leaves the room. The pilots try to soothe her, without revealing the truth.

The Minister resumes his talks with the officers and it is decided to continue the test flights. Matz refuses to cooperate and faces the threat of demotion.

Under pressure he offers to take part in the test flight provided his jet is the only one to fly.

As Matz is about to take off, the Chief Engineer announces his resignation. Although still confident that his calculations are perfect, he can no longer bear the accusation of the pilots that he is to blame for the accidents.

While Matz is in the air, radio communication with him is suddenly cut off and then resumed. Returning from a successful flight, Matz tells of an obstruction which explains the former accidents. The engineer was right. The plane is perfect. But the pilot simply could not control his passion for height, and on attaining a certain speed he would keep on rising and rising, above the permitted height. It was this breach of discipline that had caused the death of the pilots who had crashed in the test flight. Matz had been saved by a miracle, and had brought back with him the key to the problem that had baffled them all.