

Biederhold: Women and girls, bereft of any pious modesty...

Jenny: It's the same thing every time.

Biederhold: ...without blushing, wear their hair and their dresses so short that they actually provoke lasciviousness and sin. Their disgraceful ways of hiding from...

Wolff: That's easy for him to say.

To the left and right listeners fill up the restrooms. In the men's room are Barde, Widerborst, Krachhahn, Speicherer, Selters, and on the women's side Trankhafen, Wachtel, Möhre.

Biederhold: ...of hiding from the true and deserved consequences of wicked desires—or, wait a minute—of sinful actions, which unfortunately are necessary to the procreation of humankind—these disgraceful conceits have become enormously popular. Even in this high house there are more and more voices that would withhold the strong arm of justice from the vice of same-sex love—no, love doesn't work there—hmm, what did I call it last time? (Rattling of papers once again. Paula, Jenny, Annie and Hantke go quietly into the staff room.)

Stechbein: (to Widerborst) Did the page tell you that the reverend was memorizing his speech?

Widerborst: Didn't have to, we can smell that kind of thing.

Krachhahn: Locus a non locendi.

Biederhold: ...ah, yes it was pederasty—would withhold the vengeful arm of justice from the scandalous vice of pederasty. Barbaric women who wickedly rid themselves of the divinely blessed fruit of their wombs—some in this house want to excuse this outrage. You shout to me, Herr Colleague, that a child that is born must also have food to eat...

Jenny: (in staff room) Now he's answering the interruptions from the floor.

Biederhold: Oh, if the people did not disdain the food of Heaven, then they would not also have to do without earthly nourish-

Thunderation!

Folk Play with Song and Dance

Erich Mühsam

Originally published in German in 1930 as *Alle Wetter! Volksstück mit Gesang und Tanz.*

Translated, edited, and introduced by David A. Shepherd in 2001.

pulls out a notebook and pencil.)—I can no longer conceal the far-reaching apprehensions of my party. We must not overlook the significance of such a valuable invention—rather, installation—no...

(women's room)

Otti: Who's that preaching?

Berta: That's Pastor Biederhold from the Church Party. He always practices his speeches there.

(men's room)

Biederhold: ...of a process that subordinates the weather to the human will; for herein are also serious dangers to the soul. Ladies and gentlemen! Providence has from the beginning of time reserved the right of rewarding and punishing the human behavior with wise application of the forces of nature—I mean...

Stechbein: (Enters, stops short.) Ah! (Hustenreiz makes a sign. Stechbein calls out the door.) Messenger!

Hantke: (Appears, dressed in livery.) Herr Privy Councillor?

Stechbein: One moment!

Biederhold: The sacred bonds of the family—wait, that is: If we presume to intervene in the measures of the Lord most high—dammit! (Turns the page.)

Stechbein: Inform the party leaders immediately.

Hantke: All of them?

Hustenreiz: (whispering) I'm here for the Socialists.

Stechbein: Well, all right, the others, except for the Intransigents. Also Fraulein Trankhafen. (Hantke exits.)

Biederhold: The family is decaying. Lewdness and intemperance are shamelessly raising their ugly heads. Non-belief is taking over the gullible masses.

Paula: (listening from women's room) Watch out, now he'll get to the girls.

Annie: (Enters at left.) Thank God I finally have some time. Is there fresh air in here? (Sees Otti.) Oh, excuse me!

Otti: You don't need to be embarrassed on my account. I'm just here for some company.

Berta: Guess what, Annie, the young lady sang us a song.

Otti: Didn't I see you in the mailroom?

Annie: Yes, I'm the telephone operator, and I know who you are: Fraulein Jungleib from Weatherspring.

Otti: Nobody says Weatherspring at home. They forced that name on us. At home we just talk about the tower and everyone calls me Red Otti.

Annie: Have you all heard? Stechbein is supposed to become state secretary. The Weather Bureau is going to get its own administration.

Paula: That's why he was drinking wine with Trankhafen.

Jenny: Listen to this. Yesterday he stopped me in the hall and asked me if I didn't want to improve myself. He said he could get me a better paying job. I told him you couldn't pay me to do the kind of work he was talking about.

Berta: Yeah, he really runs after blonde hair.

Otti: This kind of thing seems to be very important in the government.

Paula: You have no idea. In general the republicans prefer blondes and the nationalists prefer brunettes.

Otti: I thought the party colors were what mattered. You mean hair color is more important?

Jenny: A lot of girls choose their party colors later on. But Stechbein is wrong if he thinks he could take time out from his little ministerial advisor with me.

(men's room)

Biederhold: (from the stall) Considering all this, ladies and gentlemen—(Hustenreiz moves in front of the toilet and

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(men's room)

Hustenreiz: (Emerges from stall.) There's the bell, The man surely won't be waiting outside the door.

Steinbott: Just don't worry. That was all just to win points with his Kajetan Teutsch. But why don't you wait here a few more minutes anyway. The danger hasn't completely passed.

Hustenreiz: I am still sick from the excitement.

Steinbott: I have cognac here for situations like these. Would you like a small one?

Hustenreiz: Yes, please, but pour yourself one as well.

Steinbott: You bet. (Wolff and Brunner, both in livery, enter.)

Wolff: Here we come, just in time.

Brunner: You have whisky! Steinbott, it's never smelled this good in here!

Steinbott: The delegate isn't feeling so well. You all go into the staff room. I'll bring you a drink.

Brunner: No need to turn on the light, it's bright enough in here. (Goes with Wolff into the half-darkened staff room in front.)

Steinbott: Can I pour you another? (He has another himself. Hustenreiz sits down once again.)

Biederhold: (Enters with a file folder under his arm.) Everything clear, my good man?

Steinbott: Whatever you like, Reverend. Paper? Something to read?

Biederhold: I am fully equipped. (Disappears into a stall.)
(staff room)

Steinbott: (Brings the bottle and two glasses to the front.) Here. But keep your mouth shut.

Wolff: This will pass the time just fine.

(women's room)

Otti: There are the best people in the world there, all farmers and workers.

Jenny: Oh, so you're on their side?

Otti: You should be able to tell that from my song.

Berta: Are you a communist?

Otti: I'm probably something like that. I just can't put up with all that party stuff.

Paula: We can't either. But here in the building we can sing songs about it.

Jenny: Even if we don't have a voice like yours.

Paula: I'm a waitress in the dining room. There you'd get a pretty good idea of what kind of people these are, these characters who cheat the voters without their knowing it. That's how they run the government.

Otti: I already saw a bit of that: if you're going to control the weather, you should do it to create good conditions everywhere for planting and harvest, for shipping and for working. I wanted to explain our calculations to them, but they didn't want to hear a word. They only asked about the business prospects, about things like cutting back on workers, saving here and there, lengthening the workday, introducing staggered wage levels. Most of them didn't even listen. But they all wanted to look at my notes. Actually they were trying to look down my neckline.

Jenny: We know all about that.

Paula: In here with Berta is the only place in the whole parliament building where we can have a break from them, (long, drawn-out bell signal)

Otti: What does that mean?

Jenny: The first bell sounds ten minutes before the full session.

Berta: Do you have to be there too?

Jenny: Wait, Berta, you know that when the whole parliament is passing a resolution they don't allow expert witnesses.

Act I

Booths, carrouseles, market stands surround an open, somewhat hilly plaza in front of the weather tower, which, along with the windwheel next to it, occupies the middle of the background. A massive tower, in the most modern architectural style, windowless, on the front of which a large weathervane is attached. The windwheel, whose rudder is diagonal to the stage and whose structure is the same height as that of the tower, turns rather slowly at first, then stops. Between the tower and the wheel, on either side, is a broad area. We see in the background village roofs, trees, and a field.

Downstage on the right, Berta's shooting gallery. Behind that, Steinbott's sausage stand. On the left, swinging into the scene, Wolff's swing-boat. Immediately behind the windwheel a large tent, recognizable as a beer tent. In front of the booths several townspeople are chatting: Berta, a woman in her forties, Wolff, Steinbott, Paula, a young farm girl who is waiting tables in the beer tent. Brunner and Hantke approach the group.

Berta: No rain today, eh?

Brunner: That depends on the weather.

Steinbott: Is the collective working?

Hantke: The government asked for a holiday.

Steinbott: Well, that'll mean the weather will be nice.

Paula: Niedermaier surely won't mess up the celebration?

Hantke: I don't think he'll worry about it much. They can let us farmers have a day here and there, and the brickyard can have a Sunday. But the weather goes on like it's supposed to.

Berta: If it rains, I can just close up my shooting gallery.

Wolff: If everybody had a swing-boat, there would always be nice weather.

Hantke: Hasn't Niedermaier been here yet?

Paula: He must be in the tower. Red Otti came down a while ago.

Berta: She didn't want to, but she's supposed to go with the youth choir when they join the parade.

Brunner: The big authorities always want to have a circus. But I wish they'd let somebody else do it.

Paula: Otti just did it because today's also the people's festival, and the whole village will be here in the afternoon.

Wolff: Then it'll surely stay nice today.

Steinbott: As far as I'm concerned it can rain in the big shots' faces. They never asked us whether our roof's tight or whether it's dripping on our bed.

Brunner: It's not going to hurt you anyway. Warm sausages taste best when it's raining cats and dogs.

Workers come out of the tower, among them Peters, the soundings-chief, Fischer, the mechanic, Jenny, a bookkeeper about thirty years old, and Annie, a young worker. Most mingle among the booths in the background; some come over to the group.

Wolff: Quitting time? This early in the morning?

Fischer: Break time. Niedermaier says those blockhead lawmakers don't need to see us working. They don't know what it means to work.

Jenny: They must be coming soon.

Brunner: They're brushing off their top hats first.

Peters: Maybe there'll be something in it for the tower.

Steinbott: They're just looking to see if there's something in it for them.

Paula: I mean, it'll be an honor for Niedermaier.

Wolff: He can't buy much with that!

Brunner: It's not going to be very pleasant.

Trankhafen: As a rule the gentlemen have a good sense of when they might dare to make advances.

Möhre: That's what I've heard.

Otti: Well then I certainly don't want to contradict your experience.

Trankhafen: That's the same tone we heard at Weatherspring.

Wachtel: I got my gastrointestinal infection there. I'm going to go get some bitters.

Möhre: Why don't we all go with you. (all three off)

Otti: These parliamentary customs aren't easy to learn.

Berta: We aren't supposed to say anything about them.

Paula: We just do our jobs and keep our mouths shut, Fraulein.

Otti: I see. (Washes her hands and sings.)

The world works just like this, aha,
The rich man thinks the world is his, aha.
The poor man works and sweats,
Gives the rich man all that he gets.
The poor man spends his life just so,
Carries the rich man's bags, with a bow.
The rich man stands off to the side, oho,
Can't do a thing, but he always knows how.
This while the poor man stands idly by,
And it ends when he asks for his piece of the pie.
When he speaks up, things turn in his favor.
The world belongs to the ones who labor.
Aha, aha—oho, oho

Tomorrow things will be better, you know.

Paula: Don't you have a nice voice!

Otti: At the weather tower I sing and dance with a whole youth choir.

Berta: Are there really so many nice people there?

Selters: Just let it rest.

Hornbriller: Surely an honorable solution can be reached through collegial intervention.

Barde: I'll punch him one in the chops, then he can run.

Hustenreiz: Oh, help! Help!

Hornbriller: He's appealing for *succours*. I will speak with the interviewer myself, (off)

Speicherer: I have no desire to get involved in fisticuffs, (off)

Selters: I'll join you. (off)

Krachhahn: Good luck, Colleague Barde. (off)

Barde: So, little boy, it's just you and me now. I'm spitting on my hands.

Steinbott: Listen, sir. If you all want to beat each other up, then do it in the meeting hall. In my restroom each and every party has the same rights. When there's a meeting here there are no fights that aren't part of the meeting. If anybody behaves in a way that's not appropriate for a restroom, then I'll throw him out.

Barde: Don't get involved in things that aren't your business.

Steinbott: I'm the president here and I set the agenda. You understand? You can come out now, Herr Delegate. You're safe in the restroom. (Hustenreiz appears, trembling.)

Barde: You miserable little...

Steinbott: (Places himself between the two.) Now you sit down over there in the corner. No one will see you there and no one will touch you. And you, Herr Barde, if you have anything else to take care of here, then take care of it right now. This is not the place to do other business.

Barde: And you call yourself a German man! (off)
(women's room)

Otti: (Enters.) Good morning.

Trankhafen: Now we can ask her ourselves. Was it on account of you that the commission meeting was stopped so suddenly?

Otti: I had to put a stop to some inappropriate advances, that's all.

Fischer: Just think of all the monkey wrenches they threw in the works till the tower was working.

Jenny: Until the French got interested in it, then a couple millionaires coughed up the money for it.

Hantke: The benefactors? We know how that goes.

Peters: If it weren't for the collective, those guys would've made the weather a corporation on the stock market.

Niedermaier comes out of the tower smoking a short pipe and wearing a windbreaker.

Annie: Ah, good, there he comes.

Berta: Doesn't he need to get dressed?

Annie: No, he doesn't have any use for that.

Niedermaier: Well, now for a glass of beer.

Paula: I'll get you one, Herr Niedermaier. (She goes off.)

Niedermaier: That was a good night's work, wasn't it, Herr Peters?

Peters: I've got all the soundings recorded.

Niedermaier: That high in the Azores will be good for us. (Looks at the weathervane and the wheel, which is sporadically turning very slowly.) Everything's in order. Have you seen Fraulein Otti?

Steinbott: She's coming with the visitors.

Niedermaier: Right. She can't stay away too long, she still needs to monitor the report from the Iceland station.

Fischer: Okay, Herr Niedermaier. (Paula enters with beer.)

Paula: To your health, Herr Niedermaier.

Niedermaier: To everyone's health! (Drinks.) I hope this whole hullabaloo passes without any problem.

Hantke: In the People's Paper it says that the government wants to make an announcement today.

Niedermaier: I'm afraid they want to put some kind of authority over us.

Jenny: How come? The collective's always been able to give us advice about weather decisions.

Fischer: Exactly. If that hadn't worked so well, they would've let us drop dead and then said the state was against it from the beginning. Now everything's fine, now all of a sudden they're coming to commemorate the groundbreaking, and they'd probably like to turn over the weather planning to the politicians.

Brunner: Whatever they get their hands on will turn into a mess.

Niedermaier: Well, I don't want any part of this festival that the big shots are throwing. As far as I'm concerned, every day of working in the tower is a party; all of a sudden the government wants to join the party. This whole thing is just an interruption, hopefully nothing worse.

Peters: I was talking with Otti about that. She says the same thing.

Annie: We all do, Herr Niedermaier, every worker in the tower.

In the distance a drum and pipes.

Berta: They're coming.

Hantke: It'll be awhile before they get up here.

Steinbott: I think I'll build a fire under the sausage kettle.

Ministerial Advisor Trankhafen enters, showing signs of hurried excitement. She is a fading spinster dressed in a tastelessly youthful style, with pince-nez and a sharp, bellowing voice. She is followed by curious village children.

Trankhafen: (Scurries up to the group.) Aha, here's the site of the festival. The famous weather tower! But there's no flag on it! Who's responsible for this?

Jenny: Are you looking for someone?

Trankhafen: I don't see a podium anywhere, either. The minister will need to be appropriately elevated.

Brunner: Paula, roll a beer keg over here.

Wolff: My swing-boat would be a nice pulpit, too.

Selters: A regrettable incident. It's one thing if something like this happens in the plenary session, but in the commission, where we are among ourselves!

(women's room)

Trankhafen: So my party colleague Hustenreiz is innocent. We have to find out what's been decided. (Jenny enters.) Aha, my party's secretary. Are you coming from the commission meeting? What's new?

Jenny: They're beating each other up. That is, right now it's just the Intransigents against the Landowners and the Racialists.

Möhre: How un-Christian.

Wachtel: (Comes out of the stall.) Oh, attendant, do you have anything for diarrhea?

Berta: All I have here is laxative.

Wachtel: Oh, for heaven's sake! No!

Paula: At the buffet table in the cafeteria there are some very good bitters, Frau Delegate. They always help Minister Blödel.
(men's room)

Hornbriller: (Enters.) Everyone is so upset! A very damaging *affaire*. I am seeking Herr Hustenreiz.

Barde: He's taking a load off his mind. Otherwise it'll fall into his pants.

Hornbriller: Is he wounded?

Krachhahn: Ah, no, he's pale but he's alert.

Hornbriller: Only deranged from the shock, *tant mieux*. Hello!
(Knocks.)

Hustenreiz: (from within) Herr Government Assessor?

Hornbriller: A journalist would like to interview you about the attack. Do you want to speak with him?

Hustenreiz: As long as this threat lasts, I will stay where I am.

Krachhahn: Defend yourself, man!

Barde: Just let him come out, that weakling. I'll knock the chutzpah out of him!

Speicherer: It's not worth it, Colleague Barde.

Steinbott: The parties are probably having another difference of opinion.

Hustenreiz: (Storms in, slams the door shut.) That is robbery! That's not parliamentary!

Barde: (Enters in a rage swinging a ruler.) Where is that Jewish lout?

Hustenreiz: Help! Help! (Ducks into a urinal niche.)

Selters: (timidly) Please, no violence, Colleague Barde!

Speicherer: Calm down, gentlemen!

Barde: Step aside! (Hustenreiz escapes into a stall.) You cowardly wimp!

Krachhahn: (holding his belly with laughter) This is great! What's the matter, my dear Barde?

Barde: This son of a bitch is trying to insult our Fuhrer! This little piece of Kajetan Teutsch's crap!

Speicherer: Tell us!

Barde: The asshole said: certain gentlemen—and he meant Kajetan Teutsch—were less interested in the young weather lady's explanations than they were in her feminine charms.

Selters: That certainly is strong.

Krachhahn: Ha ha ha! That probably hit close to home!

Barde: The hysterical slut seems to be in with the left wingers. All of a sudden she shrieks, blows up like a rocket, and declares with chaste dignity that she wouldn't speak any more, until Herr Teutsch moved away from her. She said he had tried to grope her with his legs.

Krachhahn: This is terrific!

Barde: And that pinko headwaiter there tries to play all Goody Two-shoes and starts to make a speech about the impertinence of it all. I had him by the necktie in two seconds.

Speicherer: Broke up the meeting?

Barde: Sure. Everybody got into the brawl.

Niedermaier: What can we help you with, and who are you?

Trankhafen: I don't have any business with you. Where is Herr Engineer Niedermaier?

Niedermaier: That's me!

Trankhafen: You? But the esteemed gentlemen are already on the way here!

Niedermaier: By all means!

Trankhafen: But you surely won't receive them that way, dressed in your overalls?

Niedermaier: I've just come from the machine house. I expect that the gentlemen want to see my work and not my Sunday clothes.

Trankhafen: It won't make the best impression.

Peters: Won't you please tell us what you're looking for?

Trankhafen: I won't be talked to in that tone. What gives you the right to ask me questions?

Peters: I'm the soundings master in the tower.

Trankhafen: And I am a member of the state government, Ministerial Advisor Henriette Trankhafen from the Ministry of Law, Order, and Security.

Brunner: I thought she was a woman traffic cop.

Trankhafen: It was lucky I hurried on ahead to make sure everything was ready. No podium and not even a flag on the weather tower!

Niedermaier: The tower was built for meteorological purposes. We didn't even think about the need to put a flagpole on it.

Trankhafen: Couldn't we put a flag on the windmill up there?

Fischer: The windwheel? Do you want to stop the whole works? (The drums and pipes are audible once again.)

Trankhafen: It's time. Where should the speakers stand, then?

Annie: Couldn't they just stand on that hill over there? (Leads her to an elevated area in front of the windwheel.)

Trankhafen: That will work. (Climbs up, tests the area.) Honored guests of the festival! (The children laugh.) Foolish rascals, someone ought to teach you some manners!

Berta: I'd love to have her as a figure in my shooting gallery.

Hantke: Does the government require something else?

Trankhafen: I don't like those clouds. Can't that be changed?

Didn't you receive the telegram from Privy Councillor Stechbein, Herr Engineer?

Niedermaier: I certainly did.

Trankhafen: Wasn't a cloudless sky requested for the whole day?

Niedermaier: The wind blows and the rain falls where they must.

Trankhafen: What's that supposed to mean?

Niedermaier: At 12:07 it will start to drizzle.

Trankhafen: That's impossible! Please switch on the sun immediately, Herr Soundings-Chief! (Turns to the tower.)

Fischer: (Stands in front of the entrance.) You keep to politics. You don't understand anything about the weather.

Brunner: It's just barely 11:00. In one hour a couple of ministers and parliament deputies can talk their way into the people's pockets just fine.

Trankhafen: This is terrible! And no one has an umbrella! (Trudges toward the approaching music.)

Berta: Is the festival really going to be rained out?

Niedermaier: It'll just last an hour and a half; the tomato and cucumber farmers asked for it. When it's done there'll be dry west wind into the evening.

Hantke: That little shower won't hurt us.

Jenny: If it washes away the honored guests, then it'll really be a people's festival.

Wolff: It's just a shame that Fraulein Trankhafen ran away. I'd like to have seen her fidgeting around in that swing.

The procession enters. In the front is the youth choir, young men and women of the working class, dressed in their Sunday best. On the end of the first row is Ottilie Junglieb, dressed simply, with dark eyes and red hair. Dr. Trankhafen, running along next to the procession, is talking to her. The drum and fife corps follows; during the parade

Trankhafen: I'll let my party colleagues know what's going on. Since I'm a civil servant I have to keep myself out of the affair. But the center parties need to be informed as well. The Housewives' Party certainly won't sit still for this kind of prearrangement.

Möhre: That's exactly what I mean: surely no one will allow all openings to be shut off in such a time of distress.

Wachtel: (Comes in hurriedly.) I can't take any more of this excitement.

Trankhafen: There's Frau Wachtel of the Housewives' Party now.

Möhre: Have you heard, Frau Wachtel?

Wachtel: Yes. It's a scandal. How horrible—forgive me... (Tries to leave.)

Trankhafen: What are you talking about? What happened?

Wachtel: I think you know. The meeting of the commission is dissolved.

Trankhafen: Dissolved? What do you mean?

Wachtel: The Racialists broke it up. Yes, they did!

Möhre: Oh my God, and we missed it! But how did it happen? Don't run away.

Wachtel: Representative Hustenreiz and Herr Barde got into it—because of Herr Teutsch and the lady from the Weather Bureau...

Trankhafen: Of course. And she pulled Hustenreiz and Teutsch into her net.

Möhre: They're letting themselves be terribly misled.

Wachtel: My God, it's not as bad as that. But—you know—the ceremony at the weather tower—drafts are always hard on the digestive tract. (Rushes into a stall.)

Trankhafen: I never would have thought it possible of Hustenreiz! (Outside noise and shouting are heard approaching. Speicherer, Selters and Krachhahn come into the men's room.)

(men's room)

Krachhahn: What kind of murderous din is that?

set some guidelines that stipulate that the weather office be made subject to the leading economic indicators, without regard to humane and social slogans.

Selters: If we make sure that the supervisory board is made up exclusively of agents of our own parties, then we won't have to worry if the other positions are filled by the other parties.

Speicherer: Yes, then we'll have in our hands the full possibilities for exploiting the enterprise. Come, we can step back here and draft a secret agreement without being noticed, and then present it to our factions.

Selters: Of course, we must protect the forms of democracy.

Krachhahn: Well, if you really think that's important. (They disappear behind the wall.)

(women's room)

Trankhafen: (Appears.) Ah, you are here, my dear Frau Möhre.

Möhre: Yes indeed, but—psst!—I just happened to be witness to a very important political agreement.

Trankhafen: You don't mean it! Tell me!

Möhre: Don't you want to take care of necessary business first?

Trankhafen: No, I was already here in fact, I just wanted to check—tell me what you overheard.

Möhre: But shouldn't my Christian conscience forbid me from betraying it?

Trankhafen: I beg you, Frau Möhre—I can keep my mouth shut.

Möhre: The Intransigents want to bring a vote of no-confidence.

Trankhafen: What are you saying!?

Möhre: But that's nothing. The Industrial Party, the Landowners, and the Liberals are drafting a secret agreement next door that they alone will occupy all the seats on the supervisory board of the Weather Bureau. I heard it all quite clearly: Krachhahn, Speicherer, and Selters are writing the thing up even as we speak.

Trankhafen: Well, of course we need to lay some defensive mines.

Möhre: I really do think that the Christian Reform Party shouldn't be excluded from the profits.

their music overwhelms everything else. Then come the government and parliament members in a loose group. Minister Blödel walks next to the socialist delegate Hustenreiz, a thin schoolmaster. Privy Councillor Stechbein, a fifty-year-old man of the world, walks with the corpulent delegate Pastor Biederhold of the Church Party and then Frau Möhre of the Christian Reform Party, a pious woman dressed in an old-fashioned way, who tosses glances over to the government assessor, Dr. Hornbriller; he is gesticulating and waving his briefcase about as he speaks with the eighty-year-old village mayor, Schönbrod, whose wrinkled farmer's face remains absolutely unmoved. He simply makes clear from time to time with a shrug of his shoulders that he doesn't understand a single word. General von Stiefengrat in uniform is in a group with delegate Krachhahn of the Landowners' Party and delegate Barde of the Workers' Race Party. Another group is composed of the Liberal delegate, Selters, the Industrialist Speicherer, and Frau Wachtel of the Housewives' Party, a rather round woman who carries several pieces of cloth under her arm, which she wraps around her shoulders now and again as if she were chilly. Provincial Parliament President Krampf runs back and forth among the groups. At the end of the parade a club composed of petit bourgeois, civil servants, war veterans, etc., marches with a blue flag. The parade is accompanied by men and women from the village, some dressed in traditional costumes. A large group of villagers walk next to Schönbrod and Hornbriller and watch the village mayor intently. The parade wraps around the festival plaza. At a signal from the drum major the music stops. The honored guests are led by Trankhafen to a high spot of ground; the group becomes "king of the hill." The other members of the procession spread out in the background among the tents. Niedermaier goes into the tower with Peters and Fischer. The others stand in loose groups near the sausage stand. Steinbott gives them sausages. The windwheel has started to move rather quickly.

Trankhafen: (coming down the hill toward Otti, who stands to the left in front of the youth choir) I simply will not be able to tell the minister. He will be beside himself. You are, after all, Herr Niedermaier's assistant. Do you have such small influence that you couldn't have prevented this rain shower, which comes contrary to the express wishes of the government?

Otti: I consider the needs of the farmers more important than the festival.

Trankhafen: If the members of your choir lose the opportunity to perform before the leaders of our state, they will know whom to thank!

Otti: Annie!

Annie: (Comes running over.) Yes, Otti?

Otti: You're a worker in the weather works, and you sing and dance with the choir. Which do you like more?

Annie: They're both really nice.

Otti: Fraulein Trankhafen, the ministerial advisor, thinks that if you all don't get the chance to sing for the councillors and delegates today because of the rain, you'll be angry at Herr Niedermaier.

Annie: We don't need for the government to watch us if we want to have fun.

Otti: (to the choir) Do you all want me to ask Herr Niedermaier to forget about the weather calendar? The one we put together with the village and the collective? So that the government can watch you dance?

Everyone: No!

Otti: Then run around the festival plaza. If we're still wanted, I'll sound a signal.

Trankhafen: Well, here is finally something that's working properly.

Otti: That's certainly right.

Hornbriller: (Comes from the hill.) Pardon me, Doctor Trankhafen, I must point out that the honorees seem to

Speicherer: And of a lot of other sectors of the economy. Our whole customs and tax policy is being thwarted, and now we have to listen to their crazy rantings about humanity. They've taken huge storms and spread them out over large areas, and turned them into beneficial winds. Sounds good, doesn't it? Of course, the practical effect is that there is no longer any storm damage to houses, consequently a loss of jobs in the construction business. The worst damage happens to just the very industry that the people make a fuss about stimulating in the warm season. They create good weather for building, but at the same time they destroy the very reason for construction activity. That's nothing but a mockery of the working class, gentlemen.

Krachhahn: These fools are a danger to society.

Speicherer: There's more. The deep-sea fisheries are blessed with weather during the catching season that causes a glut of cheap fish on the market. The result?

Krachhahn: The cattle breeders go broke. (Steps forward.)

Speicherer: Never mind the fact that the manufacture of rain slickers goes to ruin because of stagnant sales. Or the young lady presented a statistic that proved that shipwrecks declined a tiny percentage point. Very noble, except that nobody is thinking about the insurance companies.

Selters: Very true.

Krachhahn: It's even crazier. There aren't any more hailstorms. Now the companies that insure against hailstorms are completely done for.

Selters: These really are bad side effects.

Krachhahn: It's really a catastrophe when it comes to setting prices. The grain silos are bursting at the seams. We have to simply let it sit there and rot if we don't want to sell it dirt-cheap.

Speicherer: It is time to show strength. We three, gentlemen, the representatives from industry, agriculture, and trade, have to

Speicherer: And Möhre is always behind Hornbriller.
Möhre: What vulgarity!
Selters: So who got lucky with that pretty girl?
Speicherer: I think the great racial renewer Kajetan Teutsch, is trying his best.
Krachhahn: But the girl doesn't seem to me to have a lot in common with our republic when it comes to one particular point.
Selters: What do you mean by that?
Krachhahn: Well, that she would fall for anyone who didn't spit in her eye.
Selters: Where does she stand politically?
Krachhahn: Well, there is where she looks a little more like the republic: black eyes, red hair, and a golden disposition.
Speicherer: And all the while pitifully dense about the things that matter.
Krachhahn: (Steps into a niche.) You mean the way they're kicking the weather works around up there. As well as she knows how to defend her own cause—if we let them mess around with the corporation much longer, then the agricultural economy will go to the devil.
Speicherer: You mean the whole economy. The damage is pretty serious already. And the weather service could quite easily be made into a very profitable enterprise.
Selters: The most important thing is to get good, healthy, business-oriented leadership in place.
Speicherer: Up to now the whole operation has been run absolutely childishly. They are only dealing with the weather needs of people who work outdoors. They're not asking the entrepreneurs who take risks with their capital, they're only asking the clueless workers.
Selters: You know, that really is naive. Still, they can point to their great harvests all over the country.
Krachhahn: Exactly: that will be the ruin of the agricultural economy.

be *peu à peu* indignant. The organization here is totally without direction. Just who is the *maitre de plaisir*? The senile village commandant manifests himself as a complete simpleton. His naive disinterest in the festivities is absolutely disastrous. And the celebrant himself found it inconvenient to participate in the honors.

Otti: Herr Niedermaier has work to do in the tower. For him duty always goes before manners.
Trankhafen: There's no need to lecture me, young woman. I myself am a socialist.
Otti: There he comes from the tower now. (Goes toward him.)
Hornbriller: What? That man in the relaxed *couture*? The one coming—so nonchalantly toward us?
Trankhafen: Yes indeed, the person in the yellow windbreaker. What do' you say to that?
Hornbriller: This sloppy individual, the representative of this miracle of our age! Unbelievable!
Trankhafen: She's coming here with him.
Hornbriller: *Tant mieux!*
Niedermaier: (while walking) Otti, if you've gotten the report from Iceland, then send along the last transmission to the Newfoundland station.
Otti: Do you have the new messages up there?
Trankhafen: He called her by her first name! Did you hear?
Hornbriller: Ostentatious and for the public. It is probably not relevant.
Trankhafen: But it's telling.
Niedermaier: East Frisia requests a southerly wind on account of the experiments with coconut production.
Otti: Did the Lofoten Islands get the word?
Niedermaier: I'm expecting the reports on the latest soundings in the Gulf Stream this week.

Hornbriller: Pardon me, sir, if I am breaking your train of thought. Could your interesting discussion continue after the dispatch of the pressing formalities? Government Assessor Hornbriller!

Niedermaier: Pleased to meet you. My name is Niedermaier. (quick handshake)

Trankhafen: The government assessor thought he should introduce you to the minister and the other ladies and gentlemen right away.

Niedermaier: Do you really need me personally to be there? Earlier the lady was complaining about my clothing.

Hornbriller: Oh, I'm sure everyone will generously tolerate the original idiosyncrasies of a genius.

Niedermaier: As far as the greetings are concerned, Herr Schönbrod is with the gentlemen. I'm sure that he can represent the village and the collective.

Otti: You'll have to go up yourself. Just let them introduce you. I'll keep everything in order.

Niedermaier: Well, yes, and Peters and Fischer are in the tower.

Trankhafen: It's getting late. We can't keep them waiting any longer.

Hornbriller: So, *sans phrase*, Herr Engineer. Allons! His Excellency von Stiefengrat insists on exact precision. And we mustn't leave the other illustrious personages waiting. That would almost be an affront.

Niedermaier: I'll count on you, Otti. (Goes with Hornbriller to the hill.)

Krampf: Who is that coming with the government assessor?

Stiefengrat: Probably a worker, to tell us something about our order for a change in the wind.

Möhre: A wonderful achievement, with the help of God!

Stechbein: A miracle of technology!

Selters: The human mind keeps creating more and more astounding things!

Speicherer: We are living in an age of culture and civilization.

the shareholders determine its political stance. But in a vital business of the state—to Steinbott—towel, please!

Paula enters the women's room.

(women's room)

Paula: Hi, Berta. I just got off work. I'll stay here with you for a little while.

Berta: Sit down, Paula.

Möhre: Aren't you the waitress from the dining room? Is Government Assessor Hornbriller there?

Paula: Only Privy Councillor Stechbein. He's sitting with the ministerial advisor in the wine area. I saw Herr Hornbriller go into the hall where the commission is meeting.

Möhre: Has Dr. Trankhafen been there long?

Paula: No, the Privy Councillor wanted to pay the bill.

Möhre: So, no one from my party, the Christian Reformers. Good. (Eavesdrops.)

(men's room)

Selters: By the way, what was your impression of that woman Herr Niedermeier sent us as his representative?

Speicherer: Pert little thing, eh? I noticed her that time at the tower.

Selters: Does she at least have better manners than that impossible engineer?

Speicherer: Cool as a cucumber. But the whole parliament is making eyes at her. (Krachhahn enters.)

Krachhahn: Of course, wherever you go it's the same conversation.

Speicherer: For the first time, a unanimous opinion in the parliament: we've never had anything here that looked as nice as she does.

Krachhahn: Only the women would vote against that. Trankhafen keeps right on tagging along behind Stechbein.

Widerborst: You'll see me on the floor! We are going to bring a vote of no-confidence! (Exits furiously.)
(women's room)

Möhre: That was the Intransigent Widerborst. But with whom was he speaking?

Berta: I don't know, I wasn't listening.

Möhre: Couldn't we find out?

Berta: Well, you'll have to get over to the gentlemen's side.

Möhre: The gentleman in question is probably still there. (Strains to eavesdrop. Speicherer enters the men's room, goes to the faucet.)

(men's room)

Speicherer: Ah, Herr Colleague Selters, any news?

Selters: (Comes forward.) I'm not a member of the commission.

Speicherer: I just heard the whole story. The Socialists want to make the main speeches, of course. Hustenreiz is counting it up like he always does: however many seats in the parliament, that many jobs in the Weather Bureau.

Selters: That is simply the rule of democracy.

Speicherer: Of course. But we can't let the whole economy go to the dogs because of that. Do you really want to let these people onto the board of supervisors, even if their past history as the opposition has made them independent from certain elements of the workers' movement?

Selters: Everything has its limits, to be sure. On the other hand they have adjusted their socialist theory to agree completely with the necessities of the existing economic order. They will approve what we need. So it would be very difficult to shut them out of the purely technical and administrative jobs.

Speicherer: In private enterprises the democratic process makes more sense. Take a newspaper, for example. The majority of

Blödel: It is an age of democracy.

Hustenreiz: And of a social upswing.

Krachhahn: Don't forget national interests!

Barde: And ethnic renewal.

Biederhold: Amen!

Hornbriller: (Remains standing with Niedermaier below the hill.)

Herr Minister, Herr Provincial President, honored delegates, ladies and gentlemen! I finally succeeded in locating the ingenious constructor of this atmospherological institute. Please allow me to introduce Herr Engineer Niedermaier!

Niedermaier: Good day. (general perplexity, knowing glances)

Krampf: (Goes over to him, the others follow hesitantly. The rest of the scene takes place mid-stage. Otti, the owners of the booths, and the workers withdraw to the booths in the background.) According to parliamentary procedure I welcome you into our midst. We understand that the customs of ceremonies, such as this one to which the parties of the provincial parliament have sent their representatives, are somewhat unfamiliar to you.

Möhre: But that doesn't really matter.

Niedermaier: Ah, I see, my clothes. The weather works don't permit me any holidays.

Selters: Nevertheless we are happy to meet you.

Blödel: Of course, very happy.

Stechbein: Extraordinarily so!

Speicherer: Certainly. But perhaps one of my more popularly oriented colleagues would like to take over my assignment of greeting the gentleman on behalf of the parliament.

Krachhahn: Whom do we have here who could do that?

Stiefengrat: In such a situation Herr Delegate Hustenreiz would probably be the right man.

Barde: Quite right!

Krampf: Hearing no objection, may I ask you, Herr Delegate, to consider yourself the representative of the provincial parliament?

Hustenreiz: I'd be honored. Although I am totally unprepared, Herr Engineer, I nevertheless gladly accept the task of offering you greetings and congratulations on behalf of the legislative bodies of our home and fatherland. I myself, having been elected to parliament with the confidence of the working class, and sent here today by the Socialist faction of that body as its representative, believe it is all the more appropriate that I should convey to you, on this day on which we commemorate the fifth anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of your revolutionary cultural achievement, the thanks and acknowledgment of all the electorate. The high esteem in which the government of our republican state holds your achievements was shown one year ago, when it granted you, at the suggestion of the board of trustees of the amalgamated labor unions, and in spite of the lack of a prototype, the honorary title of Certified Engineer, exempted from the qualifying examination. You, who placed in human hands the reins by which clouds, wind, and waves are steered, you stand here today in modest work garments before the highest representatives of our nation. The minister for law, order, and security came here himself, and with him, under the leadership of the president, the delegates of the provincial parliament (Stiefengrat coughs and rattles his sabre.) comes as well one of the leading commanders of our national army, who also insisted on being at these festivities. Even though you thought only of the interests of your working comrades and relegated the role of welcoming delegation to this elderly gentleman here, nevertheless the government-composed as it is of parties of differing ideologies (and even we Socialists are represented in the coalition)-believes enough in socialism not to bear you ill will. Labor is still an honorable thing, even

Widerborst: But she's got a sharp tongue. You should have seen the way she took on General Stiefengrat!

Selters: You don't mean it!

Widerborst: Of course, he'd like to make the Weather Bureau into a barracks-yard, where he could have the clouds march a close-order drill.

Selters: Well, Herr Colleague Widerborst, as a left-liberal I too would rather not give the military an excess of state power. On the other hand we must never lose sight of the necessity of defending our country.

Widerborst: We Intransigents will not approve a single man nor a single penny for this Weather Bureau.

Selters: The creation of the Bureau is assured in any event, thanks to the agreement of the Socialists and the Workers' Race Party. The only difficulties concern the administration of it.

Widerborst: Your treason won't do these so-called workers' parties any good. Naturally when these new offices are distributed we demand our just share according to our numerical strength.

(In the women's room) *Frau Möhre leaves the stall, but she remains standing in place when she hears Widerborst's strong voice, and she keeps listening.*

Selters: As important as I consider the principle of proportional democracy in our republic, I do believe that the needs of the state absolutely have to be considered when distributing such important jobs.

Widerborst: I see! So this is what the finance capitalists plan to do: to place us, the only true representatives of the working people, under the control of your own machinations! Well, we will rip the mask from the face of the ruling class. Under the leadership of the Intransigent Party...

Selters: But my dear colleague, this is neither the time nor the place for such an impassioned expression.

Trankhafen: So if you know who the young lady is-have you perhaps seen whether she has met with Herr Privy Councillor Stechbein out there somewhere?

Berta: I haven't seen her with anybody. And that's not really my business. I would think you would know about that yourself.

Trankhafen: You're being discreet. I understand. Still-if you should notice something-here's fifty pfennigs. (Exits.)

(men's room)

Barde: Here's one mark, my dear fellow. I'd really love to know who the red-haired weather vixen has been flirting with. You've surely seen her by now?

Steinbott: But not with any of the gentlemen.

Barde: I suspect certain leftist characters. You can maybe give me a little wave.

Selters: (Enters, stands in one of the urinal stalls.) The plenary session will begin soon, Herr Colleague Barde.

Barde: If the weather commission isn't finished on time, Krampf will probably start later.

Selters: I doubt that the commission will come to an agreement on the bill today.

Barde: Doesn't matter to me. (to Steinbott) Here, save this soap for me. Who knows which comrades will stick their paws all over it.

Off: Frau Möhre goes into a stall on the left side.

Widerborst: (Delegate of the Intransigents, stands at a urinal next to Selters.) The government won't have any luck with that bill.

Selters: Will the commission be at it much longer? You're a member of it.

Widerborst: The gentlemen can't bear to part from the pretty expert witness.

Selters: Yes, I saw her, quite a pretty little thing.

if it sometimes gives shortshrift to tact. Yes, apart from all that, Minister Dr. Blödel intends today to present a special surprise...

Krampf: I beg you, Herr Colleague Hustenreiz, not to anticipate the official government ceremony. Your task is simply to express to our honoree the greetings of the honored guests. You have really done this already in your statement, to the satisfaction of us all, so perhaps you could conclude your remarks and allow the ceremony to continue without delay.

Stechbein: How true!

Hustenreiz: Therefore I express to you, honored Herr Engineer, once again the highest satisfaction of the high house of parliament as well as of the highest reaches of the government with the high achievements you have enabled through your high art of regulating the weather. I ask you to give me your callused hand as a sign of your close and insoluble solidarity with the state and its people.

Krampf: The handshake has taken place. I confirm that. Herr Government Assessor Dr. Hornbriller will now be kind enough to tell us the order of events on the festival program.

Hornbriller: The constitutive committee, over which I have presided, has sketched out the following provisional disposition. In order for it to proceed exactly, a brisk tempo will of course be *conditio sine qua non*. At the moment it is... (Strains to look at the weathervane.) The construction of the chronometer there is strange to me—

Niedermaier: That is a weathervane. It is now 11:13.

Hornbriller: *Merçi*. The prelude of the program will consist of a report by Privy Councillor Dr. Stechbein on the civilizational and cultural mission of the atmospherological institute. Next Delegates Selters and Speicherer, as members of parliament, will discuss the consequences of a possible nationalization of this meteorological establishment for the state treasury, as well as the outlook for commercial or financial implications for private economic interests. Then there will be a patriotic appeal by his

Excellency, the delegate of the military ministry, General von Stiefengrat. At the climax of the rhetorical program the head of the institute, our honoree, will himself give some information about the functional premises of this atmospherological phenomenon.

Niedermaier: I can't do that.

Hornbriller: You only need to give a very vulgar explanation of the way it really works.

Niedermaier: I'm not a public speaker.

Hornbriller: *Ultra posse nemo obligatur.* No one will worry about your oratorical experience; perhaps you can act as a docent later on when we all inspect the mechanical and administrative operation of the institute and the laboratory; we can't pass up the chance to hear from the preordained inventor and organizer of this revolution of the cosmos. After that we will see a presentation of the choreographic and vocal talents of the local youth choir under the direction of Herr Engineer's assistant, Made-moiselle Ottilie Jungleib, and as a finale of this opulent program, last but not least, the government's statement that Minister Blödel will proclaim *urbi et orbi*, and that will culminate in the initiative of the government whereby the institution will be placed under the protectorate of the republic. A statement of allegiance will come at the end. We have automobiles ready for the return trip, and an extra train will also be waiting at the station.

Krampf: I would like to thank Herr Government Assessor Dr. Hornbriller for the very edifying explanation of the day's agenda. Does anyone wish to propose any additions or supplements to the program?

Biederhold: In the event that any participants in the festival should wish to take this opportunity to offer a prayer for the blessing of the Almighty on the further work of the government, there will be a devotional service behind the sausage tent immediately after the viewing of the institute.

Berta: I only know the ladies in the parliament, the secretaries of the parties, and the ones from the office.

Trankhafen: Well, then, you must have noticed a new face.

Berta: Do you mean the blonde typist that the Intransigent Party hired?

Trankhafen: No, Fraulein Jungleib has red hair.

Berta: Oh, her. I thought maybe she was an artist and maybe somebody's girlfriend.

Trankhafen: Ah, is that what you thought? No, she is being called as an expert witness.

Berta: Is that possible? But she was so nice, I thought she was one of us, or worked in the theater.

Trankhafen: Just as I thought, she's buddying up to the whole world. (Works with lipstick.)

(men's room)

Barde: Say there, my good man, you probably hear and see all kinds of things here in the hallways and stairways, eh?

Steinbott: Whatever I catch in the course of my work.

Barde: Well then, not bad. I mean-well, so to speak, unofficial communications between certain gentlemen and ladies-that is-you might say-of a non-political nature.

Steinbott: Delegates are people too.

Barde: Could you maybe tell a couple of your observations, hmm?

Steinbott: That's not part of my duties, Herr Delegate.

Barde: I'm not asking just out of curiosity, man.—Comb!

Steinbott: Here you are.

Barde: Was it well cleaned?

Steinbott: With spirits of ammonia. Apart from you it's really only used by Herr Government Assessor Hornbriller.

Barde: All right. (Combs his hair.)

(women's room)

Act II

Restrooms of the provincial parliament. On the left the ladies' room, on the right, the men's. In both sections we see stall doors, and next to the entrances the sinks, soap, and paper towels. In the men's room, the urinals are built so that the user's head can be seen over the privacy wall. The wall between the two restrooms reaches to about four steps from the edge of the stage. The foreground is occupied by a hall-like room that serves as the waiting room for the parliament staff. This room is indicated by a rear wall, covered with wallpaper and decorated, which covers only a small area in the middle. It is connected to the wings with special entrances on the left and right. In the scenes that take place here, the lighting is used to suggest the impression of a room that is separated from the background. The furniture in this room is also merely suggested by a couple of chairs.

On the left Dr. Trankhafen is washing her hands. Behind her stands Berta with a towel. On the right Barde is washing his hands, behind him stands Steinbott with a towel.

(in the men's room)

Barde: Soap!

Steinbott: Isn't there any there?

Barde: Give me another piece. Who knows who's used that one?

Steinbott: Only delegates. Here you go.

(in the women's room)

Trankhafen: Have you seen Fraulein Jungleib here today yet?

Berta: Is she in the parliament?

Trankhafen: She's been taking part in the commission hearings on the Weather Bureau for the past few days.

Krachhahn: Well, naturally, no decent person will want to miss such a chance to get his soul cleansed. But when we get to the tour of the installation there in the tower, could I ask you, Herr Director, to perhaps set up a short thunderstorm?

Niedermaier: That's not possible in just a few minutes.

Barde: Well, hell's bells, man, why didn't you prepare something like that in advance? We want to see how this magic works!

Stiefengrat: The army is most of all interested in learning whether it is possible, and how long it will take, in an emergency determined by the supreme command, for an earthquake or flash flood to be delivered on demand.

Niedermaier: The purpose of my work has never been anything other than this: to artificially help relieve the economic damage to farm communities and cities caused by unfavorable weather.

Speicherer: Well then, the actual benefits of this operation haven't even begun yet.

Wachtel: I have a request for the weather man. It is quite drafty here. Could that fan up there be turned off?

Niedermaier: That is a wind wheel. It's used for generating electricity for the weather tower.

Wachtel: Oh, I see. But couldn't you let a little bit of sunshine through? You know, I have a very sensitive stomach.

Hustenreiz: Probably our host is planning a sudden surprise. That cloud that is darkening the sky just now will be disappearing soon with the movement of a single switch.

Niedermaier: You misunderstand the purpose...

Trankhafen: (stepping forward suddenly) What are you all waiting for? The rain will be here in a half hour!

Blödel: Rain? What rain?

Trankhafen: You mean you still don't know? Herr Niedermaier and his Fraulein Jungleib have decided in their infinite wisdom to allow the dedication of the weather tower to be rained out, in spite of an advance telegram ordering sunshine. I will withhold my own judgment of the whole proceeding.

Krampf: On behalf of the council of elders of the provincial parliament, I must ask you, Herr Engineer, is this true?

Niedermaier: We can't change the arrangements we already made with the farmers.

Krachhahn: Unbelievable!

Barde: This is nutty!

Stechbein: Therefore we are not even going to consider the planned agenda of the program?

Möhre: This is terrible.

Hornbriller: An apparent sabotage of all our plans.

Selters: Absolutely unbelievable!

Hustenreiz: Herr Niedermaier, shame on you!

Wachtel: Now the draft is really getting terrible. And you made it happen on purpose? Bah!

Speicherer: Everything seems to have gone wrong here.

Krampf: So you place the selfish interests of a few farmers above the will of the people? Because, as you know, the government and the parliament are the representatives of the people's will.

Niedermaier: As long as I am making decisions on behalf of my assistants and the collective of farmers and workers...

Krachhahn: It's high time that we put an end to that.

Stechbein: It certainly seems that the powers of state will be called upon to preserve the law.

Möhre: I don't understand. What's happening now?

Biederhold: I suggest that we leave this place immediately after we bow our heads for a silent prayer.

Trankhafen: We shouldn't expose ourselves to this weather, simply in order to preserve our dignity.

Wachtel: And also in order not to catch cold. If a person has stomach problems...

Blödel: On the other hand, we have to carry out the orders of the ministerial council. I absolutely must fulfill my official duty.

Hornbriller: A fatal situation.

Hustenreiz: Point of order!

The young sprout strives toward the sun.

Sweep clean his way, destroyer storm!

When death comes, then is life begun.

Cloudbursts and the glowing sun,

Rime and frost and earthquakes too,

Thunderation, all the weather

Kills and creates life anew.

(dance)

Peters: Well, I think I'll go into the tower. The sky will be clear this afternoon.

Otti: I'll come too. I need to get the radio report from the Iceland station.

Jenny: But you all come back soon.

Niedermaier: Yes, today we're celebrating. Not for the big shots, for the people!

Paula: Beer! Beer!

Wolff: Step right up to the swing-boat! Step right up!

Berta: Rifle shooting, target shooting! Hit the target!

Steinbott: Warm sausages!

Festival, carnival activities. The swing-boat is swinging, a carousel is turning. Vendors sell balloons, peacock feathers, etc. Music from an organ grinder.

Schönbrod: I'd like to see the Weather Bureau do that!

CURTAIN

Otti: Do you want to? What'll it be?

Annie: "Thunderation!"

Otti: Okay, everyone get in place. (The choir and the musicians take their places.)

Steinbott: Here comes Paula with the beer. The sausages are still warm.

Niedermaier: I'd like a glass, Fraulein Paula. So, have the fine ladies and gentlemen left?

Paula: Most of them are still sitting in their cars. They think a great flood's coming.

Hantke: Now let's go ahead with our program.

Brunner: The puppet theater is over.

Schönbrod: Be quiet, now, Otти's choir is all ready.

Otti: (Gives the signal, the music begins, the choir begins to sway with the music and sings.)

The passions in the human breast,
No one could ever keep apart.
Both joy and pain dwell in one nest,
Hate blazes in a loving heart.
Flood waters mix with the ebbside.
Gray ashes hide gold dust from view.
In the same bed of clouds abide
The snow, the hail, and morning's dew.
Disaster streams forth from the sun,
Compassion from the lightning's blaze
Thunderation, all the weather
Dwells in Heaven's realm always. /

//

The ones who fear life's colors bright
Dread also every life's demise.
Destruction brings new life to light
And something's born when something dies.
The dead branch nourishes the worm

Krampf: Point of order, Herr Hustenreiz.

Hustenreiz: In view of the very regrettable turn of events threatening the ceremony, and also in view of the suggestion, presented by Deputy Rev. Biederhold and supported by Ministerial Advisor Dr. Trankhafen and the representative of the Housewives' Party, Deputy Wachtel, to terminate the festivities without further ado, but also bearing in mind the objection against this course of action raised by the minister himself, may I be allowed to make the following suggestion, which I put in the form of a motion: that the president of the provincial parliament call a recess in these present discussions, so that the day's agenda might be further discussed in confidential session and the continuation of the discussion be considered for the time remaining until the precipitation arranged by Herr Niedermaier is fully implemented.

Krampf: Is there any objection? Herr Government Assessor, if you please!

Hornbriller: In order to complement the explications of Delegate Hustenreiz, but not to polemicize against them, I appeal to your political intelligence to eliminate any further complications *a priori*. We are under the auspices of a *force majeure*. This unqualified attack against the sovereignty of the government counterails every intention of the program committee. If you accept the proposition of Herr Hustenreiz, you must also insist on implicit guarantees that make new complications *côte que côte* impossible. In affairs such as this present one there is the latent danger that temperaments might explode during the course of the discussion. The debate on the res agenda allows for a pessimistic *prognosis sub specie* of the rather disloyal methods of Engineer Niedermaier. We must therefore guarantee that the discussions of the conference committee be handled discreetly. As precarious as it might be to motivate such a resolution, for the sake of our reputation I find it inappropriate to concede any participation of the honoree in the committee session. The in-

ternal character and relative danger of making public the committee's proceedings forces me to suggest the following proposition: the special conference shall make clear that, due to the explosivity of the discussions, functionaries of the atmospheric institute not be allowed to participate in the discussions. I would like to substitute a formal vote as an amendment to the motion of Herr Hustenreiz.

Speicherer: Very reasonable.

Barde: That's right. Well spoken, Herr Hornbriller.

Stechbein: Any further discussions may be dispensed with, in view of the cogent arguments of the two previous speakers. Let us empower the president by proclamation to proceed according to the motion.

Biederhold: Agreed.

Krampf: Hearing no objection, so ordered. It is now my democratic duty to ask Herr Niedermaier whether he wishes to make a statement on this matter.

Stiefengrat: That really shows an excess of patience.

Niedermaier: Please don't worry that I will try to force my opinions on you. I simply want to give an explanation.

Selters: Hear, hear.

Niedermaier: This commemorative ceremony was neither planned by us who work in the weather works, nor were we asked about it. Today's rainfall was agreed on by the communal representatives of this village at the request of the Tomato and Cucumber Growers' Association. If we had only been asked, we would have told the people who organized this event which day might be the best for their plans. It's not my fault that you didn't do that. The weather tower and everything attached to it belongs to a collective of farmers and workers who have placed their trust in me, that I would use this equipment-equipment that I designed and built-for the service of the community. I can't consider requests for sunny days that come from outside the collective or from somebody in the government. I am only

Blödel: My pleasure. You know, Herr Assessor, I believe the drizzle is light enough that we can do without the umbrella. By the time this fellow makes it rain hard, we will be inside. (Goes off with Krampf.)

Hornbriller: (Closes the umbrella.) *Voilà*, it is quite passable. I will return the *paraplui* to the young mamsell in the restaurant, *en passant*.

Stechbein: What do you think of this performance by the engineer on the day of his own commemorative ceremony?

Trankhafen: It is the pinnacle of ingratitude. In the very same moment that the government showers him with praise.

Stiefengrat: We need to make this guy harmless.

Hornbriller: *A tou prix*; until we do, this enterprise won't be able to turn a profit. (Stechbein goes off with Trankhafen, Hornbriller follows them.)

Stiefengrat: (loudly in the crowd) Cheers for the defense of our fatherland! Hurrah! (laughter)

Biederhold: May God protect it and give this work into the hands of enlightened people who don't mock it. (Off with Stiefengrat.)

Schönbrod: Let's hear it for our weather tower, our collective, our village! (Everyone cheers.)

Annie: Is the weather still going to get bad?

Otti: No worse than it is now. We don't need to run away from it.

Hantke: Didn't you say that the rain was going to get heavier?

Niedermaier: That was just to scare our honored guests away. If I hadn't they might have given out even more honors!

Fischer: Let's have fun today. As soon as the weather office is in place the fun will be over.

Brunner: They'll try to put a leash on the sun and turn it into a guard dog.

Berta: Don't worry. Who wants to take some shots at my shooting gallery?

Wolff: Who wants to ride in the swing-boat?

Jenny: First let's let the youth choir sing something.

Niedermaier: Since I will be the director of the works for the time being—

Fischer: Forever!

Niedermaier: I promise that all decisions will be made according to social necessity, as they have been up to now. Never without the agreement of the community, because the community is the collective, and the collective, that's the weather works. Everybody who works at the tower works here with enthusiasm for our cause, even though the collective—that's all of us ourselves—even though it's poor and can't pay any of us enough for our hard, tiring work. But no one among us wants any more than anyone else. But we are glad to put up with a bit of want and poverty for the sake of the future, for the future of those who might have to put up with want and poverty. Now they say that our tower should somehow become a state enterprise, something none of us has ever asked for. Well, all right, then let the Weather Bureau begin its work by ensuring that all laborers and employees receive a sufficient wage.

Hornbriller: Arrogance run amok.

Niedermaier: One more thing, friends. I have been recognized by having a title bestowed on me. I expect you all to keep calling me by my own real name. Instead of some plaque on the tower we would have been better off with warm foot mats in the tower for the workers. Let's hope that the most dangerous parts of the state's intervention in the people's business can be held at bay through our own solidarity. Let us be united: we won't give up the ground we have gained with our own collective labor. We will defend it, if need be, with our bodies. (Thunderous applause. Niedermaier is carried down from the hill and almost crushed by the teenagers.)

Blödel: That really is enough. I don't wish to be a witness to such a spectacle a moment longer.

Krampf: They don't even know the first thing about parliamentary procedure. May I join you, Herr Minister?

asking that you rework your new program for today just like the one before, but without my participation. Since my friend, Village Mayor Schönbrod, who is also chair of the weather collective, will surely be included in your discussions, I'm sure the concerns of the weather works and of the village will be well represented.

Trankhafen: And this is the way a man speaks whose name should one day appear in school books!

Möhre: God help us!

Blödel: His tone seemed quite inappropriate to me.

Krampf: I don't suppose there is any objection to having the mayor participate?

Schönbrod: Oh yes there is. I wouldn't have any idea what I have to toss into your little convocation, or whatever you call it. Out here in the country we'd call it a club. I am over eighty years old, and so you can listen to me when I say this: since we've had this tower standing here, our farmers have had good harvests every year. And the workers have plenty to do, and so we're happy with it. In the last two years we haven't asked the government for one red penny for our village, and for that the government charges us taxes and payments and such. And I'll tell you this, you important ladies and gentlemen, if you don't want to do anything here except get everybody worked up and mess up the way the weather tower works, then you should have just stayed home.

Stiefengrat: Unbelievable!

Schönbrod: Out here, we make our own decisions. You can see that for yourself. And we—I'm talking about the collective and the village—we are all behind our friend Niedermaier and Otti and Peters the soundings man and everybody who works in the tower. They know what we need for our farmers and workers. And you all don't, and anybody can see that.

Speicherer: This really is a delicate situation here.

Selters: It looks as though they don't even have a real board of directors here!

Stechbein: The government will have to deal with this.

Speicherer: Tell me, Herr Mayor, what sort of dividends is your weather collective paying?

Schönbrod: I don't know anything about that.

Niedermaier: The basic idea of the collective is that everything the tower produces is used for the good of the workers themselves.

Selters: That's nothing but anarchy.

Krachhahn: Someone needs to clean house around here.

Hustenreiz: We are not going to put great weight on your comments, Herr Schönbrod. You are an old man. In other circumstances a speech like yours in front of the leaders of the state and the authorities would not be permitted.

Schönbrod: Makes no difference to me.

Hornbriller: *Charmant, à la bonheur.* So I take it you have no respect for authority and matters of state?

Schönbrod: Those things don't matter to me at all. I'm just concerned with the village and the collective. And what happens to them is no concern of yours.

Stiefengrat: And with rabble-rousers like this out in the provinces we are supposed to win the next war...

Biederhold: May the Almighty lead the blind in the path to humility.

Möhre: If it's not already too late.

Trankhafen: We will stand here wasting time with this old man until the cloudburst washes us all away.

Blödel: First I absolutely have to carry out the mission of the government.

Wachtel: And the wind is getting nastier.

Krampf: Where can we retire to around here?

Schönbrod: Why don't you just step behind one of the booths? That's what we do.

Krampf: I mean, where can our meeting take place undisturbed?

Hornbriller: *Roma locuta, causa finita.*

Blödel: Come along, Dr. Trankhafen, the umbrella will keep us both dry.

Schönbrod: Just you all stay put for a minute. If Herr Niedermaier has something to say, then he has a good reason.

Stiefengrat: How much longer must we put up with this insolence. About face, forward march!

Peters: (in a mighty voice) STOP! Stand right where you are! It's time for the working class to speak! (absolute silence)

Niedermaier: I am duty bound to say thanks to the government. The minister had words of praise for me, but forgot to offer words of praise to my co-workers and helpers. This should have been extended to the collective, to the community, above all to our old and young village mayor, Herr Schönbrod. I hereby correct that omission. Without the selfless support of everyone who has joined with me in a common goal I would have received no help at all from the sun and the moon, the earth and the seas. I would not have been able to regulate the weather for the needs of the working people. I also thank the youth choir for providing the joy without which real achievement cannot flourish. The government has stated its intention to separate the tower area from the rest of the village.

Schönbrod: Never!

Niedermaier: The town and the weather works were, are, and will remain connected. We will see to that, those of us who laid the cornerstone here five years ago, we who live here, not the state! The works belong to the village and will stay with the village, come what may! (great applause)

Stechbein: That is strong language.

Trankhafen: It is a declaration of war against the democratic state.

Otti: It's an oath of loyalty by our good comrade!

Schönbrod: That's right, girl.

unwavering friendly, courteous, tactful, and modest attitude displayed by the weather collective in its dealings with the government, as well as the exemplary good behavior of its employees and of the entire population, the government shall install at the Weatherspring Tower a plaque to commemorate the name Niedermaier and to remind our children and our children's children of this jubilee day, during which the government and the people, in mutual admiration and unblemished harmony, gathered to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone in glorious sunshine"—please hold the umbrella up a bit, Herr Government Assessor, the proclamation is getting soggy.

Hornbriller: *Pardon!*

Blödel: "F) In recognition of his loyalty to the state, Herr Engineer Niedermaier shall receive the title Weather Councillor."

Niedermaier: That's all I need!

Blödel: "Implementation of points (A) through (F) shall be undertaken by the appropriate ministries. Long live the fatherland! Signed: State President Wimmerzahn, Ministerial Councillors Blödel, Trostreich, Klirrschwert, Schiebling, Schwamm, Funzelmann." Subsequent to the proclamation I am obliged to convey the best wishes of the entire populace and to hand you, Herr Niedermaier, the proclamation document. Here. And to express the warmest wishes of the state government by extending you my hand. May I, Herr Weather Councillor? (Proffers his fingertips, then pulls them back quickly.) Which I have now done, (laughter and noise)

Krampf: We have reached the end of the agenda. I hereby adjourn the meeting.

Niedermaier: Wait, just a minute, please.

Stechbein: We have nothing more to do here.

Trankhafen: We are leaving now, just as you wanted.

Biederhold: We will also have the prayer service in a more worthy setting.

Niedermaier: The beer tent is over their behind the wind wheel. No one will bother you there.

Krampf: Then may I ask that the ladies and gentlemen follow me over to the beer tent.

Krachhahn: Finally a break in the clouds. »

Selters: Perhaps you should come with us, Herr Mayor.

Stechbein: We can excuse your inappropriate remarks on account of your white hair.

Schönbrod: I'll stay wherever Niedermaier stays.

Trankhafen: You will regret your obstinacy.

Schönbrod: Maybe so.

Government representatives and parliamentarians begin to move.

Wachtel: So where is this tent? Ah, there it is, thank God! (Hurries out.)

Schönbrod and Niedermaier come down to the foreground and simultaneously break into loud laughter. The others disappear into the background. At the back of the group Hornbriller follows with Frau Möhre, and then after a bit Stechbein with Trankhafen.

Trankhafen: (loudly) Look, Herr Privy Councillor, they dare to still mock us! (quietly) Theodore!

Stechbein: (loudly) Someone needs to do something about that, (quietly) Henriette!

Möhre: (loudly) I never would have believed that the people out here in the country were so corrupted! (quietly) Norbert!

Hornbriller: (loudly) Their obstreperousness will be answered with repression, (quietly) *Malvine!*

He follows the others, patting Möhre on the rear end.

Niedermaier: (Puts his hand to his mouth and calls out behind the swing-boat.) Otti! Otti!

Otti: (off) Hello! What's up?

Niedermaier: Come over here.

Otti: (Comes forward.) Is nobody here? Where did they all go?

Niedermaier: The whole government is sitting in Paula's beer tent.

Otti: How crazy!

Niedermaier: I wasn't allowed to go, because I didn't behave myself.

Schönbrod: And I turned my back on them.

Otti: What's that mean?

Niedermaier: Trankhafen scared them into thinking their beautiful ceremony would get rained out.

Otti: But it's just going to drizzle for a little while.

Niedermaier: I wouldn't tell them that. They wanted to spoil our whole day. Now they're putting together a new program that can still be rattled off in good weather.

Otti: Well, they better hurry.

Niedermaier: The minister is feeling pressure from the government decree. Otherwise they would have gone home complaining. Now they'll probably cut the bowing and scraping to me out of the program. All the better.

Otti: So I don't need to bring in my choir to sing for them?

Schönbrod: They wouldn't appreciate it anyway. This is too nice a thing for them, letting the poor people and children be a part of things.

Otti: What a revolting bunch! After the reception down there the dignitaries from all the parties and ministries tried to seduce me. The more patriotic they were, the worse it was.

Niedermaier: I'd really like to hear how Hornbriller makes love to someone. That guy spits out his foreign words as if he were drunk.

Otti: And these characters are our government.

Schönbrod: They don't have anything else to do the whole blessed day.

has *ipso facto* become a fiasco. His Excellency's impulsive intuition can therefore not be rejected *brevi manu ad acta*. I do not wish to prejudice the minister's vote. Nevertheless, I do not believe that the premises of the ministerial *manifesto* are any longer extant. If we therefore no longer allow the reputation of the state authorities to be discredited by these tumultuous excesses and atmospheric depression, and if we abandon our mission under protest, instead of letting ourselves be criticized *ad infinitum*, then the government should be tolerant enough to concede to us an indemnification from this orgy of provocation *postfestum sans phrase*.

Blödel: No, that won't do. I must agree with the unanimous resolution of the cabinet, by all means.

Trankhafen: Then there is nothing left but to see this to the bitter end. But couldn't the rain at least be delayed a bit now? Just until the minister has fulfilled his duty?

Niedermaier: If the government declaration doesn't last much longer then you won't get too wet. But of course in about fifteen minutes the heavier rain will start.

Wolff: The best thing would be a good hailstorm to chase 'em out of here.

Stechbein: So I take it that you are powerless to bring this mob under control?

Niedermaier: This isn't a mob. These are my friends. I am not going to demand anything from them.

Stiefengrat: What impudence!

Krampf: The debate on procedure is now closed. I would ask that the minister please continue with the agenda.

Blödel: My guiding principle is: fulfill your duty to the end! (Reads.) "D) In view of Herr Engineer Niedermaier's fulfillment of his duty to the end, the directorship of the weather works shall remain entrusted to him until further notice; E) as a confirmation of its unequivocal satisfaction with the achievements of the weather tower and as a sign of its recognition of the

community by means of its detachment from the neighboring village, to which it previously belonged.”

Schönbrod: (with a start) What?! What’s that? Detachment from the neighboring village? The devil you say!

Krampf: I will ask the gentleman to refrain from interrupting the minister.

Schönbrod: This is downright meanness. I’m not standing up here a minute longer! (Walks down the hill and stands next to Otti.)

Steinbott: It would be nicer if the works stayed with the village.

Peters: We won’t let ourselves be torn-off from the village.

Jenny: Just let them try!

Wolff: We won’t let you touch our tower! (general uproar)

Krampf: You mustn’t disturb the minister in the middle of a state ceremony.

Hantke: You are the disturbers of the peace!

Stechbein: This noise is unbearable.

Trankhafen: (to Niedermaier) Why don’t you do something!

Niedermaier: Leave me out of it.

Biederhold: (to the crowd) Whoever doesn’t obey the authorities will be judged by the authorities, (loud noise)

Berta: You all get out of here! The authorities don’t have any business here!

Stiefengrat: I suggest that we leave this rabble alone and leave the rest to the police.

Krampf: Do you wish to speak to the suggestion of Herr General Stiefengrat, Herr Hornbriller?

Brunner: Listen, the clown is playing the role of a trained bird. (It becomes quiet.)

Hornbriller: Without allowing myself to become irritated by invective, I will go directly *in medias res*. The turbulent scenes during the official proclamation of our government’s mandate sabotaged also our modified program. In the meantime, *Jupiter pluvius* has also intervened, and this means that the ceremony

Niedermaier: As long as they keep their hands off our weather works. I’m more scared of this bunch protecting us than I am of the plague.

Schönbrod: Well what are they going to smell if they stick their noses where they don’t belong?

Niedermaier: Didn’t you understand what those questions about the board of directors and dividends meant? They want to make laws for the weather works so the stock exchange can speculate on barometric readings instead of on nerve gas.

Schönbrod: Well, they’ll have to deal with the village on that.

Annie: (Comes forward hesitantly, behind her other young people.) Otti, what’s going on with the choir? Should we go into the village and come back in the afternoon? If the visitors are gone? I don’t see anybody here.

Otti: They’ll be back. So, what do we do now?

Niedermaier: Go ahead and start!

Otti: But they could be back any minute.

Niedermaier: Don’t worry about that. If they’re going to have their program without us, we’ll have ours without them.

Otti: You’re right. I’ll have the choir come over. Come on, Annie.

Annie: Great! (Otti goes quickly off with the teenagers.)

Schönbrod: Give them something to look at.

Niedermaier: By the time they’re finished with their meeting everything will be over, maybe even the rain. If that happens we’ll have them on our backs the whole day.

Schönbrod: Know what I think? I think you ought to speak, even if they don’t want you to anymore.

Niedermaier: What grand things could I say to them? That kind of person just wants to hear himself talk, and tries to sound like he knows everything, even when he doesn’t know anything. I can explain to any simple person how the operation works, but not to people whose only concern is: how can they all cheat the people without cheating themselves at the same time?

Schönbrod: Ah, don't worry about it. Your tower isn't easy for anybody to understand.

Niedermaier: Of course not. In order to understand how this machine can influence airstreams by long distance, you have to know something about physics, geography, and astronomy. But do you think that a single one of those lawmakers has more of a clue than you do? Or than any milkmaid in the village?

Schönbrod: Well, no. But if any of us didn't know from having seen it that the tower makes weather, I think it would be hard for us to believe it.

Niedermaier: That's true. Those guys believe in anything as long as they can also believe that it will earn something. They don't want to hear anything else from me, either. But you want to know more, and so therefore you can understand more.

Schönbrod: I sure do want to hear about it.

Niedermaier: You see, artificial weather control is no more unnatural than taking advantage of solar power, or using the electricity of lightning, and these things have been around for a long time. I asked myself which natural power has the strongest influence on the formation of weather. That would be the same power that makes ebbs and floods, the power of tides, an inexhaustible amount of energy that surrounds the entire globe.

Schönbrod: I understand that.

Niedermaier: You've heard of the gulfstream. That's the source of warmth for the world's oceans. When we were successful in gaining control of that huge source of warmth and at the same time releasing the power of tides, then we solved the problem. That's the secret of the tower, and it's the first of its kind to be able to make the atmosphere available to us, even if it is in just a limited area.

Schönbrod: Can you make any kind of weather with your machine other than rain and sunshine? The general wanted to know.

Niedermaier: All the weather is put into our hands.

of the fact that the creator and director of this incomparable cultural phenomenon, Herr Engineer Niedermaier, through his exemplary work in service of the community, deserves the undying thanks of those living today as well as generations yet to come, and that the government has heard the voice of the people, who have called upon it to take official measures to express the thanks of the fatherland for his exemplary achievements in the common interest, by bestowing a special citation—therefore the government has chosen the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone, in a public ceremony in the presence of the legal representatives of the pertinent offices and authorities as well as of the legislative bodies and, in recognition of the local population, here assembled in patriotic enthusiasm, in the voice of the minister for law, order, and security to make the following proclamation: A) The Weathertower, Incorporated, is to be placed, along with all its attendant and peripheral accessories (Looks nervously at the sky, the first raindrops are beginning to fall.) under the protection of the state, which reserves the right to make further similar resolutions.

Hornbriller opens the umbrella and holds it over Blödel. Laughter in the crowd.

“B) A Weather Bureau, expressly created according to strictly democratic principles, will have the responsibility of assuring that the concerns of the fatherland and the people are always followed in the direction of the weather works, and also of serving as an advisory and supporting office for the existing local collective. C) The area immediately surrounding the weather tower, including the land extending to the borders of the neighboring village, will be henceforth named Weatherspring and will be elevated to the status of an independent

Hornbriller: I do not react to such common insults.

Krampf: Unfortunately I do not have any authorized means at my disposal for reprimanding this kind of impropriety. Otherwise I would' have imposed on the interrupter a call to order.

Hornbriller: We are therefore standing *vis à vis* an insurmountable discrepancy between the intentions of the governmental organs and the power of an obstinant local autocracy. We cannot allow even the expression of state capitulation to such rabid obstructionism. *Rebus sic stantibus*, the conference agreed on the observance of the following tactic: the presumptive ceremonial program should be liquidated *ab ovo*, and the official formalities should be reduced to the minister's usual duties. As a result, the participation in the ceremony was limited to the designated delegates of the respective ministries, the president of the parliament, and the representative of the coalition parties, Delegate Biederhold, whose mandate also involves the ministrations of religious ceremonies. The congratulations and ovations, held *in petto*, to the extent that they are not immanent *ex officio* to the various functions, were eliminated. *Dixi*.

Krampf: I hereby give the floor to the minister for law, order, and security, Dr. Blödel, for the purpose of reading the government decree.

Blödel: (Digs papers out of his briefcase.) "In consideration of the cultural significance of the mastery of the weather, which has proven successful after several years of experimentation; in further consideration of the fact that the first weather station to be constructed with all the scientific and technological means available in the modern age is located here in our beloved homeland; in further consideration of the belief on the part of the provincial government that it is incumbent on it not to evade its commanding duty in light of the needs of the fatherland, to extend its protective hand to this meteorological installation, which has previously been under the supervision merely of a private organization; moreover in consideration

Schönbrod: Thunderation! Boy, you could really do something with that!

Niedermaier: We have weather watchers all around the world, especially on the high mountains. They report to us the natural weather formations according to observations of heavenly phenomena and humidity. Our radios and soundings devices enable us to guide the waves and wind movements in the direction we want.

Schönbrod: We country people know how important that is. What an invention!

Niedermaier: That's the way you see it. The way the authorities see it, they can't work fast enough to invent some legal battering ram to control it.

Trumpet signal. The plaza fills up quickly. Steinbott steps out of his booth.

Steinbott: Is it time now? Get your warm sausages here!

Wolff: Nah, the hill is empty.

Berta: Are we the only ones celebrating? That would be a lot nicer.

Otti: Listen: our great patrons are angry, because we aren't making the sun shine on their heads all day long. Now they are having a meeting over a glass of beer as to how they can rattle off their dedication speeches without getting wet. Until they decide that, we can have our own festival the way we want it. What do you say?

Several: Yeah! Let's get started!

Otti: Okay! (Another signal. The band arranges itself.) Are you all ready? (Arranges the rows of the youth choir.)

Jenny: Mayor Schönbrod should stand on the hilltop.

Hantke: Niedermaier too.

Niedermaier: Are we supposed to act like bigwigs?

Brunner: No, just like kings of the bowling alley.

Schönbrod: That we can do. (Goes with Niedermaier up the hill)

Otti: Everyone quiet now. Maestro? (Band director raises his baton. The musicians raise their instruments. Trankhafen rushes on from around the wind wheel.)

Trankhafen: What are these trumpet signals supposed to mean? (At a signal from the band director the musicians put down their instruments.)

Brunner: They just wanted to call you to the bar.

Otti: We went ahead with our own festival program.

Trankhafen: That was irresponsible of you. If you will listen to me, we can set everything right again.

Annie: It's best if we just stay here among ourselves.

Niedermaier: Let's not make a scene, please. The lady apparently wants to tell us something; please go ahead, Frau Ministerial Advisor.

Trankhafen: Very kind of you. The meeting is lasting a bit longer than planned, but you can rest assured that the mood is one of reconciliation. Privy Councillor Stechbein succeeded in convincing the minister to respond sympathetically. In addition to Delegate Hustenreiz I too suggested, as an excuse for the very inappropriate behavior of the leaders of the village and the works, that the two gentlemen apparently had very little experience in dealing with the leaders of the state. Now, fortunately, there is an inclination toward forgiving these unfortunate occurrences, and even the minister was convinced that he should express his happiness with the way the weather works have developed.

Steinbott: And you don't want anything from us?

Trankhafen: The only precondition is that you, Herr Engineer, also compromise and at the last minute brighten up the weather appropriately for the ceremony, (laughter)

Berta: Boy, aren't you funny!

Trankhafen: If you help the sun come out, then you will not only drive the clouds away from the sky, but also from our hearts.

Schönbrod: Well, you can try till you turn blue in the face.

While the song is being sung, Blödel, Stechbein, Trankhafen, Stiefengrat, Krampf, Biederhold and Hornbriller, who carries an umbrella, climb up the hill to Niedermaier and Schönbrod, without greeting them. Indignant glances at the choir, inquiring gestures.

Krampf: That little folk entertainment there is not on the agenda.

Hornbriller: (Waves the umbrella in vain towards the band director.) This is pure recalcitrance, Herr Engineer; this misplaced spectacle must be stopped.

Niedermaier: (waits until the end of the song, then) Otti, please! (At a sign from Otti the music and dance stop immediately.)

Berta: Where did they leave everybody else?

Fischer: They had to stay in the bar as punishment.

Wolff: They're crying in their beer.

Krampf: Honored guests! May we have quiet, please!

Hornbriller: *Silentium.*

Krampf: We are beginning the dedication ceremony. Government Assessor Hornbriller has the opening remarks.

Hornbriller: Ladies and gentlemen. The constitutive festival committee was forced to radically reallocate this *rendezvous faut de mieux*. The preconditions of the government that the simplest meteorological premises be prepared for the festivities were cynically ignored by the local instances.

Hantke: Can't you use plain language?

Hornbriller: My diction is not in need of any correction. The earnest and conciliatory appeal to a respect for state authority on the most primitive level was met with a provocative and obstinate resistance. Even the compromise that was suggested in the critical moment by Fraulein Government Advisor Dr. Trankhafen, that the government should excuse the disturbance in exchange for a small sign of respect, was refused with a frivolous irony inappropriate to such an urbane gesture.

Steinbott: Somebody must have bent your mouth up in a vise.

Paula: Then I was called over to the minister, and he asked me if I could get him an umbrella, because he didn't want to present a wet certificate, and the assessor kept running around yapping in his pig Latin and I thought I was going to burst!

Steinbott: So what came out of all this nonsense?

Paula: I had to leave to get the umbrella. When I went out the general was saying something about Niedermaier sticking a knife in his back.

Niedermaier: Well, go ahead and take the minister his umbrella, Fraulein Paula, so that we can get this state ceremony over with.

Annie: Do you think the choir still has some time until they come back?

Otti: They don't care about us anyway. Let's dance, as long as it's still dry. Everybody ready? (Claps her hands.) Music! (Choir sings and moves with the music.)

Whoever wants not to be lord or vassal
May have a say in how to plant the field.
Whoever wants no more than to be equal
The wind and waves to his desires must yield.
Whoever first did say the Earth was his domain,
He put the Earth in prison, and bound it up with
chains.
But he who arrogantly claims dominion o'er the sky
Will hear the people's curse and feel our fury by and
by.
//
Everything your mind can see, all of your hands' mas-
tery
Is Nature's cultivation.
If the rain falls down, if the sun shines on the ground,
It means our liberation.

Peters: The clouds aren't like some ministerial advisor who runs into a beer tent whenever someone blows a whistle.

Trankhafen: That is unheard of impertinence. But I am not here to ask about the opinions of humble subordinates. Herr Niedermaier, I await your answer.

Niedermaier: Go ahead, Otti.

Otti: Music!

The music begins, Trankhafen runs off as if escaping. The choir sings and moves to the music.

Whoever understands Nature's story,
Nature gives herself as his bride.
Whoever gives himself to Nature's glory,
From him has Nature nothing more to hide.
O children, don't forget the lesson of creation's birth:
Nature is Nature and the Earth is the Earth.
If, and only if, you listen to the sun and sea.
Can you guide the winds and know just where the
clouds will be.

//

If the sun beams down, or the rains fall on the ground,
It's for the wheat and barley.
All of your hands' mastery,
Everything your mind can see,
Give the Earth entirely.

Applause, group dance

Paula: (Enters with a large umbrella in her hand, waits, laughs uncontrollably, until the music stops.) Oh my gosh, I can't stand it!

Jenny: What's wrong with you, Paula?

Paula: I have never laughed so hard in my whole life! (Shakes herself.)

Berta: What? Tell us!

Paula: The umbrella is for the minister. He's afraid he'll get the honorary diploma for Herr Niedermaier all wet.

Niedermaier: So they're not going to let me out of that?

Paula: It was hilarious, really entertaining.

Steinbott: Competition for Berta's shooting gallery.

Paula: What a bunch of fools. First they were all worried about the dignity of the state and the good of the fatherland. That lasted until that tall Socialist piped up with his "unavoidable necessities" and social points of view. Then that guy who talks funny. I can't imitate him. Everybody ganged up against Herr Niedermaier. May I say what they called you?

Niedermaier: Sure. Everybody should know what kind of monster I am.

Paula: All right: a boor with delusions of grandeur, and a little technician whose success has gone to his head, a lout, a cheeky rascal, and more things like that. And the government assessor keep shouting parvenu, ignoramus, arriviste—I couldn't get all of it.

Hantke: They probably had something to say about us, too.

Paula: They kept disagreeing about the program. Finally they gathered in small groups in the corners, and over by me, behind the beer kegs, all of a sudden I saw that funny old spinster with the pince-nez.

Otti: That's Trankhafen.

Paula: Yeah, that's her. And behind her, who do you think? That dandy they call the privy councillor. They were making some nice politics in their little corner! You know what they were doing? They were groping each other!

Fischer: Bon appetit!

Paula: "My Theodore, my Henriette, my Henriette, my Theodore," over and over again.

Wolff: Just like in my swing-boat.

Paula: Wait, the best is coming. I didn't think anything about it, then the fat lady comes over, the one who has all the cloths wrapped around her, and she's looking for the privies. She runs over behind the beer kegs where those two were having their conference. Of course she shrieks and stumbles back over to me. I show her where the little house is out back and I look to make sure she finds it. Just as she's going in, who do you think comes out? The guy with the dictionary in his head. But not by himself; he comes out with that pious nanny-goat who always hides her eyes.

Schönbrod: You don't say!

Paula: And now the two come out of their little hiding place over by me because the bell rang and they were supposed to get back to the meeting. She came first, huffing and puffing. And then the privy councillor, and as he's going past me he grabs my rear end. I whacked him a good one.

Peters: Good for you, Paula.

Brunner: Right in the face of authority?

Paula: Right in the chops. That disgusting old pig.

Fischer: But he seems to have recovered.

Niedermaier: And then what?

Paula: Then they sent that woman up here, just when the trumpet sounded. And when she came back the howling started. All about scandal and impudence and rabble, and somebody wanted to call in the reserves and demolish the tower.

Jenny: That would've been some festival.

Paula: They were more scared of a little shower than my grandmother is of a thunderstorm. But the minister—I think he's called Bloated—kept yammering: "I have to complete the ceremony" and the preacher mumbled something about sin and evil, and the fat lady was quacking that she was going to get another intestinal infection from all this rudeness.

Brunner: She needs to take her seat on the cabinet.

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Erich Mühsam
Thunderation!

Folk Play with Song and Dance

Originally published in German in 1930 as *Alle Wetter! Volksstück mit Gesang und Tanz*. Translated, edited, and introduced by David A. Shepherd in 2001.

<worldcat.org/title/thunderation-folk-play-with-song-and-dance-alle-wetter-volksstuck-mit-gesang-und-tanz/oclc/45065998>

Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press.

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ment. But what has happened to respect toward the divine? In any newspaper you can find on any street you will find a mockery made of the sublime. Even the theater, once considered a place of edification and moral teaching, has become an arena of radicals. Do not laugh, gentlemen of the far left! These theaters are already making pronouncements against even this high house of government! I am told that one of these conniving performances, one which is being presented every evening in front of an audience, even mocks the democratic institutions of the state and subjects us all, my colleagues on the right and the left, to the masses' thirst for scandal.

Widerborst: Well, you can't pin on us what some crazy anarchist somewhere has thrown together.

Biederhold: If it has come this far, then is it not easy to imagine that eternal justice itself might be swept away in a new deluge rushing from this cesspool of vice and degeneracy? I ask you, should not we poor foolish mortals allow ourselves to fall into the protective arms of the divine almighty?

Möhre: (in women's room) Yes, how true, how true.

Trankhafen: Surely he's not going to speak against the motion?

Biederhold: Nothing is farther from our desires than to try to impede the progress of civilization.

Selters: All right, we don't have to worry about a rejection.

Biederhold: Still, we must make our approval of the government's proposal dependent on certain assurances. Any abuse of the weather station with respect to the divine order of the world must be prevented. To guarantee this, we demand that the leadership of the Weather Bureau contain the strong influence of the church embodied by appropriate representatives of the Christian ideology.

Otti: (in women's room) What's he trying to do?

Biederhold: The leaders at Weatherspring up to now have, as we learn from the statements of their representatives in the commission, completely ignored divine interests. They have

taken as the basis of their weather calendar the reports and evaluations of persons who are under no supervision of the state and who represent only the desires of the workers. It is therefore clearly the bounden duty of this legislature to establish the strict supervision of these people by the state and the church. We have already the need for this in the irresponsible way these people used this treasure that was entrusted to them: when Weather Councillor Niedermaier allowed the government-arranged dedication ceremony to be rained out. We demand the regulation of this institution, so that once and for all it is kept out of the hands of the incompetent, the worldly innocent, the morally immature. (Silence. Rustling of papers.)

Speicherer: That's all very nice, but what kind of motions does the Church Party intend to make?

Stechbein: The government is familiar with the motions. They are quite acceptable.

(women's room)

Möhre: Now, my dear young lady, you hear what responsible people think of your conduct. What do you have to say now?

Otti: I can't imagine what this gentleman wants to turn our collective into.

Trankhafen: Into a collective that gives way to the central power of the state. That kind of a collective would prove its value and achieve its purpose, Fraulein Jungleib. And I tell you that as a committed socialist.

(staff room)

Jenny: He'll let them fidget for awhile. They're going to have to go to the Church Party to ask for good weather.

Brunner: They're going to mess things up for the umbrella salesmen again.

Annie: I feel sorry for Red Otti. She must think she's fallen into a den of thieves.

Hantke: She was the only one in the commission who cared about the matter at hand. Everybody else was talking about campaign slogans and business contracts.

Paula: Don't you love how they're playing politics with the weather?

Wolff: They're going to wheel and deal with clouds on the black market, like they do with real estate or theater concessions.

Jenny: I wonder what Red Otti thinks of all these intrigues.

Hantke: Why do you call her Red Otti?

Paula: She told us that's what they call her at the weather tower.

Annie: She's so nice. She's on the side of the poor people.

Hantke: Quiet, now. The reverend is clearing his throat.

(men's room)

Biederhold: (Coughs loudly and spits with a loud noise. To the left and right notebooks are readied once again.) I now conclude. With the restrictions and amendments included in our motion my party is prepared to vote in favor of the government proposal.

Krachhahn: Now we know as much as we did before. (Stiefengrat enters, goes into a urinal niche.)

Biederhold: We will approve the sum of 14 million marks for operating and administrative costs, as well as the requested 4.8 million for the construction of the headquarters building of the Weather Bureau and for the necessary employee housing in Weather spring. We can only vote for the one-time expenditure for acquisition of instruments and completion of the technical appurtenances if these expenses do not exceed the sum of 1,800 marks.

Hustenreiz: We'll probably be able to come to agreement on that.

Biederhold: Our last request is this: the separation of the Weatherspring installation from the neighboring village must have as its visual expression the construction of a house of worship immediately attached to the institute.

Möhre: (in women's room) Quite reasonable.

Otti: But who will ever go into it?

Möhre: We will make sure that the weather works are operated by churchgoing employees.

Biederhold: (in men's room) This house of God shall serve as an admonition that any control over the weather must be carried out with the assistance of the Almighty. In the management of this new means of dominion over thunder and lightning there is no place for the arrogance and covetousness of the lower classes. Whoever is a servant now shall remain a servant.

Barde: Excellent.

Biederhold: We also concur with the demand of our colleagues on the right that days of commemoration for the fatherland shall always be blessed with beautiful sunshine.

Stiefengrat: Bravo.

Biederhold: We demand the same for all Christian holidays.

Widerborst: The first of May has to be a legal nice-weather day, too.

Biederhold: We have no objection to hail or fog on the sadder commemoration days. For the purpose of making these religious and moral determinations there will need to be a new department in the weather bureau, similar to the Radio and Film Review Board, and the Church Party will lay claim to the absolute leadership of this department.

Hustenreiz: That's going to cause problems.

Biederhold: This goes without saying. There is absolutely no place for agnosticism or free thinking in the operation of a station that controls the heavens.

Trankhafen: (in women's room) The Church Party is going to cause a government crisis!

//
Everything your mind can see, all of your hands' mastery
Is Nature's cultivation.
If the rain falls down, if the sun shines on the ground,
It means our liberation.

Schönbrod lays his hand on Otti's hair and kisses her brow. A ray of sun shines through the clouds.

CURTAIN

and sickle. Then a parade of all three groups forms, before marching off to work.

The youth choir sings, during which part of them go to the fields, part to the workshops, and Niedermaier marches with the workers to the tower. Schönbrod stands by the young people.

Whoever understands Nature's story,
Nature gives herself as his bride.
Whoever gives himself to Nature's glory,
From him has Nature nothing more to hide.
O children, don't forget the lesson of creation's birth:
Nature is Nature and the Earth is the Earth.
If, and only if, you listen to the sun and sea
Can you guide the winds and know just where the
clouds will be.

//

If the sun beams down, or the rains fall on the ground,
It's for the wheat and barley.
All of your hands' mastery,
Everything your mind can see,
Give the Earth entirely.

While this song is sung, a red and a black flag are raised on the flagpoles of the weather tower.

Whoever wants not to be lord or vassal
May have a say in how to plant the field.
Whoever wants no more than to be equal
The wind and waves to his desires must yield.
Whoever first did say the Earth was his domain,
He put the Earth in prison, and bound it up with
chains.
But he who arrogantly claims dominion o'er the sky
Will hear the people's curse and feel our fury by and
by.

Hustenreiz: (in men's room) This means the end of the coalition!

Selters: No it doesn't. They'll be open to further discussions.

Krachhahn: If you're going to be a horse trader, you have to have horses.

Biederhold: Therefore let us...

Paula: (in staff room) Okay, he's at the "let us."

Biederhold: ...let us with the blessings of God (loud rustling of papers)—in the spirit of humility— (Sound of flushing, which drowns out the rest of his speech. Everyone leaves the restrooms hurriedly. To the left Berta, Trankhafen, Möhre and Otti remain onstage. To the right Steinbott and Stiefengrat remain.)

Stiefengrat: (while washing hands) Amen.

(staff room)

Jenny: Do you think they really want to shut out the Socialists?

Hantke: He was only talking about free thinkers.

Wolff: This government really teaches you to pray.

Paula: They talk about freedom, and whenever you go somewhere with them they stop into a church.

Brunner: If you keep walking you will be shot.

(men's room)

Biederhold: (Comes out of the stall.) Ah, General.

Stiefengrat: So, Reverend, you are going to establish your party's position?

Biederhold: Just light a fire under certain coalition partners.

Stiefengrat: That can only help.

(women's room)

Otti: (to Berta) Do they always make big political deals back here?

Berta: This is the only place in the building where they are sometimes honest.

Trankhafen: Quiet! We need to hear where the military stands.

Berta: You go in there, Fraulein Otti. (Opens the door to the staff room for her.)
(men's room)

Stiefengrat: So is the government going to try to go ahead without the pinkos?

Biederhold: They need to learn modesty.

Stiefengrat: Shouldn't they be kicked out?

Biederhold: We can't think about that at the moment.

Stiefengrat: No? It seems to me...

Biederhold: In the opposition they would foul up everything we undertake.

Stiefengrat: Would that be so bad?

Biederhold: Your Excellency, it is an enormous advantage to us if we have someone whom the masses would trust, and who could convince them that everything was happening to their benefit. You know, our activities aren't exactly tailored to accommodate to the tastes of the rabble.

Stiefengrat: You are quite right there, Reverend.

Biederhold: Let's allow the Socialists to play along. Under our supervision, they could be the best possible horses to pull our wagon.

Stiefengrat: Well, of course, then they'll have positions that they could lose.

Biederhold: Exactly. In more peaceful times they might have to clear out in favor of more qualified personnel, and then they can go ahead and raise a ruckus against us. But if the situation is precarious, then put the harness on them! Without them we would never have gotten control of the revolution.

Stiefengrat: Indeed, we would never have been able to get the paramilitaries and the national militias on their feet. I understand now: back then we worked with the facts as they were presented to us. Now they have to do that.

hand tools, in their hands or over their shoulders. The two groups take places on the left and right. The youth choir marches between them and sings:

Disaster streams forth from the sun
 Compassion from the lightning's blaze
 Thunderation, all the weather
 Dwells in Heaven's realm always.
 //
 The ones who fear life's colors bright
 Dread also every life's demise.
 Destruction brings new life to light
 And something's born when something dies.
 The dead branch nourishes the worm
 The young sprout strives toward the sun.
 Sweep clean his way, destroyer storm!
 When death comes, then is life begun.
 Cloudbursts and the glowing sun,
 Rime and frost and earthquakes too,
 Thunderation, all the weather
 Kills and creates life anew.

From each of the three groups a few men and women come forward and quickly clear out the debris. The top hat rolls over to Otti's feet, and she picks it up and tosses it away. It gets caught on the point of the church steeple, where it hangs.

Then the youth choir makes a semi-circle and surrounds the dance of the workers and farmers:

From each group six men and six women come forth and go behind and past the twelve from the other group. From the workers' group the men carry hammers, from the farmers the men carry sickles over their shoulders. Each man from the farmers pairs off with a woman from the workers, and vice versa. The twelve couples then perform a dance showing the solidarity of the workers and farmers, of the hammer

Act IV (Epilog)

The sky is filled with heavy clouds. The gray of the clouds becomes suddenly brighter. There is a rainbow over the wind wheel and the tower; the rainbow becomes visibly paler and disappears before characters enter the scene. The wind wheel is moving, the rudder is as in the first act; so is the pointer of the weathervane. Signs of destruction show that a storm has been through. All the garlands and flags have been ripped down, although the flagpoles still stand on the tower. The terrace and the Swiss cottage are heavily damaged. The windows are broken in the other houses and the church. The church tower is badly damaged. There is rubble of all kinds on the ground, brush, torn bits of cloth from the flags, shards of glass.

A dented, beat-up top hat lies in the middle of the stage.

The stage is empty. The "Thunderation Song" approaches from the distance, unintelligible at first, with instrumental accompaniment:

Hate blazes in a loving heart.
Flood waters mix with the ebbside.
Gray ashes hide gold dust from view.
In the same bed of clouds abide
The snow, the hail, and morning's dew.

The youth choir becomes visible, led by Otti. It enters the scene between the weather tower and the weather wheel. At the same time farmers enter from the right, with Schönbrod in the first row. They are carrying sickles, scythes, shovels, and other tools, most of them carried on their shoulders. From the left, at the same time, come workers, with Niedermaier in the first row. They are carrying axes, saws, and other

Biederhold: That's the way it is. You see, the establishment of the Weather Bureau is a delicate matter. By all means we have to make the inventor of the thing, the right honorable Herr Niedermaier, completely harmless.

Stiefengrat: Toss him out on his ear.

Biederhold: That won't work. It's difficult enough to remove him from the management. The lower classes idolize him.

Stiefengrat: To be sure, his activities have evoked a dangerous sense of contentment in the people.

Biederhold: That's why we need the Socialists. We can yield the point that Niedermaier retains the operation of the technical apparatus. Herr Hustenreiz and his comrades will calm the simmering masses by making clear to them that Niedermaier basically remains what he was before, and they can shout about how their participation in the governing coalition is insurance for the protection of democracy or whatever.

Krampf: (Enters men's room.) The session is beginning now, Reverend. You are the first speaker on the list. (Goes into a urinal niche.)

Biederhold: As always, Herr President. Is there anything on the agenda besides the Weather Bureau?

Krampf: If there's enough time, we'll have the third reading on the law for the protection of domestic tranquility and happiness, (long, repeated bell signals)

Stiefengrat: Delegate Biederhold just now explained to me why the government would rather not do without the participation of the reds.

Krampf: Indeed—as long as the Weather Bureau is not yet well established, they are absolutely indispensable. In my capacity as president of the provincial parliament I spoke yesterday with State President Wimmerzahn. He is very concerned about naming Privy Councillor Stechbein to a position, since he wants to appoint Ministerial Advisor Trankhafen as the director of the personnel division...

Stiefengrat: She'll want to go along as his nanny.

Biederhold: As a scarecrow against all the pretty secretaries. (All three laugh.)
(women's room)

Trankhafen: Miserable rumormongers!

Möhre: Don't worry about it, Fraulein Doctor. We defenseless women have to be very careful if we don't wish to be gossiped about.

Trankhafen: By the way, I've wanted to suggest to you that you might want to watch out for the gossip about you and Herr Government Assessor Hornbriller.

Möhre: I won't even dignify that insinuation with a response.

Trankhafen: It might also be a good idea for you to keep quiet.

Möhre: You just heard what Christian politicians are saying about your party.

Trankhafen: Well, we certainly aren't Jesuits! (The two exit women's room arguing.)
(men's room)

Hornbriller: (Enters.) Herr President? Are we still going by the motto: *festina lente*? It's time. The ministers are already taking their positions on the podium.

Stiefengrat: Everything's ready for the storming of Fort Niedermaier.

Biederhold: Of course, part of the forces have already been weakened by the pretty forward fortifications.

Hornbriller: Exquisite *bon mot*. By the way, I found her very impressive, the fair proletarian. An apologist par excellence for her boss. Her parliamentary debut in the commission hearing was brilliant.

Krampf: But I heard it caused some scenes that interfered with business.

Hornbriller: (while leaving) Only a burlesque *intermezzo*. A foolish remark by Herr Hustenreiz in response to the speech by the

Hornbriller: Inferno! The vehemence of this hurricane is destroying the established order! *Lasciate ogni speranza!*

Möhre: Horrible! Terrible! Oh, my Norbert, will you stay with me forever?

Hornbriller: That's an illusion! Every man for himself! *Sauve qui peut! Adieu, Malvine!*

Möhre: Oh no! Oh no! (from a distance) Norbert! (The two disappear.)

Complete darkness. The raging sounds of a storm, with hail and thunder. Windowpanes shatter. House timbers break in two. The curtain remains open. The noise subsides, stops. Light dawns on the scene. With a sudden brightening, the veil of darkness is lifted from the stage.

CURTAIN

Niedermaier: The weather ought to be here soon. Now it's our time. (Little Blue-Skies enters crying.)

Blue-Skies: I can't find Little Sunshine.

Berta: What's your problem, little man?

Blue-Skies: I am Little Blue-Skies. I'm staying with Little Sunshine.

Peters: Oh, too bad, Little Sunshine is gone and Little Blue-Skies has lost his way. What will we do about that?

Paula: Come with me. When Little Gusty-Wind and Little Thunderstorm are gone, we'll go together and find Little Sunshine.

Now the stage is only very dimly lit. Wind and rain whip the whole area. Everyone leaves the scene.

Fischer: (going off) I wonder who'll be the first to try to cheat the workers and farmers tomorrow?

Otti: (going off) All power to the workers' councils! (It gets even darker, the weather gets even noisier. Stechbein and Trankhafen grope their way from the terrace across the stage.)

Stechbein: Get under a roof quickly! The storm is uprooting us!

Trankhafen: But where, Theodore? It's black all around us, and the office has been occupied by the enemy. I feel the earth giving way under my feet. Oh, my darling!

Stechbein: Go on, Henriette! I want to get my feet on firmer ground. The revolution is victorious. Your party betrayed the people. Tomorrow I intend to join the Party of the Intransigents. Farewell, Henriette!

Trankhafen: No! No! (from far away) Theodore! (The two disappear.)

Wachtel: (Runs across the stage.) The belly of the earth is breaking open! There's no place where I can crawl! Oh what misery! Poor me! (Disappears. Möhre and Hornbriller stagger together across the stage.)

Möhre: Hurry, my darling, the weather will devour us.

aspiring dictator Teutsch gave the signal for a set-to. (All four exit.)

(staff room)

Steinbott: (Enters staff room.) So now they're finally going to start slinging the crap. (Sees Otti. The forward part of the stage gets imperceptibly brighter.) Excuse me, Fraulein.

Otti: Please, not at all. I think you're right.

Steinbott: Berta, come here! Or is the government still doing business in there with you?

Berta: (Comes out.) No, whenever the platform is full in the meeting hall then it's quiet time for us. So, Fraulein Otti, I bet you never imagined that a view behind the scenes of the parliament would look like this.

Otti: I certainly didn't. What's going to happen with our tower? Poor Niedermaier! As long as people have been watching the stars they've been wondering how to make it rain. Now that we can finally do it, they want to haggle over it in the stock exchange.

Wolff: Does that surprise you? After all, flying was just invented so they could murder people from high above whenever they have a war.

Brunner: Or whenever the workers want to run the politicians out on a rail.

Otti: Well, if someone didn't know anything about politicians, this building is the place to study them.

Hantke: You know what? Why don't we sing our house song for Fraulein Otti?

Annie: Sure, do you want to hear it?

Otti: Of course, please.

Paula: Well let's go. But later you have to sing us something too. (All except Otti join hands and sing while they sway to and fro.)

Be grateful, people, to the ones who lead you,
The ones who always look out for your good.

If you should go the way you think you need to,
Your cart won't take you where you hoped it would.
What do you know about the dreams you seek?
You should obey, because your minds are weak.
And don't ask questions; no, you do not need to.
The state will hang you when it thinks it should.

//

People, trust the parties' delegations.
Your happiness is all they care about.
Vote for them, they promise liberation,
But once they're in, your interests get tossed out.
Imagine, if the government went away,
Just where would all the big-shots get their pay?
The parliament would suffer from starvation.
The restroom lady would be down-and-out.

Steinbott: That's an extra little goody for Berta.

Wolff: She earned it, too.

Otti: Did you all write this song?

Brunner: All by ourselves.

Paula: That was when they raised their own per diem pay and didn't approve a single extra penny for the staff. Berta had to go and negotiate for the workers' council. Only the Intransigents were on our side.

Hantke: But they wouldn't have been able to do anything either, if we hadn't threatened to go on strike.

Steinbott: They wanted to fire Berta.

Berta: Well, all right. Let's do the third verse.

Song:

They study laws until their vision's blurry.
The big-shots write the laws to earn their keep.
They'll punish you or tax you in a hurry

Wachtel: My stomach can't take a thunderstorm. Please change the weather!

Wimmerzahn: (waking up) A restless night, really quite restless.

Krampf: Herr President, come along quickly to the car. The session has been suspended. Herr Minister, please. (Krampf and Blödel take Wimmerzahn under their arms and lead him into the restaurant. The terrace empties quickly.)

Möhre: Where is Government Assessor Hornbriller?

Trankhafen: Where is State Secretary Stechbein? (It gets darker and darker.)

Stiefengrat: If only I had soldiers! I would try to help you!

Schönbrod: Even if you had all the cannons in the world... (Points to the sky.) ...they would be just toys in the face of our artillery. (Blinding flash of lightning, sharp crack of thunder. Stiefengrat exits trembling. Stechbein and Trankhafen appear on the balustrade.)

Trankhafen: Friends! Listen! We have an important message! The government has approved all your demands. It accedes to the facts as they are right now. (Peals of laughter, mixed with a gust of wind that blows through, and the two noises seem to sweep Stechbein and Trankhafen away.)

Barde: (Appears with the fascist salute at the balustrade of the terrace.) Comrades! The Workers' Race Party joins you in raising the banner of the revolution! We too are workers...

Paula: With brown uniforms!

Barde: We are taking over leadership of the country. I hereby declare Kajetan Teutsch dictator!

Brunner: If he comes here he'll dangle from the wind wheel. (A gust of wind turns Barde around and throws him through the door into the restaurant.)

Schönbrod: Presidents and governments and parliaments and whatever all that stuff is called, they all want to help the people, and now we're supposed to believe this guy who is going to give us all commands from up on his high horse.

Steinbott: It's going to rain, kids!

Berta: And wind! It's coming together already.

Schönbrod: This is going to give us more than just rain and wind.

Jenny: Where is Niedermaier?

Annie: With Peters and Fischer in the tower. They're making weather!

Otti: Do you understand now?

Wachtel: I don't know, suddenly there's such a draft. (The sky becomes filled with dark clouds.)

Biederhold: It's time to go to church.

Barde: So that we can bless the Third Reich, (lightning flash)

Möhre: My God, it's a thunderstorm.

Stechbein: That's impossible. We already had the apparatus set for ten days of cloudless weather.

Hornbriller: Does this sensitive equipment function with guaranteed accuracy?

Stechbein: Absolutely. Where is the soundings chief? (Wind begins to whistle. The stage gets somewhat darker. The bureaucrats and audience members who are still onstage begin to withdraw at signs of the storm.)

Trankhafen: There comes the weather councillor with the soundings chief and the mechanic out of the tower.

Hustenreiz: That explains everything.

Hornbriller: Sabotage! Obstruction!

Biederhold: What's that crowd doing over there? (The mass of people moves threateningly toward the terrace. It gets darker.)

Möhre: They're coming toward us! Police!

Hornbriller: We require the military. Terrorists!

Stiefengrat: They've cut the telephone lines. We are powerless.

Biederhold: I will go pray silently. (Off. Continued flashes of lightning, distant thunder, the storm gets stronger. The crowd comes nearer.)

Niedermaier: (Steps in front of the terrace.) You'd better hurry if you want to get out of here safely, (clap of thunder)

And call it treason if you make a peep.
 They never notice when you're having troubles;
 They always notice when your free time doubles.
 So people, there's no need for you to worry,
 The state is watching o'er you while you sleep.

Otti: That's terrific. I'd like to take you all home with me for my choir!

Annie: If only we could!

Otti: Maybe Trankhafen will hire you all for the Weather Bureau.

Steinbott: There'd surely be jobs for us there.

Brunner: Wherever there's hot air, there's work for you and Berta.

Paula: And there'll probably be a restaurant there.

Wolff: The whole thing is starting out with a restaurant and a church.

Jenny: And I'll keep taking Stechbein's dictation.

Hantke: But first let's hear what kind of songs we'd be learning with your choir.

Annie: Yes, now you have to sing. You promised us.

Otti: All right, our farmers' song. (sings, demonstrating a dance at the same time.)

When the grain has reached ripe age
 The farmer comes to bring it in.
 And the geese all raise a din,
 Shouting, honking full of rage.
 Easy does it, brother goose!
 Nothing comes from shouting so!
 When you let your rage fly loose
 You cannot change the status quo.
 //
 When the farmer's hard at mowing,

Comes the landlord riding by,
Sees the grain's not cut too high,
Takes what others have been growing.
Drive that landlord from the land!
Farmer, don't you be afraid.
Not money, nor his cruel hand
Makes the grain ready for the blade.

//

When a flood flows from the stream
And the spark roars to a fire,
Let the landlord's barn expire
And you save your rafter-beams!
The geese rail at the parliament
But you can free yourself—it's true!
The land you've plowed as punishment,
O farmer, that land belongs to you!

During the last few lines Minister Blödel appears by the men's room. He looks around as if searching for something. He hears the song and steps into the staff room hesitantly. He stands there somewhat nonplussed. After the applause has died down, he coughs.

Jenny: (Embraces Otti.) Otti!

Annie: Dear, dear Otti! ...

Otti: There's a gentleman standing over there. Perhaps he's lost his way.

Blödel: I am the minister for law, order, and security. This is very strange. Are you not the expert witness from Weatherspring?

Otti: That I am. Were you looking for me, Herr Minister?

Blödel: Not at all. I simply find it quite inappropriate that you, in your position, should be here in these circumstances, here in the lackey's room.

Hantke: This is the staff lounge, Herr Minister. Nobody is in charge of this room except for us.

You older ones, march with us youth.
Don't stand in our way! Come hear the truth!
If you stay behind, then you miss the chance,
And youth, rest not: advance, advance!

//

Why constant sun in these temperate climes?
We also need thunderstorms at times!
Living things grow; death takes them away.
To the youth grant the world and the coming day!

Embarrassed faces. The beginnings of applause quickly fall silent. Otti leads the choir around behind the ladder, where they are welcomed with handclapping.

Hustenreiz: That was a strange song.

Krachhahn: Really hair-raising stuff.

Trankhafen: Imagine teaching that kind of thing to young people.

Biederhold: Truly, this is a sad sign of moral decay.

Möhre: I didn't understand it all, but I found it shocking.

Selters: When one compares this with that lovely fairy play...

Hornbriller: One cannot even compare the two. In their earlier *opus* there was much humorous symbolism, here we see the tendentious ramblings of amateurs.

Stechbein: Why is the wind wheel moving like that?

Everyone looks up. The rudder of the wind wheel, which up to now has pointed to the right without moving, has started moving vigorously, swings the wheel back and forth for awhile, and finally stops, pointing in the opposite direction. The wheel begins turning with increasing speed.

Otti: Look, the wind wheel!

Hantke: And the weather vane! (The pointer of the weather vane swings vigorously, turns around completely several times, and finally turns downward.)

Selters: As we follow this course we must ask the supervisory council about the reaction of the equities markets.

Biederhold: The Church Party remains open to all possibilities.

Hustenreiz: We must by no means forsake the constitutional course.

Blödel: It is incumbent on the government to verify whether pursuing a dictatorship is consistent with the constitution's definition of democracy.

Stechbein: The established administrators of the Weather Bureau would initially continue running it, at any rate. I can't see any other way to establish pension claims.

Trankhafen: If we distance ourselves from the legal course, then the constitution will inevitably suffer a shock.

Wachtel: My constitution is completely exhausted from all these shocks.

Krampf: I believe the list of speakers has also been exhausted.

Möhre: Shouldn't we wake the state president?

Otti: (Marches on with the youth choir.) All right, the "Song of Youth," but don't laugh while you're singing!

Möhre: Herr President! (Shakes him.)

Wimmerzahn: Yes, of course. So next week it will once again be warm and dry. Yes, I agree, indeed.

Trankhafen: Herr President, wake up!

Choir: Wake up, O youth, it's the dawn of the day.

Rise up, take your hammer, and swing away.

Strike strong upon the age's gate.

Arise, o youth, there's no time to wait.

//

And if decay is blocking your view,

Then, youth, you must force your way through!

Drive out the ghosts that linger here!

We'll take our place! The way is clear!

//

Blödel: I didn't find anyone next door. But I was certainly shocked at what I found here.

Brunner: Oh, I see, the minister has an upset stomach.

Steinbott: Well, not everyone can stand to hear what the common people are doing and thinking. Come with me, Herr Minister, you belong back here. (Goes with Blödel to the men's room.)

CURTAIN

Act III

The square in front of the weather tower. The village and the fields can no longer be seen. Instead there is prosaic, bland housing for civil servants everywhere. On the right next to the weathervane, is a small, tasteless church. Diagonally behind that we see the facade of a huge administrative building. To the left, the terrace of a Swiss-looking restaurant looms onto the scene. The square has been leveled, and on the right in front a portion has been fenced in. All the buildings are decorated with garlands. Two flagpoles extend from the tower, and these display a variety of flags, including the black-white-red, the black-red-gold, the swastika flag, and several flags of provinces, mostly green and violet.

It is the birthday of the state president. The weather is sunny and warm. In the foreground of the terrace sits President Wimmerzahn in a decorated reclining chair. The honored guests sit on chairs in a semicircle around him. To the left and the right of the president are Minister Blödel and General Stiefengrat, and in the group are Krampf, Krachhahn, Barde, Speicherer, Selters, Hustenreiz, Frau Möhre, Frau Wachtel.

Behind the parliament deputies are a number of tables with tablecloths, at which sit the participants in the celebration. Everyone is in formal clothes and party attire.

Stechbein prances around them; he is now state secretary and the administrator of the Weather Bureau. Paula is serving them all, dressed in elegant traditional costume. In front of the tower are employees of the weather works, part of them in uniform, part in Sunday suits, some workers in overalls. Otti, Peters, Fischer, Annie, Niedermaier are dressed as in the first act. The bureaucrats from the ad-

Krampf: But Delegate Widerborst would certainly have violated the spirit of the constitution with his crude, subversive speeches.

Hornbriller: The minister, by making his modified offer, has very likely ensured that any categorical obligations on the part of the government pertaining to the reorganization of the Weather Bureau can only be considered *cum grano salis*. To defer dealing with this matter will *peu-à-peu* bring the mood of the popular psyche here to a state of subordination. We must have the courage to be unpopular.

Barde: (Rises.) Ladies and gentlemen! Today's events force us to take drastic measures.

Biederhold: I wonder where this is leading?

Barde: These were true Germans who expressed to us today the emergency our fatherland is facing. The Workers' Race Party sees in these events the beginning of a national revolution, and it understands that the cries for help from the depths of the popular spirit are cries for the party to come to the people's rescue. The result must be the renewal of the state in every respect. Therefore we demand the immediate abdication of the government, the dissolution of the provincial parliament, the removal of all Jews from the fatherland, and the abolition of interest slavery. Starting tomorrow the legislative and executive power will lie in the hands of our great leader, Kajetan Teutsch. All alien influences will be removed from the Weather Bureau immediately. In order to guarantee a non-Jewish administration of the weather, in accordance with the people's interests, I myself will take over its management, and I vow that from now on the determination of the weather will fulfill the needs of the defense of the fatherland! Heil!

Stiefengrat: This is the way to our salvation!

Krachhahn: Without a doubt, this is the best way.

Speicherer: At any rate it's a way we can follow.

Wimmerzahn: (Wakes up.) What's that? Oh, yes, the young lady is reciting a poem, yes, very nice, really poetic. Thank you, dear lady, thank you very much.

Otti: ...by singing a little song. May we?

Blödel: But of course, my dear child. We look forward to it.

Otti: Youth choir, assemble, please!

Trankhafen: Let me embrace you, Fraulein Jungleib. All is forgiven and forgotten. (Otti begins to arrange the choir.)

Paula: (holding her sides) Otti, I've never seen anything so funny.

Otti: So you all aren't mad at me?

Steinbott: I just can't see what's going to come of this.

Schönbrod: If this doesn't work out for the best, you all can take Otti and me out this evening and flail us to death.

Stechbein: I never would have hoped that things would turn out so happily.

Hornbriller: An admirable declaration of loyalty. All is well.

Hustenreiz: But the meeting of the ministerial council tomorrow is confirmed, and it has to take place. The government will have to find a solution by all means, one that at least hints at a concession in the direction of their demands.

Krachhahn: So we are supposed to feed them all the steak they're asking for at the state's expense?

Selters: As a member of the advisory council I must point out how important it is that these people's carelessly aroused hopes not be answered to the detriment of the bond market.

Speicherer: On the contrary, if we make changes in the administration, we ought to give economic considerations even higher priority than before.

Trankhafen: We must be careful not to jeopardize this welcome change in the mood of these unpredictable people. It might even be advisable to adopt a non-binding compact with the Intransigents.

Stechbein: If we had brought them along today to this celebration, we probably would have been spared this unfortunate scene.

ministration building, some of them in holiday uniforms, some in top hats and morning coats, the ladies dressed in middle-class Sunday best, stand tightly together in the area between the tower and the restaurant.

Behind the fence are residents of the village, among them Jenny as a worker, Berta as a farmer's wife, Steinbott as a farmer, Brunner as a worker, Hantke as a farm worker. In front of the fence a policeman stands guard. In front of the church are more police officers and a police lieutenant.

A costumed parade moves from the background in a curve around the state president. We see paper helmets, allegorical figures for the seasons, the stars, and so on, all indicated by headdresses or attachments sewn onto the costumes. The Fairies, Elves, and Angels and the characters in the play are the showiest part of the parade. At the head of the parade are Hornbriller and Trankhafen, tripping backward and tirelessly keeping a beat with their hands. Both are dressed festively.

Trankhafen: One, two-left, right.

Hornbriller: Tempo, beat-tempo, beat. Correct steps, there, hold the tete in place!

Trankhafen: Left, right-one, two. Watch out! Exactly ten paces in front of the president.

Hornbriller: Everyone begin the *chanson* precisely on the signal!

Trankhafen: Careful, left, right, left-one-two (large gesture)-three!

Song. Untrained voices, rough tone, wrong chords, uneven entrances, the whole performance is an unexpressive, dragging, howling mess.

On the hill and in the vale
The lovely sky is blue and pale!
O, what splendor! O, what light!
Say, who made this lovely sight?
Was it the Lord God alone?

Everything is in His hands.
And each human understands
For the Lord has made it known,
And the sun shines from His throne.
//
There's a time for everything:
For sunshine and the rains of spring.
If it pours or if it shines,
The government makes all designs,
Because it's so benevolent.
So let's thank them, then, also,
Thank God and the weather bureau.
Fair remains the firmament,
And fair remains our president!

Wimmerzahn: (Makes awkward waving motions.) Thank you,
thank you. Very nice-yes. Thank you.

Möhre: Well, wasn't that charming!

Selters: I'm curious to know who the author is.

Hustenreiz: Can I tell the secret, Herr State Secretary?

Stechbein: Oh, please...

Blödel: Our state secretary! Really, it's quite cute.

Stechbein: Oh, really, it's not worth talking about.

Krachhahn: Why not? It's an excellent song. Full of feeling. I
wouldn't have suspected that you wrote it.

*The parade goes around the square once more. Hornbriller and
Trankhafen maintain the pace with raised hands.*

Hantke: What a parade of trained monkeys.

Berta: And that stupid yowling.

Steinbott: We're forever having holiday celebrations and never a
drop of rain.

Steinbott: I just don't get it.

Jenny: Me neither.

Paula: Because you're acting like numbskulls. Or do you think
those puppets over there are smarter than we are?

Annie: I think I understand now. They are the dumb ones, because
they took us all for dumb.

Brunner: Now Otti's going to finally make those puppets dance.

Otti: My friends asked me to beg your pardon for their inappropri-
ate behavior.

Speicherer: Hear, hear!

Otti: Of course, no one should have expected that the government
would immediately say "yes" and "amen" to our demands that
were drawn up in the heat of the moment. We are all the more
embarrassed and touched by the fact that the minister showed
such understanding for the requests made by our staff and pop-
ulation. The fact that the government is going to give favorable
consideration to our requests and defer disciplinary action is
really more than we could have hoped for, perhaps more than
we deserved. One should not ask for impossible things, and we
gratefully and respectfully acknowledge the great insight of-
fered by the leader of our fatherland, in whom the people place
their trust. We will gladly and obediently abide by all his deci-
sions.

Krachhahn: Would you listen to that!

Biederhold: What a wonderful development, through the grace of
God.

Hantke: Don't you think they'll notice?

Brunner: Don't worry, both butter and flattery have to be laid on
thick.

Otti: We have one more request. We too would like to step forth
and express our admiration for our wise captain of the ship of
state, President Wimmerzahn, on his birthday...

Speicherer: They've gotten so quiet all of a sudden.

Stechbein: They're discussing the matter. We haven't lost anything yet.

Hornbriller: A sign that they are distracted.

Blödel: So our declaration did have an effect, after all.

Stiefengrat: (Comes out of the restaurant furiously.) This hole of a restaurant! The connection is broken! I can't get through to the military positions!

Otti: Comrades, stick together. We don't need violence now. Everything will be all right.

Jenny: We mustn't give them enough time for them to call for troops.

Paula: They can't do that, I cut the lines.

Schönbrod: That was pretty smart, little Paula.

Otti: Let me do what I want to with them.

Steinbott: But we don't have anything to discuss with them.

Schönbrod: If you all think you need to run and start a fire before you even know where Niedermaier went, then I can't stop you. But if you'll listen to me, then I'll tell you: you all let Otti do as she sees fit. I'll guarantee that you won't get hurt.

Hantke: Let's leave it up to Otti. Afterwards we can still do whatever we want.

Otti: (turns toward the terrace) If the ladies and gentlemen wish to go to church, they won't find anything stopping them.

Jenny: Otti! What can you be thinking!

Wolff: She's gone crazy.

Stechbein: This certainly is a surprising turn of events.

Trankhafen: She's afraid.

Berta: Look, she's going to say more. I really can't understand this.

Hantke: She must know what she's doing.

Wolff: She didn't tell us any more than anyone else did.

Schönbrod: I'll tell you one more time, I'll vouch for Otti. You all mustn't do anything, no matter what you hear her say. You can just wonder about it to yourselves.

Berta: Instead it'll be pouring at harvest time and everything will rot in the field. If I were Niedermaier I would have told them a long time ago where to stick their nice weather.

Hantke: That's easy to say. After all, he and Peters and Red Otti set up the whole thing.

Jenny: Yesterday Otti was crying her eyes out again.

Steinbott: We field workers don't have a clue what the government wants to do with the weather.

Brunner: You know something? They call that stuff the bureaucrats have in their heads "statesmanship." If you all could spread that manure on your fields, you wouldn't need any other fertilizer.

The parade stops in the middle of the square.

Trankhafen: Halt. All right, now the parade can break up. Whoever is not part of the play should stand in front of the tower, the others should stay here. (Runs around everywhere organizing things, and makes everything more and more confused. In front of the tower.) But we need to clear some space here. This is for our procession. The workers need to move back. All the way back to the church, please! (Grumbling from the crowd.) You can still see from there.

Fischer: Yes, it would be a shame if we missed something. (They move back slowly.)

Hornbriller: (Steps forward.) Dum diddley um! (Comes over to Niedermaier and Otti.) *Parbleu!* The technical managers are in the gallery! But Herr Engineer Niedermaier should be placed with the experts. We need to reserve separate places on the terrace for the Weather Councillor and his assistant *a tempo*.

Niedermaier: Let me stay over here where my windbreaker won't bother anyone.

Hornbriller: Oh, please come over with the honorees. Your achievements excuse you from certain conventions. Genius has the prerogative of being a bit peculiar.

Niedermaier: Thanks, really. I'll go over here behind the barrier. Otti, will you come along? (Starts moving with Otti, followed by Peters, Fischer, Annie, and others. Only the uniformed and dressed-up employees go to the place indicated by Trankhafen, between the wind wheel and the church.)

Hornbriller: (walks with Niedermaier, talking insistently with him) Please don't be so melancholy. The prominent guests will appreciate your participation in the group. Your celebrity is something of an attraction. So your exterior is relatively irrelevant. Not to flatter you, but...

Niedermaier: You are wasting your breath, Herr Government Assessor.

Hornbriller: You are being intolerant. Just because the administration of the institute can't concede to you full power over its operation, you feel debased. The whole matter has to be considered and discussed without emotion, *sine ira et studio*...

Otti: Then you should listen to the farmers and workers sometime.

Hornbriller: You too seem preoccupied, *mademoiselle*. But one simply cannot make concessions to the popular sentiment *ad libitum*. The interest of the state comes before anything else. That is a general principle. (They have come to the barrier. They disappear into the crowd.)

Wolff: (Pushes his way through from the left with a brightly decorated ladder.) Where should I put this thing?

Trankhafen: Aha, the stage. Over here. (Points to a spot in front of the terrace.)

Wolff: Watch out, coming through!

Wachtel: (Comes down from the terrace as if looking for something.) Ouch! You ran that ladder right into me!

Wolff: Well, you should move your belly somewhere else.

representatives of economic interests, will convene in extraordinary session (laughter), for the purpose of establishing the government's position on the requests that have been made here, (louder laughter, whistles, boos) I would like to note that the government is not only willing to give favorable consideration to these wishes (roaring laughter), but also generously to defer any disciplinary action related to today's mass demonstration, (thunderous laughter, loud noise)

Niedermaier: That's all!?!?

Stechbein: We are being extraordinarily obliging. (Returns with Blödel to the terrace.)

Niedermaier: Otti, you know what to do. Peters, Fischer—forward march! (Niedermaier, Peters, and Fischer run to the tower.)

Stechbein: Apparently these people still aren't satisfied.

Blödel: Unbelievable.

Wolff: Let's go up to the terrace!

Steinbott: Get the scythes!

Berta: Burn the place down!

Hantke: Wait, settle down. Don't everyone go off on your own. Whatever we do, we must do together, (animated arguments)

Otti: Grandpa Schönbrod, could I have a word with you? (She speaks with him quietly.)

Trankhafen: Unfortunately it seems that they haven't yet gotten quiet.

Wachtel: (coming out from inside the restaurant) And no service. I had to use the men's toilet.

Hustenreiz: What should we do? I fear the worst.

Krachhahn: Nonsense! Just don't lose your nerve!

Hornbriller: *Contenance!* We must maintain our composure.

Möhre: We'd be better off praying.

Biederhold: Trust in God—that's our motto now.

Otti: Come here, comrades, gather around. Come closer, we don't need them to hear this.

Annie: Come on, listen to what Otti's saying, (whispering)

Hornbriller: And balanced with the psychological principles of mass thinking.

Blödel: I trust that the state secretary will stand at my side as I make this very difficult walk.

Krampf: If there is no objection...

Stiefengrat: Miserable cowards! I'll telephone for troops. (Off. Blödel and Stechbein step onto the terrace.)

Wolff: Comrades! Listen! (A crowd assembles.)

Brunner: The last appearance of the comedians of Weatherspring!

Stechbein: The minister for law, order and security, Dr. Blödel, on behalf of the state president...

Paula: He's asleep.

Stechbein: ...as well as the government, would now like to make a declaration.

Steinbott: Let's hear it!

Blödel: The state government, as the protector and voice of the people...

Jenny: That's just what you look like.

Blödel: ...will endeavour from this moment on to give full consideration to the legitimate wishes of the people. Therefore the government can by no means overlook the fact that certain unpleasant incidents caused by some residents of this village...

Hantke: By all of them!

Blödel: ...as well as by a part of the technical staff of the weather tower...

Fischer: The whole staff!

Blödel: ...may well not have been entirely without valid reasons.

Otti: You're too kind.

Blödel: Therefore, in joint consultation with the management of the Weather Bureau and the representatives of all parties of the provincial parliament that are loyal to the state, the following has been resolved by the state president, to wit: no later than tomorrow the ministerial council, under the chairmanship of the state president and including all pertinent authorities and

Wachtel: (Calls up to Paula.) For God's sake, waitress, where is one around here?

Paula: Through the restaurant. I'll give you the key.

Wachtel: This is awful, you could cause an accident with that thing.

Wolff: Well, you'd better run before an accident happens.

Trankhafen: Herr Government Assessor, there you are. Everything is chaos, no one is listening to me.

Hornbriller: The performance must not be incommoded. The space in the center is only for the actors. The stage properties must be *vis-à-vis* from the orchestra. Mechanic, please clear the arena.

Wolff: Make way there! Coming through! (pushing through the crowd)

Stiefengrat: This is taking forever! They need a little military discipline.

Barde: All our artworks are contaminated by Jews nowadays.

Möhre: My God, they're all just amateurs.

Hustenreiz: I heard that only the wives of the local bureaucrats are participating.

Krachhahn: Is this play that they're putting on written by you as well, Herr State Secretary?

Stechbein: To tell the truth, Herr von Krachhahn, the play is by Fraulein Trankhafen herself. I only helped with the sense of some of the lines.

Blödel: That must have been difficult. We're usually more used to producing nonsense.

Hornbriller: (Comes over to the group.) Just one more moment, then everything will be perfect.

Selters: This is a lot of work for you today, Herr Assessor.

Hornbriller: Yes, I must scrutinize everything, correct mistakes in the staging. They're all just amateurs.

Speicherer: Weren't you speaking with the weather councillor a minute ago down there? Won't he and the lovely young lady join in the honors?

Hornbriller: Completely obstinate. They're fraternizing with the gallery.

Krachhahn: That's where they belong, after all.

Hornbriller: This pathetic engineer is playing coy with his enormous prestige, just because of his own prejudices. He's being childishly peevish. And the person with the red *coiffure* follows him around with her vulgar arguments.

Blödel: I trust you maintained good form and invited them over?

Hornbriller: Without success. My extravagant words of praise had no effect. He ignored it all quite nonchalantly. They seem to want to show solidarity with the rabble *à tout prix*.

Stiefengrat: These people should have been removed from here long ago.

Barde: Quite right.

Stechbein: That would have created bad blood. Niedermaier's removal from the management is already being interpreted as ingratitude on our part.

Biederhold: Then we could buy his silence by naming a street after him.

Hornbriller: That would be a *fait accompli*, without violating decorum.

Hustenreiz: The Intransigents would have gotten the masses all worked up.

Speicherer: The great masses always resign themselves to the facts. The noisemakers in the streets always shout until they're hoarse, and all their noise falls on deaf ears.

Selters: The main thing is to take the planning of the weather out of that man's hands.

Wachtel: When I think about that day we celebrated the building of the tower! It was so windy that I was miserable for weeks!

Möhre: Well, today the skies are all the more beautiful.

Hornbriller: To be sure, staging an example would be a great risk. If it turned bad we would have a catastrophe of unimaginable dimensions.

Stiefengrat: You don't have to negotiate with corpses.

Hustenreiz: Your Excellency, I am a Socialist after all.

Barde: (clearing his throat) I would like to point out, too, that my party's platform calls for a certain friendliness to workers.

Krachhahn: If the situation is already this bad, then we probably need to come back to them with some tidbit. How about if the state secretary, or even the minister himself, declares that a ministerial council would take up the matter tomorrow morning in a special session?

Trankhafen: Delegate von Krachhahn is deceiving himself as to the seriousness of the situation. These people are already much too excited to leave without receiving acceptance of their demands.

Stechbein: But I can't just go ahead on my own and dissolve the Weather Bureau here on the square and dismiss all the bureaucrats. They're getting ready for the church service even as we speak.

Hornbriller: A grotesque idea, that the administration should be decommissioned *stante pede in corpore sans façon*. Absolutely ridiculous.

Biederhold: If the minister for law, order and security were willing, I believe it would be most expedient if he made a declaration on behalf of the president—we don't need to rouse him from his slumber—stating that the state government will convene tomorrow and favorably consider the demands. If necessary he can assure at the same time that we will desist from applying any disciplinary measures.

Selters: Excellent. That is a satisfactory solution in every respect.

Speicherer: Yes, this way we don't give up anything right away, and we gain time.

Hustenreiz: Dignified resolution coupled with wise moderation.

politicians, who are gathered here not to work but to celebrate a birthday—will you willingly give back to the people that which belongs to the people? Will you leave this installation without resisting us, this operation that you didn't build and that you don't need, will you leave here so that it can fulfill its purpose for the ones for whom it was created, those whose goals and thoughts are so far from your own? Will you leave this place unconditionally, without haggling, this place that is not meant for you, this place you would never have been able to occupy without the power of your money and weapons? The farmers and workers are the true owners of this installation, they are the members of the collective from which you robbed the fruits of honest and cheerful labor. These farmers and workers are determined to retake that which belongs to them today. Their patience is at an end, their anger is great. Now you know our demands, make a decision!

Hornbriller: This is the *ne plus ultra* of arrogance!

Hustenreiz: We at least need to talk it over.

Niedermaier: If you can do it quickly, go ahead. But we aren't joking.

Krampf: We'll interrupt the birthday celebration and convene a discussion. (The demonstrators disperse into small groups on the square.)

Selters: In view of our precarious situation we are forced to yield somewhat.

Speicherer: There is only one thing to do right now: play for time!

Möhre: Maybe we can hold them off until the next church service.

Stechbein: We must preserve the appearance of our authority in any event.

Hornbriller: This is a tricky problem. The government could discredit itself irreparably by making embarrassing concessions.

Stiefengrat: We need to back these insubordinates up against a wall.

Wimmerzahn: Splendid, yes, quite splendid.

Stiefengrat: Truly imperial weather!

Trankhafen: The Angels, Fairies, and Elves should all make a semicircle around the ladder. Little Sunshine and Little Blue-Skies, you hide behind the skirts of the larger ladies there, and the animal voices, you hide as well.

Gusty-Wind: And us? (Gusty-Wind, Snow, and Rain go back to the line of police officers.)

Trankhafen: Right, but you stay there by the lieutenant, so you don't get too close to the people behind the barricade. And where is Gnome?... You just stand in front of the masks, miss. Does your beard fit you? Good. Now Treefrog. You sit on the ground next to the ladder and look around thoughtfully. (She runs from one to the other as she arranges them.)

Jenny: Say, officer, we want to see something besides your back.

Policeman: I have to make sure the barricade isn't penetrated.

Peters: We can only see those angels up there from the back anyhow.

Berta: Let Herr Niedermaier and Otti through there.

Niedermaier: It doesn't matter to me. But maybe Otti can learn something from Trankhafen for her choir.

Otti: Yeah, just as much as you can pick up from Stechbein about the weather.

Annie: We ought to just dance through them with our youth choir. Look around, Otti, almost all of us are here.

Otti: Oh, I think we ought to just settle for dancing on the village square for the time being. We ought not to dance up here again until we have a say in what happens here.

Hantke: That time will come.

Wolff: (Comes and stands outside the barricade.) All right. Now the magic can begin.

Hornbriller: (Climbs onto the ladder with a gong.) Is the scenery ready? Silence! Absolute silence for the ensemble! (Strikes the gong.)

Wolff: I've seen the rehearsals for this a dozen times.

Otti: What a hard fate.

Treefrog: What a hard fate, indeed, does fall my way
Each early morning, when the roosters crow,

Animal: Cockledoodledoo!

Treefrog: For I should know just what the skies have planned.

Both man and beast await to hear from me.

The cultured creatures of the giant city

Ask their barometers what clouds will come.

The farmer, though, and all the cows and calves,

When they come to the meadow peacefully,

Animal: Moo!

Treefrog: They only come to me. "Say, good Treefrog,

Please tell us what the weather's going to be.

Will shining sun flood over all the fields,

Or will we rather see in hill and meadow

The lovely earth become all soaked with rain?"

I, poor Treefrog, give everyone the news.

I must leap up and down as in a flash.

The insects, who are my own daily food,

Hum on the ground when thunderstorms arrive.

Animal: Hmmmmm!

Treefrog: And when the air is clear they fly on up

And up and up into the heavenly blue.

Grasshoppers chirp,

Animal: Chirp chirp chirp!

Treefrog: and hosts of noble birds

They hop from branch to branch and tweet

Animal: Tweet tweet tweet!

Treefrog: and sing

Animal: Wheet wheet wheet!

Treefrog: And trill

Niedermaier: (He has climbed onto the ladder.) Friends! Comrades!

Shouts: Hurrah for Niedermaier! Down with the Weather Bureau!
Down with the government!

Niedermaier: The state secretary just referred to the democratic constitution. The ruling class is all for democracy, but only as long as it's to their advantage. The party that has a democratic majority right now has been excluded from any decision making, only because workers elected it. We won't change anything about these methods as long as we just put new leaders into these "democratic institutions." State offices just exist so that big shots can make a living, and the Weather Bureau doesn't have any more noble purpose than that. We don't need a replacement for State Secretary Stechbein and Ministerial Advisor Trankhafen. A chauffeur in the driver's seat can't turn a donkey cart into an automobile. Let's do away with the whole mess! Let's do away with all this speculation on our labor!

Shouts: Down with it! Throw it out!

Niedermaier: Wherever an office runs the show, then life can't flourish. Desk lamps don't make sunshine, rain doesn't fall from inkwells, wind doesn't blow through dusty file folders. Our hands designed the weather machines, our hands turned the switches. But the bureaucrats and political players have locked our hands in chains, and so this blessing to humanity has become a curse on humanity. We wanted to multiply the fruits of the earth for the sake of the people; but they have desecrated these weather works and artificially caused a drought for the sake of money, in order to make bread more expensive for the common people, to make milk too expensive for children. We warned them and they didn't listen to us. We made demands and they showed us the door. For the first time we are standing face to face with the leaders of the state and the weather authorities. We had to force them to give us access to them. But now I ask the government: will you

Jenny: Yeah, self-help!

Wolff: But we're not going to keep waiting till who knows when.

Stechbein: Threats will get you nowhere. State your demands. The Weather Bureau will prove capable of responding.

Schönbrod: Up to now the Weather Bureau hasn't even opened its upholstered chancery doors for us. And now you want to know what we demand. I'll tell you what. The people who made these weather works should also have a say in how they're run. The tower needs to be returned to the people, and we'll decide ourselves what the weather will be. As far as the state secretary is concerned, with all his idlers and whip-crackers and know-it-alls who never learned anything but how to fill out forms, go to parties, and cheat the poor—these guys all need to go back where they came from. The collective gets all its rights back again, and tomorrow morning Herr Niedermaier will be the director of the whole operation, so he can finally bring the rain we need for our fields and livestock. (Climbs down from the ladder. Several people shake his hand.)

Hantke: But now we need to stand behind that statement. Comrades, I'm a farm worker, and I say the gentlemen need to mark this: there's not a single person here among us, farmer or worker, man or woman, who doesn't know what will have to be done if things don't change around here right now.

Speicherer: That's really a bit much.

Stechbein: You certainly don't seriously expect us to simply give up these offices which were assigned to us according to the constitution!

Otti: That's exactly what we expect. Immediately.

Hornbriller: What a rabid, vulgar *ultimatum!* She's just playing to the crowd!

Möhre: How ungrateful people can be!

Hustenreiz: This movement shows that the Weather Bureau should be under different leadership.

Animal: Tweedledee! Tweedledee!

Treefrog: and gaily, merrily pass the day.

Meanwhile, I watch and prattle, all in green,
And dream away the day, and ask myself,
Should I now nimbly hop high on the ladder
And thus foretell another sunny day?
Should I sit among the buds so small
So everyone will know the weather changes?
Or should I sit here at the ladder's feet
And warn of summer hail and thunderstorms?
The treefrog must not act just as he wants.
Responsible reliability
Is always the true guide of all his tasks.
(Looks pensively into the distance.)

Speicherer: This is really extraordinarily lovely.

Barde: I have to admit, it's funny.

Fischer: These folks are crazy as coots.

Treefrog: Look there, the Gnome, the human's goodly spirit,
And also friend to heaven's mighty powers.
He surely will not dare make fun of me.

Gnome, comes in.

Hello, come close, O Gnome, come closer by.

What message is now written in the sky?

Will this day turn out gray, or rather fair?

Should I sit here, or should I sit up there?

Gnome: Good day, friend Treefrog, how are the flies today?

Treefrog: Where have you been?

Gnome: With donkey, sheep, and goat.

Animals: Hee-haw! Baaah! Maaah!

Brunner: It looks like he came from the parliament.

Treefrog: And did they know what weather's coming, pray?
Oh, tell me.

Gnome: I regret, they didn't say.

Have you not heard that human beings now
Can make whatever weather pleases them?
They've built some splendid buildings in the land,
With a great tower, and there's a wind wheel, too,
And even a small church, so all might thrive.

Biederhold: Very commendable that my Socialist colleague
remembered to think of that.

Gnome: Observers watch in farthest Africa,
On jagged peaks and high upon the mountains
They listen to the wind and to the waves,

Peters: Sounds like they're taking ocean soundings from-on top of
Mt. Chimborazo.

Gnome: So that the weather here in our fair land
Is just the weather that the people need.

Jenny: So we can starve.

Treefrog: I think I've heard of that.

But, sad to say, I have no contacts with the Weather Bureau.
I must still stick my nose up in the air
So I can find out where the winds will blow.

Möhre: You're feeling better now, Frau Wachtel, I hope?

Treefrog: But you, friend Gnome, hear all there is to hear.

If you stay hidden there among the humans,
Then you can be present as they work,
Attesting, as a messenger from earth.

Krachhahn: Great, isn't it?

Selters: These allusions are both ingenious and lovely.

Gnome: That's true enough, but as that messenger,
I am obliged to maintain strictest silence.
The government determines all the weather,
With the advice and wisdom of the parties.
The Weather Bureau works out the details.

Otti: These foolish verses are just what they deserve.

Niedermaier: Now, Otti, don't be too cruel.

to go crazy. Maybe all that banging and shooting messed up something in the stratosphere, or whatever it's called, or maybe it comes from radio, the way they send their signals all around the earth. I don't know anything about that. Well, when Niedermaier came up with his invention it was high time for it, and we were lucky enough to get the weather tower right here. Those couple of years when he was controlling the weather with Red Otti and Peters the soundings man and everybody else, and when we all got together in the collective and talked it over, and when it worked out for people everywhere else—those were the best years of my whole life. Never a bad harvest, the earth gave us three times as much as before, and all over the country they planted foreign fruits, things that otherwise only grow where that doctor there learned to speak. (Laughter.) Well, and then they came and built that church there and the terrace and those concrete boxes and this whole mess, and they tore the weather works away from the village. Of course, that didn't do you much good, because you can see that we still stand together. But you took our friend Niedermaier's very own weather works out of his hands. Now he has to stand here and watch all these government councillors and party secretaries hop around here, and this whole bunch of big shots with their top hats standing around thinking up God knows what kind of idiocy.

Krampf: You may not speak this way about worthy civil servants.

Schönbrod: I'll speak whatever way it comes out of my mouth.

And the honorable bureaucrats! What does it look like now in our fields? When we're sowing it's a desert, and when we're harvesting it's a swimming pool. And it's like this all over the country. We were once happy people here. And now? We can't even give away contracts on our crops. The men are all out of work, the women mope around and don't know how they're going to put soup on the table. And the children are all starving and have rickets. That's gone on now for too long. If no one will help us, we have to help ourselves. Otherwise we'll get no help.

Stiefengrat: (Stumbles backwards.) What are you doing to me?
Herr President, declare martial law immediately!

Wachtel: This is terrible! Waitress! ... Oh God, where is the waitress? The key, please! (Stumbles around in the restaurant, searching.)

Schönbrod: (He has climbed up onto the ladder.) Quiet! **Paula:**
Quiet for Grandpa Schönbrod!

Stechbein: (in front of the terrace) The village mayor wishes to present his concerns.;

Biederhold: Can't that be postponed? We need to get over to the church service.

Otti: You'll still be able to speak to your Lord God in a half an hour.

Schönbrod: If you had let us through right away and not sent the police against us, then we would have discussed it with you. Now we are going to speak whenever and wherever we want. We've had enough.

Hantke: Yes, we've had enough.

Schönbrod: Your president might want to hear this himself.

Peters: He's asleep.

Schönbrod: Well, never mind. I just wanted to say that when he came into the world seventy-four years ago, I was tending cows here in my village. I was a farm-hand, then a farm foreman and then a farmer, and thirty years ago they elected me village mayor. I know what's going on here. See, a village mayor isn't a politico, as we say. He spreads his manure on his own fields like everybody else. That's not an easy way to make a living, and on top of that we couldn't do anything about the weather back then. Sometimes it was too wet for potatoes, or sometimes hailstorms knocked down our oats, or sometimes there was nothing but heat and sunshine all the time, just like now. And before we could make hay and get in the harvest everything was burned up in the field. That happened sometimes. But mostly we went along with nature, and we knew when spring was, and fall and summer and winter. But after the great war the skies seemed

Gnome: The president governs for the common good,
Elected by the people, in their law.

Treefrog: And so the people really make the weather?

Gnome: The people's mood is like a weather flag
Which waves in each direction, with the wind,
And never asking how, or why, or when,
First revolution, next the fatherland,
The government, though, blows not with the weather.
If it says "snowstorm," or prescribes calm breeze,
The people's will stands behind its decrees.
For if the sun should shine, or storms should roar,
State power is people's power, now evermore.

Passionate applause on the terrace

Blödel: Excellent, quite lovely.

Krachhahn: In spite of certain democratic phrases, not bad at all.

Stiefengrat: You have to admit, that business about the changeable mood of the people is a thoroughly nationalist idea.

Möhre: And those charming rhymes. Our Herr State Secretary is really a gifted poet.

Stechbein: The muses must have touched him.

Jenny: Look over there, Annie! Paula's dying laughing! (Paula is standing in the background doubled over with laughter.)

Wolff: She must never have experienced true art.

Berta: I only hope they don't notice her.

Brunner: The authorities don't ever notice when people are laughing about them.

Treefrog: But still I don't know if it's cloudy or fair,
Or where I should sit on this weather ladder.

Gnome: Well, good friend Frog, I really pity you.
 You'll never guess what I now have to tell:
 I was in Weatherspring, and there I saw
 The officers and workers switching things.
 They put some garlands all along the roof
 And raised some flags high up upon the tower.
 Men, women, children, all were dressed up fine,
 And all had looks of joy upon their faces.
 They greeted with glad tidings and with mirth,
 Because today they celebrate a birth.

Treefrog: The birth of him who's known to small and great?

Gnome: Yes, Treefrog, of our president of state!

Treefrog: Hurrah! Then no storms will be blowing by!
 And I can hop up on the ladder high!
 But wait! I'm a bit worried once again.
 Is that not Mr. Fog there, rolling in?

Fog enters tentatively.

Fog: Excuse me, have you seen my three good friends,
 My colleagues Snow and Rain and Gusty-Wind?
 Did they not come through here early today?

Treefrog: Not here.

Fog: They must have gone their merry way.
 If they're not here, then I should leave as well.
 I'll lie down as a puddle in this dell.
 Only when wet winds blow is it allowed
 For me to rise up as a mighty cloud.
 (Lies down.)

Treefrog: He's dead! And look, there on the far horizon,
 I think I see a light there, slowly rising.
 It is the Sun! She comes to us so bright,
 And stretches out her lovely legs of light.

Biederhold: Oh, I really wish that kind of language could have
 been avoided.

Stechbein: I'm afraid it was necessary for the rhyme, Reverend.

Otti: And I suppose you'll be standing in front of the machines
 tomorrow?

Trankhafen: No one is indispensable.

Paula: You certainly aren't as far as Stechbein's concerned.

Annie: He's trying to seduce every woman in the place.

Trankhafen: You miserable rabble!

Hornbriller: We cannot continue this discussion on the basis of
 these common insinuations.

Schönbrod: We're tired of your good manners. Are we going to
 speak to the gentlemen or not?

Trankhafen: That is out of the question.

Hornbriller: Absolute nonsense.

Schönbrod: All right, let's go, kids! (Noise. The police are pushed
 back. The mob presses forward.)

Hornbriller: Lieutenant, prepare to attack!

Lieutenant: If I can't let them shoot, then I'll have nothing more
 to do with this thing. Attention! Left face! Forward march! (The
 police march offstage. The crowd moves resolutely up to approx-
 imately where the ladder stands. The bureaucrats next to the
 terrace withdraw, many of them disappear. A few participants
 in the parade mill about nervously.)

Stechbein: What does this mean?

Steinbott: Oh, we just wanted to join in the birthday celebration
 a little bit.

Wimmerzahn: I'm sure they want to come and congratulate me,
 the good people. Of course, yes. Thank you, thank you very
 much.

Blödel: But this is an open rebellion, Herr President!

Wimmerzahn: Rebellion? Impossible, Minister Blödel! That's
 funny, rebellion! Really, that's very funny.

Stiefengrat: Why are no defensive measures being taken? I'll go
 myself... (Goes down.) Who here dares to defy the authorities?
 This is unheard of! I order you...

Wolff: You clown! (Slaps him.)

Schönbrod: What are you doing here? We want to speak with the minister.

Hornbriller: I have been delegated with a mandate from the government. What are your grievances?

Niedermaier: We will not negotiate with pistols pointed at us.

Trankhafen: Herr Lieutenant, have your men put their guns away. The president does not want any corpses on his birthday.

Lieutenant: Then I don't take any responsibility for what happens.

Hornbriller: Who is the *spiritus rector* of this demonstration?

Schönbrod: We don't have any business to conduct with you. We have asked to speak with one of these gentlemen a hundred times or more. Yes, go ahead and cough. When the privy councillors and generals drive past they all jump. Today they're going to hear what farmers think.

Niedermaier: This delegation absolutely must be allowed to proceed through. Day in and day out these workers, these unemployed people, these starving farmers have been demanding a hearing before those that are causing them ruin. Resolutions and petitions against the weather have been sent in bundles to the Weather Bureau, to the provincial parliament, to the government...

Otti: ...and they're never even read.

Niedermaier: Then the people come to us and complain. But we are required to carry out the orders of the Bureau, even if these orders are stupid and criminal.

Hornbriller: Herr Engineer, your choice of words is quite disrespectful. It consternates me to hear you plead as an advocate of these rebels.

Trankhafen: The consequence of your appearance here will be, of course, your immediate dismissal.

Fischer: Then you'll have to throw us all out. The whole weather works stands with Herr Niedermaier.

Trankhafen: Whoever takes part in this uprising can consider himself fired, (laughter)

Gnome: Ah yes, you're right! She's coming to us now, And greeted by the chickens, goats, and cows.

Animals: Cluck, maah, moo.

Steinbott: Those cows sound like geese.

Wolff: I think they are.

Little Sunshine enters.

Gnome: I say, look how she's bringing gold in sheaves.

Treefrog: I'm getting warm-I'll climb up to the leaves.

Sunshine: I cast my light down on this happy day. From heaven above to earth I make my way.

Brunner: Looks like she just fell out of bed.

Gnome: Now people will be happy everywhere.

Sunshine: And look, my little sister's coming there.

Little Blue-Skies appears.

Gnome: Little Blue-Skies comes dressed in flowers there, A wreath of lovely flowers in her hair. Go, Treefrog, climb up higher in the tree.

Blue-Skies: The humans' genius caused us here to be.

Treefrog: Then of the weather I have naught to fear. I'll hop up to the top of this tree here.

Sunshine: Yes, since the state has told us what to do We can come almost daily unto you.

Gnome: You've brought such joy and gladness to this place That the storm-cloud dares not show his face. The world has never known so long a time That we've enjoyed such Blue Skies and Sunshine.

Niedermaier: You're right about that, Gnome.

Blue-Skies: Today the Weather Bureau does command That we should shine on this fair, peaceful land. Nothing should trouble this, our president's day.

Gnome: I think I hear the blue-bells down the way. (a bright tinkling of bells)

Treefrog: Oh no, what's that?

Gnome: The blue-bells have gone still.

Sunshine: The evil fiends are sneaking o'er the hill.
 Snow, Gusty-Wind, and Rain, those wicked beasts,
 They aim to spoil our president's birthday feast.
 Rain enters with a watering can, Snow with a feather pillow,
 Gusty-Wind with a broom.

Gnome: What brings you here to vex our day of mirth?
Rain: I am the Rain, I water all the earth.
Snow: I am the Snow, I've come to shake my pillow.
Gusty-Wind: I, Gusty-Wind, blow through the weeping willow.
 And with my broom I'll sweep this feast away.
Snow: You bring that Treefrog down, Rain, from on high.
Treefrog: Oh, I can come down on my own just fine.
Blue-Skies: You snow and blow through here some other time.
Rain: But the poor ground is dry as it can be.
Snow: My bag of snowflakes is too big for me.
Gusty-Wind: And in my lungs I feel a bit asthmatic.
 To have just sunny days is dangerous.
Gnome: Be still, you scamp, this land is democratic.
 Only the government knows what's good for us.
Blödel: You can say what you like, this is an excellent play.
Möhre: I'm really eager to see how it turns out.
Jenny: Somebody ought to do a play for these people and show
 them what really happens because of this drought they've
 made.
Brunner: For them to understand you'll have to bury them up to
 their necks in hot sand while they watched it.
Sunshine: If those three still refuse to leave these places,
 We'll drive them out with our bright sunny faces.
 Come, Fairies, Angels, Elves, come help us out
 We have some enemies that we must rout.
*Fairies, Angels, and Elves run onstage and begin beating the three
 with peacock feathers and similar weapons.*
Stiefengrat: Now it's getting lively!
Barde: Hit 'em again!

Barde: Well, of course.
Krampf: You want to start shooting? We need to carefully consider
 any objections to that first.
Hustenreiz: I would warn you against taking rash measures.
Krachhahn: Don't show that mob any weakness!
Möhre: Let's please not have dead bodies on this birthday!
Stiefengrat: I think it would be better to go ahead and shoot with-
 out delay.
Wachtel: Oh God, my stomach can't stand it if there's shooting.
Stechbein: This whole celebration is going to be spoiled.
Blödel: If I'm not mistaken, the ringleader is that white-haired rab-
 blerouser from the cornerstone celebration once again.
Trankhafen: They're all there, including that red-haired woman,
 I saw her clearly.
Policeman: So should we shoot?
Speicherer: That's something for the state president to decide him-
 self. Ah, wait, he's sleeping.
Trankhafen: Oh my God, there's a fairy running across the
 square.
Hornbriller: That area needs to be cordoned off from the area of
 the offensive, so that no passers-by are wounded.
Selters: The government assessor should negotiate with these peo-
 ple.
Biederhold: Just make sure that the path to the church is not
 blocked off.
Hornbriller: Decide among yourselves whether you wish to send
 me as a parliamentarian to speak with the demonstrators.
Krampf: I hear no objection.
Trankhafen: I'd like to come along.
Krachhahn: Yes, he'll need an interpreter. (The officer goes with
 Hornbriller and Trankhafen to the police line.)
Hornbriller: I can only characterize this as an infamy, the way
 you have staged this tumult in the middle of the congratulatory
 ceremony.

Lieutenant: (Grabs him around the chest.) Stop! (Blows his whistle. Police officers run onto the scene.)

Berta: They're trying to arrest the mayor!

Krachhahn: Looks like some hullabaloo over there. (Paula turns quickly and runs into the restaurant.)

Lieutenant: Arrest the old man! (Officers jump on Schönbrod.)

Niedermaier: We have to help him!

Otti: Tear down the fence! (The barricade is broken down. Everyone runs toward the policemen. Pandemonium.)

Speicherer: That looks downright dangerous. **Möhre:** It's probably just some more drunkards.

Krachhahn: There are enough police there. We don't need to worry about it. (Paula comes back carrying a tray without drinks. Glances outside intently.)

Barde: What's this all about? Are we not going to get some beer here?

Paula: (Flings her tray into the group of delegates.) Get your own beer! (Rushes out to the crowd.)

Trankhafen: That is unbelievable.

Hornbriller: She seems to have aggressive tendencies.

Blödel: Yes, alcoholism, miserable alcoholism.

Lieutenant: Get back! (Officers are pressed by the crowd, begin to yield.) Get pistols out!

Niedermaier: Man, don't do something stupid!

Otti: The whole square is full of innocent bystanders.

Lieutenant: I'm telling you to get out of the way!

Niedermaier: Lieutenant! I am Weather Councillor Niedermaier.

Lieutenant: (Stops.) All right. I'll ask the state secretary whether I should let these people through. (Speaks quietly with an officer, who then runs to the terrace.)

Schönbrod: Well, then we'll just wait here for a moment. (The crowd stands still, threateningly.)

Policeman: (in front of the terrace) The lieutenant requests permission to use firearms.

Gusty-Wind: Oh, we have met our match! O pain! O woe!
Come, I'll lead us to safety, Rain and Snow.

Fog: (Stands.) I too will flee behind these bushes here.
They run away, chased by the Fairies, Angels, and Elves.

Angels, Fairies, Elves: Away, you mischief-makers! Flee in fear!

Gnome: Ah, victory! The enemy's been destroyed!

Blue-Skies: Come, Sunshine, let us greet the dawn of joy!

Sunshine: Yes, sister, since these villains have been banned,
Let's light a light for the president of our land.
They light sparklers. Hornbriller and Trankhafen, standing on either side of the terrace, are suddenly brightly lit.

Krachhahn: Thunderation! What an effect!

Otti: That light shows off Trankhafen and Hornbriller as the true cornerstones of the state.

Gnome: Come, Angels, Fairies, Elves, come all along,
And let us raise our voices now in song

All the cast members come in front of the terrace and dance some hopping steps as Trankhafen and Hornbriller lead them with hand movements. The song begins. The participants in the parade, who have been standing in front of the tower, join in.

Song: The earth's glory is all around
When the lovely Sun shines down.
When the skies are all bright blue,
We can see their beauties, too.
Sunbeams from the firmament,
For the top man in our state;
His birthday we celebrate.
Our best wishes we have sent.
Hail to our state president!

The cast members do a ring dance and flutter past the ladder backwards over the square, then disappear behind the wind wheel. Great

applause on the terrace and among the bureaucrats. Loud laughter behind the fence.

Stechbein: It's time to wake the president. I probably ought to get started with my speech.

Hustenreiz: Go ahead and begin, Herr State Secretary. I'll deal with the president. Herr President!

Policeman: (Walks in front of the barricade.) You people behave over here, (to Wolff) What are you doing outside the barricade?

Wolff: At least as much as the cows and sheep in that play.

Lieutenant: Let's dispense with those kinds of remarks. Get back behind the fence!

Wolff: (Crawls through. From the other side) Then you can carry the treefrog's ladder away, Herr Lieutenant. I put it up there.

Lieutenant: You're working here? I couldn't tell by looking at you.

Wolff: Next time I'll dress properly: top hat, tails, cummerbund.

Krampf: Is the president waking up now?

Wimmerzahn: Ah yes, of course. (Stands.) It is an honor for me...

Hustenreiz: Not yet, Herr President. (Pulls him back down onto the chair.)

Krampf: I now give State Secretary Stechbein the floor.

Stechbein: Honored Herr State President! Worthy guests! It has been several years since this site was the object of a state visit. At that time, under the leadership of Minister Blödel, representatives of the government and of the parliament gathered to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of the weather tower, and at the same time to announce the government resolution creating a state Weather Bureau. This Weather Bureau would place the recent invention enabling control of the weather under the control of the state, in fulfillment of its duty to humanity. Memories of that first visit are, to be sure, somewhat painful...

Otti: They still haven't gotten over it.

Krampf: Delegate Biederhold has suggested that we walk over to the church now. What do you think of that, Herr President?

Wimmerzahn: To the church? Ah yes, worship service, I understand. Of course.

Stechbein: Perhaps some of the gentlemen would like to have a glass of beer beforehand. I will arrange everything.

Biederhold: Well of course, there's time for a quick one. But then we will honor the Almighty right away.

To the right of the church Schönbrod appears leading a delegation of farmers.

Policeman: Stop. No one is allowed through here.

Schönbrod: Well, we're going through, you know.

Policeman: It is strictly forbidden for anyone to enter the square.

Schönbrod: I don't care. We'll never again have these people together in one place. We're going to speak with them now.

Policeman: I said don't take another step.

Hantke: What's going on over by the church?

Niedermaier: Herr Schönbrod. (Police lieutenant runs Over.)

Barde: Waitress! Beer!

Paula: All right. \

Krachhahn: Me too, and a whisky with it.

Biederhold: Then I think I'll have a little reinforcement as well, Fraulein.

Wachtel: Would you also please bring me some bitters?

Paula: (Writes down the order.) Right away. (Starts to go, then looks out, goes to the banister, stands gazing intently.)

Barde: Make it quick! What's going on back there?

Lieutenant: For the last time, get back!

Schönbrod: We're coming through. I'm not standing here.

Jenny: I think it's getting serious.

Schönbrod: Out of the way! Forward!

see the leaders of the fatherland gathered around me under the blue skies of the Weather Bureau. May this glorious cultural artifact of ours light the path for our entire population, yes, may this shrine to civic duty and to conscientiousness serve us all as a model moral institution. I am touched by all this evidence, indeed, of your loyal devotion and, you know, statesmanlike views, and I respond to these good wishes, to a certain extent, and to the charming and, ahh, appropriate fairy tale—I mean, fairy-tale play—as I express thanks and and, ahh, a certain acknowledgment of your patriotism, to all who are charged with holding the weather service true to the needs of all the people. In that spirit, ahh, and to our dear fatherland and, of course, ahh, to our very fine Weather Bureau—hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! (Sits down. The terrace, the bureaucrats, and the members of the parade all join in the cheer. Trankhafen and Hornbriller go over to Wimmerzahn.)

Hornbriller: Herr President, along with the ovation of these enthusiastic admirers please accept our compliments as well. The eloquence of your rhetoric was exceptional, *sans phrase*.

Trankhafen: It was truly a statesmanlike speech.

Wimmerzahn: Thank you, you are very attentive, yes indeed, thank you. Your play, too, very nice, quite charming, certainly, ahh.

Hornbriller: A vivid poetic allegory.

Wimmerzahn: Quite right, yes, very good. I believe you belong to the Church Party, to the Church Party, Fraulein Ministerial Advisor, don't you?

Trankhafen: I am a Socialist, Herr President.

Wimmerzahn: Ah, I see, a Socialist, of course, yes. Very admirable, indeed, very admirable the way you were able to conceal any hints at your ideology in your play, so to speak.

Trankhafen: You're too kind, Herr President. But you know, when the good of the state must be served, there is no place for convictions.

Stechbein: ...but I mention the memory of that time because today is filled with feelings of joy and satisfaction. This is especially true since our state president is visiting this site for the first time in order to celebrate his birthday, thus bringing honor to our weather works.

Selters: Bravo!

Stechbein: Much has been achieved since that unfortunate ceremony. I am proud to present to you the mighty administration building, in which the Weather Bureau, at that time not yet constituted, carries out its duties. Indeed, the Weather Bureau can look back on its accomplishments with pride. It is an exemplary manifestation of our state's parliamentary system.

Trankhafen: Quite right.

Stechbein: Although there were some difficulties in the beginning involving the assignment of official positions, since each party wished to participate according to its strength in the parliament...

Jenny: So they could get bureaucratic salaries.

Stechbein: ...we were able to overcome these difficulties thanks to the good political judgment of all involved. The coalition of appeasement, which includes all the parties in favor of preservation of the state, from the Workers' Race Party to the Socialists (applause), that coalition owes its existence in no small measure to the efforts to distribute positions in the Weather Bureau fairly and without harm to any party. The necessity of recognizing all ideologies in proportion to their number of seats in parliament—except for the revolutionary party—was made clear after the losses in the last election. No one should mistakenly believe, just because the Intransigents have an absolute majority in parliament, that they have even the slightest influence over such an important institution of the state.

Hustenreiz: Very true!

Otti: This is a swell democracy!

Stechbein: A conscientious state must never allow the fundamental economic order to be violated even by a majority of the voters.

Speicherer: Excellent!

Stechbein: And who was it who recognized at once the needs of our state, and cut the Gordian knot with firm resolve?

Selters: President Wimmerzahn.

Stechbein: You have said it yourselves: President Wimmerzahn called an assembly of all right-thinking parties and did not hesitate to invoke the constitutional powers granted him in case of emergency, and thus led the healthy forces of human reason to a victory over a degenerate parliamentary majority! (applause)

Steinbott: Why did we vote, then, that's what I'd like to know?

Hantke: You all should have asked that before the election.

Stechbein: By carefully weighing rather than actually counting the votes, our president gave the Weather Bureau and its personnel director, Fraulein Ministerial Advisor Dr. Trankhafen, the power to place the right man in the right position in all cases, and to adapt the great scientific and technological achievements of this invention to the needs of the fatherland and of the parties. Today, on the birthday of our honored president, as we victoriously drive the evil spirits of bad weather out of our midst, just as in our fairy-tale play we have just seen...

Otti: My God, how thoughtful!

Möhre: My God, how thoughtful!

Stechbein: ...we owe the birthday boy all our thanks, good luck, happiness, blessings, good health, and a long life. Cheers for our most honorable Herr State President! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

Wimmerzahn: That was very nice, quite appropriate, yes indeed. Thank you, thank you.

Otti: Not a single word for the creator of the whole thing, not a word for the workers in the tower.

Wolff: Some people cook and serve the food and other people eat it.

Brunner: Right. Or maybe those guys there who are holding rifles ready for us, maybe they invented gunpowder.

Krampf: Attention, please! Could I ask for your attention for our State President Wimmerzahn?

Shouts: Quiet!

Hornbriller: *Silentium!* (Wimmerzahn slowly gets ready to speak.)

Niedermaier: As far as I am concerned they can eat all of our cake they want. But if the tower is going to be run for the rest of time just the way the parties and the stock exchange want it, then the day might come when I blow up my own work.

Policeman: Quiet there! The president is speaking.

Annie: But not for us.

Wimmerzahn: It is an honor for me, indeed, to express my warmest thanks to you all—yes, my warmest thanks. If I am able to pass my seventy-third birthday today—what? ah, yes, fine, my seventy-fourth birthday today in such rare mental freshness as this, then I owe my thanks to—I must thank—I give thanks to...

Stiefengrat: The fatherland.

Hustenreiz: The love of the people.

Biederhold: God's help.

Krachhahn: Rye bread.

Wimmerzahn: ...primarily to the beautiful weather, which affords me the opportunity in my high and weighty office to take a little rest from the business of state. That is, to take a lovely walk in the sunshine—yes indeed. In this place, where the weather receives its instructions according to the common good, for the community, yes...

Jenny: ...for common meanness.

Wimmerzahn: ...as I want to say, in this place I have the opportunity, in relatively youthful vigor and freshness, you know, to