

WOMEN OF AKTION

by

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SCENE 1

Three women onstage. There are microphones which are used for direct address to the audience. The tone of the narrative/ direct address is very intimate, laid back, as if speaking to just one person.

Intro music on piano, horn and kazoo.

Toller Ein zwei drei...

Continues

Fran Ladies and gentlemen good evening, we are Bent Architect,

Rach We are Women... Of Aktion... and this...

Actor 1 becomes Joan Littlewood, costume put on her etc.

Claire Is the Mother of them all, legendary theatre director Joan Littlewood.

Joan Hello. Nice to meet you.

2 Hello, thanks for coming...

Joan Not at all.

3 She made history.

2 She changed the world she did.

1 A working class woman. Go Joanie.

2 Hence she's right in our story.

1 It's all about war folks. The whole rigged game. It's all about war.

Rach But we start somewhere else...

Sound cue - harbour and fog horn sequence

Claire 1935, Manchester. Chimneys, ship canals.

Fran Joan is at the Manchester Rep Theatre, which was in Rusholme.

2

Claire Where, strolling through the stalls of the empty theatre, early one Monday morning.

Rach Is a small rosy cheeked man of about 40.

3 His black wavy hair is streaked with grey.

Joan hands actor 2 various elements of costume.

Fran He is well dressed. His name is Ernst Toller.

Claire And in a little over 4 years from now. At the outset of World War 2.
In a New York hotel room.

Rach He will commit suicide.

Claire But once he was very famous. And once he was in Manchester.

Now we have Toller created, Joan enters the space where he is.

Joan Can I help you?

Toller I... he said, I... am Ernst Toller.

Claire Oh, forgot to mention, Ernst has brought with him a very attractive blond woman.

Half his age, who apparently never spoke. So says Joan in her book anyway.

He gestures to imaginary Christiane, his wife, and Joan smiles really politely and effusively, at Christiane – or thin air.

Toller This is my wife, her name is Christiane Grautoff, she is also an actress.

Joan Hello Christiane, welcome to Manchester, bit rough and ready, but you'll like em... most of em... in time... we hope!

Claire Due to time and budgetary constraints, you'll have to imagine Christiane.

Joan Lovely frock... really suits you.

Toller Thankyou. I bought it.

Joan Good choice. Mr Toller it's a real honour to meet you. You're one of my heroes! Joan Littlewood.

Toller Fraulein Littlewood. The pleasure is mine.

Joan Joan, scrub all that Fraulein, Mister, Herr rubbish, you call me Joan and I'll call you...

Toller Herr Toller. You will call me Herr Toller.

Joan (pause) Right. Got you. I see. Herr Toller.

Toller Where are the actors?

Joan Actors!?! At this time!?! Do me a favour!

All laugh knowingly.

Joan They'll be here at 10 on the dot and not a second before if I know actors!

Toller I see.

Joan So... er... *the* Ernst Toller - Leader of an *actual* revolution! Albeit a brief one... The Bavarian Soviet! What was it one week? Two?

Toller (curt) It was one. May we...

Joan Still better than sod all, where's the bloody Manchester Soviet eh!? You... you're a proper boots on *revolutionary*!! Put it there mate!

They shake hands, Toller finds it a bit forward.

Toller So... my play!

Joan Draw The Fires! The story of the Kiel Mutiny.

Toller When the sailors of the Deutsche Navy refused to be sacrificed like lambs to the slaughter...

Joan Lions led by donkeys!

- Toller In a last desperate bid to destroy the Allied navy, that will cost thousands of sailors their lives and probably not succeed even then.
- Joan Madness. And this Ernst, sorry Herr Toller, is the very first production here in Manchester?
- Toller Of course. I was banned the moment the National Socialists took power.
- Joan Tell me about Masses And Men... you wrote that in prison right?
- Toller Yes. 5 years for my part in the revolution.
- Joan Wow... led a revolution, done 5 years bird. Wrote Masses and Men, the first Expressionist masterpiece.
- Toller Also the first use of projections in the theatre.
- Joan Really?
- Toller The cyclorama of images to enhance and expand the experience.
- Joan Hitting you all sides, images, words, songs, all of it...
- Toller We are going to get along! Draw The Fires is even better than Masses and Men. Don't you agree?
- Joan Ern... *Herr* Toller when I heard we had your new play at the Rep I was so excited!
- Toller Of course.
- Joan I've been telling my mate Jimmie, he does a thing called Theatre Of Action, all based on German and Russian agitprop... incredible stuff!
- Toller Yes so my play...
- Joan He's been over there, went out boozing with Brecht! He said he's alright, liked him, you must know Brecht?
- Toller Yes.
- Joan You and him mates? Bert?

- Toller My play? Draw The Fires. Fraulein Littlewood...
- Joan It's Joan.
- Claire Ladies and gentlemen enter the actors of the Manchester Repertory Theatre.
- Joan Oh, 10 o'clock on the dot, quelle surprise. Good morning one and all...
- Claire Morning Joan dear. Due to budgetary constraints you'll have to imagine them.
- Joan Everyone meet Ernst Toller.
- Toller Hello.
- Joan Revolutionary and war hero! We're doing his play, Draw The Fires, next.
- Claire Suddenly, according to Joan's book, Toller bounces over to the piano and sings.
- Toller
Vee don't fight for our coundree
Vee don't fight for our Gott
Veer fighting for ze Ruditoffs
Who keek us in ze mud...
- Joan Do you mean the Romanovs?
- Claire No Joan love he means ruddy toffs, says one of the actors.
- Toller Ok everyone, the boiler stokers sing this as they shovel the coal into the ship's engine and we see how unjust is their situation. Yes!?
- Claire Not much response...
- Toller The play begins with the Battle of Jutland in 1916...
- Joan Right everyone, beginners, Draw The Fires, Act 1 Scene 1... the boiler room of a German warship as they engage the British navy now shovel that coal!!

The lighting and screen image now create the setting of Toller's Expressionist piece

Draw The Fires – this is stylized acting wise too, all 3 actors take roles in this. The soundtrack is of ships engines going full throttle.

Petty Off Come on there Beckers! None of your old soldier games

Beckers Purzelmann's been at the bottle again

Joan Put your bleedin backs into it!

He's been broaching a bloody cask if you ask me

He's the laziest bastard in the bloody fleet, old bloody Purzelmann!

- Action stations! Action stations!

Codeword Frederick The Great!

Rach Course East south east. Engine 120 revs

Claire Engine 120 revs.

Rach Steam pressure?

Claire Steam pressure?

Fran Fifteen...thirteen.... Fifteen.

Claire Fifteen atmosphere!

Rach Full ahead port engine. Slow starboard engines. Stop all engines

Claire Course North north east!

Fran Full astern all!

Claire Enemy cruiser sheering out of line!

Fran We're for it mates!

Claire Course North north east!

Rach Codeword Frederick The Great

Claire Your steams dropping

Fran Your water's down...

Rach A huge explosion, the lights shake, the actors all do theatrical falling down all over the place...

Rach (*in character*) Direct hit!

Claire Well mates here we go down!

Suddenly the actor playing Joan steps out of Draw The Fires and resumes her Joan costume and character.

Joan Stop stop stop! What the hell's this!?

Sorry love?

Joan You're scared you're about to die! "*Well mates here we go down!?*"
What the fuckin River Cam on a punt!? You're meant to look like
gnarly arsed sailors!

Really? Enquire the actors.

Joan Yes really! Proper tattooed sweaty bastards you have to drag out of the
fleshpots and gutters, not sipping cocktails with Noel Coward up in the
friggin' lounge!

Well. These actors of Manchester Rep, who Joan would later describe
as...

Joan Nothing but cankers on the arse of a great art form!

Look on very blankly indeed. You talking about us Joan?

Joan Yes love, specifically, you! I need actors who are used to holding
shovels not champagne flutes!

And so it was that she fired them. All.

Joan Out! All of you!

You'll go nowhere Littlewood!

Joan Send for my mate Jimmie Miller!

Who you may know as Ewan McColl, father of Kirsty, who wrote a
lovely a song called Dirty Old Town, about Salford, which we won't sing
here.

Toller Jimmie who does the Agit Prop theatre? Yes! Real working class
actors!

Joan Yes quite Herr Toller. Now, having sorted the actors out... let's talk
about the play shall we?

Toller Was ist los?

Joan Can we do some... erm... script work?

Toller Re writes?

Joan Yes.

Toller No.

Joan I see.

Toller Good. Now let's be clear...

Joan It's got no heartbeat!

Toller Neither will you have soon.

Joan I want to *feel it*. I want it to punch me in the guts.

Toller Don't worry something will.

Joan I want to *feel* what it's like to be there... in a revolution!

Toller The sailors, Kobis and Reichpietsch, gave everything, they were shot for their part in the uprising.

Joan Yeah but they don't come alive in the first place so I don't cry when they peg it! It's got no passion, that's what's missing.

Toller You have passion.

Joan It's been said.

Toller And I have intellect.

Joan Excuse me?

Toller And a huge international repute so if you don't mind me saying young madam....

Joan Quite a while ago now though isn't it? Your last hit?

Toller Fraulein Littlewood... how dare a girl...

- Joan What's *girl* got to do with it?
- Toller Who was barely alive when I was fighting the Freikorps at Dachau!?
When my friends were executed?
- Joan Oh I get it, I ain't been where the blood and guts fly so I should keep
my bleedin trap shut, cos what do I know?!
- Toller It would help if you swore less!
- Joan No it bloody wouldn't! Know where I learned that?
- Toller The fleshpots and the gutters with your mate *Jimmie*?
- Joan The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art!
- Toller You learned to curse at the RADA?
- Joan I learned to never let anyone talk down to me again. I hated that place.
I never knew my accent was so *funny*! I used to eat my sandwiches in
the khazi cos I was scared.
- Toller You? Afraid?
- Joan Yes. Me. Posh pretty *gals*, making bee sting lips at the mirrors... Miss
Debutante 1933, rich Americans getting a proper English accent,
having *such fun*. One day this girl, she had a title, real High St Ken
sort, says... 'oh Joan dear it must be a *frightful bore to be poor*...
- Toller And did you swear at her?
- Joan Patronise me all you want mate. No I didn't. She looked right through
me and I... stood there and took it... then I ran off to the lavvy sobbing.
Like I was nothing. The Head of the course came up end of the 1st
Year, he says...
- Truth is Joan I'm a bit disappointed with you...
- Joan I thought you know what... so am I.
- Toller Why are you telling me this?
- Joan Cos it's the most important lesson I ever had... the door will never
open for me, unless I put my boot clean through it first! There'll always

be a reason why my face don't fit. I'm female, working class and I don't look like Greta fuckin Garbo, so it's scrubbers or comedy aunts for me Ernst!

Toller I see... well Fraulein Li...

Joan It's Joan! Just Joan, alright?

Silence, neither breaks it. Loud explosion.

SCENE 2

Actor 3 becomes Gertrud. She speaks quietly. Toller is dispensed with.

Gertrud My name is Gertrud Voelcker,

Rach Well folks that's the whole building shaking you can feel... so, day one of Draw The Fires, went well didn't it...? What we know is it was a very fraught production, whether Joan and Ernst had that particular row well...

Gertrud Please Fraulein Littlewood...

Rach So now Joan has no actors and the writer is heading down Oxford Rd into Manchester with his wife,

Joan Good

Gertrude I would like to be in your play

Rach and may or may not be back...

Joan Be quiet

Gertrude if I am may if this is no trouble

Joan What was that?

Rach What was what?

Gertrud Sorry, I beg your pardon, forgive my rudeness, I will leave now.

Joan No, stay, who are you?

Gertrud Gertrud Voelker, aus Kiel, I heard the shouting.

Rach Sorry? All the way from Kiel?

Gertrud Yes.

Rach From 1914? Over 20 years ago?

Gertrud Yes.

Rach How?

Gertrud I was just sitting over there...

Joan It's a play love, get on with it!

Gertrud Fraulein Littlewood I was only a very small part in events... not so important as Herr Toller who is a great revolutionary and author.

Joan Yes.

Martha And Ich bin Martha Riedl... also from Kiel. I too would like to be in your play Frau Littlewood. I was 15 years old when the Aufstant took place.

Joan Go on.

Martha I was there all day when the shooting happened and the people were killed.

Gertrud I also witnessed the Aufstant first hand.

Joan Did you know each other?

Martha Nein.

Gertrud No

Joan Right, well let's say you did for the benefit of our story.

Gertrud Can you do this?

Martha This is unethical is it not?

Joan Not if we say so upfront, look do you want to be in this play or not?

Gertrud Hello Martha.

Martha Hi Gertrud, yes I remember you now!

Gertrud I worked in the union office on Langen Segen.

Martha That's where we met! I knew it, my Dad was in the union!

Gertrud Then I definitely met him.

Martha A real Socialist, I was brought up to be against everything that was military. Were you born in Kiel?

Gertrud Hamburg, we moved to Kiel... we had such a lovely childhood before the war, we'd go camping, hiking at Tugendorf...

Martha Oh I love Tugendorf!

Joan Yes alright, tell me about the revolution.

Gertrud Which revolution? Whose?

Joan There was more than one?

Martha Yes. And they happened in more ways than one.

Joan When did it start?

Martha Long before 1918.

Gertrud Yes. I remember when War broke out...

The sound of cheering, of patriotic songs/ music.

The office gradually emptied of young men. And...

Joan And what?

Gertrud Part of me was really glad. To see the back of them... and to have some real proper interesting work to do.

Suddenly a whole new rhythm, energy, music, screen images of wartime Germany. Both Martha and Gertrud deliver these lines and play with them,

Martha 1st August 1914. Sunday. we sat on the steep cliffs at Möltenort. The Kiel harbour was empty and the Kieler Woche had ended.

Gert In the streets, the citizens debate, shocked and stunned.

Martha They don't want war but all you hear is "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles!"

Gertrud At school we had learnt "The Kaiser is a lovely man"-

Martha And now war! A patriotic wave breaking out.

Images/ soundscape – gentle, melancholic air, for we know what happened.

Gertrud At the train station, lines and lines of young men, bedecked with flowers.

Martha Being hugged by mothers, hands firmly shook by fathers.

Gertrud To the sound of drums and trumpets and singing crowds they're sent off to war.

Joan Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag!

Gertrud Was?

Joan Pack Up Your Troubles...? it's a song, a patriotic British song from the time, sorry I'll shuttup.

Martha It was madness. Everything that was military I was brought up to be strictly against!

Now Martha is with Gertrud as if at the union office.

Martha Gertrud.

Gertrud Oh hi Martha come in.

Martha Can't stay my dad sent me to collect his tailoring tools, he left them here yesterday?

Gertrud Oh. He hasn't been called up then?

Martha No he's needed at the clothing office, it's important war work so he stays at home thank God.

Gertrud Good, I'd help you find them, but I have to finish all this work.

Martha Really? Do you need some help? I could work here too.

Gertrud How old are you?

Martha 17... (pause) 15.

Gertrud You have to finish school.

Martha I hate school.

Gertrud Word of advice, don't say that in a job interview.

Martha They teach nothing useful!

Getrud Or that.

Martha Songs about the stupid Kaiser.

Getrud Not that either.

Martha Then tell us off for having short hair! I want to be independent, stand on my own two feet, earn my own living... be like you.

Getrud Like me? The only reason my job is interesting is because of this war, and I still have to do all the boring stuff like compile lists.

Martha What of?

Getrud The dead.

Martha Oh.

Getrud And wounded. You can help me do that if you want?

Martha No... I don't think so.

Getrud Don't blame you. Every now and then I'm typing a name and address... and I realize I know him. Knew him.

Martha Really?

Getrud One the other day... he worked here in this office. Sat at the next desk to me.

Martha Oh... sorry were you and he... sweet..?

Getrud No... I didn't like him. The least bit.

Martha You shouldn't say that when he's died for..

Getrud I know. When he's died for me... to protect the women and children that's what they tell them... before the war I was the only woman in this office.

Martha Lucky you, had the pick of all the fellers!

Gertrud But they were all horrible. They loved embarrassing me, playing tricks. Now they're all saints and heroes.

Martha Maybe they were just joking?

Gertrud Yeah. Maybe they all thought I shouldn't have been here too.

Martha Oh I see.

Gertrud Yeah. At home, with the apron, one baby here, another one here...

Martha Wearing plaits in your hair like a good German girl?

Gertrud Quite. They might have been joking... but it wasn't funny.

Martha is silent a moment.

Martha What's the book you're reading?

Gertrud It's a Sociology book. I got it from the library here.

Martha I want to read sociology books... what are they?

Gertrud How do you know you want to read them if you don't know what they are?

Martha Cos it's an 'ology... I just know that it's about something important. Things that actually matter! Not the stupid romances...

Gertrud Where the heroine gets to wait by the door...

Martha Weeping..

Gertrud Her hair flowing in the wild November wind...

Martha As the angry sky glowers darkly overhead and her love is taken off to war...

Gertrud From which he'll most likely return minus an eye, a leg, most of his teeth and also his entire pre war personality.

Martha Really? Not in the ones I read.

Gertrud Maybe we should write some new ones? Real ones? You should come to our youth group meetings.

Martha What happens there?

Gertrud We talk, read, share ideas, argue cat and dog, about politics, art... the madness of this world, and how we change it top to bottom and make better one!

Martha Really? I'd love to come!

Gertrud You'll be welcome, now, I have work to do.

Martha Writing lists?

Gertrud Exactly.

Martha That'd make me angry too. I'll see you soon.

Exit Martha. Gertrud is alone. She tells the audience.

Gertrud Everyday the special war bulletins - Victories and conquests and victories and conquests. Mixed with ethnic hatred! Tempered only when the first lists of wounded, missing and fallen reached the people. The pain of parents who lose sons is unimaginable.

A very long list of names on the screen. Kathe Kollwitz images here.

But the war continues. And the queues grow.

Music. Food queues, hunger. The visual motif of the Kathe Kollwitz statue. Mother and Son. Images of wartime Germany on the screens.

SCENE 3

The lighting gives us Draw The Fires. Music comes in. The actor playing Joan assumes the character of Lucie the barmaid/ prostitute character.

Lucie (drying glasses and singing to herself)

She sat beneath the willow,
Her baby at her breast;
The night wind sighed along the lake
And a star shone in the west.

She sat so sad and still
As pale and still as death;
And the night wind stirred her raven locks
With a cold and chilling breath...

Actor 3 now becomes Reichspietsch, one of the sailors who inspired the mutiny.

Reichs A pint of old and mild, Lucie

Lucie There you are love.

Reich Come off it!...

Lucie Who do you think you're talking to?

Reich That was alright once, perhaps... You've got the officers after you now though.

Lucie Oh have I, Mr Know -all? Same again?

Reich Look slippy then, I'm in a hurry!

Lucie Stop a bit longer now you're here.

Reich You're such a faithless hussy, you are!

Lucie You've got such smooth soft hair.

Reich I'm like that all over.

Lucie You're a pig you are!

Reich Well, have you... what have you been up to lately, Lucie?

Lucie If you really want to know I'm getting married.

Reich Good luck to you! Who've you caught?

Lucie He's been invalidated out. Got a nice job too.

Reich Flown high haven't you? No room for us poor devils now!

Lucie Won't you take me out again Max?

Reich Me? What, have you quarrelled with him already?

Lucie You've got such nice hair Max?

Enter Ernst Toller. The actor playing Lucie now drops that character and reverts in a second to Joan.

Joan Ernst what's his hair got to do with the price of milk? And why if she's getting married... how come she's throwing herself at the hero?

Toller Because he's the hero and er... she's...

Joan A barmaid? And that's what they do?

Toller Max Reichpietsch was shot for his part in the revolution! You should show some respect for him!

Joan Ernst, have you ever been hungry?

Toller Yes. In the trenches in Flanders, and again in prison in fear of my life, when my friends were murdered by the Freikorps! You?

Joan I've been hungry. When I left RADA... I didn't finish the course. I hated the London lah de dah theatre world, so I set off walking, to Liverpool. I was gonna get the boat to America... be like Charlie Chaplin... I had nothing. I was so hungry I nicked some turnips from a field... gnawed on em raw. A couple, nice people, dirt poor theirselves, found me on a grass verge in Burton On Trent... I passed out. They thought I was dead.. they took me to their house and shared what bit they had with me... with a complete stranger.

Toller That was kind of them.

- 3 It may also be a complete fiction of course, but it's in Joan's book so er... must be true.
- Joan You had food queues didn't you? In Germany?
- Toller Yes, Fraulein Littlewood...
- Joan It's bloody Joan!
- Toller Bloody Joan! There were food queues! I've seen men, close friends, killed!
- Joan Course.
- Toller Watched them cry their last breath, beg for water and their mother with their guts spilling out. Those men suffered! And don't tell me that you can imagine because you can't!
- Joan Is that why there's no women in your play?
- Toller (pause) Sorry?
- Joan Because we can't know what war's like?
- Toller There are women in the play.
- Joan The heroes mother, she gets to weep over him, and a barmaid, tart with a heart...
- Toller My play is about the Kiel Aufstant... there were no women on the ships!
- Joan But there were women in Kiel!
- Toller Yes.
- Joan Women who actually starved!?
- Toller Yes.
- Joan So where's that? Their suffering? That mother? Watching her kid shrivel and die of malnutrition? Right in front of her.
- Toller But how can I tell of that?

Joan Why not, you're a writer aren't you? You're right, I won't ever go to the trenches... but I could be holding that kid as it starves. Isn't that a war? Put it to my breast and there's nothing there for it cos I ain't eaten in days either.

Toller I am Ernst Toller...

Joan I know, you've said.

Toller My work has been translated into English and I am darling of the London left wing world.

Joan Good for you, where's the women?

Toller I led the Bavarian Revolution...

Joan Where's the women!?

Toller I am fleeing Nazi persecution, a refugee! And who the bloody hell is an English girl who swears too much to question me!?

Joan Who are you to say women's wars don't count?

Exit Toller furiously. There needs to be a large and rowdy theatrical musical effect to create this sense of seismic shift.

Joan You're right! Maybe I'm no-one and should accept it and know my place... but like I said mate... sod that!

SCENE 4

Enter Lotte (actor 2) she has a pail. She sits upon it. The queue image. Lotte exists/ thinks in a separate mental space from Gertrud & her Mother – but physically/ image wise they are connected.

Gertrud Gertrud Voelcker worked in the union office...

Lotte writes a letter. As she speaks, the movement/ push pull physicality of the queues comes alive.

Lotte Hour after bone chilling bitter, biting, teeth grinding hour, dear Karl...

Gertrud If we want milk my sister Lotte has to queue for hours. This is her. Lotte.

Lotte Clinging onto me ration book for grim death, half the time there's sod all to buy when you get to the front anyway, so it's not worth the paper it's written on... Oi! Never mind pushing in get to the back mate!

Gertrud's mother (actor 1) peeling potatoes and turnips. Gertrud joins her and is sewing clothes from old material. Find imagery/ physicality that brings this to life.

Gertrud Each day at noon I leave the office... starving hungry for some lunch... I walk down Langen Segen to the centre of Kiel, hungry faces, children with lice and sores because we have no soap... each day the second I walk in the door...

Lotte And me a soldier's wife Karl!

Gertrud I meet the stench of dried turnips!

Lotte Thought I was meant to get sympathy for that! Who's given more to this war effort than me? Folks think we get it soft cos our blokes are at the front... if it's not us they have a pop at then it's these *lazy feckless trollops* who have too many children!

Gertrud My appetite vanishes!

Mother Ah, there you are, I was beginning to worry.

Lotte Why's it their fault and not the feller's who shtump em one then skip like rats off a dying ship? Tell me that?

Mother You're usually here before now.

Gertrud Work's very busy. This is my mother by the way.

Mother Are you hungry?

Gertrud I thought I was.

Lotte You remember Herr Dittmann, the potato seller? We'd see him Sundays sometimes, out walking by the coast, or in the country at Tugendorf.

Gertrud (to audience) Our childhood was beautiful, we had no idea what was coming.

Lotte He and his wife were always so nice, so polite.

Mother I've made dinner.

Gertrud I'm not hungry.

Lotte He got attacked, a mob knocked 7 bells of hell out of him, for hoarding spuds.

Mother Yes you are.

Gertrud No I'm not.

Mother You have to eat.

Lotte Covered in blood he was... I didn't help him. Once I would have been really scared, now it's... normal. It's who we've become.

Mother Gertrud you have to eat. There's some bread left...

Gertrud That's half sawdust.

Mother Sawdust for bread.

Gertrud Acorns for coffee.

Mother What are we bloody squirrels!?

Lotte We're not who we thought we were at all.

Motion, Lotte being pushed and pulled in the queue.

Gertrud If I'd been quick this morning I could have got some horse meat.

Lotte There can't be nothing left! I've queued for hours!

Mother Thought you'd no appetite?

Lotte Got enough money you can have Christmas dinner delivered every day of course but... Oi!! Watch it! Get off me! Get your hands off!

Imagery for the pull/ push of the queue feeds into that of the animal dying, It gets more frantic, aggressive and repetitive that creates the energy of the food riot.

Gertrud It was pulling a cart up Langen Segen.

Lotte We've queued here!

Gertrud It's hide was covered in sores...

Lotte In the freezing cold all day!

Gertrud The man was trying to keep it going, pulling on the bridle, it stopped... walked on a few yards, but then it stumbled...

Lotte Maybe if I go round the back with you would that do it!?

Gertrud And he whacked it so hard with the stick...

Lotte I'd sooner starve mate!

Gertrud He kept pulling and he got really angry but... the horse just crumpled down. Only that the police came the mob'd have ripped the carcass apart in front of him... there was hardly any meat on it anyway.

Lotte You can't... do this!

Gertrud How come I can cry over a horse but not people?

It finishes sharply, throwing Lotte on to the floor. She gathers herself up and climbs to her feet, with nothing.

SCENE 5

Enter Lotte now in to a new space/ reality with Gertrud and Mother.

Gertrud Lotte!

Mother We were going to come and find you.

Gertrud You must be freezing, poor thing.

Mother Where's the milk?

Lotte (tearful) There is none.

Mother What?

Lotte Yeah. It ran out!

Gertrud Oh Lotte... come here... (*hugs her*)

Lotte It's alright, same for everyone.

Silence.

Mother Lotte...

Lotte I'm not hungry before you start Mum.

Mother No... shall we get you a blanket... or anything..?

Lotte Yeah. Please.

Mother Long as you didn't get hurt.

Lotte No just the usual, yanked and shoved about, some cheeky swine grabbed my arse.

Mother Come here.

Lotte An old guy got beat up by three lads for his bag of mouldy spuds.

Gertrud Lotte.

Gertrud hands her the telegram and walks away and out of the scene.

Lotte What?... What's up?

Gertrud Lotte had been out queueing for hours in the cold... the day the telegram came.

Mother I'm sorry Lotte.

Lotte looks at the telegram. She takes the letter she was writing from her pocket.

Lotte (*slowly*) Oh... Oh Karl... what did they do to you?

3 1917, the year that everyone starved.

1 That horses fell dead in the street.

3 That the casualty lists grew and grew.

2 That is what changes everything.

3 The feeling that we were betrayed.

1 Said Kathe Kollwitz of the loss of her son, Peter.

3 And perhaps Peter would still be living had it not been for this terrible betrayal. Peter and millions, many millions of other boys. All betrayed. That is why I cannot be calm. Within me all is upheaval, turmoil."

1 Said Kathe Kollwitz

Song/ music here.

Gertrud An end to the war was not foreseeable for the people. More and more young men and fathers were dragged into war service, wounded, lost their health and lives. I was closely connected with the workers' youth group, firstly as a learner and then as the anger and the despair grew... I became an agitator.

SCENE 6

Joan and Ernst Toller return.

Toller So the next scene from Draw The Fires, and Max Reichpietsch, hero of the story is on the run after leading the revolt against the conditions in the German navy... however first we need a song!

Music comes in too as she ponders this.

When I was living in Hamburg
I was so young and gay;
I kept my name unto myself
And thrived on sailors pay.

My brother wrote me sadly
Dear Sister please to come;
Your mother's lying very ill
And wants her little girl home

Who wants the Kaisers crown?
Who wants a shilling a day?
There's nothing so rare that can compare
With a girl on sailor's pay!

Actor 1 is Lucie, 3 is Reichpietsch.

Lucie Hide Max! Upstairs in my room! They won't look for you there!

Reich Don't you worry kid.

Lucie But I'm afraid for you Max! They'll lock you up if you stay!... I know a fisherman who'll take you over to Holland...

Reich Same again please! Us fellows have to pay twice as much for our drink as the officers. Next thing that'll happen they'll be given a pound of tea for everything they drink! Extra. Reward. For gallant thirst!

Lucie I'd go too Max. We could meet in Amsterdam.

Reich (sings) For I'm young and I'm good and I'm willing.

Lucie (weeps) You don't love me a bit Max, I know you don't!

Reich (kisses her laughing) You've got a bloke already. And I've got a girl in Berlin.

Toller The Master at Arms comes in, with several armed guards...
Hands up!

Toller Reichpietsch and two other sailors who are standing at the bar, laugh

Toller Put 'em up you lousy deserter!

Reich Nice day isn't it? Bit too much rain perhaps.

Toller Stand to attention or I fire!

Reich Here's how!

Joan breaks out of the rehearsal.

Joan Blimey... the square jawed hero laughs in the face of danger as the tart with a heart gives it her best *'You don't love me a bit Max! I know you don't!'*

Toller It's a good scene, she loves him and... look Reichpietsch is...

Joan A hero, yes, but he was *real* once, you've turned him into something out of a boys adventure story... but her... what's she? How do you think that makes me feel Ernst?

Toller (exits) I don't care how you feel!

Joan I know!

SCENE 7

The other actors remove costumes of Martha/ Gertrud/ Mother we are back to the opening Narrator figures – talking on microphones.

- 3 So, ladies and gents, rehearsals for Draw The Fires are erm... still going... actually that's Ernst Toller you can hear shouting \$*!k you Fraulein Littlewood on his way out of the building...
- Joan Please his bloody self!
- Fran An organised oppositional youth movement grows, Gertrud Voelcker's memoirs tell us.
- Gertrud A policeman in blue uniform with spiked helmet, sabre and moustache sat in on our meetings. Martha...
- Martha Hello. If something is *politically suspicious* to him, or appears *dangerous*, he dissolves the meeting!
- Gertrud The young people did not lose their oppositional attitudes
- 1 Says Gertrud. Martha Riedl is 15 remember.
So, here is one of the youth group's meetings...
- Martha My dad's been conscripted...
- Gertrud Isn't he too old?
- Martha If he falls overboard he can't swim!
- Gertrud Don't. Lists and lists of the dead and wounded piled high to the ceiling in the office...
- Martha So many of ours already lost. Hardly any of the boys who are taken ever come back!

A gradual building wall of sound, a cacophony of female voices, a combination of recorded sound – also appearing on screen in the original German, the actors on stage also speak these lines (narration lines via the microphones) as it reverberates loud, tumultuous, it builds and builds, very percussive. This needs to build and build and be very loud by the end.

- Gertrude Who knows what's actually happening in Flanders?!
- Martha All these daily bulletins about victories, they're not worth arse paper!
- Gertrud They lie and lie but they can't hide the truth, it's a disaster in France!
- Martha On and on they say until we're victorious!
- Gertrud Stick with it until we're victorious!
- Martha There'll be none of us left!
- 1 That policeman in the spiked helmet is pretty alarmed by now...
enough of this, that's quite enough! Traitors to the Fatherland!
- Gertrud And now we are traitors for saying so.
- Martha You are the traitors to the Fatherland not us!
- 1 This meeting is closed!
- Gertrud The voices went out beyond our meetings. They went into the streets...
- Martha Revolution in Russia - an entirely new way of life - workers, soldiers,
farmers form councils. Soviets.
- Gertrud January 1918, the metal workers' strike is a direct attempt to end the
war...
- Martha But still it continues...
- Gertrude The great German offensive in the summer of 1918, which was
supposed to secure victory...
- Martha Falls apart in failure.
- Fran The soldiers begin to desert.

Each actor whispers Peace Bread Freedom into the microphone and it is record via the loop pedal. Now their voices are recorded, and looped atop of one another, thus we have a building sense of cacophony, of a multitude of women.

- Claire Enough of the mass murder, enough of the hunger, enough of the
oppression!

Rach Said Minna Fasshauer

Fran Friede! Brot! Freiheit!

Rach That's Peace Bread Freedom by the way!
(*under others*)

Claire Peace Bread Freedom

Fran To our work, women, proletarians, in order that our message reaches even the most humble garret!

(*under others*)

Claire Peace Bread Freedom

Fran To our work so that our message becomes an intention of preparedness and energy!

Rach That's Clara Zetkin by the way

Claire From women to women! We don't want to watch as our men and sons are slaughtered.

Rach Wrote an unnamed pamphleteer...

Fran Make no pacts with false friends! We arm ourselves with every weapon to take on our enemies on every stage.

Rach That's Clara Zetkin again

Rach "I'll go and get the weapons... a woman is always beyond suspicion"

Fran That's Cläre Jung

~~Claire We fought for a new attitude towards life, for socialist ideas, for an art of activism. We fought for the collective, the truth, beauty..."~~

Fran Women are strong enough to stop the wheels of industry if we want to!
We fight!

All We want peace! Peace for everyone!

(tumult continues then sfx cut by Claire on looper)

Claire Until finally...

The screens have images of ships, the sound of ships horns, loud and booming.

Gertrud October 30th the warship the "König" lay offshore at Wilhelmshaven,
the sailors are ordered to sail...

SCENE 8

Draw The Fires lighting state. Enter Joan Littlewood.

A Sailor enters

Sailor Listen mates! They say we've got to put to sea. Death or victory – the bloody fools! What chance have we got to win? This isn't August 1914, it's October 1918. Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey have all shut up shop. The brass hats on shore are asking for an armistice. They know bloody well that the army's finished. And the submarines are finished too. And so are we! Are we going to let ourselves be mucked about to save the officers faces? I ask you!

All No!

Sailors What's it to be then? Steam up or draw the fires?

All Draw The Fires!

Sailor The crew has taken command sir.

Captain You mean they've mutinied?

Sailor Against the monarchy sir. Not against Germany.

Captain You are traitors to Germany!

All Draw The Fires! Draw The Fires!

Joan breaks free from it – and the lighting reverts to former state.

Joan Why no mention of all the people starving in Kiel?!

Toller The scene is in the ship's boiler room!

Joan Barely a minute later the play ends. But Kiel, the people, the women...!!

The ships horn blasts out once more.

Gertrud Please Fraulein Littlewood... On the 1st November 1918 the warships came to Kiel, the ones that had refused orders.

Martha On the Konig a red flag is hoisted.

49 sailors from the Konig are arrested.

They're taken by force along the Kiel canal from Wilhelmshaven

To be locked up in the Kiel Barracks...

The ship passes right through the town,

Past the factories

And from the windows way up in the factories the people call out to the sailors aboard the ships...

Back and forth the shouts go out and soon all of Kiel knows what's happening...

And so the people, the ordinary people ...

Gertrud And the people... the ordinary people,

Martha Finally... together...

Gertrud Go out into the streets.

Martha It's like a wildfire that everyone can feel in their fingertips.

Gertrud So many meetings... so many hours arguing...

Martha Waiting for this!

Gertrud November 3rd, 20,000 sailors and dockers on strike.

Peace! Bread! Freedom!"

Gertrude From the forest glade down to the trade union headquarters, the streets were full.

Martha We were young, we were curious. We wanted to be part of it. I could not lay low.

On the screens these quotes in German

"We don't want to be thugs. We only want our rights!"

Said Clare Jung...

I stood on the side of the revolutionaries. It seemed to me that this was the logical end to the war with all of its corruption!

Said Constance Hallgarten

Gertrud Soldiers with machine guns come flooding into Kiel. Martha, Martha!

Martha I was at school... the caretaker ordered us all to hide but I shouted - My father is in the Navy, I need to find out what's happening! I could run quickly back then.

Gertrud The sailors meet at the Union office, we try to make sense of events... we send and receive messages all day... we need to warn people about the soldiers!

Martha I ran all the way to Trades Union HQ. I bumped into a bloke called Eggerstedt.

Cut crowd sound. Actor 1 is Eggerstedt.

Egg Martha what are you doing?

Martha Is my Dad here?

Egg How did you get here? Bloody hell young girl running about, soldiers in town... It's not safe!

Martha Is my dad here?

Egg Yes he's here. Everything's all right.

Martha I don't know where my mum and sister are!

Egg You can't go back out, it's....

Martha I have to go!

Egg Then again... nobody'll suspect you will they?

Martha Of what?

Egg Anything. Teenage girl... what could you be up to... no forget it your old man'll go mad if I get you involved, go on scam, vamoosh...

Martha What is it you need doing?

Egg Do you know where Peerstall pub is?

Martha Course I know where Peerstall is, think I'm stupid?

Egg Take a message to the blokes in there.

Martha I haven't got time to run messages to blokes in pubs!

- Egg Tell them there's a squadron of soldiers due to arrive in Kiel any time... they need to be ready.
- Martha Soldiers? Government soldiers?
- Egg Yeah. Anyone stops you, you're just on your way home and don't know a thing.
- Martha Ok. November 3rd, I ran errands and messages back and forth across town all day.
- Gertrude 20 000 demonstrators approach the military prison in Kiel.
- Martha I saw much more because I was on the streets.
- Gertrud These German soldiers have been ordered to shoot their brothers...
- Martha And also their sisters.
- Gertrud Military might will not be overpowered without spilling blood.
- Fran 7 people are killed... 2 more will die later of wounds... scores and scores are injured and wounded..
- Rach Many of the soldiers who are sent to quell the rebellion... lay down their guns and join it instead.
- Fran 40,000 Germans, men, women and children... have control of Kiel.
- Gertrude Finally the Soldiers and Workers Council publish 14 demands!
- Rach The 4th of November.... from the union office in Kiel... we proclaimed the first German Republic.
- Gertrud It will be the end of the war! The war provoked by world conquerors which has led to immeasurable mounds of bodies and rubble.
- Fran Said Gertrud Voelcker.
- Getrud It will be the end of the war!
- Fran She said.

The sounds of gunfire. Another burst of gunfire. Another round of gunfire runs as the 14 points appear on the screen in English and German. We need a visual/ sound form to relate the riot/ shooting/ deaths moment.

The Time will Come

Those of you in prisons bound
Who call a freezing jail your home,
Do not despair! For all around
The call rings out: the time will come!

The time will come because we all
Will work to build a brand new world
And we will break the old time's thrall
You shall/will see freedom's flag unfurled

The time will come! The thunder's quaking
Across the earth with monstrous boom
Comrades hark: the earth is shaking!
Our day will come

The time draws near. The mighty fist
Of the proletariat wakes the land...
Comrades we will set you free,
Red flags flying in our hands!

*The time draws near. The mighty fist
Of the worker wakes the land...
Comrades we will set you free,
Red flags flying in our hands!*

SCENE 9

Enter Martha

Gertrud Martha! Did you find your mother and sister?

Martha Yes, Mother was at a neighbour's house, going mad wondering where I was. My sister was inside the school.

Gertrud Good.

Martha What are you doing?

Gertrud My very first job for the Revolutionary Council no less!

Martha The Revolutionary Council! Are you actually a member of it?

Gertrud What do you think? I just do the typing.

Martha Oh course. You couldn't actually be on it.

Gertrud I have to write the dismissals to the soldiers...
My dear Comrade... the state that you served so bravely, and risked your life for, is no more. You are hereby freed from your obligation to it.

Martha But not from your obligation to help us build a new, fair and equal Socialist country like they are in Russia.

Gertrud Can't put that.

Martha Why not?

Gertrud I just type what the council have agreed.

Martha What do the soldiers say? To being de mobbed?

Gertrud They all stamped and cheered then went to the pub.

Martha They can't do that.

Gertrud Who can blame 'em, 4 years fighting, they're tired.

Martha How do they think we feel?

Gertrud They're not bothered how we feel.

Martha But it's only starting, we need them to spread the word, get the people out on the streets everywhere!

Gertrud I have work to do, as ever. You go home Martha, your mum and dad'll want to see you.

Martha walks away.

Martha But this only became grist to my mill.

1/MB Said Martha Riedl many years later.

Martha I ran back and said – look we know people who have got fight in them! We know people who are ready to spread the uprising further!

Gertrud Martha, out beyond Molfsee, there are officers meeting who want to have control back in their hands. This is far from over.

Martha Then we need to send our people out, get the message out and spread the revolution!

Martha gives an account of this conversation occurring between between her and 'a friend from school' who she never names.

Martha Not many people were paying attention to a small girl who flitted from place to place like a sparrow.

Said Martha Riedl many years later... of her role in the Kiel Aufstant. That merits no mention in the history books.

Or plays. Till now.

Fran Martha Reidl was 15 years old. Gertrude Volker not much older.

All (sing) *Red flags flying in our hands!*

SCENE 10

- Claire Meanwhile back in Manchester Ernst and Joan, Joan and Ernst...
Draw The Fires... let's face facts guys this isn't working...
- Joan Zip it.
- Claire I'll zip you...
- Toller Ok so these girls were in Kiel.
- Joan And were smack in the middle and involved in what happened.
- Toller She was an errand girl!
- Joan She's a heroine! Errand girl my arse! If she'd copped one of those
bullets, that'd be her in the cemetery wouldn't it?
- Toller Of course but...
- Joan Is that not the same as getting your head blown off in Flanders?
- Toller Probably.
- Joan Or getting kicked to death by the Freikorps?
- Toller Yes. A revolution needs a mass of ordinary people...
- Joan And hunger, starvation, the sheer heartbreakin 4 years of pain is what
drove it, and who cops at least half of that? We do! But cos we weren't
in the trenches, somehow we weren't there, we don't know... shooting
a gun is a revolutionary act, but nothing else counts. You read history
books... and we're not in em at all! Men have this really strange sight
defect, where they only see each other, and we get blotted out... or if
we're there we're somebody's wife. I say Gertrud and Martha weren't
just two girls who ran errands or worked in the office... I say they
represent the heartbeat of the revolution... and without 'em it wouldn't
have happened. But all you see Ernst... is the mother or the
prostitute... which is no good to me, cos I'm neither.
- Gertrud Die Rote Fahne – 'This is the beginning of the German revolution – of
the world revolution...' It spread like wildfire, Hanover, Bremen,
Hamburg, Berlin... Munich.

SCENE 11

Toller Exactly! The real revolution happened in Munich. You need to know what happened there to understand it. Kurt Eisner...

3 Leader of the Munich revolution

Toller Invited me to come to Munich and...

3 My name isn't Kurt Eisner, but if it was I'd be disputing this, Toller seems to have made it up.

Toller I did not make it up!

Joan Did it happen?

Toller It... well...

Joan Right. So you can write up your role in things all you want, but I can't talk about two girls in Kiel?

Enter Hilde Kramer – Actor 3.

Hilde Please Fraulein Littlewood.

Joan Yes, sorry Ernst, one second love.

Hilde Ich bin Hilde Kramer, I would also like if I could be in your play, I was not in Kiel however... I was in Munich when the revolution happened, unlike Herr Toller, who was not.

Joan He wasn't?

Toller No. I arrived some days later...I'd been ill at my mother's house with the Spanish flu, which also killed millions. (*leaves?*)

Hilde And also Fraulein Joan, like you I too am not a prostitute.

Joan I never said you were love.

Hilde You may not have but others surely did!

Joan Really?

Hilde Yes.

Joan Why?

Hilde Because I... entertained... men... in my room.

Joan So?

Hilde They said I was immoral.

Joan People say a lot of things love, learn to take no notice.

Hilde My stepmother, Gabriele Kaetzler... you'd like her, she adopted me when my parents died when I was young, then her husband died, she raised 6 of us on her own to be Socialists and free thinkers.

Joan Well done Gabriele.

Hilde She said marriage and bourgeois love is our enemy because it will make us into a man's property.

Joan That should be taught in schools.

Hilde And she allowed us to run round the garden naked.

Joan Maybe not that.

Hilde In the summertime.

Joan Obviously.

Hilde The neighbours complained.

Joan As they will.

Hilde It didn't stop us.

Joan Good for you. What's your point?

Hilde They make out that we are not a true German women. We are not proper.

Joan So what you say and do is of less value.

Hilde I am silenced because I'm not *normal*, I'm a bit *weird*.

Joan Exactly, a slut!

Hilde Yes, alright I get it.

Joan We don't count cos we're unnatural, cos we're not mothers, nurturers... yeah... it's a... a...

2 "*A tool of oppression*" ladies and gentlemen, that's the term Joan's reaching for, back then it wasn't around unfortunately, but 'tool of oppression' is the phrase and right she is too.

Joan Thankyou.

2 You're welcome.

Joan Now shuttup.

Now Hilde takes this on and up a level. A shift.

Hilde 1918, the first year of my adult life, by far the most eventful! Barely out of school and in the middle of events I could never have dreamed of, moving in circles of left-wing radical students, fully prepared to dedicate my life to socialism, to sacrifice my life to it. On the night of 7th November, I was on the streets with my friends... especially a young man from Luxembourg who I was in love with!

Joan What was his name?

Hilde It doesn't matter because he wasn't around for long.

Joan And you knew Toller?

Hilde Of course, I saw him everyday, I was secretary to the City Commander Rudolf Egelhofer, so I was in all the important meetings... but you should ask Rosa Levine...

Joan Why? Who's that?

Hilde Rosa was an agitator for the revolution. Her husband was Eugene Levine, Communist Leader.

Rosa Eugen and I joined thousands of people from all groups and classes gathered on the Oktoberwiese. Seven stages were erected and seven men spoke to the people.

Rosa The Kaiser has to abdicate!

Hilde Almost all the soldiers in Munich mutinied.

Rosa The next morning the King had fled and a new provisional government established in the Free State of Bavaria.

Hilde When I heard “Long live the Republic! Long live the Revolution!” We jumped up and down, we embraced each other. That was the 7th November. The happiest day of my life.

(song)

*The time draws near. The mighty fist
Of the worker wakes the land...
Comrades we will set you free,
Red flags flying in our hands!*

The time will come.

- Claire It didn't last.
- Claire (*pause*) Rosa didn't like Toller much.
- Rosa Toller was intoxicated with playing the Bavarian Lenin.
- Claire Said Rosa Levine-Mayer, and:
- Rosa That Toller thinks he's a character in one of his plays!
- Toller I also 'thought' I would form a Red Army unit and lead them into battle against the Freikorps at Dachau. Which I did!
- Rosa The Freikorps. They who said things like:
- Claire "People told us that the war was over. That made us laugh. We ourselves are the war. Its flame burns strongly in us.
- Rach It envelops our whole being and fascinates us with the enticing urge to destroy.
- Claire We obeyed... and marched onto the battlefields of the postwar world just as we had gone into battle on the western front:
- Rach singing, reckless and filled with the joy of adventure as we marched to the attack; silent, deadly, remorseless in battle.."
- Rosa Right. Men who choose death! Who con us all into believing we have to be in a state of perpetual war to survive... but against who?
- Claire Kill the men and rape the women.
- Rosa Quite. Men who hate women then...
- Rach Women, Socialists, pacifists, anything that challenges their twisted masculinity.
- (Sound cue - 'cello music - plays out during this scene)*
- Hilde I was in prison with Rosa when her husband, Eugene, was executed by the Friekorps. We spent the night together in our tiny cell... we held one another on the cold plank bed.

Both unable to sleep, tortured by each passing moment... but my worry must have been nothing to what Rosa endured.

Rach In the morning... there came a sound... a dull thud in the distance.

Rosa Hilde? Hilde what was that?

Hilde It was nothing.

Rosa Sounded like a...

Hilde It's probably a door slamming.

Rosa It didn't sound like a door.

Hilde Rosa stop it, it could have been anything.

Rosa Eugene?

Hilde Now don't let your mind race away with you...

Rosa What was it?

Hilde it was... nothing to worry about... I'm sure.

Rach Shortly afterwards, they brought out her husband's things.

(Cello music. Silence after end of music)

Toller Am I condemned because Eugene was executed and not me?

Joan Nobody is condemning you, Ernst. Just because I want to hear their stories - Hilde, her stepmother - it doesn't mean I'm attacking you.

Song in a round:

The time draws near. The mighty fist
Of the proletariat wakes the land...
Comrades we will set you free,
Red flags flying in our hands!

SCENE 12

Actor 2 is Gabriele.

Gabriele Hilde! Hilde!

Hilde Mother Kaetzler! what are you doing here?

Gabriele Same as you. I'm accused of going round giving inflammatory speeches and inciting the farmers to revolutionary action.

Hilde Oh...

Gabriele What darling?

Hilde I'm so happy to see you... and so sad too... it's over. Our revolution.

Gabriele Well... the big one yes...

Hilde At least we tried.

Gabriele Yes. Are you alright Hilde?

Hilde As I can be stuck in a tiny prison cell... with only a stinking toilet bucket for company. The warder watches me... use it... through the peephole.

Gabriele Come here. Now you have me too.

Hilde I don't mind being here, but Mother you shouldn't be.

Gabriele Why not? I'm guilty. Besides, it's all new experience, I've never been in a prison before. I like my little cell, the simplicity... gives you time to think.

Hilde Still prisoners aren't we.

Gabriele Hilde, darling we're prisoners anyway... jail cell or not we're captives in every aspect of life.

Hilde I suppose. Least at home we had clean clothes and soap.

Gabriele And a life sentence of conformity, femaleness, form, etiquette, of what's *proper*...

Hilde And what's immoral!

- Gabriele They can take your son away to get his head blown off but we can't vote in the election! They must really hate us to do that.
- Hilde Yes.
- Gabriele Come on Hilde, cheer up.
- Hilde Yes. Mum... my time on this earth has been heavenly.
- Gabriele Hilde...
- Hilde I'm ready to give my life for this cause!
- Gabriele You were only a secretary!
- Hilde I was not *only* a secretary!!
- Gabriele You know what I mean!
- Hilde I was in every meeting, privy to everything. Each night I spoke for hours with Toller about the progress of things...
- Fran MA Hilde reports this but Toller never mentions her by the way.
- Hilde In Berlin I met Karl Liebknecht. I had hoped to run into Rosa Luxemburg.
- Gabriele Didn't you?
- Hilde I found out later that the little dark-haired woman who came in and out of the room, while all the men were talking, was Rosa.
- Fran MA She who said...
- Rach MB "With the outcome of the world war the bourgeois class has forfeited its right to exist. It is no longer able to lead society out of the catastrophic economic collapse which the imperialist orgy has left behind."
- Fran MA And...
- Claire "The most revolutionary thing one can do is always to proclaim loudly what is happening."

- Rach MB And...
- Fran MA Women's freedom is the sign of social freedom."
- Rach MB Rosa Luxembourg who was beaten to death by the Freikorps, along with Karl Liebknecht, in January 1919.
- Fran MA Many years later, Hilde will write..
- Hilde It still causes me distress that I saw this great personality of the German workers' movement but I didn't recognise her.
- Fran MA Rosa Luxembourg, who said...
- Rach MB ... in the dark I smile at life, as if I knew some sort of magical secret that gives the lie to everything evil and sad and changes it into pure light and happiness. And all the while I'm searching within myself for some reason for this joy, I find nothing and must smile to myself again – and laugh at myself. * I believe that the secret is nothing other than life itself.

*** Music cue - Refrain of the Willow song**

She sat beneath the willow,
Her baby at her breast;
The night wind sighed along the lake
And a star shone in the west.

She sat so sad and still
As pale and still as death;
And the night wind stirred her raven locks
With a cold and chilling breath...

SCENE 13

- Fran Draw The Fires premiered in Manchester... and for all the rows, it was actually well reviewed. However...
- Jimmie Oi, Toller!
- Toller Yes?
- Jimmie My name's Jimmie Miller, aka Ewan McColl and either you cough us up a donation to our Theatre of Action funds or me and the boys will not be transferring with the play to London...
- Fran So says Joan in her book anyway.
- Toller That young man! He thinks he is everybody and he is nobody! I refuse to be blackmailed like this!
- Jimmie No donation to Theatre Of Action – no play. Adios amigo.
- Fran Jimmie and the boys walked out.
- Claire Upon arrival in London Joan found that the prompt script had vanished.
- Toller They are trying to sabotage my play!
- Claire Said Toller. And there seems to be evidence that people were.
- Joan I'll make another, and I'll replace the actors as well. And I'll play the barmaid's part myself I have to. I ain't the type to be beat Ernst.
- Who wants a sailors girl?
 Who wants a shilling a day?
 There's nothing so fair, as can compare
 With a girl on sailor's pay
- Fran After the performance in London Joan quit Manchester Rep.
- Claire She joined Theatre of Action, sowing the seeds of Theatre Workshop.
- Rach Ernst Toller is now barely known. His plays mostly forgotten.
- The hotel room in New York, where he would end his days beckoned, as depression consumed him.
- Fran Joan would make her mark in history with Oh What A Lovely War.

Claire The original ending of which, goes as follows...

Claire German soldiers disarm their officer.

Fran 'We represent the Soldiers and Sailors Council of Bremen, Hamburg, Friedrichshaven and wedding. Come with us, brother, we're marching to Berlin to arrest the Kaiser.'

Fran Officer:

Rach You will be shot.

Fran Soldier:

Claire Not yet.

Fran But the Lord Chancellor didn't like a scene where the German soldiers exhorted their British counterparts to join them in forming Soldiers Soviets and overthrowing their leaders... shame in my view.

The following is spoken into the microphone, recorded and then played back repeated via the looper pedal.

Claire Gertrud Voelcker.
 Rach Martha Riedl.
 Claire Hilde Kramer.
 Fran Rahel Strauss.
 Claire Anita Augspurg,
 Fran Lydia Heymann,

Claire The list goes on.

Fran Women who played a huge but utterly invisible role in ending the First World War.

Rach Their stories are an inspiration. We think they matter.

Claire As Rosa Luxemburg said:

Fran "I want to affect people like a clap of thunder,
 Rach to inflame their minds with the breadth of my vision,
 Claire the strength of my conviction and the power of my expression."

THE END