
Impressum

Bertolt Brecht - O Blindheit der Großen
(translated by Klaus Bung)

Length (of Editorial Introduction and English translation):
402 words = 2278 words

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SOURCE

Bertolt Brecht
from: Der kaukasische Kreidekreis (The Caucasian Chalk Circle)
(Brecht, Versuche 31, Aufbau-Verlag, Berlin 1956, p 19)

from: Brecht: The Caucasian Chalk Circle
first performed in 1948
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Caucasian_Chalk_Circle

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

In Brecht's play "The Caucasian Chalk Circle" (Der kaukasische Kreidekreis) there is a revolution. A dictator who thought himself invincible is toppled. The dictator has been arrested. His family has fled. His wife has grabbed jewellery to take with her but forgotten her baby. A speaker/Sänger ("Chorus") comments poetically on the action and its implications.

They trust
Into force which has lasted so long.
But long does not mean eternal.
O changing times! You give hope to the people.

In the audience are:

- Adolf Hitler (1889-1945), leader of the 1000-year Reich, which ended after 12 years
- Idi Amin (1928-2003) of Uganda
- Saddam Hussein (1937-2006) of Iraq
- Colonel Gaddafi (1942-2011) of Libya
- the people of Libya
- Sheikh Hasina (1947-) of Bangladesh, who was toppled in 2024 and was bewildered by the ingratitude of the people she had ruled with an iron first for so long
- the East Germans (GDR) (1949-1990) under their Communist Regime
- Bashar al-Assad (1965-) of Syria
- the people of Syria
- the Palestinians under the onslaught of the Zionist marauders

Original German

(The Chorus)

O Blindheit der Großen! Sie wandeln wie Ewige
Groß auf gebeugten Nacken, sicher
Der gemieteten Fäuste, vertrauend
Der Gewalt, die so lang schon gedauert hat.
Aber lang ist nicht ewig.
O Wechsel der Zeiten! Du Hoffnung des Volks!

(Aus dem Torbogen tritt der Gouverneur, gefesselt, mit grauem
Gesicht, zwischen zwei Soldaten, die bis an die Zähne bewaffnet
sind.)

Auf immer, großer Herr! Geruhe, aufrecht zu gehen!
Aus deinem Palast folgen dir die Augen vieler Feinde!
Du brauchst keine Baumeister mehr, es genügt ein Schreiner.
Du ziehst in keinen neuen Palast mehr, sondern in ein kleines
Erdloch.

Sieh dich noch einmal um, Blinder!

(Der Verhaftete blickt sich um.)

Gefällt dir, was du hattest? Zwischen Ostermette und Mahl
Gehst du dahin, von wo keiner zurückkehrt.

(Er wird abgeführt. Die Palastwache schließt sich an. Ein
Hornalarmruf wird hörbar. Lärm hinter dem Torbogen.)

Wenn das Haus eines Großen zusammenbricht
Werden viele Kleine erschlagen.
Die das Glück der Mächtigen nicht teilten
Teilen oft ihr Unglück. Der stürzende Wagen
Reißt die schwitzenden Zugtiere
Mit in den Abgrund.

English translation by Klaus Bung

Chorus:

O blindness of the great! They stride like the eternal gods
Great on bent necks, certain
Of the hired fists, trusting
Into force which has lasted so long.
But long does not mean eternal.
O changing times! You give hope to the people.

(From the archway steps the dictator, in handcuffs, grey-faced,
between two soldiers who are armed to the teeth.)

Chorus:

For ever, Great Lord! Walk upright if you please.
From your palace the eyes of many enemies are watching you.
You do not need any more architects, all you need is a carpenter.
You will not move into a new palace but into a little hole in the
ground.
Look back for the last time, blind man.

(The prisoner looks back.)

Do you like what you had? Between Easter Mass and breakfast
You go to the place from which no-one returns.

(He is led away. The palace guard follows. Alarums. Noise behind
the archway.)

When the house of a great man collapses,
Many small people are crushed.
Those who did not share the fortune of the powerful
Often share their misfortune. [*] The falling cart
Drags the sweating horses
Into the abyss.

*NOTE

"Never alone
Did the king sigh,
but with a general groan."
(Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act 3, Scene 3, 11-23)