

Lajos GALAMBOS:

SURRENDER

First performed at the Vigszinház Budapest on Feb.18 1972

Directed by Gábor Székely,
sets designed by Miklós Fehér,
costumes by Fanny Kemenes
20 male and 2 female parts

Following the success of the revolution in Pest, an independent government was formed in the autumn of 1848. The Hapsburg Court ordered Jellacic, the Ban of Croatia, to attack revolutionary Hungary from the South. The Honvéd army /Home Guard/ was formed under the leadership of Arthur Görgey, a Major in the Imperial Forces.

The play tells the story of two Courts Martial. The accused is Imre Kenéz, a cadet who is half Croat and half Hungarian. He is a naive revolutionary with a passionate faith. He had joined the Vienna uprising and had then returned home to Hungary, to fight at the side of the Hungarian revolutionaries.

In the first part he is being Court-Martialed by the Croats, the accusation being that he had agitated against the leadership in the Croat ranks. Imre Kenéz is honest, head held high he admits to his revolutionary views, his participation in the Vienna uprising and also that he had sought the permission of his ideal, Arthur Görgey to go and persuade the Croat rank and file that there was no sense in fighting their Hungarian brothers.

It becomes clear that Kenéz was not actually commissioned by Görgey, he had undertaken his task off his own bat and at his own risk because of his conviction that the various nationalities must not turn their arms on each other in the revolution, they ought to link arms instead.

He is condemned to death, and right then news of an Hungarian attack arrives. The Croats, put to flight, promise Kenéz his life if he agrees to kill Görgey. They blackmail him and tell him that his father's life also will be taken, should he say no. A rope is put round the neck of his aged sire in his presence.

Kenéz wishes to gain time and accepts the commission. His father is carried off by the Croats as a hostage.

In the second part Kenéz faces a Hungarian revolutionary, that is Görgey's, Court Martial. The scene is the same, the behaviour of the judges is the same, the accused is the same, the procedure is the same. He is charged with an attempt on Görgey's life, though Kenéz had not done anything of the sort.

The judges conduct proceedings on the basis of the depositions of the earlier Court Martial which had been found. Görgey is getting ready to do battle on the Plain of Ozora. The Battle of Ozora was one of the greatest victories of the whole Hungarian War of Liberation. Kenéz, who is particularly familiar with local conditions, suggests a sound battle order to Görgey. There are differences between the Major and Kossuth, and Görgey is relieved of his command. Being full of his own worries he does not do anything about Kenéz.

The Court condemns Kenéz to death, and he is executed on the morning of the Battle of Ozora which the Hungarian host goes on to win essentially thanks to his ideas.

The proof of the pudding is that destruction awaits those passionate revolutionaries who are unable to reckon with historical reality.