

REBUILD

a play

by

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Rebuild

ENSEMBLE:

1-8. Eight men and women. A mixture of ethnicities preferred.

PLACE AND TIME:

A city, a country, a community. Here and Now.

Notes:

A few of the lines may be redistributed to other ensemble members for aural effect. The lines were, however, given to each ensemble member with purpose.

The author originally visualized the wall as a screen (perhaps blocks of paper or cloth) behind which the ensemble is backlit and upon which their shadows are cast once it is constructed. No matter how it is built, stylized, or of what it is constructed, the wall is a division between audience and ensemble, a barrier, a separation. A physical wall.

A / in a line indicates the next ensemble member's line begins there, overlapping.

(The ruins of a wall. 2-8 sit / lie / are dispersed among the rubble and/or audience. Indolent, bored, tired, broken, afraid, destitute. 1 walks among rubble, inspects wall.)

4
The wall is broken down –

5
And the gates burned with fire.

1
(to aud)
You see the trouble we are in?

3
Where are we in?

6
We are in danger.

2
In disgrace.

1
We are in our city without protection, our country without border, our house without walls.

7
Who are We?

1
We are without definition. Without skin. Let us rebuild the wall.

ALL
Let us rebuild the wall.

(All rise. To building positions. Music. About to rebuild –.)

8
(re: aud)
They demand to know, Is this rebellion?

3
This is rebuilding.

1
(to aud)
We the servants rebuild. You have neither historic right to our city nor share in our house.

6

They will be right here among us, in the rubble.

8

Wherever we turn –

7

Wherever we turn –

4

Wherever we turn –

6

They will attack us.

1

Don't be afraid.

(1 distributes a spear and two guns to 3, 5, and 7, and keeps a spear for himself. Those with weapons stand guard.)

Now, build for our God. Fight for your brothers and sisters, your sons and daughters, your wives and husbands. Fight for your fellow man. Let us rebuild the wall.

ALL

Let us rebuild the wall.

(Choreographed building of wall. Spoken words provide rhythm. Music. Each builder is paired with a guard, 1 with 2, etc. The builder recites line and builds, then takes weapon and switches with guard, who becomes builder.)

2

The high priest and his fellow priests rebuild the Sheep Gate
And as far as the Tower of the Hundred.

4

The men of Jericho rebuild from the Tower of the Citadel to the Fish Gate.

6

The sons of Hassenaah rebuild the Fish Gate.

8

Next to them, Meremoth, son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz rebuilds.

1

Next to him, Meshullam, son of Berekiah, son of Meshezabel, rebuilds.

3

Next to him, the men of Tekoa rebuild.

5
--

7
But the nobles do not bend their necks to the work.

(Rebuilding stops. The wall is partially raised. Re: 5.)

2
The men work --

3
The women work --

7
The landless work --

8
The landowners work.

1
We all shoulder the yoke.

3
We all bend our backs --

6
And you say, Lift with your knees.

2
But what do the wealthy --

3
The well-endowed --

7
The 1% --

2
-- do?

4
A quarter of all earnings and 40% of all wealth are in the hands of 1% of our countrymen.

8
They incorporate themselves with private equity.

Rebuild

4

Equity? 7

Is profitability our god? 2

We must have grain to eat. 3

We mortgage our fields and our homes for meal. 8

We borrow money to pay the interest on our debt to you -- 6

We cannot pay. 7

And because we do not own our fields or our homes or our cars or our computers -- 3

You own them. 4

You own us. 7

And though we are of the same flesh and blood -- 6

We are enslaved. 7

And though our children are as well-skinned as yours -- 3

Our sons and daughters are enslaved. 4

(Pause)

The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide for those who have too little. 1

Governor, sir, they have too little because they are dependent, and living beyond their means, and given to sloth. 5

2

Is this (*re: wall*) sloth?

3

Does a sloth take advantage of his brothers?

8

Do they lay them as cornerstones?

6

Do they skewer them on spears?

7

The sloths are so hungry.

1

Wait, fellow sloths. We have so little energy, let us pool our resources. (*to 5*) You derive revenue from the misfortune of your countrymen. You exact usury. We bought our brothers from (*re: aud*) them to bring them home. Now you buy them to sell them back to us at a profit? We are here for one purpose. Go outside the wall, among them, back into exile, or let usury stop.

ALL

Let usury stop!

5

... We will give back the fields, the homes, the grain, wine, and oil. We will not deal in real estate. We will give away the interest and ask no more.

1

Do you swear?

ALL

We swear.

1

As I shake the dirt from the folds of my robe, let any who do not keep their word be shaken out of our house.

ALL

Let us rebuild the wall.

(They resume rebuilding the wall, rhythm, music, etc.)

5

Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah rebuild the Old Gate.

7

Next to them the men of Gibeon and Mizpah rebuild.

2

The goldsmiths and the perfume makers rebuild to the Broad Wall.

4

Next to them Rephaiah and Jedaiah and Hattush rebuild.

6

Malkijah and Hasshub rebuild the Tower of the Ovens.

8

Next to them Shallum and his daughters rebuild.

1

The people of Zanoah rebuild the Valley Gate.

3

Malkijah, ruler of Beth Hakkerem, rebuilds the Dung Gate.

5

(competitive)

Shallun, ruler of Mizpah, rebuild the Fountain Gate

-- And he rebuilds the wall of the King's Garden.

7

(competitive)

Beyond him, Nehemiah son of Azbuk, ruler of Beth Zur, rebuilds

Past the tombs, opposite the artificial pool, as far as the House of Heroes.

2

Next to him, the Levites rebuild.

4

Next to them, the countrymen under Binnui rebuild.

6

Ezer rebuilds along the Armory.

8

Next to him, Baruch zealously rebuilds.

1

Meremoth, son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz, rebuilds along the house of the High Priest.

3

Next to him, the priests rebuild.

5

Beyond them, Benjamin and Hashub rebuild.

7

And Azariah and Palal and Pedaiah rebuild.

2

The temple servants rebuild opposite the Water Gate.

4

The people of Tekoa rebuild again from the Great Projecting Tower to the Wall of Ophel.

6

From the Horse Gate, the priests rebuild.

8

Next to them, Zadok / son of Immer rebuilds.

1

And Shemaiah / the guard at the East Gate rebuilds.

3

And Hanun / the sixth son of Zalaph rebuilds.

5

And Meshullam / son of Berekiah rebuilds.

7

And Malkijah / the goldsmith rebuilds.

2

From the corner to the Sheep Gate, the merchants rebuild.

(Celebration, cheers, music – clang of cymbals, trumpets.
Wall is complete between ensemble and audience. Shadows
of ensemble cast on wall. Pouring of wine. Toasting.)

6

Our walls are rebuilt!

8

Our skin is stitched!

7

Our house reborn!

3

-- Every house leaves stretch marks.

5

We have been stiff-necked. We praised the golden calf. We abandoned ourselves.

4

Our wall collapsed. We became our enemies. We were scattered.

3

Our wall was razed, time after time.

2

But in compassion we were delivered --

3

We raised our wall, time after time.

2

Today is a sacred day, do not grieve!

8

(peeking around wall)

Our enemies are afraid --

6

(peeking around other end of wall)

They lose their self-confidence!

1

Then let us enjoy choice foods and sweet drinks and share with those who have nothing!

(A triumphant march around wall, displaying wine and an abundant feast to audience, enjoying it.)

(Behind the wall again, an assembly.)

1

Our skin is whole. For the sake of our house, let us make an agreement:

2

We the people will bring the first born of our sons and our herds and our flocks to our house for ministering.

3

Our daughters will not marry outsiders and our sons will not take their daughters.

4

We the people will pay a tax for the service of our house and its people: priests, singers, gatekeepers, servants, government officials, merchants, financial managers, and the poor.

5

Every seventh year we will cancel all debt.

6

We the people will contribute wood to burn in the eternal fire.

7

Nothing will be bought and sold on Sabbath or any holy day.

8

We the people will give to our house the first fruits of our crops and fruit trees, and a portion of our grain and our meal and our wine and our oil.

1

All who are of foreign descent are excluded.

ALL

We the people will not neglect our house.

(Music. A shift.)

1

We the people are too few.

7

It's all relative.

4

Shall we list ourselves again?

8

No, we shan't.

4

Why not?

8

We are already bored.

2

We are holy.

1

We must multiply.

3

Aren't we happy?

5

We have plenty.

1

It's God's law: Multiply. What are we if not growing?

6

We grow in the gut --

8

The paunch --

3

The belly.

7

And we did rebuild the wall.

8

Why?

7

Why did we rebuild our house?

3

Or why must we multiply?

8

Precisely. Why?

2

It's God's law: Do not ask why, just invert and multiply.

1

Because we are too few to defend ourselves when the enemy comes.

6

We have the wall.

4

The wall hasn't its own arms.

8

There is no enemy.

5

When did you last look beyond the wall? The enemy covets.

4

It also must be recognized that we are too few to sustain material happiness. Our portions dwindle. Our offerings are inadequate. We consume the first fruits.

1

Then add from outside the wall. Grow or stagnate.

4

(looking outside wall)

None will come.

1

They have no choice. I declare 1 out of every 10 are no longer outside the wall but inside. 1 out of every 10 are in our house. 1 out of every 10 are not who they were. They are us.

7

When we divide the portions with them, we will have less.

8

They will come with offerings, and be accustomed to less equitable portions.

6

No foreigners are permitted behind the wall.

1

No foreigners – brothers. Stretch our skin for them. They packed bags and left families and brought bodies for our defense and contributions for our abundance.

2

We do not lack --

8

We do not lack --

3

We do not lack because we're few. (*re: 8*) The nobles moved into the storerooms.

(Commotion. They grab 8.)

8

I poured riches into the wall – my money is integral.

4

Organic hemp bed skirts buried under sacks of grain, cheap plastic children's toys made in Asia submerged in vats of oil, smart phones glowing atop casks of tithed wine.

1

Throw it out.

(8 is thrown out into audience.)

7

You think your portion is small? The officials have not distributed the bread to the singers and servants of the house. The poor have nothing.

1

Where is it?

6

They eat it!

2

They bury it!

3

They sell it!

4

There is not enough, Governor.

5

Sir, if the government were to buy our oil, wine, and grain, we could pay the people to work our fields and grow the offering you buy.

1

From where will the money come to buy?

5

From their tax.

1

Then we use the offering to buy the offering?

2

The offering is for our house.

7

For its servants.

5

The more money people have, the greater tithe you can demand, the more you can buy from me, the more I can sell to you, the more I can grow, the more I can pay the poor. Not a circle, but an upward spiral with more wealth at each revolution, ad infinitum.

2

To heaven? Is this why you open the market on the Sabbath?

5

The more buying and selling, the more profit, the more the pot grows. Once they have a reliable paycheck, they can borrow more from me to buy yet more on credit. It is not the government's job to take care of those who are without.

1

Then it is yours.

5

The economy will take care of them.

(Beat)

1

You stitch words to robe usury. Close the gates for the holy day. No goods shall pass.

(looks outside wall)

Why do you lodge about the wall? You can't sell here. I will lay hands on you.

3

We must have grain to eat.

6

Portions shrink because the pot is split with foreign wives and their children, children who cannot speak our language.

(Commotion, outrage. 1 calm, resigned.)

1

Pull out their hair. Throw them out. We took an oath.

(Dragging by hair, beating of men. Men and women thrown out, only to return behind wall. 8 returns. A building clamor, chaos. Tearing down of wall.)

2

Purify the priests and cleanse the foreign elements.

1

Give away the first fruits for nothing.

3

To everybody.

1

Leave no oil unpoured.

5

Fry the first-born sheep.

1

Share the wine and drink it dry.

7

Eat the fat and drink the sweet.

1

Bring the wood offering. Rebuild the fire. Throw our digital money and our derivative bodies and our golden gods on the fire. Today is a holy day.

7

Burn the private equity!

5

Consume the public good!

4

Throw the doors on the fire.

6

Our enemy is here!

8

Tear down the wall!

3

Welcome all into our disgraced skin.

2

Welcome the wind to scatter our ashes across the nations.

1

Remember us, who rebuilt our wall, and let the wall be rebuilt.

ALL

And rebuilt.

(End of play.)