

# Echoes

**HITLER** thinks that Jewish art is bad for Germany, but he knows that Jewish artists are still a drawing card with U.S. audiences. That is why German broadcasts beamed at U.S. forces in Italy carry Benny Goodman's records.

Benny, America's king of swing, is tearing his hair out, but says this is nothing when he thinks how Hitler, after compromising on this issue, must be eating his heart out.

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**THE** Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church in Russia has announced its decision to establish an Orthodox Theological Institute in Moscow for the training of Orthodox Priests. The study of the Hebrew language will be obligatory for the students of the Institute.

—Cable from Moscow.

takes you by the throat. And the house is warm and bright and fresh and clean in every corner. So I sit down like a king, and open the Good Book, and go twice over the week's portion. Then I close the Book, and it's off to the synagogue.

"What a homecoming after that! When I open the door and sing out: 'Good Sabbath' you can hear me at the other end of town. Then comes the benediction by candlelight, and the drop of good old whisky, that sings right through me, if you know what I mean, and then the Sabbath supper—the shining fish, and the golden soup, and the good old yellow carrots in honey. That night I sleep like a lord, if you know what I mean. And where am I going in the morning? Why, to the synagogue, of course, as I'm a man and a Jew. And back from the synagogue it's the real Sabbath meal again, the grand old chopped radish, and the good old onion, and the jellied calf's foot, if you know what I mean, with a proper smack of garlic. And when you wake up after your Sabbath afternoon nap, and your mouth's dry, and there's a sourness in your belly, if you know what I mean, what's better, I ask you, than a quart or two of cider? Then, when you're good and ready, and fresh and strong, you sit down to the Good Book again, like a giant, and off you go! Chapter after chapter, eh? Psalm after psalm, at the gallop, like the mileposts on the road, if you know what I mean . . ."

So speaks a man of the people. We do not know who he is. He appears and vanishes. We only hear the deep voice, we see the broad, round smiling face, the massive build. What, indeed, would he do, without the Sabbath and the festivals? You cannot content him with a ritual detached from the texture of his life, with something called "religion" on which he pays a respectful call every now and again, hat in hand.

This was Jewishness at its earthiest, of course, worth remembering because our attention is generally directed to the Jewishness of the more learned. Each in its own way the various levels of the Kasrievkites were interpenetrated with this omnipresence of their folk religion, asserting itself tacitly in their daily lives, and emerging into more explicit expression on the festivals.

(Continued next week)

# Serious and Otherwise

\* by ben dor \*

## Kreiser

**LIEUT.-GENERAL** Jacob Kreiser, who as reported in the "Zionist Record" last week, is stated to be at loggerheads with the leadership of the Jewish anti-Fascist Committee, should be known to some people in this country as a "landsman" of Dokshitz, 120 miles from Vilna.

His father was a Cantonist—one of the veteran soldiers in the Czar's army who were seized as children by Government body-snatchers to be trained for life-long military service. Like most of the Cantonists, the father must have been a good professional soldier. When he was demobilised, he settled in Dokshitz, and became a small merchant. The son is fond of quoting a phrase of his father, "A promise is unlike a boot: one should not change it at will."

Popularly known as Yankel Osher Kreiser, the General studied Talmud in his youth, and is said to have retained in his memory much of what he has learned. In 1939 when the Russians took over Lithuania, Jacob Kreiser marched into his home town and addressed his "landsman" in Yiddish, from the top of a truck, in front of his father's house. He distinguished himself in the recent military operations, holds the Order of Suvorov and the Order of Kutuzov First Class, and was mentioned in one of Stalin's Orders of the Day.

Speaking of Jewish Generals, I am told that General Konev, hero of the recent Kaney battle, is also Jewish and has relatives in this country. I wonder if any of my readers can offer information on this subject.

## A Choir-Master

**AT** several Jewish concerts recently I was particularly impressed by the performance of the newly established Zionist Socialist Youth Choir. I have no hesitation in saying that considering its size, this little band of singers has developed into the finest Jewish choir. **Johannesburg** has heard for a long time. Both the items which they perform and the manner of presentation are in the best tradition of Liov's and "Hazamir" Choral Societies in Poland.



Mr. Himmelstein.

The conductor is Mr. Himmelstein who hails from Warsaw where he conducted various popular Jewish choirs. He presents the songs not as a mere conglomeration of voices, but in a truly Jewish spirit, creating clever vocal accompaniment-effects which add to the beauty of expression. One of his most remarkable achievements was the presentation of Nowakowski's "Kol Dodi," a fragment from the Song of Songs, with Cantor Mandel as soloist. This is a composition of rare beauty, and it was delightful to listen to the Cantor's magnificent voice, accompanied by Mr. Himmelstein's choir.

I feel that this young choir-master deserves much more sup-

port from the community in regard to choristers. He should have at his disposal at least one hundred good voices and thus be able to establish a great and permanent Jewish cultural institution in Johannesburg.

## Tat-Speaking Jews

**ACCORDING** to a cable from Moscow, received by the "Zionist Record," M. Gelmond, a Jewish poet and translator, has spent the last two years in the interior of the Daghestan Republic, collecting the rich and interesting folklore of the mountain Jews who speak the Tat language. About 12,000 Jews are scattered in this mountainous region, on the Eastern slopes of the Caucasus.

The whole of this part of Caucasia is rich with legends of tribes intermarried with Jews, or of Jewish origin, who migrated from Palestine about 200 B.C. The Daghestan Jews use the Tat language, a Perso-Judaic dialect. Out of the material he gathered, Gelmond compiled a collection of folklore which he translated into Yiddish. It will be a valuable contribution to Jewish literature.

Similarly, several Jewish literary works and collections of folklore have been translated into Tat, and are being published, arousing great interest among the Daghestan intelligentsia. The Daghestan Scientific Research Institute of History, Literature and Language has requested Gelmond to translate into Yiddish the poetry of Tsebasa, Gafurov, Tagiri, and Kurban, poets of the people, who have been decorated for heroism.

These Tat-speaking Jews have long been known as a fierce warlike people, and even before the war they carried arms. To-day many have distinguished themselves at the front. Mordecai Avsholimov is one of the best-known of those who have been decorated for bravery, and his exploits, which have become almost legendary, form part of the interesting material collected by Gelmond about Daghestan heroes.

## More Goldwynisms

**GOLDWYN** advertised for a new junior in his office. A host of candidates duly arrived. When the first one appeared before the film magnate he was asked, "How much is two and two?" "Four," replied the candidate.

"Wait in the next room," said Goldwyn. The second candidate was asked the same question. "Two and two is six," he replied. Here Goldwyn became most interested: "You certainly have imagination. You should do well. Wait in the next room."

The third candidate was also asked how much two and two was. "Twenty-four," he replied. The magnate thereupon grew almost lyrical. "What drive! What ambition! Here is a boy who will go far in this world. Wait in the next room."

Finally, Goldwyn called in the second and gave him the job. The staff was amazed. "Why," they asked, "did you engage him?"

"Because he is my wife's nephew," replied Goldwyn.

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