

Echoes

"Tell the 'Poritz'"

CHIEF RABBI ISAAC HAL-
EVY HERZOG of Eretz
Israel told an amusing anecdote
to journalists whom he met at a
press conference called to discuss
Sabbath observance.

When the Rabbi of Ger, famous
"wonder-working sage," visited
Eretz Israel the first time in 1921,
Sir Ronald Storrs (then Govern-
or of Jerusalem) called on him.
They spoke through an interpreter
and Storrs asked the Rabbi to
bring about peace between the
various sections of the Jewish
population. Said the Rabbi to the
interpreter:

"Tell the 'poritz' (lit. the ruler) to
give me Eretz Israel and I shall
then find a way of bringing about
peace among the Jews here. . . ."



ANOTHER interesting episode
was told by the Chief Rabbi
concerning H.R.H. the Duke of
Windsor when he was still the
Prince of Wales. The Prince was
wont to visit the home of Leopold
de Rothschild, a good friend of his,
on Sabbaths. During one visit, a
Reform Rabbi was introduced to
him. Questioned by the Prince,
the Rabbi explained the purpose of
the Reform movement as to intro-
duce changes in Jewish observance
and customs.

"Changes? Improvements?" His
Royal Highness repeated. "Well,
I really do hope that you will not
make any changes in Jewish cook-
ing."



MUSICALLY Speaking, Benny
Goodman observes: Musso-
lini played second fiddle but Hit-
ler will have to face the music!

daughter of his former Rebbe.
When he sent her a proposal, it
was in the form of a playful
scholarly commentary on the book
of Esther.

"And it came to pass," he wrote,
"that a Jew by the name of Mor-
decai, who is Motte, dwelt in the
capital city of the Kingdom of
Ahasuerus, called Shushan, which
is none other than our own city . . .
and the maiden was fair and
beautiful, and she found favour in
the eyes of Mordecai. But Mor-
decai instructed Esther to reveal
no word thereof to any man. . . ."

And what shall we say of a boy of
ten who applies to his little play-
mate, in all innocence and delight,
verses from the Song of Songs:
"Come, my beloved, let us go forth
into the field, let us lodge in the
vineyards, let us see if the vine
flourish, whether the tender grape
appear and the pomegranates bud
forth. . . ." And when the little
girl says that she wishes she were
his sister, there spring to his lips
the words: "Would that thou were
as my brother. . . ." Or "My be-
loved is mine and I am my be-
loved's." When he has offended
her and she will not speak to him,
he thinks of the verses: "Let me
see thy countenance, let me hear
thy voice. For sweet is thy voice,
and thy countenance is comely."

No, this is not pedantry or in-
sincerity. It is as direct, as im-
mediate to the emotions, as the
inarticulateness which we have
been taught to associate with sin-
cerity. The children of Kasriel-
evky acquired the equipment of
adults at an earlier age than we;
but the peculiar irrecoverable
beauty of childhood was not denied
them; and it may be that because
they learned to reconcile it at a
very early age with the bitterness
of manhood, they managed to re-
tain its flavour into later years
than we.

Serious and Otherwise

* by ben dor *

Tommy Brought a Bulldozer

THERE have been many stories
of the warm hospitality ex-
tended by villages and settlements
to Allied soldiers on leave in Pal-
estine. A few weeks ago the vil-
lage of Gadera was royally re-
warded for its friendly reception
to four lonely British sappers.

Five months ago when the four
weary Tommies were recuperating
in Palestine after action in
Europe, they came to Gadera to
ask for a place of rest. They were
promptly adopted by the village
and installed in a convalescent
home. When Gadera celebrated
the vintage festival and the open-
ing of a new swimming bath, the
Tommies were the honoured guests.

During their short stay the
soldiers became interested in the
community's problems, and learnt
that the main obstacle to its de-
velopment was the absence of paved
roads. Weeks later the people of
Gadera beheld a caterpillar tractor
pushing a bulldozer up the
main street of their village. Dig-
ging large blades into the craggy
roads, it began levelling out the
township.

It appeared that one of the vil-
lage's erstwhile guests, Corporal
Griffiths, had been assigned to in-
struct a group of sappers in the
use of Lend-lease bulldozers,
newly arrived from the United
States. Remembering Gadera's
rough roads, he offered to use them
as a training field.

By doing this the village was
saved more than 3,000 man-days'
work and 500 mule-days. Ten foot
knolls were reduced and levelled
out, and decades' old gullies
as deep as fifteen feet were filled.

Everybody was happy. The
children had a grand time riding
the giant vehicles, and the grate-
ful citizens of Gadera gave a recep-
tion to Corporal Griffiths and his
friends on Sunday after the work
was over.

Isaac Ben-Zvi

ISAAC BEN-ZVI, M.B.E., Presi-
dent of the "Vaad Leumi,"
leader of the Histadruth and the
Palestine Labour Party and mem-
ber of the Jerusalem Municipal
Council, one of the leading figures
in the Yishuv, was 60 years old on
December 6.

Ben-Zvi is a man of unswerving
principles and idealism, and com-
pletely absorbed in his passion for
social justice. He has lived in
Palestine for the past 37 years,
practically the whole time in Jeru-
salem, and is widely esteemed
among all communities for his
kindness, his modesty, and his
fundamental straightforwardness.

Born in Poltava, Russia, the son
of Zvi Shimshi or Shimshelwitz,
a well-known Zionist worker in
Russia, Isaac Ben-Zvi was among
the organisers of Poalei Zion in
the Ukraine in 1905 with his friend
B. Borochov, and one of the
founders of that party in Russia
a year later. He organised the
self-defence in Poltava with his
father. He came to Palestine in
1907, after a visit three years
earlier, and lived at first in Jaffa,
but in 1908 moved to Jerusalem,
where he was a founder and one
of the first teachers of the Hebrew
High School and a labour leader.

He took up law and was with D.
Ben-Gurion in the Law School at
Istanbul University from 1912-14.
In 1922, he obtained a law diploma
from the Palestine Government.

Ben-Zvi went to the United
States in the last war, and in
1918 led the recruiting movement
for the Jewish Legion of the British

Army, coming back to Eretz Israel
as a private soldier. In 1920 he
helped to found Assephath Haniv-
harim and the Labour Federation,
and from 1920-21 was a member of
the Government Advisory Council.
He has headed the Vaad Leumi
for the past 13 years, and has
taken a foremost part in public
affairs. His other interests include
the investigation of and research
into archaeology and Jewish his-
tory, and he is an authority on
the Samaritans, who live outside
Nablus in Central Palestine.

His wife is Rachel Yannait, a
women's labour leader and head of
the Girl's Training Farm at North
Talpioth outside Jerusalem. Ben-
Zvi is the author of many studies
and books on politics, archaeology,
Palestine lore and demography.

Boy Hero

A THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD boy
from Minsk, has been decor-
ated with the Order of Lenin, the
Order of the Red Banner and the
Order of the Red Star! His name
is Yankel Babitzky.

It so happened that Yankel's
mother and older sister were visit-
ing in Moscow when the Germans
captured the Belo Russian capital.
Yankel and his sick father remained
in Minsk and were detained in the
Ghetto. Shortly afterwards the
Germans killed his father, and the
ten-year-old boy was alone. Deter-
mined to escape from the Ghetto,
one evening Yankel tore off his
yellow armband from his coat
sleeve, and ran away to his friend,
a Belo-Russian worker. He hid
with him for some days, and the
worker agreed to help him to reach
the Partisans.

They stole out of the city and
reached the woods safely. The
worker gave Yankel a pistol and
pointed out the direction. He found
the Partisans and remained with
them until the Red Army liberated
Belo-Russia.

The boy was frequently sent by
the Partisans on scouting missions
and he returned with valuable in-
formation. He often crept close up
to the Germans and remembered
everything he observed. He re-
ported all he learnt to Mikitenko,
the commander of a guerilla detach-
ment.

Yankel personally derailed two
enemy trains carrying tanks and
troops which were heading for the
front. He learnt how to handle a
tommy-gun, and captured several
dozen Hitlerites.

After the Germans were expelled,
Yankel found his mother and sister,
and the three of them are now liv-
ing together in Minsk.

The Damaged Arm

DR. CHAIM WEIZMANN had a
sly dig at Abraham Hartz-
feld, Palestine agricultural labour
leader, when they met at Nahalal
during Dr. Weizmann's formal
visit to the village.

Hertzfeld had been in hospital
for several weeks following a car
accident, and his arm was band-
aged in splints. When they met
Weizmann and he kissed cordially.
Then the President saw Hartz-
feld's arm and twinkled:

"Abraham, tell me, how can you
talk with only one arm free?"

A VIOLIN concerto found at the
Majdanek death camp near
Lublin by a Reuter's correspond-
ent, has been sent to America on
micro-film and presented by the
O.W.I. to violinist Joseph Szigeti.
It was composed by Ernst J. Weil,
believed to have perished at the
camp.

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