

RG-91.1961

Summary

Side A

Comic monologues (circa 1937, but possibly 1933) written by Antoni Slonimski and performed in Yiddish-inflected Polish by Warsaw cabaret.

It is a parody of trial and tribulations of a cunning Jewish soldier named Joyne Karabin (Karabin means rifle in Polish) serving in the Polish army during non-descript time (it was published in 1933).

In the beginning it describes a situation where the soldiers are asked: "Who is musically inclined and plays an instrument?" When Joyne volunteers, he is told to take a grand piano to the 5th floor. After this, he is told to serve in the corridor (sic) and to lower the belt of his hat under his chin. The reason for this is that under attack his hair would stand up out of fear, his hat would fall off, and therefore there is a need to lower the belt.

The last part makes fun of his lack of knowledge about the ranks of the military, mixing up the lieutenant and corporal since he has only been in the army for one week. The whole monologue presents a young man full of himself and in good humor.

Side B

Joyne is told that there is a 300 zloty reward for bringing in a Bolshevik flag. He brings many flags by exchanging his Polish flags with his brother's Bolshevik flags and, as a result, he gets paid a lot of money. Joyne is also asked to bring in Bolshevik soldiers. He is able to bring nine of these soldiers. "Where did you find them," his officer asks? "It was easy," Joyne replies and explains, "In the Jewish religion on the anniversary of a loved one passing you need 10 men to pray. I pretended it was my anniversary and got nine Bolsheviks out of the trenches and was able to bring them to you."

In another instance Joyne runs away from his guard position anticipating that there could be many enemies attacking. His officer threatens him with death sentence by shooting for this crime. Joyne is begging for pardon mentioning that he was not home for 2 years, during which his wife had three children resulting from the letters he sent home. "Imagine how many children would she have if I was home", he says. "You are a faithful soldier" answers the officer. "I was just testing you."