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EDITORIAL

## THE "CITY OF ZION."

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A**T the mass meeting of Zionists, held on the 5th instant in the Medinah Temple Theatre, Chicago, the speaker in whom greatest interest was manifested was Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch. Rabbi Hirsch is not in full accord with the movement to establish the Jewish race once more in Palestine. He thinks the scheme is not practicable. Hence the interest that was manifested in what he would say. What he said was, indeed, interesting. It was interesting, however, only inasmuch as it betrayed the point that is held in common by both the Zionist and the anti-Zionist, or Rabbi Hirsch, Jews. That point is bat-like blindness on the Social Question, total ignorance on the lessons it teaches.

The Rabbi, after correctly pointing out that what the Jews suffer to-day from most Governments is inconsequential, and after arraigning with substantial justice the Governments of Russia, Roumania and Galicia for their inhuman and tyrannous conduct towards the Jews, said:

"Shall we call these Jews to America? I would gladly do so, if their coming would be a solution of the problem. But it would not be. From the prey of Russia to the sweatshops of America does not spell redemption."

The following anecdote is authentic. A young man temporarily in the city several years ago, hired for a few days, a furnished front hall room in the neighborhood of Sixth street, not many thousand miles east of the Bowery. His landlord turned out to be a Jew, whose appearance and language announced clearly enough that he had escaped not many years previous from one of the tyrannous Governments mentioned by Rabbi Hirsch. One Monday morning, the last our young man was to occupy his room, he was awakened by a rumbling and mumbling of words in the contiguous room. The oddness of the sound fixed his attention. Two voices were distinguishable: an elderly man's and a boy's. It was soon evident that

the two were praying in Hebrew, and that the boy was being trained: the older voice frequently making corrections, that the younger voice imitated. That being the last day our traveler was to be in town, he wished to surrender the key of his room. Stepping out into the hall, he knocked at the parlor door, the room contiguous to his. His landlord opened. Indeed, he and his young son had been praying. Unmistakable prayer-books lay on the table, and the phylacteries were being rolled up. The landlord seemed to have been pleased with his guest, and, moved by a delicate sense of propriety, expressed the hope that his voice had not disturbed his guest's slumbers. Our young man also became interested in the specimen before him. A short conversation ensued, in the course of which the landlord referred to his sufferings in Russia, his devotion to his creed, and his delight at being in America. “I had hard times,” said he, “but I am getting along, now”; and, going to the back of the parlor, whither he invited his young lodger to follow him, he stepped up two short stairs, opened a door into another room, and, with twinkling eyes, repeated: “I am getting along, now.”—The space he looked into was a sweatshop. There, in a room contiguous to the one in which he had just been praying, possibly reading burning passages from Isaiah against “grinding the faces of the poor,”—there sat, cramped together, ten, possibly fifteen, men and women of his own race, a spectacle fit for hell, working like fury, sweated to the marrow!

By what power were these ill-starred Jews,—freed from “the prey of Russia”—, now being held with their noses to the grindstone of a sweatshop in America? Obviously, that power is neither Gentile nor Jew; neither watered with the Old, nor born of the New Testament. It must be a power common to Russia and America. It is, indeed, a power that dominates both. It is the power of the Capitalist System of Human Slavery. In short, it is a power that the standard of the Jewish race and creed, re-reared in Palestine, will not, of itself, be able to ward off from the Jewish Working Class, re-established in Palestine. For the same reason, pointed out by Rabbi Hirsch, that the coming of the Jews to America “would not be a solution to the problem,” neither would their re-establishment in Palestine.

Migration, whithersoever, spells “redemption” for the oppressed Jew as little as for any other creed or race: Redemption is not, can not be in the cards that leave enthroned the international tyrant,—Capitalist Domination. So, likewise, “Zionism” spells “redemption” for the oppressed Jew as little as similar nationalistic

Movements spell “redemption” for any of the other and numerous oppressed races: Redemption is not, cannot be in the cards where racial and creed vanities are made a cloak for class exploitation.

Rabbi Hirsch spoke truer than he wot. Pro-Zionists, Anti-Zionists, together with all the tyrannies they are arrayed against, are all birds of one feather, crows of the same nest,—the nest of the Capitalist System of exploitation. There is no real difference between them. They are one, despite external shows of hostility.

The “City of Zion” that the Psalmist sang of will be established. But the flag around which the Faithful will rally will not be any of those held in Zionite or Zionistic hands. All such flags, together with their many-styled sweatshop-keepers’ class, will roll in the dust, trampled under foot by the hosts whose flag will announce the Oneness of the Human Race, the Emancipation of the Working Class, the Socialist Republic.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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