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“Jews and Russia,” 1905 November 19.

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Sunday, November 19, 1905.

JEWS AND RUSSIA.

I can think of little else but Russia and the fate of our unfortunate brethren. Millions of Jews, one half the Jews of the world, are living within the Pale of Settlement, with its poverty and its misery. The Pale has not been enlarged for more than half a century, but has been narrowed in the face of the increasing Jewish population.

It is well to remind ourselves and the world that Jews belong to Russia. They were in Russia before the royal Romanoffs, and millions of Jews came to Russia with Poland, under guarantee of religious liberty. Before the 10th century, the Jews in Poland enjoyed freedom, and peace, and prosperity. In the 15th century, Poland was the center of culture for the Jewish people, and a safe refuge for the Jewish exile from other lands. Russia expelled her Jews in the middle of the 18th century; but when she seized Poland, Jews once again came under Russian dominion.

I shall not attempt to tell the story of Russian horror. Of pogrom after pogrom, expulsion after expulsion. The slaughter of Kishineff is vividly in our minds, and now comes the story of sorrow from Odessa, and 41 cities throughout the Pale, and more provinces to hear from. Read Michael Davitt's "Within the Pale", and the truth concerning Russia as revealed in Isadore Singer's "Russia at the Bar of the American People." Note Harp Friedman's "The New Exodus", the story of a decade ago. Significant the title of Leo Errera's book, "The Russian Jews, Extinction or Emancipation?" I quote the words of the prefatory note, by the great historian, Mommsen:

"Sir,- You have been good enough to submit to me your work on the present condition of the Jews in Russia. The heart-rending picture which you have traced, supported as it is throughout by proofs which are unhappily but too well based, cannot fail to move many hearts, unveiling to them as it does, the abyss in which common sense and humanity alike seem to be engulfed. But amongst those whose hearts you have touched, will any be found capable of removing the disgraceful plague-spot, persons not merely content with deploring, but also capable of wiping out the

darkest blot on this century?

Is it not possible to arrest the decay of a greatly vaunted civilization, the suicide of Russia? Let us hope so!

It is a duty never to despair of poor humanity. But this duty becomes more difficult. Fanaticism is incorrigible.

But we may still hope that the statesmen of a great Empire, and the Sovereign Arbiter of Europe may no longer be dominated by the blind action of a resuscitated Torquemada."

I do not doubt that the Russian Government has instigated these massacres. The Engineers' Union of St. Petersburg, on November 4th, directly charged the Government with this crime. "We are witnessing a series of massacres of the Jews, carried out by the rabble, whose crimes are tolerated by the authorities. We see in these misdeeds a desire to abuse the ignorance and blindness of the people, for the purpose of deliberately organizing a counter-revolution in the hope of saving the remnant of the old regime." Hon. Oscar Strauss, ex-minister to Turkey, publicly declared the Russian massacre a well-organized conspiracy, - the slaughter of thousands of Jews simultaneously from the Black Sea to Siberia.

Unspeakable and unpardonable is the crime of a Government who slays or suffers to be slain her own children. I marvel at the world and at the great nations. Will they longer tolerate the old friendly relationship with a government like this? I marvel at the Christian leaders and Christian teachers and the Christian world. They read the story, they hear the story. By virtue of an almost all-seeing and omnipresent press, they are practically eye-witnesses of the awful slaughter of the innocent, - and speak scarce a word and give scarce a dollar. I remember America stirred over the cause of Cuba, that she be free. Shocking indeed were the ways of the cruel Spaniard, and the Army of the Reconcentrados, and of him who was called "butcher Weyler." Contrast with the holy Pobias donosteff, and the peace-loving Nicholas, and all his foul instruments, the brutal Cossacks and brutish peasantry.

No longer is it a question whether Russia or Japan is the most civi-

lized. Russia boasts herself a teacher of Christian civilization, declaring Japan a heathen people. All the world knows Russia to be a savage barbarian; so it "flaunt a mere iken and cross and glory in a holy Greek Catholic Church, and a holy procurator." All the friends of Russia rejoice and give thanks that Poblaedonosteff rules no more in Russia.

America that has battled for freedom, that has fought a good fight for human rights, that rose to arms against the petty tyrannies of King George, can have no sympathy with Russian despotism, and should have full sympathy with the Russian patriots struggling to be free. America's humanity should be aroused by Russia's inhumanity, to indignation and infinite pity. All the world must condemn the bigotry of Paul Poblaedonosteff and the church, and the despotism of the czar and his corrupt bureaucrats.

I shall not concern myself with the charges brought against the Jews, charges made by the enemies of the Jews in Russia, repeated by Jew-haters everywhere, and one half believed in almost every land. There are no apologies for Russia now, but how many there are who hesitate to side with the Jews or defend the Jews, even though they be butchered! But how about these Jews? "The Jew exploits of peas-ants; the Jew is a money-lender; the Jew oppresses the poor; the Jew leads Russian peas-ants to drunkenness; the Jew is a revolutionist."

Jews are not men without faults. I do not proclaim Jews perfect in Russia nor in America. Jews are as other men, good and bad, noble and base. Jews are human. I emphasize this, that Jews are human, even as other men.

Were all the charges true, and not a thousandth part is true, no faults no sins, no short-comings, aye, even no crimes of Jews or groups of Jews, could justify, or excuse, or palliate Russia's horrible crimes against men, women and children. Never in the history of the world has there been savagery more inhuman.

The medieval world did not deal gently with the Jew. He was expelled from France a number of times, and from England in 1290, and absent almost four centuries. Every land of Europe, with the exception of little Holland and old Ireland

persecuted him and oppressed him. He experienced torture of spirit and body. He was made to feel the thumb-screw and the rack and the auto-da-fe of the Inquisition. He was expelled from Spain in 1492. How many thousands of him were deserted upon the low sands to be swept to death by the rising tide? Jews know suffering. They have passed through the fire, and the flood, and the Crusades, and the Middle Ages, and the Inquisitions of Spain and Portugal; - but the Russian Massacres are unparalleled in history for torture and inhumanity, all the more barbarous, all the more inhuman, since we live in the 20th and not in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries. I glory in the Jews of Russia. They are Jews in the face of burdens and severe restrictions, in the face of the old choice between apostacy or death. They stand steadfast for their truth, in spite of the persecutor and the oppressor. To all the world they give an example of human courage and human loyalty, unequalled as the story of their martyrdom.

Persecutions, threats of cowards, had Israel, into the welcoming arms and safe refuge of the church, - but these centuries the brave-hearted have endured all the tortures of the spirit, and all possible physical burdens and physical degradation. The oppression of Pharoah thousands of years ago, transformed the Hebrew slaves into the Nation Israel. Persecution always has made and always will make Israel one.

We cannot fully comprehend all the misery of our brethren, - we, who live in ease, and comfort, and security. We know not what suffering is. I would that every heart be stirred. I would that every man, woman and child feel keenly the pain of the Jewish massacre. I would that every one give to his fullest capacity. Practice self-denial, - deny yourselves some pleasure, some luxury; make a sacrifice, if sacrifice be needed. But let men, women, and children give.

The appeal has been sent forth. But in order to relieve the immediate destitution, not less than \$1,000,000 should be raised by the Jews of America. I call upon the men, women and children of Cleveland to do their duty.