

# Impressions Of A Great Jewish Spectacle

*27,000 People Attend Jewish Pageant In Chicago*

By  
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HAVING enjoyed the great and unique pleasure of attending the most gigantic Jewish pageant ever presented anywhere under one roof; with a cast of 1,250 actors with so many great artists from the stage, ballet, opera and pulpit, with so colourful and picturesque settings and costumes, so tastefully and artistically performed, that I feel a compelling desire to share this wonderful ecstatic experience with *Zionist Record* readers.

Of course, trying to describe it in full would be attempting the impossible, because it took all the old and latest devices of artistic expression to produce this effect. All I can try in this limited space is merely to touch upon the high spots of this spectacle.

The fact that they succeeded in keeping a Jewish crowd of 27,000 under one roof at a Jewish performance, captivated and spell-bound, describes it better than to tell you that it was excellent, magnificent and exquisite.

THE pageant consisted of four episodes: The first in the form of prologue; portrayed Jewish life in Russia 50 years ago, disclosing various types of Jews in those days; Chassidim, Gaboim, Shamosiam, Klessmorim, merchants and beggars. This scene was more like a large canvas scattered in a harmonious disorder all moving, dancing, singing and playing. The high spot of this episode was the entrance of the Rabbi, a saintly patriarch escorted by a group of enthusiastic admiring Chassidim, who were performing a Chassidic dance, with a religious fervour and ecstasy in every movement.

The climax of this episode is reached when the Rabbi begins the service of blessing the Chanukah candles with his rich and sweet melodious voice sounding and vibrating, and filling the immense hall with the blessing, accompanied by a mighty choir of 500 voices. The audience was enchanted with the beauty of the moment.

After drinking of a "I'chaim" and merry-making, the Rabbi stops the festivity by telling the story of Chanukah in a melodious song. In a moment

the entire stage, setting and cast is submerged in darkness and the spot light is turned to a new stage. The high priest in his gorgeous priestly gown is at service in the Temple. The assistant priests open the golden gates with songs. The Levites are ascending the steps of the Temple with psalm singing.

THE second episode portraying the Temple at the most beautiful moments of the ritual service, was full of splendour and exquisite beauty. There was a procession of the daughters of Zion carrying floral offerings, grace and beauty in every move, the triumphant march greeting the victorious Maccabees with garlands and palm branches in the most impressive and beautiful formation. The Maccabees entered receiving the blessing of the priest. The sounding of the victory trumpet and the opening of the holy ark with prayers of adoration were the high spots of this scene.

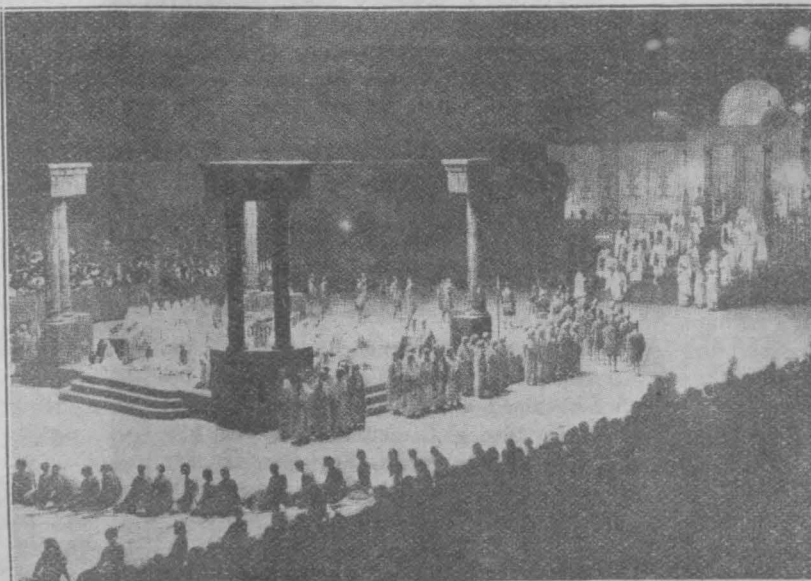
The third episode is very hard to describe as it was called "Lamentation," endeavouring to portray in song the despair, sufferings, prayers and hopes of the Jews since the destruction of the Temple. And while lacking splendour, was overwhelming with intense emotions. The plaintive voices of the singers were emphasised by the electrical effects of light and shadow and accentuated by the dance of "Lamen-

tation," which expressed in graceful movements the motifs in the songs and altogether created an unforgettable impression.

THIS deep tension of the concentrated emotion is broken by the great and final episode "Israel Reborn," the name of which was given the entire pageant. In this scene the new pioneers Chalutzim and Chalutzoth make their appearance with the spirit of the Maccabees reincarnated with a new song which sounded with vigour and determination that nothing will stop them until the Jewish Homeland is rebuilt. The climax of this episode was reached when the entire cast and audience joined in the singing of the "Hatikvah," with great fervour.

A concert by many noted Jewish artists followed, and was very enthusiastically received. Dancing by the audience concluded the programme.

The pageant was sponsored by the Zionist Organisation of Chicago with Meyer Weisgal, Executive Director, being the leading spirit, in co-operation with 120 other Jewish organisations and contributed a great deal to unify Jewish activities. Huge as the hall was, many hundreds were unable to gain entrance. No doubt this pageant has contributed a great deal to the national, cultural and spiritual rebirth of Chicago Jewry.



A Scene at the Great Pageant.

INCIDENTALLY a return trip to Palestine was awarded to the holder of the lucky number on the admission ticket, and which went to a 14-year-old boy, a Hebrew school student whose teacher presented him with the ticket.

It is hoped that similar pageants will be presented by other Jewish communities even if not on so large a scale, which will provide a wholesome Jewish cultural recreation and will contribute to the cultural rebirth of Jewry.