

Non-Jewish Zionism

Dr. Regina Al Sharif is a Palestinian researcher and the author of a book based on her study of the origins of Zionism in American and European history and culture. In a lecture delivered in English in Kuwait, Dr. Al Sharif gave an exposé of the major ideas tackled in her book. Although of historical nature, her study has current relevance in view of the special support being given to the Zionist state by American Christian fundamentalists, such as Jerry Falwell and his 'Moral Majority' - a group that is also ardently backing Reagan's most reactionary policies.

The main thrust of the author's lecture (and book) is that Zionism appeared in Western Europe, and then the US, several centuries before the emergence of an official Zionist movement. Without this early trend, no official Zionist movement would have materialized. The author concludes that the support of Western Europe and the US for the state of 'Israel' sprouted naturally from the seeds of Zionism originally sowed in western culture. She also concludes that European and US partiality for the Zionist entity is most likely to continue and increase, because this support does not stem from temporary or superficial factors or from the presence of the Zionist lobby. Moreover, this partiality is directly proportional to western animosity towards the Arab nation.

Dr. Al Sharif's conclusions serve to discredit illusions popular among rightist Arab forces that: (a) there is a possibility of lessening US favoritism for Zionism, and steering it in their direction; and (b) the US can be rendered an impartial mediator in the Arab-Zionist conflict.

Despite these commendable conclusions, Dr. Regina's ideas have their shortcomings. Whether intentionally or not, she overlooks the material base of imperialism's alliance with Zionism. While her emphasis on the cultural and ideological aspects provides interesting points that are often overlooked, one does not get the picture of Zionism's organic connection with imperialism's pursuit of monopoly capitalist goals in the strategic Middle East. Dr. Regina does, however, point out the convergence of Zionism with British colonial interests in the Middle East at the end of the 19th century. Her research lends credibility to the hypothesis that

if Zionism had not existed, the colonial powers would have invented it. Her analysis also substantiates the fact that without the support of the colonial powers, Zionism would not have materialized into a concrete project.

Following is a resumé of the lecture given by Dr. Al Sharif in Kuwait. (The subtitles are our own.)

ORIGINS OF THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

The special relationship between the US and the Zionist entity is a truth long boasted of by both parties. Former US President Carter gave an adequate description of this relationship in an address to the Israeli Knesset in March 1979. He said that this was «not merely a special relationship» but «a unique one... which cannot be destroyed because it is deeply rooted in the conscience, values, religion and beliefs of the American people...» On what basis has this special relationship been erected and what are the factors contributing to its survival? Dr. Regina believes that Zionism is the binding ingredient between the west and the state of 'Israel'. The Zionism she is referring to is non-Jewish Zionism, as distinct from Jewish Zionism.

The general impression is that Zionism is a purely Jewish phenomenon, as if it were a Jewish ideology embraced by European Jews towards the beginning of this century. However, from her research, Dr. Al Sharif concludes that Zionism is a product of western culture and civilization, of which it is an inseparable part; it is the fruit of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The history of western civilization is full of myths, beliefs and superstitions that are Zionist in nature. As a consequence, US policies are

designed to serve Jewish Zionism. The US and western European countries view the Middle East from a Zionist viewpoint. This fact requires one to view the US-Israeli relations based on studying the nature of Zionism itself, keeping in mind that Zionism was born and nurtured in the west, and works to benefit western interests.

Jewish Zionism emerged as a coherent political ideology and a modern, organized, political movement in Europe towards the end of the 19th century. However, the major pro-Zionist hypotheses can be traced back 300 years before the convening of the first congress of the official Zionist movement in Basel in 1897. The Zionist trend was developed over four centuries of European religious, social, political and ideological history. Non-Jewish Zionist traditions have their roots in myths which were incorporated into western history mainly through the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. Protestant teachings introduced Zionist myths into European thinking during the 16th and 17th centuries. These were to a great extent concordant with the myths that later formed the 'internal logic' of Jewish political Zionism, for example: the idea of God's chosen people, the promise and the second coming of Christ.

ZIONIST MYTHS FROM PROTESTANTISM

The first of these myths placed the Jews as a people apart from all other peoples. The myth of the promise is based on the indestructable connection between the 'chosen people' and the Holy Land, with Palestine having been promised to them in advance as the land of the Jewish nation. The second