

Religion in General and Jerusalem in Particular in The State-Capitalist Age

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Israel has been moving so steadily to the Right that no reactionary action should surprise anyone. Nevertheless, the world—and this includes President Carter who is still pretending that the so-called Peace Treaty he engineered between Egypt and Israel will bring real peace to the whole of the Middle East—was shocked by the TIMING, if nothing else, of the "sudden" fiat from the Knesset that Jerusalem, East and West, that is, Arab as well as Jewish, was "one," was "indivisible," indeed, was the "eternal" capital of Israel, as if really its order extended into the eons of time.

If, however, we take a second, objective look at that phrase, "if nothing else," we will see that it is, precisely, the timing, the PROVOCATIVE timing, which is the logical conclusion to the extremist imperialist moves ever since Menachem Begin came to power, and that very week visited and approved a controversial new Jewish settlement in Arab land. It has gone on and expanded ever since. It is necessary, however, to limit ourselves to this year.

In March 1980 the government of Israel announced it would be taking 1,000 acres of mostly Arab-owned land. It was the first such major expropriation in a decade, and the second largest ever since the victorious 1967 war. Indeed, by the mid-1970s, Israel pried 30% of East Jerusalem from Arab ownership. Could anyone doubt when the biggest war hawk of them all, Geula Cohen, was chosen to bring in a draft for the new status of Jerusalem that it would be anything but what it was?....

What is new—and it is by no means limited to Zionism—is the new politicized form of religion. Nor is it

a question of whether you listen to the money-wise electronic "evangelists," or you follow the Old or New Testament—or the Koran, and quote Mohammed, who is supposed to have said: "Whoever goes on a pilgrimage to the Jerusalem sanctuary shall be forgiven all his sins."

The point, rather, is why this RUSH TO POWER. One need not go abroad to see it is so. All one has to do is look right here at the New Right, the Christian Religious Right....

The real point is this: the totality of the crises, especially since 1973-74—and by no means only the Arab-Israeli war, but the economic crisis that resulted from the oil embargo—has shown that the undercurrent of revolt may—and in some cases, did—lead to revolution. It is this, especially as it is evolving in the last year, which has led the capitalist rulers to flirt with Nazism and occultism all over again.

Occultism has ever been the escape from reality, and since it doesn't have quite as obnoxious an odor as Nazism, non-taxable dollars are spent on that electronic miracle to bring the message to the public. In any case, the New Religious Right, as in Begin's Israel or in Khomeini's Iran, or the Christian Right here, even when they get masses to follow them, by no means signifies that what the masses want, and what the leaders are striving for—power—has the same motivation. Which is why Karl Marx made so sharp a distinction between the religion of the oppressed and that of the oppressor. The whole theory of alienation started there.....