

Iraq stands up

As the Jan 15th deadline draws closer, Iraq is preparing to face a massive military onslaught. The Western capitalist nations headed by the U.S are belligerently threatening that if Iraq does not toe the line, then it must face the consequences. Yet, Iraq refuses to be cowed and remains unshaken in its resolve.

There is every possibility that Iraq's economy will be destroyed and thousands of its people will be killed by a U.S.-British attack.

In face of this one may well ask why is Iraq standing up to this bullying and intimidation?

The division of the Arab World into 20 or so states is no longer economically sustainable, with massive poverty existing from Morocco to Oman. At a time when European states are uniting in a European Community, what double standard is being applied to prevent the reunification of the Arab Nation?

Iraq, as the most advanced area of the Arab Nation, is leading the Arab masses against the corrupt pro-imperialist regimes in the Middle East which continue to line their own pockets at the expense of the people. World support for Iraq is growing particularly in Africa and South-East Asia. Recently BBC World Service listeners have voted Iraqi President Saddam Hussein "Man of the Year", to the embarrassment of the war mongering pommy broadcasters.

Kuwait is part of Iraq and Iraq is part of the Arab nation

The former feudal ruling family's massive extravagance in Kuwait is no longer possible or acceptable in today's world. It is not acceptable to the Arab people to have oil rich resources alienated from their control, squandered by Emirs and Sheiks, and filling the coffers of Transnational corporations. Arabs need the wealth more evenly distributed throughout the Arab Nation in order to raise the

standard of living of their poor.

Imperialism's pillage of the Arab states on the one hand and their token aid on the other is no longer an acceptable substitute for the pride and dignity of a re-unified, independent, non-aligned and viable Arab Nation.

Actually, until recently and for many centuries Kuwait was part of the territory of Iraq. It is the natural port of the Basra province. The British only separated the territory of Kuwait from Iraq for their own strategic and commercial interests in 1921.

The re-unification of Kuwait and Iraq is not unlike the re-unification of Germany.

However, the process does not in fact end here. The future will bring the federation of the the Arab Nation, with states like Iraq, Syria, Jordan etc. being akin to Victoria, N.S.W., Queensland, etc. in the Australian Nation.

Linkage with the Palestinian Question

One of the most pressing problems for the Arab people is the loss by the Palestinian People of their homeland and the accompanying civil and human rights violations by the Zionist colonial settlers in Israel.

The Palestinian question is indeed linked to the issue of Iraq, Kuwait and the disunity of the Arab Nation. The U.S continues to make this linkage by its financial and military support for Israel's aggressive and expansionist behaviour. It does this for the purpose of keeping the Arabs divided. On the 10th of November 1975, the United Nations General Assembly (not the Super Powers Security Council) passed a resolution that "*determines that Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination*". Why is it that the United States is blockading Iraq and not Israel? The issue, of course, is the linkage by the United States to the Palestinian question. They however have a different view to the U.N. The United States

uses Israel to keep the Arab Nation divided, poor, and subservient. Israel continually attacks its neighbours to prevent their economic development and keep them divided and powerless.

World Recession and Australia

The world recession and poor commodity prices are not only affecting the Third World including the Arab states, they are also devastating Australia. The U.S. blockade of Iraq has devastated Australia's wheat, wool and live sheep markets in the Middle East (Iraq was Australia's largest trading partner in the region).

Mr. Hawke's slavish following of the insane policies of the United States has not only induced a rural recession, but has denied Australia's secondary and tertiary industries a leading position in the export market for agricultural machinery, computer technology and communications equipment. For the last 30 years Australia has spent massive resources in developing this market and maintaining friendly relations in the Middle East, only to have Hawke and Gareth Evans destroy this overnight.

Why worry about whingeing at the GATT negotiations locking us out of the already saturated European and American markets, when Australia has eager customers in the Arab states and the rest of the developing world?

We are indeed in a new era. An era when confrontation between East and West has diminished and where the rich capitalist nations in the North of the globe are oppressing the rest of the world (the South). There is a growing movement in the South demanding a New Economic Order. In this North-South divide, Australia's only future is to stand with the South.

- Support the people of Iraq and the Arab Nation!
- Support the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America!

Risking a war to help the slave-owners of Kuwait

THE principle that "my enemy's enemy is my friend" is obviously a dangerous one. Nevertheless, any power contemplating military action against another finds itself obliged to court the antagonist's other enemies, however repellent they might be. Once our enemy's enemy is our ally he acquires immunity from criticism. Then our representatives are photographed clutching the hands of tyrants, laughing with them in dishonorable camaraderie.

Who are our new friends, the Kuwaitis, for whose national sovereignty we are prepared to die? Who is the beaming emir who has been given a standing ovation at the United Nations despite the fact that since 1986, when he dissolved the Kuwaiti National Assembly, he has ruled by personal decree?

For one thing he is the kinsman of Sheika Farla el Sabah and Sheika Samiya, who stole their servant's passport and her two gold teeth, kept her a prisoner in their London apartment for four years, and gave her no bed but the floor outside the locked kitchen door, and very little sleep in any case, very little food and no wages but daily whippings that have left her scarred for life.

The High Court awarded the Kuwaiti princesses' slave \$680,000 damages only last December, but who remembers?

It is only because Laxmi Swami's spirit was unbroken after years of brutalisation that her case ever came to light. The British Home Office makes it easy for Gulf Arabs to import slavery by issuing their servants with visitors' visas and denying them the right to work for any other employer. Officially nobody knows how many Laxmis are prisoners in the houses of Hampstead and Kensington, and nobody except the Anti-Slavery Society cares.

For all the necessities of everyday life the Gulf Arabs rely on foreign labor. In all the great airports between Manila and the Gulf you can see gangs of men and women, many with numbers on their breasts, lying or sitting on their cardboard suitcases, gazing about them with anxious, uncomprehending eyes or sleeping the sleep of exhaustion. Many of them have sold their land or incurred debts to pay for their passage to the Gulf.

When they arrive, their passports are taken away; they sign documents in Arabic, which they neither speak nor read, and find themselves bound to hard labor for years. Those who refuse to sign on are told they must leave at once and pay their own fares home. Some who think that they are going to exercise the professions for which they are qualified find themselves scrubbing floors for half the pay they were promised.

Foreign workers in the Gulf have no rights and no representation. Their fate is entirely in the hands of the employer and his family. Children are taught to discipline — that is, to insult, pinch, slap and pull the hair of — servants who displease them. Many servants have to carry buzzers so that they are on call at all hours of the 24. They are not allowed to do their own shopping or cooking, and eat only what is left after their employers and their guests have been fed. There is often no time off even for religious observance.

Now and then the 'Kuwait Times' reported spectacular cases of servants thrown from roof-tops, burnt or blinded or battered to death; the systematic abuse they endured every day was unworthy of remark. Occasionally, desperate servants ran away, but with no money, no documents and no command of Arabic they had nowhere to go but to the police, and the police would promptly return them to their employers.

We are not proceeding with all flags flying to the rescue of 500,000 foreign workers, or of the 350,000 Palestinians who found temporary refuge in Kuwait, or even of the professionals who are admitted to Kuwait to provide financial services, education and health care for the term of their working lives, only to be unceremoniously kicked out at retirement age. When the Queen took tea with the Emir she did not chide him in even the gentlest terms for his flouting of the international labor conventions.

We are sending our finest to defend the 8.6 per cent of the total Kuwaiti population of three million or so who are allowed the rights of citizenship, namely the male descendants of males resident in Kuwait in 1920. We are risking a war that could poison the planet at the same time as it scuttles our precarious economy, to restore an idle and luxurious lifestyle that depends upon the daily humiliation and degradation of hundreds of thousands of people. And we are taking the slave-owners' money for doing it. The greatest armies in the world have become mere mercenaries.

It is now unpatriotic to hint that either the Kuwaitis or their fellow slave-owners, the Saudis, could be anything but decent chaps; the BBC has dropped Miranda Miller's story 'Kiddleworld', about the lives of expatriate women in Riyadh, from the 'Book at Bedtime' autumn schedule not primarily because the broadcast would incense the Saudi Government but because it might incense the British public. If Mrs Thatcher's second war should become unpopular, the political strategy of which the sabre-rattling is such an important part would come badly unstuck.

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