

IRAQ

An Epilogue

Sir,

What has happened to us? Where is our sense of honour and of high adventure? Where is that fine generous public Spirit, spontaneously active and outspoken against cruelty, tyranny, injustice, the Spirit of sound sense and enterprise?

A crime has just been committed, so cowardly and brutal that it will inevitably be recorded in History amongst the most nauseous examples of human treachery.

The victims were the long-proven friends of our Country, and the courageous leaders of their own people, their work of patriotism and enlightenment in this task long and nobly recorded. They shared with us and the remaining free people of the World those aims of progress and civilization now so periously attacked on every side by the threat of urthless force and cunning subversion which have for their objectives the Satanic enslavement of the minds and bodies of all Mankind.

These victims were our Friends, the loyal allies of our Government, who often moved freely amongst our people, and often were the welcome guests of our own well-beloved Royal Family.

Together we had built up a great Arab state, founded by British inspiration, but taken forward by the steady leadership of these friends of ours, who chose to rely on British integrity, rather than upon other enticing ventures, firm in their belief that thus would their own people best be served on their way to independent progress.

Now they have been murdered, King, Princes, Statesmen, with their Women folk, children, and entire households, slaughtered suddenly in their homes in every circumstance of atrocity, by murderers inspired from abroad wearing the uniform of their Royal army, now besmirched for

ever by the gross evil of this crime,

In our times of danger these friends of ours had always remained loyal; their Premier, who was amongst these victims, had always placed his experience at the disposal of our Government, and in his very recent - and last - visit to England he warned us - as is well recorded most forcibly of imminent danger; and it had even been publicly stated that his departure from England was thereby touched by a certain official British coldness. If this is indeed true, then it was a coldness presaging mutual Death. Within a few weeks he was assassinated, and all that we had built up together through almost half a century was devastated and brought to nothing, of which the symbol on our side was a burnt out and murder haunted British Embassy. Whatever else the years may bring, the Spirit of that fine mutual achievement is dead for ever.

And now what? A brief, prim, statement of regret by the British Premier in Parliament, with some "sympathetic murmurs" from listening M.P.s one morning when our Flags in London were flown at half mast; a Memorial Service, privately organized, and attended mainly by personal friends, grief-stricken and ashamed; and amongst those friends the personal representative of Her Majesty our Beloved Queen. There was also present despite grave illness a great English Statesman, by the repudiation of whose brave leadership, some two years ago, treachery at home and opportunism abroad, brought upon us and the whole world, all the major disasters of the many tragic months which have followed, with their recent hideous climax. The horror of that climax evidently is not, and probably could not, yet be fully visualized by the mostly easy-going British public; nor do they realize its menace to us all.

Meanwhile the Ambassador at our burned-out British Embassy reports "well-disposed talks" with the assassins who organized that burning and those murders? Since when has English pride sunk so low that a British envoy is required to solicit, the amiability of murderers fresh from their blatant crimes? And now today August 2nd. 1958, our Statesmen "recognize" the new government (set up by criminals), for reasons, which whatever they may be, are certainly not connected with courage or morality, or the protection of such few of our friends, who, in probably brutal conditions, may yet survive? Can the decision be connected with a Statement just made by an American Special Envoy? This diplomat, after polite visits to the Headquarters of the criminals, and those of their known confederates, during which no doubt he listened - one hopes with reluctance? - to virulent anti-British tirades, has announced that the "new Government is doing well in difficult conditions"? O, Shades of burning Cairo, and aborting Suez!! There has been a superficial and unofficial Press surmise that it is the welfare of some six thousand British Subjects in Iraq which has made this "Recognition" by Britain essential. If so it seems strange that no such urgent concern was shown for the far larger number of British, French, and Jewish people who at the time of the incredible lunacy of the Suez withdrawal were left suddenly defenceless (amidst violent hostility which had been aroused against them), apparently at the behest of the U.S.A., or for the misty (or perhaps not so misty)! blue eyes of "Mr.H", to the utter ruin of these people, and to the almost irreparable damage of England's prestige and good name throughout the World? Or again, is the Middle Eastern oil the motive force for this decision, and if so why and how is its importance greater than that of the Suez Canal, especially when the British public are now constantly being assured that the Iraqi supply

of oil is no longer irreplaceable or essential to the West - which the Canal still is. None of this seems to make sense.

In any case if it is again political non-morality which is the real motive force, then is the grand old tradition of National Honour never more to have its place in the picture? - which in the past has always proved of far more solid worth than a moment of smug expediency. Such expediency for temporary gain, by gradual stages can lower the morale of the World to the point of chaos, collapse - and Soviet Russia.

Meanwhile ordinary thinking British people stand aghast, while the Ghosts of England's greatness seem to gather in reproach, and fade shuddering away.

Those of us who have known Iraq through the long years since her foundation, with affection for her people and countryside, bow our heads in respectful memory of those her great leaders recently slain. Their friendship was our privilege, and their record and ours through the years of co-operation can still inspire both our Nations through the days of History to come.

H. H. J.