

The Locusts

Killing Civilization in Mesopotamia

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“From our thousand year old sleep, From our crippled history, Comes a sun without ritual, To the country that’s dug in to our lives like the grave, To the drugged and murdered country, And kills the shaikh of the sand and locusts.”
Adonis (Ali Ahmed Said) “Victims of a Map”, Saqi Books.

Locust swarms are the dread of hot countries, also of course, the Biblical curse. They devour all, destroying sustenance.

The locusts in uniform, who have destroyed Iraq, humanity, sustenance, its history, predating the time of Christ and the Prophet Mohammed, are never, it seems, satiated or satisfied. From the early defiling (ongoing) of Mosques, cemeteries (Muslim, Christian, Yazidi ...) even the sacred tributes to the memory of the martyrs are being destroyed and defiled.

After the illegal invasion, the US military did the unthinkable. They made a camp in the great turquoise memorial to the half million lost souls of the Iran-Iraq war. In the marble mausoleum, where the names of all the dead are believed recorded on the shining marble walls, where their belongings and gifts in their homage, are displayed, they camped – and despoiled the names with graffiti, regimental symbols, defiling even the dead.

The memorial is split, so the souls of the dead can fly heavenward – and the fountain represented the tears for their loss, or the eternality of the Euphrates, thus life itself, depending on whom was asked. It was Iraq’s equivalent to America’s Viet Nam memorial wall, Arlington Cemetery, to Britain’s Cenotaph, symbol of slaughter in two World Wars. Imagine the outrage were those defiled. Imagine sleeping by them, pissing on them, graffitiing them. Unthinkable. But America’s finest, did just that, to a memorial to a butchery compared to the first world war. Ironically, it was built by Mitsubishi, from a country subject to America’s very own, home made, “holocaust”: Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Doubt that the Godless deviants who squatted in this palace of tears knew that, having too, scattered their own radioactive poisons (residue from uranium weapons) throughout Iraq. History certainly has a strange way of meeting up.

Now it appears that what Karen Dabrowska (Iraq: Bradt Travel Guides) described as “Iraq’s Arc de Triomphe”, is being demolished. The great triumphal arch, commemorating Iraq’s victory in the sacrifice of the eight year (Western driven) Iraq-Iran war, is situated near the US/UK illegal trespassers in the Presidential Palace. The great parade ground with its monument to war’s horrors, the cost to the lost and the living left behind – is to be erased.

The pain on both sides of the Iran-Iraq war, is unimaginable. Iranian soldiers helmets – Iran’s martyrs – are at the base of the great monument. The vast arch of crossed swords held by

great arms and hands – the latter believed enlarged casts of Saddam Hussein’s hands – cross above the centre and is made from the melted weapons of Iraq’s martyrs. No Iraq foundry was big enough to cast the arms, although Iraq did cast the swords. The arms were cast by the world’s largest art foundry, Morris Singer, in Basingstoke, England.

Triumphal arches, ancient and modern, have existed since ancient Rome. Pliny the Elder wrote in the first century A.D. of honouree monuments of unusual importance, erected to commemorate triumphs. From the Menin Gate at Ypres, to London’s Wellington Arch; from Libya to Laos; Spain to Syria; Moscow to the Monumental Arch at Galveston, Texas and the Soldiers and Sailors Arch at Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn, New York.

Rob Seaman is Chairman of Morris Singer. His stance, he said, is absolutely non-political. Their work on memorials and that which their artisans and the architects for each, create, involve heartache, emotions and strong empathy for the suffering represented. “Removing a piece known throughout the world ...in years time (maybe even those who did it) will be saddened. If you go back in history, from ancient Egypt to Nazi destruction, archeologists too say ‘if only’ history too had not been destroyed.”

The foundry recently created the Battle of Britain Memorial and that to the Women of World War II, which stands in London’s Whitehall. Reflecting on the closeness of the human involvement of their experts in their projects, Seaman talked of: “The ladies from World War II...”, who visited, during the memorial’s creation. “Many were in tears.” Each such project, from Iraq to Whitehall represents above all, the ultimate in human suffering and Sacrifice; those at Morris Singer learn many stories, walk in many distant footprints and hear tragedy’s voices echo from other times and lands.

From the late nineties, until the 2003 invasion, prisoners and remains were finally exchanged between Iran and Iraq. No matter how impoverished by the UN embargo’s rigours, those who had heard nothing for all the years, those who had heard something (released prisoners would bring names with them of those still alive and get them somehow to families) would reach the border exchange points. Waiting, praying, breath holding, wondering too, whether those they sought would be even recognisable. The disappointed went back and back, just in case... Now, even the monuments to those they loved, lost or who returned, changed forever, count for nothing. And an early action of the “liberators” was to halt the exchanges. “Killing Hope”, is the title of William Blum’s devastating book on US interventions since World War II. Indeed.

The architect of “Iraq’s Arc de Triomphe”, requested he be buried there, at the site in to which he had poured his heart and soul. He is.

As ancient and modern heritage, from the Holy Land’s sixty year decimation of history itself and the current danger to the Al Aqsa Mosque by Israeli excavation, to Mesopotamia’s “Year Zero” ruin, it is impossible not to ponder on Zionism’s hand. “From the Nile to the Euphrates ...” ?

UNESCO (The United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation), charged with protecting world and national heritage, watches silently, as History, from Babylon forward, is erased from the map. The Parisian tax payers, who know a bit about culture, should perhaps demand that the building is evacuated of this useless body and turned into affordable housing for the homeless.

The perpetrators of these crimes of enormity should be reminded again, that the Nuremberg Tribunals held individuals accountable also for cultural war crimes. Several Nazi officials were sentenced to death for the destruction of cultural property. The precedent led to similar charges after the 1993 Balkans war. And the Trespassers-in-Chief in the various palaces might (also, again) do well to bone up on the illegality of using cultural property in support of military effort or as a command centre. (Geneva Convention, Article 53.)

A metaphor: desert locusts devour all in their path (the mature are of a yellowish colour.) In spite of their insatiable appetite, the lifespan of their reign is short. It is also greatly affected by environmental conditions. After they have destroyed all, communities with nothing left, fry them. (<http://www.no-pest.com/Locust.htm>)

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Please also see:

Victims of a Map <http://www.signaturebooks.co.uk/cgi-bin/ai.cgi?ISBN=0863565247>

Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II by William Blum http://www.venusproject.com/William_Blum/index.html

Iraq's "Year Zero" (photo source) Felicity Arbuthnot** <http://www.islamonline.net/English/ArtCulture/2005/11/article08.shtml>

The International Council on Monuments and Sites <http://www.international.icomos.org/home.htm>

UN group concerned about involvement of private security companies in conflicts <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=21673&Cr=mercenaries&Cr1>

US Fuels Sunni-Shiite Fire, to Hit Iran http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=Article_C&cid=1172500524666&pagename=Zone-English-News/NWELayout

Western civilisation? Hussein Al-alak, The Iraq Solidarity Campaign <http://iraqsolidaritycampaign.blogspot.com/2007/01/western-civilisation-hussein-al-alak.html>

Three Years after Looting of Iraqi National Museum: an Official Whitewash of US Crime, notes Sandy English <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2006/apr2006/muse-a07.shtml>

Racism at Core of Iraq Invasion, by Firas Al-Atraqchi <http://www.unobserver.com/index.php?pagina=layout5.php&id=1636&blz=1>

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