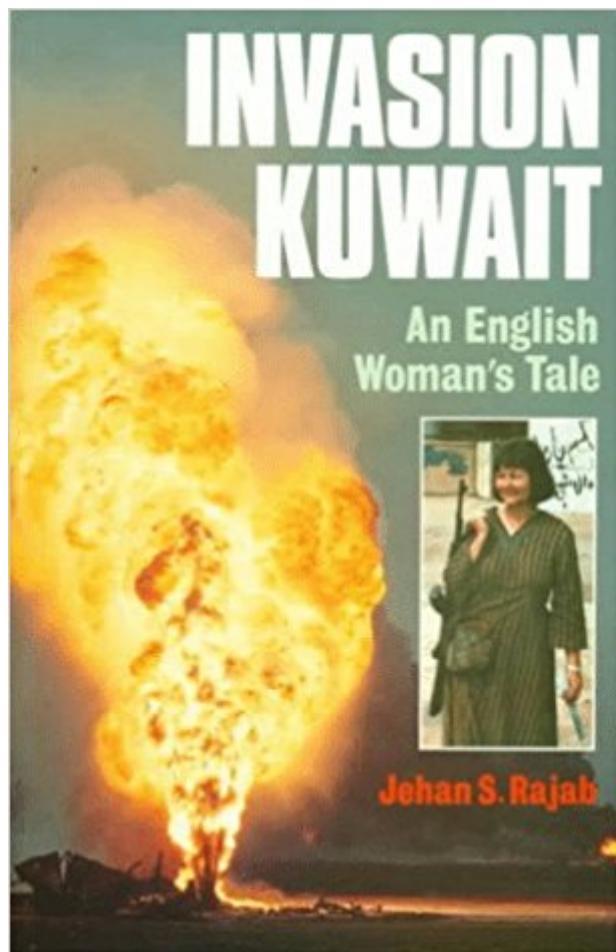


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Invasion Kuwait: An English Woman's Tale



Synopsis

In the form of a journal, this book tells the story of the author's experiences in Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion. Jehan Rajab chronicles her fight to preserve normality in the face of persecution and to save the Tareq Rajab Museum, her workplace, from destruction.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a great account of life in Kuwait during the invasion. Thanks to some ingenuity, loyalty to friends and family, wise decisions, and being very observant, Jehan S. Wellborne Rajab and her family survived the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and then she told the tale - eloquently. This is a fascinating book and an admirable tale.

Kuwait in 2007 shows little sign that there was ever an invasion or occupation, and yet, underneath the surface, the trauma lives on. When people tell their individual stories, it is as if it happened yesterday. Current events are still influenced by the invasion, the occupation, and the return of those who were caught outside the country, and separated from loved ones, now knowing if they were dead or alive. I heard this book recommended, but could not find it anywhere in Kuwait, and had to order it used, from . After reading it, the modern, characterless city of Kuwait looked entirely different. Here, you can still see bullet holes. There is the wreckage of the infamous Regency Palace. Here is an obscure invasion museum, or a memorial, almost lost and forgotten in the modern bustle of Kuwait. This book is a must-read for anyone who wants to get beneath the surface, to the events that shaped the attitudes of today.

In the plethora of Gulf War books covering the grand strategy of generals, presidents and prime ministers, this book, like so very few others, presents a unique and fascinating account of life in Iraqi-occupied Kuwait both in the first five months of the occupation, prior to Desert Storm, and then during the war itself. It is truly the 'inside' perspective, in no uncertain terms. Mrs. Rajab and several members of her family - long-term residents of Kuwait, and with the special perspective of a mixed Western-Kuwaiti family - did not have the protection of a large military organisation. They lived day-by-day alongside occupying Iraqi troops and the feared Mukhabarat (Iraqi Secret Police), surviving by the grace of God, sheer good fortune, and their wits. The prospect of sudden and possibly brutal death was ever-present. The fact that many others did not survive the same risks visited upon her gives the book a gravity which strikes home. This is the perspective of the crisis that was forgotten by the world's media in the rush for TV footage of fireworks displays over Baghdad, and bodies on the Basra Road. Soldiers, airmen and Marines of the Gulf War, with all credit due to them, generally lived the fear and danger of combat in periods of minutes or, at most, hours. Mrs. Rajab coped with extraordinary circumstances over seven long months with a strength of will which can only be described as inspirational. Yes, she could have left the country, but she stood by her home against incredible odds. This book is in the class of my own *Days of Fear: The Inside Story of the Iraqi Invasion and Occupation of Kuwait* (Motivate Publishing, London/Dubai, 1997). Mrs. Rajab has done a great service to the history of Kuwait and the Middle East with this book. Anyone who ever doubted the rightness of the Allied campaign to free Kuwait should read this, and know what horror and terror the people of Kuwait and those who lived there were delivered from. Any serious scholar of the Gulf War cannot claim to have his or her library complete without this very readable little book. Thank you, Mrs. Rajab, for a truly relevant book from a remarkable woman.

One would expect the harrowing experience of living in Kuwait through seven months of Iraqi occupation to have produced a flood of memoirs. But it's been a mere trickle, perhaps because those who survived the ordeal wish to put it behind them and rebuild normal lives. As Rajab's title states, she is a Briton; but having married a Kuwaiti and lived in Kuwait for thirty years, she experienced the occupation as a Kuwaiti (that is, she could remain in her own house, without fear of being taken hostage). From this perspective she could observe the Iraqi soldiers, involve herself in Kuwaiti organizations, and participate in the festivities upon liberation. Her story takes on added drama due to the fact that in her husband had built a well-known private museum in the basement of

his compound, filled with antique and valuable items. The museum had been open to the public for years and was much-visited; to make matters worse, her husband was out of Kuwait when Saddam Husayn invaded. Will the author succeed in keeping the museum from being pillaged? (Yes, by sealing off most of it and displaying some third-rate items to marauding Iraqi troops.) First-hand accounts of warfare from the Middle East reveal a pattern of normal life mixed with searing violence (kibbutz children attending school in bunkers; Beirutis at the beach with snipers a few blocks away) and the Kuwait experience is no exception. To those of us not on the scene, this combination remains enduringly mysterious. *Middle East Quarterly*, December 1994

What can I say about this book? As I read through the pages, all the memories of that awful period came back to me as if they happened yesterday not 18 years ago. And even that I was a 7 year-old child at that time, and nothing very bad happened to us, still the bitter feeling of knowing what my country went through make my heart swells with sadness and anger. Yet, I can only bow in respect to the brave Mrs. Jehan Rajab and to all those who gave their lives for Kuwait and to everyone helped us in our ordeal... God Bless Kuwait...

Mrs. Rajabs style is sincere and human. Her account, unlike other books on the subject, not only talks of strategy, but day to day accounts and problems faced by the people of occupied Kuwait. A masterpeice. I suggest this book not only to those people intrested in the Gulf War, but to those poeple who are intrested in reading about the strength of the Human Will as well.

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