

Document HHJ-18-5. Manuscript letter dated 25 Apr 1955 in the hand of Harold Hindle James (in pencil). 3pp.  
The letter describes the history of James's involvement in the Arab world, and mentions his acquaintance with such people as St John Philby, Gertrude Bell and Glubb Pasha. (Original MS from papers of Robert C.T. James, held by John Barnard January 2018. A note on the back in Margaret Beagley's hand, suggests that he obtained it from her).

To —  
From —

25/April/55

Dear —

I have just been reading in the Journal d'Egypte of April 24<sup>th</sup> 1955, the leading article by its Editor - Omer Edgard Gallad, upon St John Philby's expulsion from the Kingdom by the new Saudi-Arabian Rulers there. The final paragraph reads, "He goes out of Arabia, which saw him triumphant, fortunate, & respected, now an undesirable whose return no one wishes to see". Philby is now over 70 years of age. His lifetime of adventure, service & literary achievement has brought high prestige both to his own country & to Arabia.

I cannot help recalling a little luncheon party at Edgard Gallad's flat which I attended, some years ago, with Brigadier Clayton. The subject of English Arabists arose, & Gallad spoke of several, Philby, Lawrence & Glubb included, with an eloquent respect alleging genuine insight into their "fine qualities". Gallad at that time was also an eloquent supporter (as were also the Amin twins of "Khbar-al-Yom" etc!), of H.M. King Farouk & all that appertained to him; & a "well balanced" well wisher ~~of~~ of Anglo-Egyptian good-will. I have myself often in the past discussed these matters with him. How changed is that time today! and how shattered now are those ~~two~~ who failed to change their loyalties!

I remember also when I was in Jeddah as the personal guest of H.M. King Abdul Aziz, dining one evening at the local "mansion" of Philby. The British Minister was also his guest, & we were in dinner jacket rig, though our host I had seen at a Royal Reception that morning looking magnificent in Arab robes. Philby's prestige in Saudi-Arabia at that time, whether as a great Englishman, or as a great friend of that Arab people & of their King, was supreme & uncontestable.

When I met H.E. Sheikh Hafey Wahba in Cairo last year (I have known him well since 1923) and again at his Embassy when I was ~~in~~ in England last ~~year~~ summer, his uneasiness at the tendencies to change of political orientation in his country & in Egypt was evident. In the privacy of his "study" he even expressed regret at my own present day "silencing"; but how much more gravely deplorable is any attempt to denude such great names as those of Lawrence, Gertrude Bell, Philby & Glubb (& with them their Country's name), all of whom receive their quota of disparaging innuendo in Gallad's article.

With Lawrence, as you know, I served for a time in 1917. Gertrude Bell was my earliest instructor in Arab policies; & it was with Glubb that I first found the deserts in Iraq, in the early twenties, being made acquainted with the Chiraks & Shammar warrior-tribes & their famous leaders of

that time, Iahad al Hadhadhal & Agil al Yaman — hereditary enemies themselves, & between whose people one had not infrequently to negotiate.

The Order of Mahdi I received from King Hussein, great-grandfather of the present King of Iraq. My contacts with King Abdulla of Jordan were cordial & of long duration. My British Order was bestowed upon me for my work as a Special Service Officer. More recently, centred on Cairo, my appointment as Liaison Officer Middle East, kept me touring throughout the M.E., & in Egypt's Western Desert during several years. All this is known to, and appears to be recorded against me by, the present Egyptian Revolutionary Regime with greater malice than my former friendships within the Egyptian Royal Family. All this is well known, & is quite outside all question of any alleged present-day politics of mine.

Taking into consideration the implied warning to me from Hafez Wahba, following that from a Sherifian personality when he was in Cairo, the virulent Anti-British comments made to me at my interview when I was "invited" to the Ministry of Interior here on Jan 12<sup>th</sup> last (already reported to the Embassy) & the abnormal duration (now some two years) of failure to accord to me a long-term Residence Visa, ~~which~~ in spite of constant assurances that this is about to be issued to me as a normal right, & now the evidence of glib hostility ready for production in newspaper articles, I feel that I should put forward to the British Embassy the following points as to my circumstances here.

I have, as you are aware, the strongest possible reasons, quite unconnected with politics, for wishing to continue my residence in Egypt. From a health aspect, it is almost a "life & death" matter, & there are important aspects of financial expenditure, & personal interests. In spite of some ill-considered & incongruous implications that I still "dabble" in politics here, I am actually quite out of touch with M.E. political activity. I neither know nor wish to know present political developments, outside my normal support for the decencies of ordinary civilized living. The Revolutionary Council may possibly however be attributing to me a wholly disproportionate personal influence. If by pressing to continue residence in Egypt I am exposing myself to unscrupulous attack of malicious intent, about which I have no means of realizing the danger, and against which I can no longer be officially protected, then it is

evidently my right, as a British Subject, and as an officer invalidated through Service causes, to receive official warning. It would be far more than a personal wrong ~~that~~ that I should be allowed to drift unknowingly into a position in which my name & past Service ~~could~~ could be used for some unscrupulous misinterpretation to the detriment of British prestige & my personal correct record. In priority to my personal interests in wishing to maintain residence in Egypt is the feeling that it is wrong for a British Subject to submit readily to unjust coercion. I have no aversion from risks of a correct sort, but it would be no becoming to involve myself in some sort of third 'folly'. So again I ask advice.

Galland proclaims that the days of individual British "adventure" are over. If this is so it is a loss to the World; & perhaps we are to have instead the cold mechanism of "totalitarian" inhumanity; & perhaps he reserves his praise now in support of Man-Mann, and the like. With us however the names of those who have served England well in the days when individual adventurousness was called for must at least be made safe here from malignant distortions, especially from the malice of petty opportunists such as Edward Galland & his sort, who readily lend themselves to any sinister scheme. Surely that is not asking very much!

Will you please make known these comments of mine at our Embassy, in the appropriate senior quarters.

Yours

Sincerely yours

Hubert H. Jacobus.

Please enclose this pencilled letter. I am still as you know, unwell.