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# IMPRESSIONS OF EGYPT AND THE SUDAN

By M. PHILIPS PRICE, J.P., M.P.

Report of a lecture, with slides, delivered at a meeting of the Royal Central Asian Society on Wednesday, February 9, 1955, Admiral Sir Cecil Harcourt, G.B.E., K.C.B., in the chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Philips Price needs no introduction to most of those present. He has been a member of this Society for many years and has lectured previously at our meetings. As most of you know, he is a Member of Parliament, and has been so for a long time, being probably one of the most travelled Members, travelling chiefly as a free lance and not on official delegations. In addition, he is a journalist and has written many books. I now call on him to address us.

IT is with some diffidence that I approach the task of giving you an account of the impressions I gained last autumn of Egypt and the Sudan, because I realize that there are in the Society many who know far more about those two countries than I do, in that they have probably lived and served in them for many years. I have only twice been in Egypt, the last time in October 1954, and I had never been in the Sudan until I went there last autumn. But, knowing the tolerance of members of this Society, I am emboldened to give some account of what I saw and heard, in the hope that it may contribute towards clarification of the ideas about those two countries.

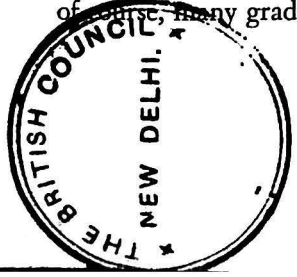
Of course this Society deals almost entirely, as its name implies, with Central Asia and its peoples. Geographically, the Sudan and Egypt form part not of Asia but of N.E. Africa. On the other hand, the southern shore of the Mediterranean has since the Mahomedan era come very much under the cultural influence of Asia, particularly, of course, of what is known as the Middle East, and the Arabs have left, since the early days of the Mahomedan era, an indelible mark upon the northern shores of Africa.

## THE ASIAN INFLUENCE

The population of Egypt is not entirely Arab but contains a mixture of many races, going back to very ancient times. It is, in fact, one of the most ancient civilizations we know of. In the Sudan there is a large area in which there is no Arab population, but a very strong, and indeed quite pure in places, negro element. The Nile, of course, is the great giver of life to all this part of N.E. Africa. Rising in the plateaux round Lake Victoria Nyanza, it passes through forests and swamps where the population is negroid, living in primitive tribal conditions and pagan in religion. This is the type of country in part of Uganda and Kenya, and it is that type of population which spills over into the Southern Sudan. Northwards, the country opens up into prairies, and farther north still there are deserts studded with oases round the banks of the great river. The negroid population in this area gradually thins out, while the Arab population increases, so that finally there is a mainly Arab population, descendants of those who came in from Asia in the early Mahomedan era. There are, of course, many gradations between negroid and Arab.

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The great cultural line runs, quite irrespective of political frontiers, about half-way down the Sudan, along a line across the Middle Nile up to the Abyssinian frontier and right across to the frontiers of the Belgian Congo. All the Upper Sudan is non-Arab, negro, pagan and primitive. Further north one sees more and more the cultural influence of Asia until, primarily in Egypt, there is the pure Arab cultural influence, noticeable also in Northern Sudan. In other words, the farther north one goes, the stronger is the Arab and the Semitic influence, and Arabic, of course, is part of the Semitic group of languages. Consequently Egypt, although racially mixed, is culturally and politically a unit, and it has been easier to build a nation there because one type of culture has been dominant. In the Sudan, on the other hand, it is going to be more difficult to build a cultural and political unit because while Northern Sudan is very much like Egypt, based on Islam, the South is primitive and pagan, so that the conditions under which the population live are pretty well what they were a thousand years ago.

There is something rather mysterious about the history of N.E. Africa. The people of Egypt and the Lower Sudan have learnt the art of agriculture by irrigation and the use of horses and camels for traction. Their standard of living is relatively advanced; in fact, as advanced as that of any of the countries of the Middle East. One can say that, economically, Egypt is the most advanced of the Arab-speaking countries, with possibly the exception of Syria. But south of a line drawn across the Middle Nile one encounters primitive life where agriculture is archaic and the livestock industry very poor. Still farther south, in Uganda and British East Africa, Tanganyika and Kenya, agriculture is of an even more primitive type, and it seems that the influence of the higher civilization of the Arabs and of the people from Central Asia has not penetrated into that area, with the exception of course that the Arabs did penetrate down to the coast of East Africa, though their influence was not of the best because they went there to trade slaves; they made raids into the interior for that purpose. Nevertheless, they did establish along the coast, and only along the coast, Mahomedan culture and civilization, which prevail to this day. There was and is nothing of their influence inside the country.

Consequently negro Africa remained, until the British arrived there, very much as it was thousands of years ago—primitive religion, pagan spirit worship and black magic, witch doctors and most primitive agriculture, over large areas not even cattle and sheep, and the beasts of burden, as today over much of the area, women who carry things on their heads. It may be true to say that the tsetse-fly had something to do with this, because cattle and sheep cannot thrive where the tsetse-fly is predominant. But that is not the whole story. It is, I think, because there was failure of penetration of Asian culture into Central Africa, so that the Arabs did not establish their influence there. And yet there must have been some passage of people into this part of Africa because one finds all over Kenya, Uganda, and I believe also in Tanganyika, some of the African tribes showing the strong features of the Nilo-Hamitic people: the aquiline nose, the narrow head and the very open eyes, so different to the ordinary negroid type with thick lips and fuzzy hair, indicating that there has

been immigration down into that area at one time. Though Asian people penetrated into this part of Africa they did not establish Arab civilization; they became absorbed into the native culture of the Bantu tribes of Central Africa.

I have dealt with the foregoing points in order to show where the Asian influence penetrated into Africa, where it stayed and where it faded out.

### EGYPT

As I have said, Egypt is the most advanced of the Arab-speaking countries in that part of the world. It is geographically in Africa but culturally in Asia, whereas the Sudan is geographically in Africa but culturally it has one foot in Asia and one foot in Africa. And there is this interesting fact to be borne in mind, that historically speaking the Egyptians have been dominated by foreigners for centuries, not since the days of the Pharaohs have they been really independent. First the Greeks, then the Romans and then, for a time, the Persians even, as one realizes when going to Luxor and seeing the great statue of Rameses II lying smashed on the ground as it was left by the followers of King Cambyses of Persia when he invaded Egypt hundreds of years ago. Then came the Arabs; they ruled Egypt for a time; then, again, they fell under foreign influence. The Mamelukes who governed them in the Middle Ages were Turkish mercenaries acting for the Arabs, and they continued to govern Egypt until the time of Sultan Selim the Grim, who conquered Egypt and made it part of the Ottoman Empire, which it remained until very recent years.

Though Arab culture and Islam remained the basis of the life of Egypt, the people never until recently showed any real signs of throwing up their own leaders, but I am convinced that they are showing signs of doing that today. Like other people of Asia, the Egyptians have developed during the last fifty years a strong national feeling. The greater prosperity caused by our control over Egypt, under Lord Cromer's régime in the last century and the beginning of the present, created a rising national consciousness. Before we left we encouraged the Egyptians to set up parliamentary democracy as we know it. I am afraid it cannot be said that parliamentary democracy has, in the early stages of its application in Egypt, been a great success. One cannot wonder at that. With 90 per cent. of the population illiterate, the radio and the bazaar demagogue have been the chief moulders of public opinion in Egypt. Consequently, the controller of the radio and of the bazaar demagogue (namely, the big landlord, the pasha and the rich merchant) has run elections and has dominated Parliament.

The corrupt régime of the Wafd was brought about in this way. It has largely caused the average Britisher to be somewhat disgusted with what has happened in Egypt since we have left, and there is, of course, good cause for that disgust. The anti-foreign agitation which was carried on by the Wafd has been a smoke-screen behind which misrule and corruption have flourished. But I must add that I was very impressed by something I saw last time I went to Egypt. Quite a change seemed to have taken place since my first visit in 1946.

When I went to Egypt in 1946, just after the Second World War, I had an introduction to one of the Secretaries to the late King. I went to the Abdin Palace to meet him; he was very nice to me, a charming gentleman who had been educated at Oxford. He knew which horse was likely to win the Derby, but, somehow, I felt he did not represent Egypt. When I went to the Abdin Palace again in the last few days of October 1954, I saw a most extraordinary change. This was the ex-King's Palace. The whole place was given over to offices of the Government. There was bustle and everybody was busy doing various things. There were young emancipated Egyptian girls, dressed like Europeans, working hard at typing. There were young men with reports and memoranda bustling about the place. I went to one of the places close by where I had seen the delightful pasha seven or eight years ago, and I saw written over the door: "Office of Land Reform." I naturally came to the conclusion that something had happened since my earlier visit.

The truth is that the Egyptian Army stepped in and decided to clear up an Augean stable of a corrupt parliamentary democracy under the former régime. We in democratic countries do not like to see soldiers mixing or taking part in politics, but then we have centuries of experience and parliamentary education behind us. Very few, if any, Middle East countries have had experience of parliamentary democracy. Therefore, in a young country, not young in culture or in race but young in political experience, we need not be surprised to see the Army taking a direct interest in something which affects its very existence as a corporate body and, indeed, affects the nation as a whole. And the fact is that the Army in Egypt today is officered and manned very largely by the common man of Egypt: the little people of the middle class with small businesses, the sons of Civil Servants and of the professional classes of modest means, and indeed the sons of that hitherto forgotten and downtrodden class the Egyptian peasants, they are there, corporals, sergeants, sons of peasants, some of them junior officers—all that shows that when the Army takes an interest in political affairs it is not going to be the kind of régime which has hitherto dominated.

It seems to me that the Army in Egypt today is trying to do what Ataturk did for Turkey, but of course the task in Egypt is more difficult than in Turkey because the Turks have had for centuries the experience of self-discipline and self-government as the centre of a great Empire. Egypt, as I have explained, has for centuries been dominated by foreigners, and it is much more difficult to get things running smoothly. One cannot do more than wish them well and hope that they succeed. I believe the Army to be the only hope.

The present régime has its many difficulties and its enemies at home. There is the Wafd, the former régime, underground. Then there is, more important still, the Moslem Brotherhood, with whom the Army worked together for a time in the early days of the Revolution. The Moslem Brotherhood has no use for rich pashas and corrupt politicians. It consists of many of the old leaders of Islam and of quite a number of young people who are deeply religious and who long to return to the simple ways of Islam as in the days of the Prophet. They are the puritans

of Egypt. Unfortunately, there is a romantic and unpractical streak in the Moslem Brotherhood. They are inclined to think that all the ills of Islam are due to the foreign unbeliever. They would not hear of any compromise over the Suez Canal, which the Army leaders were prepared to consider. The Moslem Brotherhood wanted to drive out of Egypt all foreign commercial and industrial enterprise, with complete indifference to the social and economic effects of their policy on the wealth and prosperity of Egypt.

Of course the leaders of the Army, being practical men, could not get on with romanticists of this type for very long, and so the break was bound to come. When I arrived in Egypt at the end of October 1954, that was the situation, and I felt it was coming to a head. It did so while I was there. I had made arrangements to see, first, some of the entourage of Colonel Nasser, and then Colonel Nasser himself. Everything was arranged, and then I heard Colonel Nasser had been shot at in Alexandria. Naturally, conditions during the next few days were somewhat chaotic and it was not possible to see any of the leaders of the Government. Nevertheless, the Government had the situation well in hand. In the crowds which paraded the streets of Cairo there was no anti-foreign demonstration, so far as I could see; the crowds were extremely friendly to foreigners. The only bit of hooliganism was the burning down of the headquarters of the Moslem Brotherhood. While all that was going on, I felt I ought not to try to see the important people, but go out into the provinces, into the Delta, to see something of the land reform of which I had had an inkling when I went to Abdin Palace and people at the Office of Land Reform.

I went, first, to see a big estate owned by the late King in the Delta which had been divided among the peasants. In other words, the agrarian revolution had started, and I wanted to see something of it. 1,400 acres had been divided among the peasants, each having three acres. On the land of the Delta it is possible to grow two crops a year because the soil is so extraordinarily fertile; it is only a question of getting sufficient water. Alfalfa, cotton, wheat, maize, clover are grown. In the first year there are two cuts of alfalfa, then cotton is grown; in the second year, wheat, then maize; in the third year, clover, then wheat or maize. The alternative crops are grown one in spring, the other in the late summer. The crops were consolidated into areas of about 100-acre plots. Each peasant had one acre of each of three of the crops, three acres in all. Crop consolidation makes it possible for there to be mechanical cultivation. I saw tractors working on the land. The Co-operative Society had been loaned tractors and large cultivating machines by the Department of Land Reform, so that the Co-operative Society was able to do the initial cultivation of the land, leaving the later stages for the peasants to do by hand cultivation.

The financing of the scheme is quite reasonable. The peasant takes all the crops on his three holdings of one acre each; he pays the Co-operative Society for the mechanical cultivation, but the Co-operative pays a portion to the Government for the loan of the implements. The peasant pays also interest and sinking fund to the Government for the

purchase of the land from the original owner. In the case of the King and the Royal Family the estates have been confiscated. Private owners are being paid for their land. The basis of payment is limited to seventy times the basic land tax. There is no question of the system of land purchase being different as between one estate and another; the system is the same throughout the country. In a recent lecture to the Royal Central Asian Society,\* Sir Clarmont Skrine told us what was going on in Persia and thought—and I believe there is a great deal in what he said—that the land reform there is not of this uniform nature. The Shah is making considerable concessions to the peasants which the private owners feel they cannot afford to make. It is different in Egypt. There really is a uniform system; every peasant pays on the basis of so many years' purchase of the basic land tax.

There is, however, one difficult problem in Egypt and there has been an endeavour to solve it. There is the problem of land inheritance and the Moslem law. The sacred law of Islam lays down that the owner of property must pass on his land to all his children, which tends to hinder the cultivation of land and renders it difficult to make improvement. Under the Egyptian land law that has been got over by insisting upon the maintenance of the holding. One of the children takes it over, but the proceeds of the land can be, unless they wish to contract out, divided amongst the other members of the family. That seems to be a practical way of dealing with the problem and at the same time it gives some recognition to the sacred law of Islam.

The land reform deals not only with large estates, because they are, after all, only one-tenth of the whole land; it applies to all property above 200 acres, and the law is that no one can own a bigger acreage than 200 acres, which is similar to the agrarian land reform which Turkey has put through during the last twenty years. I have heard rumours of its not being carried out entirely like that, that there are exceptions and so on, but in the main that is the aim and object, and it is largely being carried out.

There is, of course, a political aspect to all this. The Army wants to break the economic and hence the political power of the Wafd. As regards the economic side I made an attempt to work out one peasant's budget. That is not easy, but one can get a rough idea. The most valuable crop grown in the Delta is cotton, and the gross return on cotton is, roughly, £90 an acre. Formerly there was no reason why the whole of that should not have been taken by the landlord, and the greater part of it generally was; it depended very much on whether the landlord was a good or a bad landlord. The essence of the land reform seems to me to be that everything is now uniform. The peasant knows where he is; he is not dependent on the whim of one man. The landlord in the past often took £65 an acre from the peasant, leaving him no more than £25 for the one acre of cotton. Today out of the £90 an acre for the cotton land, the peasant has to pay £21 in interest and sinking fund for the purchase of the land and, on an average, £15 towards the cost of Co-operative cultivation, the cultivation by tractors and so on, leaving a final return on the cotton land of £60 an acre. Of course, the other two acres of the

\* This issue.

peasant's holding produce less and consist of wheat, maize, alfalfa and fodder for the animals. On the whole, one may say that on the three acres the peasant may now net £100 a year, whereas formerly he was lucky if he received between £30 and £40 a year; £100 is not a princely sum but, in view of the poor conditions under which a fellaheen has lived so long, a considerable advance. In the villages I saw a few indications of the rise in the standard of living. Some peasants had radio sets and some had bicycles. I enquired how long they had had those and found they had been bought recently. That seemed to indicate that there is a general improvement. Some of the money paid out to the peasants for their crops is paid in Co-operative tickets which go to the women, so that they can cash those tickets in the local bazaar, and that is a good step forward.

Of course the Army régime in Egypt knows quite well that this land reform will not solve the land hunger, because the population of Egypt is rising at the rate of 400,000 a year. Hence more irrigation is needed, which means more water from the life-giving Nile. Plans have been drawn up for raising the level of the Nile above the Assuan dam by a new dam which it is hoped will irrigate 2,000,000 more acres. That will cost £200,000,000 (sterling). But the sands are running out. The population is rising continually. One hopes as education spreads the birth rate will tend to fall. That is the only hope for the future of the country. The finance of this scheme is a serious matter. We still owe Egypt sterling balances of something under £100,000,000. Some of that, no doubt, we are releasing at the rate of about £15,000,000 a year. We could increase that. That would be the basis, possibly, of a further loan for them to get on with this scheme. It seems that the International Bank and possibly the Americans will have to come along.

All this tends to show that the Egyptian Army régime is being realistic and wants to receive help from the West for the economic development which it knows is a matter of life and death for Egypt. This was the psychological reason for the recent Anglo-Egyptian agreement on the Canal. The Army is reasonable because it knows it has terrific economic problems to solve, and that it must have economic assistance from the West. Therefore, in spite of the strong anti-foreign feelings which have been whipped up in the past by the Wafd and the Moslem Brotherhood, the Army régime has been able to put through a realistic policy of co-operation with the West.

#### THE CANAL ZONE

I now come to the Canal Zone. What has happened there? I went there and had the pleasure of the hospitality extended to me by the daughter and son-in-law of Sir John Shea, until recently our President, who was then Chief of Staff of the British Army in the Canal Zone and was preparing to leave for Cyprus. Before I went into the Canal Zone proper I spent a little while in Ismailia, and saw a straw showing which way the wind is blowing. I saw two British Military Police walking with an Egyptian Police officer, chatting in a friendly way together, patrolling the streets. Ismailia was the place at which some of the most ugly incidents

took place during the time of the trouble. But now the British are packing up and leaving. We are putting the stores in order for the civilian experts who are to look after them, and the units of the Egyptian Army which are to guard the stores.

I visited the camps at Fayid and a place nearby; I did not get to Tel-el-Kebir. From the information that came to me I think that a sum of not less than £100,000,000 sterling of British tax-payers' money is still out there—very important, of course, as a base of supply to other forward bases in the Middle East in the event of trouble further north. The problem I did hear—and it is not an easy one—is that of stopping pilfering of the stores. I think we managed to stop it fairly well. One hopes that the units of the Egyptian Army will succeed in doing so also.

I gained a good impression of the appearance of the Egyptian soldier, both officers and men, compared with what I had seen five or six years before. He seemed smart and intelligent and went about his business efficiently. I was informed by those who know that his training in modern warfare has only just begun. I doubt very much if the Egyptians want a show-down with Israel; at least at the present time. I hope not ever. At the same time, I could not help noticing that feelings towards Israel showed no sign of letting up; in fact, they are more bitter than ever. I can see no chance of the Arabs generally, certainly not Egypt, raising the blockade.

#### THE SUDAN

The important point in regard to the Sudan is the political situation there. Religion has played an important part in the politics of the most culturally advanced part of Sudan—*i.e.*, the Arab part in the north. There are two parties, both with religious background. One is the *Umma* party, based on the Ansar sect, founded by the Mahdi whose Dervishes killed Gordon. The Dervish sect believes that God made other revelations after the Prophet Mahomet and that the father of the present Mahdi was the last to hear God's word. The other party is the National Unionist party, which arose out of the *Ashigga*, based on the Khatmia sect and more orthodox. They claim that God revealed His last word to the Prophet Mahomet. You are all aware that the Mahdi Dervishes revolted in 1885 against the Egyptians and conquered a large part of the Sudan, and that Egypt and the British under Lord Kitchener threw out the Mahdi after the Battle of Omdurman and established the Condominium. Fear of the return of the Mahdi sect and party dominates the Khatmia sect and the National Unionist party. Rather than have the Mahdi sect and party back in power they would prefer to seek the aid of Egypt, but they also want the independence of the Sudan. I talked to their leaders and gained the impression that they want independence. They want to be linked with Egypt, but when pressed as to what the link is to be they were non-committal. I saw the posthumous son of the famous Mahdi whose Dervishes killed Gordon. He received me in the cool of the evening in a lovely garden in which beautiful Kavirondo cranes walked about begging for food as we were taking tea. We discovered that we were the same age within a week or two. The impres-



sion I had was that the Mahdi is not a fire-eater as his father was, but a courtly Arab gentleman. Yet the fear of the Mahdi sect and party dominates the politics of the Sudan and gives the Egyptians a chance to interfere in Sudan politics. It seems to me that there is something else behind this, probably the age-old struggle which runs right through Central Asia, the struggle between the nomad, the pastoral and the settled and agricultural sections of the population. The followers of the Mahdi are, on the whole, rather more to be found among the "pastoral tribes of Kordofan in the west and south-west, and the National Unionist party and sect that follows Sayid Ali el Mirghani is more to be found among the settled population round the rivers. In other words, it is the old struggle which we know in Central Asia and have seen in Persia and Iraq and at times in Turkey—the struggle between the Desert and the Sown.

If Egypt does not interfere in the elections, I believe the Sudan will declare for independence, but at the same time will wish for friendly relations with Egypt and probably with the British. Unfortunately, there is a rather mischievous gentleman who is in the Egyptian Government at the present time, Major Salem, who has been into the Sudan and using influence—I think undue influence—there. Nevertheless, we all must agree that good relations between the Sudan and Egypt are essential, if only because of the Nile water question, the waters of the Nile being the means of life and the absence of them the cause of death to both countries. Egypt, being the more thickly populated country, requires to be more plentifully supplied, so that in the case of Egypt it is more a matter of life and death. In the case of the Sudan it is a question of developing the potential wealth of a potentially rich country. Therefore, while there is agreement about the existing use of the water supplies from the Nile, agreement and understanding as to future use have become vital.

I should like here to interpolate a few words in regard to British officials in the Sudan, a question which affects us all. As the Sudan becomes independent our officials have to leave. We have been there long. We have given the area good Government and established various services. What will happen? There are British officials who have spent their lives in the service of the Sudan Government and done magnificent work. I was glad to see that the Nigerian Government is offering posts to those who are going to have to retire from the Sudan. That is excellent. I am told that a number of our Crown Colonies in Africa will be only too glad to have a number of those officials. And yet there is a certain tragedy about their retirement from the scene of their activities. It seems to me that our compatriots in the Sudan are not considering money—they are being offered generous terms of retirement—but I felt on talking to them that they regard themselves as men with a mission; they have had a job of work to do, a mission to their fellow-men which they want to carry through; they are sorry their mission has to be given up; they would like to carry on. In other words, they were doing what inspired Gordon in the past when he went out to Egypt, a most laudable and Christian character, to serve their fellows. There is nothing for

it, however. The Sudan must now run on its own show, as we have half taught the people there to do. The truth is that people prefer to be badly governed by themselves than well governed by somebody else.

The political services, when our officials leave, will, I imagine, be carried on without much difficulty by the Sudanese. It is, however, a far more serious question when we come to the economic services because they involve technicians, engineers and other experts whose presence alone can keep things running smoothly. As an example of what I have in mind I cite the Sudan plantation. I spent a whole day there from early in the morning until late in the evening when I left by 'plane. I had a good look round. I found there were four British irrigation engineers and experts virtually running that plantation. From what I could gather, there was only one Sudanese sufficiently trained to be able to take over if all four British experts go. There is no one else, apparently, able to deal with the complicated business of controlling the waters, keeping the canals clean and dredged and all the hundred and one complicated jobs connected with the maintenance of that wonderful system of irrigation. If all four of the British engineers and experts go, I have grave doubts as to how the Sudanese will be able to carry on. These four experts want to go because unless they are given an assurance as to how long they can continue in the service there, they feel that they can get other posts fairly easily now but that in ten years' time they may not be able to do so. That is the problem. It is up to the Sudanese.

#### SUDAN AND EGYPT IRRIGATION PROBLEMS

Immense economic problems lie before Egypt and the Sudan in connection with water and irrigation. As I have said, for Egypt that is a matter of life and death, if it is to grapple with its teeming millions. For the Sudan it is a problem of developing the potential wealth of the country. 84,000 million tons of water of the Nile pass down into the Sudan and Egypt every year; 12,000 million tons are lost by evaporation; 50,000 million tons are used by Egypt; 22,000 millions tons are used by the Sudan. There is also a certain amount of the water which goes out to the Mediterranean, which could be saved and used by means of the dam to which I referred earlier. But there is a much bigger problem still. It is believed that if the waters of Lake Victoria Nyanza, which is the source of the Nile, were raised by four feet it would be possible to provide 80,000 million tons more water, nearly as much as all the water which flows down the Nile at present. That would double the irrigation possibilities of the Sudan and Egypt, and it links up with the great hydro-electric power scheme connected with the Owen Falls and the other great falls in Uganda, a scheme on which a beginning has already been made. This is a problem affecting not only the Sudan and Egypt but our colonies and protectorates in East Africa, and it has big international implications.

But there is one other big problem. If 80,000 million tons more water went down the Nile, as things are today half of it would be lost by evaporation in the Sudd, a vast swamp in the Southern Sudan. I have

spoken of the primitive non-Arab population and the negroid element there. Many of those people live in this vast swamp, and it is here that the evaporation of the Nile waters takes place at a tremendous rate. The problem of dealing with that swamp will have to be tackled in the first place. That will mean dealing at the same time with the human problem of these primitive tribes who have hitherto lived largely by fishing and small cultivation. If that swamp is drained and canalized, it will mean a big revolution in the way of life of those primitive folk. So that immense problems arise in connection with the irrigation of Egypt and the Sudan by the use of the Nile water. I only add one last point: it is to the advantage of all concerned in the international water problem that good relations shall exist between the Sudan and Egypt.

Asked if he could throw any light on the hostile attitude being taken by Egypt in regard to the proposed alliance between Iraq and Turkey, Mr. PHILIPS PRICE replied: Egypt feels she is the strongest of the Arab States and she wants to lead the Arab League. That feeling is so strong that Egypt pretends, at any rate, to think that the danger in the north is not so great as it really is. Iraq clearly sees and feels that danger and is prepared to make alliances. It seems that Egypt is afraid she might lose her influence, but I am not without hope that she will come round to a rather more reasonable attitude in regard to this matter. For the moment the position is a little difficult. The people have got themselves into that way of thinking, and one must bear in mind that the régime in Egypt, for so long the Wafd and the Moslem League, whipped up the public feeling so that the danger has come in people's minds to be the imperialism of the West, and Russia does not matter. That kind of mentality is prevalent in Egypt and is bound to be, because the feeling has been for so long worked up. The Army realize the position, but they have their own difficulties to deal with.

Colonel W. C. GARCIA: Are the Egyptians an Arab people? Are they not descendants of the ancient Egyptians, most of whom have adopted the Moslem religion?

Mr. PHILIPS PRICE: That is probably so. I referred to the Egyptians as a mixed race. What I meant was—and I hope I conveyed it—that even though they may be a mixed race culturally they are Arab and Islam. That is what really matters.

Sir RONALD STORRS: In congratulating our lecturer on his admirable discourse, I would like one point verified. Does he consider Arabia to be in or out of Asia? We sitting in Egypt and in Palestine have always regarded Arabia, very properly, as outside Asia. We consider Asia begins on the east side of the Persian Gulf. I gather the lecturer places Arabia inside Asia. The Islamic culture which is inside Asia at present is from Arabia. The debt of gratitude is due mainly to the Arab-speaking countries from the Islamic peoples of Asia. Therefore I am asking, does the lecturer think that Arabia is in Asia or out of it?

Mr. PHILIPS PRICE: You have put me a poser. Geographically Arabia might be regarded as in either Asia or Africa, because there are two dividing lines of water, the Red Sea on the one hand and the Per-

sian Gulf on the other. Culturally, of course, this was the centre of Islam where the Prophet Mahomet preached, but from there there went out great influence towards Central Asia, where Islam has been established for many centuries, and into India and also all across North Africa. Culturally, it is the centre of Islam and it has spread into North Africa and right through to Central Asia and into Southern Asia. Geographically, it might be said to be both Asian and African.

WARIS AMEER ALI: I believe we who originated from Arabia do consider ourselves, or did consider ourselves in the old days, as part and parcel of Asia before some of us became part and parcel of Great Britain.

Admiral Sir CECIL HARCOURT: Time is up, and it remains for me to thank Mr. Philips Price for a most interesting and clear picture of what he saw during his recent visit. This is the Central Asian Society and some may wonder why we have had a lecture which deals with Africa. Of course, what goes on in Egypt does so vitally affect the Arab States—which I confess I always thought were in Asia—that we are most grateful to Mr. Philips Price for coming and speaking to us today. We thank you very much indeed, Mr. Philips Price.

