



## CHAPTER V

### SOCIAL FACTORS AFFECTING RURAL LAND USES

#### a. Population

Egypt is one of the many countries which, in the nineteenth century, entered a period of demographic transition. Briefly put, the population of these countries was growing rapidly because the former balance between births and deaths had been upset.

In pre-industrial societies the death rate is usually high owing to inadequate nutrition, defective hygiene, the spread of epidemics and the loss of lives resulting from disorders and wars. In order to compensate for this high wastage, the community would tend to favour those customs and institutions that promote a high birth-rate, such as stigmatizing celibacy, encouraging marriage at an early age, honouring parenthood, and so forth. When, as a result of the spreading of industrial civilization, order and security become available, the first effect is a decline in the death-rate. The birth-rate, however, which is determined mainly by social and religious factors, remains for a long time at its previous high level. It is only when an industrial civilization has prevailed sufficiently long to change the whole customs and outlook of the population that the birth-rate begins to decline, as it has been doing in Western Europe and North America. Egypt is at present in the first stage, the stage of a declining death-rate unaccompanied by a falling birth-rate.

#### Birth and Death Rates:

Both birth and death rates in Egypt are among the highest in the world. Published birth rates have, in both the pre-war and the post-war years, averaged about 42 per 1000 while death rates averaged 27 per 1000 in the pre-war period and about 23 in the post-war period, whilst the infant mortality rate has declined from 160 to 140 per 1000 live births. <sup>(1)</sup>

A study of health conditions in five villages near Cairo, made by the

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(1) Essawi, G. 'Egypt at Mid-Century' Oxford Press, London 1954, page 55-57

Metzger Foundation in 1948 - 51 showed that the reporting of both death rates and birth rates was very inaccurate. Thus the true infant mortality rate in one village, Sindbis, was 326 per 1,000 against reported rates of 80 to 161 in the other four villages, while the real crude death rate was 32 per 1,000, against reported rates of 12 to 23. Similarly, the true birth rates ranged from 56 to 61 per 1,000 against reported rates of 44 to 50.

#### Annual Rate of Population Increase

It must be noticed that the annual rate of increase in the population is in a geometrical progression while we measure the increase in production as an arithmetical progression. The following table shows the rate of increase in population together with birth and death rates between 1920 and 1951.

Table (7) Rate of Increase in Population and Birth and Death Rates (1920 - 51)

Year	Birth Rate	Death Rate	Rate of Increase in population
1920	4.22%	2.8%	1.43%
1930	4.54%	2.49%	2.06%
1940	4.13%	2.63%	1.50%
1950	4.44%	1.91%	2.53%
1951	4.47%	1.93%	2.55%

One of the reasons of this great rate of increase is that a large percentage of the population are in the fertility age (between 15 and 45 years). The percentage of the population in this age group has also increased from 48.6% in 1927 to 51% in 1947. The official statistics of 1927, 1937, 1947 show that more than 87% of the population are under the age of 50 years which indicates that the population structure is concentrated in the young ages which make a continuing increase in the number of population most probable in the future.

There are other causes which contribute to the high birth rate. First, the poverty, ignorance, and general wretchedness of the Fellah make procreation one of the few pleasures left to him, and give rise to a slum psychology in the con-



and villages. Secondly, there is the influence of the cotton cultivation, which provides employment for children and turns the child into a financial asset at the early age of four or five.

The population has increased from 3 million to 23 million over the last hundred and ten years. This sixfold increase is probably unparalleled in any other agricultural country. The second fact is that Egypt, in terms of cultivated area is perhaps the most densely population country in the world, with a density of 550 inhabitants per square kilometre.

The increase in Egypt's population was made possible by two sets of circumstances; the order and security introduced by Mohammed Ali and the growth of Egypt arising out of the extension of the cultivated area, the replacement of basin perennial irrigation and improvement in the yield of crops, and the extension of cotton cultivation.

Map No. 16 shows the existing density of population in both urban and rural areas. This Map shows the intensity of human concentration in the Nile Delta.

#### Population by Age and Sex Groups

Although the people of the Delta are old in historical and psychological terms it will be seen from the population pyramid (see fig.12) that the inhabitants of the Delta are very young, biologically, nearly two-thirds of the population being under thirty. At the same time there is a significant change now manifesting itself in the population structure due to the improvement in the hygienic and the educational conditions in the country as a whole. As will be seen from the following table, the age group under nine years of age has decreased by about 1.3% and the age group over fifty years of age increased by about 3% over the 40 year period 1907-47. At the same time there has been a significant decrease in the working age group between 20 and 50 years.

Table (16) Changes in the Structure and Distribution of Age Groups of the Population between 1907 and 1947.<sup>(1)</sup>

Age Group	1907	1917	1927	1937	1947
0 - 9	30.1%	28.0%	27.5%	27.5%	26.4%
10 - 19	18.5%	20.3%	20.3%	20.5%	21.7%
20 - 29	18.1%	15.5%	16.4%	15.2%	15.1%
30 - 39	14.7%	13.5%	14.1%	14.7%	13.8%
40 - 49	9.0%	9.0%	9.2%	10.1%	10.4%
Over 50	9.7%	13.7%	12.5%	12.3%	12.4%
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(1) General Census of 1947 Ministry of Finance Cairo 1949

# THE NILE DELTA

MAP NO.16

scale 1:2,000,000



CAIRO

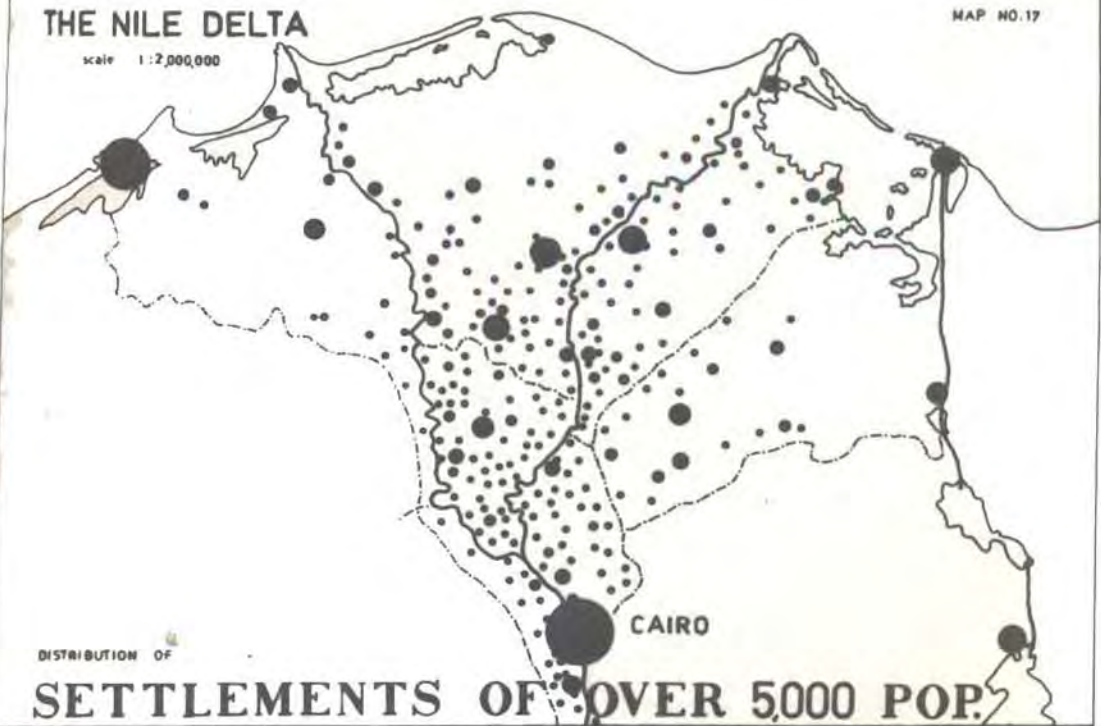
## DENSITY OF URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION

OVER 100 PERSONS PER SQ. KMT.	500 - 600 PERSONS PER SQ. KMT.	0 - 199 PERSONS PER SQ. KMT.
900 - 1099 " " " " " "	300 - 499 " " " " " "	" " " " " " " " " "
700 - 899 " " " " " "	200 - 299 " " " " " "	" " " " " " " " " "

# THE NILE DELTA

MAP NO.17

scale 1:2,000,000



CAIRO

DISTRIBUTION OF

## SETTLEMENTS OF OVER 5,000 POP.

PROVINCIAL BOUNDARIES	PROVINCIAL TOWN
RURAL SETTLEMENT	
DISTRICT TOWN	



Population and Occupation

It is clear from the tables showing the distribution of the population in different occupations in the Delta (See appendix No. 5) that most of the population engaged in the manufacturing industries, transport, commerce and services are concentrated in the cities and the big towns leaving a very small fraction in rural areas. Diagram No. 12 reveals the great differences between the distribution of the population in the different occupations in Cairo as compared with the rural province of Menufiya and the Delta as a whole. It is interesting to note that 66.2% of the population in the province of Menufiya are engaged in agriculture whereas 47% of the population of both Cairo and Alexandria are engaged in personal services, most of these having been drawn from the countryside. The question of rural population and occupation will be studied in detail later in Chapter VI.

Urbanization and the Distribution of Agricultural Population

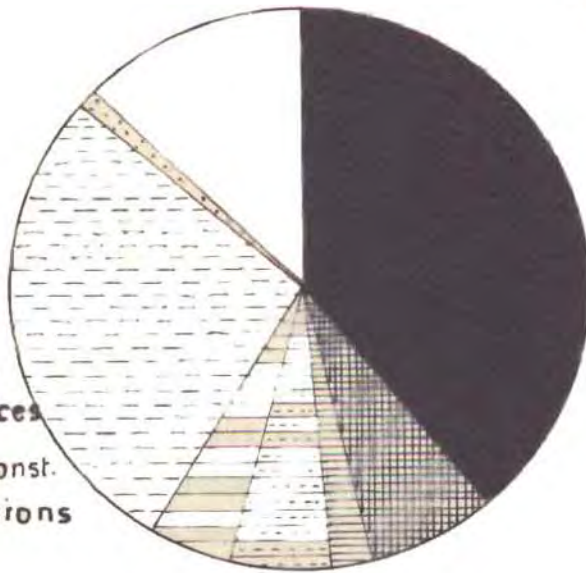
Population censuses have been taken in Egypt since 1882 and since 1897 at regular intervals of ten years. The number of inhabitants registered by the censuses at different dates is given below for Cairo, Alexandria, other governorates and for Lower and Upper Egypt.

Table 8. Population Growth During 1882 - 1947 (000's) (1)

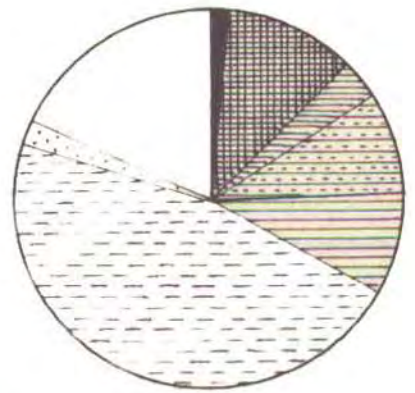
Year	Cairo	Alexandria	Canal, Suez and Damietta	Lower Egypt	Upper Egypt	Total
1882	399	233	65	3,279	2,693	6,669
1897	590	316	99	4,655	3,932	9,591
1907	678	354	109	5,417	4,578	11,136
1917	791	445	153	6,095	5,187	22,670
1927	1,065	573	205	6,531	5,710	14,083
1937	1,312	686	251	7,139	6,423	15,811
1947	2,041	919	407	8,190	7,199	18,806
1957	-	-	-	-	-	23,000

(1) National Bank of Egypt; Economic Bulletin, vol VIII No.3 Cairo 1955 page 171

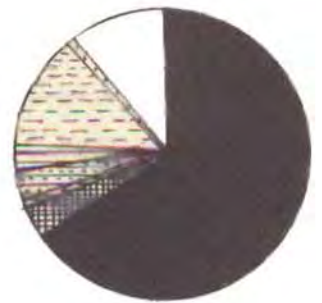
- Key**
- Agriculture
  - ▨ Industries
  - ▩ Transport
  - Commerce
  - Social services
  - ▬ Personal services
  - ▧ Building & Const.
  - Other occupations



THE NILE DELTA  
(Cairo, Alex. & Canal Z.)

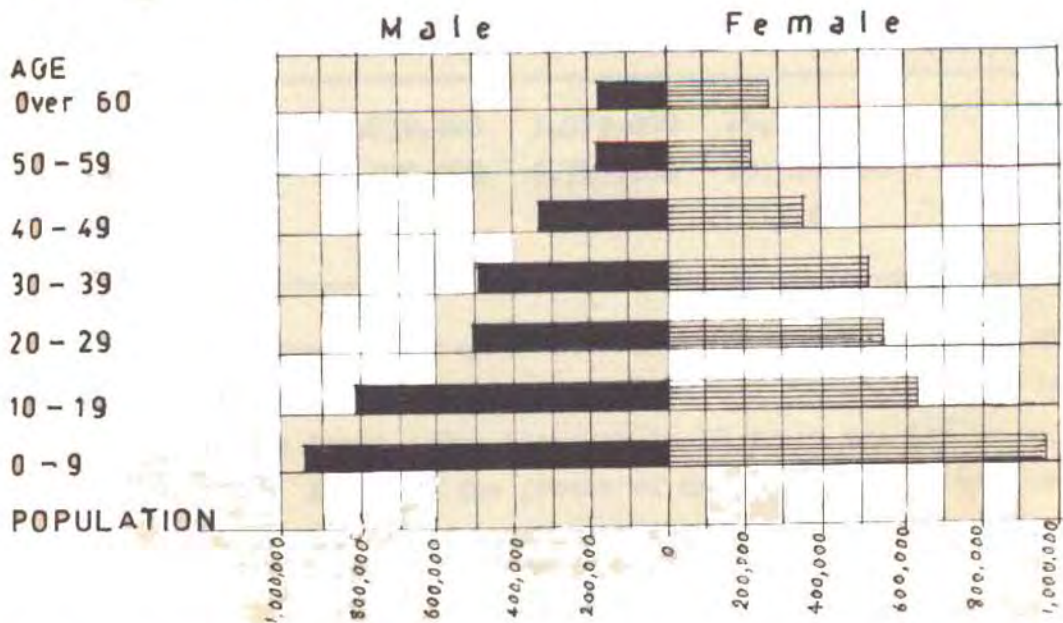


CAIRO



EL-MENUFIYA

**POPULATION & OCCUPATION IN THE DELTA, CAIRO & EL-MENUFIYA**



**POPULATION PYRAMID IN THE NILE DELTA**



Table (9) Average Annual Increases (%) (1)

Year	Cairo	Alexandria	Canal, Suez and Damietta	Lower Egypt	Upper Egypt	Total
1882/1897	2.6	2.1	2.8	2.4	2.6	2.5
1897/1907	1.4	1.1	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.5
1907/1917	1.6	2.3	3.5	1.2	1.3	1.3
1917/1927	3.0	2.6	3.0	0.7	1.0	1.1
1927/1937	2.1	1.8	2.0	0.9	1.2	1.2
1937/1947	4.8	3.0	4.9	1.4	1.2	1.8
1947/1957						

Limited to the study to the last two censuses of 1937 and 1947, the first feature that strikes the investigator is the intensive urbanization which took place during the decade which saw World War II. The distribution of population between towns and villages changed during the period as follows:-

Table (10) Changes in Distribution of Population between Towns and Villages (1937 - 47)

	Villages	Towns	Total	% of town population to total
1937	11,830,000	3,979,000	15,809,000	25.2
1947	13,098,000	5,718,000	18,816,000	30.4
Growth during decade	+ 10.7%	+43.7%	19.0%	

Thus the urban population represented in 1947 already 30.4% of the total against 25.2% in 1937, and the rural population was growing at a much lower rate than the population in towns. The increase in 10 years was 11% in villages against 44% in towns. Assuming the growth of urban population continued at the

(1) National Bank of Egypt 'Economic Bulletin' - Cairo 1955. vol V<sup>1</sup> II. No. 3 page 172



and rate it probably reached 8 million in 1957

A more detailed analysis of population growth in the provinces discloses the same picture: the town population has been growing faster than the population in the villages and there are two provinces where the village population actually was falling, thus giving a clear indication of the general tendencies of the exodus from the countryside towards the towns, not only within the individual provinces but also from them towards the big centres of industry like Cairo and Alexandria. (See map no. 18)

In the Menoufiya province which includes Markaz Ashmoun there was an increase of 20.7% in the towns population against a decrease of 1.5% in the villages population.

The following table shows these changes in villages and towns of the Nile Delta. (1)

Table (11) Changes in Population of Villages and Towns in the Nile Delta (1937-1947)

000's

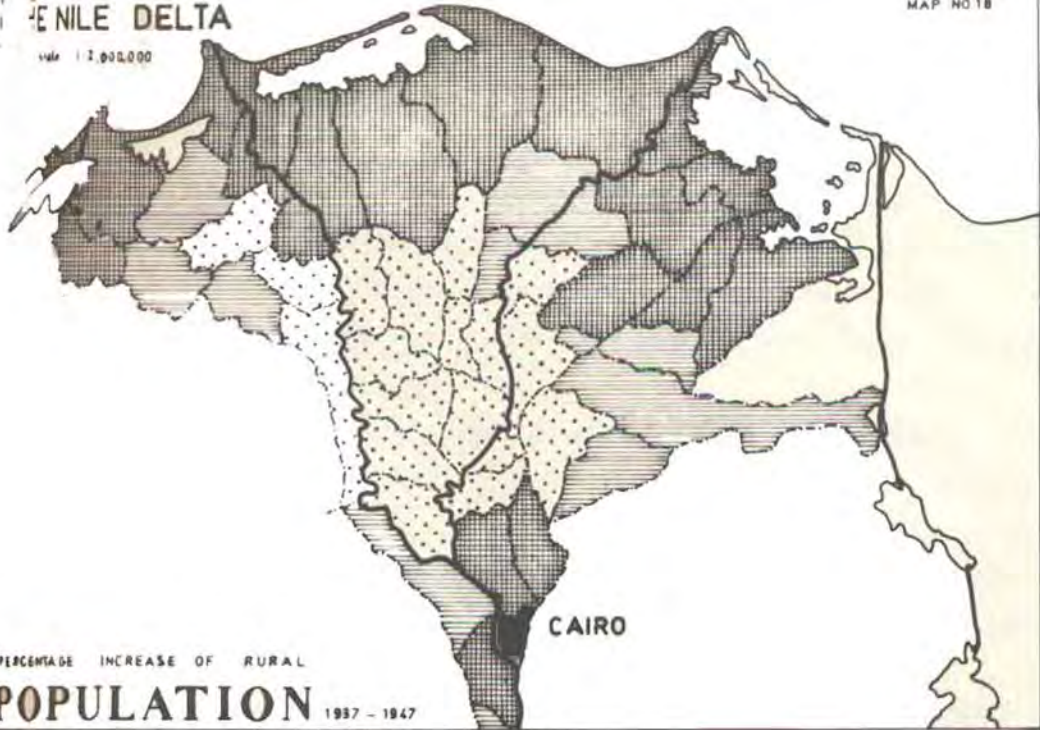
Province.	Town		Village		Total	
	Population.	% increase	Population.	% increase	Population.	% increase
1937	145.4		916.2		1,061.6	
Behera		+ 28.2		+ 15.4		+ 17.2
1947	186.4		1,058.1		1,244.5	
1937	296.5		1,671.4		1,967.9	
Gharbia		+ 45.5		+ 13.4		+ 18.3
1947	431.3		1,895.7		2,327.0	
1937	403.4		1,056.3		1,159.7	
Menoufia		+ 20.7		- 1.5		+ 0.5
1947	124.8		1,064.4		1,218.5	
1937	154.1		1,064.4		1,218.5	
Dakahlia		+ 42.0		+ 12.3		+ 16.0
1947	218.7		1,195.2		1,413.9	
1937	114.3		1,006.5		1,220.8	
Sharkia		+ 45.2		+ 17.2		+ 20.1
1947	165.9		1,179.9		1,345.8	
1937	77.5		532.6		610.2	
Kaliubia		+ 33.3		+ 10.9		+ 13.7
1947	103.4		590.5		693.9	

(1) National Bank of Egypt Economic Bulletin. vol VIII, No. 3. Cairo 1955. p.

# THE NILE DELTA

MAP NO 18

scale 1:2,000,000



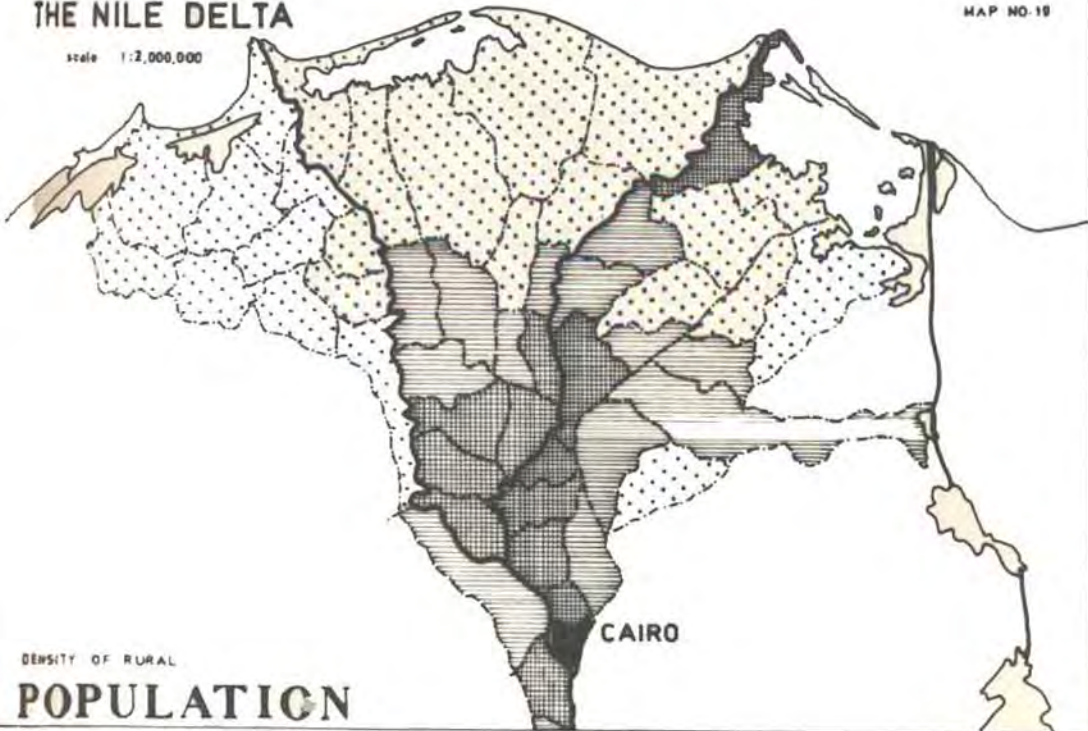
PERCENTAGE INCREASE OF RURAL  
**POPULATION** 1937 - 1947



# THE NILE DELTA

MAP NO. 19

scale 1:2,000,000



DENSITY OF RURAL  
**POPULATION**





The previous table shows that the highest <sup>percentage</sup> increase took place in the more sparsely populated northern part of the Delta, while the parts of higher population density show lower increases. (See Map. No. 12)

The above, therefore offers proof that the less densely populated provinces have a higher rate of population growth than the densely populated provinces. To a certain extent this may be due to migration, which is difficult to prove by census figures however, since the migration between villages of different provinces is overlapped by the movement into towns.

The following table shows the percentage of emigrants and immigrants in the Delta. (1)

Table 12 The Percentage of Emigrants and Immigrants in the Delta

	Percentage of population born in a town or province residing elsewhere in 1947(emigrants)	Percentage of resident population born elsewhere (immigrants)
Cairo	4.5	36.6
Alexandria	7.5	30.6
Canal	9.2	41.2
Suez	12.2	56.4
Dametta	41.4	9.8
<u>Lower Egypt</u>		
Behera	10.6	5.1
Gharbia	6.9	3.7
Menoufia	22.1	1.4
Dakahlia	8.3	2.4
Sharkia	6.8	9.6
Kaliubia	12.1	6.3

It will be observed that all provinces show losses of population and the governorates, where big towns are concentrated are the centres of immigration.

(1) National Bank of Egypt. Economic Bulletin. Vo. VIII no. 3. Cairo 1955. page 175



For Cairo the immigrant residents born elsewhere are shown by their birthplace on map no. (20) which demonstrates first of all the normal attraction of the big centre falling with the distance, and secondly the repulsive forces acting in the densely populated area (Menoufia and Kaliubia)

Table (13) The Distribution of the Towns in the Country <sup>(1)</sup> (1947)

		Number	Inhabitants
Country Towns	(2,000 - 5,000)	1,417	4,689,000
Small Towns	(5,000 - 20,000)	413	3,253,000
Medium Towns	(20,000 - 100,000)	36	1,420,000
Large Towns	(over 100,000)	7	3,720,000
		<u>1,873</u>	<u>13,062,000</u>

Thus more than 13 million of the total population of 19 million were living in towns of which the majority were simply gigantic agglomerations of agricultural population (See map no. 17)

Proof of this is supplied by the observation that 50.6% of the total active population are engaged in agriculture, while according to the above compilation only 32% of the population would appear to live in the countryside.

Some further light on the problem of the distribution of population on the agricultural territory of the country is shed by the fact that there is a comparatively high negative correlation between the density of agricultural population and agricultural income per head.

The figures by provinces are as follows: (2)

Table (14) Correlation between Agricultural income and Density of Population in the Delta

Lower Egypt	Agricultural income 1947/48 £E per head	Density of population (head per feddan)
Behera	29.9	2.4
Gharbia	26.5	5.0
Menoufia	19.3	6.8
Dakahlia	24.3	4.8
Sharkia	23.5	4.0
Kaliubia	20.9	5.7

(1) National Bank of Egypt 'Economic Bulletin' Vol VIII No.3 Cairo 1955 p.175

There are other factors in play, such as the fertility of the land, the distance from big towns, etc., but the correlation obviously is significant and the result may be formulated to be that the denser the village population, the smaller is the per capita income. There is also a very significant correlation between the per capita agricultural income and the ratio under cotton of the total cropped area.

The Ministry of Agriculture gives the agricultural income per head (for 1953/54) of the active agricultural population and not for the total village population as given in the previous table. From the data given in the same compilation it is very easy to find the density of the active population per feddan of cultivated land. These figures are given in the following table. <sup>(1)</sup>

Table (15) Income per head in £E of active agricultural population and the density of this population per feddan in 1953/54

Province (in the Delta)	Income	Density
Behera	44	0.97
Ghabiya	42	1.18
Kafre-El-Sheikh	46	1.17
Menoufiya	36	1.95
Dakahliya	43	1.27
Qualubiya	39	1.64

This is a proof of the fact that the low standard of living (which of course is a function of income) in the Delta is not attributed primarily to the backwardness of the country's agriculture, but to overpopulation. Even within the countryside itself the less densely populated areas enjoy a higher standard of living than those more densely populated.

It is therefore quite natural that, after allowing the pull of big cities, the population tends to grow faster in the less densely populated provinces. (See map no. 17)

It is unfortunate, however, that even the less densely populated areas are in actual fact heavily overpopulated. The problem of surplus population and

(1) National Bank of Egypt 'Economic Bulletin' Vol. VIII No. 3. Cairo 1955 page 176.



the problem of its rapid growth, is as it has been stated recently in an official publication, (1) 'an obstacle to economic development which prevents the majority of the people from getting an income ensuring a standard of living compatible with the hopes that they had fostered with the coming of the new Regime'. It appears that this problem needs its own solution quite independently of what is being done in the domains of expanding the cultivated area, intensifying agricultural production, of fostering the development of industry.

Should the present trend continue, Egypt will be facing a situation at about the end of the century in the year 2000 when she must feed 10 people per feddan of cultivated area instead of the present 3.5 per feddan even after taking into account the present schemes for expanding the cultivable area. This appears to be quite impossible to attain, even taking into account any foreseeable improvements in agricultural methods, and thus a turn in the population trends has to take place long before that time, or it will be enforced by the cruel ways of nature, through starvation.

#### Migration

There is practically no immigration from Egypt and very little emigration into it. Within the country two main directional flows may be observed: one from Upper to Lower Egypt, and the other of a general nature from the countryside into the towns as already explained.

It was found in 1947 that over 32,000 persons then living in the Delta were born in Upper Egypt as compared with a figure of 12,000 in Upper Egypt born in the Delta but living in Upper Egypt.

The first reason for the flow of immigration from Upper Egypt to Lower Egypt is the relatively poor conditions of life in the former. Although the average crop area per inhabitant is the same in both parts (2), the output per feddan is higher in the Delta due to the higher fertility of the cultivated land. (3)

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(1) 'The Population Problem in Egypt' the permanent Council of Public Services, National Population Commission, Cairo 1955.

(2) 0.64 feddan per inhabitant.

(3) Agricultural return is ££ 6.775 per inhabitant in the Delta and ££ 5.012 per inhabitant in Upper Egypt.



Another reason for the flow of immigrants is that the basin irrigation system still persists in the rural areas of Upper Egypt, while the perennial system of continuous production is dominant in the Delta. This fact gives the fellah of Upper Egypt more spare or wasted time than his comrade in the Delta. Moreover, most of the Egyptian industry is concentrated in the Delta which also contains practically all the big cities. This fact provides strong economic inducements to emigration from south to north. In addition, there is the fact that the men of Upper Egypt, even though many suffer from bilharzia<sup>(1)</sup> and ankylostoma<sup>(2)</sup> are generally stronger than those of the Delta and consequently can usually find employment in the more arduous forms of manual labour for which the people of the Delta are less well-fitted. Most of the labour engaged in the seasonal work of canal dredging and road construction is derived from immigrants from Upper Egypt. A great part of these immigrants usually settle in the large cities and towns of the Delta where they find subsidiary work in the building industry or in other public works.

Although the excess of labour in the rural Delta could be absorbed in the different jobs taken over by people from Upper Egypt, the people of the Delta seem to be more attached to the soil than those of Upper Egypt. This is born out by the fact that in the widening of the Suez Canal now being undertaken, the majority of the labour is drawn from Upper Egypt although the Delta is close at hand and is the nearest possible source of labour supply.

On the other hand, the current migration from the countryside into the town as mentioned before, is a much more important factor. Between 1917 and 1937 the population of Cairo rose from 791,000 to 1,312,000 and that of Alexandria from 445,000 to 686,000, increases of 66% and 55% respectively, compared with 25% for the country as a whole. During the same period the population of the twenty largest towns rose from 1,883,000 to 2,944,000, an increase of 54%. In other words, every year some 30,000 were drifting from the countryside to the towns. In 1947 there were 201,528 persons living in Cairo who had been born in

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(1) Epidemic caused by Mosquitos

(2) Epidemic caused by germs carried in canal water.

# THE NILE DELTA

scale 1:2,000,000

MAP NO. 20



## MIGRATION TO CAIRO

--- DISTRICT BOUARIES  
 EACH DOT REPRESENTS 1,000 PERSONS

# THE NILE DELTA

scale 1:2,000,000

MAP NO. 21



## SEASONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT

RECEIVING BELT  
 LABOUR SELF SUFFICIENCY  
 TARAHIL SENDING BELT  
★ MAIN SENDING CENTRES IN THE MID-DELTA



the Delta and of these 70,505 had come from the Province of Menufiya.

Internal migration, has not, however, succeeded in balancing density of population and resources. For whereas certain provinces like Menufiya and Giza are over-populated there is an actual shortage of labour in the north of the Delta. (See map no. 21)

#### b. The Fellaheen

The peasant of a country have been likened to the strips in a stained-glass window. They bind the nation together, giving it stability and character and provide the humble but indispensable support on which both the economic and social system rely. By producing more than they consume, the peasantry maintain society in health and ensure a sound regularity to the finances of the State. This is certainly true of Egypt where the Fellaheen, who constitute three-quarters of the population, have survived by persistence through fifty centuries; they have changed their masters, their language and their crops, but not their manner of life. This has been evident throughout the long history of the country and during the different stages through which it has passed.

In the case of the town-dweller and the industrial worker, the bond between nature and man is looser, the impress of the physical environment is weakened or neutralized by the stronger social, civic and political influences. This makes these classes less stable, but more progressive. The countryman on the other hand is moulded directly by the soil and the climate. He is virtually enslaved by them and in comparison with the town dweller, appears slow, over-cautious, hide-bound and unprogressive; but possessed of a long-suffering patience from which he derives emotional strength, stability and great powers of persistence.

In Egypt the monotonous uniformity of the Nile Valley has its exact counterpart in the characteristics of the Fellah community. The water and mud of the Nile seem to enter into and explain the whole life of the Fellah, his work, and his home, his soul and his body. To Egypt, the gift of the Nile is no less a gift of the Fellah. It is because this soil has incarnated itself in the Fellah that he himself is not only so enduring, but also so material and so stagnant.



Progress then, if it is to be achieved, must come from some form of release, of emergence, from education in the original sense of drawing out potentialities. The Fellah's spirit must then be liberated from its stifling envelope of mud, to free him from the defects of the soil, whilst leaving him its good qualities.

### The Psychology of the Fellah

In his book, 'The Expansion of Environment', E.S. Gutkind wrote: (1)

'It is not only the rhythm of nature in which the life and work of the peasant are inseparably interwoven but also the way in which he looks at the phenomenal worlds that erects a barrier, with a few exceptions, between him and the townsman. The peasant tends to reason from the concrete, from what can be experienced directly. He is inclined to take events in their simple succession.

For him the simplification of problems is more essential than their mutual relationship. He does not ask why and for what purpose a problem arises. He keeps his life free from abstract and speculative thinking. In reality the peasant loves his piece of land and hates the State which is for him the great 'interferer'.

It is worth mentioning here that this attitude has greatly changed since the present regime came to power and adopted the policy of improving the social and economic status of the Fellaheen. Nevertheless, it must be appreciated that the Fellah instinctively clings to the <sup>status</sup> starting quo and is reluctant to make any change unless he can see at once that it is in his immediate interest. Since the Fellah is so tied to his land by virtue of necessity and so dependent on it to save himself from complete destitution he automatically develops an outlook which helps him to accept philosophically almost any vicissitude and to convince himself that almost any misfortune has within it an ultimate good. In this, as in so much of his life, he reacts almost like an automaton both spiritually and physically. This lack of individuality and initiative furnishes in its turn, an explanation for the want of sensibility and the absence of art among the Fellaheen.

It is the social environment which limits the intelligence of the young Fellah, that is to say the ignorance which surrounds him from his first entry into the community, and the routine of a life which bows to the soil and cond-

(1) Gutkind, E.S. 'The Expansion of Environment' Free Press, London 1953.

and him to everlasting repetition. The Fellah does not think outside the immediate present - he is fettered to the actual moment. He is like a primitive or a child: his intellect is controlled by his senses, and remains close to things felt and done.

The Fellah is neither hurried, nor curious, nor ambitious. He is mild and peaceable and patient. He feels no need for constant activity. His mind is passive and fatalistic and he takes things as they come, except that in matters of personal or honour, he is extremely touchy and resentful of any affront.

In so far as he is preoccupied, by necessity, in securing at least a medium of this world's goods, the fellah may be accused of having a 'material' outlook on life, but philosophically he cannot be described as being 'Materialistic' since he is all too conscious of his dependence on powers outside his control including many which he regards as the Will of God, and which cause him to qualify any of his avowed intentions by the condition 'In-Shaa-Allah' (If it is God's Will).

#### The Fellah at Work

The Arabic word 'Fellah' is the intensive adjective of the verb 'Falaha' which means to till the ground.

The Fellah works the whole year round and takes a holiday only on the great festivals. The Fellah spends the greater part of his time in the field exposed to a temperature of 80°F in summer and 53°F in winter. He uses his hands and only a few primitive implements. The chief aids of the Fellah are the buffalo, the donkey and the cow. The Fellah takes greater care of his beasts than he does of himself.

Preparation of soil and irrigation are the main tasks of the Fellah. He is aided by 12,000 miles of canals and 5,000 miles of drains. Five days out of ten in flood time, and six out of eighteen at low Nile, the Fellah stays up night after night in order to lose none of his water ration. He uses the 'saquia', (1) the 'tabout', (2) the Shadouf (3) or the 'tambour' (4) in special

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(1) Water Wheel.

(2) Water Wheel.

(3) A wooden lever for lifting water.

(4) Archimedian screw.





A 'shadouf'



FIG. 13

THE FELLAH AT WORK



Threshing by a 'norag'



A native plough



An Archimedean screw

uses, to bring the canal water up to the crop level. (See fig. 13)

Pigeon droppings, silt cleaned out of canals and mixed with grass, and, above all, soil impregnated with stable-dung, are used for manuring as well as chemical manures.

The crops follow a system of rotation, which will be explained later under 'Irrigation', covering a period of two or three years.

Research was carried out on a village, 'Silwa' in upper Egypt by Dr. H. Ammar<sup>(1)</sup> who analysed the period of labour required for a crop per feddan as follows:-

<u>Summer</u>	<u>Work</u>	<u>Winter</u>
6 days	Soil preparation and seed sowing	10 days
90 days	Collecting fertilizer	60 days
6 days	Distributing the fertilizer on land	3 days
16 days	Irrigation (2 days each time)	8 days
15 days	Harvesting (i.e. 8 hours per day)	
<u>134 days</u>		<u>81 days</u>

This gives a total work period of 215 days per year.

### The Fellah's Budget

Food absorbs the bulk of income. In Ammar's sample, in his research on the people of Sharqiya in the Delta<sup>(4)</sup>, 58% of the families devote over half their expenditure to food. For two-thirds of the sample, tea, coffee and cigarettes absorb under 19% of the budget, while clothing absorbs 5 - 15%. The main other item of expenditure is kerosene, for fuel and lighting. No rent is paid by peasants for the mud huts they occupy. It remains to add that comparatively large amounts are spent annually on funerals, weddings, festivals and local cult practices, while only insignificant amounts are devoted to education, medical service and recreation.

It was found that the total expenditure on bread and beans is £E 11.5 per head. The expenditure on manufactured and prepared goods is as follows:

Clothes .. .. .	£E 4.0
Tea and Sugar .. .. .	£E 3.0
Soap, kerosene .. .. .	£E 1.0

(1) Ammar. H. 'The People of Sharqiya' Cairo 1939 Growing up in an Egyptian Village; R. & Kegan Paul Ltd. London 1953.



This means that the total expenditure is £E 19.5, assuming that vegetables available from the fields and meat could be obtained from the proceeds of selling eggs and milk. This budget can be very easily upset, both by reason of its dependence on these assumptions and also because of its vulnerability of market fluctuations in the staple crops.

It will thus be seen that the intense poverty of the Egyptian peasant severely limits his purchases of manufactured goods and of services. Poverty has also eliminated any incentive to raise his educational level, but it has not prevented him from responding, although not whole-heartedly, to the efforts made on his behalf by the government.

As regards to the Fellah's annual income, the sample of 219 families in Sharquiya studied by Ammar shows the following facts:-

- Over 40% had an annual income of less than £E 30
- Over 20% had an annual income of less than £E 150

In the sample of 1,071 families studied by the Rockefeller Foundation in Mendhis, Qalubiya in 1948:

- 5% had an annual income of about £E 12
- 61% " " " " " " " £E 12 - 60
- 27% " " " " " " " £E 60 - 120
- 7% " " " " " " " over £E 120

## b. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The main problems which face the rural community are of both an economic and social nature, the chief ones being the low standard of living and social inequality which has weakened the social cohesion of the people and distracted them from their social responsibilities. The third main problem is that arising from the cultural and psychological background of the rural dweller and its bearing on the process of improvement. The difficulties in this context are aggravated by the fact that so many of the people hold the belief that improving conditions is a process extraneous to the normal every day life - something imposed arbitrarily from outside.

This is the result of historical circumstances from which the people have come to regard all improvement schemes to be the responsibility of the Government only. In consequence the people have lost their initiative and developed a feeling of fear and suspicion of any intervention from outside bodies, such as the Government.

The rural community has deeply ingrained characteristics, traditions and habits revealing themselves alike in the material, the social and the spiritual aspects of the villager's life. On the material side are his different agricultural implements and the long experience the fellah has had in using them. On the social side we have the fellah's pride in the 'Madiafa' (village hall) of his clan or family group acting as a symbol of the family's position and importance. On the spiritual side there is his religion as well as the persistent beliefs and practices from much earlier times.

The social life of the fellaheen is a series of different work and customs closely connected with his mode of livelihood and his beliefs. The time of leisure is <sup>determined by</sup> allotted to the demands of agriculture, the marriage season is connected to that of the harvesting and so on.

Kinship is a main feature in the rural social structure. This does not only mean the family in the narrowest sense but stretches to the other relatives of the father which might compose a clan or even a neighbourhood.

The village community considers itself one social unit isolated from the other nearby villages. It has been noticed that in the case of any institution



erving three or four villages, the one nearest to the institution gets the whole benefit from it while the others feel and act as though they were divorced from it.

Minor social distinctions form another feature of rural Egypt. The fellah has a great self-respect in spite of his poverty and ignorance. The farmers who cultivate their own land consider handicrafts and cottage industry as inferior to agriculture, regardless of the profit or the income to be gained from them. The craftsmen usually work and live in another village away from that of the farmer.

The village of the Egyptian countryside is an example of a community whose life is characterized by social co-operation and mutual help among its members. Features of social solidarity within the village groups may be seen in the every day life of the fellaheen. Not only do they co-operate and exchange help and assistance in their work on the fields but they also exchange help amongst themselves within the village. When a villager is building a new house, other villages <sup>r</sup> <sup>give</sup> ~~come to~~ him assistance in the form of free work, if not material.

Although the peasant society of rural Egypt is a conservative one in many ways, changes in its pattern have occurred and new ways adopted from time to time. There has been a constant renewal of the plants cultivated in Egypt, as well as on occasion, the introduction of completely new plants. The existing social and agricultural conditions compel the fellaheen to continue to use some of the old implements, along with some modern implements which have been introduced and accepted.

### The Social Structure in the Delta Village

Although the biological family is the basic social unit on which the individual is centered there are very few households in the Delta which are limited in size to the basic biological family. Nearly all households shelter other members of the family such as married sons and wives or the householders widowed sister and her children and possibly <sup>an</sup> orphaned niece or nephew. The reason which keeps the married sons under the paternal roof is the fact that they normally have to await their father's death before they can possess any property of their own, and in consequence are obliged to live and work with him as long as he lives.

Furthermore the form of agriculture practised requires many hands, and this is an added incentive for remaining together as a large household.

The extended family can be regarded as an intermediate social unit between the conjugal family and the clan.

The extended families merge into the clan, the village is usually composed of from five to as many as ten clans. These clans can be found grouped in two, three or four, or even more sections of the whole village, each with its own distinctive character and centred on the village hall of the clan which serves as its guest house and where the adult members of the clan gather for their social activities.

On the one hand the clans are conscious of their integrated separate identities, but on the other hand, they are aware that they are linked together by a common ancestry which gives a measure of unity to the village.

Farmers form the major part of the population of the village. The village, however, usually contains families of strangers engaged in carpentry, pottery or mat-making. Besides we find the barber, the tailor, the grocer or others who have a specialized job like oil-pressing, corn milling, sugar cane pressing, weaving and various service trades. This kind of work is carried on by generation after generation of the same family.

In his book 'Growing up in an Egyptian Village', Dr. H. Ammer wrote: <sup>(1)</sup>

'The impact of urban life with its increasing pressure on the village has resulted in more and more strains in social living. The traditional social structure based on the solidarity of family and clan is losing some of its cohesive forces. It is obvious that villagers are keen to accept and imitate the material symbols of city life. On the other hand, social structure and organization and values have not changed very much'.

The village with its surrounding land forms a closed system outside which everyone and everything is foreign. It leads to a secluded and individual life, which originated within the habits and customs handed down from the distant past. Unwritten laws rule absolutely the acts and the pleasure of every inhabitant.

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(1) Ammer, H. 'Growing up in an Egyptian Village', P. & Kegan Paul, London 1953, page 17.



To the Fellah his village is all in all. It is his country and the limit of his activities. Ayrout,<sup>(2)</sup> has noticed that,

'Between the members of the peasant group trust and mistrust persist side by side. The main source of both is the soil, which unites the Fellaheen if it is threatened, but divides them if they own or covet it. The Egyptian village is not a community in the social sense, it is not an organism but a mass. The Fellah absorbed in the soil for a long period of oppression, lives collectively but not socially.'

#### Standard of Living.

The average annual income per person in the country as a whole was about £ 39 in 1953. But if we consider the national income of the year we recognise that the annual income of the farmer is much less than the average. The value of the income from agriculture was estimated at ££ 3555 million and it is known that 70% of the population which is about 16,000,000 live on that income with an average annual income of ££ 22 which is extremely low when compared with that in Britain which is about £290 per year.<sup>(2)</sup>

From a table prepared by Issawi<sup>(3)</sup> in 1952 comparing the different indices of economic and social activities of eleven other countries than Egypt one can recognise the stage of economic and social development reached by Egypt at that time and consequently the standard of living of the Egyptian population. It is found from Issawi's table that the per capita income of the Egyptian population is far below the world's average. But, on the other hand, the standard of living of the population, low as it is, is higher than the level of that half of the human race which inhabits Southern and Eastern Asia, most of Africa and much of Central America.

The national income per capita in Egypt was 100 U.S. Dollars compared with 57 dollars in India, 100 dollars in Japan and 482 dollars in France. In Egypt the life expectancy is 38.6 compared with 26.7 in India, 57.6 in Japan and 58.8 in France. While the number of calories per capita per day (1948-9) was found to be 2,480 in Egypt, that found in India was 1,620, in Japan 2,100 and in France

(1) Ayrout, H. 'The Fellaheen' Schindler, Cairo 1945

(2) Maril, S. 'Agrarian Reform in Egypt', Government Press, Cairo 1958. page 276

(3) Issawi, C. 'Egypt at Mid-Century', Oxford Press, London 1954, page 78

1950. The average textile consumption in kilogrammes per capita in Egypt was 2.2 compared with that of Greece which was 4.0 and that of India which was 2.6 kilogrammes per capita.

From the cultural point of view we find that the literacy rate percentage of inhabitants of 10 years or over (pre war) was 15% while that in India was 9% in Japan 95% and in France 96%. The number of newspaper circulation in Egypt is 18 per thousand inhabitants in 1950, compared with 6 in India, 219 in Japan and 284 in France. The number of radio sets per thousand inhabitants was 11 in 1950 compared with one in India, 91 in Japan and 172 in France.

These figures, although not up-to-date, still give a fair picture of the living standard of the people in Egypt as compared with other different countries. But one should not neglect the fact that the standard of living of the Fellaheen is still much lower than the above mentioned figures bearing in mind the fact that the income per capita in the rural areas is £E 22 while that of the whole country is £E 39. Conditions must have been improved since 1950 when these figures were collected, but on the other hand, we must not neglect the effect of the increase in the population since that date on the living standard of the population as a whole. In spite of the considerable number of calories which the fellah gets everyday from his food, his vital status is upset by the number of diseases from which he suffers. Moreover, the unhygienic <sup>condition</sup> and the low housing conditions where the fellah lives, put his standard of living, yet on a lower level.

#### Community Welfare Centres

The establishment of rural social centres became the official policy in 1939 after successful pioneering experiments conducted by different institutions and individuals. Unfortunately there had been a lack of continuity in the policy of the Ministry of Social Affairs and other ministries concerned with social welfare. There had been a gap between theory and practice. There were other defects due to over-centralization and lack of co-operation at headquarters level in carrying out essentially desirable reforms. (1)

In 1953 the Permanent Council for the Public Services<sup>(1)</sup> was established as an independent body attached to the Council of Ministers. Its functions cover

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(1) Permanent Council of Public Services. Government Press, Cairo 1955



following spheres:

1. To plan and supervise all aspects of social development
2. To investigate the main plans and lay the broad lines of reform in education, public health and rehabilitation.
3. To study the budget of the different Ministries concerned
4. To supervise the execution of projects.

#### Collective Centres:

In 1954 a scheme was drawn up and put into execution for the provision of pure drinkable water supplies for the people in rural areas. Another scheme was initiated for the construction of 'Collective Centres,<sup>(1)</sup> for public services in rural areas, each centre catering for the needs of 15,000 people and comprising a school, a social and agricultural guidance centre, a medical clinic and dwellings for officials employed by the Centre (See fig. 14) The 'Collective Centre' is built on an average of 5 acres provided that the people participate in providing the land and a sum of £E1,500. Each 'Collective Centre' is directed by a board consisting of the different experts employed together with representatives of the people. The board is divided into different committees:

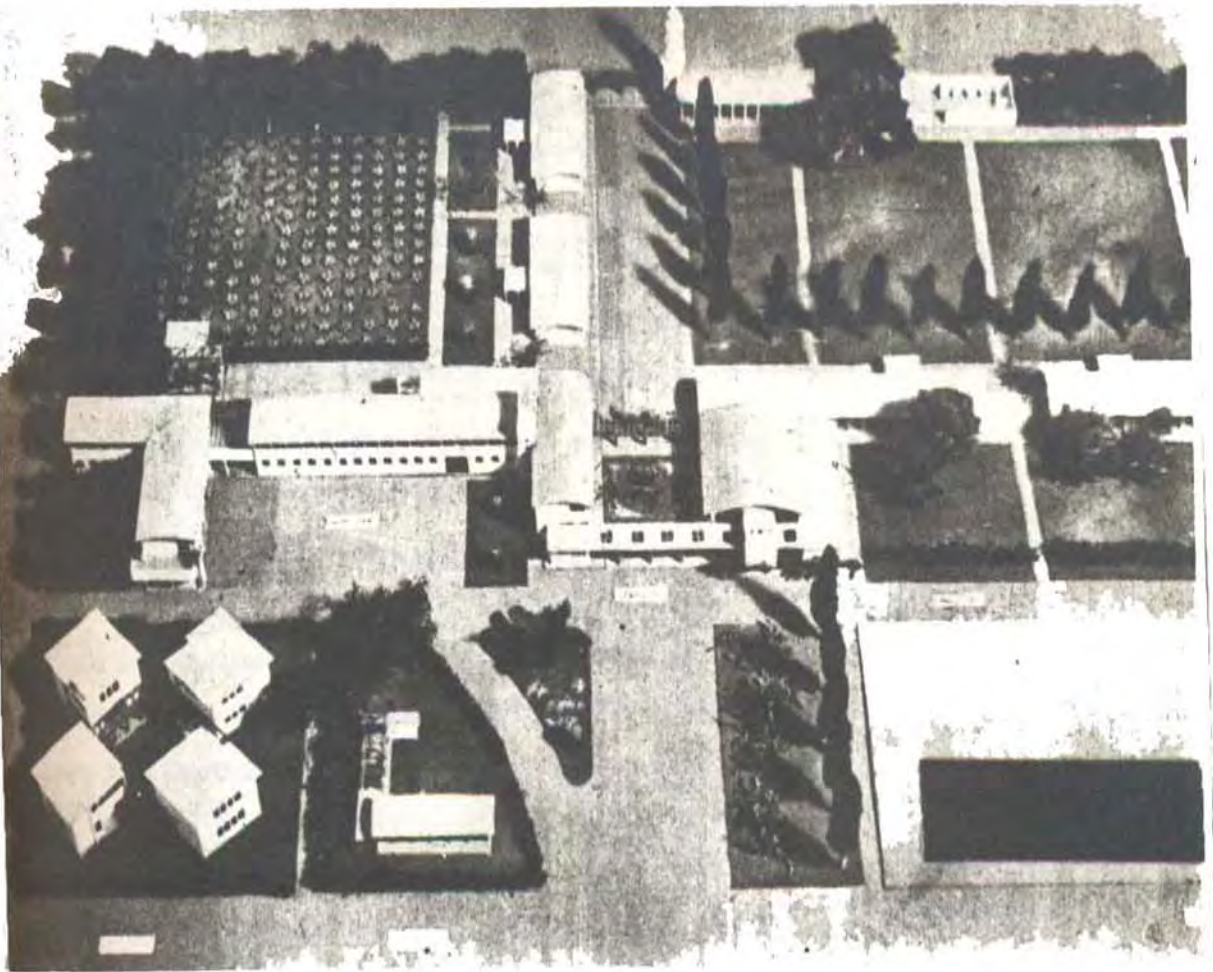
- a. The Economic and Agricultural Committee
- b. The Charity Committee
- c. The Education and Recreation Committee
- d. The Health and Cleanliness Committee.

The 'Collective Centre' serves the following functions:-

1. Economic. This includes cottage industries, live stock selection, dairying, poultry-raising, keeping of bees and silkworms, the cultivation of vegetables, fruits and trees, spinning, weaving and other handicrafts. This is besides providing demonstration plots and encouraging co-operative farming.
2. Public Services: This includes adult education, rural centre programmes, libraries, combating illiteracy, cultural excursions, sporting activities and summer camps.

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(1) 'The Collective Units', Government Press, Cairo 1954. (Arabic Text)



A COLLECTIVE UNIT



FIG. 14



3. Social Services: This includes social studies and research in addition to the ordinary social activities.
4. Sanitation: This includes combating the different diseases, providing medicines, studying the different hygienic conditions and hygienic research.

Every 'Collective Centre' includes the following elements:-

1. A Social centre including an assembly hall, a library, social guidance office, agricultural guidance office, and a nursery and rural club.
2. A medical centre including a clinic, an out-patient's clinic, a dispensary, a children's clinic and a medical laboratory.
3. A school of 12 classrooms, playing grounds, out-door classes and demonstration plots.
4. Rural Industries units for weaving, spinning, dairying, poultry-raising, palm-tree production and agricultural industries.
5. Four residential units for married employees, ten units for male bachelors and ten for female.

The social workers must live in the village, in a manner differing as little as possible from that of the community. These workers consist of an agricultural-social worker, and a health and welfare nurse, both of whom are carefully selected and trained. They are assisted by a young club leader, chosen from the local community and sent to Cairo for training, and wherever possible, a doctor and Laboratory Assistant.

The following table shows the distribution of the 'Collective Units' in the different provinces of the Delta. (1)

Table (17) The Distribution of the Collective Units in the Delta

Province	No. of Markazs	No. of division units.	Units with existing services.		Collective Units Built in 1953.
			No.	%	
El-Beheira	11	71	33	47	13
El-Dokki	7	40	13	33	12
El-Daqahliya	8	77	31	50	15
El-Menufiya	7	70	39	56	9
El-Qalubiya	5	41	15	37	12
El-Sharbiya	11	90	42	47	14
El-Sharqiya	9	81	45	56	10

This system will guarantee the stability and consolidation of public services rendered in rural areas. Thus, public services in these areas will be integrated and co-ordinated in one frame. There will be in this case one self-governing body in each area, which will be responsible for sanitation and education as well as social, agricultural and industrial activities. To this may be added the moral and material contribution of the people in the management and development of their local affairs. Village interest and self-government are stimulated by the holding of an annual Assembly, which elects a Council to carry on the business of the community.

#### Social Centres:

In most of the Egyptian villages the old social centres are still discharging their functions. They were designed to provide health, economic and cultural services. These centres occupy premises provided by the local inhabitants. They are now under supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs which gives them grants according to the amount of services and activities they perform.

So far, only a fraction of the rural population makes use of the services

(1) Permanent Council of Public Services, an Article by A. Khatkhat, The Engineers (magazine, Arabic Text) Cairo, June and July 1956.



provided at the centres. It is estimated that at most not more than 10% of the families take advantage of the facilities provided.<sup>(1)</sup> It would thus be seen that the principle of self-help which is the very basis of the philosophy of the movement has so far failed to establish itself very deeply. This is, in a way due to the ignorance as well as to shortage of personnel. The village leadership which at present comes from the semi-educated will take long to build from its present elements and a considerable time will be required for the community organization to strike deep roots. Few villages contain representatives of the professional and educated classes from which the first signs of leadership has often come, to be followed later by wider participation by other members of the community. The unattractiveness of village life to those not accustomed to it, with its limited opportunities for educated men and women to satisfy their material and cultural aspirations, is a serious obstacle to progress. Shortage of funds, in some cases, leads to frustration and continuity of work is sometimes lacking. Besides these disadvantages there were that of over-centralization and lack of co-ordination between the different departments concerned for health, education or social services. These were the main reasons behind the establishment of the 'Collective Centres' all over the country, although the existing social centres still practice their functions. They are the bases which gave the Fellaheen the first light of stimulation for self-help.

Results achieved very considerably. Much has been done to make the life of the Fellah healthier, pleasanter and more peaceful, and to remove the fog of ignorance which surrounds him. It has been noticed that the service which attracts peasants most is medicine; using this service as a basis it is possible to get them to the other activities fostered by the Community Centres.

In the economic field less success has been registered. Auxiliary activities such as bee-keeping, have made a small but welcome addition to farmers' incomes, and the introduction of new crops, or use of better varieties, has sometimes raised output appreciably, but, so far, the attempt to develop cottage and agricultural industries has made very little headway. Yet it represents one of the most promising ways of increasing incomes.

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(1) Issawi, C. 'Egypt at Mid-Century' Oxford Press, London 1954. page 74

The Collective Units and Social Centres can be the centres of any reform in rural areas. They are the starting points where the Fellaheen and the officials meet and work for the well-being of all.



#### d. HEALTH

The village population is one with an extremely low economic status, with a low but improving literacy rate, and with a pressing need for social and community development. The burden of disease carried by the population is heavy. Nutritional deficiencies, epidemic and chronic eye diseases, enteric fevers and dysenteries, tuberculosis, syphilis, and bilharzia are all found at extremely high levels in the village population. All would seem to have equal priority in any attempt to control or abate disease in the rural Delta.

Improving the sanitary conditions in a village, without parallel improvement in housing, social and economic status does not appear to have a marked effect upon the hygienic status of the village.

A survey of the public health institutions and conditions will be studied later when dealing with the rural area of Markaz Ashmoun in Chapter IX.

In his report of 'An Evaluation of Health and Sanitation in Egyptian Villages', <sup>(1)</sup> Dr. J.M. Weir says that,

' the success of any health programme in an economically distressed and illiterate population will depend upon close co-operation of the health worker with the social worker, the educator and the agricultural engineer and teacher. Such co-ordination of effort can only come through a local direction of the efforts of all these agencies at the village level. Decentralization of all Government services with autonomy of action at the village level under village councils must be achieved if improvement is to be accomplished.'

Equally, there must be a radical reconstruction of the physical fabric of the village if healthier conditions are to be achieved.

Rural blight and its devastating effect upon public health, psychological and social status, safety, and economy has become a national problem of public concern. During past years, public attention has been focussed upon the problem and numerous attempts had been undertaken by various organizations to bring about, if possible, an orderly programme of rehabilitation and redevelopment.

Unfortunately most of these studies have been based on qualitative description rather than on quantitative estimation. One of the most extensive surveys

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(1) Weir, S. An Evaluation of Health and Sanitation in Egyptian Villages. The Journal of the E.P.H.A. vol. 77 No. 3 1952

of village conditions was begun in 1942 by <sup>the</sup> Rural Health Department and covered almost all the Egyptian villages; but, this survey did not approach the farmer's house to determine the extent of the blight, considering it at that time a problem requiring future studies. (1)

### Village Sanitation

A typical Egyptian village is laid out without any sense of planning. The streets are narrow, serpentine and uneven in level. They are filled with manure heaps, garbage may be found everywhere, with human faeces scattered at almost every corner. These ideal fly-breeding places, together with favourable climatic conditions, are the main causes of the very high circulating fly population, and responsible for the high rate of intestinal diseases and high incidence of trachoma causing blindness. The soil is most probably polluted with hookworm and ascaris.

The problem of fly control is probably the most serious one met with in the Delta village. All families keep their animals within their homes and the dirt of the stable floors is utilized as manure for the fields. Thus the manure heaps in the streets, dung cakes, pit latrines in some houses, and damp waste disposal areas in and outside the houses, are responsible of the low standard of hygienic conditions.

During the cool months of January and February relatively little fly-breeding occurs. (2) With the advent of warm weather in March breeding increases and reaches a peak in May and June. The fly population shifts daily from interior to exterior sites with increasing and decreasing heat.

The houses are mere shelters, usually with an open yard and one or two rooms. Mud reinforced with reeds or unburned clay bricks are the material used in the walls, while split palm stems covered with millet stems make the roofs. There are no proper sanitary facilities in most of the houses. The environmental sanitation at present may be compared with the conditions in England or the United States of America in the first half of the nineteenth century when

(1) Issawi, C. 'Egypt at Mid-Century', Oxford University Press, London 1954. p.72  
 (2) Weir, J.A. 'Evaluation of Health and Sanitation in Egyptian villages.'  
 The Journal of the E.P.H.A. vol.27., No. 3. 1957



Abinick was trying to rouse the public conscience by his advocacy of good sanitation. (1)

It has been found that 55% of the population suffer from bilharzia, 30% suffer from ankylostoma, and 15% suffer from malaria. These diseases which are brought about by perennial irrigation and inadequate drainage, affect mainly the villagers; thus it is estimated that 75% of the rural population is stricken with bilharzia. (See fig. 15)

Examples of the sanitary status and physical features of the rural settlement in the Delta are illustrated in the following tables which summarise the findings of a survey carried out by the Rural Research Section in the Ministry of Public Health in five villages in the Nile Delta. (2)

Table 18. Sanitary Status and Physical Features of the Rural Settlements in the Delta.

Village	Occupied Houses Number	Unoccupied Houses Number	Separate Stables Number	Shops Number	Total Buildings Number	Average Sanitary Score	Degrees of Sanitation
Andbia	759	54	16	10	839	19.8	18.6%
Karenfil	724	28	1	5	758	19.1	18.0%
Karida	894	70	9	17	990	21.2	20.0%
Ighour S	753	96	9	6	864	21.8	20.4%
Ighour K	1748	225	34	24	2031	23.8	22.3%

This information was gathered through a system developed by B.R. Dyer. (3) for scoring individual homes on the basis of twelve basic components of environmental sanitation. Sanitary inspectors examined the houses and recorded data pertinent to the presence or absence of sanitary facilities, and the status of other sanitary factors such as overcrowding, lighting and ventilation. ~~The presence of adequate animal requirements for sanitation produced an arbitrary score of 106.5 per house.~~

- (1) Issawi, C. 'Egypt at Mid-Century' Oxford Press, London 1954. page 62  
 (2) Weir, J. 'An Evaluation of Health and Sanitation in Egyptian Villages' The Journal of the E.P.H.A. vol. 27. no. 3 1957  
 (3) Ibid.



A health centre



Bathing and washing in a canal

Water carrying  
from the canal



New washing places



The Sanitary score of houses by components are shown in the following table

Table 19. Sanitary Status in Rural Delta

Component	Max. score for Component.	Average Score of houses by village.				
		Sinðbiz	Quaranfil	Baruda	Aghour S	Argourk
Space around house	11.0	1.4	2.2	1.8	2.4	1.7
Approach to house	1.5	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.6
Building Condition	8.0	1.3	1.6	1.9	2.1	2.9
Cleanliness	6.0	0.4	1.7	1.2	0.3	1.0
Overcrowding	8.0	1.9	1.6	1.9	1.8	2.7
Ventilation and lighting	15.0	2.9	0.8	1.8	1.9	1.8
Kitchen facilities	13.0	1.9	1.7	2.0	2.7	1.6
Bathing facilities	4.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.2
Garbage and refuse disposal	3.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.1
Latrines	13.0	2.5	1.3	1.5	1.6	2.6
Water supply	22.0	6.6	6.0	7.6	7.4	7.9
Animal facilities	4.0	0.8	1.3	0.5	0.6	1.0
All Components	106.5	19.8	19.1	21.0	21.8	23.8

The low level of sanitation was apparent from the survey. In analysing the results it was clear that it would be possible only to improve the components dealing with water, latrines, fly control, and refuse disposal. Additional improvements could not be attained unless the entire village was reconstructed, a procedure which is not economically feasible at the present time.

#### Nutritional Status

It is apparent from the following data that the basic diet is one of bread (native type) and defatted cheese made from skimmed milk. The families could be divided roughly into four groups, those who subsisted primarily on bread and cheese, those who took milk and vegetables occasionally in addition to bread and cheese, those who took meat, milk and vegetables occasionally and those who ate meat and

(1) Weir, J.A. 'Evaluation of Health and Sanitation in Egyptian Villages  
The Journal of the E.P.H.A. vol 27. no. 3 1952

ables regularly. The survey which was carried out in Sindbis in 1948 and involved 1071 families shows the distribution of the four groups as illustrated in the following table:

Table 20. Nutrition Status in Sindbis. 1948

Type of Diet	No. of families	% of total
Minimum (cheese and bread)	131	12%
Minimum plus milk and vegetables	600	56%
Minimum plus milk, vegetables and meat	271	25%
Fresh vegetables and meat regularly	69	6%

The dietary intake in the Sindbis families was suggested to be just sufficient to meet the metabolic needs of growth and in the years of 20 and over to satisfy the requirements for work and normal activity. This is a typical example of the nutritional status of the rural Delta.



e. EDUCATION

The problem of education is one of the three main problems which faces the whole country, i.e. poverty, ill-health and ignorance. It has been carefully considered that any achievement in one field must be supported by parallel developments in each of the other two fields.

From the economic stand point, education is essential to a higher standard of production through a more enlightened utilization of natural resources and ability to participate in vocational and technical training. There is always a fundamental interrelation between poverty and ignorance.

The effects of the dissipation of ignorance are not limited to improvement in cultural standards, but have such far-reaching consequences as a better understanding of the need for good habits of personal hygiene, the importance of sanitation and proper utilization of native foodstuffs.

The rate of literacy among the Fellaheen women is very low. The significance of that is that the educational standard of a mother cannot fail to have a considerable effect upon the health and well-being of her children.

Although the school population rose from 324,000 in 1913 to 1,900,000 in 1951, and the number of schools rose from 2,500 in 1913 to 122,000 in 1951, the present regime has given education even greater attention.<sup>(1)</sup> A School Buildings Authority has been formed to deal with the operation of school building all over the country. This department is responsible for research, design and building operations of the different types of schools, a programme for which was laid down by the Permanent Council of Public Service.

Rural Education

Rural education was based on the village 'kuttab',<sup>(2)</sup> where the 'Faqih'<sup>(3)</sup> of the village teaches the village children the principles of language and then how to read and write the parts of the Koran. The 'kuttab' itself is a small

(1) Issawi, C. 'Egypt at Mid Century' Oxford Press, London 1954, Page 65

(2) Primitive village school.

(3) Literally - 'A learned man'.

ness in the 'Faqih's' house which is used in the winter time, while in summer the children and their teacher sit on the ground in the shadow of a nearby tree. The children's ages range between 5 and 10. Every child had to contribute with an amount of wheat or maize to be given to the 'Faqih' in return for his services in the harvest season. The 'Faqih' on the other hand had to look after the village mosque.

This type of school - the kuttab - is disappearing gradually, giving place to the modern and well-built primary schools of the School Building Authority. These schools are in addition to the rural schools which are attached to the Collective Units which have been mentioned before.

Every village in the Delta is served with one or more schools according to its size and the areas which it serves. Most of the 'ezbas' - small hamlets - still have their 'kuttabs'. The secondary schools, for boys and girls, are found in the capitals of the different districts, or 'Markazes' in addition to the necessary preparatory and primary schools.

Education is compulsory and free in the primary schools for the ages between 6 and 12 years. Education is also free in the preparatory and the secondary schools.

A detailed study of the educational institutions in the rural area of 'Markaz Ashmoun' will be dealt with later in Chapter IX.

### Educational Status

A survey was carried out in five villages in the Delta - the province of Qulyub east of Ashmoun - by the Section of Rural Research and the International Health Division of the Rockefeller Foundation in 1948<sup>(1)</sup>. The education status of the population was determined by recording the number of years of school attending population and asking each individual to read from the first primary reader and to write back sentences read to them from this reader. In the age group of 5 years to 9 years 50% of the males and 17% of the females were in school at the time of the survey. In the age group 10 to 14 years 37% of the males and 3%

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(1) Weir. 'Journal of Egyptian Public Health Association' 1952. page 67



of the females attended school. In the population over 15 years of age 62% of the males and 92% of the females had received no education. Among individuals over 15 years of age, 34% of the males and 6% of the females were able to read and write at the elementary standard of the survey. Loss of literacy after attendance at school was relatively high. Of 702 individuals who had attended school for two years or four, 85 (i.e. 12.15% were unable to read or write at the time of the survey.

These figures might vary slightly from one village to another and the conditions must have improved in the last ten years due to the extensive education programme which has been carried out since 1953. However, these figures give a fair enough picture of the educational status in the rural Delta at the present time.

The causes of this low standard can be summarized in the following points:-

1. Hot weather which reduces the working capacity of the undernourished
2. Frequent changes of <sup>the</sup> educational policy
3. Over-centralization
4. Overcrowding of curriculum
5. Large place allotted to language
6. Rigidity and importance of examinations
7. Poor quality of teachers and the heavy burden on them
8. The absence of intellectual stimulus at home.

In spite of that, a considerable progress has been achieved in both educational system and school buildings.