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Large-scale Landownership in Modern Egypt 1837-1914

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Main Works

"Al-Harakat-ul-Umaliyya fi Misr 1899-1952", Dar-u1-Katib e1-Arabi, Cairo, 1968. (Labor Movement in Egypt 1899-1952)

"Al-Nizam al-Ijtimaï fi Misr fi Zil-al-Milkiyyat al-Ziraïyya al-Kabîra (1837-1914)," Dar-u1-Fikr al-Hadith, Cairo, 1973. (Social Structure in Egypt in Relation to Big Landownership 1837-1914).

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Introduction

The rise of large-scale landownership in modern Egypt was a land mark in the extension of private ownership. As in some other hydraulic societies, all agrarian land had been owned by the state. Land of every village was divided into small lots each containing several feddans (acres).¹ Peasants (fellahîn) had usufruct rights, being regarded as (Khaddam el-Ardh) servants of the land who had to cultivate it and pay (mal Miri) taxes for the use.

To facilitate tax collection, the state introduced a new system known as "obligation" (Iltizam). Under this system, land was made over to a (moltazim) the one able to offer the largest sum by public tender (mazad)². But moltazim authority over the peasants exceeded that of the state. Productive relations under this system, to a great extent, were feudalist.

The origins of the Iltizam system are found in the time of the Mameluk dynasty, in mediaeval times, and lasted for more than five centuries³. Most moltazims belonged to the ruling class of mamelûks, who carried on the Iltizam System for many years, and when the influence of the state weakened around the end of the seventeenth century, Iltizam was regarded as private property and became subject to inheritance. Traditionally, it could be passed to the moltazim's son if he paid a certain amount of money, called (Hilwan).

When Mohamad Ali came to power (1805-1848), he planned to liquidate the influential Mamelûk moltazims, to uproot them from Egyptian society and establish a new regime depending on some Turkish and other foreign elements who formed his government staff.

To carry through this project Mohamed Ali abolished the Iltizam system after staging the famous Cairo Citadel massacre of the Mamelûks on March, 1811. As unchallenged ruler of Egypt, Mohamed Ali began modernization, the most important aspect of which was re-organization of the agrarian structure.

In 1813 a survey of agrarian land was undertaken, and it was registered in peasant names, those who had been enjoying usufruct rights. Although the legal situation of peasants was not changed, this re-organization paved the way for the development of private land ownership after the decline of Mohamed Ali's monopoly system, and marked the rise of largescale land ownership in Egypt.

¹ The area of one feddan is 4,083.333 square meters.

² Abdul Rahman el-Jabarti: *Āja'ib e1 Ather fi al tarajim wa al Akhbar*, vol I, P99; vol II, P152.

³ Artin claimed that iltizam started in the 17th century, and Baer accepted this opinion but, historically this is not an appropriate interpretation. (See; Artin: *La propriété foncière en Egypte*, Le Caire 1883, PP 66-82, and Baer: *A History of Landownership in Modern Egypt 1800-1950*, Oxford 1962, P1.)

I. Rise of Large-scale Landownership in Egypt

"Large-scale landownership", as a term needs defining. By this term we mean a system that gave Egyptian society a class of people with extensive agrarian interest, and who monopolized a particular socio-economic position and enjoyed political prestige in accordance with their land holdings.

One Egyptian economist has tried to find a base on which to categorize land ownership. He describes land cultivated by the owner himself and his family without the need of hired labour, "small landownership". Land cultivated by hired labour was called "Large-scale land ownership" because in such cases the landowner is rather like an entrepreneur in a large industry.⁴ But this would not be a convenient classification because in Egyptian rural society there were many landowners with only a few feddans (acres) or even less than one feddan, who lived in the towns and used hired labour for cultivation of their land, but could scarcely be considered landlords.

It is difficult to classify land owners by the area of land they owned, because land values differ according to fertility, irrigation facilities, and the possibility of cultivation for one or more annual crops. For example, one who owns 100 feddans of waste Land may not be as wealthy as one who owns ten feddans of fertile land, easily irrigated and able to give three crops a year.

Further those who own 100 feddan in Qina province (southern Egypt) may not be as wealthy as those with the same area in Gharbieya or Minufeya provinces (northern Egypt), because the latter lands are more fertile.

Those who own a fixed area of feddans cannot ipso facto be called landlords, because of the difficulty of finding common statistical data on land ownership. There are no statistics available before those of 1894, the first statistics published after the issue of private land ownership was settled. Even these statistics and those published later classified as landlords those who owned over 50 feddans with no other classification for this category of land owners.

On studying these statistics, we notice that private land ownership in this category from 1896-1914 averaged between 184-197 feddans, as shown in the following table:⁵

⁴ Abdul-hakîm el-Rifaî: *Al-Iqtisad al Siyasi*, Part I, Cairo 1936, P226.

⁵ Reports by H.M. Agent and Consul-General on the condition of Egypt and the Sudan, Egypt No.1, 1904-1914.

Year	Feddans	Landowners	Average (Feddan)
1896	2,191,625	11,875	184
1900	2,243,572	11,939	188
1905	2,356,602	12,475	189
1910	2,458,744	12,414	197
1914	2,396,940	12,480	192

In one of his annual reports, Lord Cromer, British Agent and Consul General in Egypt, used the term “Landlords” to define owners of over 50 feddans⁶, without regard to land fertility or productive capacity. According to 1894 statistics, this category of land owners held 42.5% of the total area of agricultural land.⁷

These statistics are only approximately correct and as such must be considered with some reservations. In our opinion, the measure of wealth that entitles one to the category of a landlord depends on the socio-economic position he holds, based on ownership of land, a position that enables him to combine with others in the same category and also participation in the country's political affairs.

We can consider Oshorieya land holdings and some parts of Kharajieya, known as Ohda and Masmûh land to be the essence of large-scale land ownership. As we shall see, most of its owners acted as a privileged class in Egyptian society, monopolizing vast agrarian interests and wielding political influence.

Oshorieya Land:

Before 1854 Oshorieya land (subject to tax of one-tenth) was not known under this title. In that year, Mohamed Sa'îd Pasha, Viceroy of Egypt (1854-1863) issued a decree imposing a tax equal to one-tenth of the produce on Abâdieya, Chiflik and Oseiya lands. These three categories of land had been exempted from taxation till that time. The Pasha noticed the fact that these lands benefitted from state operated irrigation projects, so he imposed on them a tax equal to one-tenth of the crop.

As most owners of these lands were "high officials and wealthy people", the state demanded an estimate of their annual production, and the one-tenth tax was imposed on Abâdieyas by annual estimation. But collecting tax in kind was not practical, though the state divided land liable to this tax into three grades according to its fertility, and every grade was subject to a certain cash amount equal one-tenth the estimated value of its production. In 1864, these amount

⁶ Egypt No.1, (1906), P50.

⁷ Egypt No.1, (1906), P50.

were raised, but it was still called one-tenth tax, although the amount of that tax was averaged between 1/6 - 1/12 of the value of the produce.⁸

Since that tax was imposed, there were two sorts of Egyptian lands; Oshorieya land subject to that tax, and Kharajiya land subject to Karaj (income tax).

Oshorieya land includes the majority of large-scale land ownership in modern Egypt, it consists of three categories of land; Abâdieya, Chiflik and Osieya Lands.

(a) Abâdieya Land:

After confiscating Iltizam system, Mohamed Ali started a land survey in 1813. The fallahs (peasants) were ordered to submit their tenure rights. As most of them were literate and rarely kept their tenure documents, state resumed their Land. Through this land survey, Mohamed Ali decreased the size of qasaba⁹ length by about one quarter. On measuring land by this new qasaba, there was a surplus of village area equal to one quarter. The state also resumed this surplus area.¹⁰ In addition to this resumed land, there was vast area of waste land which needed reclamation. All these areas included Abâdieya land.

To create economic interests for high officials, most of whom were foreigners consisting of either Turks or Europeans, Mohamed Ali granted them large areas of Abâdieya land which was exempted from taxation. He himself grabbed large areas of this land and granted leases to his other family members.

To justify that action, it was mentioned that, accordingly to Islamic law (shari'â), the Viceroy had full right to grant the Kharajieya land to any person.¹¹ The official documents, give another justification also. It is mentioned that most of the Abâdieya was a waste land, and the Pasha obliged his high officials to reclaim and cultivate it.¹² This justification is not convenient because most of the Abâdieya land was fertile.

Mohamed Ali granted land to the ruling class to attach them to Egypt as most of them were foreigners.¹³ Including this class, there were some Egyptians also who had a chance of education either at modern schools established by the

⁸ Artin, Y.: *La Propriété Foncière en Egypte*, PP156-158.

⁹ Qasaba is a land measure unit, its length was 22.30 square meters before Mohamed Ali and it became 19.23.

¹⁰ Al Jabarti: *Āja'ib el Athar fi al Tarajern wa al Akbar*, part 4, events of Jomada e1 Aula, 1229H, PP208.

¹¹ Artin, Y.: *Op. cit.*, P156.

¹² Ma'îya Turki: Record No.42, desp. No.408, Order to Yussef Effendi Māmūr Fowa, on Ramadan 24, 1246 H/March 1831.

¹³ It was the first time for Europeans to own land in one of the Ottoman Empire Provinces, but it was not appreciated by the people to grant Muslem's land to Christians. (See: Rifa'â el-Tahtawi: *Takhlîs al Ebrîz fi Talkhîs Paris*, Cairo 1905, P10.

Pasha or at European universities, who obtained land grants to be kept loyal to the regime and at the same time to isolate them from the masses.

In 1829, Mohamed Ali granted, for the first time, 100 feddans at Shalaqan village-Qalyobieya province, to one of his officials. It was regarded as "rizqa bela mal" or tax exempted grant land. After this the number of grants increased rapidly. A holder of such land enjoyed usufruct rights as in case of death land should return back to the State to be granted to another person. It was not liable to inheritance.¹⁴

As some of Abâdieyas were waste land, many holders of this land were not keen to reclaim it, because reclamation meant high expenses, which they did not want to incur on a land which could pass to the state in case of their death. To encourage them to reclaim waste land, Mohamed Ali issued a decree, on January 1837, permitting holders of rizqa bela mal land to transfer as inheritance the usufruct rights to their descendants, or to their white slaves in the event of having no descendants. If the holder had neither descendants nor white slaves, land should be passed to the "Waqfs" endowments belonging to sacred places at Mecca and Madina. If the Abâdieya holder became old without having descendants, and wanted to abdicate his usufruct to someone without charge, this abdication could be allowed by the state, if the new holder was capable to cultivate the land.¹⁵ It means that the decree of 1837 did not give Abâdieya holders purchasing right, but it determined right of inheritance which paved the way for a rising landlord class depending on vast agrarian vested interests.

Landownership right of Abâdieya land was settled on February 1842 by a decree giving its holders full property rights, including purchase, abdication and mortgage. It was also decreed that proprietors of such land had new property documents (Taqasit), in which it must be mentioned that their Abâdieyas became rizqa bela mal ila ma'sha'Allah ta'âla¹⁶ or a permanent tax exempted grant.

But all the Abâdieya Land was not regarded as "rizqa bela mal". There were Abâdieyas granted to Beduin Sheikhs of nomadic tribes living in both Western and Eastern deserts and who used to invade villages, rob peasants' crops and animals. To encourage nomads' settlement, Mohamed Ali granted them Abâdieyas with tax exemption for a certain number of years averaged between three to seven years according to productive capacity of the land. But a

¹⁴ Artin: Op. cit., P95.

¹⁵ Philip Jallad: Qamûs al Edara wa al-Qada, Part 1, P13

¹⁶ Artin, Y: Op. cit., PP96-97

provision was made that after the period of tax exemption, Beduin Abâdieyas must be subject to taxation.¹⁷

In 1827, Mohamed Ali granted some people Abâdieya and Kharajieya land as "rizqa bela mal", but it was conditioned by cultivating trees. It was also decreed that holders of that rizqa land should not receive property documents unless they fulfilled that condition. That sort of land enjoyed tax exemption until 1868, when it was subjected to taxation according to its previous situation as Kharajieya of Oshorieya land.¹⁸

There was another kind of Abâdieya land leased by the state to some persons on public auction.¹⁹ On August 1852, it was decreed that it must be leased yearly, proprietors of neighboring land were preferred in leasing that land. Later on, the state gave up leasing Abâdieyas by annual public auction, if the holder of such land was able to pay its lease value.²⁰ In 1858, it was decreed that it should be Kharajieya land, and its holders enjoy usufruct rights, the lease value to be regarded as the tax. The tax was higher than other kinds of Kharajieya land, but in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the tax was reduced to make it the same as the Kharajieya land tax. The holders were granted full landownership rights toward the end of the century.²¹

Land grants continued to be made after Mohamed Ali's time. In 1854-1855, Mohamed Sa'îd Pasha, Viceroy of Egypt, issued a decree permitting those unable to pay Kharajieya land tax to abdicate their usufruct rights to the state. Many of the fellahin surrendered their land to the state, such land being called matrûk, or deserted. The Pasha took over large areas of deserted land, granting some areas to his family members and high officials. In January 1859, he decreed that the grants of deserted kharajieya land should become Oshorieya land, implying that its holders had full landownership rights.²² As the state was indebted to some Europeans and not able to repay the loans as they fell due it gave its creditors large areas of deserted land in discharge of the debts. European holders of such land were subject to kharajieya land tax.²³

Isma'îl, Khedive of Egypt 1863-1879, continued the practice of making land grants. He took over vast areas of Abâdieya land and granted some areas to his family members and high officials as "rizqa bela mal". It was during this time

¹⁷ Ma'îya Turki: Rec. No.12, Ifada ila Yussef Effendî Mâmûr Fowa, on Shawwal 6, 1246/March 1830

¹⁸ Philip Jallad: Op. cit., Part I, P22.

¹⁹ Ibid, P17.

²⁰ Ma'îya Turki: Dos. No.43, Doc. No.172, from Mufattish Omûm Qibly to the Pasha, on Shawal 8, 1272 H/June 1856.

²¹ Philip Jallad: Op. cit., Part I, P17

²² Gergis Hûnain: al Atyan wa al Dhara'ib fi al Kotr el Masri, Bulaq 1964, P223.

²³ Artin: Op. cit., P176

also, when the legislative council (majlis shora al-nowab) decreed that waste land should be given to those who requested it as "rizqa bela mal" for a period averaging between 5-15 years, after which period it would become Oshorieya land. As the cost of reclamation of such land is high, most applicants were wealthy officials or rural notables.

There are no statistics available of the exact Abâdieyas areas, but the figures of the total area of Oshorieya land is known. It is difficult to estimate the Abâdieyas area by reference to (Taqaṣit el-Roznamjé)²⁴ the Financial Department landownership records, because this category of land was subject to purchase from February 1842, and the register, classified by the owners names, does not give an exact or even an approximate estimate of the area of Abâdieya land.

(b) Chiflik Land:

The second category of Oshorieya land was called Chiflik (pl. Chafalik).²⁵ This was a vast area of Abâdieyas owned by Mohamed Ali, his sons and daughters. Another portion of Chiflik land included agrarian land of villages unable to pay land tax and considered Ohda land for Mohamed Ali and his family. There was another portion of Chiflik land comprising vacant (mahlûla) Osieya land after the abolition of the Iltizam system. Chifliks were (rizqa bela mal), subject to the January 1837 and February 1842 decrees and became private landownership. In 1847, the total area of such land was 541,441 feddans (acres) as follows:-²⁶

Kind of land	Feddans
Osieya land	213,679
Ohda land	327,762
Total area	541,441

This total area does not include Abâdieyas, waste land, and Waqf land (endowments) granted for religious purposes. If we agree that the total area of agrarian land in Egypt estimated as 3,218,715 feddans²⁷ in 1813, and 3,590,473 feddans²⁸ in 1844 the total chiflik area was about 18% of all agrarian land in Egypt.

²⁴ The financial Department (Roznamjé) had these records of landownership documents; these documents usually stated holder's name, status of ownership, and area.

²⁵ Turkish term of Persian origin; meaning a field cultivated annually by plough, then used to imply large estates. see; Rivlin: Agricultural policy of Mohamed Ali in Egypt, P66

²⁶ Chafalik wa Ohad: Rec. No.4042, Laîhat Taftêesh Omûm e1Chafalik wa-el Ohad, (17 el Moharram k263/5 January1847).

²⁷ De Regn: Statistique de L'Egypte, année 1873, Pix.

²⁸ Rivlin: Op. cit., Appendix No.1.

In 1847, Chifliks comprised 18 units of 843 villages, arable land and crop stores (shiban, sing. Shona).²⁹ It comprised the bulk of Mohamed Ali's family landownership.

Chifliks were managed by "Diwan Shûra al Mo'awana" until 1843,³⁰ when a private department named "Diwan el Chafalik wa-al Ohad el Sanieya" was set up for the purpose. At the same time, instructions were issued to organize cultivation, treatment of the fellahin and official duties.³¹

Every Chiflik was divided into a number of small parcels (hisas, sing. Hissa). If a peasant cultivates one hissa, his wage equals one sixth of the crops, excluding summer maize; a peasant takes half the crop of summer maize, because maize flour is the basic material of the fellah's bread.

Every 15 days, the fellah takes his wage either in cash or kind. At the end of the year, the chiflik administration calculates net profits and the fellahs portion, and every fellah receives his surplus wages minus what was advanced to him through the year. If his hissa portion was not sufficient, he might be in debt to the chiflik administration. The debt must be subtracted from his next year's wage, which, if not sufficient, the administration cancels his hissa. In such a case the fellah became an (ojari) or a hired peasant to work only at seed and harvest seasons for a certain daily wage, and the chiflik administration distributes his hissa to other chiflik fellahs.³²

The fellah was not free to choose his plantation. The administration planned from year to year and decided what should be cultivated.³³

Every chiflik was headed by a manager (nazir), assisted by some assistant managers (mo'âwinêên), supervisors (molahizêên), and assistant supervisors (Khoulieya). These had no fixed salaries but took a portion of the annual chiflik profits, equal to one tenth. The Nazir's portion was half the tenth value, and the rest went to the mo'âwinêên and molahizêên on an equal basis. The Kholi's wage was equal to that of three fellahs.³⁴

Thus, the fellaheen were obliged to work hard, not only to earn enough for themselves but also to support the chiflik officials. They had many troubles and

²⁹ Chafalik wa Ohad: Rec. 4042, Laîhat Taftesh Omûm el Chafalik.

³⁰ Diwan Shûra al Mo'awana, Diwan al Mo'awana or Diwan el Katkhoda are several of the names of one department founded on 1805 to act as the Pasha's secretariat (see: M.F. Shukry and Others: Bena Dawla, Misr Mohamad Ali, Cairo 1948, P12)

³¹ Chafalik wa Ohad: Rec. 3967, Laihat a1 Dewan.

³² Chafalik wa Ohad: Rec. 3963, qurarat Majlis Al Mahalla besha's el Chafalik; Shaâban 1252/November 1836.

³³ Chafalik wa Ohad: Rec. 3971, Desp. 42, 13 Safar 1261/22 February 1845.

³⁴ Every Kholi was responsible for an average area of between 200-300 feddans (Ibid, the same record and dispatch).

were rudely treated, and most of them were in debt to the chiflik administration, and lost their hissas.

To improve the fellah-chiflik condition, one European consul urged Mohamed Ali to establish a place in every chiflik where the fellahs could eat; and a textile factory to supply them with cloth, but the Pasha refused to accede to such a proposal.³⁵ Because of the bad conditions, many fellahs escaped from the chifliks, and the state issued instructions to its local officials, ordering escaped peasants to be arrested and sent back to their chifliks.³⁶ Referring to British documents, H. Rivlin mentions that escaped fellahs were taken back to the chiflik guarded by armed guards. She also says that the number of refugee families in the Bohira province were estimated at some 12 thousand.³⁷

We can conclude that the chiflik condition of the fellahin was similar to serfs under the feudal system, but their condition could even be worse, being overloaded with duties without any proper share of rights.

(c) Osieya Land:

The third category of Oshorieya land was Osieya land, which continued after confiscation of Iltizam system, Mohamed Ali left Osieyas granted to some previous moltazims to enjoy usufruct rights either by cultivation or rent, and this was exempt from taxation. The usufruct rights of such land were not able to be inherited; holders could only vacate their usufruct to others able to cultivate the land.³⁸

Until October 11, 1854, Osieya land was regarded as Khârajiyea land. At that time, a decree was issued which subjected Osieyas to Oshr tax, but holders only enjoyed usufruct rights without the right of inheritance. Many holders asked that their land be changed to waqf for the sake of their descendants. In August 1855, Mohamed Sa'îd Pasha decreed that usufruct rights of Osieyas should pass to descendants, but if there were no descendants, the land was return to the state after the holder's death.³⁹ The holder can only transfer his Osieya to waqf for religious purposes and for mosques.⁴⁰

³⁵ Rivlin: Op. cit., PP69-70.

³⁶ Chafalik wa Ohad: Rec. 3971, Desp. 42, 13 Safar 1261/22 February 1845

³⁷ Rivlin: Op. cit., P71.

³⁸ Gergis Hûnain: Al Atyân wa-al Dharaîb fi al kotr e1 Masri, P16.

³⁹ Awamir Karîma: Rec. 1882, Order No.1, To Roznamaji Misr, 13 Zu1-Hijja 1271/27, August 1855.

⁴⁰ Ma'îya Turki: Dos. 43, Doc. 308, from Roznamaji Misr to Ra'îs Majlis al Tuggar, Shawal 1272/June 1856.

In 1857, it was decreed that relations of an Osieya holder could inherit usufruct rights if there were no descendants, but unless the heirs were capable of cultivating the land, it was to be distributed to fellahs as Kharajieya land.⁴¹

Osieya land was similar to Oshorieya land, its holders were not enjoying full landownership rights, as in the case of Abâdieya and Chiflik landowners; the only privilege they had was that they were subject to Oshr tax, which was less than the Kharaj tax. The average Oshr tax in 1873 was 37 piastres per faddan/year, whereas the average of Kharaji tax was 126 piastres per/years.⁴² The legal position of Osieya holders was similar to that of the Kharajieyas, although their usufruct rights were firmer.

After the introduction of the Moqabale law (1871) Osieya holders obtained full landownership rights, the rights of purchase, waqf and release, if they paid six years of taxes in advance, but the same law abolished the allowances they had had from the state, as compensation for their former Iltizam, known as fa'îz-al-iltizam.⁴³

Kharajieya land:

Under large-scale landownership there were also two categories of Kharajieya land, known as Ohda and Masmûh land.

(a) Ohda Land:

The ambitious political projects and military campaigns of Mohamed Ali were very costly in terms of both money and victims. The Egyptian peasants bore all these costs in both money and souls, suffering heavy taxation, and many of the recruited peasants lost their lives. Peasant recruitment for military campaigns caused manpower shortages and a decrease in agricultural production. At that time, land tax was an obligation not only on individuals, but also on the village community. The high taxes and decrease in agricultural production led to accumulated tax arrears, and so peasants fled from their villages.

In the attempt to solve this problem an Ohda system was introduced. Mohamed Ali forced high officials to pay the village dues in advance, and to guarantee tax liabilities for the future.

Nothing precise is known about the introduction of this system, but some decrees were issued on 1836 to organize the Ohda system.⁴⁴ The implication is

⁴¹ Awamir Karîma: Rec 737, order No.73, Tl Mudir el-Daqahlieya, 22 Zu1-Hijja 1237/14 August 1857.

⁴² De Regny: Op. cit., P300.

⁴³ Awamir Karîma: Rec. 862, Order No. 42, Qarar Majlis Khosûsî Sadir Alîh Amr Lel-Dakhiliya, 8 Rabî Alawal 1292/April 1875.

⁴⁴ Ma'îya Turki: Rec . 184, Sadir ila Mûfattish Omûn al Hisabât al-Misrieya, 22 Safar 1252/27 May 1836.

that the system existed before that time.⁴⁵ It may be that Mohamed Ali tested this system out in the mid-thirties, and it was enforced later.

The Ohda system was similar to Iltizam, as the (mota' âhid) Ohda holder was obliged to pay village tax in advance and collect the tax from the peasants. As with Iltizam, mota' âhid would take a parcel of land to be cultivated for his own interests by corvée labour. Theoretically, it differed from Iltizam, because fellahs did not have to pay more than the amount of tax imposed on their land. Ohda land was subject to taxation, tax arrears were distributed among the village, the mota'âhid had to pay the arrears and the annual land tax of Ohda and therefore fellahs had to do the same. The Ohda area was not limited and the mota'âhid left for the fellahs an area of land suited to their economic condition and held the rest as Ohda; then, if the economic condition of the peasants improved and they were able to pay tax arrears, he had step by step to leave his Ohda land to them.⁴⁶

Theoretically, also, the Ohda system provided a solution of accumulative arrears, but Iltizam was a permanent financial and administrative system. Productive relations under both systems were alike, although the mota'âhid had the right to cultivate his Ohda property by corvée labour, on condition that the working of Ohda land did not prevent peasants from cultivating their own land. The mota'âhids forced peasants to cultivate Ohda land and made use of their animals without charge, with the result that peasants were not able to cultivate their land, nor improve their economic condition and restore their village area.⁴⁷ When the problem of peasants leaving their land arose, the Government ordered provincial authorities to search for, arrest, and return them to the mota'âhids.

Most Ohda holders forced the peasants to pay all the accumulative arrears of the village. For example, village sheikhs of Sinbillawêên, Sharqieya province, complained to the authorities that they were forced by the mota' âhid to pay village arrears, stating that the total amount of arrears was 120 kêtês (purses)⁴⁸, that while the mota'âhid held 75% of the village area, peasants were forced to pay 113 purses and he paid only seven.⁴⁹ To prevent fellahs leaving the village it was decreed that, in such a case, the mota'âhid must pay a fine equal to thrice the amount taken illegally from the peasants.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Y. Artin, mentioned that Ohda System started on 1840, which is not convenient (see: *La propriété foncière en Egypte*, P128.)

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, PP129-130

⁴⁷ Ma'îya Turki: Rec. 184, the same order.

⁴⁸ Chafalik wa Ohad: Rec. 4007, To Mûdîr Omûmn el Chafalik wa-el Ohad, 1st, Jumad Akhar 1262/27 May 1846.

⁴⁹ Ma'îya Turki: Rec. 18, Desp. 5, To Abdalla el Mârâji sheikh Orban Awlad Ali, 4th shawwal 1261/6th October 1845.

⁵⁰ Chafalik wa Ohad: Rec. 4007, the same dispatch.

Although the state took action to prevent peasants fleeing the land, some influential mota'âhids were very severe on the fellahs. As a result the State was compelled to take over their Ohdas.⁵¹

On 1849, a decree was issued on the confiscation of Ohdas, excluding some possessed by the ruling family. In such cases, mota'âhids enjoyed usufruct rights but were subject to inheritance.⁵² The Pasha granted Ohdas to some mota'âhids as rizqa bela mal, which brought the land under private ownership. From 1854, such land was regarded as Oshorieya land.

Mohamed Sa'id Pasha re-enforced the Ohda system, and the mota'âhids regained the Ohdas that had been confiscated.⁵³ The system continued under the Khedive Isma'îl, who gave Ohda Land to members of the ruling family and high officials who asked for some parcels of Ohda land.⁵⁴ But after some years he ordered that no further Ohda land⁵⁵ be given and finally in December 1866, Ohda land was again taken over by the State.⁵⁶

There is no appropriate information available about the total area of Ohdas. G. Baer estimated it at 1,200,000 feddans, referring to British documents,⁵⁷ but Egyptian documents give no exact figure, except Mohamed Ali's family Ohdas, the total area of which was 327,762 feddans of rizqa bela mal, and on the 7th of September 1848, this came under private landownership.⁵⁸

If G. Baer's estimate is suitable, it means that Ohda land made up about one third of the total agrarian area of Egypt, estimated at 3,296,736 feddans.⁵⁹

Ohdas were given not only to the ruling family, but also to Bedouin sheikhs and rural notables, for example, Mohamad El Shawarbi, a Bedouin sheikh was mota'âhid of Qalyûb, a village near Cairo. Ali el Badrawi, village sheikh of Samannûd, Gharbieya province was mota'âhid of Fouwa, Shabasat and Mahalla villages of the same province, for which he paid 160 purses of tax arrears.⁶⁰

Ohda holders were able to convert their Ohdas to private landownership, either by requesting the Viceroy to grant them their Ohdas as rizqa bela mal or by

⁵¹ Al Waqa'ie el-Masrieya: 26 Zul-Hijja 1264/Oct. 1848.

⁵² Ma'îya Turki: Dos. 29, Doc. 220, 25 Rabîe el Awal 1271/ 16, Dec. 1854.

⁵³ Artin: Op. cit., P128.

⁵⁴ Ma'îya Turki: Dos 27, Doc.140, 18 El Moharram 1271/11 Nov. 1854.

⁵⁵ Ibid: Dos.75, Doc. 33, 3 Shâban 1282/1st, January 1865.

⁵⁶ Awamir Karîma: Rec. 1921, Order to Mofattish Aqalîm Qibly, 7 Rajab 1282/Nov. 1865.

⁵⁷ Baer, G.: A History of Landownership in Modern Egypt, P13.

⁵⁸ Chafalik wa Ohad: Rec.4042, La'ihat Taftesh Omûm el chafalik wal-Ohad, El Moharram 1263/January, 1847.

⁵⁹ De Regny: Op. Cit., PIX.

⁶⁰ Philip Jallad: Qumûs al-Edara wal-Qadâ, Part 3, P504.

investing their profits in land. Thus the Ohda system played an important role in the creation of large-scale landownership.

(b) Masmûh Land:

The second category of Kharajieya land was Masmûh land, the property of village sheikhs. Before the nineteenth century, village sheikhs had been given parcels of land by moltazims. This land was called Masmûh or Masmûh el Mastaba and exempt from taxation. These gifts were permanent for their administrative duties and guest services offered to moltazim agents visiting the village.⁶¹

When Mohamad Ali took over the Iltizam system, he granted village sheikhs parcels of land equal to 5% of the village area, as "masmûh el mastaba" with tax exemption,⁶² in payment of their duties and of guest services to government officials and strangers. They had usufruct rights of that land, and could be inherited by their sons if the latter were capable of carrying on guest services. In 1843, it was decreed that masmûh should be distributed to peasants who paid Kharaji Tax, in case of the holder's death without an heir.⁶³

In 1857, this category of land was subject to the highest rate of village kharaji tax.⁶⁴ It formed the nucleus of landownership by rural notables.

* * * * *

To sum up, large-scale landownership was created through the first half of the nineteenth century. The major part had comprised Oshorieya land which was in three categories; Abâdieya, Chiflik and Osieya land. The Ohda system played a significant role in the creation of large-scale Landownership, and Masmûh land was the basis of landownership by rural notables, enabling them to gain certain privileges in Egyptian society.

Political and economic circumstances added to the rise of large-scale landownership. The keenness of Mohamed Ali to pull up the roots of the influential moltazim class from Egyptian society, and establish the economic interests of the new ruling class led to a changed economic situation. It paved the way for the rise of large-scale landownership, and it created, as well, a class which gained political influence and social prestige, based on landownership.

⁶¹ M. Shafêeq Ghorbêl: *Misr fi Mafriq al Toroq*, P39.

⁶² Al-Jabarti: *Aja'ib al-Athâr*, Part 4, P332.

⁶³ Awamir Karîma: Rec. 843. Order dated 19, Jûmad Akher 1260/17 June 1844.

⁶⁴ Da'irat Mohamed Sa'îd Pasha: Record No. 91, Order to El Malieya, 5 Zul-Hijja 1274/July 1858.

II. Development of Large-scale Landownership

Several factors affected the development of large-scale landownership during the second half of the nineteenth century. The development of the irrigation system during that century brought increased areas under cultivation and improvements in agricultural production. The introduction of the market system, following the breakdown of Mohamed Ali's monopoly system, and the large profits gained from agricultural crops, encouraged many merchants to invest their capital in agrarian land, either by changing their business and becoming landowners, or by extending their existing land holdings. The sale of Al-Da'ira al-Sanieya and State-Domain land, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, provided land for the extension of landownership and mortgage banks and companies financed the purchase of land.

1. Development of Irrigation and Agriculture:

As a result of the reconstruction of the irrigation system through the nineteenth century, agriculture was developed. Mohamed Ali developed a basin irrigation system (ray el Hiyadh) in Upper-Egypt (el Sa'id), dug and repaired several canals, although most of the land in Upper-Egypt could not be irrigated in years of low flood waters.

About 1816, Mohamed Ali had several canals constructed in the Delta (northern Egypt) for the irrigation of cotton, Indigodye, rice, linen and sesame plantation. Several barrages were built on Khatatba, Sersawieya, Bagorieya, Bahr Shebîn, Shargawieya, Bahr Moweis, Bohieya and Mansurieya canals, to make irrigation available all throughout the year. Delta Barrages (el Qanatir el-khayriya) became the basis of permanent irrigation in northern Egypt, construction of which was started in 1833 and completed in 1861.⁶⁵

The introduction of permanent irrigation in the Delta region resulted in the improvement of agricultural production. In place of the one-crop-a-year of the past it became possible to cultivate three, or even four crops. There were some defects in permanent irrigation system, as land that was not covered by flood waters of the Nile lost fertility, and much of the land salted up, and productivity decreased steadily and drainage and fertilizers⁶⁶ became necessary.

Mohamed Ali's successors continued his irrigation policy. At the time of Abbas I, some canals were repaired and the big canal known as Rayyah el-Minofieya was constructed. In Ismail's time, 112 canals were dug, including the Isma'ilieya canal, on which reclamation of large areas of land in Sharqieya province depended. Ibrahimieya canal was also dug in Isma'il's time, to

⁶⁵ Ahmed Ahmed Al-Hitta: *Tarikh Misr al-Eqtisadi fi al Qarn al Tasî Asher*, Cairo 1955, PP58-59.

⁶⁶ Willcocks, W: *Egyptian Irrigation*, London 1889, PP89-90.

facilitate sugar-cane plantation in Minya and Asiūt provinces.⁶⁷ Although Isma'il did much to repair the Delta canals in order to provide summer irrigation for Minofieya and Gharbieya provinces, the level of water in the canals was lower than the land, and the peasants were obliged to use water lifting implements.

As a result of the development of irrigation cultivated land increased from 3,218,715 feddans in 1813 to 4,632,221 feddans in 1872. The increase was 327,484 feddans between 1863-1872.⁶⁸

The development of irrigation continued under British Occupation, in the eagerness to expand permanent irrigation and thus increase cotton production. When the Delta Barrages were repaired in 1891, the area of summer irrigation land increased from 600,000 in 1883 to 1,520,000 feddans by the end of the century. Aswan Dam was built in 1902 to facilitate summer irrigation, its height was raised in 1912 to ensure permanent irrigation of the Delta area and the Misr al Wusta (Middle Egypt) region. The area of cultivated land increased from 4,700,000 feddans in 1882 to 5,420,000 feddans by 1914, an increase of 16%, and it became possible to cultivate large areas of land more than once a year.⁶⁹

Development of irrigation was the basis of agricultural development. The breakdown of Mohamed Ali's monopoly system, the introduction of private landownership of Oshorieya land in 1842, the extension of usufruct rights for Kharajieya land in 1858 and the introduction of private landownership for the latter in 1891, were the main factors affecting agrarian development in the nineteenth century.

Peasants paid more attention to planting cash crops, especially cotton. In the second half of the nineteenth century, cotton production increased in accordance with the demand of the European market. Cotton exports increased from 944 qintars⁷⁰ in 1821⁷¹ to 5,046,604 qintars in 1910.⁷²

In the early 1860's cotton production exceeded all other crops. At the time of the American Civil War (1861-1865), American cotton export to Europe stopped. Weaving factories in Europe and Britain were about to be closed. The demand for Egyptian cotton rose greatly, and the area under cotton was rapidly expanded.

⁶⁷ George Jindi & Jacque Tajir: *Isma'il Kama Tosawiroho Al-Wasa'iq al-Tarikhieya*, Cairo 1947, PP180-181.

⁶⁸ De Regny: *Statistique de L'Egypte*, année 1873, PIX.

⁶⁹ Crouchley: *The Economic Development of Modern Egypt*, London 1938, PP152-153.

⁷⁰ Qintar, an Egyptian weight measure for crops, equals 36Kg.

⁷¹ De Regny: *Op.cit.*, P 174.

⁷² *Nizarat al Maliya: Majmo'at Ihsa'iyat an el Mūsattahat al mazro'a qotnan fi Sanat 1910*, P19.

Cotton exports and prices increased over the same period as follows:⁷³

Year	Export (qintar)	Total price (P.T.)	Price per qintar (P.T)
1861	596,220	143,088,000	240
1862	721,052	492,066,000	600
1863	1,181,888	935,649,000	730
1864	1,718,791	1,484,270,000	853
1865	2,001,169	1,544,312,000	616

It was a period of high prosperity; landlords gained high profits, extended their properties and changed their way of living to European style.

When the American Civil War ended there was a rush of American cotton on to European markets and the demand for Egyptian cotton fell and prices collapsed in those post-war years as seen in the following table:⁷⁴

Year	Export (qintar)	Total price (P.T.)	Price per qintar (P.T)
1866	1,288,762	1,142,400,000	640
1867	1,260,946	644,206,000	450
1868	1,253,455	583,125,000	409
1869	1,289,714	600,570,000	412
1870	1,351,797	507,529,149	342

The period brought to Egypt a period of depression, and most of the small landowners, heavily in debt lost their properties. Cotton plantations carry heavy costs, and peasants had mortgaged their properties to borrow money from usurers, repaying their debts at harvest. A large number of Syrian, Greek and Egyptian copt money-lenders made loans to the fellahs. Most of them had started business as alcohol dealers in some villages and provincial towns, making large profits and lending money to fellahs at 7% monthly interest. They would cheat in handling fellahs' accounts until the latter were unable to pay their debts, and so loose their properties.⁷⁵ There was no substitute source of credit at that time, Crédit Foncier Egyptien being the first mortgage bank established in 1880. When depression hit them, most of the small Landholders were unable to pay their debts and usurers seized their lands and became landlords.⁷⁶

⁷³ See: De Regny: Op.cit., P174; Charles Roux; Le Coton en Egypte, Paris 1908, P62.

⁷⁴ See: De Regny: op.cit.,173; Charles Roux; Op.cit.,PP99-100.

⁷⁵ Abdulla el Nadîm presented an example of the relation between usurers and fellahs and explained how the former exploited the latter and seized their properties (see: El Tankît wa el-Tabkît magazine, article titled: Moħtaj jahil fi yad Moħtal Tamî, issue of June 6, 1881.)

⁷⁶ Charles Roux: Op.cit., P104.

In the 1870's, Egyptian cotton exports increased from 2,013,433 qintars in 1873 to 3,000,002 in 1880.⁷⁷ This restored prosperity to Egypt. Increased cotton production was the basis of British Occupation economic policy and under its rule cotton exports increased from 2,600,000 qintars in 1882 to 5,046,604 qintars in 1910.⁷⁸

Sugar-cane was the second cash crop of Egypt. After 1865, the area under sugar-cane was increased. Khedive Isma'îl planted sugar-cane in his chifliks at Minya and Asiût provinces, and some landlords such as Mohamed Sultan Pasha, followed suit. The area under cane was estimated at about 65,750 feddans, about 85% of which was concentrated in Upper-Egypt. But when the market was depressed, the cultivated area fell to 40,000 in 1880, and rose again to 48,000 in 1913.⁷⁹

Demand for agricultural land thus increased in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the major part of local and foreign capital was invested in agrarian production. Landlords and middle-class landowners extended their land holdings.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, profits gained from dealing in agricultural products were higher than from other commodities. Merchants invested capital in agrarian production, buying up large estates and becoming landlords. Wîsa Boqtor, an Egyptian Copt merchant was a prominent example of this. Around the end of the 1870's, he began buying agrarian land; by 1898 he owned 12,000 feddans, and that same year he bought 16,000 feddans of Da'îra el Sanieya land.⁸⁰

The reclamation of waste land provided large-scale landownership with new areas. Under British Occupation, the area of reclaimed land in Bohîra province increased from 429,181 feddans in 1894 to 587,455 feddans in 1901, an increase of 36.8%, while the percentage of reclaimed land taking Egypt as a whole, over the same period was 11%. The area of reclaimed land in Bohîra province was greater than in other provinces, 50% of reclaimed land being concentrated in Bohîra. The percentage of landownership holding more than 50 feddans in the province was 67.6%, whereas the percentage of all Egypt was 43.4%. Most of the reclaimed land in Bohîra province was owned by two foreign land companies. In this sense, Gharbieya province was second in increase in agrarian area, over the same period, at 14.6%, and the total area of

⁷⁷ De Regny: Op.cit., P174.

⁷⁸ Ministry of Finance, Cotton Bureau: Index Numbers of Agricultural Production in Egypt 1913-1929, Cairo 1932, P3.

⁷⁹ Mazuel, Jean: Le Sucre en Egypte, Le Caire 1937, P59.

⁸⁰ Ramzi Tadrus: Al-Aqbât fi al Qarn ai-Ishrin, Vol III, Cairo 1911, PP 74-75.

landownership holding 50 feddans was 56.1%.⁸¹ Reclaimed land was concentrated in these provinces because there were large areas of waste land which benefitted from irrigation projects in this province.

2. Sale of Da'ira el Sanieya and State Domain Land:

The sales of Da'ira el Sanieya and State Domain land provided a main source for extending large-scale landownership. The major part of Da'ira el-Sanieya land was concentrated in Upper-Egypt, its total area being 434,975 feddans, including some sugar factories and steam powered irrigation pumps. The area was owned by Khedive Isma'il, who mortgaged it in 1865 and 1867 for two loans totalling £8,815,430.⁸²

A Liquidation Decree was issued in 1880, under which Da'ira el-Sanieya land was directed by a certain committee to redeem the loan coupons. In 1898 the Government decided to sell Da'ira el-Sanieya land to a company financed by some British, French and Egyptian financiers, for the sum of £6,431,500. The Egyptian share in the contract was £150,000. Soares, a half Egyptian financier paid £125,000 the balance was paid by four Egyptian landlords.⁸³

The Da'ira Sanieya Company sold land at public tender, but the parcelled out areas ranged from 80 to 4,000 feddans.⁸⁴ There was severe competition among buyers, who were landlords. Prices per feddan rose to more than double its rate value.⁸⁵ The land was sold on an instalment system. After May 1900, the company sold lots averaging between 20-50 feddans; the rated value of the land was between £E60-80 per feddan, according to the Al-Moayad newspaper, about double the actual value of the land.⁸⁶ Some people in middle class landowners were able to extend their properties to be more than 50 feddans, which classified them as landlords.

Some financiers, mainly Egyptian and European Jews, bought large areas of the Da'ira Sanieya land, and then divided and resold the land in small lots. One such case was Jacob Levy who bought about 3,600 feddans in Mā'sara, Minya province, and another was Rahmîn & Leishā Issac who bought 625 feddans in al-Rodha, Asiut province, which they divided into small lots and sold to fellahs.

Some foreign financiers formed land companies for the same purpose. The "New Egyptian Company" had 1,880 feddans at Matay, Minya province, and De Fantazi & Co. had 5,078 feddans at Luxor.⁸⁷ These estates were divided and

⁸¹ Baer, G: A History of Land ownership in Modern Egypt, PP24-25.

⁸² Gergis Hunin: al Atyan wal Dharaib fi al Qotr al-Misri, P232.

⁸³ Al-Moayad news paper, 23/6/1898.

⁸⁴ C.F.E. Archives: Da'ira Sanieya Document, Dos.No.81/91.

⁸⁵ Egypt No.1, (1899), P18.

⁸⁶ Al-Moayad: 3/5/1900.

⁸⁷ C.F.E. Archives: Da'ira al Sanieya Documents, Dos. No.186/207, 15/30, 236/252.

sold to middle class landowners, providing a precious chance to extend their properties.

Some small landowners also tried to get a share in the Da'ira Sanieya land. Abdul-Aziz Mā'tūq, Omda of Tersa village, Fayūm province, formed a group of 150 peasants to buy 1,823 feddans of Da'ira land at their village. But the members of the group were unable to pay the instalments, and the Crēdit Foncier Egyptien seized the land.⁸⁸ Perhaps this is the only case in which small Landowners were courageous enough to participate in the Da'ira el Sanieya bargains.

State Domain land was private property of the Khedive Isma'īl's family, totalling 425,729 feddans. In October 1878, the Khedive was forced by European creditors to transfer property rights to the State.⁸⁹ State Domain was directed by a committee composed of three members: Egyptian, British and French. At the same time, such land was mortgaged for a loan of £8,500,000. The administrative committee was authorized to use its profits in redemption of loan coupons, and to sell some estates to cover the loan value.⁹⁰ The purchase of State land was covered by a decree issued in 1879, stipulating that purchase must be by public tender, and the land so bought was to be subject to Kharaji tax. If the land bought was not in cultivation, the buyers enjoyed land tax exemption for five years, and then be subject to Kharaji tax, even if they did not bring the land into production.⁹¹

After the end of the nineteenth century, State Domain Land was sold in small parcels of 15-20 feddans. Middle class landowners who had earned higher profits from the high cotton prices,⁹² competed severely in the purchase of State land. Small Landowners (with less than 5 feddans) did not benefit from these sales, because the minimum area of new lots was 12 feddans, and competition raised the price per feddan to 117% of its rated value.⁹³ The poor condition of small landowners meant that they were unable to avail themselves of this opportunity.

State Domain land not in use was sold at a low price to land companies to reclaim and sell.⁹⁴ Some landlords bought large areas of this kind, such as Bughus Nubar Pasha and Tigran Pasha.⁹⁵ In 1907, an area of 147,509 feddan

⁸⁸ Ibid, Dos. No.463.

⁸⁹ Gergis Hunin: Op. cit., P125.

⁹⁰ Ibid, P215.

⁹¹ Ibid, P232.

⁹² Egypt No.1 (1904), P17.

⁹³ Ibid, (1908) P13.

⁹⁴ Ibid, (1906), P27.

⁹⁵ Tignor, R.: Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, P243.

remained under State Domains administration,⁹⁶ and more than 60% of the land had been sold. In December 1912, after the debt value had been recovered the remaining area was placed under the direction of “Maslahat al-Amlak al-Amirieya”, Department of State Domains, affiliated to the Ministry of Finance, and established for this purpose on April 17, 1913.⁹⁷

3. Mortgage Banks and Companies:

The purchase of Da'ira el Sanieya and State land required financial resources. This was provided by mortgage credit banks and companies, which means that mortgage credit participated in the development of large-scale landownership.

Major factors in mortgage credit were: the extension of full private landownership, agricultural development and introduction of a market economy, granting foreigners the right to buy land, Mixed Courts, and the British occupation which had put Egypt's financial system on a European basis. The decline in government borrowing from the 1870's onwards forced foreign lenders to seek new investment fields by providing mortgage backed loans for landlords.⁹⁸

Crédit Foncier Egyptien (C.F.E.), was the first mortgage bank in Egypt, having been founded in 1880, and became prominent in the mortgage credit field, its capital being mainly French.⁹⁹

In the 1890's most Egyptian landlords mortgaged their properties to the C.F.E. for a huge total of loans for the purchase of some parcels of Da'ira or Domain land. To cover its customers' demands, the bank increased its assets from £E6,000,000 to £E8,000,000 in 1904, and to £E16,500,000 in 1907. In 1905 the C.F.E. took over Da'ira Sanieya Company's claims on the buyers of land, providing the reason for the sudden increase in assets.¹⁰⁰

The total value of mortgage credit provided by the C.F.E. increased from £E6,798,505 in 1902, to £E23,671,012 in 1907, about 90% being covered by agrarian land. Until 1905, about two-thirds of the loans were for more than one thousand Egyptian pounds, the percentage of loans over ten thousand Egyptian pounds was 48.3% in 1902, 26.2% in 1903, 31% in 1904, and 37.9% in 1905.¹⁰¹ This implies that most of the credit was offered to landlords who could provide as security an area of land to cover the value of the loan.

⁹⁶ Egypt No.1 (1908), P 13.

⁹⁷ Ahmed Hohamed Hasan and Other: *Majmo'at al Qawanin wal- Lawa'ih al ma'mul biha fi Misr*, vol. II, P2355.

⁹⁸ Baer,G.: *Op. cit.*, PP 101-102.

⁹⁹ Crouchley: *Investment of Foreign Capital in Egyptian Companies and public Debt*, Cairo 1936, P34.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, P35.

¹⁰¹ These figures are quoted from the Annual Reports of C.F.E., 1881-1914.

The area of agrarian mortgaged land held by the C.F.E increased from 333,953 feddans in 1895 (10% of the cultivated area at that time), to 1,031,356 feddans in 1907 (25%). It period of Da'îra and State Land sales financed by the C.F.E.. The bank continued mortgaged credit after the 1907 crisis, and its holdings of mortgaged land was 1,257,550 feddans in 1913, including the remaining area of Da'îra el-Sanieya land.¹⁰²

At the beginning of the twentieth century, two other mortgage companies were established. The Caisse Hypothécaire d' Égypte was found in the 1902 by French and Belgian capital and The Land Bank of Egypt was founded in 1905 by Anglo-French capital.

Most of the mortgage credit was in the nature of foreign investments, and participation of local capital was limited; most shares were sold abroad, though C.F.E. preserved some shares for local financiers, most of whom were foreigners. The investments in mortgage credit banks and companies increased from £E5,968,000 in 1897 to £E39,680,000 in 1907.

The increase of mortgage company capital implies an increase in loans, which rose from £E4,434,000 to £E35,365,000 in the same period.

Adding to the mortgage companies, there were a lot of foreigners who invested their capital in mortgage credit through legal offices and mortgage institutions.¹⁰³

According to an 1894 survey, it was estimated that 10% of agrarian land was mortgaged in the Delta, and one eighth in Bohîra, Sharqieya and Giza provinces. The same survey revealed that debts of over-50-feddan landowners represented more than 70% of the total debts, and that they had pledged almost 15% of their land.¹⁰⁴

With the increase in mortgage credit, large scale landownership increased, such credit being the means of purchase of Da'îra and State land.

The following table shows the development of Land ownership distribution in the period 1896-1906, the period of mortgage credit activity and Da'îra Sanieya and State land sales:

¹⁰² Ibid, the same years.

¹⁰³ Crouchley: Op. cit., PP56-57.

¹⁰⁴ Baer, G.: Op. cit., P 102.

Categories of landownership	1896			1906		
	Area (feddan)	landowners	Average	Area (feddan)	landowners	Average
Over 50 feddans	2,191,625	11,875	184	2,356,602	12,475	189
30-50"	358,298	9,297	38.5	321,501	8,601	37.4
20-30"	317,341	12,928	24.5	278,793	11,488	24.2
10-20"	574,084	41,276	13.9	523,528	37,817	13.8
Over 5-10"	565,810	80,810	7	544,264	77,663	7
Less than 5 feddans	993,843	611,074	1.6	1,264,084	1,002,806	1.3
Total	5,001,001	767,260	6.5	5,288,772	1,150,850	4.6

It is quite clear that large-scale landownership areas (over 50 feddans) was increased 164,977 feddans (13.5%), and the number of such owners increased also by 600 persons (5%). Perhaps this increase in the number implies that some persons among middle class landowners benefited from land sales and extended their properties by the use of mortgage credit.

The total area of medium landownership (5-50 feddans) decreased by 147,447 feddans (8%), and the number of owners fell by the same percentage. But the total area of small landownership (less than 5 feddans) increased by 250,241 feddans (25%), and the increase percentage of owners was 59%. In one of his reports, Sir E. Gorst, British Consul-General in Egypt, mentioned that the increase of small landownership and landowners was not convenient. The Government surveyed agrarian land over the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century on its real owners names. Registration fees were decreased encouraging most of the peasants who owned land in common to divide their properties to entitle them to obtain mortgages.¹⁰⁵

Therefore, large-scale landownership increased during the period 1896-1906, and the average holding of private landownership among those who owned 50 feddans or more increased from 184 to 189 feddans, but at the same time, the average holding of private landownership in all Egypt dropped from 6.5 to 4.6 feddans. Improvements in agricultural production under irrigation, the introduction of the market system attracted investments in agriculture and mortgage credit, and the sale of Da'ira Sanieya and State land, were factors affecting large-scale landownership Development.

¹⁰⁵ Egypt No. 1, (1970), P.12.

III. Impact of Large-scale Landownership on the Egyptian Economy

Until the third decade of the twentieth century, agriculture was the main economic activity in Egypt. After 1816, Mohamed Ali established some industrial factories, but this experiment did not survive for long. Most of these factories were established to provide the army with equipment, so their continuance depended on military projects, and when the number of the armed forces was cut down at the beginning of the 1840's, the demands of the army rapidly decreased and the factories were closed.

Khedive Isma'îl started some industrial projects depending on agricultural materials such as sugar, ginning cotton, oil-pressing and cotton textiles. These kinds of transfer industries still exist in Egypt.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, commerce was depending on agricultural commodities, especially cotton, which held the major share of exports under British Occupation.¹⁰⁶

Therefore the characteristics of the Egyptian economy were mainly agricultural, and large-scale landownership had its impact on both productive power and social productive relations.

1. The Productive Power:

Egypt's traditional mode of production was popular until the second half of the nineteenth century. Since ancient times, agriculture was carried on without notable development, except in Mohamed Ali's chifliks where agricultural changes were affected by the chiflik administration. Agricultural development was disciplined after the expansion of irrigation, providing permanent watering in the Delta and Middle Egypt provinces, making it possible to produce more than one crop a year.

Traditional cultivation tools invented by the ancient Egyptians included the pickaxe, the wooden plough and others, which remained without modification.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, cultivation tools developed slightly. On the large estates owned by the ruling class, steam powered irrigation pumps took the place of traditional irrigation tools.¹⁰⁷

The Da'îra Sanieya chifliks were models of agrarian enterprise. In the Tafateēsh (estates) of Beba, al-Rodha, al Minya, Matay and Abu-Qarqas, most of the area was devoted to the production of sugar-cane to supply the sugar factories which had been established on the same estates. Another area of Da'îra tafateēsh was

¹⁰⁶ Crouchley: The Economic Development of Modern Egypt, P159.

¹⁰⁷ Ma'îya Turki: Dos.No.27, Doc. No.140, dated 18 Al Moharram 1271/ 1 November, 1854.

devoted to cotton production to supply the ginning mills. Each tafateēsh had a private railway line linking the cultivated area to the factory, and the main railway ran to Cairo and Alexandria to carry commodities for export. There were also maintenance units in every tafateēsh to repair tools and machines, some of which produced spare parts.¹⁰⁸ The Da'ira factories were run by European, while cultivation was managed mainly by Turks and Egyptians,¹⁰⁹ but there was no definition of responsibilities between cultivation and industrial units to ensure efficient productivity, a failure that led to the failure of the enterprises.¹¹⁰

In addition, there were several models of agrarian enterprise represented by land company ownership as well as foreigners in Bohîra and Sharqieya provinces. The European entrepreneurs used advanced tools in reclaiming land; they imported chemical fertilizers and used machines for ploughing, seeding and harvesting. They also prepared pastures for raising cattle to provide milk products factories with milk.¹¹¹

Some European Landlords established cotton-gins to serve their estates and neighbouring estates, and they also made room for field experiments and chemical laboratories.¹¹²

The economic crisis following the American Civil War forced Egyptian landlords to develop modes of production to improve the productivity of the Land to compensate for the falling price of cotton. They selected the best seed and used chemical fertilizers, ploughing and harvesting machines, but only a few landlords were able to use these costly machines,¹¹³ whereas most native landlords were using man power in cultivating their land, as it was available and less expensive.

Landlords did not invest money in non-agricultural enterprises, reserving their money for agriculture. They sometime acted as contractors for digging canals or building dikes. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, about 50% of the irrigation projects were being carried on by 47 Egyptian contractors.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ Ali Mubarak: *Al-Khitat al-Tawfikieya al-Jadida*, Part 9, PP3-4, Part 11, PP 81-82: Part 16, P55.

¹⁰⁹ Edwin Le Leon: *The Khedive's Egypt*, P213.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, PP211-212.

¹¹¹ *Bulletin de L'Union Syndicat des Agriculteurs D'Egypte*, Sept. 30, 1901. (See: the description of M. Bayerly Estetes at Kafr el-Denohieya and Mît Rikab near Zagazig, Sharqieya province).

¹¹² *Ibid*, Aug.31,1901. (see: the description of Drant Pasha estate at Kafr el-Dawar)

¹¹³ *Ibid*, Nov.20,1901. (see: interview with Mostafa Riyaz Pasha).

¹¹⁴ *Al-Mo'ayad newspaper*. Dec.12,1889.

Agricultural companies were the most attractive field of investment for the landlords. In 1895, an agricultural company was founded at Mallawi, Asiat province, the value of its assets was £E200 thousand. Most of its shares were held by Tunî Mohamed Bey, a rural notable, the company specializing in producing sugar-cane.¹¹⁵

In 1897 another agricultural company was established by some rural notables to buy the Da'îra Sanieyia estates of Beba and al-Fashn for £1,250,000 financed by Ahmed el Siyufî Pasha, Mohamed el Shawarbi Pasha, Hassan Abdul Raziq Bey, and M.Suares, all Egyptian landlords except Suares, who was a half Egyptian financier.¹¹⁶

In 1898, some Zawats (Turk landlords) founded an agricultural company with Egyptian and Belgian capital known as "La Société Agricole et Industrielle d'Egypte". The main share-holders were Hussein Kamel and Mostafa Riyaz Pasha. The total amount of capital was £E200 thousand, invested in several estates comprising 13,800 feddans in Gharbieya and Sharqieya provinces.¹¹⁷

There were some cases in which Egyptian financiers, originally merchants, invested capital in industry and transportation. In 1885, Ahmed el-Minshawi Pasha and Hassan Abdulla Bey established a glass manufacturing enterprise.¹¹⁸

In 1896, some rural notable land Zawat founded a weaving and textile factory in Alexandria,¹¹⁹ and in 1898, a narrow gauge railway was founded by some Copt and Syrian landlords to operate a private line in Fayûm province.¹²⁰ But none of these enterprises were successful, due to British Occupation economic policy which was to discourage such projects and concentrate on cotton plantation, keeping the Egyptian market open for British products.

British Occupation economic policy was one of the main reasons why Egyptian landlords were unable to found a "national bank" with native capital, the aim of which would be to get rid of the dominance of foreign money over the Egyptian economy.

The project for the foundation of a "national bank" was introduced, for the first time, in April 1879 by Amîn Shumayel, a Syrian merchant. His project was to establish a bank with capital of £14,000,000 financed by Egyptians, with the aim of gradually buying up State Debt coupons, to operate as a central bank and to invest in industrial, agricultural and commercial projects either in Egypt or in

¹¹⁵ Al-Majalla al-Zira'îya, weekly magazine, Rajab 7,1312 / Jan.26,1895.

¹¹⁶ Al-Zira'â, weekly magazine, May 21,1897.

¹¹⁷ Al-Filaha al-Masrieya, monthly magazine, Feb. and April,1898.

¹¹⁸ Hussein Ali el-Rifa'î: Al-Sina'â fî Misr, Cairo 1935, P624.

¹¹⁹ Al-Omda, weekly newspaper, Dec.10, 1896.

¹²⁰ Al-Mo'ayad, newspaper, July 6,1900.

other Ottoman provinces.¹²¹ But the economic and political circumstances were not suitable to allow such a project to begin.

In 1882, some Syrian financiers revived the project of a "national bank", financed by Egyptian and Syrian capital.¹²² Its head office was to be in Alexandria, with branches in provincial towns, and in London and Paris. The main interest of the bank was in organization of cotton exports, to provide mortgage credit to fellahs and to start industrial enterprises, in order to obviate the influence of European capital, it was proposed that capital should be £2,400,000 of which Gobran Mokhalā, Aîda and Roghîb, Syrian financiers of Alexandria were ready to put up 50%, with a share issue to raise the balance, the condition being that it must all be held by Egyptians. This project was regarded as the base of Egypt's economic independence. The landlords were the only class capable of buying the shares, but they were not enthusiastic and so the project¹²³ was abandoned during the British invasion of Sept. 1882.

During the 1907 economic crisis, the idea of a "national bank" again appeared, and some middle class intellectuals wrote articles urging Egyptian landlords to start such a project, to counter the influence of foreign capital. Talāt Harb, a well-known Egyptian entrepreneur, took part in this campaign, believing that to establish an Egyptian national bank would enable Egypt to start industrial and commercial enterprises, and in such a case Egypt would not be dependent on European products, or at least it would reduce Egypt's demand for these products.¹²⁴ But the landlords did not participate, being satisfied with investing capital in agricultural land. They disliked other fields of investment.

Finally, in April 29, 1911, the project was approved by the Egyptian Conference,¹²⁵ in one of its resolutions which stated that the improvement of Egyptian economic conditions needed restriction of the influence of foreign capital by the establishment of an "Egyptian Bank" with native capital. It was assumed that Egyptian deposits in foreign banks would be transferred to the "Egyptian Bank".¹²⁶ The project was supported by the wealthiest landlords, particularly, by Mostafa Riyaz Pasha, chairman of the conference. On June 2, 1911, the conference decided to send Talāt Harb to Europe to study the banking system and prepare a plan for the project, taking in consideration the economic conditions of Egypt.¹²⁷ The death of Mostafa Riyaz Pasha stalled the

¹²¹ Al-Tijara, daily newspaper, April 17, 1879.

¹²² Al-Mufid, daily newspaper, Jan.23, 1882

¹²³ Misr, daily newspaper, March 15, 1882.

¹²⁴ Al-Jarîda, daily newspaper, Oct. 1, 1907.

¹²⁵ The Egyptian Conference was held as a reaction to the Coptic Conference held in Asiut after the assassination in 1910 of Botrus Ghali Pasha, the Egyptian Premier.

¹²⁶ Al-Mo'ayad, April 29, 1911.

¹²⁷ Ibid, June 4, 1911.

implementation of the conference resolution. During the First World War conditions in Egypt were not suitable for carrying through such a project, but it was revived in 1920 under the title Bank Misr (Bank of Egypt).

The support now given by landlords to the "Egyptian Bank" project, implied that they were, convinced that agriculture was not the only suitable field for investment capital, and they were seeking new fields of investment, specially commercial, industrial and financial.

This meant that Egyptian landlords were interested in developing the kind of productive power which had existed from the nineteenth century. This was probably a subconscious intention, as the development of productive power would provide good opportunities for the Egyptian working classes to improve, a movement which had already begun by the end of the nineteenth century.

The views of the Egyptian landlords on developing productive powers were contrary to the interests of the British Occupation, which was eager to maintain the traditional productive powers as the basis of its own existence and interests. The development of productive power leads to the development of a national liberation movement. So Egyptian landlords had no choice but to struggle against the Occupation, eager as they were to develop productive power. This was one of the reasons for participation by the Egyptian landlords in the 1919 revolution against the British Occupation.

2. Social Productive Relations:

Social productive relations were stable during the nineteenth century. Some landlords rented their properties and lived on rents. There were two ways of renting land:

- (1) To rent the land annually by public tender to a person who would then divide the Land into small lots and rent it to peasants.
- (2) The proprietor himself divides the land in small parcels and rents it direct to peasants.¹²⁸

The majority of landlords cultivated their properties direct, but as absentee landlords living in the towns, leaving the management of cultivation to their agents. They rarely visited their estates, merely checking the records yearly. They regarded tenants as less than human, treating them merely as productive tools.¹²⁹

The estates were known as tafateēsh (sing. tafteēsh), and each estate was managed by a mofattish (inspector) who was responsible for planning cultivation. Most mofattishs were bureaucrats, with no technical qualifications,

¹²⁸ Yousef Nahas: *al-fellah, Halatoh al Iqtisadieya wal-Ijitima'īya*, Cairo 1926, P110.

¹²⁹ Arminjon, P.: *La Situation Économique et Financière de L'Égypte*, Paris 1911, P172.

but required to be prudent, and violent enough to control the supervisors and tenants. Every mofattish was assisted by a group of nazîrs (supervisors), each being responsible for a division of the estate. He was the one to decide what plants should be cultivated in his division, to arrange manpower and organize irrigation. Every nazir was assisted by a certain number of kholis, each being responsible for some tenants. All these employees were paid monthly Salaries.¹³⁰

Tenants had different kinds of treatment, known as tamallieya (sing. tamalli) or qirarieya (sing. qirari).¹³¹ There was no fixed base for tamallis wages. Sometimes they would receive a daily wage less than the average paid to outsiders; they also had free lodging and a parcel of land less than one feddan for the cultivation of clover and corn to provide food to their families and stock. But they had to pay rent for this land nor was it permitted to cultivate cotton there, to avoid outworking the land. They had to devote themselves to the landlord's cotton plantation, which required a lot of manpower.¹³² The tamallis were encouraged by the tafteësh administration to keep animals to provide organic fertilizer, and to serve as a guarantee for the loans made to the tamallis. In addition to cultivation, the tamallis were recruited without charge to maintain the tafteësh canal dikes in flood time and to guard the fields.

Some landlords allowed a tenant a parcel of land in lieu of his annual family wage, and in such a case the tenant had to pay neither rent nor tax.¹³³

The tamallis were subject to a strict system; if one of them made a mistake he would be severely punished, either by reducing his wage or by lashing. All members of the tamalli's family were land tenants,¹³⁴ and he had to use his animals in the estate fields whenever they were needed, and without payment.

The status of the tamallis was better than that of others, for they had a permanent job and residence, and sometimes they enjoyed a reduction equal to 60% of the rent value for the parcel of land they cultivated for their own

¹³⁰ Al-Filaha al-Masrieya, monthly magazine, January 1898

¹³¹ Means a permanent peasant, the first term was popular in the nineteenth century, and the second was popular in some provinces. It is of mediaeval origin, used for the same category of land tenants (see: Ibrahîm Tarkhan: al-Nuzum al-lqta'iya fil-Osur al-Wusta, Cairo 1968, P237)

¹³² Bulletin de L'Union syndicate des Agriculteurs de L'Egypte, Nov. 26, 1901.

¹³³ Al-Filaha al-Masrieya, Jan. 1898.

¹³⁴ For Example, the tamallis of Riyaz Pasha's estate at Mahalat Rouh, Gharbieya province, comprised 100 families of about 600 persons; each family had a parcel of land less than a feddan (see: Bulletin de L'Union Syndicat des Agriculteurs de L'Egypte, Nov. 20, 1901.)

interest, just to keep them loyal to the estate. The relation between tenant and landlord was not organized by legislation, but by tradition.¹³⁵

There was another category of tenants known as ojarieya (sing. Ojari). These were seasonal workers, employed in seed and harvest seasons. The daily wage for this category averaged between 2-2.5 piastres, and they had to work from sunrise to sunset, with one hour break for lunch.¹³⁶

The majority of the ojaris were landless peasants, but there were a lot of small landowners in this category owning one feddan or less, the productivity of which was not sufficient to cover the needs of their family, so they worked as seasonal workers to supplement their living.¹³⁷

There was another kind of social productive relations known as "al-mozara'ā"; farming the field of the landlord for a share of the produce, maybe one fifth, a quarter or a half, and every share was fixed according to certain traditions.¹³⁸

The tenant who had a quarter of the produce was called "al morabî". He had to cultivate maize and the landlord would provide fertilizers; he had to work in the estate fields whenever he had spare time, but without charge.

A tenant who had one fifth of the produce was called "almokhāmis"; he had to work in the estate fields for one fifth of the produce, after deducting all expenses.¹³⁹ Usually, the landlords would take all cotton produce and the mokhāmis rarely getting a share; because the latter would borrow money from the landlord through the year, and the landlords would postpone calculation of the tenant indebtedness till the cotton harvest. The landlords would exploit the illiterate peasants and seize the whole crop. The tenant was always told that he was still in debt, money that would have to be paid the next year.¹⁴⁰

The tenant who shared half of the produce was called "almonasif"; he had to pay all costs of the plantation, including seeds and fertilizers, but if the tenant was not able to pay, the landlord would provide him with seeds and fertilizers and then discount the costs from the peasant's share at harvest. If production was bad due to weather conditions, and the tenant's share was not sufficient to cover all the expenses, the amount in deficit was considered a debt to be paid in the next year.¹⁴¹

¹³⁵ Yousef Nahas: Op.cit., P .111.

¹³⁶ Al-Filaha al-Masrieya, Feb. 1898.

¹³⁷ Arminjon, P.: Op. cit., P.172.

¹³⁸ Yousef Nahas: Op. cit., P.108.

¹³⁹ Al-Filaha al-Misrieya, Feb. 1898

¹⁴⁰ Yousef Nahas: Op. cit., P.180.

¹⁴¹ Al-Filaha al-Masrieya, Feb. 1898.

The last kind of social productive relations was popular in Minofieya and Gharbieya provinces, and known as "feddan yakhdim feddan". In this case a fellah rents a parcel of land at reduced rent, but he had to cultivate another parcel equal in area for the landlord, without payment.¹⁴²

Social productive relations which existed in Egypt during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, were similar to that of Mamelūks in mediaeval times. The Mamelūks were absentee feudal lords living on the revenue from their land. The status of land tenants at that time was similar to their status during the period we are referring to; there were those permanent tenants (qirarieya), seasonal peasants (al-tawarīk), those farming fields for share of the produce (almozara'a) and a rent system paid either in cash or in kind.¹⁴³

Since ancient times and up to 1883, tenants were attached to the land, and could not leave the land without being punished. After the introduction of the Egyptian Civil Law in 1883, the tenants were, theoretically, liberated, but actually they could not leave the estates because they were in debt to the landlords. If they wanted to leave, the landlord could seize their cultivation tools, animals and domesticated birds, although their conditions were bad, tenants were not eager to leave the estates, because there they had, at least, house and food.

The status of tenants in Egypt was similar to that of serfs under feudalism in Medieval Europe, but the conditions of Egyptian tenants would be worse than that of serfs, being overloaded with dues without an appropriate share in the rights. Social productive relations were feudalistic, while the productive powers were developing, at least, a little. The nineteenth century meant that Egypt's economic development, was a period of transition from feudalism to capitalism.

¹⁴² Ibid, the same issue.

¹⁴³ Ibrahim Tarkhan: Op. Cit., PP234-242

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