

unity. The symposium included the major writers and journalists and lasted 4 hours.

All the opinions expressed have supported the need to underline the national unity but have disagreed on the means for tackling the events that try to undermine this unity. They have also disagreed in pinpointing the responsibility for the small incidents that have taken place during the past weeks. Furthermore, they have disagreed on the role of the press and of the information media in tackling the incidents.

At the outset of the symposium, Kamil Zuhayri, the journalists doyen, said: We are today in a situation that does not require many statements. Many writers and authors have preceded us to highlight the meanings of national unity faithfully and sincerely. I believe that the present society can be broken down into numerous social forces. There is the force of the state with its three authorities, there are the parties, there are the professional unions, there are the religious institutions, such as al-Azhar and the church, and there are the religious youth groups.

Parties and Sedition

Kamil Zuhayri also said: We have noticed that the partisan forces with their various ideologies, even though they are new and growing forces and even though they appeared only a few years ago, include, incidentally, Muslims and Christians in their leaderships.

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EGYPT

CULTIVABLE LAND VIOLATIONS IN AL-QALYUBIYAH SAID TO THREATEN CAIRO'S SUPPLY

Cairo AL-AHRAR in Arabic 28 Apr 80 p 2

[Article: "Law Protects Usurpation of Lands and Officials Exchange Accusations"]

[Text] State against state! It is a surprising conflict this into which the popular and executive agencies in al-Qalyubiyah have fallen.

While the state is raising the slogan of the green revolution and of food security, most of the fertile lands in al-Qalyubiyah are turning into residential areas. What is more surprising is that nearly (16,536) feddans in al-Qalyubiyah have turned into construction lands without any planning and in a haphazardly manner. But will the events of this farce continue and till when?

Al-Qalyubiyah Governorate is considered a source of vegetable and fruit supply for the greater Cairo.

Despite the advantages which the governorate enjoys, we have found surprising things happening there, such as when al-Qalyubiyah Governorate Popular Council issued a decision supporting those who violate the law prohibiting the construction of buildings on agricultural lands. Thus, the agricultural lands in al-Qalyubiyah are being threatened and this poses a threat to the food security in the governorate and in the greater Cairo.

Usurpation in Name of Law

Muhammad Raghieb Nawwar, the deputy chairman of al-Qalyubiyah Popular Council, says: Al-Qalyubiyah Popular Council has been issuing decisions and recommendations regarding some memoranda submitted by Shubra al-Khaymah inhabitants who are hurt by the ban on licenses for the construction of buildings on agricultural lands within the jurisdiction of Shubra al-Khaymah. It is the Popular Council's duty to preserve the agricultural lands in al-Qalyubiyah Governorate and to ban the construction of buildings that pose a threat to the cultivable area which represents the main source of food for the greater Cairo.

Ahmad Kamal al-Jayyar, the chairman of Shubra al-Khaymah Local Council, says that the buildings surrounded by agricultural lands within city and village limits are licensed by the councils concerned and not by the Directorate of Agriculture. This means that the minister of agriculture, on agreement with the local popular councils concerned, determines the fees and licenses for construction on agricultural lands. This is in addition to the recommendation made by the ministers of agriculture and of justice to stop the citations made in this regard against buildings constructed on agricultural lands.

Surprising Conflict

Sa'id Jum'ah 'Ali, the People's Assembly member representing Shubra al-Khaymah and al-Qanatar al-Khayr yah District, believes that the rise of the price of a square meter of land to more than 300 pounds in some agricultural areas has enticed many of the owners of these lands to sell their property without any consideration for planning or for the law that bans the construction of buildings on agricultural lands.

But giving the opportunity to a large number of agricultural land development companies which divide the land into plots and then advertise the sale of these plots as approved plots is something that makes the citizens buy the plots and fall, ultimately, prey to these lies when the executive agencies concerned awaken from their slumber.

Construction Under High Tension [Powerlines]

Lt Col Jalal 'Abd-al-Nabi al-Tawil, the police station chief, asserts that the violations committed against the law that bans the construction of buildings on agricultural lands have exceeded all limits and that some agricultural land owners who subdivide their lands without any control by city councils and who are only interested in making enormous profits without any consideration to the harm that may be caused to the citizens sell even the lands that are located under high tension powerlines. This is something that poses a threat to those engaged in the construction work under these lines.

City Councils and Violations

Madihah Muhammad Imam, chairman of the Health Affairs Committee of al-Qalyubiyah Popular Council, says that she favors given at the expense of the law are what causes all these unchecked violations. Some National Party leaderships make a trade of subdividing and selling the agricultural lands and this encourages the citizens to purchase them. This makes the engineers and assistants in the engineering agencies refrain from writing violation citations against those who engage in the construction either as a favor or out of fear of those subdividing the lands. A committee has been formed to survey the agricultural area that has turned into a residential area so as to determine who permitted the citizens to build

and who gave them the licenses despite the presence of a decision that prohibits the transformation of agricultural lands into residential lands. When Madihah tried to bring up this issue in the Popular Council, some of those who benefit from violating the sovereignty and sanctity of the law resorted to insulting her outside the council. But she faced them courageously and made a report on the issue to the public prosecution which interrogated some thugs who cover up crimes.

Agricultural Cooperatives and Negligence

Muhammad 'Abd-al-Mu'ti Khayyal, chairman of al-Qalyubiyah Popular Council's Permanent Committee, says that the agricultural cooperatives in the governorate are almost closed and all their agencies are almost idle because their officials know nothing about the agricultural lands that have turned into residential areas in a haphazardly manner.

He added: Even though al-Qalyubiyah is very famous for its production of vegetables, fruits and citrus fruits--a production valued at more than 4 million pounds which are equal to the national cotton crop [sic]--all this production is beginning to suffer from a cancer that will destroy it very quickly and will lead to a drop in the food supplies exported by the governorate to Cairo.

State Against Itself

But if the popular and executive agencies in al-Qalyubiyah are thrashing about with the decisions and the recommendations they are issuing and if the officials themselves are the ones who violate the law and make a trade of subdividing and selling the agricultural lands by exploiting their positions, then who is ultimately responsible for the presence of the cancer cells that are spreading in the agricultural land and when will this farce end?

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we have suggested that clay bricks be used as a substitute, especially since clay is available on both banks of the Nile. Despite the numerous promises by former ministers of housing, the clay brick industry is still crawling and its production has not appeared in the local market despite the fact that 15 years have passed [since the promises were made].

Ilfar Kamil further added: What has been said about bricks can be said