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A SURVEY  
OF THE  
PRINTING FACILITIES  
IN EGYPT

February, 1978



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# A SURVEY OF THE PRINTING FACILITIES IN CAIRO

February, 1978

## INTRODUCTION

The research for this survey was severely truncated by the necessity for a quick look and fast appraisal. Under the circumstances it was necessary to resort to selected representative samplings in the case of printing plant visitations and interviews. An additional handicap was the lack of industry records for historical perspective. It is in these shadows, then, that the survey was undertaken. It should be noted, however, that the researcher sincerely doubts if more time and effort would change substantially the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

This exploratory study does reflect accurately information gathered from a series of unstructured interviews and conversations. It also reflects the personal observations of the writer who is well-founded in the graphic arts and particularly, printing and publishing in the less developed countries in this area of the world.

Fact-finding expeditions were conducted in all three sectors of the Egyptian printing industry - - - government presses, public presses and private presses. The interviews were with owner/managers, suppliers, brokers and equipment salespeople. The views of some Egyptian government officials are also reflected.

The facts and figures were checked and cross-checked with the many interviewees and persons thought to be knowledgeable. Despite the desire and attempts at accuracy, there is undoubtedly, some error; the wage rates in neighboring countries, for example. However, such figures are basic industry wide and are the "facts" on which much planning and managing is being done in Egypt.

## . Introduction-

Almost all the printing plants inspected were equipped to do both offset and letterpress work. Only those plants with automatic sheet-fed presses, mechanical composing machines (in some cases electronic imposing), power cutters and other power assisted equipment were considered to be pertinent. In addition, only those plants whose output reflected a considerable number of books and a higher than average production rate and level of quality were considered as significant.

A list of the persons interviewed and the industrial sites visited are an attachment.

## THE STATE OF THE PRINTING ART

Egypt - February 1978

RATING Poor but fast improving in most aspects.

This rather uncomplimentary rating must be tempered with the realization that the Printing Art in Egypt in 1952 was suddenly plunged into isolation. For the next 23 years or so, the changes and refinements in the art or craft were more rumor than a demonstrated fact.

In 1952 when this isolation began, letterpress printing was still the premiere process. Photo-offset printing, while not in its infancy, was still not fully adapted to the craft. However, offset printing was recognized as the wave of the future by most people in the craft.

In effect then, while Egypt languished in a never-changing situation of letterpress printing, the rest of the world surged ahead into photo-offset printing and the age of photo-composition and imposition.

It wasn't until about 1975 that the whole of Egypt was exposed to the new printing age. For the first time the new photo-offset printing equipment began to arrive in Egypt in quantity. It is true that some equipment had found its way to Egypt during the period of isolation, but the amount was small and the effect negligible.

Thus, since 1975, the printing craft in Egypt has been literally "in the air" as a result of its leap from letterpress printing, to offset printing and photo-composition. Millions of dollars worth of new equipment has been and is pouring into Egypt as the country strives to catch-up with the craft and provide for the ever-increasing need for printed material.

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Many, many problems result from this giant leap into the printing art of today. The problems have not resulted in a state of chaos but it certainly can be said that the printing trade in Egypt today is far from a smooth, routinely operating craft. Much new equipment stands exposed to the elements or unerected in the dust of temporary storage. Many new buildings to house this equipment are under construction, some are far enough along that some of the new equipment has been erected and is running amidst confusion of construction. In other situations workmen are still remodeling the building while third country mechanics install and run-in the new pieces of machinery. To add to the confusion, many untrained (some perhaps unfit) and others ill-trained Egyptian workmen have been pressed into service as operators of this sophisticated machinery.

It is against this background then, that the printing craft in Egypt is trying to rise, and in that milieu that several important factors which are closely related to the printing craft are discussed in the following paragraphs.

### EQUIPMENT ---

Some of the finest, and most sophisticated printing presses and related equipment has been shipped into Egypt. Almost a like amount is on order or is in transit. Most of the material is suitable and will be put to good use.

The market for printing will not be flooded when all these new presses and enterprises are going. A high percentage of the equipment can be categorized as replacement. Offset presses replacing old, worn out letterpresses that should have been junked twenty years ago. Furthermore, the market for printing seems to be growing, especially the export market. With Beirut production level way off, Egypt has become an important source for Arabic books, pamphlets, etc. In general terms, there appears to be an ample flow of printing equipment coming into Egypt. If there is

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a shortage now, it should be overcome in the next 12 to 18 months. The only things which might hamper the flow are the lack of soft loans for financing and the slowness of production in the manufacturing countries. The Egyptian will learn how to better apply for soft loans with experience and certainly the third country production problems should be solved shortly.

### PERSONNEL

#### Technicians

It is axiomatic in the printing trade that a letterpress pressman does not an offset pressman make and in the same vein an engraver does not an offset platemaker make. As ridiculous as these little homelies may sound, they are still proven truisms. While there may be some similarities between the letterpress process and offset, the basic difference in technique have been proven time and time again, to be too great to be bridged by the average tradesman.

Therefore, when Egypt entered the offset age, the problem created by a lack of trained personnel has become one which will haunt them for years to come.

There are only three vocational schools that even claim to do some training in the trade. But the owner/managers say that the graduates have no "hands-on" training in offset, that the schools barely teach the theory of offset and merely demonstrate the letterpress technique. Another source of trained personnel is the equipment manufacturers themselves. When a business buys a new press, the contract almost always includes a training clause. Generally two or three Egyptians are sent to the manufacturers' service center abroad. The men learn how to operate the machine and perform simple maintenance chores over a period of six weeks. So in six weeks there is a new offset pressman back in Cairo. He may or may not have the aptitude, knowledge and pride in his work required for the true craftsman. Even the sales people find

the training program lacking. They admit that much of the true training is actually done in Egypt by the maintenance men, supplied under the terms of the contract for about one year.

In any event, the training is poor, regardless of how it comes about. As a result there is an acute shortage of trained personnel. Unfortunately, the owner/managers do not recognize the true cause of the lack of skilled workmen. They are quick to blame the neighboring countries, namely Saudi Arabia. A familiar refrain is the complaint that skilled Egyptian printing craftsmen are being enticed to work in other countries by a wage scale that pays as much as L.E. 700 per month and found. One local entrepreneur emphasized the situation saying he had no takers for a superintendent's job at L.E. 400 per month.

The figures may well be inaccurate, probably highly inflated. But they do illustrate well, the serious lack of well-trained printing technicians. They also illustrate the excellent opportunities awaiting those Egyptians who would seek a career in the printing craft.

#### Supervisory and Managerial Personnel

A recitation of all the textbook theories on supervision and management is easily found in the Egyptian printing industry but examples of its practice are not in evidence.

In most printing plants there is the printing manager and, depending upon the enlightenment of this manager, one may find a nucleus of supervisors. However, there are far too few supervisors under any circumstances. Most of the smaller plants, 30 - 60 employees, are managed by a manager/supervisor. One of the larger plants visited, maybe 150 - 200 employees, was operating in a similar manner; one man manager/supervisor.

If the Egyptian printing plant does have supervisors, the supervising is mainly time and attendance keeping, rather than production scheduling, quality control, supply maintenance and unit leadership which would be anticipated.

Perhaps someday when there are standards for the individual artisan --- pressman, cameraman, compositor, etc., the second level supervisors may be developed as an integral part of the management system. But until there is a solid base of craftsmen, the lack of competent supervisors will hamper the Egyptian printing industry.

#### Refinement of Techniques ---

Almost anyone who understands the theory of photography can be a cameraman in the printing industry and eventually produce negatives for offset plate making or letterpress clichés. But there is no guarantee that the ex-portrait photographer will produce commercial, or industrial negatives of good quality. This same truism is applicable to segments of the art of printing --- a good mechanic to a pressman, linotype operator, or mechanical maintenance man.

How does the cameraman or pressman enter the craftsman category? First by years of experience, of course. But as part of this experience there must be a refinement of his techniques. The cameraman must acquire the skill to make the slight adjustments in his techniques which will produce the best negatives from the original photograph or line work. In the same vein, the pressman must be able to glance at the plate prepared for the "run" and immediately begin to adjust his machine and ink accordingly, before the first sheet of paper is run through the press.

It is the additional skills, called the refinements of technique which are so important to the quality and the production in the printing industry.

Such refinements not only come from training, but also from the interaction of individuals who are active in the craft; the exchange of ideas and the results of experiments which eventually lead to an improvement of the end-product. Unfortunately, this refinement process has yet to come to Egypt and until the desire and demand for quality is apparent it is doubtful if the printing in Egypt will move smartly into a good printing category.

Probably the most glaring example of the need for refinement can be seen in the half-tone work. Some are reasonably good but most are poor and many times unacceptable. Surely part of the problem originates with the original photograph. The original illustration is obviously not selected with one eye on the end quality of the reproduction and the other on the photo-content. So the poor half-tones in Egypt have their beginning with the photo-editor who first makes a poor selection and then compounds the problem by not sending a good print to be reproduced. There are prints for reproduction purposes just as there are art prints, soft-portrait prints, etc. So the refinement process begins with the photographic process used in producing the print.

Let's assume for purposes of further illustration, that the photo-editor does send the perfect print to the offset camera man. If the camera man can't look at the print and decide immediately as to the slight adjustments he will make in the angle of his arc lights, the camera aperture, exposure time, and arc light time, he has not refined his technique.

Most of the half-tones observed in Egypt are grey, lacking highlights and tonal gradations. These shortcomings are symptomatic of craftsmen who have not refined their techniques.

But aside from reasons "why", it is obvious that the printing craftsmen in Egypt must begin to refine their techniques. The answer may lie in guilds or it may lie in short night courses, but the lack of refinement is hampering the industry.

### Standards ---

The lack of standards in the printing industry is appalling. It might be expected that the buyer of printing would have a measure or standard for good printing which would be at variance with that of the producer. But to find a standard for printing mainly based upon the lowest level of customer acceptance and

a "what can I get away with attitude" on the part of the printer practically precludes the possibility of obtaining or producing quality printing.

The lack of a standard begins with the technician. In Egypt the technician is first pleased by a job or task completed. There is little or no thought to the quality and probably if the work produced does not warrant a complaint about its lateness, the worker feels as though he has done his job well. At each step in the printing process, this same attitude seems to prevail so that the end product is the result of a series of indifferent work performances producing an overall poor product.

Even worse, this poor product is found acceptable by most buyers of printing. Apparently because of a lack of competitiveness for business within the industry, the buyers are conditioned to accept almost any quality in its printing. It must be that the buyer is so relieved to have found a printer to take his work, and better yet, a printer who has completed the work that the buyer will accept the quality presented. Worse yet, the buyer will pay a bill which probably, judged in the terms of the end product, is many times the true worth!

It would seem then that the lag in the printing industry in Egypt has produced a "sellers" market. That within the confines of a sellers market, the printers have thrown all thoughts of standards to the winds and are producing only to fill the need not to create a quality standard for their shop or the whole trade.

Naturally, the return to a competitive market will change much of the present philosophy. But it will take time for this competitive force to change the philosophy of the worker. For it is ultimately the individual worker who must have a standard if the industry is to have standards.

So much for the analysis of factors which are of long range. While it is true that the foregoing short analysis have been concerned with factors considered pivotal to good printing in

Egypt, there are other short range factors which can be cumulative, equally as pivotal. A quick note of these lesser but equally important factors follows.

#### Government Regulations and Posture Toward The Printing Industry

While the government appears to be assisting the industry when it releases hard-currency for the purchase of new printing equipment, beneath this apparent benevolence lies a sinister understanding which is almost crippling to the industry. While no written agreements were seen, it appears that entrepreneurs/managers (government, public or private) who have been allotted hard currency have in exchange pledged to return a like amount to the public exchange from export earnings. Obviously only the government and public sector presses can be strictly held to such an agreement and perhaps the private presses to a lesser extent. But aside from a discussion of control, the agreement will most certainly assure the Egyptian government of a substantial flow of hard currency from export earnings. But unfortunately, the policy is also reducing the printing capacity available for the Egyptian market.

#### Allocations and Taxes

Many of the supplies basic to industries related to printing are under an allocation system, controlled by the government. For example the Rakta Paper Company, government sector, is allowed only 20% of its needs for chlorine. This shortage results in off color paper which is often rejected for the whiter imported paper.

A. The local ink manufacturers (public sector) are not getting all the ingredients they need. There is an insufficiency of carbon black, cobalt blue and sienna. Such shortages result in dull, fast-fading ink and, of course, a preference for imported ink.

B. The import tax on commercial film used in the printing industry is in itself almost prohibitive - 150% ad valorem.

Given the exorbitant tax, the printers must cut corners. Many line work positives for offset platemaking are merely proofs taken on tracing paper. These tracing paper positives are directly burned onto the plate. The process works but the quality suffers. Returning to the camera man half-tone illustration for a moment. Obviously, there cannot be many retakes made which might improve the quality of a half-tone.

C. Many printing plants are wired so that they can obtain their power requirements from two different grids. Some even have a third grid. But despite ingenuity demonstrated, most printing plants are down because of a lack of power for some portion of every day. Of course, not only is the total lack of power a hampering factor, the fluctuation in voltage is equally as crippling. Can you imagine trying to operate a press when the motor supplying the power is vascillating in speed from 2800 rpms to 3200? Or worse, trying to make a color separation when the arc lights are not producing a steady candle-power rating? Truly, the technicians in a developed country would throw up their hands and leave until the situation was corrected. The technician here, of course, has to make do producing as best he can.

There are probably many less obvious factors which could be cited. However, the foregoing are sufficient to indicate that the government is not making any special concessions to the printing industry. It may well be that the government is crippling the industry in terms of long range improvement.

Availability and Quality of Material and Supplies Required by the Printing Industry.

Metal The metal used in the type and line-casting machines as well as that used in clich'e or blockmaking is extremely soft and thus lacking in durability. It is doubtful if there is any tin or antimony in the metal much less the proper percentage. However, there is a supply pf "printer's metal" available but the lack of quality certainly hampers the industry. Copper sheets for clich'e's is almost an unknown material in Egypt.

Ink A foregoing discussion in the government allocations sections suffices. It need only be noted that there are sufficient supplies of imported ink available so that no plant is forced to resort to the inferior, locally manufactured inks.

Film and Photographic Paper Again a foregoing discussion covered the subject. It should be noted however, the chemicals that are needed to develop the film and paper are also all imported. There appears to be a sufficiency. There is a fledgling film manufacturing industry but it has not developed into the commercial film field.

Chemicals and Adhesives In addition to the chemicals needed in the crafts dealing with photographic material, there are chemicals needed in other sectors of the printing industry. Most are imported and are available without difficulty, but where they are locally manufactured, allocation becomes a problem. Surprisingly, many of the binderies are still using adhesives made from animal by-products even though the more popular, better and faster drying casein (Elmer's Glue) is available. The casein adhesive is manufactured in Egypt. Perhaps, as the bindery techniques are refined, the use of casein adhesive will become standard.

Bindery Cloth There is little hard-back binding in Egypt which uses cloth, either on the spine of a book or on the case or cover. Paper or leather is generally substituted for the cover. Hand-sewing of the signature is the general rule. However, there are some fine automatic sewing machines in Egypt but it is doubtful if the cloth applicator part of the machines has ever been used. Another process skipped, probably as a cost-cutting device.

A final note: The cardboard (heavy cardboard) used in the hard-bound books is produced in Egypt and it warps when dampened with adhesive. Evidently a quality, non-warping board is not available.

Paper There are two main sources of printing paper in Egypt; the Rakta Paper Mill in Alexandria and the imported

paper market. (The Egyptian El National Paper Mill is not considered in this discussion. It is said to manufacture only light poster paper and a manifold suitable for multiple copies.)

All the printers in Egypt seem to prefer imported paper. This is true of the government and public sector presses as well. The lack of quality and press runability were cited for reasons. This preference is substantiated by the fact that during the visits to many printing plants, it was almost an impossibility to find a press running Egyptian paper.

According to one self-styled government spokesman for the Egyptian paper manufacturers, the in-country mills are supposed to supply 45,000 long tons of paper against the estimated annual national needs of about 80,000 long tons. Thus, the necessity to import 35,000 long tons per annum becomes an important annual budget consideration. Using the approximate world price for newsprint, \$340 per long ton for calculation purposes --- a price which represents the lowest grade printing paper --- it would seem that the GOE anticipates spending about \$12 million in hard currency for imported paper each year. Considering the amount of offset paper being used the \$12 million estimate might well be as much as \$15 million.

A few observations on both the imported and Egyptian paper follows.

Imported Paper In February 1978, the main source for imported printing paper were Austria and Rumania with some paper being imported from East Germany and Japan. The bulk of the paper was white. The only color was in Bristols and manifolds.

All the paper available in the market was in sheets, the roll needs being met by the individual plants whose presses require a certain size rolls.

The most popular sheet size is 70 x 100 cm. There were some sheets available in sizes 57 x 82 cm. and 60 x 90 cm. but hardly enough to create a market. The 60 gram basis is the most popular weight; 80 and 100 gram weights were available.

The Egyptian paper market prices seem to reflect the world market prices, with fluctuations over a 90 day period of about 10-15%. On the day of the visit, Austrian 60 gram, 70x100cm. white offset was being offered at L.E. 10.5 per ream. The lesser quality Rumanian paper, same weight and size, was offered at L. E. 9.5 per ream. These prices reflect a 70 piasters to \$1.00 U.S. exchange rate and a 17% ad valorem import tax. The tax rate varies according to the paper, The 17% rate applies to printing paper normally used for books. Other paper, such as that used in packaging fancy chocolates, is taxed at a 35% rate. The locally manufactured Rakta offset, same size and weight, was offered at L.E. 8 per ream.

The government paper warehouse under the Ministry of Supply is also in the paper market. While importing in accordance with the demands of the government printing plants, the Ministry of Supply increases most orders for a basic stock by a percentage (10-15%) and thus has a supply available for sale at a profit to the private or public sector; profit enough to pay shipping costs. The government price for paper does not fluctuate.

Storage conditions in the market, public and private, are deplorable. To see paper standing in the open is not uncommon. Broken reams stacked any way but neatly is the order of the day. Mechanical paper handling equipment has yet to come to the dirt floored warehouses so there is considerable damage when the 200 to 300 pound bales of paper are handled.

#### Egyptian Paper

The many complaints of the printers about the Egyptian manufactured papers seem well-founded. But it must also be said that the Rakta Mill is producing a fair sheet of paper when the circumstances surrounding the production are understood and considered.

A cursory examination of the Rakta paper, visual and touch only, indicates the below listed characteristics:

- poor tensile strength
- low moisture content - almost brittle. (Moisture loss probably due to poor packaging and storage)
- good opacity
- low percentage of wood pulp. Poorly mixed and distributed filler to make up the shortage of pulp and to add body.
- poor whiteness --- almost a light buff color which would indicate insufficient bleaching.
- a soft finish
- the finish on one side did not match the finish on the other, a normal phenomenon but in this case far too different to be acceptable.

A more definitive analysis would have to be obtained from laboratory tests to support the observation. The quick analysis would appear to be sufficient to support the contention of the printers.

Unfortunately, one can not leave the locally produced paper with just those simple observations. There are other complaints and faults which were substantiated by observations. One of the most obvious was the packaging. The reams are poorly wrapped and not completely sealed. The sheets are not "jogged" before packing so that the ream when opened will present an even, smooth side. The reason for not jogging is obvious when almost any sheet is folded. The paper is not cut squarely. Variations of as much as one-quarter inch were observed. Many printers say they are forced to take as much as a one-half inch trim all around the Rakta ream in order to get "registration for the run."

Other letterpress printers complained about the thickness of the paper, claiming it varied not only between sheets but also within the sheet itself. Without a sensitive caliper it is impossible to substantiate the complaint. Evidence was presented in the form of a series of sheets on which the printing varied from that which was heavily embossed to those samples lightly inked. The same variations appeared within individual sheets. Although such evidence is convincing, only a measure-

ment will indicate the true variation. Sheets run on a press with worn bearings on the platen roller with considerable wear on the slide bed could produce similar evidence.

To avoid a lengthy subjective discussion the obvious is accepted; Rakta paper is not suitable for any quality printing. Perhaps some day Rakta will produce a good sheet but the present output leaves too much to be desired.

Special batches of paper for a specific project? It might be possible if sufficient wood pulp and chemicals were imported for the batch. However, the admitted shortage of trained personnel, only one fully trained and qualified paper maker and a bright apprentice who is coming along, might well negate the extra effort at least at Rakta.

Rakta operates four paper making machines, three producing offset paper and a fourth turning out board. Almost 70% of the mill's production is in some form of offset paper. The paper is based on a low percentage of imported wood pulp and a high percentage of benghase and rice straw. The benghase content is very evident; the obvious brown spots that pepper each sheet.

The mill management also talked of poor maintenance because of a lack of technicians. The poor, unpolished condition of the calendar rollers attested to that fact.

All the foregoing shortcomings in the paper were substantiated by the visit. Many more were perceived. All of which added up to an obvious conclusion: Egypt cannot produce quality paper until it has well-trained operators. Also it is obvious that the paper industry (government) will not keep trained employees until the wage rate --- L.E. 35 - 40 per month --- is raised to at least L.E. 100.

#### OTHER RELATED FACILITIES

- A. There is at least one facility that can regrain offset plates. Some of the plants do their own grinding and regraining.
- B. The blades on the guillotine cutters were sharp and showed surprisingly little metal loss in the sharpening process. There is someone who can sharpen cutter blades.

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C. Businesses which would specialize in offset platemaking, color separations, or certain bindery functions, or typesetting have not yet appeared in the Egyptian printing industry.

## A BRIEF GUIDE TO ORDERING PRINTING IN EGYPT

February, 1978

The foregoing analyses and comments, while presenting capsule assessments of specific skill areas, do little to answer questions normally posed by those uninitiated in the art of printing. Therefore in the following paragraphs, an attempt will be made to present questions and short answers to problems. Hopefully such an approach will be helpful to the casual reader who may be charged with obtaining printing in Egypt.

1. What about simple, single color work forms, single sheets with one or two folds, pads, letterheads, etc.?

Yes, good single color work can be obtained in Egypt. Stay with line work, imported paper and ink and the results should be good. Much will depend upon the printer. Always choose the better equipped plant. (Note: If the letterpress method is used, remember that the local clichés are not of the best quality. Any run beyond 500 or so copies will begin to lose quality in the area of the cliché.

2. What about color printing?

Good line color printing is possible. The best results will come from offset printing. Again the quality of paper and ink will have much influence on the quality of the end-product.

The results in color process (colors overprinted for shades) printing is very unpredictable and perhaps should not be attempted.

If it must be done, use only offset printing. Then insist that the process work be printed separately from any other colors which might be called for in the job. There is a difference in inks used for process work and those used for line work.

3. Can books be printed in Egypt?

Yes, and quite well. A quick summary of the process involved follows.

(a) Composition: The new photo-composing machines with both an English and Arabic capability are just coming on line. In about six months they should be in full production, eliminating many of the composition problems formerly encountered. Close supervision will be required for work in English. Arabic should go smoothly and should be trouble free.

(b) Presswork: Plenty of good, high-speed presses on the offset side but anticipate slow production. Book printing has historically been low priority work because of the small profit margin. The scheduling of the work will frustrate if on time delivery is an important factor.

(c) Bindery: Despite the new equipment and movement toward improved methods, it is still a slow process in Egypt. But good binding for soft-cover books is available. Use the mechanized printer if there is a choice.

(d) Other Suggestions: Stay away from color and half-tone work and other complicated production if time is a consideration. Checking and re-checking the work as it progresses through the plant is an important factor in the production of a worthwhile end product. Contracting under the bid procedure is predicted to be difficult, if not impossible. Undoubtedly almost all work will be under negotiated terms. Printing is operating in a sellers market. Under such conditions it becomes axiomatic that the job with a good profit margin will receive priority treatment in the areas of quality and scheduling. Plenty of time and money are involved in obtaining good printing in Egypt.

4. Fancy printing? Don't look for it in Egypt for several years. There is neither the technical ability nor the machines to produce the fancy candy bar wrapper, cigar band and similar printing. The Stella beer label is a good example of the state of the art in these very specialized areas of printing. Straight line printing, uncomplicated by fancy inks, embossing, die-cutting and glueing is the order of the day. It is likely to remain so for several years.
5. Some Words of Caution!
  - a. Any good printing will be expensive.
  - b. Good printing will take an inordinant amount of time.
  - c. Seek the largest and best equipped printer.
  - d. The best printing will be done by the photo-offset method. The smallest run considered economical by this method is 5,000. (Note: the small 5 x 8" form or similar work would be "ganged" on a large sheet, thus reducing the 5,000 copy order to only a 325 sheet run. Hence, offset is an uneconomical method of printing. Because AUC has some small presses the comment is not necessarily applicable to its press.)
  - e. Do not force a printer to take a job. His disinterest will be apparant in the end product.
  - f. If there is a choice between printers and assuming quality of work can be equated, always choose the printer where the forces of friendships or political considerations can be brought to bear if problems develop.

#### Epilogue

The preceding paragraphs have assured that some good printing can be obtained in Egypt. In addition, there have been cautions raised and limitations placed

Epilogue - continued

on the type of printing to be ordered in Egypt.

Lest these words be accepted as absolute dogma, let it be noted again that the state of the art is improving and that the occasional miracle also occurs in printing. However, any practising printing technician and any observant citizen would certainly agree that the Egyptian printing industry is still a long way from being a serious competitor for the printing of the Pan-Am or BOAC calendar, and that any attempt to stretch the present level of capability would probably only produce a disaster not the miracle.

All the best equipment is presently with the printing plants that are in the public sector. To get any one of them to cooperate with a mission effort is predicted to be a difficult task. Certainly competitive bidding will not be a part of the scheme.

Therefore, on any individual project the mission might find itself relying on printing plants in the public sector. Do not dismay because the best printing craftsmen in Egypt are in the private sector.

If the private sector must be used, there are a few plants with new equipment that are recommended for utilization. (See the Observations Section for suggestions).

BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS AND ASSESSMENTS OF PRINTING FACILITIES VISITED

(Presentation is in the order in which the visits were made and in no way is indicative of importance, capacity or ranking.)

Al Geil Printing House  
14, Kasr El Louklouka

A private sector enterprise that was devoting almost all of its capacity (probably 80-90%) to books at the time of the visit. Presently is operating mainly as a letterpress plant but has just installed a new offset press.

EQUIPMENT

Composition:

Two old line-casting machines - - - English and Arabic. Doing some hand composition - - - text and heads. One monotype set-up.

Presses:

Two old automatic feed flat bed presses - could handle a 16 page signature. Two old, small automatic feed presses. (both can handle book covers). One new 71 x 102 cm. single color, automatic feed Heidelberg offset press - running line work at about 2200 impressions per hour.

Bindery Machines:

One new 4-stop automatic Mohr power cutter (est. 45 - 48" bed).  
One automatic feed, power folder (five folds). Can handle 16 page signatures to page size 8 x 10".

Associated Equipment:

Vacuum frame, developing sinks, masking-stripping table.  
A new 100 x 120 cm. camera with every conceivable "gadget" accessory. (Far beyond the needs of the plant)

ASSESSMENT

A small, unspecialized printing house that is over-loaded with orders. A low level managerial skill with only four reasonably well trained employees - - all others are merely "helpers"; perhaps 20 - 30. The owner/manager is the superintendent with the help

## Descriptions - 2

of a pleasant, but not too knowledgeable gentleman.

The shop has no production schedule and is responsive only to those who cajole for the completion of their work and to those jobs with a high profit margin. The place is admittedly deeply in debt as a result of recent purchases. The owner/manager has no idea of costs, etc. and probably handles everything out of his pocket with records on the back of an envelope.

Any work done here, particularly books, would require almost daily personal inspections and even then the quality might not be acceptable and the delivery schedule unmet. A signature in a book for FOA was being reprinted the day of the visit - - - poor inking and too many fingerprints.

Dar el alam el Arabi Printing House  
23 Daher Street

A private sector plant, descriptive of the term medium sized. It can handle both letterpress and offset work. At the time of the observations there were several books in process. A cigarette (3 color) package was being run on one of the offset presses and two other run of the mill commercial jobs were observed - a pamphlet (3 color) and some sort of form. Estimate that 60% of the plant capacity was devoted to books at the time visited.

### EQUIPMENT

Composition:

Three line casting machines - English and Arabic.

One Harris Foto-Set -- text and heads -- English and Arabic.

Some hand composition -- English and Arabic. Mainly English insert words and English and Arabic heads. No book texts.

Presses:

Two automatic feed Heidelberg Offset Presses about 25 years old and 71 x 102 cm. size.

## Descriptions - 3

### Presses (continued)

One three section web offset computer paper printing press. Also has a three section carbon inserter which is not operable. (A highly specialized printing set-up and not easily adapted to other work.)

One small 11 x 14 automatic feed letterpress suitable for book cover work.

Four old hand feed flat-bed letterpresses.

### Bindery Machines:

One new 4 stop automatic Mohr power cutter (est. 45-48" bed size).

One new automatic feed, power folder (five folds). Can handle 16 page signatures to page size 8 x 10".

Two old power cutters - no stops (est. 36-40" bed).

### Associated Equipment:

Complete dark room for line work, vacuum frame and stripping make-up table.

### ASSESSMENT

The owner/manager has spent some time in the U.S., perhaps as a student. He was not associated with graphic arts when in the U.S. As a result of his visit he seems to be aware of some managerial terms, time and motion studies, cost factoring, for example. Unfortunately there is little application of this knowledge in his plant.

However, one spark of management skill is signalled by the presence of a time clock at the entrance. The clock is used for time and attendance only and then about 15 of the labor force of 50 - 60 is "on the clock". The work force seems to be built around a nucleus of 4-5 trusted employees of whom 2-3 appear to have some experience and/or training in the printing trade. The owner, an engineer (undoubtedly mechanical) who is not only the floor superintendent but also the repairman, erector and chief operator of the Harris Foto-Set.

This plant could be a good production facility and may well be someday. The manager/owner talked of new presses and new related equipment which was on order. Equipment such as half-tone screens

Descriptions - 4

and color separation filters were mentioned. If and when this equipment arrives, the plant will truly warrant the medium sized label and its capacity could approach the significant level.

As presently constituted the plant could be used for book printing -- Arabic and English. Not much supervision by the contracting officer would be required. Composition might be a problem particularly in the area of "proofing".

If this printer is used it is recommended that he be supplied with positives, negatives or proofs, that the composition be done elsewhere. There should not be a problem with the platemaking, the press run or the binding. Delivery could be expected within a reasonable time, providing the profit margin was attractive.

This plant has more business than it can handle. The owner/manager freely admits that he delivers best (quality and speed) when the job pays well and promptly.

American University Press  
113, Kasr El Aini Street

A tiny offset facility that was visited mainly out of courtesy, but partially to be responsive to a letter the mission received from Dr. John Rodenbach of AUC. The rumor Dr. Rodenbach had heard about the U.S. mission bringing in a giant printing facility was put to rest and while there, the printing facilities were inspected.

EQUIPMENT

Composition:

No text composition capability. Uses outside sources for composition or makes do with unjustified typewritten pages.

Heads (English only) are composed on an out-of-date Photo-Headliner machine.

Presses:

Only one double-size (14 x 17) Multilith Offset Press.

Bindery:

One 14 x 17", three fold folder; office type.

One power cutter, 42" bed. (The cutter was a gift from the U.S. Mission in 1967 when it disbanded its printing facilities. It is assumed that other pieces of equipment observed were acquired similarly.)

One power wire-stitcher.

Associated Equipment:

A small camera and vacuum frame. The plant uses sensitized aluminum plates.

ASSESSMENT

The AUC facility scarcely fits into the printing plant classification and probably is ignored by most would-be customers. In the U.S. it would be termed the office reproduction center of the university.

The "Press" as it is called at AUC has produced some books, most notably the AUC Guide Book. The reprinting of the Guide Book keeps this tiny facility busy almost year round with only short interruptions for urgent AUC printing.

Without a greater press capacity --- mainly a large press (the present press can only accommodate four pages at a time, an eight page signature), and a composition capability, the AUC press is not a possible source for any book publishing undertaking. Some short run office forms, yes, but nothing else. The AUC press is an office reproduction set-up and should be considered as such.

It is true they do publish other books. The most recent book issued from that press was in English and was printed in Malta, not on AUC facilities.

Government of Egypt Book Organization (GEBO)  
(Offset Division Only) - Kornische el Nile

A superbly equipped plant that was in the process of "setting-up" at the time of the visit. As envisioned by the Director, its

physical assets will consist of a few fairly new pieces of offset equipment from the former combination offset letter press plant plus many new pieces of the latest design. The division of the offset equipment from the letterpress facility is the result of an internal reorganization --- within the last couple of years in the Ministry of Culture.

When the plant was visited only four of seven presses were operating, the main activity occupying almost everyone's attention was the erection of a new web offset press. Little or no on-line production was evident. This lack of true production activity was also evident in the photo-composing rooms and the stripping and platemaking areas, as well as in the camera department and the bindery.

The equipment observed and the work flow plan were a delight to see. Overall there is ample evidence that someday this facility could be a high speed, quality production offset plant. However, one important element of such a plant was not in evidence. The total lack of an experienced, well-trained work force was all too apparent. Perhaps the true backbone of the work force was still at the old letterpress plant, toiling with the old, less productive equipment.

The Director claimed the in-house training program was producing workmen of sufficient skill, but the work habits and self-discipline of a good journeyman were not evident. The wage rate of L.E. 35 - 40 per month will never attract the good, experienced worker who can easily command L.E. 100 - 150 in the private sector.

#### EQUIPMENT

##### Composition:

Text only, Monotype photo-composition, five keyboards, one cathode ray display screen and one tape processing machine. Either bromides or positives can be produced - English and Arabic typefaces. (The crew was punching tape but there was no activity at the CRT or processing unit. There is a question as to whether these units were operable.) No other composing equipment or plans for it was apparent.

Descriptions - 7

Presses:

Three 71 x 102 cm. single color, automatic feed Invectas.  
Two 58 x 84 cm. single color, automatic feed Invectas.  
One 71 x 102 cm. two-color, automatic feed offset press (not operable).  
One beautiful 60 - 70 cm. press being erected. Two single color units, one two-color unit feeding to the center where there is a cutter and a four fold folder.

Bindery:

One new, four stop automatic guillotine cutter, 75 - 80 cm. bed. (not operable).  
One new 72 cm. automatic feed, four fold folder (not operable).  
The Director told of plans to move three folders from the letterpress plant and to eventually do all the GEBO bindery work in the offset plant. He also talked of an automatic soft-cover book binding unit that is on order. The unit he referred to folds, collates, glues, trims three sides and presents finished books ready for packaging at the specified rate of 40 books per minute.

Associated Equipment:

Two commercial cameras, both equipped with at least a 30 x 30" ground glass, perhaps a 48 x 48" on one. (The Director said that eventually all the cliches for the letterpress division would be made in this department).

Five large stripping and make-ready tables.

Ten to twelve opaquing and touch-up tables.

Three large plate sensitizers. (The Director said that eventually all the cliches for the letter press division would be made in this department.)

Five large stripping and make-ready tables.

Ten to twelve opaquing and touch-up tables.

Three large plate sensitizers. (The Director hopes eventually to go to pre-sensitized plates.)

Two overheard light-plate frames.

(Note: The equipment in this area appears to far exceed requirements for any present or planned needs.)

ASSESSMENT

A well equipped plant by any standard which should be producing a goodly percentage of the book needs of Egypt some day. Unfortunately, there are overtones of a propensity to print the beautiful, four color process work rather than the uninspired, grey, inexpensive textbooks claimed to be so desperately needed in Egypt.

According to others in the trade, much of GEBO's output today is produced for neighboring countries. (The Director stated that 50% of GEBO's capacity was reserved for the government needs and the remainder for profitable private sector requirements.) He also noted that he was earning hard currency foreign exchange with that 50% production capacity.

Both USIS and AUC have attempted to have books printed at GEBO but with absolutely no success. AUC claims to have had a book under print there for almost four years. The USIS contract is now approaching two years with the first copy yet to appear. These experiences plus the Director's boast of earning foreign exchange, plus the evidence of new equipment seems to give credence to the rumor that GEBO prints for the Arab world, not Egypt.

The GEBO (offset division) plant is equipped to produce 40 - 50 book titles ( 3 - 5,000 copy run) when fully operational. However, despite the large capacity, there appears to be precious little inclination to undertake the long and large production runs required to solve the needs for textbooks. There is much lip service given to the "needs of the poor students" but very little press time is actually allotted.

RECOMMENDATION:

The use of this facility should be most judicious and with the full realization that its first loyalty is to the Egyptian government, not its commercial customers. Any foolish optimism which would anticipate quality work completed on schedule should be avoided.

Recommendation - continued

Any bidding procedure will be a farce in that the government has set prices for almost all kinds of printing. Furthermore, GEBO like all the other good printing plants, has too many would be customers beating on its door who are more concerned about delivery than price.

In addition, the lack of sufficient journeymen and those with managerial and supervisory skill almost precludes quality production and on time deliveries. Even close contract supervision will not help this situation.

The temptation to use GEBO is great but it is fraught with obvious shortcomings and an operating philosophy which is a combination of personal vanity and government posture.

Taawun Newspapers - (New Offset Division Only)

Maadi Plant

Here is an enterprise (public sector) that is still "in the air" in that giant stride from letterpress printing as practised in the late 1940's to the modern, electronic offset printing of the 1970's. No easy stride but yet here is another newly equipped plant getting into production amidst wet concrete, reinforcing rod, still crated equipment, foreign erectors and hundreds of shouting unskilled workmen.

The offset division was limping along -- four presses running the day of the visit. But the potential is there for high-speed quality production.

EQUIPMENT

Composition:

A completely equipped photo-type setting department. (Brand name not noted but of German manufacture.)

Five Arabic keyboard tape punchers.

Six (CRTs) correcting screens.

Two tape processing units (bromides, negatives or positives)

In terms of book production, mainly text, this unit could be expected

## Descriptions - 10

### Composition - continued

to produce about one uncorrected average sized book (200 - 225 pages at 400 words per page) per shift. The plant plans to have two shifts and to set their large run (25,000 copies) periodicals, probably only three, in this department too. The composition capacity is excellent.

Presses: (Offset Only)

One 72 x 104 cm. 2 color Miller

Three 72 x 104 cm. 1 color Millers

Three single color web offset presses - 4 units to each press. In terms of book production these units each could be expected to produce two 32 page signatures at the rate of 10,000 per hour. In other words, a medium-sized book that was set in one shift in the composing room could be printed in quantities of 10,000 copies in little over an hour on the web presses.

Bindery:

Not observed.

Other Equipment:

Large horizontal camera yet to be installed.

Two overhead plate makers.

Countless make-ready, retouching/opaquing tables.

Two darkrooms complete with almost every gadget and aid --perhaps more capacity than the plant will ever need.

### ASSESSMENT

Perhaps the finest and most generously equipped offset plant to be seen in Cairo. The plant plans to print books for the Ministry of Education and if only 50% of the capacity is used, about 200 - 250 titles can be expected annually. This rate will not be reached this year, but perhaps in 18 - 24 months.

Financing has been a problem for this public sector enterprise. Some arrangement between the public sector of Taawun newspapers and the Ministry of Education has provided some of the financing for the new equipment. In addition, there is reason to believe that there is some short term paper being held in West Germany either by the government, the banks or a combination of the latter two.

RECOMMENDATION

With the equipment described above available, there should be no concern about textbook printing and publishing for Egypt over the years ahead. However, there are many pitfalls between eventual full capacity and the fledgling plant observed. Some of the problems which must be overcome are: Lack of trained personnel. While all the equipment has a follow-on training and maintenance clause, the success of these programs has yet to be demonstrated. Can illiterates trained as pressman get the best out of the equipment? Can a similar illiterate maintain the machine? Will the enterprise be satisfied to print for the needs of Egypt or will they succumb to the attraction of the hard currency offered for a large selection of books for sale to OPEC?

Will the desire to do high quality printing tend to sublimate the need for textbooks? Already this plant is trying to contact Readers Digest so as to make an arrangement to print an Arabic edition here in Cairo.

Here is a well-equipped shop, set up mainly for big (20,000 minimum) press runs. It has yet to prove itself in operation but the potential is there and given 18 months it should have an impact on the local printing scene.

Dar El Maaref

1109 Korniche El Nil

An excellent public sector plant that prints a fine 74 page (with cover) 4 color weekly magazine; 150,000 copies. At the time of the visit, the plant had just completed the magazine 36 hours earlier so the shift crew was light and production rather low key. The typical let-down of a plant publishing periodicals.

The management estimated that 80% of their production was in books. Perhaps a 60% figure would be more accurate if the records of the business were to be scrutinized.

The finished printing work inspected was excellent but one could quarrel with the procedures and methods of various points along the

production line. Also certain additional pieces of equipment would refine the work. The Director was well aware of the need and plans are afoot to fill the equipment gap. The top managers are apparently good planners and well aware of the newest and latest equipment. It is also probably true that any rate structure for periodical advertising and prices for printing jobs are based on what the traffic will bear and what the competition is quoting, rather than any idea of basic costs.

#### EQUIPMENT

##### Composing:

Seven Monotype keyboards - Arabic and English.

Three Monotype Casters.

A complete Monotype photo-composing set-up consisting of: Nine Arabic keyboards, three English keyboards, two correcting units with CRTs, and two processing units -- bromides, negatives or positives. Also included are two developing units and a small headline unit. This photo-composing set-up is used for the magazine and books. There are no line-casting machines.

##### Presses:

One web Heidelberg Offset press (60 cm. est.) 4 units with a two fold folder attached. Used mainly for the 4 color work in the magazine.

Two web Alfredo offset presses (72 cm. est.) - 4 units with 4 fold folders attached. (Used mainly for book production).

Two 2-color automatic sheet feed (72 x 104 cm.) Heidelberg offset presses.

Three single color automatic sheet feed offset presses (1-72 x 104 cm. and 2 62 x 94 cm. est).

Two older sheet feed flat bed letterpresses. Sufficient in size to handle 16 book pages.

Two 12 x 15" automatic sheet feed Heidelberg offsets - suitable for book covers.

##### Bindery:

Here is the first modern, automatic bindery observed. Supposedly there are several like it in Cairo.

Bindery continued:

At least three - 4 stop Mohr guillotine cutters. An automatic signature collating sewing, gluing and three-side trimming bookbinding machine. (Actually there are two of these machines, one slightly newer and more automated than the other.)

Two automatic back stitching cloth pasting machines.

At least four wire stitchers.

An 8 station collating, stitching and trimming machine for the magazine. Possibly other equipment which was not observed.

Other Equipment:

There are several well equipped make-ready, stripping and retouch areas. Surprisingly there is only one vacuum frame for plate exposures. The plant does some fair to middling color processing on a rather ancient Klimsch camera. The half-tones lack good definition, gradation and sufficient highlights. Of course the choice of the photograph to be reproduced and the development of the photograph for reproduction would have an affect in the areas noted as weak. The originals were not available so the true cause of rather poor quality cannot be truly judged. The management hopes to replace much of the equipment in the camera and platemaking area.

#### ASSESSMENT

Additional proof is evident here that the printing and publishing equipment needed to handle the printing requirements of Egypt is in the country or at least enroute. Also there are many examples demonstrating the need for better trained workers and supervisors.

It was noted that all the machines in operations (particularly the presses) were "loafing": running at speeds 1,000 to 1,500 iph below the rated optimum speed. The level of employee knowledge and expertise observed was considerably higher than that noted in other plants. However, there was just too much adjusting going on after the approval to run to put the pressmen in the expert category.

Furthermore, the Director who conducted the tour appeared to be the approval agent for every operation. The floor or area super-

Assesement - continued

visors common in the U.S. management scheme are not being used in Egypt. The Director was judged to be a good manager but whether he had the expertise to supervise in all areas of this sophisticated equipment was doubtful.

The Director was perhaps overly concerned with quality and naturally the same was true of the employees. But, because of starts and stops for approval and the tendency to "loaf" the machines plus an inclination to make the hand work last, the production level was far below which might be expected. There is a crying need for better managerial techniques in this plant as it is in almost all the presses visited.

RECOMMENDATION

This plant can do books and periodicals well with a fair modicum of speed. This statement is applicable to both English and Arabic requirements. Undoubtedly, any printing work contracted for here would be well done and with a concern for both quality and the completion date. However, the Director General indicated that they had a sufficiency of order back-logged, and there was no need for them to compete in a bidding situation.

It is assumed that the normal U.S. government procedures involving bidding would not work at this plant. Whatever printing would be done here would be on negotiated terms. Furthermore, even under those terms the work would probably be accepted only if there were other considerations --- politics, friendships, etc.

It was obvious that the U.S. Mission to Egypt is not considered a big printing customer. It was seen mainly as source for soft loans. Dar El Maaref wants to get in line for a loan for equipment it needs in its darkrooms. The plant would probably accept mission work, but then only if it felt such acceptance would enhance the chance of a loan.

(Note: There are several fine plants like this in Cairo --- Al Ahram, Rosa El Youssef, Al Akhbar, etc. Not all were visited.)

## Descriptions - 15

### Gareib House and Bookshop

1 Kamel Sidky - Fagalla

A poorly equipped private sector book publishing letterpress plant. Despite the old and worn equipment, the work force of 30 persons, with a well-trained nucleus of 5 or 6, is turning out some excellent work. It is said that the plant produces 10 - 12 titles per month. This plant represents probably the first move toward specialization because the plant does little but books.

#### EQUIPMENT

##### Composition:

Two line-casting machines - Arabic. One machine relatively new and the other approaching museum age.

One relatively new line casting machine - English.

One monotype - Arabic.

A crew of at least eight hand compositors which would lead one to think the monotype is used only to produce the hand type and an assortment of rule, not to set book pages.

##### Presses:

Two old automatic feed 72 x 104 cm. flat bed letterpresses.

Three slightly smaller hand feed letterpresses.

One 12 x 15" automatic feed letterpress for covers.

##### Bindery:

One five fold automatic feed folder. (The folder apparently did most of the folding.)

Two ancient guillotine cutters, one power assisted.

One wire stitcher.

No other equipment noted.

#### ASSESSMENT

A fine letterpress house that is turning out some excellent work under the most deplorable conditions. There is a lack of power, almost all the equipment is old and well beyond the discard point. The plant is terribly crowded, dirty and poorly lighted.

Descriptions - 16

Assessment - continued

As for setting and printing straight text only this plant might do the job better than most.

RECOMMENDATION

USIS likes to work with this press because the owner/manager is attentive to the printing and the work gets done in a reasonable length of time. The quality is comparable to other books published, except when the bindery work is compared. The signatures are loosely glued and the cover does not fit tightly.

The press has demonstrated it can produce books and probably its composition facilities might be used for photo-offset proofs. Undoubtedly the workers would have to be shown samples of the quality of proofs desired, but after a few tries, the more or less skilled workers might produce acceptable proofs.

Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop  
near Ain Shams University.

The latest records seen of the book titles produced by individual shops had this creaking letterpress plant turning out 98 Arabic titles in 1969. A quick turn through the shop and it is obvious that there was no way that the antiquated pieces of equipment could turn out 98 titles per annum. How was it done?

Simple! The publisher is a speculator and most of his titles are textbooks. The textbooks are written, published and sold by the author who is of course, the teacher/professor of the course! Each year, the professor orders 2,000 copies of his book, many times with no change, sometimes with just a minor change or small addition. Over the years the publisher watched this annual order come in, and for years he tried to get the professor to increase his order but to no avail. The professor could not finance a larger run.

Finally, the printer took the plunge, personally bank rolling an additional 2 to 4,000 copies for next year. These so-called over-runs have nearly crowded out the equipment but it is assumed

Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop - continued

that this owner/ mgr. could produce within the hour, at least 1,000 copies of any popular textbook he has printed in the last 3 - 4 years. Of course the shop also contracts for book printing with other presses.

This plant also participates in the USIS translation program, even though it likes to bill itself as an English language book publisher.

EQUIPMENT

Composition:

One relatively new linotype machine - Arabic and English.

A hand composition facility for heads only.

Presses:

4 super-antiquated letterpresses, hand feed. Three 72 x 104 cm. and one 50 x 80 cm. that can handle only 8 book pages.

Two small platens for covers, also hand feed.

Bindery:

All folding is done by hand.

One old, guillotine cutter - hand operated.

One old wire stitcher.

No other equipment.

ASSESSMENT

Somehow the sense of a downhill slide was evident here. The bubbling plans normally found in the private sector plants was not evident here. The quality of work was good when the production conditions were taken into account.

RECOMMENDATION

While the 98 titles is, and was, a significant quantity it is doubtful if the facility can truly produce 40 - 50 titles per annum. The facilities are so poor, it is doubtful if the mission ought to go much beyond the work already allotted to it by USIS.

## RELATED INDUSTRIES

### Clicheés - Blocks - Stereotypes - Engravings

Zincographe El Ettehad

1, Rue El Mehrani - El Zaher (near the Roman Catholic Church)

Touted as the best engraver in Cairo, probably better termed a magician. Here is an excellent technician, working with equipment and a technique long relegated to the museum in other countries.

The wooden framed camera was built in the 1930's and the carbon lamps were probably one of the first experimental models. Join the leaky, creaking camera with flickering arcs with a candlepower not much greater than a 100 watt bulb and most of today's engravers elsewhere would not attempt to start. The owner/manager is not daunted however. He just takes a little more care when he sensitizes the glass plate. It's true. This plant is still using sensitized glass, plates and a poor quality of glass at that.

Zinc appears to be the only metal used because when asked about copper plates, a brass embossing plate was shown. Solid blocks of yellow pine (imported) are used for mounting, not the special plywood or metal used in other parts of the world.

Prices for line work range between 15 and 20 millimes per square centimeter, the final price depending upon the work. Half-tones are offered at two and a half piasters per square centimeter.

### EQUIPMENT

No attempt will be made to itemize the equipment in this operating museum.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Only in kindness, it might be said that this blockmaker might be used for line work. But then, only if one was satisfied with a slightly feathered line as opposed to the sharp, clean lines normally found. Of course, in a country where letterpress printing approaches an embossing technique (as opposed to the light touch used elsewhere), the feathery line would not have much affect on the quality.

Discard the thought of half-tone work from this plant. There is only a 60 line screen available and that one is of questionable quality and limited in use<sup>ful</sup> area.

If this shop is the best in Cairo then engraving is the Achilles tendon of letterpress printing in Cairo. There is no way quality letterpress printing can be produced from such poor quality blocks.

Therefore, despite the presence of a couple of "good" grade letterpress printers who have an almost "good" grade composition capability, the probability quality letterpress production requiring the use of illustrative blocks is practically nil. Any such production would be extremely risky and most probably very disappointing even with the closest supervision.

### SURVEY SOURCES

In addition to the observations of printing plants noted in preceding pages other data for this survey was gathered from individuals.

#### Unstructured interviews and conversations

Dr. Mahmoud el Sheniti

Senior Undersecretary of State of the Ministry of Culture and  
Chairman of the General Egyptian Books Organization (GEBO)

Dr. John Rodenbeck, Director of the Press  
American University in Cairo

Raouf Naaman - General Manager  
Al Wai Al Araby Bookshop

Eng. M. Mounir Khalil, Owner  
Darel alamel Arabi Printing House

Yousry Zaki, Managing Director/Owner  
Al Geil Printing House

Lucio Spadaccini, Printing Superintendent  
AUC Press

Benjamin S. Benjamin, USIS Cairo

Alfred El Said, USIS Cairo

Yehia Wahba Barsoum, Owner/Manager  
Arab Press and Publishing House

Eng. Abel El Moalim, Sales Representative (Second son of owner)  
Dar El Shorouk

Interview sources - 2

Heinrich Artmann, Assistant Sales Manager  
Miller Printing Presses - Wiesbaden, Germany

Ian R. Ventham, Area Sales Manager  
Linotype - Paul Limited

Hussein Abdel Rahman, Managing Director  
Taawun Newspapers

Yousri Said Dimitry, Manager      Offset Division  
Taawun Newspapers

A.W. Talaat Abd El Aziz, Accountant  
Taawun Newspapers

Samir Abd El Salam Soliman, Vice-President of the National Assn.  
of Private Printers - a sub-sector in the Chamber of Commerce.  
Owner/manager of a leading wrapping paper printing and sales  
organization.  
Owner/manager of an Egyptian printing ink manufacturing concern,  
Sales representative for Boehm folders.

Dr. H. Abou El Kneir, Director of Printing  
Daar El Maaref

Dr. Salib Botros, Director General  
Dar El Maaref

Dr. Sobhy Gerais, Owner/Manager  
Anglo-Egyptian Publishing House

Interview sources - 3

Mohammed El Elari, Director  
Rakta Paper Mill, Alexandria

Eng. Nader El-Baroudi, Production Director  
Rakta Paper Mill, Alexandria

Eng. Taher Bishr, Production Manager  
Moharrem Press, Alexandria

The names of four paper merchants interviewed were mislaid  
and are not available.

PUBLIC RECORDS

The UAR Book Publishing Industry

(A Master of Arts thesis by Nadia Abdel Shaheed  
for the University of Cairo --- approved in  
April, 1971.)