

EGYPT

Dates of Elections: 7 and 14 June 1979

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the popularly-chosen members of Parliament following the premature dissolution of this body on 21 April 1979. Previous general elections had been held in October-November 1976.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Egypt, the People's Assembly, has 392 members: 382 are elected, at least half of whom must be workers and farmers and 30 women*; 10 are members appointed by the President of the Republic. The Assembly has a 5-year term.

Electoral System

All citizens at least 18 years old have the right to vote (naturalized citizens obtain this right five years after naturalization). Disqualified are the insane, undischarged bankrupts, persons convicted of crime or whose property has been sequestered, persons who have been dismissed from guardianship for reasons of bad conduct or betrayal and persons who have been dismissed from employment in the Government or the public sector for dishonourable reasons.

Electoral registers are revised each year in December. Male electors are automatically registered; women, on request. Voting is compulsory for men, failure to do so resulting in a fine of one Egyptian pound.

Any candidate for election to the People's Assembly must be a qualified and registered elector who is at least 30 years old and proficient in reading and writing and who has either been enlisted in or exempted from military service. (Naturalized citizens may be candidates 10 years after naturalization.) Except in certain cases determined by the Assembly, the office of parliamentarian is incompatible with that of employee of the Government.

Every candidate must make a monetary deposit equivalent to approximately US\$29, which is reimbursed if he obtains at least 20% of the valid votes cast in his constituency.

For election purposes, Egypt is divided into 176 constituencies. In each, two members are elected; at least one of them must be a worker or a farmer.

A *worker* is any person who, in industry, agriculture or the services, is engaged in manual or intellectual work, is dependent upon this work for his livelihood, and does not possess any diploma from a university, institute of higher education or military school. However, any person who started out in life as a worker and later obtained a university

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 13.

diploma but has remained affiliated to his worker's trade union is regarded as a worker, notwithstanding his having obtained such diploma.

A *farmer* is any person who, together with his wife and minor children, does not own more than 10 *feddans* (four hectares) of land, and for whom agriculture is the sole income and occupation. He must moreover reside in a rural area.

The elective seats are filled through a two-ballot absolute majority system, as follows:

- If, in a constituency, two candidates, including at least one worker or farmer, obtain an absolute majority of votes cast in the first round of voting, both are declared elected.
- If neither of the two candidates who have obtained an absolute majority is a worker or farmer, only the one who has received the most votes is elected. A second round of voting is then organized for the election of the constituency's second deputy, in which only the two workers or farmers who were best placed in the first round may participate.
- If only one candidate obtains an absolute majority in the first round, a second round of voting is organized. All candidates may participate in this second round if the person elected in the first round is a worker or farmer; if this is not the case, only worker and farmer candidates may participate.
- If none of the candidates secures an absolute majority of the votes cast, a second election is held among the first four candidates who have received a relative majority, provided that at least two of them are workers or farmers. In this case, if no candidate secures an absolute majority in the second round, the seats are attributed to the two best-placed candidates on condition that at least one of them is a farmer or worker and that they have won at least 20% of the votes cast in their constituency.

Where any seat becomes vacant between general elections, it is filled by electing or appointing a new member, according to whether the seat, before it became vacant, was filled by election or appointment.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

On 19 April 1979, in application of the relevant constitutional provisions, President of the Republic Anwar Sadat invited the nation's electors to vote in a referendum on the peace treaty with Israel as well as on governmental and political changes (including adherence to democratic socialism and the formation of new parties)*. This referendum was overwhelmingly approved, and the People's Assembly was dissolved on 21 April to make way for general elections.

The 1979 poll was the first contested by several parties since 1952. Participants in the six-week campaign were Mr. Sadat's National Democratic Party, the left-of-centre Socialist Labour Party, the moderate right-wing Socialist Liberal Party, and the extreme left-wing National Unionist Progressive Party. About 1,600 candidates—including nearly

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 13.

1,000 independents—ran for the 382 seats at stake, including 30 reserved for women for the first time.

Socialist Labour agreed with Mr. Sadat's foreign policy but criticized the Government on its domestic affairs. On polling day, observers interpreted the large vote for the NDP as reflecting strong national support for the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, which issue was turned aside from those debated during the campaign. Some 300 candidates vied for 147 seats in the runoff elections which took place on 14 June.

On 19 June, President Sadat reappointed Mr. Mustafa Khalil as Prime Minister. The new Cabinet was essentially the same as that formed by Mr. Khalil when he became Premier in October 1978.

The newly-chosen Assembly held its inaugural session on 23 June. It is due to amend the Constitution and adopt new Rules of Procedure.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the People's Assembly

Number of registered electors. 11,000,000 (approx.)

Political Group	of Seats ¹
National Democratic Party.	347
Socialist Labour Party.	30
Socialist Liberal Party.	2
Independents.	13
	392

2. Distribution of Deputies according to Sex

Men	358
Women	34
	392