

# www.anwarsadat.org



In 1918 in the small village of Meit Abou El Kom in the Egyptian delta, Anwar El Sadat was born. It was in the same small village, at the house he loved so much that the party celebrating the launch of the website dedicated to this great world leader took place in June of this year.

In the lovely gardens surrounding the villa, the late



President's family and friends gathered to salute his memory while on the street in front of the house the local villagers for whom he gave so much help including the donation of millions of Egyptian Pounds from the royalties on his book, "Search for Identity" and the proceeds of his Nobel Prize watched the comings and goings of the guests with evident pleasure.



**Anwar Esmat El Sadat is an impatient man, he is anxious to see the Egyptian people move forward, to reduce poverty, to increase employment and to have better healthcare and for Egypt to reassert its leadership in the Arab world. His desire to see change is not only obvious from his words that spill out in a torrent, but also from the intensity of his facial expressions as he utters them**

**E**l Sadat was elected to the People's Assembly as an independent along with his brother Talaat both representing the same constituency, the Tala district in Menoufia Governorate where his revered uncle, President Anwar El Sadat had his home in Meit Abu El Kom. He is a newcomer to the formal political scene having been elected for the first time last September but does not shy away from controversy as many that are new to the political scene do.

He is unabashedly pro-change, after 24 years under the NDP and President Mubarak he feels Egyptians are looking for an answer that is different from the business as usual approach of the present government because they are out of touch with the people. He has joined the liberal Democratic Front to present the Egyptian people a real option to the NDP and the former members of the Muslim Brotherhood that ran as independents. "They voted for the Muslim Brotherhood because



Written by Alex Fuchs  
Photographed by Jacqueline Burrell

## **Anwar Esmat El Sadat**

### **A man with a Mission**

they had nowhere else to go," he says.

Sadat recognises that the opposition parties are factionalised as well. Speaking about the various groups that attempted to run under the new election law or have protested against

government action recently, he says; "our problem here with the opposition is that everybody would like to play, but they have no maestro; like an orchestra without a conductor. Everyone wants to be his own master, to be the leader and





The website launch party was a welcome contrast to the usual media event in Egypt where dignitaries assemble at a major hotel and chat until a speech is made and everyone has dinner. In Meit Abu El Kom, Anwar Sadat's friends and family gathered in the late spring sunshine with foreign students and a few journalists and reminisced. The formal speech about the launch was short and the dinner, cooked by the local ladies was wonderful.

## Major events in the life of Anwar El Sadat

- 1918.** Born in Meit Abu El Kom on 25 December.
- 1938.** Graduated from Military College and appointed in Mangabadi in Southern Egypt.
- 1942.** Imprisoned by the British for 2 years for aiding the Germans in exchange for the independence of Egypt.
- 1944.** Escaped from prison and worked as a driver under the alias "Hajj Mohamed".
- 1946.** Convicted of being an accomplice in the assassination of Amin Pasha Osman and sentenced to two years in the notorious cell 54.
- 1949.** Separated from his first wife and married Gihan Raouf Safwat.
- 1952.** Joined the Free Officers in launching the revolution on 23 July and personally announced the first official revolutionary communique.
- 1960.** Elected Speaker of the Nation's Council (Parliament).
- 1961.** Appointed Chairman of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Council.
- 1967.** The six day war broke out on 5 June and Israel defeated Egypt.
- 1969.** Elected First Vice President to President Nasser.
- 1970.** After the death of Nasser, Elected President of the Arab Republic of Egypt.
- 1971.** Started the Revolt of Correction to eradicate power centres, rectify the path of the revolution and achieve the rule of law. He also aborted an attempted coup d'état against him.
- 1972.** The great October war where he snatched victory from defeat.
- 1974.** Adopts a laissez faire economic policy to bring prosperity to the country.
- 1975.** Cancels the Soviet-Egyptian Treaty and reopened the Suez Canal.
- 1976.** Announces the establishment of political parties in Egypt.
- 1979.** Takes the courageous peace initiative to put an end to bloodshed and makes his famous visit to Jerusalem.
- 1978.** Concludes the Camp David peace agreement with Menahem Begin which restored occupied land to Egypt earning them the Nobel Peace Prize.
- 1980.** Cancelled martial law and established the rule of democracy.
- 1981.** Assassinated on the 6th of October.





everyone. I am open, flexible and I have no obligations to anyone but the people in my district who elected me." He considers himself a listening opposition to the ruling party and government and feels that those in the opposition that have closed minds and shout no to everything the government does, achieve nothing. "I'm not like that, when the government does something good I applaud it."

If Sadat does run for president in the next election, one of the contenders running against him will possibly be Gamal Mubarak. Without admitting his own participation, he says that if the elections are held on the basis of everyone having an equal chance he has no objection to Mubarak running. He thinks there is a good chance that the next elections will be more inclusive. "Article 76 which was changed for the last election has to be changed again and we have requested this. I believe it will change to allow the parties to put forward candidates. If they give everybody a fair chance I say, fine, let the people decide." He expects it will be debated and decided in November of this year and he is also pushing for Article 77 which will limit the president to two terms.

Prior to being elected to the assembly and after graduating from the Naval Academy, Sadat was a businessman involved primarily in shipping and trade. Now he devotes himself to

government with the exception of about five percent of his time which he devotes to an NGO that he founded called the El Sadat Association for Social Development to help the people of his district.

One of the goals is to help the unemployed in the district by developing small projects in the health or education sectors. This will have a two-pronged effect. It will provide jobs for the unemployed and social services for the people of the district. "We need to establish a centre for these unemployed young people to provide them with language and computer skills they did not get in public universities. We need clinics because for many people the nearest health services are 20 kilometres away and when your transportation is a donkey cart, 20 kilometres can feel like 200. We need a library and things like that. We also want to help the environment by doing things like improving refuse collection and cleaning the canals.

The NGO will also deal with the social side of life by providing help and assistance for those who want to get married and cannot afford to buy furniture or refrigerators or giving medicine and healthcare to the unemployed or those who cannot afford it or even giving carpets to mosques.

The NGO was established two years ago but only became active in the last few months. "We are just organising

look after his own interests so they never come together." He even feels that some of the members of the Democratic Front, although he says they are very good people, do not have enough understanding of the grassroots, the ordinary people in Upper Egypt or the Delta. "We are working very hard, meeting very often to develop the right approach because I know the people expect it. They want a party they can trust, that they can pull with."

As far as Sadat is concerned, reaching the people is the key, something he thinks the present government is not doing successfully. Asked if he felt the Cabinet reshuffle in December that brought in younger, experienced businessmen would help, he responded; "I am not against it. Many of them are very successful businessmen but from what I have seen they don't have the touch of dealing with the people. Dealing with the public is something different, I can see it whenever we discuss something in the assembly they don't have this touch. Even the prime minister, he is a very good man, really serious and he would love to do something to develop things but he doesn't know the language. Even when he comes to the Parliament there is no chemistry at all between him and the Parliament. The man talks a language the people do not understand. He has to be a little more political.

"I know he is honest and sincere but this is not enough, the people need these new ministers to go down to them, not stay in Cairo holding conferences in five-star hotels. The people need someone to go to them, to sit and discuss and be a part of them. They are good ministers and successful businessmen but this is not enough for Egypt. You have to be a good politician and speak the same language as the people," he concludes.

In the People's Assembly, he has chosen to focus on foreign relations. Asked what he thought about the situation in Lebanon he replied that he did not think Nasrallah was doing the right thing; "he has set Lebanon back 100 years in my opinion. It will not help, it will end up with everybody losing. But the people of the Middle East who are suffering from a lack of democracy and civil rights consider him a hero whether he is right or wrong. Gamel Abdel-Nasser was considered a hero but in the end he was just a man," he replied with a touch of sadness.

He rues the loss of Egypt's role as a leader in the region and feels that is why we cannot play an effective role as a mediator in either the Palestinian problem, in Lebanon or in Sudan. "We ended up having no role in even trying to solve the problems in the Darfour region because people thought we could not bring any pressure to bear."

In speaking about Egypt's relations with the current administration in the US and Britain particularly the anti-American feeling the population exhibits, he feels that any problems rest with the Egyptians. We need to change ourselves. We need to understand that the world is changing and we have to be a part of that. It is not a matter of the Americans trying to change us, to impose their type of democracy. I believe they have helped us as they have been helping us since we made peace with Israel. We have to have our own ways, our own respect and dignity but it does not mean we can't listen and learn. All this anti-Israeli and anti-American talk is nonsense. Not everything that Israel does is right but we can try to correct that with negotiation not breaking treaties."

The role of an independent or opposition member of the assembly is something Sadat feels is very important. "Frankly, I am trying to be a part of whatever changes are made in the constitution or new laws that are enacted. We have to be present and share our thoughts, even when the majority party wins the vote because they are, of course, the majority, we still have our say. We warn them, we talk, we fight and so we are a part of everything, new laws or regulations and so on. Sometimes we even say well done! If we feel that something is wrong we have tools as





ourselves, building a team," he admits. "We have a few people from the area there, very good people who are well educated and we are building a team here in Cairo. We are working out our strategies and targets and then we will approach whoever is willing to help and assist either technically or by giving training or donating gifts for a particular

project, making soft loans. We are also looking at manufacturing companies that might donate some of their products."

There are about 500,000 people living in the area that Anwar and Talaat El Sadat represent in the assembly and that the NGO will serve as well. The relationship between the people of that

area and the Sadat family is very strong. "That is why we had no difficulty in the election. It is the first time in Egyptian history that two brothers ran for the two seats in a district at the same time. The people not only voted for us, they literally put us on their shoulders. It is about eight kilometres from Tala to our house and for those eight kilometres our feet never touched the ground. They carried both of us the whole distance. The people are very loyal to us and they deserve the best in return. We have to!"

Sadat was inspired to enter politics after only being an observer all his life when his brother first ran for the assembly in the previous election. "I saw what the people did for him and how they voted and supported him. It touched me very much. Then there was this new approach in politics that there would be change and a different way conducting politics so I thought; why not be a part of this new change. The more I become involved, the more I like it, I don't regret it at all."

He is sure he made the right move and he is sure it will work out successfully in the long run. He says he feels sorry for some of his colleagues who don't understand that Egypt will not develop or change unless it is open to the whole world and tries to work hand in hand with those that support it. "We cannot fight everyone," he says emphatically, "especially those who help and back us. This is a big mistake."

As outspoken as he is, he will certainly continue to make waves. Whether these waves bring the change he feels is necessary for Egypt or eventually overwhelm Sadat himself, remains to be seen. This is a man with a vision of Egypt as a regional power and a stable happy country again, many others share this vision but Esmat El Sadat intends to achieve it.





parliamentarians that we can use. We can call for the prime minister or the minister concerned to come and discuss it with us. We stay after them," he says proudly.

In every discussion on any theme with **Anwar Esmat Sadat, the underlying subject is** always "the people". It is the drumbeat that he dances to and it is not only the people of his district, but all the Egyptian people that he is concerned about. "We feel an obligation to the people who voted for us to raise their standard of living, by making sure they have clean water, healthy food and things like roads. In Cairo we have roads, but out in the country the roads are terrible. In everything, health and education, we are after the government to try to eliminate these shortcomings and solve the problems or at least to include them in their plans if it can't be done until next year, but money has to

be allocated."

Sadat sees plenty of problems that need solving. He talks about everything from the Al Salam ferry disaster in February to Bird Flu and unemployment and the effect all of these things have on Egyptian society. He was involved in the investigation of the ferry sinking and sees the events that led up to it and the flight of some of the principals involved in the company as indicative of what is wrong with Egypt today. He is particularly outspoken about the problem of unemployment among recent university graduates.

"Some of these fresh graduates are running to Libya to take boats to try to reach Greece or Italy to work and some of the boats sink and they die and they are only trying to find a job." He feels this problem and other social and health problems the Egyptians face are causing a deterioration of Egyptian society.

"One of the problems we have now in the country is that the behaviour of the Egyptians has changed. The Egyptians are not trouble-makers, they are peaceful and warm but because of all these pressures they are changing. Even the family unit is not as it used to be. A man has so many problems he does not have time to visit his mother or sister like he used to." He feels this also leads to an increase in crime especially violence within the family.

There have been rumours about the possibility of Sadat running in the next presidential elections, a possibility he discounts but does not specifically rule out. "It is difficult to say what my future holds. Maybe it's too early to think about running for president. I am trying to be a part of the political scene, to participate, to train myself, to pay attention, to listen, to have a dialogue with the opposition, the ruling party,