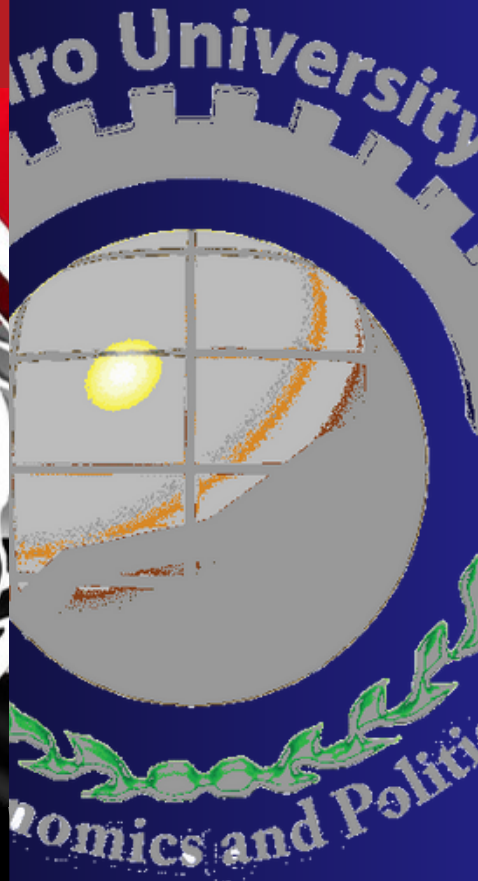




ELITE



The Egyptians Abroad: Power and Potentials (I)

Meeting Mr. Alaa Selim

The Secretary General of the General Union of Egyptians Abroad



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Interviewing the General Union for Egyptians Abroad's Secretary General : Mr. Alaa Selim

Prepared and edited by: Dr. Ramy Magdy and Rossane EL Fayed

Elite Magazine was privileged to interview Mr. Alaa Salim, Secretary General of The General Union of Egyptians Abroad, which was founded by a presidential decree of His Excellency former president Muhammad Hosni Mubarak in 1983, marking 40 years full of achievements, with the Union serving as a link between Egyptians abroad and the State. Mr. Alaa Salim is currently responsible for the most important work of the Union, with a vision of creating a cadre of various awareness-raising and economic programmes, which are ultimately in the interest of the State and its citizens abroad.

What is the structure of the Union's work?

There's an elected Board of Directors of 15 members, from those of the Union. Before the election, we represent as a whole the legitimate body responsible for Egyptians abroad as a civil society, since the official representation is the Ministry of Migration. But when there was no ministry, we represented the official body of communication with Egyptians abroad. Our union has members, a public association and the Board of Directors includes: The Chairman, the Secretary-General, two deputies and the former Secretary.

What is the importance of the Union?

The Union was founded by the presidential decree of His Excellency President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak and was assumed by many Presidents such as Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the President of FAO and the Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers of Egypt. It is a Union full of distinguished personnel and there has always been an attempt on our part to gather communities for "our hearts to beat as one" and with globalization, digitization and travel by many people as migration to the Gulf States grows to an unofficial census of about 16 million people and can be much larger because it does not include those in Iraq, Libya, Sudan or even Jordan, nor illegal migration. We can say that what is important is that the Egyptians abroad have become a significant force, an economic force and also an influential political force.

For example, during the Brotherhood's reign, there were about 5 Egyptians occupying high-ranking positions from Kuwait. I am not only talking about well-known scientists but also the other occupations in the Arab countries. It is a force that now does not grow for many reasons: like the Egyptians' need to work for any sum of money due to the encountered economic difficulties. They have not become the diplomacy and soft power that we hoped for, because of the current economic struggle, and so, the strength of the Egyptian influence has declined: Because in normal circumstances, Egyptians abroad have been transferring \$16 billion for many years, but in the current circumstances, we receive less than what needs to be transferred, which is a few millions and is currently counted on a monthly basis and not yearly, because now there is a parallel market and the banking sector is missing the dollars that are supposed to be transferred every year.

What is the difference between the Secretary-General and the President of the Union?

The difference between the President and the Secretary is determined by the regulation of the supervising administrative body, which in our case is the Ministry of Solidarity. The regulation stipulates that the President is more of an honorary position responsible for the entity in general, but it is the Secretary-General who is responsible for all administrative matters, including different activities; and so, most of the work is handled by the Secretary-General. Addressing an issue, we face: We as a union, a civil society, are responsible for Egyptians abroad on an official basis, however, there are many bodies declaring that they are responsible for Egyptians abroad but this is not real. I now call for these roles to be penalized for their adverse impact and problems, because we qualify our personnel unlike them.

How do Egyptians support state policy according to you? What roles do they play and ultimately focus on supporting State policy?

We dedicate programs for this purpose. The first of which are awareness campaigns and it is done annually, through 200 ambassadors or heads of the community where we invite them to Egypt and take them on trips to many sights, the most important of which is to visit national projects, the administrative capital, the new cities... etc.; to introduce these people to what's going on in Egypt and as ambassadors, we count on them to share their experience with the rest abroad; and this is considered one of our most important means to support the State. There are also educational courses throughout the year, on national security, the state and other, in addition to which we organize various trips from Europe for the second and third generations of migrants, the younger generation, to teach them about Egypt: what's the Nile, the pyramids, the symbols of Egypt and so on. Finally, we started this year's flights to the countries of diaspora, for those who're permanent migrants in America, and they were difficult flights to organize but with the cooperation with the Union in America, they managed to get Egypt Air to help us and facilitate the flight from Los Angeles to ensure that the largest number of participants joined. Not to mention the awareness campaigns where we introduce them to the Egyptian State and its projects, using a group of "scholars" communicating with them constantly about the state of the State and so on.



Recently, there has been considerable reliance on the financial role of Egyptians abroad. Are there models in coordination with the Union or individuals who have provided financial support to the State's projects?

In the coronavirus pandemic, there was a threat that groups of Egyptians residing in the Gulf countries were likely to return to Egypt due to the crisis. We held a conference and were intermediaries with the Agricultural Development Bank. Whoever comes to Egypt, we try to settle it with the investment stakeholders, and the Armed Forces Service has reached out to us, offering huge projects in agriculture and other. We also support the recent Egyptian exports to Africa in our branch in Uganda - a State of the Nile Basin and a central State that owns an important road network - is an Egyptian market component that seeks to attract Egyptian exporters and allow them to export to Africa.

The State's plan slogan now is "Sustainable development", including issues of combating climate change, and its impact on agricultural crops, food security, water resources management, improvement of irrigation systems, renewable energy, beach erosion, etc. This topic is not only important as a prima facie form because we find stakeholders refusing to give loans except when making sure that the project's policy is sustainable. Are there models of the Union or Egyptians abroad who have played a role in projects of this kind?

We call for support for the economy and investment in general. With the attributed importance to Sustainable Development and its impact, yet we are talking about small, non-large investment opportunities that need support, although its industry not necessarily be sustainable. We seek to attract and assist different workers in different sectors. Especially because we must have a complete vision, where we lack many things in Egypt, such as the idea of raising awareness of the importance of receiving foreign tourists, their capital and Egyptian capital abroad. This awareness must be under the organization of the State.

Earlier, there had been an initiative by former President Mohammad Hosni Mubarak, "Start by Yourself", which called for the attention of all people to be clean, for example, to reach a cleaner society. The idea of raising awareness of the investor's importance, albeit with relatively little money, is what we need to deal with any goals we aspire in order to support the State.

The themes of sustainable development and climate change are relatively new and the current difficult economic conditions affect Egyptians' interest in such topics. However, there are projects aimed at profit and investment but at the same time serve such issues as the Agricultural Development Bank project. Are there any agricultural or other projects that the Union contributes to?

Since we work in the field of volunteering, and most of our work is focused on serving communities and working outside Egypt, so the idea of working under the umbrella of sustainable development that targets society and villages is not vivid, and yet if we deal with it directly, we worked with many entities, most notably the Fund "Tahya Masr", conducting a full survey of the needs of Egyptian society in all geographical areas, thus making financial contributions with the Fund. As a Union, we once donated about half a million pounds, in addition to which, there were remittances from Egyptians abroad in various currencies thanks to the Union's campaigns. We also had contributions donated to 57357 Hospital for several years, and today we coordinate with Bahya Hospital and 500 500 Hospital.



We note your coordination with not only governmental organizations but also NGOs such as hospitals... Are there any other examples you would like to share?

Overall, the idea of community charitable contribution exists within our Union's values and our participation with the "Tahya Masr" Fund was one of the most important actions, especially through our branches in the Netherlands, which not only donate funds but also import medical supplies, medical devices, and Dutch medical teams in coordination with the Ministry of Health and then with the Fund now, in cooperation with the Egyptian Dutch Friendship Association, we organize surgical operations... and others. The Union's primary focus for coordination is with large hospitals but the smaller associations can be said to be often through more of individual attempts.

As I live in Zayed and see its expansion, I consider proposing to them a further cooperation with 500 500 Hospital and Bahia Hospital, especially that they treat many diseases of particular interest to us as an Egyptian society such as breast cancer, dwarfism, C virus and other.

Egyptians are always said to be a repository of competencies and skills, but there are no opportunities to exploit these competencies and skills internally. What is your assessment of the extent to which these competencies are exploited and what are the challenges facing these Egyptians abroad?

Of course, recently we find more openness to looking at this particular problem. Egyptian scientists abroad have been highlighted and how they contribute today is better emphasized. If we go back 30 years, for example, Dr. Magdi Yacoub returning to Egypt wasn't a big possibility, but today he is leading a wonderful Egyptian scientific team.

There is also "Hani Azer" and his successes in Germany and how this affects Egypt's tunnels and the experiences we gained from his knowledge until we became exporters in the tunnel industry. There is Dr. "Ahmed Zewil", Dr. Mustafa and his interest in Egypt. Thus, this period we are fortunate to highlight such scientists and advisers. Challenges remain, such as their permanent presence with global organizations preventing their presence in Egypt, such as Dr. "Mahmoud Mohieddin" at the World Bank, Dr. "Mohamed El-Erian" in America;

In addition to personal challenges such as the importance of personal material gains. The idea of Egyptian scientists being abroad and how they can benefit the Egyptian society is one that the state is working on, but we still have a long way to go.

Finally, the influence of Egyptians abroad does not resemble those who are in America or those who are in Europe and others in the Gulf. Those in the Gulf are more powerful and shouldn't be underestimated. Tell us how these Egyptians abroad at the Gulf are distinct from others in the other regions.

Egyptians abroad are classified as temporary immigrants, permanent immigrants (in America, Australia, Canada and some other European countries). In terms of problems and the need for the Egyptian state, Egyptians in the Gulf need their homeland more than others for different things such as housing, health insurance...etc. The power of utilization is great, and always their share is greatest but they usually face more problems than the residents of other countries.





ON THE MARGINS OF TIME

Prof. Hanan M. Aly, FEPS Acting Dean

Translated by: Mariam Ismail

Elegantly dressed, calm in his nature, categorical in his words, correct in his opinion, severe in his right...

As years passed... his experience increased, his worth heightened, his position advanced...

He became the leader to whom everyone listened, obeyed his command, and followed his path.

He achieved many successes, added many achievements, and showed many innovations.

One day he woke up to someone congratulating him on his sixtieth birthday... someone presenting to him the referral papers for retirement... someone signing the termination of his service... someone bidding farewell, saying: "We will miss you"... someone making him promise to come to visit them... someone asking him for advice, as he would replace him... someone removing the sign that bears his name... someone turning his back on him...

The world darkened in his eyes, thoughts turbulent in his head, grievances crowded in his chest, and words weighed heavy on his tongue..

He did not believe that he would not go to work again... He did not understand how he would stay at home day and night... He did not plan how he would occupy his time... He did not imagine what his life would look like...

Gloomy days and months passed, and he became bored with a monotonous life.

Whenever memories and nostalgia overwhelmed him, he would go to his old place of work, breathe in its news, wander its corridors, and stare at its people.

While preparing for one of the regular events, someone invited him to attend.

His eyes sparkled, his mouth smiled, and his heart danced... He expressed his approval to attend, welcome to participate, and enthusiasm to express his opinion...

And he began to prepare himself for this important event... turning over his papers... recalling his memories...

On the promised day, he came early, as usual, bright in appearance.

He sat in the first rows, ready, excitedly flipping through some papers, looking at the faces of those present with a smile.

Some of them took the stage... the event began, speeches said, and dialogues were conducted..

And in the meantime... and after his eyes were shining with light... his shine began to turn off little by little... Until his eyelids almost closed...

And after his face was shining with a smile... the smile began to disappear little by little... until a look of gloom appeared on his face...

And after his heart was jumping between his ribs with joy... his beats slowed until they almost stopped...

Soon after, he put his papers aside... even wanted to tear them up...

He stopped his memory from reviewing the tape of memories... until he decided to forget them...

He stopped recalling his courageous stances, until it seemed as if he was blaming himself for taking them at the time.

And as soon as the event ended, he was about to leave... One of them asked him about the secret of the transformation that appeared to him, the change that befell him, and the distress that he experienced...

He replied curtly: "Nothing... I felt a little tired..."

And then he was stopped by the one who invited him to attend: "I hope you liked the presentations, the interactive dialogues, and the innovative achievements..."

He nodded his head and walked towards the door.

And then someone called him... it was one of the speakers... and he asked him about his opinion on the presentation he made, the new method that he would follow, and the modern innovation that he would apply...

Another joined him and asked him about his opinion on the radical change he made in his position, the fundamental difference he followed in his decisions, and the steady modernization he followed in tools...

A third asked him about his point of view on the difference between current and future methods of work, and between the old methods.

At this point, it seemed as if this question had festered a wound in him.

He looked at them, and a tear welled up in his eye, a lump stood in his throat, and the pain in his chest...

And he said: "I came today... and I thought that I would give my opinion... I thought that I would offer my advice... I thought that I would present my experience..."

Instead I listened to words I did not understand, a dialogue I did not comprehend, and a change I was not familiar with... I thought that I came from another planet..."

One of them said: "Don't worry, sir... It is possible that we allocate time on the sidelines of the next event, for a more detailed explanation of the changes and innovations..."

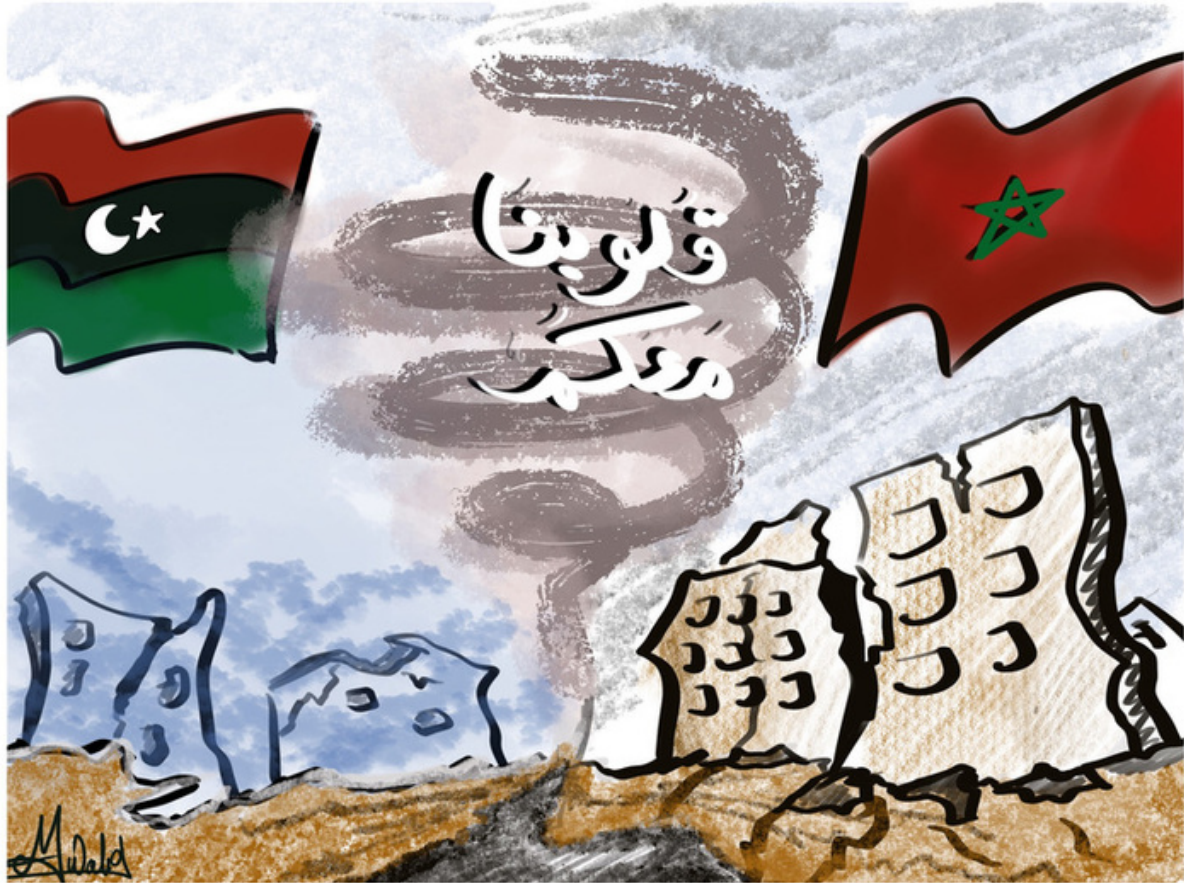
He interrupted him... after looking around him... as if he was recharging his energy... or drawing his strength... and he said: "Here in this place... in the past, I was the captain... planting basil... playing melodies... distributing tenderness..."

And now... the place is the same... but time has passed... the branches have changed... the shores have diverged... the colors have changed... and the quails have migrated...

This place can no longer accommodate me... It is the nature of time... It is constantly spinning... It is a law that cannot be underestimated... The horse grows up... and becomes on the margins of time...



This Month Caricature





Commodifying Identities

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Dear reader, as you navigate this article, I want you to think about how your brand yourself. Is your professional brand similar to how you advertise yourself in the social arena? Which branding is more accurate to your true self?

If you look up ways to become more appealing to employers, you'll come across the words "personal branding." In simple terms, personal branding is how you market yourself to employers – how you sell yourself. It isn't complicated, you just have to be charismatic, professional,

creative, and "unique." You need to stand out and fit the cookie cutter at the same time. You can't be too "unique," or you risk being seen as "weird." You can't fit the mold too well either because then you're just boring. You don't just sell your time and labor. You have to sell your personality as well. We slowly erase our core – what makes us unique – and use our identities as canvasses to paint a piece that panders to our environment We reduce the very essence that makes us human to a device

that we can trade. And just like that, you are a commodity. Not just in the professional world, but also in social settings. Your value in the social market is determined just like that.

This concept is not new, we just put a label on it. It's a fact of life that we have to accept. Our identities are complex with positive and negative attributes. They are all different faces of your identity. Depending on who you're working with, you may choose to highlight some aspects and hide others that may seem less desirable in the current setting. In principal, there's nothing wrong with that. In fact, it could be described as a form of social intelligence. Well, Noor, what's wrong with that?

To answer this question, let's analyze this from a Macro lens. Countries brand themselves to become more appealing tourism destinations or build a certain image to boost their economy. For powerful countries, that is certainly not a problem as their reputation precedes them, but for developing and emerging nations that want to establish a foothold in the global playing field, it most certainly is. Countries might let go of core values in order to appeal to the



masses. For example, if a certain tradition or moral (that isn't harmful) is frowned upon or considered bizarre by the rest of the world, the country might try and erase association with it if it means that it'll gain more approval on a global scale. Just like children who hide their "embarrassing" interests to fit in with the cool kids. At minimum, it could be considered simple adaptation, but it can easily become erasure of identity.

To conclude, I decided to refrain from using concrete examples or taking a scientific approach to this topic to keep it as simple as possible and invite the reader to think about some of the implications of this phenomena. At the end of a long, exhausting day full of interactions with different people, who do you become when you take off these masks?

On the occasion of G20 Summit



The President of Bharat



India or... Bharat ?

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The first week of September witnessed great controversy before the G20 summit was held in India, as the government sent official invitations to the various presidents who would attend the summit under the name (President of the Republic of Bharat), which sparked controversy over India's intention to change its name.

The name Bharat dates back to the era of Emperor Bharata, who was the conqueror of the Indian subcontinent and the Republic of India. In addition, the name Bharat - in some sacred Hindu books and texts - refers to the name of a king who ruled the earth and gave it its right. Bharat is a name from the ancient Sanskrit language, taken from the word Bharatam, which means the land of the south. This term first appeared in 1950. This name is even recognized by the Indian Constitution as the name of India, and some have indicated that the name Bharat was the common name before the arrival of British colonialism in India.

Therefore, the state wants to change the name to Bharat, which has an indication of cultural importance and to

preserve the Hindu identity. This is the vision of the ruling party, "Bharatiya Janata Party," to erase everything related to the colonial era and return to the Indian national origin and the ancient cultural heritage, and this is what The government wants to achieve it before the completion of 100 years to achieve independence in 2047.

The government intends to submit a proposal to Parliament to discuss this issue in a special session that will be held from September 18 to 22. Despite the presence of some parties opposed to this principle and the continued use of the two words, the efforts of Mr. Mohan Bhagwat, Chairman of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh Organization, Swayamsevak Sangh: This organization is the ideological guide for the ideas of the Bharatiya Party - to abolish the name India and use the word Bharat as a motivating factor for change and return to the old name.

Are these efforts by the government to test the public atmosphere before holding legislative elections next year, or are they to preserve the Hindu identity, which could lead to racial discrimination within India towards all other religions, especially Muslims?