

## SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

Dates of Elections: May 25 and 26, 1973

### Purpose of Elections

Pursuant to the provisional Constitution of May 1, 1969, a People's Assembly was constituted in February 1971 \* under the name of People's Council. This was the first legislative body since 1966, when the National Assembly was dissolved.

A new Constitution was prepared and approved by this Council on January 1, 1973 and by national referendum on March 12, 1973 \*\*. As it provided for a new National Assembly, parliamentary elections — the first since 1962 — were held to choose this body's members.

### Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Syria, the People's Council, consists of 186 Deputies elected for 4 years. According to the Constitution of 1973, 95 of these must be representatives of workers and farmers.

### Electoral System

All citizens of Syria, of either sex, aged 18 years or over are entitled to vote.

Candidates to Parliament may run either in an individual capacity or as member of a coalition list.

### General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The elections, in which 1656 candidates — 659 representing workers and farmers and 997 other social groups — contested the seats of the People's Council, were the first since the Baath Party seized power in 1963.

Although voting was to take place on March 25 only, it was extended by the Government until the 26th because of the light turnout of voters. This apathetic showing was in part explained by the fact that the Moslem Brotherhood, dissident Nasserite groups and other groups opposing the Baathists and their allies had called for a boycott of the elections.

\* See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections V* (1970-1971), pp. 16 and 17.

\*\* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 17.

The Baath Party, which fielded roughly half of the candidates, and its allies — the Communist Party, the pro-Cairo Arab Socialist Union (ASU), the Arab Socialists and the Socialist Unionists — who ran on a unified " national progressive " ticket, succeeded in winning 10 of the country's 15 governorates and about two-thirds of the parliamentary seats.

Successful candidates included Mr. Mahmoud Ayoubi, the Prime Minister. Parliament was due to hold its first meeting in June, 1973.

Statistics

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

Number of registered voters. . . . . 3,300,000 (approx.)

Political Group	Number of Seats in the People's Council
National Progressive Front	
— Baath Party . . . . .	111
— Communist Party . . . . .	7
— Arab Socialist Union.	6
— Arab Socialist Party.	3
Independents . . . . .	33
Opposition . . . . .	4
	164*

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\* Figures bearing on elections for Deputies held on May 25 and 26.