TRANSLATIONS ON NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

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AL-SADAT'S STORY FROM VILLAGE TO PRESIDENCY

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[Interview with President Anwar al-Sadat, in Mit Abu al-Kawm on 25 December 1975, President al-Sadat's birthday, by Ahmad Sa'id and Himmat Sa'id: "Al-Sadat Tells His Whole Story About Egypt and the Revolution"]

[Text] In the interview that Cairo Television broadcast yesterday on the occasion of President al-Sadat's birthday, the President said, while narrating his full story on Egypt and the revolution: "If I were to express my wishes for the new year, I would say that the liberation of Sinai is still our prime objective and it is an inevitable, sacred duty. The second thing I hope for is that the insurance umbrella will extend as soon as possible to every Egyptian, regardless of the hamlet or village in which he lives, because I do not want anybody to undergo the suffering I experienced in my youth."

At the outset of the televised interview conducted with President al-Sadat in his village of Mit Abu al-Kawm, the president recounted some anecdotes of the 6 years he spent in the village: how he joined the kuttab [Koran school] to learn the Koran and how feared the kuttab schoolmaster was by all the students, who were afraid of his "floggings" that were reserved for students who failed to memorize the Koran properly and for negligent students. The president also recounted how he used to sleep in the hall of the house and how experience taught his illiterate grandmother a lot and how this experience implanted in her heart the values that the Egyptian people have inherited over the past 7,000 years-- values which gave the president utter superiority when he came to the city for the first time.

In the interview, President al-Sadat recounted how he learned the meaning of British colonialsim from the popular songs about Zahran of "Dinshaway" and Adham al-Sharqawi--songs which taught him for the first time, and in a tangible manner, the meaning of a persecuted homeland.