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Egyptian Hungarian relations between 1981 and 2011

(Secondary sources analysis)

This paper will discuss the findings of my secondary sources analysis. First, I would like to give an overview regarding the structure of my dissertation and my thesis.

Dissertation structure

Chapter I: introduction (methods, sources, and main problem)

Chapter II historical overview of the 3 Ruling Presidents Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak (secondary sources)

Chapter III Political, Economic, culture and trade relations between Egypt and Hungary (Primary sources)

Chapter IV conclusion

Findings of secondary literature

Types and practices of governments under the 3 ruling Presidents Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak. The challenges and the tasks that President Nasser had to deal with included eliminating the British presence from Egypt and nationalising the Suez Canal.

President Nasser (1952-1970)

President Nasser was the second President to rule the Arab Republic of Egypt President Nasser also tended to use different terminologies to describe the Arab – Israeli 1967 War those terminologies included political solution and political action. There was quiet little in depth analysis regarding the dedication and examination of how President Nasser viewed peace with Israel particularly in the “post war” context.¹

¹ Sharnoff 2017: 2.

In the next part of this paper, I will discuss the ideology of the Egyptian revolution lead by President Nasser until his death in 1970, it surveys the distinct known as Nasserism, Nasserism is defined as a movement or an ideology that mainly aimed to liberate the Arab countries from Western occupation. The declaration of the National charter in 1962 was considered as the main crystallisation factor of the Nasserist ideology. Discussing Nasserism as an ideology is vague and far away from Socio-political realities.²

British – Egyptian Relations 1955-1967

President Nasser was quite eager to remove the British presence from Egypt. It is also crucial to point out that both Egypt and Britain engaged in political, economic, and military confrontations between 1955 and 1967. However, from 1959 until 1962 this was rather regarded as a peaceful period between the two countries. The British were convinced that President Nasser was aiming to halt their role in the Middle East completely.³

President Sadat then rose to power; Sadat was the third President to rule Egypt from 1970 until 1981. President Sadat played a crucial role in the Arab Israeli 1973 War, and he is regarded by the Egyptians as the Hero of War and peace. One year before the war in 1972 President Sadat decided to expel all the Soviet Military and economic experts from Egypt. The main reasons behind this decision from President Sadat was first because the Soviet Union did not deliver the weapons it had previously promised to Egypt. Another reason was that President Sadat believed that the Soviet Union might obstruct his 1973 war preparations.⁴ Bringing the United States to the negotiating table and his visit to Jerusalem on November 19th, 1977, was also seen as significant accomplishments. Mainly his visit to Jerusalem which was regarded as a significant turning point in the Egyptian – Israeli bilateral relations. President Sadat also misleded both the Americans and Israelis by launching the so called “false war scare” which meant that President Sadat ordered the Egyptian troops to take position for war and then he ordered the troops to withdraw. Sadat was keen to regain the territories that Egypt lost in the 1967 Arab Israeli war. Regarding the Syrian perspective former Syrian President Hafiz Al Asad engaged in the war because he believed that no satisfactory negotiations would be reached with the Israelis until the Arabs managed to regain back some of their lost territories. If the Egyptians and the Syrians did not go to war against the Israelis in 1973 any peace agreement before the war would have meant that Egypt would be in a weak position and that it would submit and agree to the Israeli terms, and this is what President Sadat did not want. He knew that by going to this war and defeating the

² Rejwan 1974: 1.

³ McNamara 2019: 1.

⁴ Lippman 2016: 7.

Israelis would create greater chances for reaching peace. The victory of Sadat also made him achieve an important goal that he aimed for and that was to gain equality at the bargaining table and bring the United States into the negotiations.⁵

President Mubarak (1981-2011)

President Mubarak was the fourth President to rule the Arab Republic of Egypt, the persona of President Mubarak remained vague and hidden in ambiguity. Since the presidential preferences and style are quite crucial in this “executive centered system.”

It is important to identify how President Mubarak dealt with the political elites and policymaking mechanisms. The fragmentation of the Egyptian political power during Mubarak was partially due to the way in which President Mubarak structured the inner core of the elite, which originated from changes in the Egyptian economy in the past decade and from the personal political style of the President. Unlike President Sadat, Mubarak did not gather around himself high-profile advisers with extensive connections. The freedom of action for President Mubarak was constrained by two main social forces that flourished in the partial vacuum of power.⁶ President Mubarak was a balancer by nature both in his foreign and domestic policies, the Economic management of President Mubarak required reaching a compromise between the rich and the poor.⁷ Mubarak is not that of a “mastermind” as others perceived him but rather, he is viewed as a “slow-witted” former officer who lacks the basic ability of transformation from a bomber pilot to a President. Mubarak’s failure lied in his inability to draw a correct strategic path and vision that would help Egypt overcome its economic difficulties. Many considered President Mubarak a leader who would go down in the history books as a leader without followers and supporters. After the assassination of President Sadat, Mubarak immediately initiated a “low key” peaceful tone of political articulation. He started to release political prisoners, who got previously rounded up by Sadat in September 81 (one month before his death) Mubarak also revived the political liberalization process that was introduced in 1976. President Sadat aborted this process in 1978-1979. When Mubarak did that, he started gaining considerable amount of support from the Egyptian population. Egyptians put faith in President Mubarak and believed that he would help them in overcoming the economic difficulties. Springborg views Mubarak as a leader who lacks charisma, not relaxed and comfortable in a political environment. He was originally a military officer accustomed to strict routine imposed by bureaucracy and bureaucratic practices.⁸

⁵ Lipmann 2016: 8–9.

⁶ Springborg 2019: 11.

⁷ Springborg 2019: 17.

⁸ Springborg 2019: 23.

The 2011 Egyptian Revolution

After Mubarak was overthrown from power labor strikes increased significantly reaching 1,962 in 2012 compared to only 530 in 2010. In March 2013, over sixty police stations across Egypt went on strike protesting the policies of the Egyptian Ministry of Interior. The Egyptian youth celebrated the driving force of the 2011 uprising Other Egyptians did not reach an agreement regarding the best way to represent the Tahrir Revolution. News media was quite hesitant and uncertain in labelling any Tahrir Square activist as revolutionary preferring to simply call them as protestors⁹

Egypt and Hungary a thriving relationship

President Nasser scheduled visit to Hungary in 1956 however, this visit got cancelled due to the Suez Crisis in Egypt. Nasser's visit was supposed to take place on September 5th, 1956. In 1956, the Hungarian newspaper Szabad Nép published a lengthy interview with President Nasser, in which the bilateral relations and the most important international and regional matters were discussed in addition to discussing the Non-Aligned Movement, the content of the Brioni Meeting and other political issues of common interests¹⁰

The next visit of President Nasser to Hungary took place in 1958. On his way to Moscow President Nasser stopped in Budapest and held talks with Hungarian leaders, the visit lasted only for 90 minutes. President Nasser was hosted by an official Hungarian delegation headed by István Dobi Chairperson of the Hungarian Presidency Council, Prime Minister Ferenc Münnich and Foreign Minister Endre Sik. In 1958, however, the visit of President Nasser was a successful diplomatic event. President Nasser showed his great respect for Hungary and the Hungarian people. This visit was the first official meeting between Egypt and Hungary since the Egyptian-Syrian Union based on the popular referendum held on February 21st, 1958. Hungary was among the first countries that recognised the UAR (United Arab Republic) and the Hungarian Ambassador to Cairo at that time was among the first to present the credentials in the newly established country on February 22nd, 1958. In addition to that, the Egyptian-Hungarian bilateral relations, mechanisms, and cooperation sectors were also discussed to enhance them. The Egyptian and Hungarian delegation also discussed the situation in Algeria, the Arab Unity and how to establish a common front against imperialism. The cultural corporation agreement between the two sides was also elaborated by talking

⁹ Mellor 2015: 4–5.

¹⁰ Al Naggar 2020: 10.

about the required authorisations and permissions needed that would facilitate the establishment of a Hungarian General Consulate in Damascus. The discussions between the two delegations also included a topic around the Helwan Nile Bridge, built by the Hungarians to be opened on Egyptian Revolution Day July 23rd, 1958, in addition to the communication centre in Damascus, which was also built by Hungary. Other topics were also mentioned including agricultural collaborations and the methods of using irrigation systems.¹¹

The Hungarian Attitude towards the Arab Israeli 1973 War

The next point that I will discuss is the Hungarian standpoint on the 1973 Egyptian Israeli War. After the 1967 Egyptian Israeli War, Hungary continued supporting the Arab Nations. The Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs noticed a decline during the period that followed the Israeli aggression on Egypt in 1967, regarding the death of President Nasser. Egypt became less acknowledged at that time due to many factors including negative internal political tendencies, manipulation of the right-wing Nasserist politics, intensifying internal reactionary groups and the external and internal consequences of the long going crises in the Middle East.¹²

Difficulties in the Egyptian Hungarian bilateral relations in the 1970s

The most controversial article was published following the demonstrations of the Egyptian workers in the beginning of January 1975, which was triggered by the rise of food prices. the main reason behind these demonstrations was the ruthless actions of the Egyptian bourgeoisie, which was a consequence of severe deteriorations from the socialist path.¹³

¹¹ Al Naggar 2020: 10–11.

¹² AL Naggar–Laszlo 2020: 1

¹³ Al Naggar–Laszlo 2020: 2.

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