

**SHERIF ABOUSHANAB**

# **The Egyptian Hungarian Relations between 1981 and 2011 (President Mubarak Period)**

My PHD Thesis will be discussing the Egyptian – Hungarian relations between 1981 and 2011 politically, economically socially and culturally in addition to the trade relations.

Before discussing the main points of this paper, I would like to give a quick overview about the structure of the paper.

1. Sources and methods
2. Research Questions
3. Historical background
4. Political relations
5. Economic and trade relations
6. Cultural relations
7. Conclusion

Sources and methods, I used three significant Egyptian newspapers, which are Al Ahrām, Akhbar el youm and Al Gomhoria (2 daily newspapers, and 1 weekly newspaper) which is (Akhbar el Youm), I also used several books both in English and Hungarian languages. In addition to using 2 types of Analysis the discourse analysis (Critical reading) and the Comparative analysis how Hungary visioned the corporation with Egypt and vice versa.

Primary sources, documents of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the documents of the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Regarding the research questions, I have one main research question and two sub research questions the main research question is: what were the main features of political and economic relations between Egypt and Hungary from 1981 until 2011, and what were the challenges faced in developing those relations?

The Sub- research questions are the following:

1. What were the main representations of Hungarian culture in Egypt?
2. How did the Egyptian press portray the image of Hungary and the Hungarians during that period. the relation between Egypt and Hungary date back to the time of the Ottoman empire mainly in 1517/1518 when Egypt transformed into an Ottoman Vilayet as a result of the campaign, which was carried out by Selim I and later also due to the victories of Suliman I that took place from 1521 till 1541, when a part of the then Hungary was occupied by the Ottoman empire, the history of both countries became very much close mainly due to the active roles of the ex- Governors of Cairo

who moved to Buda, and through the pashas who were moved from Buda to Egypt. Ten of the Buda pashas were given the same tasks in Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

The history of the bilateral relations during the inter-war period (the period between the I and the II world wars) also had great significance mainly in 1932, 1934, 1938 and 1939 when Miklos Horthy Jr the son of the Hungarian governor made several visits to Egypt during that period. one other crucial point during that period was the visit of former Egyptian Prime Minister Ismael Sedky Pasha to Hungary in 1932. The two countries started diplomatic relations in 1928 it was cut off in 1942 and restored once again in 1947.<sup>2</sup>

Due to the Suez Crises of 1956 President Gamal Abdel Nasser was forced to cancel his visit to Budapest but two years later he stopped in Budapest and had crucial talks with several Hungarian leaders, the Suez Crises started between Egypt on one side and Israel, Britain and France on the other side aiming to gain the upper hand in control over the Canal. The Hungarian revolution started in the same time, Egyptians and Hungarians both suffered from (though differently) manifestations of aggression in this year. The post-revolution Kádár-regime acknowledged the decision of Nasser to nationalize the Canal as a logical and justifiable decision. While Egypt returned the favour to Hungary by abstaining when a vote was taken in the United Nations regarding the Hungarian question.<sup>3</sup> This question was mainly discussing the Soviet Occupation of the Hungarian territories.

On the discussion about the political relations, in 1991 former Egyptian President Hosny Mubarak hosted Hungarian Prime Minister Joseph Antal, who had an official visit to Egypt that lasted for 3 days during the visit both leaders discussed the means of enhancing and strengthening the bilateral corporation between both countries the meeting also attended by former Egyptian Prime Minister Mr Atef Ebid, the meeting mainly focused on the results of the Madrid Peace Accords, which was originally held in November 1975, the meeting discussed the situation in the Middle East. PM Antal stated in the meeting that Hungary views the Madrid Peace accords as a major turning point in the peace process and that he completely appreciates the effective role that Egypt plays, he added that if Hungary recognises the existence of the Israeli state, it also supports the rights of the Palestinians to live in peace.<sup>4</sup>

The former head of the Egyptian people's Assembly Mr. Ahmed Fathy Sorour mentioned during his visit to Hungary in 1992 that it is quite crucial to strengthen and enhance the efforts of development particularly in the 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries and to accomplish regional stability in the Eastern European countries, in addition to that, he also stated that it is very important to work on initiatives and agreements that mainly aims to have areas that are free of weapons of mass destruction, Dr. Sorour stressed that there were many similarities between the Egyptian experiment and the Hungarian

<sup>1</sup> Al Naggar, Zoltán The Egyptian – Hungarian Diplomatic relations between world war I and 2 titled paper

<sup>2</sup> Al Naggar, Zoltán 2011: 57-59.

<sup>3</sup> Al Naggar, 2020: 10.

<sup>4</sup> Al Ahram 1991.November 6.

experiment, which would further strengthen the possibilities of mutual corporation between both countries politically and economically as Hungary had great experience in the technological fields and Egypt could greatly benefit from this experience.<sup>5</sup>

The next crucial part that I would like to discuss is the international parliamentary conference held in Budapest in 1993, the conference focused on human rights and how those rights were seen both in European countries and in 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries as well. The conference discussed the views of the Hungarian public in relation to the notion of human rights and how those rights should be protected. The main importance of this conference is that it came right before the conference of the government which was held in Vienna Austria in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of June of the same year. A delegation from the Egyptian people's assembly attended the conference as well, the delegation was headed by Dr Fawzeia Abdelsattar the head of constitutional and legislative affairs committee. The main result of this conference, or the things agreed upon was that the national parliaments should have a stronger role in defending human rights and they should do this in accordance with their specific means and in a way that is both independent and complementary to the Executive and Judiciary in each country.<sup>6</sup>

The 1990s period saw several breaches and violations to human rights the most significant among those were the incidents that took place in Bosnia and Hercegovina, which was considered by major European parliamentary figures as a sign of shame and disgrace in human history.<sup>7</sup>

## **Economic and trade relations**

The next part discusses the economic and trade relations between the two countries in 1987 the mutual committee of trade corporation between Egypt and Hungary held a meeting from the 21<sup>st</sup> till the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, the main topic of the meeting focused on the possibility that Egypt would get facilitated loans from Hungary worth 150000000 USD such loans would help Egypt in financing the major developmental projects specifically in the field of recultivating the agricultural lands, in addition to issues related to life stock development.<sup>8</sup>

In March 1997 Hungary decided to lift all the administrative fees on the Egyptian exports, a delegation from the Hungarian Chamber of Trade and Industry visited Egypt to negotiate the possible opportunities for corporation mainly in the field of trade chambers. Ferenc Miklos the Vice President of the Hungarian trade chamber made an

---

<sup>5</sup> Al Ahram 1992. May 14th

<sup>6</sup> Inter parliamentary symposium, 1993 Budapest Symposium: summing up (ipu.org) (date accessed: October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022)

<sup>7</sup> Al Gomhoria 1993. June 1<sup>st</sup>-

<sup>8</sup> Al Akhbar 1987. April 1st

important visit to Egypt as he had crucial negotiations with several officials from the Arab league mainly those who are dealing with the joint Arab trade chambers with foreign countries. Mr Abdallah Moustafa the leading figure of the Egyptian-Hungarian delegation proposed an idea during the meeting that an Egyptian-Hungarian company should be established with the main headquarters located in Cairo, however he also suggested that a branch of the same company should be established in Budapest as well. The vice President of the Hungarian trade chamber mentioned that this suggestion will be discussed in detail during the next visit of the Hungarian delegation to Egypt which was held in April 1997.<sup>9</sup>

## Cultural relations

In 1990, Egyptian caricaturist Effat returned from his trip to Budapest after making an art exhibition there this exhibition contained around 40 paintings of the exhibition was broadcasted by the Hungarian television. Effat also gave several lectures on the methods of teaching drawing and painting to blind people.<sup>10</sup>

In 1994 the HGCA (Hungarian Gypsy Cultural association invited Egypt via its Ambassador to Budapest at that time Mr Mohammed Abou Zaid in addition to his cultural consultant Mr Fayez Halawa to take part in the International Gypsy conference held in Kaposvár. To negotiate the rights of the Gypsy (Romani) minorities around the world in addition to the challenges and problems that they are facing which are mainly associated to unemployment and their deprivation of gaining access to education.<sup>11</sup>

Hungary and Finland won the 1<sup>st</sup> prize at the experimental theatre international festival, which was held in Cairo in 1991, 33 countries participated in that festival from all over the world.<sup>12</sup> In 1996 an Exhibition was held in Budapest from the 20<sup>th</sup> of September until the 29<sup>th</sup> of September, many countries from Eastern and Western Europe took part in this Exhibition. Many Egyptian companies were invited to take part in this Exhibition and International market<sup>13</sup> In 1997 an art exhibition was held by Egyptian painter Dr Farouk Shehata in Kecskemet, Mr Moktar El Hamzawy the Egyptian Ambassador to Budapest at that time took part in the Exhibition as well. It included 50 of his paintings, those paintings varied in their techniques in relation to printing on copper and silk.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Al Ahram El Ektesady 1997. March 10<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Al Akhbar 1990. September 25<sup>th</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Al Ahram 1994. July 12<sup>th</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Al Ahram 1991. September 11<sup>th</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Al Ahram 1996. August 5<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Al Ahram 1997. July 3<sup>rd</sup>

## Conclusion

I mentioned in the beginning of this paper, the Egyptian-Hungarian relations enjoyed immense bilateral ties and corporations not only in the period of Mubarak but also way before that and mainly since the period of the Ottoman Empire. Then during the period of the Austro Hungarian Empire and moving forward till the periods between the two world wars, all of those periods also were characterised by mutual corporation between the 2 countries , until we finally reach the period of former Egyptian President Nasser and how the Egyptian Hungarian relations were shaped under his presidency mainly considering the fact that the Hungarian revolution and the Suez Crises both happened in the same year (1956) and how Nasser had positive relations with Hungary and the Hungarian officials and finally I gave a glimpse of the Egyptian Hungarian relations currently under President Sisi and how strong they are mainly in the political and economic fields. And to give a further and more detailed conclusion I would say that my plan for the future is to read in detail the primary sources which I gathered from the Hungarian National archives like the letters from the Hungarian Ambassador at that time also the letters that were exchanged between the Egyptian and Hungarian delegations that stresses on strengthening the bilateral ties between the two countries. The same thing applies to the cultural and trade relations. This detailed reading would also allow me to know what were the main challenges that faced the development of the Egyptian – Hungarian relations during Mubarak period. regarding the sub research question I suggested which talked about how the Egyptian press viewed the image of the Hungarians at that time I would say that from the newspaper articles I red I would say that the image of Hungary in the Egyptian press was a positive image and Hungary was portrayed in the Egyptian press as a country that always seeks to strengthen the bilateral ties in the economic and political fields and this was clear as both countries as I previously mentioned had the same view point regarding many issues mainly the Situation in the Middle East and reaching a common ground between the Palestinians and the Israelis was crucial for a progressive peace process in the region.

## Sources

### Press

Al Akhbar 1987.

Al Ahram 1990–1997.

Budapest Symposium: summing up (ipu.org) (date accessed: October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022)

## Bibliography

- Abdallah Abdel Ati Al Naggar The Egyptian- Hungarian relations between world war I and II, 2011 University of Szeged Mediterranean studies pp 51–59 [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339677789\\_The\\_Egyptian-Hungarian\\_Diplomatic\\_Relations\\_between\\_World\\_War\\_I\\_and\\_II\\_Mediterranean\\_Studies\\_-\\_Etudes\\_sur\\_la\\_Region\\_Mediterrannee\\_Szeged\\_Szegedi\\_Tudomanyegyetem\\_Ujkori\\_Egyetemes\\_Tortenetes\\_Mediter](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339677789_The_Egyptian-Hungarian_Diplomatic_Relations_between_World_War_I_and_II_Mediterranean_Studies_-_Etudes_sur_la_Region_Mediterrannee_Szeged_Szegedi_Tudomanyegyetem_Ujkori_Egyetemes_Tortenetes_Mediter) (date accessed: October 29th, 2022)
- Abdallah Al Naggar , President Nasser visit to Budapest in 1958 : Rewaq History Heritage, Doha Hassan Bn Mohammed Centre of historical studies 2020 (10) pp 6–17 (99+)
- President Nasser’s visit to Budapest in 1958: Rewaq History & Heritage, Doha: Hassan Bin Mohamed Centre for Historical Studies, 2020 (10), 6–17. | Abdallah Abdel-Ati Al-Naggar - Academia.edu (date accessed: October 29th, 2022)