

Sadat's Egypt from Hungarian point of view Hungarian-Egyptian relations 1970-1980

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The motivation of the project

The base of the project lays in the new research method of the historical past of Middle East currently problematic region. These timely problems can be frame-worked in the non-agreement of Israel and the Arab countries. These controversies are based on comprehensive items like the geopolitical, religious, military or ethnic components. These items are in multidimensional relations, which creates obstacles in finding the final solutions. Besides the chronological structure the writings on the Middle East region focus mainly on the most important historical events and present the region's history with them in linear way.

The dissertation briefly presents Egypt's political structure. In the Middle East region Egypt had outstanding position from even economic, strategic and also political points of view. The revolution of 1952 was one of the prominent act of the process of the decolonization. Nasser's newly founded regime had radical reforms also at internal and external fields of politics. The authoritarian system was closely tied to the region of the Soviet Union under the circumstances of the cold war. The literature of this subject has been thorough researched. Beyond the new ways of presidential leadership the reason for changes of the newly elected Sadat administration in 1970 can be found not only in the hence changed international environment but in the answers given to the new challenges. Those studies presenting these two important presidents' work in comparison describes the countries' history along the opposition of Nasser and Sadat. William Baker's *Uncertain Revolution under Nasser and Sadat* displays the country's foreign policy change from the Soviet Union towards the United States along the decisions of these presidents.

The new approach of this thesis lays in the presentation of the Hungarian point of view related to Egypt. Researching the Middle East region - due to its specialized circumstances - is impossible without concerning the international field of power. Recognizing the Soviet Union's position in the region, from our point of view without researching the Eastern Block's situation the acknowledgement of this region cannot be complete. In our thesis we describe Hungary's related connections.

The aim of the research

The dissertation's Hungarian elements have double function. On one hand side during the description of Sadat's Egypt the dissertation present the contemporary Hungarian point of view related to each section of the country. The last part of the thesis definitely focuses on the relations of the two countries. It has been divided into economic, political and cultural parts. The duplicity of the Hungarian point of view accounts for the duplicity of the research's aim. By describing the Hungarian opinion of Egypt's internal and foreign politics, the contemporary Hungarian interest could be charted toward the region. We were looking for answers whether the different ideologies and politics of the two countries could have helped or hindered the creation or improvement of the relations. We also wanted to answer under which condition could Sadat's country be optimal for the framework of modernization. To which degree could the economic liberalization be called liberalization by Western assets or to which extent was it hindered by the specialty of the Middle East region. The most dominant parts of the Hungarian-Egyptian relations were the commercial parts of it. Due to the relative stability of the clearing system the improvement of the relations had become important for both parts of this relation. During the research of the economic cooperation we supposed to answer how could the Hungarian part follow the new rules of the liberalized economic policies.

Studies, period, methods

The fact - realized during the research - that the relationship between two countries was dominated by the economic field of cooperation determined the framework of the method. We focused during the presentation of Sadat's Egypt on that the base of it not should be only the opposition to the previous system. The marks related to Nasser's policy could not be a complete presentation of the history of Egypt since 1952. Our aim was not to fully describe Nasser's Egypt, these themes are only to make Sadat's decision more understandable. The thesis is not a concise work, thus do not use the methods of comparison. Although for understanding Egypt between 1970-1980 it is inevitable to describe the basic elements of Egypt since the revolution in 1952. Our maintenance is that analyzing Sadat's Egypt and its innovation should be based not only in comparison with its predecessor.

From the same point of view the dissertation does not describe the main events of the period in detail. Instead of the narrative form of presenting by linear historical events we decide to look for its consequences. Due to its character, during the commercial cooperation we focused on the economic establishment from historical and methodological point of view. The detailed presentation of the economy helps to understand Egypt's decisions, considering the effect of it to different fields of policy also. The comprehensive program of Egypt is also known as *Infitah*. This "open door" policy's elements were also dominated by the economy itself. So, not only for understanding modern political history of Egypt but also for the cooperation of the two countries the economic part is inevitable. In spite of it, the

comparison method of history is also neglected due to the major differences between Hungary and Egypt. The framework of the thesis is given by the Presidency of Sadat. The research field of this period between 1970 and 1980 comes from the opportunity of changing. This era is the operation part of the predecessor's great reforms. These new element - born after the revolution - has changed not only because Sadat himself but as an answer for the changing national circumstances. Due to the researched era is - from historical point of view - covers a small range of years instead of a chronological order we structured the presentation of the changes by economy, political and social consideration. The work of Raymond Hinnebusch *Egyptian politics under Sadat* helps to understand and describe the Sadat administration's capacity, although for relations of the different political groups to each other. The summarizing work of Hinnebusch can be useful as a political scientist's theme. Using mainly secondary sources we applied it in the theoretical parts. Presenting the *Infitah* policy we used John Waterbury's *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat* and Ikram Khalid's work on *Egypt's economy till 2000*. These works focus on the economic part, the last one also helps us with detailed sources of data. In the last chapter we worked from the sources of *National Archives of Hungary*. Beyond the secret and administrative documents of the Foreign Ministry of Hungary the economic part was discovered by then existing firms' documents. After Nasser' death the Hungarian embassy increased the detailed its reports to inform the Hungarian leadership of the newly occurred changes day by day. Sadat's memoirs can be dived by his presidency. The *Revolt on the Nile* - published in 1957 - is about the revolution, Nasser, and the Free Officers. In the thesis it is not through mentioned, but its statements about Nasser were also used by us. After elected as president the *Search of Identity* had been published in 1978. The changed presidential point of views can be realized in comparison with his pervious works. Besides the "denasserization" it shows the problems and disadvantages of Nasser's time. Because of the date of its publication it can summarize a wider range of the period so we used it as a primary source during our work.

The result of the research

The conditions and chances to carry out the great plans of the Infitah were given during the period and serious steps were taken by the Egyptian government to manage it. After a complete examination of the Infitah it can be said that it could not fulfill the requirements. It is quite difficult to determine a general description for modernization because each country's special circumstances or its state of development easily can influence it or can also create numerous version of it. Interpreting it as an updating process - in case of Egypt - it could only be a forced closing up. Democratization or building democratic elements were inevitable for the chance to opening towards the West. The gap between these elements and the chance of using it led to a failure. From our point of view a more specific answer can be found if we interpret this method as normalization. A change which besides correcting the previous system's problem can give answers to the new challenges also. From 1971 the cooperation between Hungary and Egypt has changed. The level of the diplomatic relationship decreased. Apart from the diplomatic gap

the cultural and scientific cooperation still worked, but their intensity also decreased by the end of the decade mainly due to financial problems. It must be concerned that the socialist countries also took part in the deterioration of the cooperation. The firms could adapt themselves to the new economy system with difficulties. In spite of the declining relations Hungary's role at Egypt's market stayed solid and important. Generally it can be said that the economic cooperation of the Eastern Block in the Middle East was dominated by the trade. The following figure compares the amount of this domination to each other.

Country	1965	1970	1975
Bulgaria	80.9	75.1	44.9
Czechoslovakia	67.7	69.0	61.1
GDR	81.3	84.0	56.2
Hungary	62.8	75.3	28.9
Poland	79.0	76.3	23.9
Romania	86.7	78.7	39.1
Soviet Union	78.6	73.0	61.1

In the thesis we tried to define the Hungary's own way in the process of the cooperation, although to discover its specialties by researching the sources of the National Archives. As the structure of the relationship of these countries and the Middle East, diplomatically it was dominated by the Soviet Union. The difference can be found in the economic part of these ways of cooperation. In the case of political and military decisions the Block followed the directives of the Soviet Union. The limit for the autonomous maneuvering was the interest of the Soviet Union. This autonomy reached different levels of the countries. Diplomatically Moscow preferred the high level cooperation meanwhile the countries of the Eastern Block used their specialized social networks to keep connect with the region. Economically a more liberal path was given to these countries. The biggest obstacle of it could only be their common market.