

Bulgaria and Egypt in the Dynamics of Transformations in the Middle East

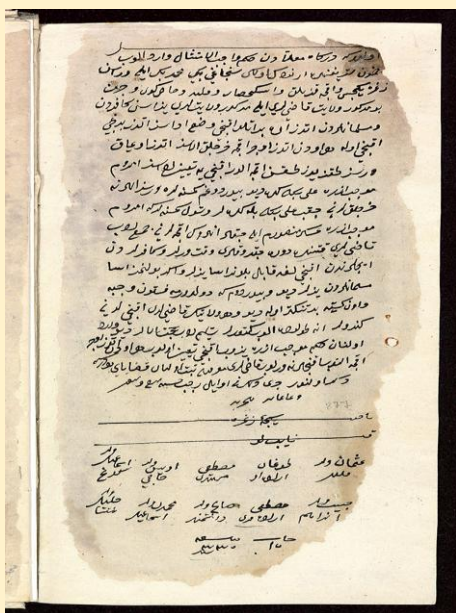


On the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Bulgaria and Egypt

The exhibition is part of the joint research project "Beyond the Boundaries of Time and Space: Bulgaria and Egypt in the Dynamics of Transformations in the Middle East". The project is being implemented during the period 2025–2027 by the Institute for Historical Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and Damanhour University under a bilateral agreement between the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Egyptian Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (Project No. IC-EG/10/2025–2027).

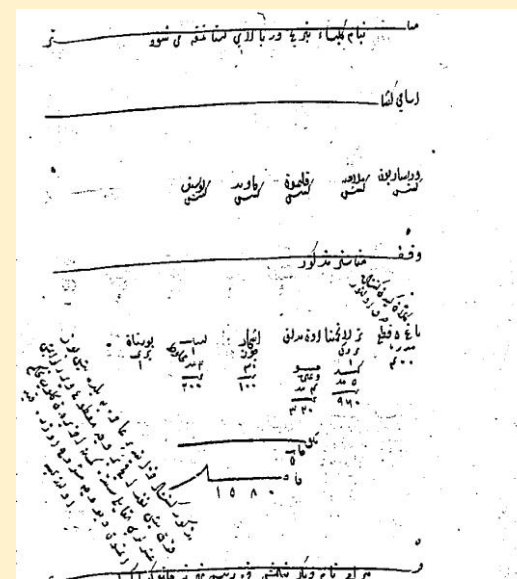


In 1926, Bulgaria and Egypt established formal diplomatic relations. This act was preceded by centuries of coexistence across a vast region stretching from the Volga River through the Balkans to the western parts of Asia Minor. Traces of this shared cultural and historical heritage have been the subject of long-standing research in Bulgaria and Egypt. Written and material evidence of this shared journey beyond the boundaries of time and space has been disseminated in the 20th and 21st centuries. Knowledge of "the other" forms the foundation for mutual understanding and the search for new ways of cooperation.



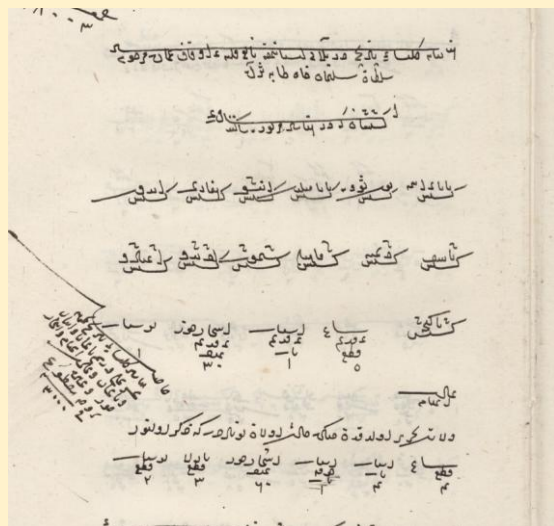
Ориенталски отдел на
Националната библиотека "Св. св. Кирил
и Методий", ОАК, 94/73. Регистър на
акънджиите (леко въоръжена конница,
съставена от доброволци) от вилаетите
Нова Загора, Казанлък, Стара Загора,
Пловдив, Хасково и Чирмен. Регистърът е
откъс от документ от 1472 г. На първата
страница е препис от заповед на султан
Мехмед Втори Завоевателя за
рекрутирането на акънджии от всеки 30
къщи на мюсюлмани и немюсюлмани от
споменатите административни единици в
Тракия.

Oriental Department of the National Library "St. Cyril and Methodius", OAK, 94/73. Register of akancies (a lightly armed cavalry unit of volunteers) from the vilayets of Nova Zagora, Kazanlak, Stara Zagora, Plovdiv, Haskovo and Chirmen. The register is an excerpt from a document from 1472 that has not been fully preserved. On the first page is a transcript of an order of Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror regarding the recruitment of one akancı from every thirty Muslim and non-Muslim houses from the mentioned administrative units in Thrace.



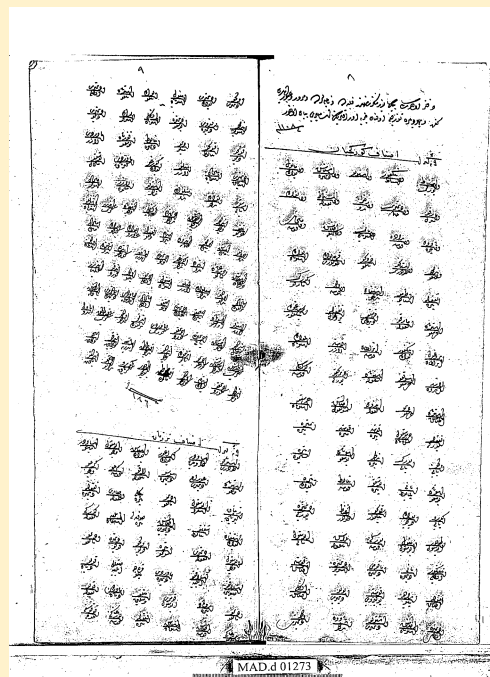
Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul (DABOA), Tapu tahrir defteri 77. Опис на петима монаси от манастира при църквата Петрич над Станимака (в наши дни Асеновград) и поземлената собственост на манастира, която притежавала специален статут като вакъф на манастира.

Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul (DABOA), Tapu tahrir defteri 77. Inventory of five monks from the monastery at the church of Petrich above Stanimaka (nowadays Asenovgrad) and the land property of the monastery, which had special status as a waqf of the monastery.



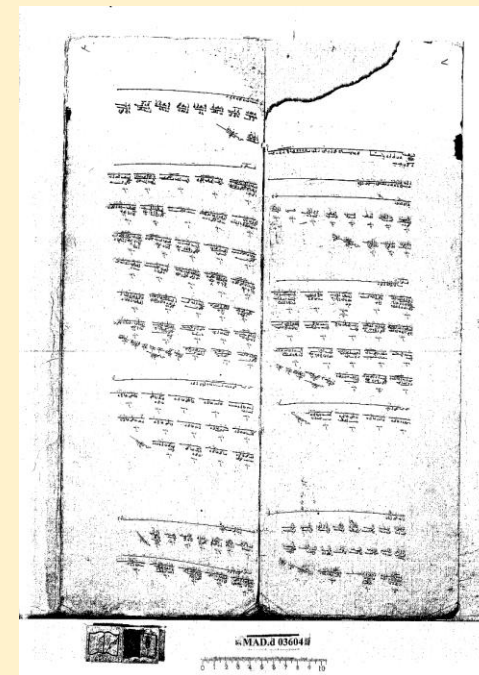
Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul (DABOA), Tapu tahrir defteri 498. Опис на манастира при църквата Петрич над Станимака в един вакъфски регистър от 1570 г., когато в манастира живеели тринадесет монаси, а поземлената собственост на манастира и стадата от овце, отглеждани за манастира, са вече обложени с данъци.

Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul (DABOA), Tapu tahrir defteri 498. An inventory of the monastery at the Petrich church above Stanimaka in a waqf register from 1570, when thirteen monks lived in the monastery, and the monastery's land property and the flocks of sheep raised for the monastery were already taxed.



Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul (DABOA), MAD 01273. Първата страница на регистър за събиране на данъка джизие от немюсюлманите в района на Пловдив от 1108 г. по Хиджра (1696-1697 г.).

Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul (DABOA), MAD 01273. The first page of a register for the collection of the jizya tax from non-Muslims in the Plovdiv region from 1108 AH (1696-1697).



Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul (DABOA), MAD 03604. Първата страница на авариз регистър от 1695 г., който предоставя подробна информация за демографското и икономическото състояние на мюсюлманското и немюсюлманското население от региона на Пловдив.

Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul (DABOA), MAD 03604. Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul (DABOA), MAD 01273. The first page of an Avariz register from 1695, which provides detailed information about the demographic and economic status of the Muslim and non-Muslim population of the Plovdiv region. The register includes the names and properties of officials of the Muslim religious cult, participants in various military units, as well as Orthodox priests from the town of Plovdiv and the villages in the region.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Bulgarian government and private entrepreneurs continued to develop political and commercial relations with the Middle East, focusing primarily on Egypt. In 1911, Bulgaria established a Consulate General in Alexandria. For the first time the two countries opposed each other during the First World War. According to Kamen Velichkov, "Following Britain's unilateral Declaration of February 28, 1922 on Egypt's independence, Bulgaria dispatched its new Consul General Mr. Pancho Dorev to Alexandria. He managed to re-establish the official relations, to promote bilateral economic exchange and to revive the shattered Bulgarian community".



Pancho Dorev

Литературен свят

On 29 March 1930, the journal "Literary World" published Pancho Dorev's article "Arab Historians on the Proto-Bulgarians", which was reprinted in issue no. 90 of the same journal in December 2016.

Source:

"Literary World" journal, Issue 90, December 2016

<https://literaturesviat.com/?p=126438>

<https://literaturesviat.com/?p=126441>

The following sections of this virtual exhibition trace Egyptian-Bulgarian relations through press images, situating them within the broader transformations that shaped the Middle East throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Drawing on an expanding Bulgarian and Arabic press archive, it highlights diplomacy, culture, economics, and political change.



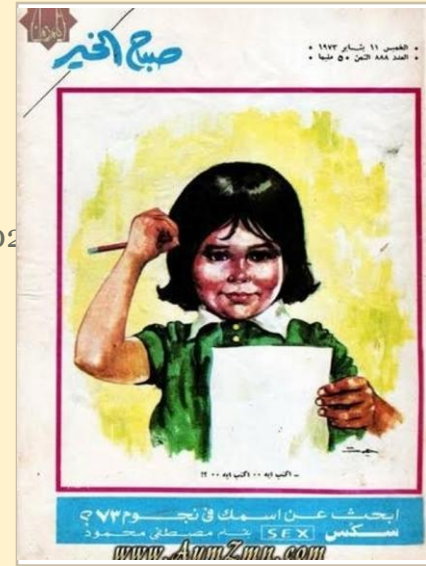
Al-Ahram



Al-Akhbar



Rosa Al-Youssef



Sabah Al-Khair



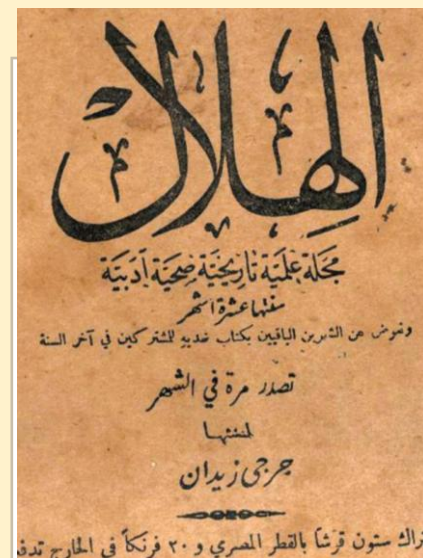
Nesf Al-Donia



Al-Wafed



KYATYPA



Al-Helal



Al-Sharq Al-Awsat



Al-Hayat

During the interwar years, Bulgarian-Egyptian relations developed within a shifting international order marked by state formation, political realignment, and cultural exchange. Press materials from this period show Bulgaria becoming more visible in Egyptian journalistic and intellectual circles through diplomatic contacts, official visits, and regional developments. The covert visit of the former Bulgarian king to Egypt further illustrates how the press could transform a political episode into a symbolic narrative, revealing not only facts but also the ways events were framed, perceived, and emphasized.

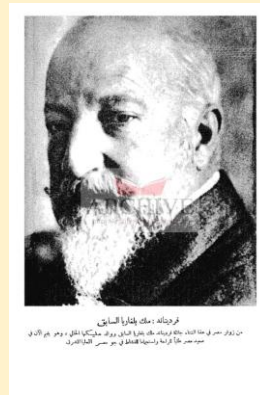
Publications reflect, inter alia, the geopolitical rivalries of the interwar period.



ملك بلغاريا يأكل لحم راس وكباب على قارعة الطريق
Rosa Al-Youssef, 5 June 1928
The King of Bulgaria eating cow brains and kebab by the roadside, Cairo, Fuad St.



ملك بلغاريا السابق وبرنارد شو في مصر
Al-Helal, 1 April 1931
The former King of Bulgaria and Bernard Shaw in Egypt.
According to published reports, the ex-king of Bulgaria, Ferdinand, arrived at Cairo Station on 24 February 1931.



فرديناند ، ملك بلغاريا السابق
من زيارته مصر في هذا التاريخ ، ملك بلغاريا الذي زار مصر في الثاني والعشرين من شهر فبراير في
مصر بعد طرده من بلجيكا في عام 1918.

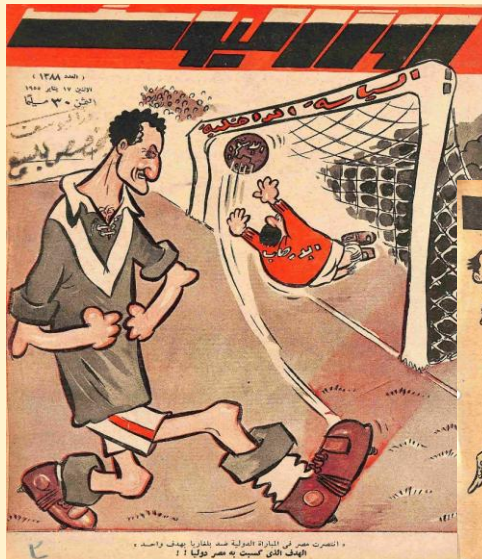
فرديناند ملك بلغاريا السابق
Al-Helal, 1 February 1933
Ferdinand, former King of Bulgaria
On 1 February 1933, it was reported that the ex-king was spending his summer holiday in Upper Egypt.



مفاجأة مسرحية يعدها ملك بلغاريا لشعبه وللعالم
Rosa Al-Youssef, 11 June 1934
The King of Bulgaria prepared a theatrical surprise for his people and the rest of the world, by pretending that the kingdom and the regime were in danger.

Following the signing of the Paris Peace Treaty, Egypt was among the first states with which Bulgaria restored diplomatic relations in 1947. This demonstrates that the two governments considered each other promising partners in the rapidly changing landscape of international relations after the Second World War. In 1948, Bulgaria reopened its embassy in what it believed to be the most important country in the Middle East.

By the mid-1950s, Bulgaria and Egypt had developed their economic partnership. The number of press articles about the partner state and nation increased, covering a range of topics from politics and economics to sports and culture.



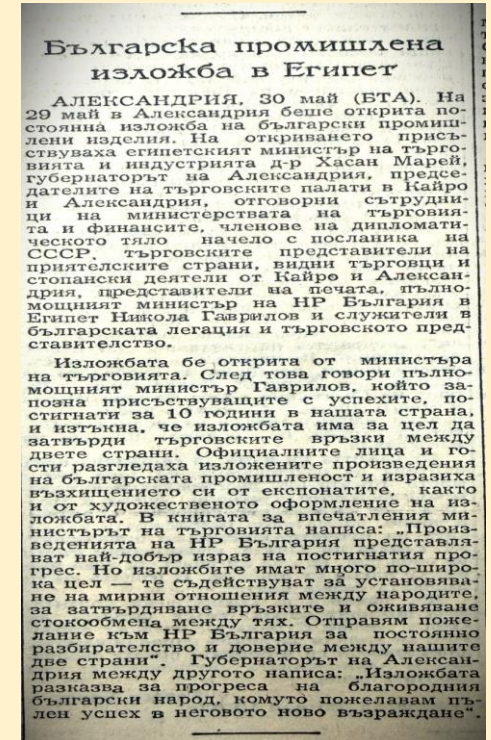
رأى عبد السميع مباراه مصر و بلغاريا
Rosa Al-Youssef, 17 January 1955
Egypt-Bulgaria (1:0) match in Cairo
of 1955



В. „Народна култура“, 16 август 1958 г.
Пътеписен репортаж от Египет,
Сирия и Ливан

Narodna Kultura Newspaper, 16 August 1958
Travelogue from Egypt, Syria and Lebanon

Source:
<https://newspaper.kultura.bg/bg/archive/view/1958>



В. „Работническо дело“, 31 май 1955 г.
Съобщение за българска промишлена
изложба в Египет
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 31 May 1955
Announcement regarding a Bulgarian industrial
exhibition in Egypt

On 26 July 1956, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser announced the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company. He stated that Egypt would make every effort to enforce the modernization of the country, including through industrialisation and raising the standard of living.

Of particular importance to Bulgaria was the Egyptian president's stated intention to speed up the country's industrialisation by diversifying its foreign policy and economic ties with countries in the Soviet bloc. The Bulgarian press emphasised these objectives and reported on Bulgaria's diplomatic and political support for Egypt during the Suez Crisis of summer and autumn 1956.



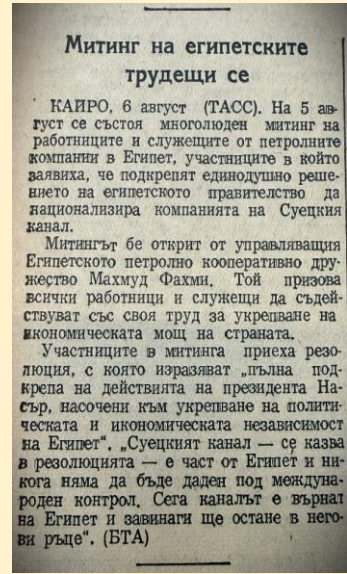
В. „Работническо дело“, 25 юли 1956 г.
Реч на Насър за стремежа на Египет към пълна независимост и Индустриализация на страната
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 25 July 1956
Nasser's speech on Egypt's struggle for full Independence and the industrialisation of the country



В. „Работническо дело“, 28 юли 1956 г.
Съобщение за национализацията на Суецкия канал
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 28 July 1956
Announcement regarding the nationalisation of the Suez Canal

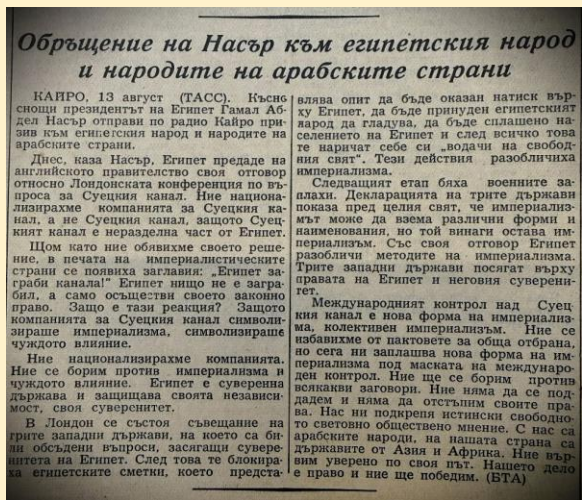


В. „Работническо дело“, 10 декември 1955 г.
Египетският печат за деня на Конституцията на България
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 10 December 1955
Egyptian media coverage of Bulgaria's Constitution Day



В. „Работническо дело“, 8 август 1956 г.
Съобщение за митинг на египетските трудещи се в подкрепа на египетското правителство
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 8 August 1956
Announcement of a rally by Egyptian workers in support of the Egyptian government.

In August and September 1956, the Bulgarian press published reports from various countries backing the nationalisation of the Suez Canal. This created the impression that a massive anti-Western wave was sweeping the world. The Bulgarian media also supported the Egyptian government's actions. Sofia provided press coverage of Cairo's stance at the London Conference, where options for resolving the crisis financially and politically were discussed. The Egyptian ambassador Ahmed Abdel Migid arrived in Bulgaria at the height of the crisis, on 12 August 1956.

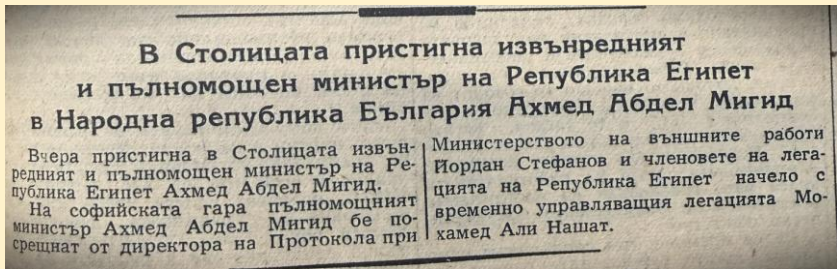


Обръщение на Насър към египетския народ и другите арабски народи

Nasser's address to the Egyptian people and other Arab nations

В. „Работническо дело“, 14 август 1956 г.
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper,
14 August 1956

Декларация на българското правителство в подкрепа на Египет
Statement by the Bulgarian government in support of Egypt

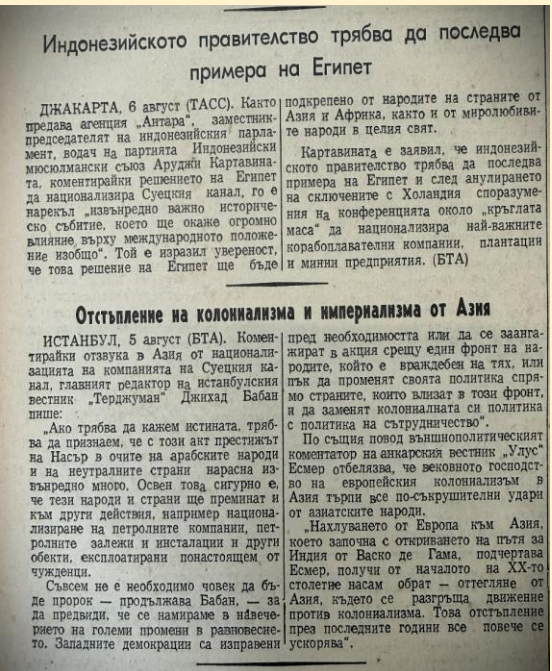


В. „Работническо дело“, 13 август 1956 г.

Съобщение за пристигане на египетския посланик в София

Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 13 August 1956

Announcement of the Arrival of the Egyptian Ambassador in Sofia



В. „Работническо дело“, 7 август 1956 г.

Съобщения за подкрепа по света за национализацията на Суецкия канал

Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 7 August 1956

Reports of worldwide support for nationalisation of the Suez Canal

The Bulgarian press published the official statement of the Bulgarian government condemning the military attack by Israel, the United Kingdom and France on Egypt in autumn 1956. The press also reported on the statement made by the Bulgarian representative to the UN in support of Egypt. Citing Egyptian sources, the Bulgarian media also emphasised the determination of the Egyptian people to defend their country.



Изказване на представителя на НР България за агресията срещу Египет

НЮ ЙОРК, 15 ноември (БТА). На заседание на извънредната сесия на Общото събрание на ООН на 4 ноември българският представител д-р Петър Вутов се изказа за агресията срещу Египет. Каго направи преглед на последните събития в Средния изток, той заяви: „В света няма човек със здрав ум, който осъжда който да не може да разбере истинската цел на агресорите. Израелската агресия срещу Египет има две главни цели — първо, да загуби с помощта на Англия и Франция египетската територия и, второ, да подготви за француските империалистически планове за повторно заграване на Суецкия канал“.

След като разобличи лицемерните аргументи на агресорите за нападение срещу Египет, българският представител заяви, че народите върват в ООН и че въпреки стремежа на империалистическите кръгове да подпоая основните народна организация е в състояние да се намеси и да принуди агресорите да зачитат Хартата на ООН.

Накрая д-р Вутов прочете пред събраниято декларацията на правителството на НР България относно агресията срещу Египет и заяви, че по поръчение на своето правителство ще даде в джуха на тази декларация всеостанна подкрепа на ООН за прекратяване на военните действия и незабавно оттегляне на чуждите войски от египетска територия.

**В. „Работническо дело“, 4 ноември
1956 г.**

„Долу престъпните ръце на агресорите“

*Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 4
November 1956*

"Down with the criminal hands of the aggressors!"

В. „Работническо дело“, 10 ноември 1956 г.

„Египетската младеж е в първите редици на героичната борба на египетския народ за отстояване свободата и независимостта на своята родина срещу империалистическата агресия. На снимката: Девойки-бойци от народноосвободителната армия на Египет“

Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 10 November 1956

"Egyptian youth are at the forefront of the heroic struggle of the Egyptian people to defend their homeland's freedom and independence against imperialist aggression." Pictured: Female fighters from the Egyptian People's Liberation Army.

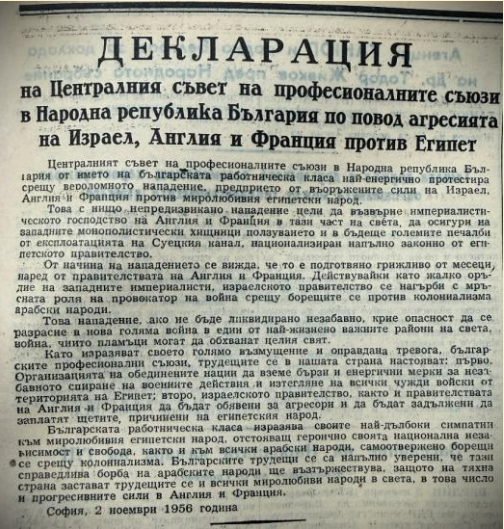
В. „Работническо дело“, 6 ноември 1956 г.

„Изказване на представителя на България в ООН за агресията срещу Египет. Петър Вутов разобличи „лицемерните аргументи на агресорите“

Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 6 November 1956

“Statement by Bulgaria’s representative to the UN on the aggression against Egypt. Petar Vutov denounced the ‘hypocritical arguments of the aggressors.’”

The Bulgarian Communist Party's newspaper, *Rabotnichesko Delo*, published articles reporting widespread Bulgarian backing of Egypt in the face of aggression. Such support was declared by labour unions and ordinary workers in Kazanlak, Burgas and Mihailovgrad, among other Bulgarian cities. During the years of the communist rule in Bulgaria, rallies were organised by the authorities.



В. „Работническо дело“, 4 ноември 1956 г.

Декларация на Централния съвет на Българските професионални съюзи от 2 ноември 1956 г.

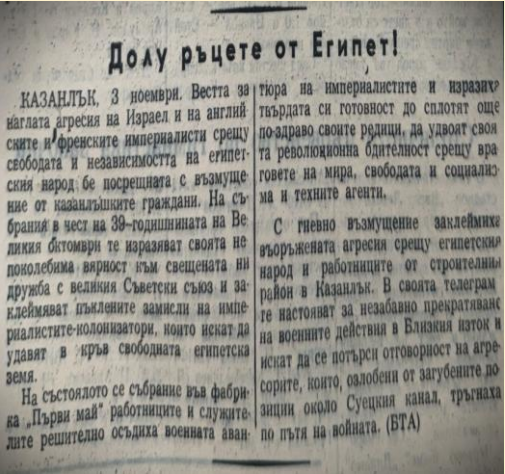
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 4 November 1956

Declaration of the Central Council of Bulgarian Trade Unions, 2 November 1956



Многохиляден протестен митинг, Михайловград
Protest rally in Mihailovgrad

В. „Работническо дело“, 4 ноември 1956 г.
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 4 November 1956



Долу ръцете от Египет!
Казанлък
Protest rally in Kazanlak



Бургаските работници заклеияват агресорите
Protest rally in Burgas

In the mid-November 1956, the Bulgarian press publicised announcements about support for Egypt expressed by the Soviet Union and other countries worldwide. In these circumstances, the government in Sofia promoted the Soviet ideological framework under Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev. This framework emphasised the unity of the Soviet bloc's foreign policy objectives and those of the newly independent states.



В. „Работническо дело“, 6 ноември 1956 г.

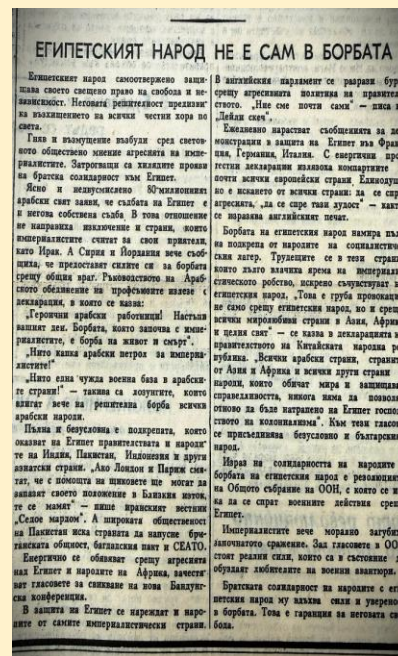
На агресията срещу Египет трябва да бъде сложен край!

Декларация на съветското правителство

Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 6 November 1956

“The aggression against Egypt must end!”

Declaration by the Soviet Government



В. „Работническо дело“, 5 ноември 1956 г.

Египетският народ не е сам в борбата!

Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 5 November 1956

“The Egyptian people are not alone in their struggle!”



В. „Работническо дело“, 7 ноември 1956 г.

Народите подкрепят правото дело на Египет!

Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 7 November 1956

“The peoples support Egypt’s just cause!”

In 1958, Egypt and Syria united to form the United Arab Republic, making Cairo its capital. The Bulgarian government officially recognized the value of the formation of the United Arab Republic. A spirit of understanding prevailed in official bilateral relations during the late 1950s and early 1960s. However, in line with Soviet foreign policy assessments, the Bulgarian Communist government criticised President Gamal Abdel Nasser's policies in closed-door forums for two main reasons. Firstly, Moscow and the entire Soviet bloc did not accept the redrawing of political borders in the Middle East. Secondly, they did not approve of the exclusion of Syrian communists from power. It was under these circumstances that criticism of the authorities of the Syrian part of the united republic first appeared in the Bulgarian press in 1961, containing accusations of the persecution of communists.



В. „Работническо дело“, 9 март 1961 г.
„Да се прекрати терорът против патриотите, демократите и дейците на работническото движение в Обединената арабска република!“
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 9 March 1961
“Stop the terror against patriots, democrats and labour movement activists in the United Arab Republic!”



Rosa Al-Youssef, 11 November 1958
Nokola Gavrillov, the history-lover Ambassador of Bulgaria's interview in 2
pages on the bilateral relations: „My wife translated Tawfik Al-Hakim works into Bulgarian“.

استقبل الرئيس جمال عبد الناصر أمس السيد لاثني زاراموت وزير الدولة البلغاري
Al-Ahram, 20 October 1965
Nasser and the Bulgarian Official Delegation in Cairo

In the mid-1960s, Bulgaria and Egypt strengthened their economic and trade ties. Bulgaria granted Egypt several loans and began exporting weapons. A symbol of the strengthening of bilateral relations was the visit of Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov to Cairo in November 1965. This visit was widely covered in the Bulgarian and Egyptian press.

The Bulgarian press highlighted the opportunities for exporting Bulgarian machinery to Egypt, as well as expressing the Bulgarian government's interest in taking part in Egypt's industrialisation. During his visit, Todor Zhivkov presented the “Georgi Dimitrov” Order to the Egyptian president.



В. „Работническо дело“, 16 – 21 ноември 1965 г.
Българският комунистически официоз отразява посещението на Тодор Живков в Египет. По този повод Георги Джагаров съчинява стихотворение, в което възпява борбата на българския близоизточен партньор за независимост и близостта на двата народа.

Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 16 – 21 November 1965

The Bulgarian Communist Party's official newspaper reported on

Todor Zhivkov's visit to Egypt. On this occasion, Georgi Dzagarov wrote a poem in which he extolled the struggle for independence of Bulgaria's Middle Eastern partner and the closeness of the two peoples.

The Egyptian press gave the five-day Todor Zhivkov's visit to Cairo in November 1965 extensive and prominent coverage, with numerous news reports and analyses on the front pages of major newspapers. President Nasser met his Bulgarian guest on four separate occasions, hosted him at a private dinner with his family, conferred upon him the Order of the Nile, Egypt's highest state decoration, and awarded the Order of Excellence First Class to his wife.



الرئيس يستقبل رئيس حكومة بلغاريا عند وصوله اليوم

عبد الناصر يقول في حفل تكريم رئيس وزراء بلغاريا

عبد الناصر يقول في حفل تكريم رئيس وزراء بلغاريا

رئيس حكومة بلغاريا في القاهرة لأول مرة

عبد الناصر يقول: طموح الشعب المصري يجد من حوله أصداء الإعجاب والتجاوب من كل قوى السلام والحرية في العالم

The Bulgarian press covering art and culture reported on cultural events in Bulgaria that promoted Egyptian achievements, as well as events that demonstrated the Egyptian government's commitment to preserving and promoting Egypt's cultural and historical heritage.

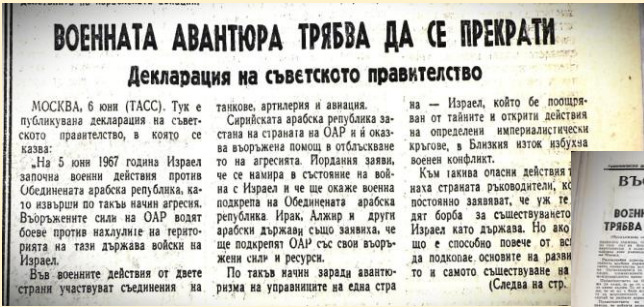


В. „Народна култура“, 15 януари 1966 г. Репортаж, посветен на египетското изкуство и кино <i>Narodna Kultura Newspaper, 15 January 1966</i> <i>Report dedicated to Egyptian art and cinema</i> https://newspaper.kultura.bg/bg/archive/view/1966	В. „Народна култура“, 25 октомври 1966 г. Съобщение за изложба на съвременна египетска керамика в София <i>Narodna Kultura Newspaper, 25 October 1966</i> <i>Announcement regarding an exhibition of contemporary Egyptian ceramics in Sofia</i> https://newspaper.kultura.bg/bg/archive/view/1966
---	---

[illegible]

В. „Народна култура“, 16 януари 1966 г.
Репортаж, посветен на преместването на храмовете на
Рамзес II и на съпругата му Нефертари в Абу Симбел
Narodna Kultura Newspaper, 15 January 1966
Report dedicated to the relocation of the temples of Ramesses II and his
wife Nefertari at Abu Simbel
<https://newspaper.kultura.bg/bg/archive/view/1966>

During the lead-up to and the Six-Day Arab-Israeli War of June 1967, Bulgaria provided diplomatic and political support to the Arab states. At the United Nations, the Bulgarian government accused Israel of pursuing an aggressive policy. At the behest of Moscow, Sofia severed diplomatic relations with Israel in a show of solidarity with its Arab neighbours.

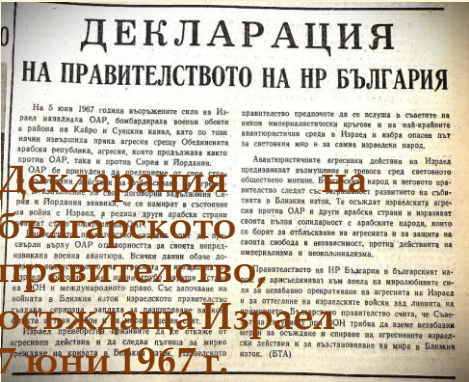


„Военната авантюра трябва да се прекрати“
Декларация на съветското правителство,
6 юни 1967 г.
“The military adventure must be brought to an end.”
Declaration by the Soviet Government,
6 June 1967.

В. „Работническо дело“, 6 – 11 юни 1967 г.
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 6 – 11 June 1967



Въоръжено нападение на Израел
срещу арабските страни,
6 юни 1967 г.
Israel’s armed attack on Arab countries,
6 June 1967.



Bulgarian government
statement
condemning Israel
7 June 1967.



На 10 юни 1967 г. вестникът публикува декларация от Москва на държавите от съветския блок с предупреждение към Израел, че ако не прекрати агресията, „социалистическите държави, подписали тази декларация, ще направят всичко необходимо, за да помогнат на народите на арабските страни да дадат решителен отпор на агресията“. На 11 юни 1967 г. вестникът публикува съобщението за това, че България скъсва дипломатически отношения с Израел.

On 10 June 1967, the newspaper published a declaration from Moscow by the Soviet bloc states, which warned Israel that if it did not cease its aggression, “the socialist states that have signed this declaration will do everything necessary to help the peoples of the Arab countries deliver a decisive rebuff to the aggression”.

The following day, the newspaper announced that Bulgaria was severing diplomatic relations with Israel.



In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Bulgarian-Egyptian relations reached their peak. The stalemate in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the intensified efforts by Egypt and the international community to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict fostered the growth of bilateral ties. The scope and forms of economic cooperation expanded. High-level visits took place in both directions. Educational and cultural exchanges flourished. The press in both countries reported extensively on the various forms of cooperation. This mutual understanding brought the two nations closer together.

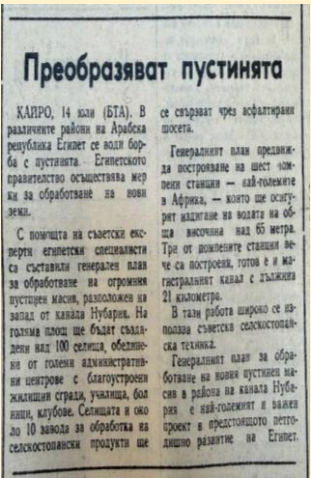
Bulgaria was an active promoter of Soviet aid for Egypt's development and defence.



الرئيس استقبل امس نائب رئيس وزراء بلغاريا
Al-Ahram, 28 November 1968
The President received the Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria



استقبل الرئيس جمال عبدالناصر أمس وفد الحزب الاشتراكي البلغاري
Al-Ahram, 16 March 1970
Nasser and Ivan Popov, member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party



В. „Работническо дело“, 15 юли 1972 г.
Съобщение за усвояване на египетската пустиня с помощта на съветски специалисти
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 15 July 1972
Report on the cultivation of the Egyptian desert with the assistance of Soviet specialists



В. „Работническо дело“, 9 юни 1972 г.
Съобщение за посещението на египетския военен министър в СССР
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 9 June 1972
Announcement of the visit of the Egyptian Minister of Defence to the USSR

Thanks to media coverage of political and cultural ties and reports on their shared historical past, the Bulgarian and Egyptian peoples deepened their understanding of one another.



В. „Народна култура“, 26 април 1969 г.

Статия от видния скулптор Ернст Неизвестни за впечатленията му от пътуване до Египет

Narodna Kultura Newspaper, 26 April 1969

Article by the prominent sculptor Ernst Neizvestny about his impressions of a trip to Egypt

<https://newspaper.kultura.bg/bg/archive/view/1969>



В. „Народна култура“, 20 януари 1975 г.

Интервю с министъра на културата Юсеф ел-Себаи

Narodna Kultura Newspaper, 20 January 1975

Interview with the Minister of Culture Youssef El-Sebai

<https://newspaper.kultura.bg/bg/archive/view/1975>



رياض يبحث تطورات الموقف مع وزير خارجية بلغاريا

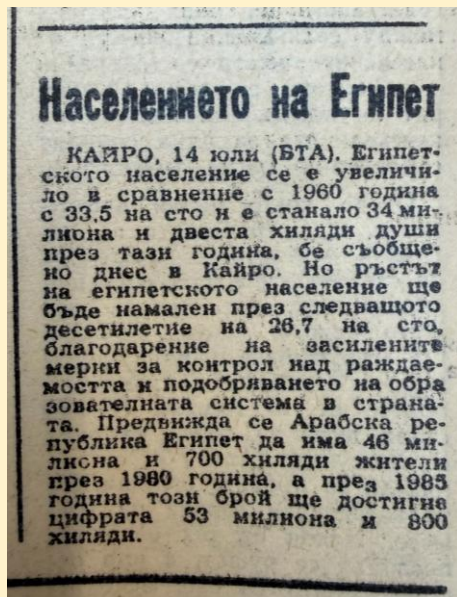
Al-Ahram, 5 May 1970

Riad Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ivan Hristov Bashev, the Bulgarian Foreign Minister

Alongside positive media coverage promoting close political ties, differences began to emerge in the press of both countries in the early 1970s. The promotion of socialist development and Soviet support was accompanied by veiled criticism. In 1972, Soviet military experts left Egypt at the request of President Anwar Sadat, and the Bulgarian press emphasized the contribution of the Soviet military. However, at closed-door Communist party meetings in Sofia, doubts grew regarding Sadat's intentions to continue close cooperation with the Soviet bloc.



الرئيس يستقبل وزير خارجية بلغاريا
Al-Ahram, 7 May 1970
 President Nasser and Ivan
 Hristov Bashev,
 the Bulgarian Foreign Minister



В. „Работническо дело“, 15 юли 1972
 г.
 Информация за демографското
 развитие на Египет
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 15 July 1972
 Information on Egypt's demographic profile



В. „Народна култура“, 2
 август 1973 г.
 Репортаж, посветен на
 развитието на египетския
 театър
Narodna Kultura Newspaper, 2
 August 1973
 Report dedicated to the
 development of Egyptian theater
[https://newspaper.kultura.bg/bg/
 archive/view/1973](https://newspaper.kultura.bg/bg/archive/view/1973)

On July 19, 1972, the newspaper “*Rabotnichesko Delo*” published a report from the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency, citing MENA regarding a statement by Sadat that “the mission of the Soviet military specialists and advisers who were on Egyptian territory at Egypt’s request had ended on July 17.” The report cited “our high appreciation for the enormous assistance provided to us by the USSR and our ardent desire to maintain friendship with the USSR.”

Bulgaria officially supported Egypt throughout the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War, providing political and diplomatic support, as well as weapons. However, Egypt's desire to seek a resolution to the conflict with Israel through direct negotiations conflicted with the strategy of the Soviet bloc, which aimed to resolve Arab-Israeli issues comprehensively through Soviet mediation. In this context, while political cooperation between Bulgaria and Egypt continued in the mid-1970s, underlying tensions began to emerge. Under these circumstances, in July 1974 Anwar Sadat visited Bulgaria, an event widely covered by the press in both countries.



السادات في بلغاريا بعد محادثات ناجحة في رومانيا
Al-Ahram, 1 July 1974
Sadat and Zhivkov in Sofia's International Airport

В. „Работническо дело“, 1 юли 1974 г.
Тодор Живков посреща Ануар Садат в София
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 1 July 1974
Todor Zhivkov welcomes Anwar Sadat in Sofia

زيارة السادات إلى بلغاريا تحقق ثاني اعتراف دولي بمنظمة تحرير فلسطين
Al-Ahram, 3 July 1974
Sadat's visit to Bulgaria achieved the second international recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization

В. „Работническо дело“, 2 юли 1974 г.
Тодор Живков дава официална вечеря в чест на Ануар Садат
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 2 July 1974
Anwar Sadat was the guest of honour at an official dinner hosted by Todor Zhivkov

In the second half of the 1970s, relations between the Soviet Union and Egypt gradually worsened. In search of solutions to Egypt's national priorities, President Anwar Sadat held talks with Israeli and US leaders. In 1977, Sadat visited Israel. In September 1978, under U.S. mediation, the leaders of Israel and Egypt signed key agreements at Camp David, paving the way for Israel's first peace treaty with an Arab state in 1979.

Against this backdrop of unfavourable developments from the perspective of the Soviet bloc, Bulgarian–Egyptian relations deteriorated. The Bulgarian Communist leadership's hidden resentment was exposed in the Bulgarian press. Kept in the dark about the true assessments of the Bulgarian leadership, Bulgarian readers were bombarded with criticism of Egypt in 1978 with focus on the criticism in the Arab circles.



В. „Работническо дело“
3 октомври 1978 г.
Rabotnichesko Delo
Newspaper, 3 October 1978

*Under the headline
“Resistance to the
Triple Conspiracy at
Camp David”,
Rabotnichesko Delo
newspaper reported
on the protests
against the
negotiations in the
Israeli-occupied
territories. It
informed about the
hard stance against
the negotiations,
publicly expressed by
Arab communists
'and Ba'athists.*



В. „Работническо дело“,
5 октомври 1978 г.
Rabotnichesko Delo
Newspaper, 5 October 1978

*Under the
headline “A
Conspiracy
Against the
Arabs,” Rabotnic
hesko Delo
newspaper
highlighted
Arab
assessments of
the United
States’
dangerous plans
regarding the
Middle East.*



В. „Работническо
дело“, 16 октомври
1978 г.
Rabotnichesko Delo
Newspaper, 16 October
1978

*Alongside
disappointment at
the anti-Soviet
stance of a
traditionally
friendly country,
Bulgarian readers
were shocked by the
“true reality” of
Cairo for the first
time when, in
October 1978, the
newspaper
“Rabotnichesko
Delo” reported that
“Cairo is a
decaying city”, a
situation resulting
from Sadat’s policy
of tolerating social
inequalities.*

The Bulgarian and Egyptian press presented conflicting facts and assessments regarding the cause of the arson attack on the Bulgarian embassy in Cairo in December 1978, and who was responsible for severing diplomatic relations that same month.

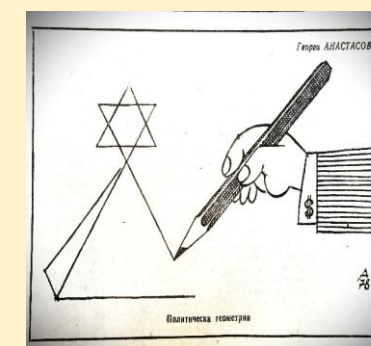
According to Al-Ahram, the President ordered action against Bulgarian Embassy personnel after they assaulted the family of a Ministry of Electricity undersecretary at their Zamalek residence, and the diplomats were also reported to have fired shots and resisted surrendering the suspects and weapons. Within days, Cairo announced the severance of diplomatic relations with Bulgaria, the handover and subsequent evacuation of the Embassy building, and the departure of Bulgarian diplomats. Egyptian coverage thus framed the crisis not as an unprovoked attack on Bulgaria, but as the outcome of a concrete diplomatic and legal dispute that escalated rapidly into a complete rupture in bilateral relations. The late 1970s transformed these hidden tensions into open confrontation, as economic disappointment and political realignment erased the fragile balance that had sustained bilateral contact.



Al-Ahram, 5, 6, 9 December 1978



В. „Работническо дело“, 4 декември 1978 г.
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 4 December 1978



В. „Работническо дело“, 18 декември 1978 г.
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 18 December 1978

The Bulgarian Telegraph Agency published on 4 December 1978 a condemnatory report regarding an attack organised by the Egyptian authorities against the Bulgarian Embassy in Cairo. According to the Agency, the attack involved Egyptian citizens, police and military personnel.

A cartoon with the caption “Political Geometry”

After the severance of diplomatic relations, references to Bulgaria in the Egyptian press became extremely rare until 1988, despite the restoration of diplomatic relations in December 1984. Most of these were brief notices rather than substantial coverage. Bulgaria was no longer presented as an active political or diplomatic partner but appeared only marginally.

Resembling the Egyptian approach, Egypt and the Egyptian nation largely disappeared from Bulgarian media discourse in the 1980s. The state-controlled press mainly covered Bulgarian economic activities in Egypt and continued criticizing the Egyptian alignment with the American foreign policy in the Middle East. However, information about the achievements of Egyptian writers, sculptors, filmmakers and other cultural figures kept the bridge of mutual understanding between the Egyptian and Bulgarian peoples alive.



В. „Работническо дело“, 12 март 1983 г.
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 12 March 1983

Announcement of the establishment of a joint Bulgarian-Egyptian company that was expected to contribute to the development of bilateral economic ties and conduct business throughout the broader Middle East region.



В. „Работническо дело“, 13 март 1983 г.
Rabotnichesko Delo Newspaper, 13 March 1983

Announcement regarding the participation of Bulgarian companies in the 21st International Trade Fair in Cairo. This announcement highlights the ongoing yearly presence of Bulgarian businesses at the event.



В. „Народна култура“, 4 ноември 1988 г.
Статия, посветена на известния египетски писател Нагиб Махфуз
Narodna Kultura Newspaper, 4 November 1988
Article dedicated to the famous Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz, a Nobel Prize laureate.
<https://newspaper.kultura.bg/bg/archive/view/1988>

In the 1980s, the most important turning point came in July 1988, when Suzanne Mubarak, the Egyptian President's wife, paid an 80-hour visit to Sofia, prompting *Sabah Al-Kheir* to devote a seven-page supplement to the event. The visit marked a visible thaw in bilateral relations, as it brought together high-level political symbolism and carefully staged cultural diplomacy: Suzanne Mubarak met Todor Zhivkov and Malina Stambolski, gave an extended interview to Bulgarian television, visited schools in Sofia, and took part in the “Flag of Peace” conference. More than a ceremonial gesture, the trip signaled that the two countries were now working to replace the lingering Cold War distance with a more pragmatic and mutually accommodating relationship, one in which public visibility, personal diplomacy, and cultural exchange became instruments for easing political friction and redefining bilateral contact.



Sabah Al-Kheir, 21 July 1988

In the 1990s and early 2000s, Egyptian-Bulgarian relations were reframed by post-Cold War changes, democratic transition, and renewed cultural and economic contacts.



مبارك يبحث مع رئيس وزراء بلغاريا تنمية التعاون بين البلدين
Al-Ahram, 27 September 2000
Mubarak and Bulgarian Prime Minister Ivan Kostov in Cairo.



أول طفل منذ 70 عاما للأسرة الملكية السابقة في بلغاريا
Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, 15 March 2007
The first child in Bulgaria in the last 70 years for the former royal family.



رئيس بلغاريا وقرينته في المتحف المصري وقلة صلاح الدين
Al-Akbar, 27 March 2029
The President of Bulgaria and his wife at the Egyptian Museum and Salah El-Din Citadel

Designers of the exhibition:

- Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nadya Filipova (Institute for Historical Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; Department of Arabic and Semitic Studies, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”)
- Dr. habil. Abdallah Abdel-Ati Al-Naggar (Academy of Scientific Research and Technology, Egypt – Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary)
- Assoc. Prof. Dr. Simona Samuilova (Institute for Historical Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)
- Senior Asst. Prof. Dr. Krustyo Yordanov (Institute for Historical Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)

The exhibition is part of the joint research project “Beyond the Boundaries of Time and Space: Bulgaria and Egypt in the Dynamics of Transformations in the Middle East”. The project is being implemented during the period 2025–2027 by the Institute for Historical Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and Damanhour University under a bilateral agreement between the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Egyptian Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (Project No. IC-EG/10/2025–2027).

