

discusses the role played by Isaiah Horowitz (ca. 1570 – 1626) in the process of the dissemination of Lurianic *Kabbalah* in Ashkenaz. Offspring of an important Prague Jewish family, Horowitz eventually immigrated to the Land of Israel and is buried in Tiberias, only a stone's throw from the grave of Maimonides. The final chapter by Pavel Čech is dedicated to the history of Sephardic Jews in early modern Amsterdam (ch. VI). Special attention is paid to strategies of dealing with forced converts to Christianity, *conversos*, and their re-appropriation by the Jewish community.

It is not easy to pin down the relationship between isolationist and integrationist tendencies in a group fostered by an exclusivist culture which is at the same time engaged in constant interaction with broader society. For the historian of Judaism, most studies in this volume present little new data. Hence, more emphasis should have been placed on its analysis rather than mere description. Some chapters would also have benefited greatly from paying closer attention to discussions in recent historiography (especially ch. I and III). Still, the authors of this volume have succeeded in presenting the Czech reader, including non-specialists, with an important resource for understanding the complexities of Jewish medieval history. On top of that, some chapters provide information and insight relevant for students of the history of the Middle East and Islam as well.

Milan Žonca

WANNER, Jan. *Ve stínu studené války. Střední východ v letech Eisenhowerovy doktríny 1956 – 1960*. [In the Shadow of the Cold War. The Middle East in the Years of the Eisenhower Doctrine 1956 – 1960.] Prague: Lidové noviny Publishing House, 2011. 568 p. ISBN 978-80-7422-094-4. In Czech.

Few books will so fully and comprehensively guide the reader with their depth, breadth and mastery of argument as Jan Wanner's new monograph of the political developments in the Middle East during the second term of Eisenhower's presidency. In more than 500 pages the author has managed to tell the story of the Eisenhower Doctrine and its impact on the Middle Eastern Arab countries. The book is truly a detailed account of the trail of American foreign policy in the region. It focuses on Arab-superpower relations from 1957 until the end of 1960.

The book is divided into two parts, each of which contains five chapters each. The first part is entitled "Containing the Arab Nationalism". This period began with the US introduction of the Eisenhower Doctrine for the defence of the Middle East and ended with the merger of Egypt and Syria in a unitary state called the United Arab Republic. In the interval, two crises occurred in Jordan and Syria. Analyzing them, the author shed light not only on the application of the doctrine but also on the genesis of the Egyptian-Syrian union.

The Suez War helped Jamal Abd an-Nasir fully appreciate the radical shift in the international balance of power. No longer could Britain and France, the two traditional

colonial masters, play the role of great powers except within the context of US global strategy. In other words, the United States had replaced Britain and France as the dominant Western actor in the Middle East. After the war, the Egyptian leader admitted that Eisenhower and Dulles played the leading role and most effective role in thwarting the aggression (p. 21).

Due to the close alignment of the USA with Israel, the revolutionary Arab regimes (e.g. Egypt) had to seek an alignment with the USSR to obtain arms, economic assistance and diplomatic backing. However, this alliance was overshadowed by distrust. The Egyptians asserted that Egypt had long struggled to rid itself of foreign domination and did not intend to repeat this experience with the Soviets (p. 60).

The intensification and intrusion of the Cold War into the Middle East was bound to complicate Arab politics. Nowhere was this truer than in the Jordanian crisis of April 1957. King Hussein's conservative orientation put him at odds with a large segment of Palestinian nationalists living under Jordanian sovereignty. Hussein's success in crushing the opposition owed much to his ability to mobilize regional and Western support (pp. 72 – 75). The Eisenhower Doctrine would not be the vehicle of return for the right-wing elements in Syria as it had been for pro-Western forces in Jordan in April 1957 or in Lebanon in 1958.

The exit of Saudi Arabia from the Egyptian-Syrian bloc had important implications for the Arab order. First, the Arab order had become rigidly divided into two competing revolutionary and conservative camps, where Saudi Arabia had been leading the conservatives and Egypt had been leading the radicals. Second, the Saudi action dealt a blow to the Egyptian position, thus providing a psychological boost for Egypt's Arab opponents. In early 1958 Syria and Egypt appeared to stand together as the leaders of a wave of anti-imperialist pan-Arabism. This convergence between the Ba'ath Party and the Egyptian regime brought about the Egyptian-Syrian union of 1 February 1958, the United Arab Republic (UAR). Jamal Abd an-Nasir initially objected to the goal of unity, preferring instead a form of federation. A group of Syrian military officers persuaded him that only a full merger could arrest the state of uncertainty and instability that was tearing apart the Syrian body politic. It is correct that before giving his consent to a total fusion of the two countries, the Egyptian leader imposed draconian conditions: the liquidation of all parties and the depoliticization of the Syrian army (pp. 127 – 128).

The second part of the book is entitled "Between the Currents". The author analyses with deep insight how the new union influenced further development in the Middle East. The Americans were afraid that the expansion of Egyptian power would encourage anti-Western and particularly anti-American tendencies. It is a sad fact that no one cared about the Arab quest for genuine political and economical independence. The contradictions and ambivalence in the analyses of US officials explains their low key response to the establishment of the UAR. The essence of US policy, mistrusting and keeping Jamal Abd an-Nasir on trial until he recognized "legitimate" US interests in the Middle East, remained unchanged. It was hardly surprising that Moscow was equivocal in its response to the establishment of the UAR. The Soviet leadership, considering the union an extension of the hostile atmosphere against communism in Egypt and Syria, made its support of the new state conditional upon its taking the lead in the struggle against imperialism.

The establishment of the UAR introduced new elements into regional and world politics. Not only did the UAR change the geographic and political map of the Arab world, it also forced the great powers to re-examine their strategy. The intensification of the East-West contest imposed severe constraints on the great powers, while bestowing considerable freedom of action on local actors. In short, the relationship between the USA and the USSR affected their relationship with the Arab states. On the other hand, the powers' obsession with each other prevented them from playing adequate attention to local fears and expectations. The dominant view within the Eisenhower administration was handicapped by a Cold War ideology that divided Third World states into enemies or clients. Global interpretations were imposed on local disputes and produced results contrary to those intended.

Professor Jan Wanner, a renowned Czech historian and an authority in the modern history of the Middle East, has presented a tightly organized, elegantly written, analytically nuanced, well-researched and thoughtful work. The author has mobilized his deep knowledge of both Western and Eastern diplomatic sources to assess the significance of the period, and has put together a fascinating account of continuity and change and succeeded on every score. The reader finishes this book with a firm grasp of the main tendencies of the historical development in the given period in the Middle East.

*Karol Sorby*