

mancher Wortarten (Adverbien, Präpositionen), die Syntax des Verbs und verschiedene Typen der Satzverbindungen und Satzgefüge durchgenommen und geübt.

Die Ergänzungstexte werden in dreierlei Form geboten. Die meisten stellen Fachtexte dar (Geometrie, Technik, Medizin); daneben enthalten sie Proben des arabischen Humors und zwei klassische Texte über die Zeit des Aufkommens des Islam. Besonders die Fachtexte bilden den anspruchsvollsten Teil des ganzen Lehrstoffes und erfordern ein intensives Studium unter Leitung eines Lehrers.

Wohlüberlegt ist die Verteilung und die Auswahl der Konversationsbereiche und Konversationssituationen. Ihr einigendes Thema ist der Aufenthalt eines slowakischen Arabisten in Ägypten. Mit seinem Gesprächspartner, einem gebildeten Ägypter, konversiert er auf Schriftarabisch, was vollkommen begreiflich ist. Seine Gespräche mit manchen anderen Personen klingen jedoch nicht ganz natürlich. Dessenungeachtet bieten die Konversationstexte ein reiches, die kommunikative Fähigkeit förderndes Material.

In den Schlussteil des Lehrbuches hat der Autor eine umfangreiche Auswahl aus modernen literarischen sowie nichtbelletristischen Texten aufgenommen. Es überwiegen darin Proben aus ägyptischen Prosaikern und Dramatikern, vertreten sind aber auch Syrien, der Irak und Libanon.

Einer der charakteristischen Züge von Sorbys pädagogischer Methode ist der Gebrauch visueller Anschauungsmittel. Der Autor hat alle Möglichkeiten und Vorteile, die die Arbeit mit dem Computer anbietet (verschiedene Tabellen, mannigfache Schrifttypen u.a.), maximal ausgenutzt. Dank diesem Umstand ist das Buch typographisch mustergültig ausgestattet.

Karol Sorby hat ein wertvolles Lehrbuch verfasst, das auf seiner langjährigen pädagogischen Praxis basiert und sich durch eine erprobte Methode auszeichnet. Es wird ein intensives Studium des modernen Arabisch an den slowakischen Universitäten und in Sprachkursen fördern.

*Jaroslav Oliverius*

SORBY, Karol R.: Suez 1956. Súmrak tradičného kolonializmu na Blízkom východe. (Suez 1956. The Twilight of Traditional Colonialism in the Middle East). Bratislava, VEDA Publishing House 2003, 347 pp. ISBN 80-224-0782-8.

The number of scientific works dealing with the history of Asian and African countries is still insufficient in Czech and Slovak historiography. The more must be welcomed this original synthetic work by a prominent Slovak Arabist and historian, expert on Arab and Islamic history, senior research fellow at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava.

Karol Sorby set himself a difficult task in writing about the Suez crisis which had already been analysed so many times by different authors. However, it is one of the most astonishing events and a major turning point in both British and Middle Eastern history.

In this well-documented work the author uncovers the full story of Suez. He offers his reassessment in the light of newly released archives containing some interesting revelations.

France and Israel had obvious motives for confronting Jamal Abd al-Nasir and sought British support. But why did Anthony Eden agree? The roots of the Suez crisis lay in British interests in the Middle East dating from the mid-nineteenth century. By 1945, these interests were challenged by pressure for an independent state of Israel, the emergence of the US as an influential power, and the replacement in Arab countries of "old guard" elites, often supported by Britain, with younger regimes which proclaimed nationalist agendas. Geographically, the centre of the evolving conflict was the Suez Canal. Its control by France and Britain was an important symbol of the continuing dominance of those countries in the region.

Events increasingly isolated the British and brought Washington into the centre of affairs. American support for Britain as the dominant Western power in the Middle East was no longer assured. The author brings out the reversal this meant in Eden's own policies: the successful 1954 agreement with Egypt on evacuation, the well-meant but abortive Anglo-American Plan Alpha for an Arab-Israeli settlement, and the aid offer for the Aswan Dam (pressed by Eden on a reluctant US administration to pre-empt the Soviets). After March 1956 Washington and London had shifted to "containing" Jamal Abd al-Nasir and supporting the Baghdad Pact. The new material shows, however, that Eden was already set on intervention – against either Israel or Egypt as aggressor. From the moment of the nationalization of the canal in July the policy aim was defined as the overthrow of Jamal Abd al-Nasir, public denials notwithstanding. It remains unclear what exactly – apart from sickness – brought Eden to his paranoiac view of Jamal Abd al-Nasir as a latter-day Hitler. For one who witnessed Selwyn Lloyd's reaction in Cairo to Jamal Abd al-Nasir's quip about the dismissal of General Glubb (and to the stoning of Lloyd's party in Bahrain the same evening), that the episode – relayed to Eden as proof of Jamal Abd al-Nasir's malignity – is a key factor. The author also emphasizes the influence of Nuri al-Said, who advised Eden to "hit the Egyptian hard and quickly".

Transatlantic cross-purposes over the canal negotiations are clearly presented: while John Foster Dulles played for time the Europeans worked for a *casus belli*. But it is shown that Eden was deceived only by his own wishful thinking into expecting the United States to acquiesce in the Suez attack. The consequences of Suez emerge as a shedding of illusion all around. In France, disillusion with allies and humiliation in the Arab world paved the way for de Gaulle, withdrawal from Algeria, and an independent defence policy. Britain under Harold Macmillan took the opposite course of rebuilding the transatlantic relationship and was relatively

unscathed; Suez merely exposed the limitations of an imperial role that had existed since 1945. However, the Suez affair had bad consequences for the Conservative Party and negative impact on a generation of diplomats and others who were outraged by the actions and deceptions of their political leaders.

One does not normally expect a historical analysis to be a page-turner. However, this is an extremely readable book, and in fact one which is often hard to put down, so well written is it, so beautifully produced, and so coherent in its presentation of what in other hands might be a tedious subject. In sum this important and challenging book will be an excellent stimulus for students of the modern Middle Eastern history. More generally, it should be of great interest for all those concerned with this significant period of Middle Eastern history which at the same time provides the background for understanding the contemporary problems.

The reader finishes this substantial book with a firm grasp of the main tendencies of the historical development. The impressive part of it is its comprehensiveness. The author has put together a fascinating account of continuity and change and succeeded on every score.

*Eduard Gombár*

SORBY, Karol R.: *Arabský východ (1945 – 1958)*. (The Arab East). Bratislava, Slovak Academic Press 2005, 305 pp. ISBN 80-89104-77-0.

The political development in the Arab world attracts the attention of both the scholars and common people since several decades. Along with author's *Suez 1956. The Twilight of Traditional Colonialism in the Middle East*, this monograph is an especially welcome addition to the scholarly literature on the modern Middle East. There has been relatively little systematic, theory-relevant work in Central European historiography. Teachers of courses on modern Middle Eastern affairs until now have had slim pickings in the way of synthesizing texts, usually having to rely on narrative "current history" approaches, impressionistic essays, or military-strategic compendia.

This book is the best and most comprehensive yet produced in Slovakia in this field. It actually provides a synthetic survey of the post-war (1945 – 1958) history of eastern Arab countries and is arranged in five chapters. The first chapter "The Arab East between the two World Wars" represents a broad introduction in the post-war developments and contains the following themes: The Arab East after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire; European power and the unequal treaties; The French mandate in Levant; The British mandate in Palestine; British supremacy in Iraq; Developments in the Arabian Peninsula; Arab unity and the League of Arab