

that period have survived and as Malečková claims “we still live surrounded by a number of myths, which we inherited from the period of national ideology formation”.

Miroslava Darnadyová

SORBY, Karol R.: *Suez 1956. Súmrak tradičného kolonializmu na Blízkom východe (Suez 1956. The Dawn of Traditional Colonialism in the Near East)*. Bratislava, VEDA Vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied 2003. 347 pp. ISBN 80-224-0782-8.

In this monograph the author presents a succession of analyses of relevant sources that move forward our recent knowledge of the Suez Crisis, one of the milestones of top importance not merely in the history of modern Egypt, but also, in a much wider sense, in the history of Western colonialism. The Napoleonic invasion of Egypt, more than two centuries ago, set in motion processes between East and West, processes marked by confrontation much more than by cooperation, which still dominate global political perspectives with constantly varying scenes, names of winners and losers. The Suez Crisis, when choosing the term out of the set of competitive names, like Kadesh Operation, Suez Campaign or Suez War, differs from the never-ending routine clashes in the troubled area of the Near or rather Middle East at least in one significant point. The difference lies in the reversal of respective positions occupied by the invaders and the invaded with respect to the outcome of the conflict: the invaders, usually victorious, suffered here a humiliating defeat, while the invaded emerged from the crisis as victors and winners of the world's sympathy and moral support.

The roots of the crisis extend back to the fall of the Egyptian monarchy in 1952 and the new style of policies adopted by the republican government. The anti-Egyptian alliance between two European powers, the United Kingdom and France, and Israel, stimulated by their economic and trading interests in the Suez Canal, was a direct response to the nationalization of the Suez Canal by the Egyptian president Gamāl Abdannāšir (Gamal Abdul Nasser of the Western media) on July 26, 1956.

Sorby's narrative of the crisis sheds new light on a number of ambiguously interpreted facts and, in some cases, like the Western policies towards financing the High Dam and Egypt's turn to the Soviet Union, the purchase of weapons from the East, etc., etc., the author reexamines the critical relationship between causes (or what is presented as such) and their consequences, real or imaginary.

The monograph consists of six chronologically arranged chapters:

- (1) The Near East in the context of World Politics, 1945 – 1954;
- (2) Egypt between the withdrawal agreement and the purchase of weapons from the East, 11/1954 – 9/1955;
- (3) Weapons and the High Dam, 10/1955 – 2/1956;
- (4) The road to nationalization of the Suez Canal, 3/1956 – 7/1956;
- (5) The nationalization of the Suez Canal, 7/1956 – 9/1956;
- (6) The useless search for a peaceful settlement, 9/1956 – 10/1956.

The book offers a well-documented comprehensive picture of the Suez Crisis, its evolution, climax and its unexpected outcome and aftermath: the United Kingdom and France lost most of their influence in the Middle East; the Suez Crisis overtly signals the dissolution of the British colonial and imperial power.

The chief merit of Sorby's work derives from the ability of its author to break through the flood of discredited postcolonial stereotypes by which this sensitive part of Egyptian and World history is usually depicted. Sorby's viewing of events is free from any aspect of anti-Arab and anti-Islamic prejudice currently observed in some media networks as well as in some scholarly texts dealing with Near- and Middle-Eastern topics.

*Ladislav Drozdík*