

**ZÁHOŘÍK, Jan, *Etiopie v letech 1923–1935. Cesta k italské invazi, Karolinum, Praha 2009, 163 pages.***

ROMAN KODET

The history of Ethiopia is not well researched by Czech historiography. The book of Jan Záhořík is therefore a welcomed contribution to the history of Africa and colonialism in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its main attention is focused on the years 1923–1935, but the scope of the book is quite larger, because it depicts also the previous period of Ethiopian history with emphasis on the relations of this African state to its relations with Italy.

The work is divided into six parts (further split into further chapters), in which he deals with the main problems concerning Ethiopia in the 1920s and the first half of 1930s. In the first short chapter Záhořík describes the previous research of relations of Ethiopia with Italy, where he claims, that the interest of historians throughout the world in the history of colonial expansion increases only in past twenty years, while previously this topic was somewhat neglected. The next part is contributed to the ethnography of Ethiopia and its history before the rule of Menelik II (1889–1913).

The third describes the years 1889–1923. Záhořík concentrates here on the main problems of this period – the battle of Adowa where the Ethiopians stopped Italian invasion, the policy of Great Powers towards Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian accession to the League of nations and even the treaty of friendship with Rome in the year 1928. After this introduction into the international relation comes a part focused on the picture of Ethiopia in Europe and Czechoslovakia. Here the author summarizes the image of this country and gives us an interesting account the stand of Europeans toward Ethiopia and Africa.

The fifth section deals with the so-called Walwal incident of 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> December 1934, which eventually lead to the Italian attack against Ethiopia. In two chapters there is described the problem of borders between Ethiopia and the Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland. Záhořík also explains

Mussolini's policy and his decision to conquer Ethiopia on the 30<sup>th</sup> December 1934. He also depicts the effort of the Emperor Haile Selassie to hinder such development. In the last part there are described the relations of Ethiopia to the outside world. In separate chapters the author deals with the foreign policy of Addis Ababa towards Germany, Sweden, Belgium, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Russia (or USSR), United States of America, Islamic world, Africa, India, Australia, France and Great Britain.

As a whole the book seems well balanced and brings the reader a good overview of the history of Ethiopia at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially its foreign relations. The language of the work is readable and vivid and there are several tables illustrating Ethiopian demography, economy and trade. In the annex there is a list of abbreviations and glossary, which is quite helpful for a reader who is not so familiar with the Ethiopian history. Also the map included in this section can help with the orientation in the text. The bibliography than shows an excellent orientation of the author in the historiography of the history of Ethiopia and his erudition.

In conclusion it can be said, that Záhořík brings the reader a remarkable account of Ethiopian relations with the outside world in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are quite few Czech authors dealing with the modern history of Africa in comparison with Europe or America, and Záhořík shows, that it is important to study its history for us, to be able to comprehend its present.