

had nominated Adlai Stevenson to oppose Dwight Eisenhower in 1952 because they knew they would lose that election. I doubt that delegates to the Democratic Convention reasoned that way. And I imagine that at least some influential members of the Egyptian regime under ‘Abd al-Nasir, Sadat, and Mubarak—perhaps even the presidents themselves—believed that they were moving the country toward liberal democracy. Could these opposition groups have maintained morale and membership without believing some of what they said about the need for change and democratization? That they did not succeed in achieving such goals does not prove hypocrisy. The harsh judgments about intent seem unnecessary to the argument of the book.

Albrecht says opposition can contest a government at three levels: “singular *policies* executed, or planned to be executed, by the incumbency; the *basic rules and procedures* of the regime; and singular members of the political elite, that is, the *incumbency* [italic in the original]” (p. 9). There he differentiates regime and incumbency, but, perhaps because he does not think even the Islamists represented a genuine challenge to the regime, he tends to use the words “incumbency” and “regime” almost interchangeably in the rest of the book. Often it is not clear whether “incumbency” refers to the inner circle around the president or to a larger group, such as the ruling party. It is sometimes unclear whether “incumbency” means the military regime as constituted since 1952 or just those holding office under Mubarak.

Unfortunately, the quality of writing and editing makes the book much less accessible than it could be. The switching of verb tenses constitutes a serious impediment to clarity. Written or revised after the fall of Mubarak, the text sometimes refers to happenings of the Mubarak era with the simple past tense, but sometimes it employs the present perfect as if the regime and its practices continue. That may well be the case, but the seemingly haphazard choice of tenses leaves the reader wondering what the author meant. A second problem relates to sequence: the reader encounters “on the other hand” without being able to find “on the one hand,” or finds himself searching backward for “first” once “second” and “third” are mentioned. Misuse of prepositions is frequent. And then there are misspellings and typos of the sort that have become all too common in contemporary academic publications. The book includes a guide to acronyms, a small glossary, and an index, all of which are helpful.

With this book, flawed though it is, Albrecht establishes himself as one of the most astute observers of the contemporary political scene in Egypt. He makes a significant contribution to the understanding of authoritarianism in one country and to the understanding of that phenomenon more broadly. The study is theoretically sophisticated and empirically solid.

JAMES TOTH, *Sayyid Qutb: The Life and Legacy of a Radical Islamic Intellectual* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Pp. 392. \$35.00 cloth.

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Much has been written about the famous Egyptian Islamist ideologue Sayyid Qutb (1906–66) over the past decades, including books by Ahmad S. Moussalli (*Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutb* [Beirut: AUB Press, 1993], William Shepard (*Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism: A Translation and Critical Analysis of Social Justice in Islam* [Leiden: Brill, 1996]), Adnan A. Musallam (*From Secularism to Jihad: Sayyid Qutb and the Foundations of Radical Islamism* [Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2005]), Sayed Khatab (*The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb: The Theory of Jahiliyya and The*

*Power of Sovereignty: The Political and Ideological Philosophy of Sayyid Qutb* [both New York: Routledge, 2006], and John Calvert (*Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2010]), as well as many articles by the same authors and others. Most courses on modern Islam at universities around the world include Qutb, and published overviews of Islamism in the 20th century are certain to mention him. All of this makes one wonder what another book could add to our knowledge on Qutb. At the same time, it is clear that beyond the circle of scholars of the Middle East and Islam, Qutb is still too often believed to be the man almost single-handedly responsible for the radical ideology behind al-Qa'ida and the terrorist attacks of 9/11, suggesting that information on Qutb aimed at a broader audience is apparently needed. It is precisely this point—popular ignorance about Sayyid Qutb's life, ideology, and contribution to radical Islam—that James Toth, an American anthropologist based at New York University in Abu Dhabi, seeks to address in this book.

In an attempt to counter what he sees as distorted views of Qutb's ideology by writers like Paul Berman, Toth strives to “find what is worthwhile in [Qutb's] ideas ... determine their impact, give him a fair and balanced assessment, regard him like other ideologues who inspire revolutions ... and explain what may appear unintelligible” (p. 4). Toth describes “Sayyid Qutb's vision of Islam” as “a powerful social movement” and hence uses “a social movement framework” because it allows him “to examine the perspective of the participants [in the movement] without in any way judging or evaluating the movement and its goals” (pp. 6–7). While others have focused on Qutb's major publications, his biography, or “a set of important concepts that Qutb emphasized,” Toth's book “use[s] all of these methods in understanding Qutb's critical contribution to the Islamic movement” (p. 10).

The latter point is certainly correct: Toth focuses on both Qutb's life and his ideological legacy—as the title of the book suggests—and he regularly deals with Qutb's most prominent publications as well as their key concepts, as is evident from the book's layout. In Part 1 of the book, Toth describes Qutb's childhood, education, and career as a literary critic (Chapter 1), his gradual shift towards Islamism (Chapters 3–4), and the radical Islamism for which Qutb is best known (Chapter 5). Part 2 focuses on Qutb's legacy through an analysis of his general ideas about Islam (Chapter 6), the important concepts of *jāhiliyya* (the pre-Islamic period of ignorance that Qutb believed the contemporary Muslim world also lived in), *ḥākimiyya* (sovereignty), and jihad. Toth then continues with Qutb's ideas on Islamic society, the Islamic economy, and the Islamic state (Chapters 8–10, respectively), ending with Qutb's perception of Islamic history, followed by an epilogue that discusses various Egyptian movements inspired by Qutb's ideas. Also included in the book are several appendices covering the *dramatis personae* as well as overviews of Qutb's ideas on women and the family, the “People of the Book,” and apologetics.

While Toth takes the broad approach that he promises the reader in his introduction, he is less successful in his attempt to use a “social movement framework” to counter distorted views of Qutb and his legacy. Apart from the fact that it is rather puzzling how Qutb's “vision of Islam” can be seen as a social movement, Toth does not actually apply social movement theory (SMT) in his book, despite dedicating several pages of the introduction to explaining why it constitutes such a good approach. If leaving SMT out was done on purpose to broaden the appeal of the book, perhaps Toth should not have mentioned it in his introduction. As it is, the author raises expectations that he does not live up to, which is frustrating to scholarly readers interested in this aspect. Similarly frustrating is Toth's frequent use of the word “Kharijite” (see, for example, pp. 70–71) to describe Qutb's thinking. Those familiar with Islamist discourse know that the term “Kharijite” refers to the early Islamic Khawarij, a group that is said to have split off from the fourth caliph 'Ali b. Abi Talib (r. 656–61) and his army and developed extremist ideas on *takfīr* (excommunication of other Muslims). The label “Kharijite” is often applied to radical Islamists by their opponents to paint them

as zealous and extremist murderers, as Jeffrey Kenney's work has shown. As I have pointed out elsewhere, labeling modern-day radical Muslims as Khawarij may be an effective way to discredit and slander them, but from a theological (not to mention historical) perspective, the comparison is incorrect. This makes it quite strange that Toth, whose goal is precisely to debunk such wild accusations, applies this term to Qutb's ideas.

A more important problem with Toth's book from an academic point of view is that it makes very little use of primary sources, instead retelling a story that has been told several times before in English-language books and articles by authors such as those mentioned above. Further, although Toth has spent much time in Egypt and knows the country very well, he does not seem to have done fieldwork specifically for this project, which gives one the impression that the book grew out of his earlier work rather than constituting a serious research project in its own right, a point that Toth seems to confirm in the preface (p. ix).

None of this means, however, that Toth's book is a bad one. It is very well written and nicely structured, making it a pleasant read. Moreover, unlike other works on Qutb that focus mostly on biography (Musallam, Calvert) or ideas (Mousalli, Shepard, Khatab), Toth gives a very broad, yet detailed overview of Qutb's life *and* ideology, ensuring that he does indeed demystify his subject—as he set out to do—by showing Qutb's development over the course of his life. Furthermore, although Toth makes little use of primary sources, he should be credited with digging up an impressive range of secondary sources—including some rarely used ones—that, while not focusing directly on Qutb, offer some interesting insights into the book's subject, particularly the often highly contentious period of the 1930s during which Qutb was a poet and literary critic. Toth's analysis of the Egyptian intellectual and literary milieu is quite interesting and, despite his reliance on secondary sources, will offer new information to many.

Given the fact that Toth's book does not exactly live up to its own promises and offers little new information or insights to specialists of Qutb and radical Islam in Egypt, the book cannot be said to be a significant contribution to the literature from a scholarly point of view. For those (relatively) new to the subject of Sayyid Qutb, however, the book's comprehensive approach (supported even further by the appendices), clear structure, and pleasant style of writing ensure that it will serve as a very good introduction to Qutb's life and ideology. So while scholars familiar with the subject will be better off with Khatab or Calvert, nonexperts—who may have been Toth's target audience all along—may find no book better to start with than this one.

CARRIE ROSEFSKY WICKHAM, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013). Pp. 384. \$29.95 cloth.

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A leading authority on Islamist politics, Carrie Wickham brings years of thoughtful research, experience in the field, and careful reflection to her new book on the Muslim Brotherhood. The book, which is meticulously detailed and superbly sourced, is a pleasure to read and advances robust theoretical and empirical claims.

Wickham begins with the expectation that competing tendencies of ideational continuity and change exist in any large political-missionary organization. Rather than boil the group down to a voiceless monolith or speculate about the Brotherhood's essential intentions, Wickham shows