

northern Yemen (cf. p. 159) would seem to be unrealistic, disregarding historical as well as geographical realities.

d. The name of Sulaymān ibn Saḥmān al-Najdī is constantly misspelt as Ibn Samhan (cf. pp. 32, 82, 196), possibly under the assumption that this part of the name is a *nisba* denoting descent from the Banī Saḥmān, a Bedouin tribe inhabiting the eastern range of the Judean hills. The title of this author's book, referred to and quoted from by Habib (not from the original, which was certainly not seen by him, but from Muḥammad al-Madani, *Firqat al-Ikhwān al-Islāmiyya bi-Najd*, n.p., 1923) does not read *al-Hudiyah al-Sunniyah* (cf. p. 32), but *al-Hadiya al-Saniya* (the complete title being *al-Hadiya al-Saniya wa'l-Tuhfa al-Wahhābiya al-Najdiyya li-Jami' Ikhwānina al-Muwahhidin min Ahl al-Milla al-Hanifiya wa'l-Tariqa al-Muhammadiya*, Cairo: Mṭ. al-Manār 1342; cf. *GAL*, S iii, 498 and L. Massignon in *REI*, I, 33 ff.).

Finally, it must be observed that the index leaves much to be desired: many technical terms mentioned in the book have not been included, and a considerable number of page references are incomplete or incorrect. No rule seems to underly the presence or absence of English translations of Arabic book titles in the notes and the bibliography. Apparently, the author has been as careless with his proof-correcting as he has been with the compilation of his manuscript: the book abounds with printing errors and typographical inconsistencies (e.g. in the use of italics for technical terms and book titles). Even in the course of a first cursory run-through the reviewer counted more than fifty of such errors.

University of Leiden, January 1981

F. DE JONG

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Johannes REISSNER, *Ideologie und Politik der Muslimbrüder Syriens. Von den Wahlen 1947 bis zum Verbot unter Adīb aš-Šisaklī 1952*. Freiburg, Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1980 (21 cm., vi + xii + 455 pp.) = Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, Band 55. ISBN 3 87997 073 4.

Scientific works dealing with the Syrian Muslim Brothers are scarce, and for that reason alone Mr. Reissner's slightly revised doctoral dissertation, presented originally in 1978 to the Free University of Berlin, and now published in book form, should already be considered a welcome contribution to a field which for long has enjoyed relatively little academic consideration.

Dr Reissner proposes in his work to study the Syrian Muslim Brothers within the frame of what he considers to be the most essential political, social and cultural developments which determined Syrian history in the period under review, i.e. the time in which the Brothers could, after having consolidated themselves as an organisation in 1946, politically develop with relatively the least obstacles and could optimally unfold their characteristics as these really were: from the elections of 1947 when three Muslim Brothers were elected in Parliament until the prohibition of their organisation during the dictatorship of Adīb al-Shishakli in the beginning of 1952. Dr Reissner claims that his work "is not intended to be, and neither

can be, a general history of the Syrian Muslim Brothers". His claim is correct insofar as three quarters of his book are mainly confined to a relatively short period of the history of the Syrian Muslim Brothers; but on the other hand his study's scope is much wider than its title would suggest. Dr Reissner proposes to investigate to which extent and in which form Islam really determined the behaviour of the Syrian Muslim Brothers, as well as which function it had for their interests, and to which extent they were in the first place a product of their own time, as far as their understanding of Islam, their organisation, and their political and social goals were concerned; rather than that they were a movement with a rigid, Islamic inspired, ideology which "imposed" itself on the time epoch of his study. In doing so, the author has widened the scope of his book so as to include much of Syria's social and political history relevant to the developments which gave rise to the ideas and behaviour of the Syrian Muslim Brothers as a movement or a society.

The book is divided into four parts. Part A (pp. 1-79), "Sozialer Wandel und Säkularisierung", provides a useful account of socio-economic developments in Syria during French Mandate and of the process of secularisation which to a certain extent set the political and socio-economic scene, the description of which may contribute to better understanding the rise of the Muslim Brothers as a movement. Part B (pp. 80-162), "Organisation, Verbreitung, und Ideologie", discusses the historical development of the organisation of the Syrian Muslim Brothers until 1947, as well as some fundamental characteristics of their ideology. Part C, "Opposition im Namen des Islam" (pp. 163-299), and Part D, "Islamischer Sozialismus und Neutralitätspolitik" (pp. 300-406), give a scrupulously carefully written political and ideological history of the Syrian Muslim Brothers between 1947 and 1952.

Dr Reissner's dissertation is to a great extent based on a study of the Syrian Muslim Brothers' own periodical *al-Manar* (from Spring 1947 till May 1949) and their subsequent mouthpiece *al-Manar al-Jadid* (from November 1949 till January 1952, when the Brothers' organisation was forbidden). The facts and insights obtained from these sources are supplemented by a study of secondary sources on Syria, political memoirs, interviews with some Syrian Muslim Brothers, ideological works of Mustafa al-Siba'i, Muhammad al-Mubarak and others, and documents obtained from the Center for Historical Documents in Damascus and the Public Record Office, London.

The book is superabundant with details, and clearly retains the character of a thorough doctoral dissertation, German tradition. Since Dr Reissner has stated at the beginning of his book that he did not intend his work to be a study narrowly confined to the Syrian Muslim Brothers only, and did not want it to be strictly patterned in sections on "History", "Organisation", and "Ideology", considering this "too exemplary", it would perhaps be unjustified to reproach him for bringing in on various occasions lots of detail which might have been done without in order to explain — sometimes on a somewhat higher level of abstraction — the circumstances under which the Muslim Brothers emerged. Although this might on the one hand have improved the coherence and readability of some parts of the book, it adds on the other

hand to its value because it now includes many facts which would otherwise be very difficult to obtain. I mention by way of an example the survey of various Islamic reform societies (*Jam'iyat*) which existed in Syria during French Mandate, and which is apparently included to demonstrate amongst other things that the Society of the Syrian Muslim Brothers during the first years of its existence differed almost in nothing from these other *Jam'iyat*: they all represented the rising petit bourgeoisie, which had to maintain itself not only against mandatory rule, but also against the new national upper-classes.

The interesting picture which emerges from Dr Reissner's description of the Syrian Muslim Brothers is not that of a fanatic and dogmatic society, but rather that of a politically relatively moderate and pragmatic movement. He notes that the Brothers usually co-represented the general political mood, and in any case never opposed the main stream when important Syrian political questions were concerned. From their political argumentation and ideological approach to current problems it was often impossible to deduct that they considered Islam as a comprehensive and crucial system affecting all aspects of life and as a theoretically decisive yard-stick with which to measure all things. Occasionally they argued on a purely Arab nationalist or even secular level, and they sometimes used a political vocabulary which contradicted their ideology of harmony between the social classes. In the period under study, the Brothers did not turn out to be a movement which at all costs wanted to implement the idea of an all embracing Islamic order, but rather a society seeking to achieve its own interests, which in practice were those of a restricted part of the urban Sunni petit bourgeoisie. If they argued from an Islamic viewpoint at all, Islam used to function as their religious-moralistic and ethical basis of legitimation, constituting the deeper dimension of their thought. This basis tended to become the more important as they were in the opposition, or when they considered Arab-national-religious identity to be threatened. The role of the Syrian Muslim Brothers could be of particular importance when political or social tensions could be translated into Islamic religious terms, or when such tensions could be given a dimension which would make it appear as if Islamic values were being threatened.

Although the ideological position of the Syrian Muslim Brothers towards Christians and Jews is explained, the book does not consider the Brothers' attitude towards heterodox Muslims, such as Alawis, Druzes and Isma'ilis, notwithstanding the fact that the Brothers' organisation did have branches in regions which were predominantly inhabited by the minorities concerned, such as in Latakia and in the Jabal al-Duruz. The absence of this ideological point may be explained from the generally pragmatic attitude of the Muslim Brothers: Since members of these heterodox Islamic minorities did not play a prominent political role in the period on which the study concentrates, the Brothers may at the time have considered it inopportune to ideologically deal with their position. In their opposition to the heterodox Islamic minoritarian dominated Ba`th regimes which ruled Syria since 1963, the Muslim Brothers' severely critical attitude towards these groups later became one of the key issues however, by which they tried to win support amongst the Sunni majority of the population.

Although Dr Reissner's book is written in such a broad perspective that it might be fruitfully used by specialists and non-specialists alike, its purely academic character will in practice probably tend to restrict its readership to the former; and it is to the specialist who does not mind to digest a lot of detail before being presented with a number of very interesting conclusions about the Syrian Muslim Brothers that this profound study should be highly recommended.

The Hague, September 1980

NIKOLAOS VAN DAM

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Hanna BATATU, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq. A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Ba`thists, and Free Officers*. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1978 (25 cm., II + XXIV + 1284 pp.) = Princeton Studies on the Near East. Price: \$ 94.00. ISBN 0-691-05241-7.

This monumental work of Hanna Batatu, Professor of Political Science at the American University of Beirut, is the result of about a quarter of a century of serious study on Iraq. It constitutes the long-awaited sequel to his important, though unpublished, Ph.D. thesis *The Shaikh and the Peasant in Iraq, 1917-1958*, presented to Harvard University in 1960.

In fact, Professor Batatu's newly published volume consists of three books. Book One, "The Old Social Classes" (pp. 1-361), comprises a study of the landowners and the men of money and commerce of prerepublican Iraq, and concentrates on the wealthier and more influential layers of the classes concerned in the period of the monarchy (1921-1958). Since many characteristics of the social structure in the monarchical period had their roots in a more distant past, Batatu has extended his descriptive analysis, when necessary, back to Ottoman times. "Apart from throwing some light on the circumstances, the power, the function, the way of thought, the political behaviour, the social standing, and the origin of the position of wealth of the landed, commercial and moneyed elements, the aim of this part of the study is", in Batatu's own words, "to find out whether a class approach would open to view historical relations or social features that would otherwise remain beyond vision or, to put it more generally, whether such an approach, when applied to a post-World War I Arab society, is capable of yielding new insights or valuable results".

Due to the extremely complex and many-sided character of the class picture of Iraq, in which elements with respect to wealth, ethnicity, sect or religion, regional or tribal affiliation, political influence or social prestige, and others, are in many cases simultaneously at work, Batatu has been forced to conduct his discussion — in all three books — on a low to medium level of generality. In his Preface Batatu states: "Perhaps the exposition lapses here and there into minutiae or verges on a scholarly overkill". Generally he has taken care, however, not to lose sight of the wider context, and to bring to the surface only