This book which is a must have for anyone —lay person, scholar or policy-maker— with an interest in the Muslim world, the Islamic revival or its international implications will hopefully contribute towards changing the Western perception of Islamic revival by setting the stage for further research. The editors have precisely laid the groundwork for studies directed at the removal of misconceptions and formulation of policies consistent with the long term interest of international security and the fundamental right to self-determination. [Reviewer’s note: The book is available from the American Educational Trust, publishers of the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs. $11.95 for one, $14.95 for two. Tel. 1-800-368-5788].

1Peter O’Brien, "Islam vs. Liberalism in Europe", 10:3 American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences 367 at 379.
2Caryle Murphy, "Egypt: An Uneasy Portent of Change", Current History (February 1994) 78 at 79.
4Murphy, "Egypt", 2 at 80.

FAISAL KUTTY

Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane Idleman Smith (eds.), Muslim Communities in North America (Albany: SUNY, 1994), 545 pages.

In 1994, the Olduvai Humanities Library started producing Islam in America. That same year, Dar al-Islam organized the second annual North American Muslim Powwow in the mountains of Northern New Mexico. A summer NEH session met there for high school teachers teaching Islam in the curriculum of schools across the U.S. And I understand that the Library of Congress was holding meetings to decide how literature produced by American Muslims would be catalogued. "Islam in America" has become an academic subject. Islamic Law, some may be astonished to learn, is already being practised by U.S. courts —when Muslim inmates demand certain religious rights, the courts have to make pronouncements about Islam, what it is, and what is "obligatory" and "not-obligatory". This is a time of great excitement and not a little trepidation. I found this feeling accurately explored throughout the pages of this collected work.

All the articles are focused nicely on particular groups. Sachedina’s contribution (one of only three not produced specifically for this book) is of course very scholarly, but it also captures the small-scale of Muslim
communities. I have visited a number of community mosques and centres, and many of my colleagues visit even more and attend conferences like ISNA’s, and in every case, the "history" of these places and peoples is almost family scale. The events of power struggles or conflicts of mosque-usage are close and personal, and for the most part the articles respect this.

Some of the communities examined include immigrant women in Dearborn, Iranian Muslims in Los Angeles, Yeminis in Delano, Albanian Muslims in Detroit, Muslims in Montreal, New England, Indianapolis, Seattle, San Diego, and New York City. Included are rural and urban communities, immigrant and convert, Sufi and non-Sufi, Shi’i and Sunni. One increasingly important community that seems to have been completely overlooked is the Muslims in prison. Some of the most dynamic scholar-activists I have met are active in this field.

I found Gardell’s contribution on the Nation of Islam to be very informative. One problem that many Muslims have, and not just the media, is that we do not know exactly what NOI teaches. Gardell details the two faces of NOI by talking about Minister Farrakhan’s need to be true to the creed of Elijah Muhammad and sensitive to "the orthodox criticism of the movement" (p. 32). He traces "a transformative process of the NOI along two lines of evolution", external and internal.

Mukhtar Curtis looks at forty years of New York African-American converts to orthodox Islam, Dar ul-Islam. Although this movement was truly small-scale, where the half dozen Friday Prayer attendees in one period are named, the importance of the movement is still shown. Curtis quickly mentions the "jazz route" of Islamic da’wah, saying that "[t]he converts frequently socialized at restaurants run by Muslims from the Caribbean and at clubs that featured Muslim entertainers or those attracted to Islam at one time or another such as Dakota Station, Charlie Parker, and John Coltrane" (p. 51). I would be interested in learning more about Coltrane’s convergence with Islam: recently in Islamabad, I heard an excellent American musician trained in rag-dari doing a Coltrane-inspired number cooked up by his Muslim Pakistani teacher—a truly post-modern event, especially if Coltrane had an Islamic connection!

Gisela Webb wrote a beautiful, appropriately enough, article on the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship. I got to know in New Mexico two Muslims who were there in Philadelphia when Bawa explicitly told his followers that what they were doing was “Islam”. I found Webb’s description of events to be very perspicacious.

Yusuf Nuruddin wrote about the Five Percenters: A Teenage Nation of Gods and Earths. Apparently the Five Percenters are known in fairly wide circles (Richard Pryor has a comic sketch assuming knowledge of them), but
they were completely new to me. Although Nuruddin seems very sensitive to the offence that the Five Percenter discourse presents to Sunnis, I found their use of language quite attractive and compelling. A "Sunni Muslim" is "soon to be Muslim", and their insult to someone who does salah is, "Are you still diving to the floor?" That Five Percenters seem to "grow up" eventually and turn to NOI or orthodox Islam is interesting; I think I now know where one orthodox Muslim at the Powwow from the inner city got his particular call to salah — he would say, "Let's go thump heads".

Scholarship on Islam in America has evolved to a stage where non-judgemental portraits are drawn and some good history and stories are being written. I am restless, however, for the scholarship to move to another level. The same tone which I found frustrating in Yvonne Haddad’s important book *Islamic Values in America* is found throughout this volume. The tone is that "Islam" is nothing more and nothing less than what some Muslims say it is. Thus questions of halal meat or riba are treated in a neutral-sounding and disengaged way which covers up its own bias. The tone is perhaps a reaction to a kind of narrow minded approach which is poor anthropology, and approach, for example, that would refuse to even think about asking, "Do you drink", on a questionnaire for Muslims.

What we need, instead, is a lively fiqh in America, and that will come about when communities recognize knowledge and knowledgeable people engage in questions of Islam (it is already starting). The issue of hijab or moon-sighting should be addressed according to language (identification of the ‘Arab semantic field, the ism), legal determinative property (hukm), and situation (hal). I have written about what some are calling "The Fifteen Questions" which every Muslim community seems to face in common. I gave a full cross-fiqh analysis of these questions and was amazed to find great flexibility and appropriateness in the fiqh positions. The authority of well thought out discourse on Islam, a living fiqh, is widely appreciated, not least by the spokesmen heard in this volume who are struggling to match the hukm of Allah with the hal of their locality in America. A living, textual, knowledge-based fiqh is needed, and that will be a stage beyond the "value-free" approach of some of the contributors.

*Abu Munir Eric Winkel*