

### Correspondence

To the Editor:

I feel impelled to set the record straight at a couple of points in Kamran Bokhari's review of Hamid Algar's revision of Hardie's translation of *Social Justice in Islam* by Sayyid Qutb (*MESA Bulletin* 35(2001): 70). Algar's effort did not involve "corroborating seven different reprints and/or editions." Algar makes it clear that he used only one Arabic edition, the fifth (p. 16). He also makes it clear that Qutb's 'Neo-Jahiliyyah' thesis is not evident in this or the earlier editions (p. 17). For the record, *Social Justice in Islam* went through six Arabic editions: 1949, 1950 or 51, 1952, 1954, 1958, 1964. All of these are new editions, not just reprints. In 1972 Dar al-Shuruq was given the exclusive right to reprint Qutb's books. To my knowledge all of its printings are reprints of the sixth edition. Algar presents a good corrected translation of the first edition. My own translation of *Social Justice in Islam (Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism)* [Leiden: Brill, 1996], reviewed in *MESA Bulletin* 31[1997]: 102-3 translates the sixth edition and provides detailed comparisons with the earlier editions. Given the considerable difference between the first and last editions, I believe that Algar's effort and mine complement each other nicely, although it is to be regretted that Algar was evidently unaware of my translation when he did his.

WILLIAM SHEPARD

*University of Canterbury (retired), Christchurch, New Zealand*

Kamran A. Bokhari responds:

I would like to thank Professor Shepherd for his feedback on my review. My comment about Algar's corroboration of seven different reprints and/or editions was based on Algar's own statement that "The task of revision was complicated by the fact that *al-'Adalat al-Ijtima'iyyah fi'l-Islam* has gone through several editions that are by no means identical with each other" (p. 16). This is a matter which has largely escaped attention, the exception being William Shepherd (Shepherd, 1992, *passim*). The book has been published at least seven times, but it is not certain that each publication represented a different edition, for the word *tab'a* may mean either 'edition' or simply 'printing.'

My use of the term 'corroboration' was perhaps a bad choice of words, considering that Algar did only use the 5th edition. Nevertheless, my point was to highlight that the task of revision is cumbersome. Nevertheless, I am grateful to Professor Shepherd for pointing out this ambiguity in my review.

However, I must disagree with Professor Shepard's comments about 'Neo-Jahiliyyah.' Nowhere does Professor Algar even mention it. He does, however, state the suggestion by Professor Shepherd regarding Qutb's shift toward "radical Islamism." Perhaps Professor Shepherd uses the terms interchangeably. My own comment about Neo-Jahiliyyah is based on my perception that Algar's work has the potential to rescue Qutb from being reduced to the status of an ideological mentor of contemporary jihadist groups. This is quite clear if my remark is read in the context of its paragraph. Moreover, it does not contradict Algar's statement about not being able to detect any evidence of an ideological shift in the 5<sup>th</sup> edition.