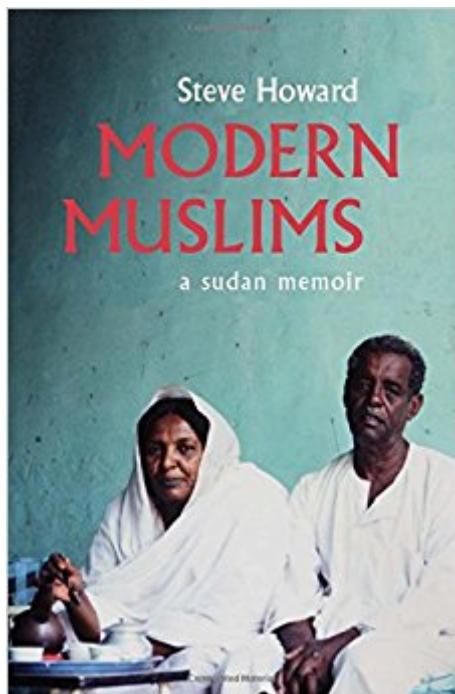


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# Modern Muslims: A Sudan Memoir



## Synopsis

Steve Howard departed for the Sudan in the early 1980s as an American graduate student beginning a three-year journey in which he would join and live with the Republican Brotherhood, the Sufi Muslim group led by the visionary Mahmoud Mohamed Taha. Taha was a religious intellectual who participated in the early days of Sudan's anti-colonial struggle, but quickly turned his movement into a religious reform effort based on his radical reading of the Qur'an. He was executed in 1985 for apostasy. Decades after returning to the life of an academic in the United States, Howard brings us this memoir of his time with the Republican Brotherhood, who advocated for, among other things, equality for women. *Modern Muslims* describes Howard's path to learning not only about Islam and Sufism, but about Sudan's history and culture. When the Brotherhood was thrust into confrontation with Sudan's then-president Jaafar Nimeiry, Howard had a front-line perspective on the difficult choices communities make as they try to reform and practice their faith freely. As well as a story of personal transformation, the book offers an insider's perspective on a modernist nonviolent Islamic movement that thrived and was brutally suppressed. An important book for our times, *Modern Muslims* yields significant insights for our understanding of modern Islam, African history, and contemporary geopolitics.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Steve Howard is a professor of media studies and African studies and the director of the Ohio University Center for International Studies. A sociologist by training, he has studied and worked all over the African continent. He directed Ohio University's African Studies Program for

twenty-five years and has published several scholarly articles about the Republican Brotherhood Movement.

Dr. Steve Howard's evocative and insightful words give voice to the struggles and joys of the Republican Brotherhood in a way that takes you on a journey to that unique time and place. I was delighted to read about his experiences. I savored each page and enjoyed getting to peek inside his mind and heart. This book is written with the wise mind of a scholar and the heart of a believer--a rare combination.

One may write about one's travels in Central and Eastern Africa in search of true spiritual Islam. Or one could pen a narrative on the workings of a movement where the teacher/leader was a contemplative visionary and the followers/brothers strive for purity and excellence. Professor Howard's book, however, is at the intersections of the aforementioned streams. To the disinterested bystander, it is the best window on a unique experience.

I truly enjoyed reading it.

If you have already read the philosophical arguments for or against the Republican thought of the Sudanese thinker Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, this book is your chance to get into the soul of that thought. You are guaranteed a fascinating everyday sailing into what made the man, Ustadh Mahmoud, and his life that emulated his teachings and brought about followers who impressed everyone with their model behavior. I thought the memoir of Professor Howard were going to be boring as I thought I knew the Republicans, brothers and sisters and what they went through. However, I was amazed at the details and the incredible way Steve Howard conveyed to the readers, including myself, his time with the Republicans, and how he learned and understood not by reading books or pamphlets, but by being an active participant. This book is unforgettable. If you have never heard of the Republicans or heard but do not know who or what they are, start with this memoir that will make you want to read more, especially at this time when Muslims are known just as terrorists. Thank you Professor Howard.

At a time when we have become accustomed to hearing negative things about Islam and Muslims, Howard's *Modern Muslims* points out the pluralistic nature of this faith. Through interviews and

personal experiences, Howard provides an insightful account of the Republican Brotherhood of Sudan. The book is an excellent reference for individuals interested in Islam, Islamic movements, Sudan etc..

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