

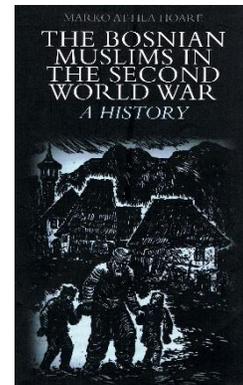


Bosnian Muslims in World War Two

Hoare shows a multiple connectivity of Islamists to the Left and the Right

Hoare, a reader in history at Kingston University in London, has produced a history that draws on the archives of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, and Croatia. Regrettably, though, he has omitted works in German or English on the main Islamist leaders who, like the Jerusalem grand mufti al-Hajj M. Amin al-Husaini, aided Hitler and used Islamism as a key recruiting instrument, mobilizing Muslims into the murderous [Khanjar](#) Division. As a result, the work is lopsided with a focus on the Muslim part in the eventual communist takeover of the country but neglecting the role of those who were the Nazis' willing accomplices.

Thus, the author takes us through the Nazi and Italian fascist occupation of Yugoslavia in 1941, through the years of the first Yugoslav civil war between Josip B. Tito's Partisans, Serbian royalist Chetniks, Croatian nationalist Ustaše, and others, up to the communist victory. The Yugoslav communists, Marko Attila Hoare writes, were able to harness part of the Muslim population in their bid for power. Muslims helped shape the revolution but were soon curtailed as a religiously-based ethnicity when the victorious communists took control of the state. The emancipation of women, for example, became a tool in the hands of the communists not only to tap into a new political base but to erode traditional, Islamic control of a sizable portion of the population.



Tito's Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was not greatly supported by Muslims. But it played a role during the Cold War by helping to shape the Arab socialism of leftist autocrats of the Middle East such as Egypt's Abd [an-Nasir](#) and Libya's Muammar [al-Qadhafi](#), thus keeping at bay the stricter Soviet model.

This book offers interesting clues for Middle East countries as well as multiethnic, multi-religious states like Bosnia about the networks among fascists, Islamists, and leftists. Hoare shows that Islamists were able to act very flexibly on the Left as well as on the Right while leftists showed a remarkable potential to gain support from Muslims. Islamist ideologues were also able to operate with the far extremes on both sides, with the fascists and the communists. This multiple connectivity became a pattern, especially for Muslims and Islamists in World War II and in the early [Cold War](#).

[Wolfgang G. Schwanitz](#)

Marko Attila Hoare, *The Bosnian Muslims in the Second World War. A History*, Oxford University Press [2013](#), 478 pp., \$120.