

BOOK REVIEWS

Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe, by Emily Greble, Oxford University Press, 2021, 376 pp., \$35.00 (hardcover), ISBN 9780197538807.

With the end of the Caliphate in 1924, political power was no longer in the hands of Muslims, which led to radical transformation of societies and Islamic institutions around the world. *Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe* offers an historiography of this transition in the Balkans where, long before the post-World War II immigration, Muslims started to live under classifications imposed by non-Muslim regimes. Such an historiography has the merit to overcome the usual dichotomy of East/West that dominates the research on Islam and Muslims in Europe. It sheds light on the issues of immigration, discrimination, and religious adaptation to secular cultures that are usually considered the specific challenges of Muslims in Western Europe but, as this book shows, were discussed in the Balkans before and between the two world wars. It therefore counters the dominant perception that Muslims are newcomers in Europe.

The significant added value of this historiography is to indirectly bring evidence to the research in social sciences that questions the taken-for-granted “religion versus politics” divide embedded in western scholarship. It means that the dominant conception of religion as confined to personal faith and beliefs with no direct implication on society and politics precludes in-depth analysis of the ways religion has been a major factor in the political modernization in and outside the West. More specifically, Emily Greble’s book converges with the studies that emphasize the critical role of the nation-state in transforming and reshaping religious traditions to adjust to the specific nature of modern politics.

Part 1 of the book details the consequences of nation building and international norms on the shaping of citizenry in the former Ottoman lands. It provides a fascinating insight on the debates and tensions between Muslim religious authorities, intellectuals, and organizations, as well as on their interactions with the nascent state “secular” authorities. These discussions and tensions corroborate the key idea that the nation is not any kind of polity – it is based on two core principles: equality of membership and sovereignty of people, which distinguishes it from other forms of polities and has transformed religious communities and doctrines everywhere (Jocelyne Cesari, *We God’s People: Christianity, Islam and Hinduism in the World of Nations*, Cambridge University Press, 2022). Interestingly, Emily Greble’s book shows that these two dimensions were the main points discussed in the Balkans at the time of transition from Empire to state.

In ways similar to other parts of the Muslim world that went under colonial rule, nation-building in the Balkans resulted in an unprecedented reorganization of the society-politics-religion nexus. Under the Caliphate, Islamic institutions were financially and intellectually independent from the former. The Caliphs also acknowledged the cultural and religious diversity of the population, although it did not translate into an egalitarian legal and political status for all religions and ethnicities.

The emergence of the state as the central political institution went hand-in-hand with the homogenization of the populations inhabiting the nascent nation’s territory. This homogenization transformed the tenets of many elements of the Islamic tradition and specifically Islamic Law. Shari’a, previously the monopoly of Ulemas, was reshaped as state law and reduced to family matters (marriage, divorce, custody of children, and inheritance), while Shari’a courts were abolished and replaced by a secular court system. As the state aims at regulating social behaviors within the national community, such regulation interferes with alternative collective identities since people are not only citizens but also part of cultural, ethnic, and religious groups. That is why

nation-building systematically omitted and sometimes eradicated particular groups in order to create one nation defined by one religion and one language. As a result, conflicts can arise when their “other” collective identities challenge or do not fit within the acceptable social behaviors sanctioned by the state in the national community.

Emily Greble documents these transformations for Muslims in the Balkans. She highlights that in this particular case the specificity lies in the construction of Islam as a religious minority within a nationalizing project with Christian undertones. Like in the Middle East and Asia, this adjustment of Islam to the nation-state regime was also expressed in the question of public education. Another noticeable outcome of this nationalization of Islam is the internal debate among Muslims and the division between reformist and traditionalists, something not sufficiently emphasized since we tend to focus on the opposition between Muslims and the non-Muslim political regime.

What surfaces in Emily Greble’s account is the tension between ethnicity, language, and religion that is a specificity of the region and could have benefited from a more substantial analysis. In the same vein, the part devoted to the construction of communist Yugoslavia succumbs to a somewhat simple line of argument – i.e., communists destroy the legal religious system. Such an assessment obfuscates the fact that religion was nonetheless acknowledged, most notably as a nationality. In Yugoslavia, like in other parts of the communist Federation, “ethnic groups” were turned into “ethnic majorities” or “titular nationalities” within their own specifically delineated territory. That is how Bosnia was recognized as Muslim – not because of Sharia but because Islam was the collective marker of the majority of the people in this particular territory. In that manner, the local Muslim elites of the Communist Party could be promoted to every level of government, which later fueled the rising concerns of the Serbian and Croatian minorities when the Yugoslav Federation collapsed.

Ultimately, this book shows the need for historiography to document the important idea of modernization of religion as nationalization. Social scientists who work on this topic would benefit from such a historical analysis to compensate for the unhistorical trend of their discipline. Although obliquely, Emily Greble makes the point for a more extensive interdisciplinary work on religion and politics, a field of inquiry that until now remains divided between social sciences and history.

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Survival as Victory: Ukrainian Women in the Gulag, by Oksana Kis, translated by Lidia Wolanskyj, Harvard University Press, 2021, 652 pp., \$94.00 (hardcover), ISBN 9780674258280.

In *Survival as Victory*, Oksana Kis offers a ground-breaking feminist analysis of Ukrainian women’s experiences in the Gulag. The study is the first of its kind to examine a large collection of oral and written testimonies by former prisoners who were among the millions of Ukrainians arrested for nationalism and anti-Soviet activities. As an ethnographer and oral historian influenced by the cultural turn, Kis takes aim at top-down political and institutional perspectives both for their reduction of prisoners to statistics and for their reliance on state records, which regularly claimed that prisoners enjoyed adequate housing and safe working conditions. Her nuanced analysis of camp sisterhood, camp motherhood, and gender-defined national resistance work reveals that Ukrainian women deployed a repertoire of cultural practices to resist the Gulag and create vibrant communities that enabled them to survive the prison camps.

To identify the sources of agency in survivor testimony, the author analyzed how prisoners navigated turning points in their journey through the Gulag as well as events in daily life that gave