

Christian confession was more invested in freedom of conscience than Methodism and no church was more unanimously and openly supportive of the Nazi regime than the Methodist church in Germany. Not all acts of conscience expressed democratic values, as the case of Julius Evola, an Italian fascist intellectual who championed the idea of a spiritual racism, clearly shows.

Undoubtedly motivated by a desire to be inclusive, the editors included one essay (by Sara Han) that deals with Jewish life: a piece on the Berlin Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums as a space of Jewish spiritual resistance to Nazi terror. The essay is undeniably moving but raises questions about faith in the face of existential destruction that run in directions not reflected in the other contributions. Despite this inconsistency, this volume is an excellent introduction to some of the most recent research on the enduring problem of Christian nationalism in European history.

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Balkan Fighters in the Syrian War. By Tanja Dramac Jiries. Southeast European Studies. London: Routledge, 2022. xv, 184 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Illustrations. Index. Figures. Tables. \$155, hard bound; \$48.95 e-book.
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The spectacular, if short-lived, rise of the self-declared Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the previous decade prompted a voluminous body of commentary, much of it devoted to “foreign fighters”—the label placed on the tens of thousands of sojourners from dozens of countries who found themselves under ISIS rule or even fighting within its ranks. As the adjective “foreign” implies, the conversation is structured by a kind of methodological nationalism whereby nation-states are the primary unit of analysis, treated as either sources or destinations of foreign fighters. Although this perspective may obscure the inherently transnational experiences of their subjects, it provides a convenient rubric for organizing knowledge production: there are now case studies on nearly every country from which individuals have traveled and ended up in ISIS.

In this context, the book under review is the first academic monograph in English to specifically address ISIS migration from Bosnia-Herzegovina (hereafter, Bosnia) and Kosovo—places hitherto treated as destinations rather than as sources of “foreign fighters” during their own wars from the 1990s. According to various police statistics, upwards of 1,000 people from the two countries traveled to Syria during the war there, a considerable fraction of whom were women and children. The figures do not specify whether these individuals were involved with ISIS as opposed to other armed groups, nor do they differentiate fighting from other activities. Investigating such questions is beyond the scope of the study. Instead, Tanja Dramac Jiries focuses on the processes and networks that impel and facilitate departure for Syria in the first place.

Dramac Jiries’ research is based on interviews conducted with four returned foreign fighters and thirteen family members of foreign fighters throughout Bosnia and Kosovo, as well as officials and journalists. She eschews any easy attempt to construct profiles of individuals recruited to ISIS and instead highlights the “dysfunctional elements in the family, community, or state” (86) that leave no satisfying alternatives. In the case of Bosnia, Dramac Jiries notes that most of the ISIS sojourners in her sample came from broken families and found meaning in faith communities dedicated to the Salafi orientation of Islam, which were also sources of informal work opportunities and forms of social solidarity such as food banks (120–22). In contrast, in Kosovo she argues that recruitment primarily took place through strong kinship networks (116).

While these findings are broadly consistent with the literature on “radicalization” in which this study is situated, Dramac Jiries also usefully situates migration to ISIS as part of the broader “brain drain” afflicting the region (156).

Dramac Jiries also draws important distinctions between the ISIS sojourners in her study and those from western Europe who have been most prominent in the foreign fighter literature. In contrast to marginalized immigrant-origin Muslim populations in western Europe, Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo are generally understood as autochthonous and not minoritized (47). Instead, marginalization and despair are experienced more as society-wide structures in these two “post-conflict” countries: both are locked into semiformal forms of Euro-American domination (euphemized as “externally driven democracies,” 39) and Bosnia’s fragmented political system systematically privileges ethnonationalist secessionism. Dramac Jiries cogently points out that the gravest “radicalization” threat in the sense of anti-state violence stems from elected Serb and Croat secessionists—Salafi groups, in contrast, enjoy no significant presence in state institutions (102–3).

As noted above, *Balkan Fighters in the Syrian War* is very much enmeshed in radicalization debates, rather than area studies conversations. It is not a study of the region’s Salafi communities and it largely relies on secondary literature and journalistic sources on Salafis in its contextualization migration to ISIS. Moreover, the bulk of the study is dedicated to Bosnia, with Kosovo at times appearing as more of an afterthought. Finally, the book’s structure also bears the hallmarks of a lightly revised dissertation: literature reviews, background information, and description of methods take up the first half, with much of the analysis being relegated to the final substantive chapter. Nonetheless, there are some fascinating observations buried in the interview data, especially a haunting anecdote about a Bosnian mother whose son was killed in Syria corresponding with the Yazidi woman who she insists on describing as her “daughter-in-law,” notwithstanding widespread reports of the sexual enslavement of Yazidi women by ISIS fighters (141). While Dramac Jiries uses family members to gain insights on those who went to Syria, her data are perhaps more compelling as an account of how the family members left behind make sense of those departures and their devastating consequences.

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Polish Jews in the Soviet Union (1939–1959): History and Memory of Deportation, Exile, and Survival. Ed. Katharina Friedla and Markus Nesselrodt. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2021. xvi, 319 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$139.00, hard bound.

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Most Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust had escaped or been forcibly deported into the Soviet interior between September 1939 and summer 1941. Probably more than 300,000 of the 700–780,000 Polish citizens who found themselves in Soviet territory after the western parts of the Soviet Union had been occupied by German troops in summer 1941 were Jews. Though their chances of survival here were significantly higher than under German occupation, many of them also —some estimates are as high as thirty percent—died in the Soviet Union by the end of the war, mostly because of the harsh living conditions for the refugees and deportees.

For a long time the history of Polish Jews in the Soviet Union attracted only small attention in research, but in recent years a number of studies on this subject have