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Johnson, Ian, *A Mosque in Munich: Nazis, the CIA, and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in the West.*

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This is a cautionary work about unanticipated consequences—an issue that always confronts foreign policy making. In this case, it is what happens when short-term objectives fail to take into consideration longer-term consequences. It is also about the folly of believing that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.” Sometimes, that enemy is your enemy too.

Ian Johnson is a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist who spent five years researching and writing this important book. He asks the question: “How did Europe become a Muslim frontier without our noticing it? And why should we care about this now?” We must care because the United States, England, and Spain have all been attacked by Muslims living in Europe (and now, the United States).

The book is divided into three war periods: The Hot Wars (World Wars I and II); Cold Wars (the US and USSR); and Modern Wars (Afghanistan-USSR, Gulf War I, Iraq War, Afghan war). The connection in all of these wars is the role of Germany and its obsession with making use of Muslims.

**World War I and Before.**

Germany and the Ottoman Empire were allies during World War I, to the detriment of both; but at the time, it made sense. The Ottomans had fought with the British and Russians during the 19th century, but not the Germans. Hence the relationship between the Germans and the Turks.

Even earlier, Germany, a latecomer to empire, was already interested in Central Asia (at that time controlled by the Russian Empire), and Germany produced a number of excellent scholars with knowledge of Persia and the Turkic-speaking peoples of Asia.

Between World War I and II, the Germans were preparing for empire in the East—and they had to consider how they would fight the new Communist Soviet Union. They established an “ostministerium” in preparation for occupying eastern territories (the Muslim part of the Soviet Union—and also a place with oil).

**World War II.**
With the Nazis taking on the vast Soviet Union (the Russian war), they found that there was a ready fifth column there: unhappy Turkic-Muslim soldiers of the Caucasus and Central Asia not eager to fight for the Soviet Union. The Germans encouraged mass defections and took many of these men back to Germany to train—and then used them to fight.

Germany was also fighting the British in North Africa. The British and French were colonial and Mandate masters of North Africa, with an Arab Muslim population very unhappy under European rule. The Nazis staged a campaign of propaganda and promised independence to Arabs who would help them and they sweetened the deal by deporting and murdering Jews who had lived there for millennia.

The Nazis made certain that the Arabs understood that Anti-Semitism was not really against all Semites (Arabs were that too), but against Jews. One of their more notorious allies was the Palestinian Grand Mufti (chief cleric), who became an enthusiastic Nazi and was even feted in a parade in Germany and a meeting with Hitler.

Although Germany lost that war—both in North Africa and then in Europe, no sooner was the war over, a new enemy arose: the Soviet Union and the Cold War.

**Cold War.**

Arab sympathizers in the Middle East and North Africa helped hide escaping Nazis after the war—a number of whom converted to Islam and began new murderous careers in the Middle East. And the entire range of Nazi anti-Jewish propaganda was absorbed with enthusiasm by Arab states, now engaged in a conflict with the new state of Israel, an insult to Muslims who wanted nobody but Muslims in their region.

**The CIA and the New German Intelligence Service.**

In the ongoing fight against the Soviet Union, both the CIA and Germans recruited Muslims—both Turks and Arabs—this time not so much for direct fighting, but to keep the Soviets from seducing them into Communism. It was logical to assume that religion (Islam) would be a natural bulwark against Marxism Atheism—so the West encouraged religiosity, mosque building, and community bolstering. What they did not understand was that some secular Muslim states (dictatorships) liked the authoritarian aspects of Communism and were left-leaning (Iraq and Syria).

**The Mosque in Munich.**
What began as an idea to build a mosque in Munich to serve the Turkic-Muslim war veterans, morphed into something else in the hands of an extremely dangerous group—the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood was founded in the early 1930s in Egypt as a response to the rapid modernization and secularization of Egypt. This organization, from its beginnings, was an attempt to produce a world-wide union of reactionary Muslims who wanted to restore the Caliphate and resume the original militancy of Islam. They wanted to continue the battle to conquer the world begun by the early followers of the Prophet Mohammad.

As grandiose as this vision is, the Brotherhood has been very successful in creating university student organizations (the Muslim Student Association), political agents attempting to raise funds—mostly from the Saudis and other petro-dictators; and ultimately training for insurgent attacks—initially against the Israelis, but now worldwide.

The Mosque in Munich served as the nexus for all of this activity—the mother colony that with infusions of ill-considered western (CIA) and Saudi money has gone global. Today millions of Muslims live in Europe—and more have been radicalized by the Brotherhood than integrated into secular society. The United States now has this problem too.

**Modern Wars.**

In the Cold War struggle against the USSR, we seized the opportunity to foil their occupation of Afghanistan. Using Saudi and CIA money, we supported a spawn of the Muslim Brotherhood (Al Qaeda) to fight the Russians. Now what we helped to create is our problem.

The moral of this fascinating story is that radical Islam has an easier time existing amidst the freedoms of modern, democratic states than in their native countries (all of them autocratic). We have bred a serious problem for ourselves which we are just now beginning to recognize. This book is an important source for understanding what we have done.

The enemy of our enemy is not necessarily our friend.

Laina Farhat-Holzman