WHITE ENCLOSURES

RACIAL CAPITALISM & COLONIALITY ALONG THE BALKAN ROUTE

PIRO REXHEPI

White Enclosures

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Piro Rexhepi

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Racial Capitalism and Coloniality along the Balkan Route

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For Theo

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Introduction

In the early summer of 2017, in the Loznitsa neighborhood of Asenovgrad, a small town in southern Bulgaria, a fight broke out between the city's Bulgarian kayaking team and local Roma and Muslim residents. The conflict began when residents who sought to save a drowning Bulgarian woman were met with racist slurs by members of the kayaking team who happened to be practicing in the lake. Eight Roma residents from Loznitsa were subsequently arrested and charged with violations, but no charges were made against the members of the kayaking team, who left the incident unscathed. A spontaneous racist rally denouncing "Roma aggression" erupted the day after, in which local Bulgarians were quickly joined by far-right groups from other parts of the country and marched into town. Attempts by Loznitsa community members to organize a protest were prevented by local police officials, citing security concerns. In the following days, the police increased their presence in the neighborhood in order to closely monitor journalists and human rights activists who had arrived in the city as the incident gained national attention. Within a couple of weeks, racist rallies against Roma aggression had spread across Bulgaria.

Prompted by Prime Minister Boyko Borisov, who had built his political career by speaking bluntly for years about the dangers of the demographic rise of Muslims and Roma populations as "bad human material" (*Telegraph* 2009) multiplying in the peripheries of Bulgarian towns and cities, local Asenovgrad authorities began conducting background checks, installing security cameras, demolishing homes, and evicting the Roma and Muslim residents from Loznitsa. In the meantime, the Ministry of

FIGURE INTRO.1. Demolished homes in the Roma Muslim neighborhood of Asenovgrad, August 2017.

Interior celebrated the opening of a new police station with traditional Bulgarian dances and with European Union (EU) and Bulgarian flags to celebrate police officers who had worked side by side with workers sent to demolish "illegal constructions." When I returned to the neighborhood at the end of August, more than thirty homes had been destroyed, and demolitions were continuing.

I talked to Muhave, a local resident in her sixties, who sat in front of her ruined home and pulled out a paper dating back to socialist Bulgaria affirming her right to dwell there. "I was born and raised here," she said. "My family has been here as long as we remember and now we are told that we are illegal and arrived in the last twenty years with a caravan." In a rushed decision after the incident, the municipal assembly started a process of redesignating the once-public land where the mostly Roma Muslim community lived for private development. Residents argued that the privatization of public land earmarked for residential dwellings was undertaken selectively for the purpose of displacing Roma Muslim communities. Some of Muhave's neighbors had started to demolish their own homes in order to save building materials.

By the end of summer 2017, the demolition of homes in Roma and Muslim neighborhoods had spread all across Bulgaria, including two of the largest Roma communities in the country: Zaharna Fabrika in Sofia and Pobeda in Burgas. Displacements were accompanied by accounts of unchecked violence—in some instances instigated by the police and in others by fascist formations close to the ruling coalition government. Municipal

authorities were told to focus on "cleaning" and fencing their towns and cities. At the Bulgarian National Assembly, members from a wide range of political parties, from the right to the left, sought to capitalize on widespread racist rallies. Angel Dzhambazki, from the far-right Bulgarian National Movement Party (IMRO) then in the governing coalition, called for the euthanizing of those arrested in the Asenovgrad incident. Ivo Hristov, from the opposition Bulgarian Socialist Party "for Bulgaria," after arguing that the "gypsy enclaves" were a demographic "explosive material" that were "threatening Bulgarian national security" as they had also become the "hearth of Islamic fundamentalism in Bulgaria," commented that, like the Albanians in Yugoslavia, the Roma are the "capsule detonator that is going to blow up Bulgaria" (National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria 2017). That phrase—"Albanians in Yugoslavia"—referred to an earlier public concern prevalent in socialist Yugoslavia about the fast demographic growth of Albanians considered by both socialists and nationalists alike as a strategic move by Albanians to claim Kosovo in the future.

The demographic threat debates, reminiscent of the discourse during the disintegration of neighboring Yugoslavia, appeared on the Bulgarian national stage as the EU was lifting work restrictions on Bulgarians and an exodus of highly skilled Bulgarian workers combined with overall decline in birth rates resulted in a drastic population drop. With the arrival of Syrian refugees seeking passage through the Balkan route, political parties began fomenting a "de-Bulgarianization" panic by combining selective data sets to show a rise in Muslim, Roma, and Turkish minorities and a decline in white Bulgarians. In the media, intellectuals warned the public that the influx of refugees and the rise of minority populations would turn Bulgarians into an "extinct exotic minority," frequently framing the Syrian refugee surge as "a new Ottoman invasion." Meanwhile, the prime minister, who had previously praised the vigilante border patrols that had emerged to supposedly defend Bulgaria and Europe from refugees, promised to finish erecting a fence along the EU Bulgarian-Turkish border. Between 2015 and 2020, the government charted various demographic policies that ranged from defending the border and birth control for minorities to the infamous 2019 proposal by the defense minister Krasimir Karakachanov called a "Concept of Changes in the Integration Policy of the Gypsy (Roma) Ethnicity in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Measures for their Implementation" that called for free-of-charge sterilization for Roma women along with the demolition and displacement

of Roma communities to training camps for "integration." The political manifesto of Karakachanov's party, the IMRO, which was part of the government coalition, also called for reservation camps for Roma people modeled after Indigenous US and Australian reservations that would generate their own income as tourist attractions.

Bulgarian and international media have for the most part attributed the escalation of racist violence to the "populist" political platforms that have produced the EU refugee crisis, Brexit, and the presidency of Donald Trump in the United States. Yet the slogans "For Europe" and "United we stand strong," like the politics of the Bulgarian far right, closely mirror those of the EU and the Bulgarian government, which launched its presidency of the Council of the EU in January 2018 with a call for increased border control and migration management in line with the EU-Turkish deal of 2016. A few weeks later, during the fascist Lukov March held in Sofia in February 2018 in honor of the World War II Bulgarian Nazi-allied leader Hristo Lukov, inspired by the US-based *Identity Evropa* movement, European and Bulgarian marchers carried signs that read "Together for Europe" (see figure Intro.2) while chanting for "a stronger Europe with strong borders."

The normalization of postsocialist racist politics has gone hand in hand with the EU and NATO's eastern expansion. The ruling coalition partners of GERB (Граждани за европейско развитие на България; Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria) in Bulgaria from 2009 to 2021, known collectively as the Patriotic Front—the National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria (NFSB) and the IMRO—were all center-right

FIGURE INTRO.2. Neo-Nazi Lukov March, Sofia, Bulgaria, February 18, 2018.

parties with close links to fascist and vigilante groups committed to the Euro-Atlantic enclosure with stylistic rather than substantial differences. Bulgaria's politics are not unique to the Balkans and the broader postsocialist landscape. In Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Croatia too, racist, antimigrant, and misogynist agendas align with political parties in power, such as the Hungarian government's policy of "procreation, not immigration." All have organized around the idea of a united Europe under threat of demographic decline because of an influx of migrants and Muslims, ideas generally recuperated by World War II anti-Semitic heroes renewed after socialism. Much like the EU, they invoke Europe as a postnational Pan-European geopolitical entity tied by common history and geography and defined through race and religion. Far from being "Eurosceptics," they consider their postsocialist integration into Euro-Atlantic security and capitalist economy as the backbone of their ascendance and see the sealing of borders as a fulfilment of a post–Cold War promise of a globally gated white enclosure.

The EU has exceeded their expectations by overhauling its asylum policies, which have now produced a public-private carceral conglomerate amounting to a growing industry that has bolstered its spending for border security from €5.6 billion ($6.3 billion) for 2014–2020 to €21.3 billion ($24 billion) for 2021–2027. A good amount of that money has landed in the hands of governments along the Balkan route accompanied by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (known as Frontex). There are now refugee carceral camps in every country across the Balkan route with standard revenue streams from the EU that are funneled through government subcontracting of local and mostly private construction, surveillance, security, tracing technologies, and transportation services and the larger humanitarian-industrial complex that are meant to provide food, sanitation, and health and social services. The emergence and growth of a carceral capitalist conglomerate of policing, pushbacks, or confining refugees along the Balkan route go beyond the profit incentive that comes out of security services, processing suppliers, aid workers, cleaners, and cross-examiners to also extract precarious migrant labor underwritten by profit margins that are hardwired by the histories of racial capitalism and colonialism that constitute what Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2018) calls the "coloniality of migration" of both EU and US geopolitical bordering of wealth and whiteness. Recent "rapid border intervention" agreements with countries aspiring to become EU member

states have sought to negotiate their freedom of movement within the EU at the expense of policing the movement of migrants along the Balkan route: Montenegro (February 2019), Bosnia and Herzegovina (January 2019), Serbia (September 2018), and Macedonia and Albania (both in July 2018).

In October 2020, the EU contracted the state-owned Israel Aerospace Industries and Israel's largest private weapons manufacturer Elbit to design a wholesale drone surveillance system for tracking migrants along the Greek coast and the Bulgarian-Turkish border based on their effective use in the ongoing siege of Gaza in the occupied Palestinian territories. There is now an ongoing effort by EU officials to either cover up border violence by classifying migrant torture reports or attributing them to specificities of nation-state border policing as a supposedly separate realm of sovereignty. In one such instance, EU officials classified details of the Croatian border police beating migrants, dismembering their fingers, and pushing them back into Bosnia with shaved and spray-painted crosses on their heads so that drone surveillance could monitor their movements in the forest. In another instance Frontex covered up push-back images captured by its own surveillance planes showing the Greek Coast Guard dragging migrant boats into Turkish waters; Frontex was subsequently forced to release the images as part of an internal antifraud investigation (Christides et al. 2022).

The overall logistics and border technologies that have now come to dominate surveillance, incarceration, and the sealing off of populations into enclosures rely on technologies developed in settler-colonial contexts. Unsurprisingly, the United States and Israel not only provide examples for enclosures but are also front-runners in the automation of carceral regimes, having developed expansive industries that export services around the world. Crossing sites along former colonial zones of contact that are now seen as weak links of the expanding Euro-Atlantic enclosure constitute their main revenue. Rather than consider these enclosure sites along the transatlantic peripheries as mere outcomes of military-border corporatism or transient populist electoral platforms, this book situates the Balkan route in the larger context of the coloniality of racial capitalism and borders.

I started with Loznitsa as a departure point because I want to draw attention to how seemingly small and situated acts of enclosure around a Roma Muslim community in the outskirts of a peripheral Bulgarian town

are linked with the ongoing transformations of Western "white replacement" conspiracies into Euro-American white enclosure policies. These transformations raise fundamental questions about the nature of enclosures, not only as contemporary coagulations of white, colonial-capitalist accumulation of wealth within Euro-American spaces through sprawling and interconnected border regimes around the US-Mexico crossing, the EU-Mediterranean passage, and the Balkan route but also as colonial formations of race bent on bolstering white demographics at its edges.

ENCLOSURE AS THE NEW GEOPOLITICS OF WHITENESS

The Balkan route has now become a geopolitical enclosure for surveilling, sequestering, sorting, torturing, and incarcerating migrants, part of what Achille Mbembe calls the emergence of an "archipelago of carceral spaces" across global peripheries (Universitaet zu Koeln 2019). While these spaces are now visible around the world, this book focuses on the Balkan route—not because it is a unique site of carceral capitalist regimes but because it is an overlooked site of connected global histories of race and coloniality that inform ongoing georacial imaginaries of a world-white enclosure. If the US-Mexico border has served to symbolize and structure the geopolitical racial frontier for the Americas, wherein the "Third World grates against the first and bleeds" (Anzaldúa 1987, 25), the Balkan route and Mediterranean crossing represent the "two main geographical, cultural, and racial threats [in] long-standing European tropes: one located in the Global South, with African migration representing the quintessential racial difference from white Europe; the other emanating from the Middle East, where Muslim migrants embody the religious/cultural opposition to Christian/enlightened Europe" (El-Tayeb 2008, 651). Despite attempts to understand the connected and global nature of these borders through their "compartmentalization into nation-states," as Roberto Hernández (2018, 3) points out, they are "nonetheless refracted in our contemporary geopolitical ordering" as the underside of European modernity/coloniality (Quijano 2000; Mignolo 2002). Blurred mandates of white vigilante groups and the vectors of the state at the US-Mexico border, like the ones on the Bulgarian-Turkish EU-non-EU border, all form part of the geopolitical attempts of walling whiteness. The screams of "you will not replace us" in Charlottesville, Virginia, and the panic over the changing demographics in Europe and the United

States are not simply the percolation of fears about "white extinction" but the logic of worldwide white supremacy preemptively legitimizing the violence that this fear unleashes. To the decolonial ear, the vocabulary and imaginaries that have accompanied Western millenarist apocalyptic declarations about the "end of the world as we know it" sound awfully familiar. Racist angst emanating across transatlantic territories tells us that the West is incubating new removals in order to sustain its white world b/orders: ideologically, demographically, and economically. If colonial cartographies inform the mapping of borderland zones across Euro-American peripheries, race functions as "a logic of enclosure" as a "processes of racialization aim[ing] to mark population groups, to fix as precisely as possible the limits within which they can circulate, and to determine as exactly as possible which sites they can occupy—in sum, to limit circulation in a way that diminishes threats and secures general safety of the species" (Mbembe 2017, 35).

When white supremacists in the West make reference to the Bosnian and Kosovo wars—from Anders Behring Breivik's 2011 manifesto "2083—A European Declaration of Independence," which calls for the extermination of Muslims and Roma from the Balkans, to the Christchurch terrorist in 2019 drawing inspiration from the Bosnian genocide—all form part of renewed Reconquista ideologies that dominated white internationalist battalions in the war on Bosnia and Kosovo and saw themselves as the new crusaders and conquistadors defending Europe and Christianity at its Balkan borderlands.[1] Their race imaginaries are identical to border points policed today by Euro-Atlantic enclosure policies. Rather than suggesting these are entirely new political realities, I think through these processes in this book as expanded modern/colonial racialized relations of power because the ways in which these histories are reactivated today to remake race through the imposition of border regimes across global borderlands suggests a much more protracted geopolitical undertaking of white supremacy in both scope and shape, one unique neither to the EU nor the United States but part of a larger Euro-Atlantic coloniality.

White Enclosure traces Euro-Atlantic politics of borderization along the Balkan route as a way of bringing attention to peripheries of white supremacy, where processes of race and border making are intricately and historically tied to the ways in which whiteness and coloniality function within the inner core of Euro-American spaces.[2] It examines the integration of postsocialist people and spaces into the Euro-Atlantic alliance as

a strategic spatial sedimentation of racial difference between the redeemable and integrable whiteness of the postsocialist former br/other and the irredeemable impasse of the postcolonial others. Here, the spatial integration of postsocialist territories into the white enclosure serves to both secure borderlands and recruit white Eastern European workers as means to tackle demands for cheap labor and the decline in racial demographics.[3] I theorize this process in the book as *geopolitical whiteness* or the post–Cold War recalibration of Euro-American colonial/capitalist race making in relation to ongoing territorial enclosures of whiteness wherein the Balkan route serves as a racial cordon sanitaire of *colonial difference* in the current geopolitical coordinates of coloniality. The Balkan route reemerges here not as a separate set of supposedly independent nation-states submerged in interethnic conflicts but as collaborative, interdependent, and protracted forms of modern/colonial regimes of power that facilitate the filtering of refugees for the Euro-American inner core through parallel processes of interpolicing their own racialized populations.

Acknowledged or not, postsocialist subjects understand that joining the enclosure comes with the mandate of supporting and sustaining white supremacy and defending its borders at its edges, its rhetoric of rights, its politics of racelessness, and especially its "fantasy of whiteness," which "draws part of its self-assurance from structural violence and the ways in which it contributes on a planetary scale to the profoundly unequal redistribution of the resources of life and the privileges of citizenship" (Mbembe 2017, 45). The frequently promised but continuously deferred state of Euro-Atlantic integration in the region plays out through various political scenarios, where the privilege of EU and NATO membership contrasts with memories of recent genocidal violence, postsocialist poverty, and the precarious position of refugees at their borders—reminding the remaining aspiring populations of the violence reserved for those who remain outside their gates. The mandate of policing the borders of the enclosure at its edges is thus presented as an auspicious opportunity to be saved once and for all through integration into white supremacy while also redeeming Euro-Atlantic coloniality in the name of ostensibly "regional," but actually racial, stability. That the left across the region today has become complicit in the enclosure, be it around small communities such as Loznitsa or around the Balkan route, is not because it continues to conceptually treat race as an outcome of capitalist exploitation or because it relegates debates about modernization into the safe socialist past where

colonial institutionalized hierarchies of race go to hide their tracks. Rather, to confront racism politically in the current context would require recourse from the volumes of nostalgic attempts to salvage the ruins of second-world color-blind socialism as well as its postsocialist dead ends.

My goal in this book is not to suggest what such recourse might look like but to think *decolonial Balkan routes* through the perspective of racialized and colonized communities as front and center of regional histories and their connections to larger geographies of liberation. The main focus of the first part of this book is on those people, movements, memories, and methods that defy the increased violence of Euro-American enclosure along the Balkan route. The goal here however is not to "study or report about social movements, actors, and thinkers," as Catherine Walsh (2018, 85) points out, but "to think with, and, at the same time, to theorize *from* the 'political moments' in which I am also engaged." A great deal of attention in this part is also given to what Catherine Hall calls "reparatory history," as a way "to think about the wrongs of the past and the possibilities of repair" (2018, 203). My work in this context means not taking for granted the connections between post-Ottoman racial formations in the region, their color-blind and secular seepage into socialist structures, and mandates of modernization and their return today as raceless projects of Euro-Atlantic integration. Decolonial praxis has been foundational in reconsidering the Balkan region through the coloniality of power, being, knowledge, gender, and race as a way of delinking from the spatiotemporal coordinates of Eurocentric epistemic infrastructures (Mignolo 2007; Mignolo and Wash 2018; Maldonado-Torres 2007; Quijano 2000; Lugones 2008; 2010; Grosfoguel 2011). Madina Tlostanova's work (2013, 2012, 2015, 2017a, 2017b, 2019a, 2019b) has been particularly helpful in thinking from the ruins of socialist modernity and the uneven postsocialist capitalist development built on the precarious labour of racialized and colonized communities and industries that have thrived on their displacement and destruction. I am equally influenced in thinking through these processes in the global context of racial capitalism and the ways in which they intersect with histories of migration, racism, and carceral economies (Robinson 2020; Gilmore 1999; Bhattacharyya 2018). In this sense, I approach the carceral economies of refugee confinement and Roma displacement along the Balkan route not as a mere outcome of "neoliberal" or "late capitalist" austerity measures (Wang 2018, 19) but as histories of racial capitalism underwritten by colonial mappings of population, place, and time.

While the geopolitical designation of borders has been enacted by Euro-Atlantic security structures, their questioning on the ground has been generally disrupted by queer and trans people whose embodiments, desires, dilemmas, and destinations for a different and possibly decolonial politics of solidarity open new fugitive flights from the enclosure while also *shifting the geographies of reason* (Kancler 2016). These interventions are important, particularly since gender and sexuality have been the intimate jurisdictions of post-Ottoman and postsocialist "saving" missions, frequently by dis/orienting local populations toward the gendered matrix of colonial/modern power. Maria Lugones's work on the "modern colonial gender system" (2008, 16) and "the process of narrowing of the concept of gender to the control of sex, its resources, and products" (12) has been especially helpful in thinking through the post-Ottoman gendering of Muslim populations in particular, given their perception as bearers of deviant genders and sexualities. In the second half of this book, I look at how the mandates of modernizing and nationalizing post-Ottoman Muslim populations in the Balkans were not just guided by the geopolitical racial reconfigurations of the world but were also invested in ordering, secularizing, and sanitizing the locals through new social, medical, and educational codes that sought to create a distinction between normative and deviant gender/sexual embodiments. Here I look at how the racial reconfiguration of gender and sexuality served as spatializing and secularizing processes of modernization, where the orientation of post-Ottoman Muslim subjects toward Europe was contingent on the straightening of their ambiguous sexualities. My goal here is not to suggest that these were top-down gendering processes since emerging industrial elites were deeply invested mediators of modernity/coloniality. What I am arguing is that the association of sexual deviance with the Islamic past became the post-Ottoman modern/colonial imperative through which the Muslim man was saved and secularized by reclaiming and returning to his supposed pre-Islamic European/white heterosexuality. This post-Ottoman return to race through (hetero)sexuality has shaped modern embodiments of secular masculinity as restless and perpetual acts of chivalry contingent on overcoming the double temptations of the tainted past, deviant desires, and Islam. In thinking about the expanded afterlives and *durabilities* (Stoler 2016) of these modern/colonial projects, I am also interested in how sexuality reemerges in the postsocialist moment to mediate new saving projects through "sexual rights," this time not by promoting heterosexuality but

ideals of sexual diversity aligned with homonormative Euro-American epistemologies and embodiments. In both instances, the subjectivization of borderland bodies through sexuality is not only "created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary," as in the US-Mexico context, but also secures white supremacy by seeking to straighten and sort out "the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulatto, the half-breed, the half dead; in short, those who cross over and pass over, or go through the confines of the 'normal'" (Anzaldúa 1987, 25). Thus, the second half of the book links the geopolitical to the body politic by looking at how the enduring effects of colonial histories and racialized relations of power engender particular kinds of subjectivities through sexuality as the more intimate site, where Euro-American geopolitics are enacted in and through bodily b/orders.

"EASTERN EUROPEAN" EXCEPTIONALISMS

One of the premises of this book is that Eastern Europe is not an exception to but a peripheral extension of European coloniality. While the geopolitical mapping of a white enclosure has seemed self-evident for a while now, its actual enactment and enforcement across peripheries remains overshadowed by national histories and epistemic hegemonies that obscure their connections to modernity/coloniality while also making opaque peripheral movements and solidarities. Writing this book has required reconsideration of those histories while also paying close attention and tracing the reactivation of other, more reactionary pasts that have served the larger postsocialist and (post)genocidal racial realignment of Eastern Europe with Euro-American trajectories of "integration." This has meant working against the pervasive leveling of violence on postsocialist racialized communities as interethnic conflict while also acknowledging their colonial origins and entailments through decoloniality. But to think through decoloniality in the Balkan borderlands means to unsettle broader Eastern European exceptionalism about coloniality despite the fact that racial, religious, spatial, and epistemic proximity to Europe and whiteness has served as the historical measure of modernity adopted to racialize those who do not fit what Fatima El-Tayeb (2016) calls the "normalized, Christian(ized, secular) whiteness" of Europe. Both post-Ottoman and post–Cold War narratives of "unification" with Europe and the West remain potent narratives of progress whereby the racial and religious mark-

ings of the Balkans as European are understood as white and Christian, with the Ottoman and socialist pasts figuring as temporal misalignments from the European path. While attempts are made to continuously suggest the history of the region as white, there is also unsurpassable difference in the presentation of the local Roma and Muslim population as tainted Europeans whose integration into enclosure is presented as simultaneously desirable for security but impossible racially. Even seemingly "critical" accounts of the Balkans reproduce this spatiotemporal arrangement of race and religion, as is the case with the often quoted *Imagining the Balkans* by Maria Todorova, who claims that "the Balkans are Europe, are part of Europe, although, admittedly, for the past several centuries its provincial part or periphery" (2009, 17), a "concreteness" read through its "predominantly white and Christian" population (455). But this viability, legibility, and legitimacy of whiteness is confronted by the very existence of the Roma, of the Muslims and refugees, whose epistemic erasure and ongoing physical removal have been foundational for Euro-Atlantic white integration. Like European discourses of racelessness (El-Tayeb 2011; Bouteldja 2016; Dabashi 2015) that abstract race in the service of colonial amnesia, "the deceased 'second world'" (Imre 2005), is eager to exclude itself from its own colonial-present pasts. This is frequently done by projecting postsocialist populations as victims of Western European colonialism or what Tlostanova calls a "double colonial difference" (2009; 2015), which converges, and at times copies, Euro-American colonial categorizations of race so it applies to local racialized populations while also erasing the more complex constellations of colonial power and the ways in which white and Christian populations connect to European modern/colonial expansion. For this narrative of second-world color blindness and colonial-present past to work, there has to be a continuous erasure of Roma and Muslim populations in both the symbolic and structural sense. When Salman Sayyid argues that "the relationship between the emergence of Islamophobia and the crisis of Europeanness is exemplified by the way white revanchism has taken hold in East Central Europe," where "the persistence of Islamophobia and its entrenchment in public discourses throughout the region point to the ways in which it cannot be simply understood as an expression of prejudice" (2018, 435), what he means is that the very acceptance of Eastern Europeans as white Europeans and their subsequent inclusion into the Euro-Atlantic enclosure is conditional to systemic violence, assimilation, and genocide on Muslim populations.

With the racialization of postsocialist laborers in Western Europe and racist attacks on migrants and minorities across the EU, however, there have been attempts to address former Eastern European racism (Böröcz and Kovács 2001, 28; Račevskis 2002; Tudor 2017, 2018). In "The Unbearable Whiteness of the Polish Plumber and the Hungarian Peacock Dance around 'Race,'" for instance, József Böröcz and Mahua Sarkar illustrate how "the arrival of relatively large numbers of displaced people seems to have provided an excellent opportunity to the governments of Eastern Europe to stake out their claim, once and for all, to essential, unquestionable whiteness" and that "the discursive denigration of the 'Arab,' 'Muslim' 'migrants' "somehow shore[s] up the essential whiteness and Christian-ness of Hungarians (east Europeans)" (2017 314). These important interventions open new questions as to the extent to which Hungarian racism (for instance) can be considered a solely postsocialist phenomenon. The history of Hungary as a coconstitutive part of the Habsburg empire suggests the corroboration of whiteness is a historical formation of earlier Hungarian encounters with "others." The Habsburg colonization of Bosnia assured Hungarian and Habsburg whiteness vis-à-vis the majority-Muslim population of Bosnia while also strengthening its self-stylized image as "protector of Christianity in Central Europe and the Balkans" (Ruthner 2008, 8) against the alleged continued threat of an Islamic or Ottoman invasion. More importantly for the analysis here, given that the Roma were racialized before, during, and after socialism as "outsiders"[4] who supposedly arrived together with the Ottomans (Vekerdi 1988), to what extent were the racialized differences of the Habsburg empire decolonized during Hungary's socialism?

Hungary is no exception when it comes to complex constellations of coloniality in former Eastern Europe. The settler colonization of Kosovo by the kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes after the Balkan Wars (Krstić 1928; Ristić 1958; Obradović 1981; Pribićević, Višnjić, and Vlajić 1996) relied on similar gradations of coloniality whereby the suspect whiteness and Europeanness of Serbs was validated by what Jovanović calls the Serb post-Ottoman "Reconquista" (2015, 95) colonization of Kosovo.[5] The nineteenth-century geopolitical mapping of the geographic, temporal, and racial borders of Europe that produced the Ottomans as an intrusion in the Balkans charged newly formed countries such as Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia, and later the kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, with the re-Europeanization of post-Ottoman spatial and social relations.[6]

These racist worldviews that imagined the Balkans as the borderland battlefield where whiteness and Christianity had come into contact with nonwhite and non-Christian populations and "Islamic" influences in the post-Ottoman era were not just European concerns; they were joint Euro-American visions of a what the eugenicist David Starr Jordan considered "racial unity" of all white people. American Atlanticists of this period, such as Carlton Hayes, Ross Hoffman, and Walter Lippmann, believed that Christianity was the glue of Euro-Atlantic white civilization and supported various Christian missionary work to keep its Balkan buffer zone white and Western.[7] For most of them, the Balkans presented a site of security in the emerging Atlanticist movement that would gain momentum in both Europe and the United States during World War I, when the Balkan League solicited their support by projecting its geopolitical position as a guardian of the frontier of the white race and Christianity (see figures Intro.3 and Intro.4).

While European powers competed for dominance in the post-Ottoman territories, US Christian missionaries carried out the groundwork of saving, civilizing, and, when possible, converting local "pure races" such as the

FIGURE INTRO.3. A 1913 poster promoting the expulsion of Muslims from Europe following the victory of the Balkan League over the Ottoman Empire after the first Balkan War. The poster reads, "The expulsion of Abdi Baba and Fatime Hanim from paradise." It depicts a Bulgarian solider of the Balkan League with a fiery sword treading on the crescent moon while chasing a Muslim couple out of Europe.

FIGURE INTRO.4. "The Balkans against Tyranny," a Greek propaganda lithograph published on October 5, 1912, celebrating the Balkan military alliance among Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro days before their declaration of war on the Ottoman Empire. The lithograph depicts the subjugation of the Ottoman Empire represented as a green dragon with yellow turban and bearded face with white Europa holding a cross in the background.

Albanians back into Christianity. Eugenicists like Jordan, who argued that the white race would degenerate because of mixing without serious effort toward global racial unity, believed that the unspoiled genetics of pure white races in the Balkans proved promising enough to preserve them, noting in the *Journal for Race Development* that there was "a large hope in the unspoiled wildness of the aboriginal Albanian" (1918, 134). Jordan supported Woodrow Wilson's presidential run based on an account that Wilson understood this global predicament and saw the "racial unity" of Euro-Atlantic civilization along identical racial lines. Indeed,

the independence of much of the post-Ottoman and post-Habsburg nation-states in Eastern Europe at the Paris Peace Conference was, to a large extent, a racial realignment of these populations toward Europe. As Robert Vitalis (2015) points out in *White World Order, Black Power Politics*, international relations as a discipline and the League of Nations as its instrument emerged out of US intellectual concerns over interracial mixing and an imagined domestic and global race war. The subsequent population exchanges between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s overseen by the League of Nations was guided by this new racist thinking that created "racialized alignment of different groups with designated geographies of belonging, such as the assumption that incoming Muslims from Greece belonged to Turkey and likewise that the Greek Orthodox from Turkey belonged to Greece," which "signaled a modern fusion of the eugenicist logic with demography, mobilized through racialized thinking and statistics, and implemented as spatial segregation" (Iğsız 2018). Hayes, the most influential of the Atlanticists, believed that global racial segregation was imperative whereby US borders should be understood and secured as an extension of Christian Europe. Following World War II, Christian Atlanticists "cheered the creation of the North Atlantic Pact in 1949, a measure that they generally welcomed as a formalization of . . . security" (Alessandri 2010, 55–78).

The emergence of European- and American-supported Christian states in the Balkans in the second half of the nineteenth century provided boundary-drawing blueprints that designated new European racial frontiers and naturalized a binary differentiation of non-European and non-Christian outsiders and European and Christian insiders. The racist imaginaries that informed early state building are visible in virtually all of the Ottoman- and post-Ottoman-era independence movements of the time. Contemporary Euro-Atlantic integration projects depend on, and deepen, such histories and are enacted as sequences of events that envision merging with Europe teleologically as a preordained goal. The racial stratification of post-Ottoman populations was particularly powerful given that it introduced novel biopolitical forms of governance, offering opportunities for nation-building elites to test modern approaches to health, education, sanitation, and psychology with the mission of civilizing, ordering, and orienting the locals toward a fulfilling European life.

The centrality of race in the world system that emerged out of the post–World War I Paris Peace Conference can clearly be seen in the commitment of Woodrow Wilson and his European counterparts to preserve the

"'white world order,' with its colonial and racial hierarchies [then] seen as being under threat from revolution, anticolonial agitation, and the rising power of nonwhite nations such as Japan" (Singh 2017, 52). The solidification of post-Ottoman nation-states in the Balkans during this period sedimented a buffer zone between colonizer and colonized, between Europe and non-Europe, as witnessed by the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey and between Yugoslavia and Turkey in the interwar period and during the first decades of the post–World War II period.

Presocialist racial formations in the Balkans didn't disappear; neither were they entirely decolonized during socialism. As Vladimir Arsenijević points out, in regard to socialist Yugoslavia, "Even in the best of times, [Albanians in Kosovo] represented primitive and ridiculous piccaninnies and Uncle Toms . . . total outsiders in and to Yugoslavia" (2007). While Yugoslav socialism sought to address decolonization—a subject that remains underexplored—racist presocialist hangovers were common—not just in Yugoslavia but throughout the socialist bloc. Their reascendency into late socialism and injection into the wider Euro-American "clash of civilizations" discourse cannot be dismissed solely as a result of the late- and postsocialist politics of nationalism and interethnic conflict. This is not only because such a claim invalidates the unequal and racialized position of minoritized communities in socialist Yugoslavia and Bulgaria but because it occludes the continuities between presocialist racial and colonial practices and policies and socialist institutions. Yugoslavia provides a good illustration of this, especially given its self-fashioned preeminence as a leader in international decolonization that emerged out of Bandung, Indonesia.

The Institute for Balkan Studies in Belgrade, Serbia, provides a telling instance of this form of continuity. The institute was initially established in 1934 by King Aleksandar I Karađorđević as the Institut des études balkaniques to script, promote, and proliferate an epistemic cartography of the post-Ottoman Balkans by copying European anthropological methods onto the kingdom's own racial others. Shut down during World War II, it was reestablished between 1969 and 1970 (Samardžić and Duškov 1993) by, among others, Vasa Čubrilović. Čubrilović, whose presocialist career included a memorandum on the *Expulsion of the Albanians* (1937), argued that "at a time when Germany can expel tens of thousands of Jews and Russia can shift millions of people from one part of the continent to another, the expulsion of a few hundred thousand Albanians will not

lead to the outbreak of a world war" (Mestrovic 2013, 44). Čubrilović's statement and the trajectory of his career prior to and during socialism not only complicate the rendering of socialist Yugoslavia as delinked from its colonial histories but they also illustrate the colonial logic of racialization that was not the exception but the rule. Similarly, the beloved and celebrated Yugoslav author Ivo Andrić, who received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1961 and was a Yugoslav ambassador in Berlin in 1939, advised the Serbian government to pursue "the deportation of Moslem Albanians to Turkey . . . since, under the new circumstances, there would be no major impediment to such a move" (Elsie 1997). That expulsion and colonization were articulated in the larger context of European-wide efforts to cleanse Europe of its racialized others illustrates the collusion of Yugoslav colonial projects with European processes of anti-Semitism and racism.

The protracted racialization of Roma populations across different (post)Ottoman spaces betrays the supposed racelessness of socialism. In Bulgaria, for instance, while the Turkish and Pomak Muslim communities were, at least formally, granted citizenship and the right to vote, Roma Muslims were banned from voting with the Election Law of 1901, which was followed by restriction on Roma organizations and cultural, educational, and religious initiatives in the 1920s and 1930s that continued well into the 1950s, at which time the socialist state started forced mass name-changing and assimilation campaigns under the banner of "emancipation." The relative failure of the campaign prompted the Communist Party to erase the existence of the Roma people in its official discourse, muting any mention or reference to Roma in public records and media and, in some instances, walling off entire Roma neighborhoods.[8]

The effects of presocialist institutions and discourses on socialist modernizing are important in that they reveal the enduring afterlives of coloniality and racism throughout the Cold War. They helped create the various contemporary trajectories that produced race- and border-making as primary mandates of Euro-American modernity/coloniality. Ironically, such attempts result in exonerating the socialist second world of its many contributions to the augmentation of post–Cold War Euro-Atlantic border security race making. In this sense, postsocialist nostalgia for colonial-less and color-blind socialist progress frequently ignores the consideration that "colonial, precolonial, and postcolonial epochs are all possible defining features of postsocialist societies" (Silova, Millei, and Piattoeva 2017, 11). But it also erases decolonization struggles

and solidarities between the then second and third worlds that were not premised on normative Cold War camps but approached decolonization as Pan-Islamic liberation. Since modernization informed both Cold War camps, their common contempt for Islam would not only compete in the methods and mandates of modernization but would otherwise converge to globalize an Islamic threat. Indeed, long before the Euro-American "war on terror," the larger context of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the Bulgarian forced assimilation and eventual expulsion of Muslim populations between 1984 and 1989, and the Yugoslav trial of "Islamic fundamentalists" in 1983, the socialist world developed its own versions of an "Islamic threat" in the 1980s.

On August 26, 1982, Radio Free Europe journalist Slobodan Stankovič produced the hour-long program "Danger of Pan-Islamism in Yugoslavia?." "Hundreds of young Bosnian Muslims," worried Stankovič,

> were sent to various Islamic centers abroad (like Mecca or Cairo) to study the Qur'an. Although many of them were party members, they returned this time not as staunch Communists, but rather as fanatical Moslems—this time not as an ethnic group alone, but, which has been even more dangerous for the regime—as Moslems by religion. So instead of studying Marx's *Das Kapital* or Tito's works, these young Moslems study the Qur'an, celebrate Ramadan and seem to be spiritually closer to the Middle East Islamic leaders than their own party leaders. . . . The polemics about pan-Islamism in Sarajevo are not over. (Stankovič 1982)

Drawing on the intense public debates around the influence of the Iranian revolution in Yugoslavia, a main concern in the mainstream media at the time—*Danas* in Zagreb and *Književna reč* in Belgrade—was that Yugoslavia had established a bridge between Muslims in the Balkans and their coreligionists in the Arab world, endangering both sides of the Cold War camp. In these debates, Muslims in the Balkans appeared as the weak link, or the "green transversal," as it came to be known, a Muslim-populated belt that linked the Middle East with the Balkans and was considered a geostrategic threat to Europe. Today, the same spatial coordinates that defined the green transversal in the 1980s and 1990s was renamed the Balkan route.

The perceived danger of Pan-Islamism that followed the Iranian Revolution would become the root of an alleged Islamic threat that would

come to dominate late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century global politics. Muslim Yugoslav activists who, in the 1960s and 1970s, situated themselves in the larger decolonizing politics of Josip Broz Tito's nonaligned commitments suddenly saw themselves referred to as fundamentalists.[9] Relative state tolerance toward the Mladi Muslimani movement organized around Alija Izetbegović's Pan-Islamist praxis would come to an end in 1983 with the arrest and trial of Muslim intellectuals involved in what came to be known as the Sarajevo Process (see figure Intro.5). The trials produced a wave of anti-Muslim discourse in late 1980s Yugoslavia, which, coupled with the economic crisis, student protests in Kosovo, and Muslims protests against assimilation programs and pogroms in neighboring Bulgaria, resulted in visible anti-Muslim political activity across the Balkans. Converging with the early onset of larger global discourses on the dual threats of Islamic fundamentalism and the clash of civilizations, Muslims in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, alongside the Muslims of Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Dagestan, became a primary site of the early globalization of Islamophobia. Recent efforts to shift the focus on the Cold War from the "two-camps" reveal "locally diverse Cold War historical experiences rather than one that encompasses this reality of plurality in favor of some unifying scheme of ideas" (Kwon 2018, 214–15).

Yugoslavia's commitment to decolonization in the nonaligned world does however complicate the questions of race, racism, and coloniality.

FIGURE INTRO.5. The Sarajevo Process trials, 1983.

Jelena Subotić and Srdjan Vučetić (2019) illustrate, for instance, how Yugoslav communist cadres were ignorant of race and racism in their pursuit of leadership in the nonaligned world. Yugoslav leaders consistently failed to understand the racism at work in global politics or their white privilege. Here too, however, racialized communities within Yugoslavia such as Muslims, Roma, and Albanians were conspicuously absent from analysis. Yet the question of the Muslims in Yugoslavia in the context of the nonaligned world was a constant source of headache for Yugoslav diplomats shuttling between Cairo, Islamabad, and Jakarta, where Yugoslav communists deemed the constant pressure by nonaligned allies to address the question of Muslims in Yugoslavia a fascist undertaking (Miller 2017). Unlike the solidarity of Yugoslav leaders with the Non-Aligned Movement, which evaded the question of race and religion, the solidarity of Yugoslav Muslims with nonaligned decolonial movements in the Middle East and North Africa not only acknowledged racism within both socialism and capitalism but they actively denounced it.

Izetbegović's *Islamska deklaracija* (Islamic declaration), written and published at the height of Yugoslav involvement in the Non-Aligned Movement between 1969 and 1970, rejected both Western interventions into the Muslim world and third-world "nationalist movements in Muslim countries that replicate the logics of previous colonial logics" (Izetbegović 1990, 27). Writing from Yugoslavia, Izetbegović chided both the socialist and capitalist camps for their competition over who gets what of the Muslim world. Izetbegović's concerns for the "suffering of Muslims in Palestine or the Crimea, in Sinkiang, Kashmir or Ethiopia" that "arouse feelings of dejection and unanimous condemnation everywhere" (1990, 24) would reveal the limits of Yugoslav decolonial solidarity. These were different concerns than those of socialist solidarity and modernization between the second and third worlds, suggesting a different geography of belonging, resistance, and liberation from that of Yugoslav leaders.

There were also instances when Muslims influenced and negotiated leverage among socialist states competing for "modernizing" projects and oil deals in the Muslim world. Bulgarian arms sales and health services to Syria, Egypt, and Libya in return for a much-needed hard currency and oil were frequently underwritten by promises for better treatment of its Muslims given the ongoing protests of Muslims in Bulgaria (see figure Intro.6) against the large-scale, violent assimilation campaigns called the Bulgarian Revival Process. Ironically, Bulgarian national air

FIGURE INTRO.6. Muslims in Bulgaria protesting the ethnic cleansing policies of the "Process of Rebirth" of the Bulgarian government that required the changing of names and religion of the Muslim citizens and their ancestors. The sign reads, "We want our mothers' names." 1981.

carriers provided transportation for Libyan Muslims to *hajj* while Muslims in Bulgaria were largely restricted from making the journey. By 1989, the Bulgarian Communist Party proceeded with expelling approximately 340,000 Muslim citizens to Turkey. In Bulgarian public discourse, this mass expulsion continues to be called "the great excursion," implying a choice rather than state-organized displacement.

The more worrying aspect of socialist racial anxieties, however, was demographics. A constant concern of socialist authorities and academics in Yugoslavia, for instance, became the "tribal" family structures and high birth rates among Albanian and Roma populations who were frequently subjected to anthropological and ethnographic research on understanding the undercurrents of high birth rates (Radovanović 1964; Golubović and Dimitrijević 1967; Lutovac 1977; Mitrović 1985; First-Dilić 1985). The "ethnopsychological" (Marković 1974, 99) reproductive role of Albanian women in Kosovo became a prime target for socialist planning and biopolitical subjectivization. Roma Muslim women in Bulgaria became targets of these polices, as they were seen as both racially and religiously incompatible with the broader Revival Process assimilationist

politics. If the Turkish and Pomak Muslims were at times seen as redeemable white "converts" to Islam, Roma people were projected as total outsiders. Moreover, the fear of racial mixing and popular resonance with Roma music in particular was closely and obsessively policed by Bulgarian socialist authorities. The popularity of Roma music in late socialism was feared for not only diluting the supposed purity and priority of Bulgarian folklore but was also considered a suspicious movement for alternative aesthetics and artistic expression that were perceived to recover, resonate with, and blur the boundaries of "Oriental" afterlives that post-Ottoman nation-states sought to break from. Nowhere are these anxieties of enduring racism toward Roma music as the last remaining renegades of (post)Ottoman politics of personhood, affect, sexuality, visuality, and overall straightened and whitewashed Bulgarian subjectivity more apparent than in the postsocialist popularity of Azis.

ON BODIES, BORDERS, AND RESTLESS OTTOMAN AFTERLIVES

In 2007, the Bulgarian Roma recording artist Azis placed a billboard in Sofia of himself kissing his then boyfriend Niki Kitaeca, a billboard removed shortly thereafter by Boyko Borisov, then mayor of Sofia. This was not the first time that Borisov had removed one of Azis's billboards. Borisov's political rise from civil servant in the Ministry of Interior in the early 2000s to prime minister in 2009 was closely tied to an earlier controversy and political debates centering on the removal of another of Azis's billboards in 2004. Azis had placed a billboard that revealed part of his bare backside promoting his song "How It Hurts" near the memorial of Vasil Levski, a Bulgarian national hero who had played a central role in the war of independence against Ottoman rule. Responding to public outcry for the disrespect Azis had shown by exposing his backside to the memorial of Levski, the Bulgarian people, and the Bulgarian church, Borisov sent firefighters and workers to ceremonially remove the billboard. The spectacular scene accentuated Bulgarians' racial and gendered anxieties over the larger historical heteronormalization and Europeanization of Bulgarian society right at a point in time when Bulgarians were finally being accepted and acknowledged as white and nominally Western—the same year that the country had been admitted as full member into NATO and had concluded EU-accession negotiations.

Following the incident in 2004, the celebrated Bulgarian talk show host Martin Karbowski invited Azis to his show. In a setting that seemed more like a public trial than an interview, Azis was brought in to face Karbowski, the publicist Kevork Kevorkian, and the philosopher Ivan Slavov. The conversation was framed around conspiratorial concerns as to whether Azis had been implanted into Bulgarian society—if he was "real" or the product of some sort of a provocative anti-Bulgarian laboratory. Slavov had brought a folder with pornography that he had collected in and around Sofia into the studio, problematizing the rising interest in anal sex in Bulgarian desire and insinuating that the proximity of Azis's backside to the memorial of national hero Levski may have been more than accidental. Slavov argued that this was part of a larger conspiracy not to liberate people's postsocialist sexualities but to feed them raunchy Roma perversity. Karbowski and Kevorkian interjected with questions directed at Azis, who looked visibly distressed and under attack. Wanting to further humiliate Azis, Kevorkian asked him if he had done this because of an inferiority complex about being Roma. When Azis defended himself by saying that he was not ashamed of being Bulgarian, Kevorkian asked, "Why don't you say that you are just a *cigan* [gypsy]?" (Karbowski 2004).

In the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the popular attraction to Azis was perceived by establishment Bulgarian intellectuals as a threat to heterosexuality. As a Roma and a genderqueer person, Azis became the ultimate target of racist and queerphobic attacks. By the mid-2010s, there was a noticeable shift in both the subject matter in Azis's songs and videos and the ways in which public pressure was exerted on Azis. While his songs and videos had merged the sexual with the social, public outcry against them had shifted from accusations of having destabilized society's gendered-sexual order to charges concerning the "Arabization" of Bulgarian culture (Karbowski 2015). In 2015 in the middle of the refugee crisis, Azis's newly released single mourning the loss of his lover—"Habibi," Arabic for "my love"—went viral on YouTube. In another interview with Azis, Karbowski was now less concerned with the subjects of the song being a gay couple than with Azis's choice of an Arabic title for the song, which was a gesture of solidarity with the arrival of migrants along the Balkan route. Why had Azis not chosen the Bulgarian word for "my love"—*lyubimi*—asked Karbowski? Sporting a *kaffiyeh*, Azis responded by arguing that love is universal and that habibi just sounded nicer. Upset, Karbowski lashed out at Azis, accusing him of Arabizing Bulgarian culture

and of turning Bulgaria into an "Arabistan." "Don't you think about these things . . . in the current situation?" continued Karbowski: "You are a cultural model." "Yes!" Azis responded defiantly. By invoking the current situation, Karbowski was alluding to the arrest and trials of Islamist radicals supposedly funded by foreign Arab organizations. Those trials and public fears about Muslim and Arab refugees passing through Bulgaria later led to a 2016 national law criminalizing radical Islam. They were in turn amplified by the WikiLeaks release of US embassy reports of a purported threat of the Arabization of Bulgarian Islam, claims that a portion of Muslim migrants arriving from Syria held Wahhabi views of Islam based on years of Western anthropological studies published on the dangers of radicalization of Bulgarian Muslims through "Eastern aid."

In the background, increased public paranoia over demographic decline of Bulgarians gave birth to the National Cause Movement (Движение за национална кауза), which uses the shorthand днк, Bulgarian for DNA, and concerns itself with "the cause of demography and the DNA" or the genetic preservation of the Bulgarian nation. In collaboration with the municipal authorities of Sofia and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, through their campaign "Do It for Bulgaria" (later renamed "Do It Now"), the organization encourages Bulgarians to have more babies in return for free Christian baptisms, IVF treatments, and various perks and packages from sponsoring companies such as Philips Avent and Bebelan. In addition to the campaign's racist undertones, various promotional posters on social media and the streets of Sofia targeted women with misogynist messaging to increase their breasts to "size C without silicone" or depicted storks carrying Bulgarian flags celebrating March 3, the day of national independence from the Ottoman Empire.

I want to return to Azis because there are several overlapping fears that he disrupts. His solidarity with migrants; his choice of a Muslim stage name in the backdrop of a long history of forced name changes; and his troubling male/female, queer/heterosexual, white/Bulgarian/Roma, Arab/European, native/migrant binaries combined with popular appeal for his *chalga* music were perceived as threats to the racial and religious purity of Bulgarians. In an opinion piece in *Postpravda* (2016), for instance, an author bemoans his popularity: "How, over the past decades, we've strayed quite a lot from the traditional bagpipes and angelic voices of Valya Balkanska and somehow stumbled onto Azis—a shocking, perverse, ever-changing hybrid of a person casually jumping between

impersonations of Rihanna, Lady Gaga and a regular family man." His comparison with Valya Balkanska, born Feime Kestebekova in a Muslim family, is meant to contrast his refusal to follow the good minority mandated by the Revival Process, whereby a good Muslim, Turk, Pomak, or Roma are those who retain their forcibly given Bulgarian names and aspire to Bulgarian whiteness and cisheteropatriarchy by disavowing their Roma or Ottoman/Islamic affectations, afflictions, and affiliations.

Azis's queerness is dangerous precisely because he gestures away from hetero and white orientations, not just in responding to relational, intersectional, or incommensurate differences that could be understood as reinforcing binary opposites but also because he refuses Eurocentric inscriptions of gender and sexuality. His moves and music touch a particular historical nerve with aspiring Bulgarian and Balkan whiteness not only because he attends to (re)stored sensibilities that he awakens with his music, cross-dressing, and dancing but also because he challenges the colonially designated temporal and territorial coordinates that produce categorically different people in Bulgaria compared to the refugees who pass along the Balkan route. That Azis is heard in Belgrade and Beirut alike speaks volumes of the common post-Ottoman affective and aesthetic commonality that challenges racial/colonial b/ordering. The pressure to distance refugees or face accusations of "Arabizing" Bulgarian culture is not so much about xenophobic racism, as might be the case in the inner core of Euro-American spaces, but is about refugees' proximity and potential to resonate with the local racial other, the collaboration of which exposes the fragility of the supposed whiteness of the Bulgarian and Balkan people. But these anxieties are not just aesthetic; they are also phasmophobic fears of the return of expelled Muslims from Turkey, and the Middle East haunts the settled stability of a "nation" built on seized territory and time—not only of those ousted from Bulgaria or the Balkans but also through recovery of forced assimilation processes that once seemed certain in their success to forever purge or purify the immediate racial other. More importantly perhaps, and unapologetically so, Azis opens up questions that threaten the silenced, straightened, and whitewashed status quo around the ruined and removed lives of queer, trans, Roma, Muslim refugees and returnees who lurk underneath the veneer of Euro-Atlantic modern/colonial b/orders of Bulgaria and the Balkans. Many of them, as Madina Tlostanova argues, "are postsocialist and postcolonial others at once who will always be excluded from the European/

Western/Northern sameness into exteriority, yet due to a colonial-imperial configuration will never be able to belong to any locality—native or acquired" (2019b, 171).

Throughout this book, I have relied on decolonial, queer, and trans traditions of geopolitical thought that conceptualize bodies and populations as key sites of global power politics (Anzaldúa 1987; Dowler and Sharp 2001; Lugones 2008, 2010; Puar 2007, 2017; Fluri 2009; Massaro and Williams 2013; Tudor 2017; Smith 2017; Kancler 2016; Rao 2020) and the ways in which racialized and gendered populations come to contest the larger security infrastructures of the Euro-Atlantic enclosure. Keeping in mind that the infrastructural war on minoritized and migrant communities along the Balkan refugee route, the demographic panic over the reproduction and multiplication of racialized bodies, and the targeting of the rehabilitative strategies of migrant and minoritized bodies are neither recent nor exceptional mappings of Euro-Atlanticist territoriality but, rather, expanded race-making regimes of modernity/coloniality. Bringing attention to sexuality in this book has also allowed me to a look at moments and circumstances when colonial contradictions generated new social and spatial relations by refusing to live up to white European expectations and orientations that seek to reinforce the patriarchy by reducing women's bodies to incubators for the sole purpose of reproducing the nation under the threat of changing racial demographics in order to preserve white supremacy. Further, decolonization, "as a transformation of racialized consciousness, is always contingent on the radical reconstitution of normative gendered subjectivities precisely because gender provided the grounds of colonial subjection through corporeal refashioning" (Khanna 2020, 27). Considering the gender/sexual embodiments that continue to trouble the flattened, whitened, straightened, and secularized sensibilities conditioned by colonial/capitalism binaries is therefore not only important in confronting the intertwined workings of racism with coloniality but also in thinking through them as generative spaces for survival, radical care, and decolonial praxis.

Part of this project then is to unimagine the national and colonial arrangements of sedentary, straight, and stable notions of space along racial readings of territoriality and temporality that make enclosures seem like the logical fulfilment of forward-moving European "integration." Critical cultural geography in general and Doreen Massey's work in particular have been particularly helpful in rethinking the seemingly

fixed and stable spatial relations to race and coloniality along the Balkan route and in reconsidering space not only as "a simultaneity of stories-so-far . . . within the wider power-geometries of space" but also in thinking about space along "the non-meetings-up, the disconnections and the relations not established, the exclusions" (2005, 130). I understand this approach to space and the broader geography of the Balkans in this book not only as a locale of multiple overlapping territorial regimes and as an object of Euro-Atlantic governance and enclosure but also as a potential route for collaborative peripheral and borderland praxis of resistance and re-existence.

BALKAN ROUTES TO DECOLONIALITY

Among the millions of people who traveled through the Balkan refugee route between 2010 and 2018 were the families of the famed Islamic scholars Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani and Abdul Kader Arnauti. Both were the last generation of Balkan born *muhacirs*, post-Ottoman Muslim refugees who traveled in the opposite direction through the same Balkan route toward the Middle East from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. On the occasion of the opening ceremony of the Abdul Kader Arnauti Center at the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Prishtina in 2015, his son Mahmud Arnauti, who had now settled in Kosovo, noted that like many Syrians arriving in the Balkans, he was not a refugee but a returnee coming back to his ancestral home.

The Arnautis had left the town of Istog in Kosovo with the arrival of the second wave of Serb and Montenegrin settler colonists in late 1920s, just as the initial emergency "Decree on the Colonization of the Southern Regions" issued in September 24, 1920, by the kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes transformed into a more systematic displacement of Muslim-populated areas through evictions and expropriation of land that was now legal due to the law on the colonization of southern regions promulgated in June 11, 1931.

Arnauti's story raises several questions related to theorizations of post-Ottoman Muslim populations through Cold War–area studies segmented into different Middle Eastern and Eastern European categories, separating common histories of coloniality and solidarity. In other words, the return of people like Arnauti, now reframed as refuges of the Syrian war, erases the continuation of what Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2018,

24) calls the "coloniality of migration." Rodríguez argues that "migration regulation ensures that the Other of the nation/Europe/the Occident is reconfigured in racial terms" and that "the logic generated in this context constructs and produces objects to be governed through restrictions, management devices, and administrative categories such as 'refugee,' 'asylum seeker,' or a variety of migrant statuses," allowing for the continued coloniality of migration through the "matrix of social classification on the basis of colonial racial hierarchies" (24). The attention on the Balkan route during the refugee crisis as an entry point for migrants and a weak link into the infrastructure of the Euro-Atlantic enclosure faces a challenge in its claims over the Balkan route as white territoriality. Here, the seemingly clear metropolitan distinctions between white and migrant become blurred, which is why postsocialist populations are continuously inveigled to both historically and racially distinguish themselves from refugees, even when such "refugees" are natives, as Arnauti's case suggests. Muslim communities in particular are pressured to promote a racial differentiation of Islam to prove their white pedigrees. In December 2016, at a ceremony marking the establishment in Brussels of the representative office of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the EU, the community's newly appointed head, Senaid Kobilica, sought to ease EU anxieties over the potential mixing of Bosnian Muslims with Arabs just as Bosnia was being assessed for Euro-Atlantic integration: "Bosnian Muslims, as indigenous Europeans, are committed to cooperation. We would like Muslims who live in Europe to understand and accept that they should be more concerned about their responsibilities than their freedoms," so that they can "earn their right to freedom" (Kobilica 2016, 22). Meanwhile, the delegation head, Bosnian grand mufti Husein Kavazović, insisted that as "the most numerous, original, and indigenous religious community of Muslims in Europe," Bosnian Muslims are ideally positioned to contribute to the development of an *authentic* European Islam because they "never adopted the practice of polygamy or marriage between close relatives" (2016a, 7–8), among other reasons. In closing, Grand Mufti Kavazović reminded his audience of mostly EU and NATO officials that Muslims in the Balkans "are neither Asians nor Africans, just like they are neither Turks nor Arabs" but are white Europeans whose Islamic institutions are modern European structures established not by the Ottomans but after the Austro-Hungarians' colonization of Bosnia in 1878.

The first three chapters in this book question these racial affirmations of whiteness and their colonial genealogies and ongoing mandates by bringing attention to overlooked moments and movements of Pan-Islamic solidarity and strategies of resistance in the lager decolonization processes of the Cold War. Looking at the collaborative work of Alija Izetbegović and Melika Salihbegović, chapter 1, "Nonaligned Muslims in the Margins of Socialism: The Islamic Revolution in Yugoslavia," illustrates how subterranean and subversive movements with itineraries and imaginaries that exceeded the capitalist-socialist binding Cold War "choices" sought to rehabilitate colonial damage and transcend the modern/colonial matrix. By focusing on Alija Izetbegović's *Islamska deklaracija* (Islamic declaration; 1969)—one of the more iconic outcomes of these subterranean relations and reflections—and Melika Salihbegović's revolutionary work, I aim to chart the alternatives to postcolonial nationalism these two thinkers engendered. Their dismissal of decolonization through modernization as a continuation of colonial relations of power in the Cold War resonated deeply with the political struggles of Muslims across the divides and became part of the larger scripts of Islamic solidarity that emerged in the late 1970s and 1980s. Here, I think of these unfinished projects that emerged out of the failures of postcolonial modernization as part of what Robbie Shilliam (2019) calls acts of "understated internationalism" during decolonization, as the performances and politics of peripheral people denied their capacity to partake in normative world making. The second part of the chapter illustrates how late Cold War and early post–Cold-War debates on the "Islamic threat" reactivated earlier colonial borderland cartographies and geopolitical racial imaginaries of white world making, with the war in Bosnia figuring not as an interethnic conflict as we are frequently told but as a genocidal attempt to eliminate Muslim populations from European borderlands. I think of this structural violence on Muslim populations in the 1990s as an early disciplinary reminder to reaffirm their racial bounds to Europe through whiteness as a way of securing their very existence along the enclosure.

Enclosures are not fixed and fortified entities. Though that may be the desired outcome, their making involves evolving, interactive, and porous sets of processes in which the geopolitical order is continually shaped on the imbrication of colonial, capitalist, and Cold War transnational infrastructures and institutions of knowledge along the production and b/ordering of memory. In chapter 2, "Historicizing Enclosure: Refashioned Colonial

Continuities as European Cultural Legacy," I turn to the curation of colonial sites and institutions in Bosnia in the last decade to examine the ways in which the occupation of the former Ottoman province by the Austro-Hungarian empire is today integrated in the European common memory, not as colonization but as a collective cultural legacy. Here, I think how the postwar refashioning of the siege of Sarajevo in 1990s and the genocide on Bosnian people are not sites of continuous colonial/capitalist violence but are darker chapters in the enlightened history of Europe, products of colonial amnesia and re-Westernizing of Bosnian history, situated within the confines of Euro-Atlantic territoriality. In the first part of the chapter, I examine how the reopening of the Habsburg-built National Museum brings into light past and present reification of European coloniality in Bosnia as a civilizing mission aimed to return Bosnians to their pre-Ottoman and presocialist "authentic" Western historiography. The second part looks at how these durable colonial references function as conduits of imperial claim making that rely on securing and securitizing colonially sanctioned genealogies and categories of whiteness through religious institutions. Here, I pay particular attention to the ways in which the Islamic Community recruits and promotes its Habsburg colonial origins as religious regulatory practices that designate acceptable forms of local practices of Islam by policing and rendering illegal divergent Islamic forms supposedly imported from the "Arab world." In thinking through the various forms of resistance to these narratives across the chapter, I illustrate how collective and individual attempts to *shift the geographies of reason*, to quote from Tjaša Kancler (2016) again, evoke movements and moments in time when they were part of larger geographies of liberation. For most of these attempts, the revival of both colonial ruins and a reactionary reading of history have not only depoliticized collaborative forms of resistance through reification of "cultural differences" but have also allowed the suspension of sovereignty under the pretext of a postwar instability. Indeed, the deferred and fragmented forms of sovereignty in Bosnia (and Kosovo) today secured through international missions and mechanisms of control are neither accidental nor sui generis exceptions of Westphalian order but rather reworked racial configurations of coloniality through suspended sovereignties.

While these logics of worldwide white supremacy have similar functions across the borderlands of the Euro-Atlantic enclosure, the "national" specificities that dominate border studies particularizes them and makes

regional and (geo)politics of whiteness invisible. To focus on the particularities of Bosnia and Kosovo today is to avoid the larger regional politics of enclosure along the Balkan route where placement under international supervision of both societies is not so much an attempt at postconflict stability but rather regard for ostensibly "Muslim" communities along the postnational borderland are suspected projects of whiteness. Roberto Hernández's work has been particularly helpful in not only thinking through the Balkan borderlands from decolonial and postnational perspectives but also in comparing the connections and continuities of Euro-American geopolitical border points across continents. In *Coloniality of the US/Mexico Border*, he points out that the "framework of coloniality aims to transcend the naturalised claims to national sovereignty and border security by historicizing and highlighting the simultaneous 'national' and global colonial episteme that underpins violence on the border. When this is done, violence and coloniality prove to be central and mutually constitutive features of the interstate system, embodied at national-territorial borders. They are the underside of the modern nation-state and modernity rather than spaces of exceptionality in a thickening borderlands" (2018, 20–21). From this perspective, taking decolonial routes in the Balkan context means not only unthinking national historiographies and the ways in which racial realignment with whiteness converges in a regional resurgence of racist politics but more importantly it means situating the region in the broader histories of anticolonial resistance.

With that in mind, moving from Bosnia to Kosovo and Albania, chapter 3, "Enclosure Sovereignties: Saving Missions and Supervised Self-Determination" opens with the organized resistance against the International Control Commission deployed by European powers to install provisory independence in Albania in 1913 in the larger context of post-Ottoman reconfiguration of European borderland territoriality in the Balkans. Rather than thinking of these political processes as competing imperial interests in the aftermath of the collapse of the Ottoman and Habsburg empires, as narratives about the First Balkan War suggest, I am interested in European powers in this period deploying joint international missions, like the one in Albania, as early Atlanticist attempts to claim the Balkan borderlands by procuring and secularizing post-Ottoman populations and places deemed ambiguously European through provisional forms of sovereignty. By comparing this twentieth-century deployment of deferred sovereignty to Albania with contemporary forms

of supervised sovereignty in Kosovo, I aim to illustrate how the refashioned post-Ottoman collaborative histories of Euro-American coloniality are redeployed in the postsocialist integration of the Balkans to reinvigorate old Atlanticist fantasies of white world supremacy. I argue that the Euro-American mission in Kosovo installed after 1999 was not meant to generate self-governing entities or sovereignty but a subordinate and dependent polity. Such interventions, constituted as they are by military corporatism, are less interested in creating self-determination or stability but, like the International Control Commission in Albania in 1913, secure and secularize suspect populations around its racial and religious b/orders.

The recursive and cumulative effects of these histories of coloniality propel particular kinds of racialized and gendered power relations that come to underwrite all aspects of life, but at their core they all are a "dichotomous hierarchy between the human and the non-human" (Lugones 2010, 743) that seeks to make and measure the colonized and racialized subject against the white wealthy heterosexual male. Indeed, such racialized Albanian embodiments of manhood through heterosexuality first emerged with the European International Control Commission and became historically reliant on the active post-Ottoman disarticulation of all previous ambiguous gender and sexual embodiments. As I discuss in chapter 4, "(Dis)Embodying Enclosure: Of Straightened Muslim Men and Secular Masculinities," these gendered subjectivities, imaginaries, and sensibilities that were set into motion during the colonial encounter require continuous straightening and whitening of the contradictions and complexities of the questionable whiteness and suspect sexuality of Albanians in the contact zone. In the first part of this chapter, I look at how the construction of the Albanian male heterosexual emerges not only as the patriarchal prototype in defense of his nation but also as the forgotten pre-Islamic medieval "giant" of the white race. If the reenactment of race and borders through gender during the International Control Commission functioned to create post-Ottoman orienting technology toward whiteness in the form of male/female heterosexual/homosexual binaries, in the postsocialist moment, sexuality and sexual rights discourses become the progenitors of Euro-Atlantic orientations. In the second half of the chapter, I examine the ways in which the geopolitical enclosure of borders along the Balkan route are constituted and mediated through the modernity/coloniality of gender (Lugones 2007), where sex and sexuality are deployed as secularism to create acceptable queer

subjects along Euro-American homo and hetero norms but to also divide redeemable postsocialist white Europeans from the irredeemable colonial, religious, and racialized others. Indeed, control over queer desires—rather by repression or Euro-homoemancipation—becomes the tool through which contemporary racial and colonial regimes congeal their global political power through queer bodies, establishing a racialized distinction between bodies designated for desirability and bodies designated for destabilization and debilitation.

The second half of the book that starts with chapter 4 links the geopolitical to the body politic by looking at how racialized and sexualized subjects are produced as objects of threat to *geopolitical whiteness*, particularly at its borderlands. In order to move beyond the dominant discourse in the Balkans, which otherwise limits our comprehension of postsocialist politics to those of privileged men and mainstream politics, in the second half of the book, I focus on communities and experiences rendered marginal in postsocialist politics yet have been the main target of racist politics. With that in mind, in chapter 5, "Enclosure Demographics: Reproductive Racism, Displacement, and Resistance," I return to the racist undercurrents of the "demographic crisis" by looking at the collaborative projects of Roma displacement in Bulgaria following the racist rallies against "Roma aggression" in 2017. Most of the political commentary on the systemic violence and displacement of Roma communities is still read as electoral propaganda and a "punching bag for social and economic issues" (Hruby 2019), as one CNN piece noted in rendering the racist rampage of home burning that happened in Gabrovo, Bulgaria, in 2019, not as historical organization of violence against Roma communities but as momentary acts of racist raptures fueled by populist politics. This is where geopolitical Euro-Atlantic enclosures of Roma neighborhoods are localized and racialized along the peripheries of Balkan cities. In the first part of chapter 5, I look at how the "demographic" threat from being on the borderland of transatlantic whiteness mobilizes discursive forms of racism to control and contain bodies that trouble b/orders and fixe identifications. Here I look at how refashioning racism has become a violent validating tool for the installment of postsocialist racial and carceral capitalism through the selective privatization of public properties through evictions, expropriations, and demolition, as well as assaults on racialized communities and refugees as a way of making and marking Europe's geopolitical border zones. Specifically, I examine how racist rallies against

Roma aggression triangulate demographic threats from Islamization, migration, and Arabization to ratify evictions and the destruction of homes and communities while simultaneously monitoring and managing birth rates, desire, lives, damage, and death.

That these processes today are referenced in historical accounts of the post-Ottoman Bulgarian nationalist narratives of Western salvation from the clutches of "Ottoman oppression" only serve to reinforce Bulgaria as a historical site of struggle for white security and supremacy. Here, I look at how the political framing of these actions today as historical defenses of the West at its fringes have made the Bulgarian government a model for many fascist groups around Europe that have come to see Bulgaria, and the Balkan borderlands more broadly, as successful in unapologetically articulating white supremacy in relation to demography and border security. In the second half of this chapter, I look at music as a productive site of queer antiracist resistance. Here, I interpret Azis's music as an overlap and intersection of post-Ottoman and postsocialist pop that not only confronts heteroracist hate but unearths and curates restless spectral embodiments of buried pasts that, in refusing to retreat, challenge, and scathe the coherent racial classification of the spatial and temporal anchors of Bulgarian racism. Azis's interventions are not so much guided by a desire to deconstruct or reconstruct the world, a kind of world making that always extends and expands metropolitan coloniality even when it claims to unmake the world (Bhattacharyya 2019). Rather, his music and wit reach out for what is already there, celebrating Roma, queer, and refugee survival in the face of always-immediate borderland violence. Thinking through these new anatomies of antiracist politics that contest the material and epistemic violence of the enclosure may be just one of way of closing in on whiteness from its global peripheries just as undercommons expose the cracks and fissures in its metropoles.

A NOTE ON POSITIONALITY

I grew up in a Bektashi Albanian family in Lake Prespa, Macedonia (also known as Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and more recently North Macedonia). In 1997, I moved from Macedonia to Michigan and enrolled at Henry Ford Community College while living with my extended family who had had immigrated to the city of Dearborn in the 1960s. Dearborn was predominantly white up to the late 1970s because of

the outright segregationist commitments of its mayor Orville Hubbart to "keep Dearborn clean." With the arrival of displaced migrants from the 1991 Gulf War, Dearborn had a decent claim to be the Muslim capital of the United States. The real Muslim capital of the United States, however, remains Detroit, Michigan, which continues to be segregated from Dearborn spatially, politically, and economically. Once one reaches downtown Detroit from Michigan Avenue, the city unfolds itself *in the break*, to borrow from Fred Moten (2003). The impoverished outskirts of anti-Black violence are united at the Renaissance Center and encircle with the bizarre futurist People Mover—both neoliberal projects from the 1990s designed to attract white people downtown. Meanwhile, the Michigan Central Station, built between 1912 and 1913, looms in the background as a massive exemplar of modernist settler style, now a toxic testament to its failed industrialist aspirations. In the late 1990s, graffiti on Michigan Avenue near the rebuilt Tigers stadium read, "Detroit is black, or it ain't." Perhaps this was a response to the hipsters who had already laid eyes on the city for its cheap land and postindustrial ruins.

In Detroit, Islam was in the grip of what Sherman Abdul Hakim Jackson (2005) might call "the Third Resurrection," following the first and second resurrections ignited by the Nation of Islam—the movements that had produced Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali. For the first time, I heard *hutbes* (Friday teachings) on Palestine and attended *zikrs* (forms of Islamic prayer or meditation) at the Bektashi Tekke in Taylor with my relatives. Having grown up in Macedonia, I could not help seeing the similarities of spatial segregation in Detroit and Skopje as I moved in and around the city. It was in and through Detroit that I came to notice that the way race defines the increasingly cordoned-off enclosures of wealth and whiteness in American and European urban spaces is synonymous with the cordoning of the post–Cold War Euro-Atlantic geopolitical border regions and regimes.

When I arrived in Michigan, I enrolled in political science and international relations courses, landing in two fields that were flourishing in US academia at the time: postconflict peace-building and post–Cold War transatlantic integration. As I took humanities courses to fulfill my general educational requirements, I came across a different transatlantic history—that of the transatlantic slave trade, racism, and settler colonialism. The differentiation of the same transatlantic into two distinct and distant disciplines governed by separate spatial and temporal imaginaries

and interests intrigued me. In the humanities, transatlantic studies were tracing the history of racial capitalism and coloniality that made possible the emergence of Euro-Atlantic modernity, if we understand modernity according to Walter Mignolo as "unfolding in the sixteenth century with capitalism and the emergence of the Atlantic commercial circuit" (2002, 58). In the social sciences, the transatlantic signified strategic policy studies concerned with the continuity of Euro-American global supremacy through the integration of postsocialist peripheries into the EU and NATO. The segmented and safely stored colonial and racist transatlantic histories in the past had seemingly nothing to do with the new post–Cold War color-blind and colonial-less politics of Euro-Atlantic integration. Never mind that President François Mitterrand saw the mass extermination of Muslims from the Balkans as a "painful, but realistic restoration of Christian Europe" (Branch 2010, 9–10). Euro-Atlantic integration and Christian European restoration that we were told had nothing to do with race or colonialism. Indeed, interethnic—and not racial and religious—violence was insisted upon as a way of leveling, localizing, and depoliticizing the genocide of Muslim and Roma people.

I was still in Detroit when the Kosovo war started in February 1998. In 1999, I volunteered and was employed by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Prishtina. In Kosovo, I had started socializing with queer activists organizing a community. As we had no offices, I had given out the Red Cross's office phone number so people could contact us. A couple of my friends had become regulars in the Red Cross office, sashaying through the "parachutist" foreigners, as we called them, teasing them about coming "here to help us." Shortly after, my Swiss boss told me I had to leave, because this was a neutral organization and I was getting too involved in local politics. In hindsight, getting fired from the Red Cross was the best thing that could have happened. Ann Marie Gayle, a Jamaican humanitarian lawyer from London and dear friend who had come to work in Kosovo, encouraged me to go into academia. I applied to whichever universities offered livable stipends, which, over the following ten years, led me to Strathclyde University in Glasgow, where I did my PhD, and City College of New York, where I completed my BA and MA in international relations. With the help of my Brazilian friend Antonio Da Silva, with whom I had done queer community organizing work in Prishtina, Kosovo, I moved to New York City. Along the way, thanks to my mentor at City College Marina Fernando and her daughter Mayanthi

Fernando, I read postcolonial theory, critiques of secularism, and anti-racist literature from Frantz Fanon and Audre Lorde to Ali Sheriati and Sara Ahmed. I later shared an apartment in Harlem with my friend Lisa Jemina Maria from West Papua, Indonesia. We were both enrolled in the international studies program at City College and were concerned with similar questions of sovereignty: Lisa through her studies on the West Papuan liberation movement and I through my studies of Kosovo. We had both been raised in countries that had positioned themselves as international leaders of the Bandung decolonization and nonaligned front with inconspicuous indifference to their internal colonial projects and struggles for sovereignty (West Papua in the case of Indonesia and Kosovo in the case of [former] Yugoslavia).

We found the Western canon and conversations dominating our curriculums, from Mark Fisher's blogs to Fredric Jameson's *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, bleak. It was not that we didn't read them. We had to. But we did not find ourselves in them, as ours was an emerging world. We thought it was funny that in being assigned these works, we were being asked to immerse ourselves in nostalgic appreciation and mourning for the seriousness of Euro-American mid-twentieth-century social-democratic promise. We called them *first-world injuries*. I remember being assigned Nadezhda Mandelstam's *Hope against Hope* and Svetlana Boym's (2008) *The Future of Nostalgia* in one of my humanities courses at City College and found them ominous opuses on second-world modernity gone wrong. These we called *second-world shortcuts* or obscured histories and relations of power generally written to furnish Western academic curiosity for "progressive" reexaminations of Cold War "alternative" histories, where Yugoslav socialism figured prominently as the redeemer of the brighter side of modernity. In hindsight, they were not so much the funny funerary masses we considered them to be but canons of colonial knowledge that sought to reproduce in the reader a very Christian but ostensibly secular sense of righteousness by lamenting the loss of a modern white world as the end of the world itself. Belated as these afterthoughts came, in decade-long writings about socialist hangovers, decolonization takes work and time, especially when as a Muslim one has to sort through so much secular mythology and fiction particular to Euro-American academia. I like to think of this intervention as timely as once-racialized people in the Balkans are increasingly employed in the service of Euro-Atlantic enclosure with a tentative and

tacit invitation to be integrated on the inside at the price of policing, containing, and blocking refugees along the Balkan route.

In thinking through Muslim positionality vis-à-vis white supremacy and coloniality, I have been deeply inspired by Salman Sayyid's (2016) call for *clearing* as a way for Muslims to think and act from a decolonial and autonomous position, as "Muslim autonomy requires not only Muslims to know their *deen* but also to know their history" without which he insists "any understanding of our *deen* will be stilted, and simply reproduce and reinforce Orientalism." Moreover, engaging with decolonial Islam with Sayyid is a process of both challenging "Eurocentric historiography and learning the history of Muslim agency" while also "changing the frame of reference bequeathed to us by the colonial order and internalized by the Westoxicated, and presented as the truth" (Sayyid 2016). Sayyid's invocation of Jalal Al-Ahmad's (2015) unfinished project of *gharbzadegi*, or "Westoxification," is in part rooted in a decolonial understanding of Islam that questions the binary Cold War "alternatives" for decolonization—socialism and capitalism—depicting them as two sides of the same "Occidentoxic" colonial paradigm.

Given that I am trained in international relations, it is inevitable that some of the ways in which I think of geopolitics are influenced by the absence of race in the field. Unsurprisingly, efforts to frame global politics as color blind refuse whiteness as a historically organizing geostrategic instrument by way of a "deep cognitive naturalization of Eurocentrism and whiteness," making the acknowledgment of racism as a "transnational *political* system" impermissible (Mills 2015, 222). In large part, this is due to the fact that "racism, capitalism and coloniality," as Olivia U. Rutazibwa points out, are "to varying degrees disavowed and erased in both IR as a discipline and public opinion" (2020, 222), but also because of what Charles W. Mills calls "an epistemology of ignorance" or "a particular pattern of localized and global cognitive dysfunctions [whereby] whites will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made." Mills's call for the interrogation of whiteness and white supremacy in both the global "assembly of white-dominated polities" and in "transnational patterns of cooperation, international legislation, common circulating racist ideologies, and norms of public policy" (Mills 2015, 223) has helped me conceptualize the instrumentality and history of racism in Euro-Atlantic collaborations. I was lucky enough to encounter people who helped me question, queer, decolonize, and acknowledge the

complexity of my positionality as a queer Muslim cisgender man: when to speak and take up space, and when to step back and listen to the Indigenous people, to Black and brown people, to trans folks, to refugees and Roma people whose voices are the vanguard of what Catherine Walsh (2018, 34) calls *decolonial insurrection*. I am deeply influenced by Fatima El-Tayeb's and Houria Bouteldjas's work on the erasure of racism and coloniality from the European discourses of post–Cold War unification, especially in understanding the ways in which ongoing attention to far-right racist revanchism in Europe overshadows the systematic and structural racism that connects colonial and contemporary projects of European unification across the political spectrum.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. For more on the histories of white international battalions, see Sweeney (2019) as well as Burke (2018).

2. I'm thinking of borderization along Achille Mbembe's conceptualization as "the process by which certain spaces are transformed into uncrossable places for certain classes of populations who thereby undergo a process of racialization, where speed must be disabled and the lives of a magnitude of people judged to be undesirable are meant to be immobilized if not shattered." Mbembe (Universitaet zu Koeln 2019) argues that these processes are ghettoizing entire regions of the world and contribute to the reclassification and refraction of bodies through fertility and mortality, with population politics becoming a new approach to georacial designs, "towards contraction, towards containment, towards enclosure; and various forms of encampment, detention and incarceration; typical of this logic of contraction being the erection in countless parts of the worlds of all kinds of walls and fortifications, gates and enclaves . . . of off-shoring and fencing of wealth . . . whose function is to decelerate movement, to stop it for certain classes of people in order to manage risk."

3. The response to refugees from the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February of 2022, where audiences around the world were reminded that these were not Black and brown refugees coming from the Middle East or Africa but "relatively" civilized and relatively European people being the more recent examples of the racial border regimes that dominate European refugee policies. For more on this, see Nachescu (2022).

4. For more on this, see Chang and Rucker-Chang (2020).

5. Needless to say, these were processes that were tied to larger economic interests; the case of the Trepça mine in Kosovo is illustrative of this. Following Kosovo's colonization, the Serbian state gave the mine, under a fifty-year concession, to Alfred Chester Beatty of Selection Trust Ltd., who had similar colonial concession agreements across Africa and Asia.

6. It should be noted that it was not just nationalist movements that supported the Reconquista policies of (post)Ottoman nation-states in the Balkans. The founder of the socialist movement in Serbia, Svetozar Markovic, would note in 1867 that "everyone alive knows that there is no other way for the resolution of the Eastern Crisis but a war for life and death between Muslims and Christians" (Markovic 1987, 31).

7. In Europe, such ideas were famous among pan-Europeanists like Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi, the founder of the pan-European movement, as well as the head of the former Habsburg Empire, Otto von Habsburg. The latter would become the president of the pan-European movement from 1973 to 2004 and play an important role in the post–Cold War Euro-Atlantic integration of Central and Eastern Europe.

8. For more on this, see Marušiakova and Popov (2000).

9. Josip Broz Tito, known as Tito, was the former president of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

CHAPTER ONE. NONALIGNED MUSLIMS IN THE MARGINS OF SOCIALISM

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1. Halil, like most "Oriental" others in Yugoslav films, never speaks. He communicates through gestures and monosyllabic words. Halil utters only one word repeatedly, asking for "su," which is not Albanian but Turkish for "water."

2. For more on the details of the outbreak, see Bura (2012).

CHAPTER TWO. HISTORICIZING ENCLOSURE

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1. *Sarajli* is local Bosnian term for Sarajevan.

2. Sassja is a female hip-hop artist from Tuzla who had become popular that year with her 2015 debut album *Taktički Praktično*.

3. For more on this, see, for instance, Burke (2014).