



Emblem of the 13th Waffen Mountain Division of the SS "Handschar," a Waffen-SS formation composed primarily of Bosnian Muslim recruits under German command during World War II. The insignia combined SS symbolism with the image of a scimitar (handschar), reflecting the use of Islamic imagery in Nazi military propaganda. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

From Bosnia to Palestine: How Fighters from the 13th Division of the SS Handschar Came to Fight Against Israeli Independence

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Introduction

In Sarajevo's political scene today, standing with Palestine is routinely sold as a straightforward, principled fight against colonialism, imperialism, and Zionism. Almost no one ever brings up the awkward piece of history staring us in the face: Eighty

years ago, the exact same parts of Bosnia, which are now the loudest cheerleaders for Palestine, were the main recruiting ground for thousands of volunteers who joined the 13th Waffen Mountain Division of the SS Handschar (13th Division of the SS

Handschar)—a unit that actively participated in Holocaust atrocities and whose very creation and ideological grooming received personal backing from the grand mufti of Jerusalem, Mohammed Amin al-Husseini.

These Muslim SS formations are still a strangely underexplored chapter of the war. And they come with one more striking postscript: After Nazi Germany collapsed in Europe, a number of these ex-Handschar men did not hang up their uniforms. Thanks to existing contacts in Syrian and Palestinian circles, some of them resurfaced in the Middle East and picked up rifles again—this time in the ranks of the Arab armies that tried (and failed) to prevent the birth of the State of Israel in the 1948 War.

The whole episode is a textbook example of how history gets cherry-picked: The bits that fit the desired story are shouted from the rooftops, while the inconvenient ones are quietly swept under the rug—all to keep the

current political narrative supposedly clean and morally comfortable.

Crescent on the Swastika: The Wartime Path of Mohammed Amin al-Husseini

The mobilization of Bosniak Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina into the Nazi war machine, as well as the creation of the 13th Division of the SS Handschar was inseparably tied to Grand Mufti al-Husseini. One of the most influential Muslim leaders of the interwar period, he placed the considerable authority that he held among Muslims at the service of the Third Reich.

After April 1941, when the Axis powers invaded the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the country was carved up: Territories were annexed outright, occupation zones were carved out, and puppet states rose from the ruins. As loyal allies of Nazi Germany, these collaborationist regimes—above all the Independent State of Croatia—embraced the ideology of racial purity with enthusiasm.

Their explicit goal was to create ethnically homogeneous territories, which in practice meant the systematic ethnic cleansing of Serbs, Roma, and Jews. These quasi-states quickly became key landmarks on the map of the Holocaust.

The establishment of puppet governments was inevitably accompanied by the creation of units tasked with enforcing the Nazi order through mass violence—and 13th Division of the SS Handschar was one of them. It holds the distinction of being the first SS division composed entirely of non-German personnel. The rank and file were predominantly Bosniak Muslims recruited from Sandžak, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and parts of Croatia, while the officer corps remained almost exclusively German.

Recruiting and organizing a division of Bosniaks required someone who truly understood the mentality of the prospective soldiers and whose loyalty to the Reich was

beyond question. All those qualities converged in one man: Grand Mufti al-Husseini.

Al-Husseini—Adolf Hitler’s most prominent Muslim ally and a key architect of modern political antisemitism—did not limit his activities to the Middle East in the 1930s. He proved enormously useful to the Reich in Europe too, playing a direct role in the formation of the 13th Division of the SS Handschar, the largest Muslim military formation ever to serve the Third Reich.

Even before his involvement in the Balkans, the grand mufti had already built up considerable experience as a Reich ally across multiple crisis hotspots, from the Middle East to Europe. After the failure of the Arab Revolt in Palestine (1936–1939), al-Husseini fled first to Lebanon, then to Iraq. There, in 1941, he threw his support behind Rashid Ali al-Gaylani’s pro-Nazi coup, which ultimately collapsed. That same

year he escaped to Germany, where he continued—and deepened—his collaboration with the Nazis.

In Germany, he quickly established direct ties with the top leadership of the Third Reich, including Adolf Hitler. Later, at the initiative of Heinrich Himmler, he leveraged his religious authority to recruit Muslim volunteers for Waffen-SS formations. He played a key role in mobilizing men for units such as the 13th Waffen Mountain Division of the SS Handschar, the 21st Waffen Mountain Division of the SS Skanderbeg (21st Division of the SS Skanderbeg), and the 23rd Waffen Mountain Division of the SS Kama. At the same time, he engaged in intensive propaganda efforts aimed at Muslims across the region, working to secure broader support for Nazi Germany.

Al-Husseini regularly broadcast on German radio, portraying Jews as “the fiercest

enemies of Muslims” and openly urging Arabs to embrace the Nazi “Final Solution.” In return, the Nazis provided him with luxurious accommodation in Berlin and a generous stipend. In a 1944 broadcast from Radio Berlin, he declared: “Arabs! Rise up as one and fight for your sacred rights. Kill the Jews wherever you find them. This pleases God, history, and religion. This will save your honor. God is with you.”¹

From the Middle East to Berlin, al-Husseini stood out as one of the central figures in Muslim collaboration with the Third Reich, especially across the Balkans, where he is remembered above all for his pivotal role in 1943 in the creation of the infamous 13th Division of the SS Handschar. He actively participated in the ideological indoctrination of its members, blending political propaganda with military mobilization to bolster Nazi influence in the region.

The Handschar division itself was established in 1943 at the direct initiative of Heinrich Himmler, driven by a combination of military and political imperatives in Southeast Europe. Hitler and Himmler sought to harness the Muslim population of the Balkans to combat partisan resistance and help preserve German control over occupied Yugoslavia, with the longer-term prospect of deploying the unit beyond Bosnia. In practice, this meant carrying out massacres across occupied territories as part of the broader architecture of the Reich. The key figure the Nazis relied on for this project was al-Husseini, whose ideological efforts were instrumental in rallying local leaders to support Nazi Germany—a support that later translated into mass enlistment in SS formations.

As grand mufti of Jerusalem, Mohammed Amin al-Husseini personally authored and signed the propaganda pamphlet *Islam and Judaism*, published in Zagreb in 1943. Its

explicit purpose was to mobilize Muslims to take part in implementing Reich policy. The text drew on early Islamic history and the Prophet Muhammad’s relations with Jews, by cynically twisting religious narrative into a tool for chauvinist and antisemitic ends. “History knows the Jews only as a subject people,” the pamphlet declared.

Furthermore, “their vulgar nature and their intolerable behavior toward the nations that offer them hospitality, as well as toward neighboring peoples, explains why those nations have been forced to take measures to suppress Jewish attempts to achieve by force what they desire.”² The document’s clear aim was to normalize and justify violence against Jews.

All these threads converged to lay the groundwork for a unit in which radical ideology and local ambitions fused into a single Nazi enterprise: the 13th Division of the SS Handschar. Officially authorized by Hitler on February 10, 1943, the unit’s

formation began immediately afterward with the recruitment of Muslim populations and efforts to give shape to the first non-Germanic SS unit in the service of the Third Reich.

Islamic Fundamentalism and Nazism: The Idea of Bosnia as an SS Puppet State

The 13th Division of the SS Handschar represented a unique intersection of religious radicalism, National Socialism, and the aspirations of the Bosniak Muslim population to carve out an ethnically pure territory within the Independent State of Croatia—one that would enjoy autonomy from Zagreb while remaining firmly under the patronage of the Reich.

Mobilization for the division relied heavily on religion as a powerful tool: It served to legitimize the ideological framework of the Reich and its military machinery, while simultaneously advancing the political goals of the Bosniaks themselves. Because one

religious figure—even one as prominent as the grand mufti—was not enough, the division included an imam in nearly every battalion. These imams were responsible for the ideological indoctrination of the men.

One of the most notable was the Islamic theologian Husein Đozo, who served as a divisional imam in Handschar and became a vocal propagandist for the Holocaust.

Despite this role, a street in Sarajevo still bears his name to this day. “The Versailles dictate pushed Europe onto completely nonsensical foundations,” Đozo wrote in a 1943 pamphlet, arguing that “under the cloak of democracy, Jews and Freemasons held a key role in political and social lifeEurope will not be easily freed from these enemies, but the SS man will build a better future for her.”³ The connection between the swastika and Islam in the division was cultivated so deliberately that it extended even to carefully designed uniform details. The collar insignia of the Handschar SS

featured a hand holding a scimitar—a curved sword—positioned above a swastika. Members also wore a fez, a detail unique among SS divisions. On the fez appeared the SS death's head (*Totenkopf*) and the SS eagle, transforming a traditional Muslim garment into an integrated element of Reich iconography.

These symbolic links were far more than superficial uniform decorations; they formed an integral part of the political indoctrination that permeated every aspect of life in the division and other Muslim-recruited SS units. Unlike the 21st Division of the SS Skanderbeg (the first Albanian unit) whose members swore a religious oath over the Qur'an promising "jihad against the *kuffar*" (war against the unbelievers), for the Handschar the concept of jihad was not explicitly invoked. Nevertheless, fallen members of the division were officially treated as *shahids*—an Islamic religious term

literally meaning "witness" or "martyr," used for Muslims killed in battle.

After training in France and Silesia, in 1944 the division was deployed for active combat operations against partisans in Syrmia and eastern Bosnia, where its members committed a series of horrific crimes against prisoners and civilians. According to the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, "these Muslim volunteer units, known as 'Handschar,' were incorporated into the Waffen-SS, fought against Yugoslav partisans in Bosnia, and carried out police and security duties in Hungary. They participated in the massacre of civilians in Bosnia and voluntarily took part in the hunt for Jews in Croatia."⁴ Following Operation Margarethe—the German occupation of Hungary in March 1944—the mass deportations of Hungarian Jews began. The vast majority were sent straight to Auschwitz, while smaller groups were used for forced labor in camps across Bosnia, including the

construction of fortifications against partisan attacks. One documented case involved a group of twenty-two Jews in forced labor who were massacred by Handschar members in a “security zone” (a German-designated area under SS control for anti-partisan operations) near Tuzla.

Although the division achieved some tactical successes and demonstrated competence in anti-guerrilla operations in eastern Bosnia, it became far more notorious for its extreme brutality and savagery—not only during combat but also through widespread crimes against Serbian, Muslim, and Jewish civilians within a designated security zone assigned to the 13th Division of the SS Handschar. This security zone was a defined territory within the Independent State of Croatia, over which the division exercised full military and police authority. Officially justified as a measure to suppress partisan activity and maintain order, it became in practice a site of systematic mass

crimes, including the executions of prisoners of war, large-scale civilian massacres, arbitrary arrests, deportations, and pervasive terror inflicted on the local population.

The zone—located in northeastern Bosnia, where Handschar men operated with near-total impunity—represented the first practical step toward the envisioned autonomy of Bosnia under German patronage. Geographically, it was bounded by four rivers: the Spreča, Sava, Drina, and Bosna. It encompassed parts of Majeвица, Semberija, and Posavina, and faced toward Bačka and Sylvania, areas populated by ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) where another SS division was also active.

The very formation of the Handschar SS was motivated in large part by the desire of Bosniak Muslims to break away from the framework of the puppet Independent State of Croatia and to secure a degree of autonomy that, as Muslims, they did not

enjoy under the Ustaša regime. Dissatisfaction with their social and political position in the Independent State of Croatia led a group of Muslims in the autumn of 1942 to lobby the German authorities for special status for Bosnia and Herzegovina. They formalized their demands in a memorandum, dated November 1, 1942, addressed directly to Adolf Hitler.

In the name of the People's Trusteeship, unnamed representatives of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims laid out their grievances against the Pavelić government and requested that Bosnia and Herzegovina be granted the status of an autonomous region under direct German military supervision. Among other things, they demanded the creation of a Bosnian Guard—an armed formation under German control. The memorandum asked Berlin to prohibit Ustaša activity in the autonomous area of Bosnia-Herzegovina, allowing local authorities to govern under German

protection. The proposed territory was to form a single Bosnian-Herzegovinian administrative region with its seat in Sarajevo. They also requested the establishment of a branch of the National Socialist Party.

Although no formal reply ever came from the German side, Heinrich Himmler acted swiftly after receiving the memorandum; he decided to establish an SS division composed of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims. The 13th Division of the SS Handschar was, in effect, Berlin's concrete response to the Bosniaks' demands for autonomy and protection under the Reich. The first concrete outlines of autonomy began to emerge after the division returned to the Balkans and carried out its initial operations in Syrmia. Just before the unit was pulled back from Syrmia to Bosnia, the division's commander, Karl-Gustav Sauberzweig, issued an official directive titled "Guidelines for the Liberation of

Bosnia.” This document effectively served as a blueprint for establishing a de facto SS state within the territory of the Independent State of Croatia. It stated the following: “the division must liberate Bosnia. The Muslim population belongs to this landThe country must be cleansed of bandits and foreigners [interpreted here to mean partisans and Jews].”⁵

This cleansing of “bandits and foreigners” translated directly into systematic terror. According to preserved archival material, between March and October 1944, the Handschar division committed a series of atrocities across Syrmia and northeastern Bosnia and Herzegovina. In terms of brutality and methods of execution, these crimes often surpassed even those of their Nazi mentors. At the 1945 trials, Mathias Franjo—then commander of the division’s 28th Regiment and later a member of divisional staff—testified about one such action: “These men slaughtered everything

in their path that wasn’t wearing a fez. There were cases where an officer leading the column would see people working in the fields. When he looked back a little later, those same people who had been working moments before were no longer alive.”⁶

Over the course of six months, at least 1,803 people were killed in Bosnia alone, while more than 700 civilians perished in Syrmia. As the military situation in the Balkans deteriorated rapidly for Germany and its satellites, large numbers of Handschar members began deserting. This prompted the creation of yet another SS division—SS Kama—built around a German command cadre and a core of Bosniak veterans transferred from Handschar. Unlike Kama, which never reached full combat readiness or operated as a cohesive unit, many of the seasoned Handschar veterans fled to Italy after the German capitulation. From there, a portion continued their military careers elsewhere.

After the collapse of Nazi Germany, Grand Mufti al-Husseini resumed his activities in the Middle East, now primarily directed against the emerging State of Israel. His earlier collaboration with the Nazis—and especially his role in the Balkans—played a significant part in connecting those same veterans to Arab nationalist movements in the postwar period.

Return to the Middle East: Balkan SS Veterans in the Arab-Israeli War

At the end of 1947, shortly after the United Nations adopted Resolution 181 on the partition of Palestine and on the eve of the War of Independence, *The Palestine Post* reported the arrival of recruits from the Balkans into the ranks of the Syrian army. According to contemporary correspondents, among the incoming fighters were former members of the 13th Division of the SS Handschar. Their wartime experience was reportedly intended to be put to use in the

impending clashes with Jewish forces, raising immediate questions about the postwar trajectories and new roles of ex-Reich soldiers in the Middle East.

According to reports from the period, “the latest recruits to the Syrian army are members of the Bosnian SS of the Wehrmacht, a Muslim formation created by the Nazis to fight Tito’s partisans and the Allies. Syria has offered asylum to the entire Bosnian SS unit, several thousand of whom fled to the British occupation zones in Austria and Germany, where they are being claimed by the Yugoslav government.”⁷ Hundreds of these ex-Handschar veterans—estimates range between five hundred and a thousand Bosniaks, together with smaller groups of Albanians and Croats—were recruited from the International Refugee Organization (IRO) displaced persons camps in Italy and transported to Syria and Lebanon. There, they underwent further training at the Qatana military base, southwest of Damascus, where

they were organized into several battalions of the Arab Liberation Army (ALA) under Fawzi al-Qawuqji. Many served primarily in the Ajnaddin Battalion, while others were integrated into the 1st and 2nd Yarmuk Battalions and the Hittin Battalion. Some of the more experienced Handschar officers even ran commando and guerrilla warfare schools for regular Syrian troops, passing on the anti-partisan tactics they had honed against the Yugoslav resistance movement.⁸

The Albanians, many of them former members of the 21st Division of SS Skanderbeg, arrived in smaller but visible groups. On April 14, 1948, *The Palestine Post* reported that a ship had brought sixty-seven Albanians, twenty Yugoslavs, and twenty-one Croats to Beirut, led by the former Albanian parliamentarian and short-lived prime minister Dervish Biçaku.⁹ These Balkan volunteers saw direct combat in several key engagements during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Many of them, organized

within the ALA under al-Qawuqji, brought with them hard-earned—and often brutal—experience from anti-partisan operations in Bosnia and Sylvania.

They participated in the Battle of Kastel (early April 1948)—a fierce struggle for control of the strategic hill overlooking the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road. They also took part in the heavy fighting for Jaffa (April–May 1948), where Arab forces attempted to hold the important coastal city. In the Galilee, they were involved in operations around Mishmar HaEmek (April 1948), a ten-day battle in which ALA units, including the Yarmuk Battalion, launched repeated attacks on the kibbutz and surrounding villages in an attempt to break through Jewish defenses in the north. Some also fought near Nazareth and in subsequent clashes in the Mis al-Jabal (or Misl al-Jabal) area in October 1948, during the later stages of the war.

Throughout 1947–1948, the Israeli press repeatedly reported on veterans of the Handschar division and other collaborationist formations from Yugoslavia and Albania that had reached the Middle East via Italy and were joining Arab units preparing to fight Israel. Claire Neikind, in an article titled “Arabs Need Balkan Soldiers,” published in *The Palestine Post* on March 2, 1948, reported that Arab agents were recruiting mercenaries to fight the Jews in Palestine from among former members of SS divisions, including both Albanians and Bosniaks. Recruitment was organized through the Orient Press, an entity operating inside IRO camps in Italy. The article noted that in the case of Muslims from Yugoslavia, Albania, and Russia, the IRO had decided it would not officially object to their relocation if requested by Muslim governments in the Middle East. Prince Amr Ibrahim, representing the Egyptian government, reached an agreement with the

IRO, and in November 1947, the organization approved the transfer of 135 Yugoslav and Albanian Muslims—along with their families—to Egypt, with travel costs covered by the Cairo government. As one IRO official explained, “All of these 135 emigrants had files as war criminals or collaborators or were in some other way traitors to the Allied cause, making them ineligible for IRO assistance. Accordingly, IRO officials were ‘pleased to be rid of them.’”¹⁰ A similar group of fifty-seven Muslims—also ineligible for IRO aid due to their wartime records—was released from the organization’s jurisdiction in December 1947 and sent to Amman at the expense of the Transjordanian government.

Al-Husseini once again threw himself into the fight for the Palestinian cause, this time helping former Handschar members find a new place “under the sun” in the Middle East by directing their efforts against the emerging State of Israel. His longstanding

connections with ex-Nazi officers and soldiers enabled the creation of a network of contacts and resources that, according to contemporary reports, influenced the formation of certain military units and organizations in the region over the following decades.

At the same time, the presence of these foreign veterans caused considerable alarm among local authorities and their allies. Their past ties to Nazi structures, combined with their proven record of brutal operations in the Balkans, made this group a potentially destabilizing element in Middle Eastern geopolitics. The arrival of former Handschar SS members, together with veterans from other Balkan collaborationist formations, in Syria and the broader Middle East just before the Arab-Israeli War illustrates how World War II combat experience became a significant asset in the new regional conflicts. Their recruitment and integration into Arab military structures—facilitated by

figures like Mohammed Amin al-Husseini and supported by the IRO and various Arab governments—raises questions about the continuity of military and ideological engagement by Balkan veterans in the Middle East.

The picture grows even more complex with the arrival of mixed groups of volunteers—Albanians, Bosniaks, and Croats—who traveled through Italy and Beirut to reach Damascus and join the Arab Liberation Army, heralding a new chapter in the role of Balkan mercenaries in Middle Eastern conflicts.

SS Skanderbeg Divisions: Albanian Formations in the Waffen-SS

Although the 13th Division of the SS Handschar was primarily Bosniak, it also included a significant number of Albanian volunteers from Kosovo and the Sandžak. Many of these Albanians later formed the

core of a separate unit—the 21st Division of the SS Skanderbeg (1st Albanian).

Formed in 1944 at the initiative of Heinrich Himmler, Skanderbeg consisted mainly of Albanian Muslim recruits with a German command cadre. Like the Handschar Division, its members underwent ideological indoctrination and swore a religious oath over the Qur'an. The division's primary tasks involved anti-partisan warfare, which in practice meant widespread ethnic cleansing operations against Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija, as well as participation in the Holocaust. In May 1944, members of the division arrested hundreds of Jews in Pristina and handed them over to the Germans for deportation to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where most perished.

After the collapse of Nazi Germany and the fall of the puppet state Greater Albania, many Albanian collaborators fled to Italy, just like their Bosniak counterparts. From displaced

persons camps there, a portion made their way to the Middle East.

A contemporary newspaper report confirms that Albanians were not absent from the influx of Balkan fighters. In an article titled "Mixed Guerrilla," *The Palestine Post* reported on April 14, 1948, that a ship had brought sixty-seven Albanians, twenty Yugoslavs, and twenty-one Croats to Beirut. The group was led by Dervish Biçaku, a former Albanian parliamentarian, large landowner, and high-ranking collaborator. Biçaku had supported Mussolini's occupation of Albania, served as prefect of Tirana, and briefly acted as prime minister of Albania under German occupation in late 1944. After fleeing Tirana, he reached Italy and later helped channel Albanian veterans towards Arab forces. The men were received by the Palestinian Arab Bureau and stated that they had fought communists in Albania.¹¹

Within al-Qawuqji's ALA, these Albanian veterans tended to remain in smaller, relatively cohesive groups rather than being fully dispersed among local Arab units. Their prior experience in mountain warfare and anti-partisan operations from the Balkans gave them particular value in the rugged terrain of northern Palestine and the Galilee, where the ALA launched repeated attacks on Jewish positions, including the battles around Mishmar HaEmek.

Another central figure was Xhafer Deva, minister of the interior in the Nazi-backed Albanian government and one of the main organizers behind the Kosovo Regiment, whose members were largely transferred into the Skanderbeg Division. Deva played a key role in recruitment and in the campaign of terror against Serb civilians in Kosovo. Like the Bosniaks, many of these Albanian veterans continued their military path after 1948. Some remained in Syria and Lebanon, integrating into local armed forces and

passing on tactics acquired in both the SS period and the 1948 War.

This episode reveals a clear pattern of continuity: Former SS soldiers from the Balkans — whether Bosniak or Albanian— who had once fought under the swastika and the scimitar, reappeared just three years later on the battlefields of Palestine, this time under an Arab nationalist banner against the newly established State of Israel.

Eight decades later, the legacy of Handschar and, especially, Skanderbeg remains highly sensitive. In Pristina, it is visible in attempts to reinterpret controversial figures such as Xhafer Deva—most notably through repeated initiatives to renovate and promote his former house as a cultural site, despite strong international criticism from Germany, the E.U., and Jewish organizations. What was once unambiguously labeled as collaboration and war crimes is increasingly treated as flexible material for contemporary

identity politics—softened, contextualized, or quietly elevated as part of a national narrative of resistance and autonomy.

In both Sarajevo and Pristina, selective memory transforms burdensome wartime legacies into symbolic resources. The most problematic aspects are downplayed or reframed: Collaborators become “defenders

of the homeland,” “victims of communism,” or simply fade into a convenient semi-forgetfulness. The result is not full rehabilitation but a quiet relativization that allows these Muslim SS formations to serve, however indirectly, as half-acknowledged pillars of modern Bosniak and Albanian identity projects.

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Endnotes

¹ Mohammed Amin al-Husseini, radio broadcast, March 1, 1944, cited in Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World* (Yale University Press, 2009), 213, where the original document is identified as Weekly Review of Foreign Broadcasts, Federal Communications Commission (FCC), no. 118 (March 1, 1944), “Near and Middle East,” United States National Archives, College Park, Maryland, Record Group 165, Military Intelligence Division (MID), Regional File, 1922–1944, Palestine, Entry 77, Box 2719, Folder 2930.

² Mohammed Amin al-Husseini, *Islam i židovstvo* (Zagreb, Croatia: Hrvatski tiskarski zavod, 1943).

³ Husein Đozo, “Zadaća SS-vojnika,” *Handžar*, no. 7 (1943), quoted in George Lepre, *Himmler’s Bosnian Division: The Waffen-SS Handschar Division 1943–1945* (Schiffer Military History, 1997), 73.

⁴ Yisrael Gutman ed., *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, vol. 2 (Macmillan / Yad Vashem, 1990), 706–707.

⁵ See original document Karl-Gustav Sauberzweig, “Richtlinien zur Befreiung Bosniens” [Guidelines for the Liberation of Bosnia], April 17, 1944, quoted in Lepre, *Himmler’s Bosnian Division*, 156–157.

⁶ Testimony of Mathias Franjo, commander of the 28th Regiment, 13th SS Division of the Handschar, and later divisional staff officer in the same division, given in 1945 and quoted in Lepre, *Himmler’s Bosnian Division*.

⁷ Israel Baer, “Bosnian S.S. in Syrian Forces,” *Palestine Post*, December 19, 1947.

⁸ Seth J. Frantzman and Jovan Čulibrk, “Strange Bedfellows: The Bosnians and Yugoslav Volunteers in the 1948 War in Israel/Palestine,” *Istorija 20. veka* 27, no. 1 (2009): 195.

⁹ “Mixed Guerrilla,” *Palestine Post*, April 14, 1948.

¹⁰ Claire Neikind, “Arabs Need Balkan Soldiers,” *Palestine Post*, March 2, 1948.

¹¹ “Mixed Guerrilla.”