

BOSNIA N STUDIES SARAJEVO 1

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Kiwi and the Dervish: A Short
History of Bosnian Settlement in
New Zealand

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Abstract

Emigration from Bosnia-Herzegovina to New Zealand invariably affects, and often undermines, the core religious practices and affiliations of Slavic Muslims. Research suggests that most of these immigrants and refugees have subsumed a key feature of their unique Balkan heritage in order to integrate into mainstream society, the Anglo-European population in this predominantly Protestant-Christian nation in the South Pacific. My study aims to elucidate this historic phenomenon through an exploration of multiple biographies of several working class persons, within the context of the wider picture of Bosnian settlement here. This essay asks: to what degree does personal motivation appear to influence participation in the wider, shared spiritual tradition of Islam in a minority societal context? Predicated on a review of the available literature, my research suggests a complex socio-economic bricolage. Through a case study design my analysis demonstrates that most Bosnian immigrants and refugees over the twentieth century were more concerned with tangible material objectives than theological principles or goals. These results indicate that, overall, religion played less of a role in their private and public lives historically compared to Asian and African immigrants and refugees. On this basis, it is suggested that in future Muslim social and religious organisations based in Bosnia make greater efforts to liaise with their diaspora populations even at these further-most edges of the earth and provide better spiritual leadership. Further research is necessary to identify other aspects that could strengthen Bosnian Muslim culture outside Europe.

Keywords: Bosnia, New Zealand, History, Immigration, Islam.

Introduction

The intention of this essay is to outline a short history of the Bosnian Muslim minority in New Zealand, from the earliest recorded evidence in the 1900s to the present. Bosnian Muslims comprise a small minority within the total New Zealand Muslim congregation, however their significance for a fuller comprehension of Islam in New Zealand is greater than their numbers suggest. The census of 1996 revealed that there were 213 ‘South Slav’ Muslims living in New Zealand, with 162 people identifying specifically as ‘Bosnian’ according to the 2013 census, but both these figures are widely believed to be underestimates (Wellington, 1997; Wilson, 2015). Presently the broader Islamic community in New Zealand numbers over 40,000, most of whom are Asian or African (*New Zealand Official Yearbook*, 2010). The figures for ‘European’ Muslims stand at 4353 (Wilson, 2015). Overall the New Zealand Muslim minority is exceptionally diverse in character, ethnicity, employment, education and geographic spread – making succinct generalisations about the evolving associations and relationships, and

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the precise details of such a diffuse group, their character or ethos, ever more challenging.

This article examines a section of the European Muslim population and tentatively explores how they have negotiated their private and public identities as Islamic New Zealanders on their own terms. It is possible that some scholars will note that it is near to impossible to write a compressive history of the Bosnian Muslims here simply because there are so few. According to this logict, there is insufficient material available to reveal anything truly profound or to make useful insights about the wider Muslim community because the Slavic Muslims (as physiological Europeans) are un-typical of the racial or ethnic minority experience of Islam in this land. There is not enough extant documentation for a thorough academic analysis. To date only William Shepard and Erich Kolig have written any in depth histories of the New Zealand Muslim population and these have tended to focus on the dominant Asian majority (See: Shepard, 1980; 1982; 1985; 1995; 1996; 2002; 2006; Shepard and Humphrey, 1999; Kling, 2009). Madjar's research on Bosnian refugees of the 1990s is an extremely useful exception to this rule (Madjar and Humpage, 2000). I think that we can demonstrate otherwise however: what is recorded about the religious dispositions of the myriad of identified Bosnians is perhaps as significant as what was not. In fact, textual uncertainties and tensions produce an unexpected amount of relatable data, and the study of these apparently inscrutable contradictions and intricacies can contribute to a deeper comprehension in our understanding of the history of Muslims and Islam in New Zealand. It must be noted that European Muslim immigrants have been generally overlooked and are frequently underrepresented in both mainstream Muslim minority literature and in the wider historiography of New Zealand. For many New Zealand Muslims, multiple identities are common place enough but terms like 'Europeans' and 'Pakeha' (the Maori word for European) are often used as synonyms. Conversely 'Muslim' is assumed throughout New Zealand to mean non-European 'ethnic minority', to some extent. My approach has been basically historical, grounded in empirical investigation and research, and underpinned by a conceptualisation of identity as a fundamentally dynamic process that has constantly evolved. The term 'Bosnian Muslim' is a broad term I will use broadly here to cover Slavic Muslims from Bosnia, Herzegovina, and the *Sandžak* of Novi Pazar (a distinctive former Ottoman district currently divided between Serbia and Montenegro), and all territories often referred to as the former lands of Yugoslavia excluding Macedonia.¹ Unless otherwise indicated, I will use the term Bosnia to include both the lands of both Bosnia and Herzegovina (for more see: Malcom, 1994; Morrison and Roberts, 2013; Pačariz, 2016).

¹ There are various spelling variations in English such as *Bosnyak*, in order to distinguish from the Slavic *Bosanci* which has a more strictly geographic sense.

Background

The first Muslims to visit New Zealand arrived in December 1769. Two Indian sailors – lascars – toured the coasts of Northland. They were in the employment of a French ship named the *Saint Jean-Baptiste*, captained by Jean François Marie de Surville who was pursuing trade opportunities from Pondicherry (the French colony in India) (Nachowitz, 2015). In the 1874 government census, 17 ‘Mahometans’ were identified and for many years, and indeed in much contemporary literature featuring the New Zealand Muslim community, this 19th century date has been presented as the start of a Muslim presence in New Zealand (Census in Wellington, 1875). However my own research has revealed a Muslim family from India resident in Canterbury from the 1850s onwards. So, the first identifiable Muslim to settle here permanently seems to be one ‘Mahomet Wuzerah’ or ‘Wuzerah Moosalman’ – commonly known simply as Wuzerah (and spelling variations of that single name). He and his family appear to have arrived in the employ of Sir John Cracroft Wilson (1808 – 1881) who came to Lyttleton in 1854 on a ship named the *Akbar* (Supreme Court Lyttelton, 1858). Wuzerah died in April 1902 (See: ‘Personal’, The Auckland Star (Star) 1 May 1902; ‘Canterbury’, Otago Witness, 7 May 1902; ‘Accidents and Fatalities’, Wanganui Herald, 2 May 1902; ‘A Venerable Indian’, Star, 2 May 1902; (untitled) Poverty Bay Herald, 6 May 1902; ‘Our Letter Home’, New Zealand Herald, 16 May 1902). Throughout the 1890s and 1900s a small number of Muslim immigrants arrived from British Imperial India – mostly from the Punjab and Gujarat regions – and a few other individuals came from Arabia and central Asia. Thereafter immigration laws were effectively tightened and it was not until the 1950s that the number of Muslim immigrants began to spike.

On 21 November 1904, several Muslim men from Bosnia-Herzegovina arrived in Auckland (New Zealand’s largest city and port) from Sydney on board the *SS Zealandia*. It is significant that this occurred during the period when Austria governed Bosnia (1878-1918) because it was at this stage that Bosnians simultaneously developed a greater political awareness and also began to explore new work opportunities in Australia and North America. These particular men appear to have all come from Mostači in the municipality of Trebinje, Herzegovina. They arrived at Sydney, Australia, on 4 November 1904, on board the *Barbarossa* from Naples. As far as can be determined from the available ship records (preserved in cursive script and most likely misspelt) their names were: Ahmed Fetahagic (aged 35), Avdo Fetahagic (31), Osman Fetahagic (18), Ahmet Galyatovie (27), Tahir Hadzovic (26), Zaim Budalica (24), Mehmed Copin (23), Lutieja Volic (22), Muho Roca (22), Muharem Spahovic (20), plus Omer (25) and Salko Haguahmerovic (17). It seems they then came to New Zealand almost immediately, with several others from Herzegovina and a number of (Roman Catholic) Dalmatians. The customs agent in Auckland who transcribed the passenger

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list identified the men as ‘Armenians’ and ‘Gum Diggers’ on the right hand side of the page. Unfortunately, in addition to being handwritten in a personal script that is difficult to decipher, these Slavic names and surnames are frequently vitiated and presented in a myriad of forms: Hadžiahmetović for example, is spelt Hagjiahmetovic by the New Zealand customs agent. Regrettably the preceding page in the *Zealandia* passenger list has been removed and the data is no longer extant, so it is not clear who these men were travelling with (Archives New Zealand, Passenger List 1839-1973). Fortunately, the National Archives in Wellington have retained a card-indexed list of kauri gum license registers in the Northland region and we know that on 14 December 1904 a “Lahir Hadgovic” (most likely Tahir Hadzovic) was granted a one year license to dig for gum in the Aratapu Riding, south of Dargaville in the Hobson county. Six months later on 15 June 1905 he was joined by Zaim Budalica, Ahmet and Osman Falagic (most likely Fetahagic), Ahmet Galujatovic (Galijatovic), and O. and Salko Hadriakmetovic (Hadžiahmetović) (Archives New Zealand, ZAAP A473/66/268).² The following year Mustappa Fetagovich, Ahmet Fetagovich, Avdo Fetagovich and Ahmet Galyatovick (Galijatvic), worked licences at the Kaihu Riding (Archives New Zealand, ZAAP A473/66/269). Furthermore Ahmet, O. and Salko Hadriakmetovich (Hadžiahmetović) also gained licenses to work at the Kaihu Riding on 2 March 1907 (Archives New Zealand, ZAAP A473/66/269).

Around September 1907, two of these Herzegovinian men were called to give evidence at the Dargaville court and were asked to remove their fezzes. They protested but complied, and their group leader took the issue to their diplomatic representative Eugene Langguth, a German immigrant of the Roman Catholic faith and consul-general for the benign empire of Austria in Auckland (Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, Volume 2, Part 1, 1902; Scholefield and Schwabe, eds. 1908; Scholefield, 1925). On 27 September, he wrote a formal letter to the Minister of Justice, James McGowan (1841-1917), an Irish-born Protestant, requesting that ‘Herzegovinians of Mohamedan religion be allowed to appear in Court in dress prescribed by their religion’. The Ministry replied in the affirmative, presumably making it legal to wear a fez in court to this day.³ From the missive penned by Langguth, we are informed that the group consisted of 13 Muslim men from Herzegovina based in Maropiu, led by one Mustafa Fetahagic.

Their fezzes were remarked upon by various newspapers. In 1909 a popular newspaper wrote about the new Croatian immigrants (a novelty in an Anglo-Saxon colony): A small number of Bosnians are amongst them, and these by their fez

- 2 The kauri, *Agathis australis*, is endemic to the North Island and produces excellent resin (‘gum’). The gum export trade flourished from the 1860s and declined in the 1920s. The 1900s were the zenith of production in New Zealand.
- 3 From: Austro-Hungarian Consul, Auckland Date: 1 October 1907 Subject: That Hercegovinians of Mohamedan religion be allowed to appear in Court in dress prescribed by their religion (R24623370), ACGS, 16211, J1, 768/ax, 1907/926.

headgear make patent their adherence to the dominant Turkish creed. In their home country these, foreigners were with few exceptions engaged in agriculture. In New Zealand their energies are concentrated in winning kauri gum, and they have fully demonstrated their capability for hard work (New Zealand Herald, 1909).

The article was repeated in other newspapers across the country (*Feilding Star*, 19 October 1909; *Mataura Ensign*, 20 October 1909; *Colonist*, 25 October 1909).

It is unclear when the group left New Zealand, but passenger lists prove a Mr “Fetgich” and A. “Galigatovic” (most likely Fetahagic and Galijatovic) left Auckland on the SS *Mokoia* for Sydney on 11 May 1908 (Passenger Lists, 1839-1973, SS *Mokoia*). On 18 January 1909 Zaim Budalica also departed on the *Mokoia* (Passenger Lists, 1839-1973, SS *Mokoia*). O. Hudzametwovich (Hadžiahmetović) left New Zealand on 29 March 1909 on board the SS *Marama* (Passenger Lists, 1839-1973, SS *Marama*). Tahir Hadzovic died in 1910 and was buried at the “Belgian Gardens Cemetery” in Townsville, Queensland, making him possibly the first Bosniak to die in Australia. Mustafa Fetahagic settled in Mourilyan, Queensland, for several years and Mustafa Road in Bellenden is named after him. During World War One “Mustaffa Fetagich” was interned as an enemy alien and his photograph recorded (National Archives of Australia, Series No: D3597). In the early 1920s Mustafa Fetahagic married a lady from the Galijatovic family and retired to Hercegovina in the late 1930s. However during World War Two, he fled Gračanica, where he died in March 1943. Ahmet Galijatovic became a sugar cane farmer in Mourilyan, Queensland, and died there in June 1928 (Cairns Post, 1928). Osman Fetagic journeyed to Indiana, USA, where worked in a steel mill before retiring to Herzegovina after the war, where he died in 1964. Although this unique group of young men left no specific legacy in New Zealand (in terms of constructing a mosque or leaving names on the geography and so forth), I believe we can assume that such a pious collection of Muslims – steadfastly wearing their fezes, residing and working in close proximity to one another – may well have prayed together: there is every reason to believe they may very well have formed the first *Jamaat* in New Zealand (Karčić, 2015, 2015a; Drury 2015, 2015a; Rizvanović, 2016; Wölfl, 2016).

Decades later, in July 1950, the first Muslim organisation in the entire country was created when the ‘New Zealand Muslim Association’ was established in Auckland, entirely through the efforts of Indian Muslim migrants (Drury, 2006). There were approximately 200 Muslims in the country at the time, almost entirely Indian or Asian (New Zealand Population Census, 1951). In April 1959, the Association acquired a property for use as an Islamic Centre in central Auckland – largely due to the concerted efforts of a new wave of Albanian and Bosnian refugees. In 1960 the first Islamic cleric in New Zealand arrived from India: Maulana Ahmed Said Musa Patel (1937-2009) (Drury, 2006). This was followed elsewhere by the creation of the ‘International Muslim Association of New Zealand’

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from 1962 to 1964, in Wellington (the capital), and the 'Muslim Association of Canterbury' in 1977, in the South Island.

There have been two waves of Bosnian and *Sandžaklije* migrants to settle in New Zealand. The first arrived on the MS *Goya* in 1951 through the auspices of the IRO - International Refugee Organisation, a precursor to the UNHCR (Plowman, 2006). The second important group arrived during the 1992-95 war in Bosnia. In between, and after, there was a regular trickle of individuals and families.

Compared to Muslim immigrants from Asia, Dr. Shepard wrote that eastern European Muslims had 'been quicker to adopt Kiwi ways, more inclined to marry into the Kiwi community, and more likely to attenuate its Muslim identity.' (Shepard, 1985). ('Kiwi' is a Maori term for native New Zealanders of both Maori and Anglo-European heritage.)

Are the Bosnian Muslims of New Zealand a specific identity group within the wider Islamic minority in this country then? Anthony D. Smith (1991) suggested there are six key features in any given ethnic identity: a collective proper name or appellation, some degree of common myth of shared ancestry, the carefully communicated perception of shared historical memories, one or more elements of a common culture, an association with a specific geographical homeland or topography, and above all a strong sense of solidarity. Certainly the Bosnians here qualify as a type of diaspora: pressured to some extent or another to leave their indigenous lands (economically or politically), along with the generation or maintenance of collective memories of such a homeland, and a curious degree of both integration and alienation from the host society. It is intriguing however that all three Bosniak-focused communal associations registered after 1990 failed and were struck off (see below). Madjar wrote: 'Many of the Bosnians who arrived in the '90s were more interested in assimilating to the Kiwi way of life than pursuing their heritage through cultural activities' (Murray, 2012). This is polite language. Clearly Bosnian Muslim immigrants and refugees arriving in the 1990s were not attracted to the Asian-dominated mosque network, nor were they motivated to establish their own spiritual centre. Equally ethnic, religious and linguistic ties were not enough to bind these Bosnians closely together within New Zealand during this time frame. Madjar's research on Bosnian refugee health at Massey University in the late 1990s emphasized the central problem of unemployment during this decade and the glacial reluctance of authorities to help facilitate urgently desired family reunifications: the various New Zealand agencies and services were more concerned with communicable diseases and bureaucratic processes than assessing their personal priorities or the mental health issues amongst traumatised concentration camp survivors (Madjar and Humpage, 2000).

MS Goya

The first identifiable Slavonic Muslims to settle long term in New Zealand arrived on the MS *Goya*, a Norwegian refugee boat engaged by the IRO. On 1 May 1951, the *Goya* arrived in Wellington bringing hundreds of political refugees, including dozens of Muslim single men, from war torn Eastern Europe. In due course most relocated to Auckland, however three identifiable Bosnian Muslim men settled in the South Island of the country. When the Department of Internal Affairs undertook a survey on the status of the *Goya* men in 1953 there were over a dozen Muslim men working locations from Invercargill to Christchurch. Some were sharing accommodation with Albanian Muslims.⁴

For instance, Adem Firkatovic (spelt Ferkatovich in New Zealand) was a farm labourer who escaped from Tito's iniquitous army in 1947, crossing the border from Yugoslav Macedonia into Greece. Born in Kazići (near Zavidovići in central Bosnia) in December 1930, the son of Ibrahim and Emina, he married a Pakeha woman from Greymouth at the (Anglican) St Johns Church when employed as a rubber worker at the Christchurch Firestone Tyre Rubber company (see: (L/22/9/55) or Labour Department; Series 22/9; Reference 55). By 1958 he had set up a coffee lounge called the Copper Cat on High Street in central Christchurch, worked at the Hotel Russley for 25 years and later operated a restaurant on Harewood Road. In 2016 he published his autobiography, called *Adem's Escape*, detailing his escape from Communist Yugoslavia and his career in New Zealand (Rutherford, 2016).

Samso Jusovic - also known as Yusovich - was born on 20 October 1936 in 'Dusnacha', Yugoslavia (most likely Dušmanići, a small village in the municipality of Prijepolje, in the Serbian portion of the *Sandžak* province). According to the records of the IRO (International Refugee Organisation), Jusovic was described as a farm labourer who had lived in exile in Italy for a period of time, under the name Semcho Gioussovitch, when he was accepted for the refugee programme (L/22/9/55 or Labour Department; Series 22/9; Reference 55). Within a decade of arriving he had married a Pakeha lady named Iris and resided in Lyttelton. He worked on the Roxburgh Hydro Dam project in Otago for two years and settled in Christchurch making him one of those migrants who was actively involved in physically reshaping the New Zealand environment. The 1975 electoral roll lists him as a labourer resident on Barbados Street in the central city area of Christchurch, while the 1982 list places him on Lincoln Road in Fendalton Electoral Roll as an 'invalid'. When he died in 1990 Jusovic was one of the oldest Muslim

4 Halit Bajram, Adem Firkatovic, Munib Ganic, Samso Jusovic, Bahri Ahmet Kavaja, Akif Keskin, Mazhar Krasniqi, Nerus Mollaj, Kaimak Murteza, Nurko Omerovic, Nazif Ramadan, Kamber Rustemai, Wilson Shkembi, Aris Zeqollari. See: (IA/52/15) or Internal Affairs; Series 52; Reference 15 'Immigrant Name List Goya'.

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refugees in Canterbury and the first person from the *Sandžak* to be buried in the South Island. Punjab-born Mansoor Khawaja and Jafar Hall, an English convert to Islam resident in Christchurch, visited him in a hospice where he expressed a strong desire to visit and pray at the mosque. A sympathetic obituary was recorded in the national Muslim newsletter:

One of the Yugoslavian Brothers, Samso Yusovich died at the age of 69 on 8th June 1990. He came to NZ in the early 1950's and met our Muslim brothers for the first time a few weeks ago and was still able to recite kalimah shahadah, Alhamdulillah. It was a very sad moment especially for the few brothers who used to visit him occasionally. He was buried on 11th June in Ruru cemetery (Al-Muslim, Vol, 2&3, 1990).

Nurko (Nurdeen) Omerovic was born on 5 May 1909 in the village of Dobrun near Višegrad (L/22/9/55). He settled in Mosgiel with his Roman Catholic Italian wife and their children. His Italian born children quickly Anglicised their names: Muharam became Murray and Hanifa became Jennifer. The entire family was naturalised in July 1960. Nurko Omerovic worked his entire life in local railways of Dunedin. He died on 5 May 1978 and was cremated. Omerovic may well be the first Bosnian to pass away in New Zealand (The Otago Daily Times, 1978). Becir Preljevic also arrived on the MS *Goya* and was buried in the South Island although he had lived most of his life in the North Island. Like Jusovic, he was born in Prijepolje, in 1926, and worked across the country and lived in Auckland for a while before settling in Wellington during the 1970s to work as a chauffeur driving cars for the government motor pool. In 1986 he retired to the South Island, alternating between his family home in Christchurch and a property in Twizel in the Mackenzie district of the Canterbury province, where he devoted his spare time to his passion for hunting deer and rabbits. In 2004, Preljevic sold the Twizel residence, toured the countryside and died in Christchurch in 2007 ((L/22/9/55); Preljevic, 2007). On 1 January 1956 the New Zealand Muslim Association staged the inaugural 'Muslim Congress' at the Garibaldi Hall on Pitt Street in central Auckland. A new Executive Committee was voted in to govern the Association, with the immediate objective of drawing the Indian and European Muslims together and constructing a mosque. Esup Bhikoo from the Gujarat was elected President with his brother Abdul Samad Bhikoo and Petrit Alliu serving as joint secretaries. Ramzi Kosovich, Avdo Musovich, Shaqir Ali Seferi, C. Shekumia and Fadsil Katseli were voted on to the new Executive Committee (Star, 1956; New Zealand Herald, 1956). Alliu, Katseli and Seferi were Albanian Muslims.

Born on 21 September 1926, Ramzi Kosovich (Remzija Kosovic), was a young worker from Sarajevo (although he told New Zealand authorities that he was from Nevesinje.) Allegedly Kosovich had fled Yugoslavia, crossing the border illegally seeking political sanctuary in the West (R23918113, Agency BBAE, Series 5041, Box 541, Record Number A371/1955). In 1957, Kosovich applied for

naturalisation (R24617034, Agency ACGO, Series 8333, Record IA1, Box 2538, Record Number 115/9485). He later opened a restaurant and then a fish and chip shop. In June 1963 he travelled abroad on the SS *Fairsea* and returned to New Zealand where he married a Bosnian lady named Emina Minka (Passenger Lists 1839-1973). Kosovich later worked at the Air New Zealand flight kitchen, then emigrated to Canada where he died (Drury, 2006).

A few other Muslims from Bosnia also arrived over the 1960s and 1970s. Mujo Beganovic (aged 30) arrived in Wellington from Sydney on the MS *Achille Lauro* in December 1966. He was listed as an Austrian and a farmer (National Archives: R24662711). In the late 1960s Muhammed Tulic (also known as Mario Toulitch) migrated to New Zealand and secured work in Wellington. Tulic became a naturalised citizen in November 1967. In February 1971, several family members arrived on the ferry *Achille Lauro*: Esad (42 years old), Jelena (63), Alma (15), Irma (17) and Azra (18). In 1975, they were joined by Reuf and Ismeta. The Tulic family were active in the local Muslim community. In 1988, Alma attended a Muslim youth camp in Christchurch, in the South Island, as a representative of the Wellington Muslim congregation. When the family left New Zealand in 1988, the local Muslim community newsletter bid them a fond farewell: 'We wish all the best to Br Reuf Tulic and his family who has emigrated to Australia' (IMAN Newsletter, 1988).

Around 1965, Omer Alim Pepic arrived by himself from the village of Draga in the municipality of Tutin, in the Serbian portion of *Sandžak*. Born 17 January 1929, Pepic brought out his younger brother Smail (or Ismail, born 25 January 1925) in 1967. They both obtained citizenship in 1972 and their surname was quickly anglicised to Pepich. Omer is frequently recorded in New Zealand documents as 'Umar'. They quickly befriended the affable Musovich who was also from the same region (Drury, 2006). Remembered within the Muslim community as an avid reader, Omer Pepic was employed as a toolmaker at the Otahuhu Railway workshop. In New Zealand Omer married Mara, a Roman Catholic from Dalmatia, and the couple lived in Mt Eden. Smail also worked as a fitter at the railways initially before pursuing employment at Reidrubber Tyres in Penrose. He married Hajrija back in Novi Bazar and brought her to New Zealand where they had three children. They later migrated to Brisbane where he died of a heart attack inside a mosque. Perhaps one of the most significant Slavic Muslim settlers in New Zealand in the twentieth century, was Hajji Avdo Musovich from Montenegro. Born in Bijelo Polje, Montenegro, on 26 January 1919, the son of Hamo and Bega, his family were descended from a Turkish governor of the territory during the Ottoman period.⁵ A long-time member of the New Zealand Muslim

⁵ I have written a modest biography of Hajji Avdo Musovich elsewhere. See: Abdullah Drury, 'From Illyricum to Elysium: Yugoslav Muslims in the South Pacific', *Waikato Islamic Studies Review*, September 2017, Volume 3, Number 2, pp.44-58.; See also: Lloyd Jones, 'Target of Ha-

Association Executive Committee, the much respected effendi died on 15 November 2001 and was buried the following day, on the first day of Ramadan 1421, following funeral prayers held at the Ponsonby mosque where he had invested so much of his time and spiritual energies. In a prominent newspaper obituary, the Bosnian was widely acclaimed as ‘a battler for the underdog and the working man’ (Walsh, 2001).

Second Wave of Migrants

As we saw with Umar Pepich and the Tulic family, not all the Bosnian Muslim migrants during this period were outright political refugees. One individual who played a role in the affairs of the Waikato Muslim Association and the South Auckland Muslim Association was Demal Hodzic. (‘Demal’ became ‘Jim’ in New Zealand). Born in 1932, the son of a Mullah in Trnopolje and the eldest of six brothers and one sister, he crossed the border illegally into Italy with his brother. In 1962, he came to the South Island to work as a labourer at the Manapouri Power Station Project. In 1969 he married a New Zealander and in 1978 they settled in Te Aroha, close to Kaikai Tunnel, where Demal had secured work. He built a house there and became loosely involved in the nascent Muslim community of Hamilton, the principle city of the Waikato region. Older Waikato Muslim residents recall that Hodzic cooked a famously good goulash and also built the extension to the house of Dr Anisur Rahman, an immigrant scientist from India. In 1985 Demal and his youngest brother Abas relocated to Auckland and became involved in the affairs of the South Auckland Muslim community.

The 1990s war in Bosnia had an incalculable effect on the diaspora in New Zealand. Through many sacrifices and the payment of large sums of money, the Hodzic family successfully managed to bring over their remaining siblings and their families to Auckland as refugees. The New Zealand government committed itself to accepting 50 internees from the ‘detention centres’ at Keraterm, Omarska and Trnopolje. In early December 1992, the first war refugees arrived: 30 former detainees and 10 members of their families allowed temporary asylum (Press, 1992).

The first group of 14 ex-prisoners from the Bosnian horror camps arrived in Auckland before Christmas. Another group of 17 arrived on January 8. The first group has completed the six-week English as a Second Language and orientation programme and has moved into flats in Onehunga. All the refugees are Bosnian Muslims aged

tred’, *New Zealand Herald*, 5 September, 1992, Section Two, p. 5.; Holmes, ‘Bosnian’, 17 May 1993, New Zealand Television Archives.; Network News, ‘Local Muslims’, 19 April 1994, New Zealand Television Archives.; Primetime, ‘Reax’, 24 May 1994, New Zealand Television Archives.; Paul Shannon, ‘Bound by Blood’, *Planet*, Winter 1994, Issue 13, p. 11.; Leanne Moore, ‘Muslims and Catholics in single salute’, *New Zealand Herald*, 30 September 1995, p. 24; ‘Muslims and Catholics greet Bosnian’s man of peace’, *New Zealandia*, November 1995, pp.20-21.

between 18 and 36 years old. There are two married couples, one with a two year old son. 'Most have broken teeth from rifle butts in the mouth' (Harris, 1993).

Concerned that the matter of family reunification was proceeding too slowly, and some suspecting that there was an agenda to do nothing at all, the Bosnians requested a meeting with the Minister of Immigration who came to the [Mangere Refugee Resettlement] Centre to hear their concerns ... Within a year, most were reunited with remaining family members (Madjar and HUmpage, 2000).

With over two million refugees driven from their residences during the fighting, New Zealand accepted a rather parsimonious 143 Bosnian refugees between December 1992 and June 1997. The authorities undertook to settle as many as possible in Auckland (Madjar and Humage, 2000). During the height of the conflict, the largest single influx – 83 people – arrived between 1 July 1993 and 30 June 1994 (Refugee and Migrant Service Annual Report 1997-98).⁶ Eleven were permitted to enter from 1995 to 1998 under the government's refugee resettlement plan. Surprisingly, these were the last to enter New Zealand on the official refugee programme (Refugee and Migrant Service Annual Report 1993-94).⁷ On 20 January 1993 Television New Zealand journalist Simon Mercep interviewed several of the new refugees on the Holmes Show. They discussed their experiences of the ruinous war through a translator and were filmed in the beachy suburbs of Auckland.

Demal Hodzic was a founding member of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Society, set up in September 1994. However there was an immediate tension within the community as several of the Muslim men who had been interned in concentration camps objected to the presence of Bosnian Serbs who were in mixed marriages with Muslims. A year later, the Bosniak Cultural Union of New Zealand Incorporated was registered on 1 November 1995. Both these associations operated for six years before being struck off as inactive after several key members left the country or concentrated their attentions on work or family matters. The Bosnian-Herzegovinian Society Incorporated was set up on 18 April 2001, with Demal Hodzic's nephew Emir serving as the first president. Members met monthly to arrange a spit lamb meal but eventually this organisation folded as well.

In 1992, Demal Hodzic served as Patron of the South Auckland Muslim Association and thereafter he became involved in the financing and maintenance of the

6 For an excellent summary of the Bosnian refugee experience, depressingly reminiscent of Musovich's own experiences seventy years earlier, see : Department of Labour, Immigration Service, 'Ferida' in *Refugee Women: The New Zealand Refugee Quota Programme* (Wellington, 1994), pp. 56-57.

7 One Bosnian refugee reported: 'We used to watch stories of the Somali refugees on television and think to ourselves, 'It's so far away.' And we would turn the channel to another station. Then one day we looked behind us and found soldiers with guns at our backs. And then we were refugees, just like the Somalis.' *RMS Refugee / Newsletter of the Refugee and Migrant Service*, Issue 2 (December 1994), p. 3; *New Zealand Immigration Services Fact Pack* (July 2002), Issue 17, p. 9.

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Otahuhu Islamic Centre and its later upgrade into a proper mosque, the *Masjid-e-Mustafa* (Allely, 2001). He died of a heart attack whilst working alone in his flat on 11 October 2004 and was buried near his brothers Shafik and Hassan Hodzic at the Memorial Gardens in South Auckland. Perhaps the best praise came from Hajji Gul Zaman, a former president of the Association, who wrote a glowing obituary in the FIANZ newsletter years later:

Demal was a unique individual who was very passionate. Committed, persistent, humble, generous, industrious, helpful, dedicated, charitable and pious. Even though he was 72 years of age and not in the best of health, his concern was always for the welfare of the Muslims, particularly those of South Auckland (Zaman, 2006).

Bosnian Muslims of the 1990s wave also settled in the South Island. In the early 1990s, with the conflict in Bosnia raging, the Otago Daily Times often interviewed Dr. Biljana Juric after she took up a four year contract as a senior marketing lecturer at Otago University. 'Ms Juric is herself a Muslim but is uncomfortable with the label. 'I was raised like a Yugoslavian' (Malthus, 1993). Juric fled Sarajevo on 14 April, 12 days after the fighting began, along with her elderly mother, her mother's friend and the friend's three-year old great-granddaughter (Smeele, 1993). Once in New Zealand she sent money and parcels back to the war zone but many did not arrive (Press, 1994). A year after the peace treaty, Dr Juric obtained New Zealand citizenship in October 1996 (Brookland, 1996). Six months later, her 77 year old mother, Razija Hadziomerspahic also secured New Zealand citizenship (Howe, 1997). Dr Juric later relocated to Auckland and took up employment with at the University of Auckland Business School.

Another interesting Muslim migrant in the region was Halid Alic from the *Sandžak* region in Serbia. In 1998 Alic was interviewed and his testimonial recorded in a Department of Internal Affairs publication: 'Halid Alic arrived in New Zealand in [June] 1993 to escape the Balkans wars. As he reflected, 'the trouble started in Slovenia, in Croatia, and then in Bosnia – in Sarajevo. Sarajevo is 150 kilometres from my home town, and it was too close' (Hutching, 1998). Alic was born in Proboj in 1962 to Ramiz and Devla. Halid Alic trained as a veterinarian but had to sit the registration examination again in New Zealand (and in English). He quickly gained employment in the freezing works and took citizenship three years later. By 2003, he and his family were living in genteel Gore and he was working for the Alliance Group meat plant there - one of the few Muslim employees in the New Zealand meat industry not employed as a Halal butcher (Al Mujaddid, 2003).

The entire Kafedzic family, also coming to New Zealand as refugees, ended up in Canterbury in the 1990s. Atka Kafedzic was able to escape Bosnia by marrying a Christchurch photo-journalist named Andrew Reid. In turn Reid and his family were able to aid the whole Kafedzic family to follow suite. Andrew and Atka

Reid were interviewed regularly by *The Press* newspaper after she took up residence in Christchurch in July 1993 (Forrester, 1994). The American author Janine di Giovanni wrote several pages on the Kafedzic family experiences in Sarajevo in her award winning book *The Quick and the Dead: Under Siege in Sarajevo* (Di Giovanni, 1994). During the 1999 Kosova crisis, a resident in Christchurch named Gerry Kostic made threats against the entire Kafedzic family after they attended anti-war demonstrations and he was prosecuted in court (Star, 1999; Press, 1999). That same year Mrs Fatima Kafedzic, the family matriarch, was interviewed by *The Press* and later in the year she organised a girls 'pyjama party' - arranging for donations of children's pyjamas to be donated to refugee children in Sarajevo (Press, 1999; 2000). In late 2004, the same newspaper ran an obituary for the Kafedzic grandmother Taiba Jusovic (née Bilalovic). Born in 1917, she was a Bula (women religious educator) in Communist Yugoslavia and had been naturalised a New Zealand citizen in 1997. 'Atka says members of the mosque were caring and generous at the time of Taiba's illness and death. Their reading of the Koran at her bedside had a very calming effect on her' (Press, 2004). The Kafedzic family were also at the centre of the 1995 Christchurch Memorial service to commemorate the Srebrenica genocide (Crean, 2005). The family patriarch Ahmed Kafedzic, a retired maths professor and son of the Bosnian poet Safet Kafedzic, launched his book *Let the Doves of Peace Fly* on 19 November 2005, at the Mabel Howard Place Community Lounge. Over five years later in May 2011, *Goodbye Sarajevo* was published by two of the Kafedzic sisters – Atka Reid and Hana Schofield and it quickly became a bestseller in New Zealand over 2012. The book about their escape from the war in their home country and the fate of their family was very well received across the country and reviews appeared in all the major newspapers (see: Gillies, 2011; Munro, 2011; Bridges, 2011; Anthony, 2011; Murray, 2012). One other Bosnian refugee fled to Canterbury at the same time: Aza Mehmedovic, a native of Goradze, married a New Zealand soldier stationed in Bosnia and he helped facilitate her escape. She settled in Christchurch in June 1994. Two years later in November 1996 she published her account in a well-received book entitled (imaginatively enough) *Escape from Bosnia: Aza's Story* (McCauley, 1996; see also: Fleming, 1996; Swain, 1996; Packer, 1996; Schwass, 1996).

One final Bosnian Muslim, perhaps the most colourful, is worth finishing this monograph. Jusuf Dzilic, aka 'Genocide', is a Bosnian hip-hop musician who settled on the East Coast of New Zealand. The Dzilic family fled violence in their hometown of Zvornik, in 1992 when Jusuf was a seven year old boy. They escaped to Austria and then were accepted as asylum seekers in Ireland. Ten years later, aged 18, Jusuf Dzilic relocated to Hastings, married a Maori lady and reinvented himself under the deliberately provocative moniker 'Genocide'. Over the following decade he produced and released many songs including 'Never surren-

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der', 'Bosnian Mami', 'Refugee syndrome', 'Srebrenica (Never Again)', 'Bury me in Bosnia', 'Free Palestine' and 'I'm a Muslim (Terrorize Records)'. All speak loquaciously and very personally of the Bosnian Muslim experience and trauma (Morton, 2007; Smith, 2007; Neal, 2009; Shanks, 2010). As testament to his appeal and broad network of contacts, Dzilic was invited to perform at the opening of 'proceedings at the Mana Party's⁸ campaign launch in South Auckland' in 2011 (Chapman, 2011). In April 2016 he was asked to comment nationally on the Karadzic verdict in Holland (Dominion-Post, 2016). Uniquely Dzilic remains a dedicated performer committed to vocalising unpopular political messages regarding the poor and oppressed folk of the world (Shanks, 2012).

Conclusion

On 9 August 2013, over a hundred years after the honorary Austrian consul-general was called upon to represent Bosnian Muslim interests, the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina opened its first honorary consulate in Auckland. The ceremony was attended by Dr. Damir Arnaut, the Bosnian ambassador to Australia and New Zealand, representatives of the consular corps and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, plus several Bosnian citizens resident here. The aim of my text has been to briefly overview the history of the entire Bosnian Muslim community of New Zealand, as this offers invaluable insights into the broader perspectives of Islam in this country, not to mention other themes such as minority migration and integration. I wanted to spotlight the biographies of the immigrants rather than specific topics for this formative period, because I believe that their intriguing lives reveal much about the broader Muslim cultural practices. Clearly more research is needed here as, with the important exception of Madjar, most of the research and history focusing on Muslims in New Zealand to date has methodologically focused on Asian experiences and viewpoints.

The narrative of Bosnian settlement in New Zealand serves as a helpful, useful microcosm of the wider immigrant Muslim experience. Particular aspects feature prominently. For instance, the Slavic Muslims who settled and integrated did not all originate in one particular village, town or locale. Nor did they restrict themselves to settling down in one specific region together with other Bosnians. There were both *Sandžaklije* and *Sarajlije*. There was no specific Bosnian colony (compared to say, the German speaking Bohemians who settled in Puhoi, or the Danish colonists in Dannevirke.) Although many members of the same family entered the country, there was no obvious chain migration in large numbers. They did not hail from one specific social class, nor did they restrict themselves to any one line of work in their new homeland. They came from all four corners of the traditional Slavic Muslim lands of the former Yugoslavia and although many congregated

⁸ The Mana Party is a Maori political faction.

in Auckland for obvious financial reasons. There is an obvious trickle emigration of those, once settled in New Zealand, towards Australia and elsewhere over time. Certain individuals contributed to several nascent Islamic agencies and undoubtedly the 'relatively moderate Islam of European provenance (Albanian and Bosnian) ... made a lasting impression' (Koling, 2009). Simultaneously, there was no Bosnian ulema here, no religious leadership. There is proof and indication of individuals negotiating their own personal, familial or group definition of Muslim activity and communal participation according to their own aspirations and understanding of spirituality and the religion. Muslim gum diggers insisted upon wearing their fezzes in court in the 1900s and whilst this may seem picturesque and quaint, the episode also informs us how seriously these men took their religious precepts, culture and heritage. It is also interesting to observe that the early Slavic Muslims migrants who settled in the 1950s, all universally married European women rather than Indian Muslim female migrants. This speaks volumes about the lack of social cohesion amongst the wider Muslim population across racial lines during this period. Curiously, in view of the considerable influx of Muslim refugees from around the world settling in New Zealand during the 1990s and dates thereafter, the Ferkatovich, Kafedzic and Mehmedovic accounts, are the only ones to make it to print (For more on the Kafedzic family, see also: Grant, 1996; Moby, 1999; Press, 2000; Kafedzic, 2006; Eaton, 2006).

In the final analysis of these long historical excurses and surveys, looking to the future, one can only hope that the Bosnian Muslim community will continue to contribute to New Zealand.

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