

ISLAM IN THE PACIFIC

1- Introduction

The Western Pacific regions were certainly crossed by Arab traders in their way from Arabia to China. But Arabs never settled in the Pacific islands the way they did in Java and Sumatra. Later, after the sixteenth century and the Islamization of Indonesia many Muslims from the Indonesian islands visited regularly the northern coast of Australia, and New Guinea as well as the neighbouring islands. The first European explorers did mention this Islamic presence, especially in Australia. For instance, when the Spanish explorer Torres visited New Guinea in 1606, he mentioned a higher civilization in the western part of the island due to "strong contacts with Muslims of the Molucca islands". Similarly, when Mathew Flinders visited the north-western shore of Australia in 1802 he found Muslim fishermen from Timor and Sulawezi islands. Thus, Islamic presence in the Pacific certainly pre-dated the European colonization.

The Muslim immigration to the Pacific which has left traces to this day can be divided in at least eight waves. The first was the Malay wave which started by 1850, and continued until 1930. It brought Muslim Malays to the north-eastern, northern and north-western shores of Australia. The Malays came as pearl divers or as indentured laborers in sugar cane plantations. Few of the descendants of this immigration remained Muslim. The second wave was that of "Afghans" who were brought by the British to Australia with their camels from

1862 to 1930. This wave of Muslim immigrants originated mainly in the present-day Pakistan. These "Afghans" helped build up the economy of the desert areas of Australia. However, only men were allowed to settle in Australia. The result was that few of those who are of part "Afghan" origin remained within the Islamic fold. The third wave started in 1872 with the deportation of Algerian freedom fighters by the French to l'Ile des Pins in New Caledonia. The fourth wave is made up by Indian immigration from about 1879 to 1916. Indian Muslims came as indentured laborers in the sugar cane plantations mainly to the Fiji islands, but also to Queensland in Australia. Some traders emigrated from Gujarat to New Zealand. Most of the descendants of these immigrants are still Muslims and form the bulk of the Muslim population of Fiji.

The first four waves could be termed as old immigration. After the World War I, Albanian refugees came to Australia and New Zealand. Their immigration started from 1920 and lasted till about 1950. After the World War II they were joined by a Yugoslav Muslim wave as well as a Turkish Cypriot wave. The immigration of both Yugoslav and Cypriot Muslims started from 1948 and lasted until 1960. Finally a large number of Muslims settled in Australia after 1960. These Muslims came mainly from Turkey and Lebanon, but also from Greece, Pakistan, Egypt and Syria. Most of the Muslims who came after 1920 remained Muslims, albeit at different stages of assimilation in the majority community.

Table 9.1 shows that the Muslims in the Pacific numbered about 260,000 persons in 1982. In this total are not included the populations of Indonesia (including West Irian) and the Philippines which are considered to be part of Asia. At present (1982), Muslims are organized in five countries of the Pacific: Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea. Muslims are also organized in Christmas Island and Cocos Islands which are under the Australian jurisdiction (administered by Australia) and thus are counted with the Muslims of Australia. The highest percentage of Muslims is in Fiji Islands (7.7%) whereas the highest number of Muslims is in Australia (170,000 Muslims). However, the number of Muslims is increasing fast in all the above mentioned territories and Muslims are expected to organize themselves soon in the other territories of the Pacific.

Table 9.1 : Muslims in the Pacific in 1982

Country	Muslim Population	Muslim Population	Muslim Percentage over total population
Australia	15,100,000	170,000	1.1
Fiji	650,000	50,000	7.7
New Caledonia	140,000	14,000	10.0
New Zealand	3,130,000	12,000	0.4
Other	4,540,000	14,000	0.3
Total	23,560,000	260,000	1.1

2- Australia: Formation of a Community

The first Muslims to arrive on the coasts of Australia were Arab traders after the 10th century, followed in the fifteenth century by fishermen from the Indonesian islands, especially Makassar, Timor and the Moluccas.

The present Muslim community of Australia, however, traces its origin to 1860 when Dost Mohomet, a Pathan from Kashmir and two other Afghan Muslims arrived in Melbourne with a string of 24 camels from Peshawar for use in the Bourke and Wills expedition across the Australian desert. In 1866, 12 more camel drivers were brought from Karachi along with 120 camels. Many more came after them and their contribution to the development of Australia was enormous compared to their numbers. Most of the Muslim camel drivers came from the present-day Pakistan. Some also came from India, Iran and Afghanistan. But since most of them were Pushtu-speakers they were all called "Afghans" or just "Ghans". In due time, they increased in numbers and became camel owners and breeders, as well as merchants, haulage contractors, hawkers and mailmen throughout the Australian continent.

Their main area of concentration was South Australia. From there they spread out to all parts of the arid inland. They contributed in all explorations of the hinterland. They were employed on the building of the first Overland Telegraph Line across the continent from Adelaide to Darwin, and helped build the Trans-Australia Railway from Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta.

This community produced outstanding personalities such as Abdul-Wadi who operated on such a large scale that he was able to import 500 camels at a time. Hanji Mahomet Allum was born in Kandahar in Afghanistan in 1858 and emigrated to Australia in 1885. He became famous all over Australia as a great herbalist, healer and teacher of Islam and a great champion of the poor. He died in 1964 in Adelaide at the advanced age of 106.

"Afghans" were treated almost like slaves by the English. Most of them did not come of their free will to Australia. When they came, they were not allowed to bring their womenfolk, a fact which prevented the growth of viable Muslim communities. They were treated with disdain and were made free targets of the Christian prozelytization. The "Afghans" faced the problem of marriage in many ways. Some of them refused to get married with non-Muslim women; others tried to convert white or aboriginal women and marry them in Islamic manner; still others married any women they met without bothering much about the future of their offspring. The result is that today there are about 15,000 persons of part Afghan origin who can be divided into about 3,000 persons of white mothers, and 12,000 of aboriginal mothers. About 80% of these Afghans are at present Christian whereas the remaining 20% identify themselves vaguely as Muslims. Notwithstanding their formal profession of Christianity, they all have strong feeling of common Afghan bond. All of them feel completely alienated and many of them are returning to Islam and regaining their lost Islamic identity and dignity.

Since 1860 C.E. the waters from Broome in West Australia, through Darwin in the Northern Territory to Thursday Island in Queensland produced up to 80 percent of the world's pearls. Many of the divers were Muslims from Indonesia and Malaysia. Some of them remained Muslims and formed communities. Although they were allowed to bring their wives, their descendants are in an advanced stage of assimilation and only a fraction of them still identifies itself as Muslim. The same could be said about the indentured laborers brought from the Indonesian islands and India to the northern shores of Queensland from Rockhampton to Cairns for the sugar cane fields, around the same period as the pearl divers. However, there is among them a perceptible desire to return to Islam today.

After the World War I a new wave of Muslims reached Australia. They were Albanians, who came with other European immigrants without being noticed as being of the Muslim faith by the then fanatic authorities. Most of the immigrants were men who became active in farming: tobacco in North Queensland and fruits in Victoria. Although they settled down in Australia yet they generally abstained from marrying locally. A great many of them went back in the 1930's to their homelands in Eastern Europe (Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania) and returned to Australia with Muslim wives.

After the World War II, more Albanians immigrated to Australia, especially from Greece and Yugoslavia. Bosniac Muslims arrived also from Yugoslavia and became very active in Islamic organizational efforts in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. Also Turkish Cypriots came in large numbers to Sydney and Melbourne between 1948 and 1952.

Since 1968, a large number of Muslims, especially from Turkey and Lebanon, have been admitted to Australia as factory workers. Many Muslims also arrived from Egypt, Syria, Fiji, India and Pakistan. Some Muslims came from China, Burma and the Soviet Union as well. Many Australian converts joined this multinational Muslim community.

In 1982 the number of Muslims in Australia could be estimated at 170,000 persons. Among whom about 90,000 Muslims live in New South Wales, 60,000 Muslims live in Victoria and the remaining 20,000 Muslims in the other states including Christmas Island and Cocos. Muslims are in a majority in these islands, and many of them are being resettled in West Australia. In terms of origin, about 70,000 Muslims are Turkish (from Turkey, Cyprus and Greece); 20,000 are Arab (Lebanon, Egypt and Syria); 25,000 are Albanians and Yugoslavs, and the remaining 25,000 are of various origins but mainly Malay and Afghan-Indians (India, Pakistan, Fiji, etc.).

Most Muslims are workers in factories; some are farmers; others are professionals and university teachers. There are about 500 Muslim students in the universities and several hundred Muslims in the diplomatic corps in Canberra, the capital of the country.

3- Australia: Local Organization

The effective history of Islamic presence in Australia could be dated from 1860, and thus has lasted about 120 years. During this period the Muslims tried to organize themselves twice. The first effort at organization started in the 1880's and was a complete failure by 1948. The second effort started in 1948 and is continuing successfully, increasing in depth, scope and trying to absorb the elements of the first organization.

The first organization was due mainly to the Afghan immigrants who had to live in small outback communities, usually on one edge of the towns. These "Ghan" towns consisted of an irregular collection of corrugated iron huts, cottages and sheds. Each of these communities had a mosque which was the focal point of the "Ghan" town. The organization of the community was "ritualistic" rather than "idealistic". In other words, the oldest or most knowledgeable man acted as the Imām and led the religious activity of the community. Little attention was paid to the education of the offspring. The mosque itself was a place of worship and was often a simple hut, sometimes a stone-built hall for prayers, but could in no way act as a community center. Most often, the Imām acted as trustee with full powers over the mosque, but besides the mosque as such there was no organization of the community. The leaders of the community were harsh and rigid, unable to implant Islam in the new environment. They were also quick to expel from the community any one who violated the ethics of the community. For instance,

if a son indulged in drinking or dating, he was brought by the father to the mosque and disowned publicly. Given the fact that all the offsprings of the immigrants were of mixed parentage, there was no way for such an organization to survive after the first generation.

The core of the "Ghan" Muslim community was South Australia with "Ghan" towns in such places as Oodnatta, Marree, Hergott Springs, Farina, Tarcoola and Port Augusta. Muslims built large mosques in Oodnatta, Marree, Farina, and especially Adelaide, the capital of South Australia. The mosque of Adelaide was among the biggest Afghan mosques. It was built under the leadership of Hanji Mulla Morbin. The land was bought in 1889 and the mosque was built in 1891. From South Australia, the Muslims moved to the other states where they established communities in New South Wales at Broken Hill, Wilcannia, and Bourke. The mosque in Broken Hill was the largest in New South Wales. In Queensland, "Afghan" communities were established in Cloncurry, Duchess, and Brisbane the capital of the state. The Brisbane mosque, the largest in Queensland, was built in 1907 with the efforts of Abdul Ghiath and Mohammed Hasan. West Australia became the most important state of Muslim settlement with Muslim communities in Marble Bar, Meekatharra, Wiluna, Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie and Perth. The most important mosques were in Coolgardie, a mining town, and Perth, the capital of the state. Construction of the Perth mosque started in 1895 and lasted until 1905 after great efforts by the community.

The Malay community was even less organized. Its main centers were Mackay, Thursday Island (both in Queensland), and Broome (in West Australia). An elderly man was chosen as Imām in each of these communities, but his only function was to lead the prayers to whoever cared to pray. Only the Muslims of Broome succeeded in building a mosque by the end of the last century.

By 1948, the entire Muslim organizational set-up was in shambles and the Muslims appeared a dying breed in Australia. The Perth Mosque became a prey to the Qadiani menace. The Broome Mosque was never rebuilt after its bombardment by the Japanese during World War II, and the Coolgarlie Mosque became a museum. In South Australia, newspaper headings read "Only Two Worship in Mosque Now" or "Last But One" for Adelaide; the mosques of ~~Go~~ Gonnatta and Farina were demolished, and the mosque of Marree, was sold in 1951 for 50 pounds. Elsewhere, the mosque of Broken Hill became a museum and the mosque of Brisbane was on the verge of being abandoned. By that time those who prayed in Australia could be counted by dozens and those who identified as Muslims were to be counted by hundreds only.

It is at about that time that an Islamic renaissance initiated by the new immigrants, took place providing the initial impulse to the present organizational effort. This effort concentrated more on the community, than on buildings; it is based on elections and choice of leaders following the Islamic shūrā principle; it takes greater account of the diversity of the Muslim community and

the realities of Australia. It tries to strike roots in the country and thus has more chance of survival.

The first among the newcomers to organize were the Turkish Cypriots in Melbourne in 1948 and in Sydney in 1952. But their organization was purely along national lines and they established clubs rather than mosques. It is only recently that they have tried to reconvert their national organizations into Islamic ones. Then the Muslim communities of Brisbane and Adelaide became organized in 1954 and 1955 respectively along new lines and were able to retrieve the mosques in both these cities, which they renovated later. Then, the Albanians established Albanian Muslim Societies in Mareeba, Queensland (1953); Shepparton, Victoria (1956); and Melbourne, Victoria (1961). They later built mosques in all the three locations. Multi-national Muslim organizations were established in 1957 in both Sydney and Melbourne. These organizations built their mosques in the late 1970's. The Muslim Arab communities organized in Sydney (1960) and a multi-national Muslim organization was established in Wollongong (NSW) in 1968. The 1970's saw the greatest increase in the number of organized Muslim communities with 19 new communities being organized for the first time. This number includes Turkish, Yugoslav and Malay communities as well as old communities which reorganized Islamically and were joining hands in the great Islamic revival, namely the Afghans of Alice Springs (N.T.) and the Malays of Mackay (Qld). There are at present 58 organized Muslim communities in Australia; they were 1 in 1950; 4 in 1955; 9 in 1960; 11 in 1965; 13 in 1970; 25 in 1975; 32 in 1978 and 58 in 1983. The distribution

of Muslim organizations and mosques is shown in Table 9.2 and the locations are shown in the map of Fig. 9.1 :

Table 9.2: Muslim organizations and Mosques in the different states of Australia in 1982

State or Territory	Number of Mosques	Number of Centers	Number of Muslim Organizations
New South Wales	7	10	17
Victoria	7	10	17
Christmas & Cocos	1	0	1
Queensland	3	4	7
Northern Territory	1	2	3
West Australia	3	5	8
South Australia	1	2	3
Tasmania	0	1	1
ACT	1	0	1
Total	24	34	58

4- Australia: National Organization

Until the early 1960's, the Muslims of Australia never formed any national body to unite them, coordinate their affairs and amalgamate them into one dynamic Australian Muslim community. An incident occurred in 1961, which under normal circumstances would have been considered just one in a series of humiliations to which the Muslims were subjected

until then in Australia. This incident however, pushed the Muslims into more unity. It concerns Imām Ahmad Skaka, the religious leader of the Muslim community of Adelaide, who is a man of great integrity. He immigrated from Yugoslavia in 1950, earned his living as an electrician, and worked day and night to organize the Muslim community. He was instrumental in establishing the South Australia Islamic Society and in retrieving the Adelaide Mosque for the Muslim community. In 1961, he requested from the Australian Federal government to be marriage celebrant for the Muslims, the way priests were for the Christians. The federal government refused and the then Chief Justice declared: "I will never allow any Muslim religious person to marry any one in this country". This was a terrible blow of humiliation to the newly immigrant Muslim community, since the old immigration had, by that time, completely disintegrated. There were in Australia by that time about 10 organized Muslim communities in the following cities: Adelaide, Melbourne, Shapperton, Sydney, Brisbane and Mareeba. An intense activity followed between these communities culminating in April 1963 in a general meeting of all representatives of the Muslim organizations. During this meeting the Australian Federation of Islamic Societies (AFIS) was established.

The first act of AFIS was to obtain for the Australian Muslim community the right to have its marriage celebrants denied to the Muslim community of Adelaide. In the beginning, AFIS had a very simple constitution making it more or less as a coordinating body. In 1968, the

constitution was found inadequate and was changed to be on the pattern of the constitution of the Fiji Muslim League, the body which represents the Muslims of neighboring Fiji Islands. However, such a constitution was of the centralized type, making all societies as branches. It was good for Fiji with its small size and homogenous Muslim population. But it could not be effectively implemented in Australia which is the size of a continent and has an extremely diversified Muslim population. In the 1968 constitution the Executive Committee of AFIS was elected every two years by a general assembly consisting of official representatives of member societies. These meetings were held every time in a different city of Australia. The general assembly elected the president and the vice-president, and the president chose five members to form the committee. In practice, the executive committee was always from Melbourne. The first president was Dr. 'Abdul-Khāliq Kazi (University Professor, originally from Pakistan) 1963-1967; he was followed by Mr. Ibrahim Dallal (journalist, originally from Cyprus) 1967-1971; and Mr. Haset Sali (lawyer, Australian born of Albanian parents) 1971-1973.

After the visit to Australia of this author sent by the late King Faisal of Saudi Arabia in November 1974, the Muslims of Australia decided to reorganize their national organizational body on the principles explained in Chapter I of this book. Thus, the Islamic organizations of Australia started an effort of reorganization based on the following steps:

- a- gradual elimination of Islamic societies based on ethnic, national, racial or sectarian ground,
- b- establishment of Islamic societies on purely geographical basis in each state of Australia (the society may use the language of the majority of Muslims present in that geographical area);
- c- the local Islamic societies in each state would form an Islamic Council which would represent the entire Muslim population in that state;
- d- the state Islamic Councils would form a Federation of Islamic Councils on the national level.

Intensive work during all of 1975 transformed completely the Australian Federation of Islamic Societies (AFIS) in the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC) based on the above three-tier system. Thus, each state and territory of Australia (9 in total) forms now an Islamic Council and each council is made up by a certain number of societies. The status of foreign Muslim students in Australian universities was considered both special and of great importance. Thus, all Muslim student chapters formed the Australian Federation of Muslim Students Associations (AFMSA) which became the tenth Islamic Council of AFIC. The local societies, state councils and AFIC all have constitutions delineating the duties of each. All are based on the free election of office bearers, by the individuals to the local societies; by the local societies for the

state council; and by the state councils for the Executive Committee of AFIC. The elected representatives of all the member societies form the Federal Congress whose members meet once a year and decide on the general policy of AFIC. The president and vice-president of AFIC are elected every two years by the 10 Islamic councils. The President nominates the other members of the executive committee. Neither the president nor the vice-president could be re-elected more than once. The first president of AFIC under this new system was Dr. Abdul-Khaliq Kazi, 1973-1976; followed by Dr. Qazi Ashfaq Ahmad (University Professor, originally from India) 1976-1978; and Dr. Mohammed-Ali Wang (Medical Doctor, originally from China) 1978 - 1982; and Mr. Ibrahim Atallah (Secondary School Teacher, originally from Egypt) 1982-1984; and Dr. El-Erian (University Professor, originally from Egypt) since 1984.

Under this new system AFIC embarked on a gigantic task of securing recognition for the Muslims in Australia by the Australian authorities on an equal footing with all other religious bodies; securing recognition for the Australian Muslim community from the Muslim world as a community which is both Australian and Muslim; planning for financial support necessary for the running of Islamic institutions; securing Imāms for all organized Muslim communities; organizing un-organized Muslim groups (in this respect Afghan and Malay descendants of the first immigration are being brought back to the fold); and securing at a range as short as possible Islamic education for all Muslim children in Australia.

The task that AFIC set before itself is enormous. It has been moving from success to success for the last four years. On its success

in securing Islamic education for the Muslim children and Imāms for all Muslim communities depends the survival of the second phase of the organization of the Muslim community and indeed the survival of Islam itself in Australia.

5- Fiji: Formation of a Community

Fiji is an independent state, a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. It is located 2700 km on the north-east of Sydney (Australia) and at 1800 km north of Auckland (New Zealand). It is made up of 844 islands of which 106 are inhabited. The total area of the state is 18,272 km² and the total population in 1982 was 650,000 persons. The two largest islands, Viti Levu (10,388 km²) and Vanua Levu (5,535 km²), make up 87% of the total area of the state and are the home of 90% of its population.

Tasman discovered the islands for the Europeans in 1643 and Captain Cook visited them in 1774. As soon as Britain conquered the islands in 1874, it introduced sugar cane culture and with it indentured labor from India. This indentured labor was brought regularly from 1879 to 1916, so much so that by 1921, the people of Indian origin made up 38.5% of the total population of the islands. Because of a higher natural increase among the Indian population compared to the native Fijian population, the Indian percentage kept increasing until it reached a maximum of 50.8% in 1970 to fall to

49.8% in the census of 1976 . This fall is due to Indian emigration which became important since 1960. Most of the Fijians have been Christianized by a multitude of Protestant denominations whereas the majority of the Indians are Hindus.

Fiji became independent on October 10, 1970. Its constitution protects the different "races". Elections are carried out by "racial groups" in such a way as the House of Representatives is composed of 22 Fijian Natives, 22 Fijians of Indian origin and 8 representatives of citizens of various other origins (6% of the total population). There is also a senate of 22 appointed members. There are two major political parties, the ruling Alliance Party made up mainly of native Fijians and the opposition National Federation Party made up mainly of those who are of Indian origin.

Muslims arrived in Fiji with the Indians as part of an organized migration of indentured laborers to work in the sugar cane plantations. The first Muslims arrived in 1879, and the program was discontinued in 1916. The laborers were brought on five-year contracts with the option of settling permanently in the new land. The total number of Indians brought under this program was 62,837 persons. Of these 53,598 were Hindus (85.3%), 9,172 were Muslims (14.6%), and just a handful were Christians. Of the immigrants nearly two-thirds opted for staying on after the end of their contract, or about 41,000 persons. But among the Muslims only 47% of the immigrants remained

(4,350 persons) the others went back to India. The British allowed the recruiting of 40 women for every 100 men, i.e. about 28.5% of the total immigrants were women.

These Muslims who remained in Fiji hailed from different parts of India, but mostly from the North including some of Afghan origin. The greatest majority was of the Hanafī school, a minority from the south of India was of the Shāfi'ī school and some families were of the Ja'farī school. Those Muslims spoke many Indian languages including Urdu.

The first major problem which faced those who opted to stay is to find wives and raise families. Since among the 4,350 persons who remained only about 1,240 were women (28.5%) the problem was a serious one. The Muslims solved this problem by converting Hindu and local Fijian women to Islam and marrying them. Children of these marriages remained Muslim. This explains the tremendous growth rate of the Muslim population from the original 4,350 persons to 6,435 in 1921 or 4.1% of the total population, to 45,000 Muslims in 1976 or 7.7% of the total population. The Muslim population in 1982 could be estimated at 50,000. Table 9.2 shows the increase in the Muslim population in the different official censuses since 1921, the percentage of women in the Muslim population, the percentage of the Indian population, and the percentage of Muslims in the total population of Fiji.

Table 9.2: Evolution of the Muslim Population in Fiji

Year	Total Number of Muslims	Female percentage in the Muslim population	Muslim percentage in the Indian population	Muslim percentage in the Total population
1879	0	-	-	-
1921	6,435	37.9	10.6	4.1
1936	11,290	43.3	13.3	5.7
1946	16,932	46.3	14.1	6.5
1956	25,394	48.8	15.0	7.3
1966	37,116	49.6	15.4	7.8
1976	45,247	49.8	15.4	7.7

The Muslim percentage in the total population increased from nil in 1879, to 4.1% in 1921 to a maximum of about 7.9% in 1970. In the census of 1976, this percentage fell back to 7.7%. This fall in the increase of the Muslim population compared to the total population is due to Muslim emigration which became important since 1966. Indeed, about 8,000 Muslims emigrated from Fiji during the last 20 years, mainly to Australia, New Zealand, Canada (British Columbia); the United States (California) and Britain. With their offspring, they form in these countries a diaspora of no less than 16,000 persons. This emigration is affecting the Hindus as well, but it seems that proportionally a larger number of Muslims emigrates than do the Hindus. Indeed, out of an estimated total of 14,000 Indian emigrants from Fiji, there were about 6,000 Hindus only. This Muslim emigration, although enormous compared to the

number of Muslims, is offset by a high birth rate which is, even in 1976, the reason for a high proportion of young in the Muslim population, of which 41% were under the age of 15. Recently, increase of the Muslim population is contributed to by conversion of Fijian natives as well.

At present, most of the Muslims of Fiji are farmers and have their own sugar cane plantations. Some of them became businessmen in the towns, or active in the professions. All the immigrant elements have fused to form a Fijian Muslim population of the Hanafī school and Urdu language but distinctly different from the Pakistani or Indian Muslims. A small minority is of the Shāfi'ī school.

6- Fiji: Organization

Most of the immigrant Muslims were extremely poor and could not read or write. Like other Indians on arrival in Fiji, they were subjected to a lifeless system, in which human values always mattered less than the drive for production. To this should be added the lack of women leading to the breakdown of moral values; added also the lack of privacy, non-recognition of Islamic marriages, long hours of work, poor and inadequate diet, harsh penal regulations for absenteeism. All contributed to a life of virtual slavery and to a complete breakdown of the social system.

In spite of all these circumstances, leaders appeared in the Muslim community who were more educated and more dedicated. The Muslims of Suva were the first to organize themselves around 1910, followed by

those of Lautoka; then Labasa in Vanua Levu, then Ba, and Nausori. Each of these local Islamic societies planned to build their mosques, the first mosques being simple wooden structures established around 1922 in Vitogo, Nausori, and Tavua. It should be noted, however, that the Fiji Sugar Milling Company allowed the erection of a wood and iron mosque in 1900 on land they leased to their Muslim workers at Navua. Eventually, by 1930 all Muslim groups were organized locally and established their mosques and Qur'anic schools.

Already in 1915 the Muslims were trying to organize themselves at the level of all the islands by establishing such associations as Anjuman-e-Hidayat Islam in 1915, Anjuman Ishaat-e-Islam in 1916 and Anjuman-e-Islam in 1919. Although these organizations tried to cater for the Muslim needs toward coordination and unity, they remained local in their activity and competitive with each other in uniting the Muslims.

The Fiji Muslim League came into existence in 1926 and from the start took positive steps to establish an elected central body to coordinate the functions of the various local societies. The Fiji Muslim League was established by the Suva Islamic Society followed quickly by the Islamic Societies of Lautoka, Labasa, Ba, and Nausori. By 1944, the Fiji Muslim League consolidated itself as the representative body of the Muslims of Fiji. Its constitution was rewritten to cater for the new reality. The effort of organization was led by

two brothers Sayyid Hasan and Hasan Hasan as well as Mawlavi Taj Mohammed Khan. The first president of the Fiji Muslim League under this system was Mr. Mirza Salim Khan. A new constitution was adopted again in 1957 in which the local organizations became Branch Leagues, thus leading to a more centralized system than that of Australia. The present president is Senator S.M.K. Sherani from Suva. The League has at present 19 branches as shown in Table 9.3 and Figure 9.2. All the properties of the branches are properties of the League.

Table 9.3 : Schools, League Branches and Mosques in Fiji in 1978.

Division	Number of League branches	Number of Mosques	Number of primary schools	Number of secondary schools	Total of students
Central	5	6	3	2	1,600
Western	13	15	11	3	4,810
Northern	1	4	2	1	1,000
Eastern	0	1	0	0	0
Total	19	26	16	6	7,410

From the beginning the Fiji Muslim League started a program of construction of modern schools for Muslim children. The first Muslim primary school was established in 1948 at Lautoka. The first Muslim secondary school was established later in the same town. At the present, the Fiji Muslim League manages 16 primary and 6 secondary schools and is

planning on more schools. Indeed, of the total 7,410 pupils in the Muslim schools, about 6,200 are Muslim children. This is about only half of the Muslim children of schoolable age, the other half goes to non-Muslim schools and the Fiji Muslim League plans to offer schooling to all Muslim children.

The Fiji Muslim League (FML) is also struggling very hard to finance all Islamic activities. In its education program it receives some support from the state; otherwise all its activities are financed by donations from the community. These, however, are not sufficient in view of the League's program of expansion. The other aim of the Fiji Muslim League is to arrange for qualified Imāms in all communities. For this purpose Fiji students were sent to universities in Muslim countries and qualified Imāms were brought from abroad, especially from India. The FML is establishing an Imām school in the country. It also established the following institutions for treating the different affairs of the community: 1) board of Islamic affairs; 2) board of finance and development; 3) board of education; 4) Islamic book service; 5) women's section; 6) young women's section; 7) young men section; 8) Muslim sports association; 9) family and social welfare; and 10) The Muslim Voice, official journal of the FML.

One political problem still nags the Muslim community: it is its present identification as a minority within the Indian "race". Muslims say that they are not a race, that they are a Muslim community of Fiji of diversified ethnic origins. Some of the Muslims request strongly

their recognition as a different group from both the Hindus and the Fijian Christians.

Although the Muslims of Fiji are on an average poorer than the rest of the population, their unity brought them recognition and respect. Muslims are in the government and in the House of Representatives and the Prophet's Birthday is a national holiday in Fiji.

The Qadianis have been trying continually to infiltrate among the Muslims since the 1920's. The number of Qadianis is about 3,000 at present. To counteract this danger the FML extended for the first time its contact with the Muslim world in 1973. Indeed, up to then, the only contact with other Muslims was with those of India and Pakistan. These contacts have reached now most of Muslim countries as well as neighboring Muslim minorities in Australia, New Zealand, and New Caledonia.

7- New Zealand

New Zealand was discovered by Tasman for the Europeans in 1642. It was conquered by the British in 1840 C.E. It became then a land of British immigration to the point that the original population has been reduced to a mere 8.4% of the total population of 3,130,000 persons in 1982. The country became a fully independent state in 1947, member of the British Commonwealth of nations. The total area of the country is 268,675 km² made up of two main islands and a number of smaller ones.

The first Muslim immigrants to New Zealand were Gujarati traders who came on the turn of the century to Auckland, the largest city in the country. Only males came in the beginning and worked as shopkeepers. They later brought their families and established the nucleus of a Muslim community. The most prominent descendants of these first Muslim arrivals are the members of the Bhikoo family who have been active in Islamic organization. By 1950, a new stream of Muslim immigrants was added to the original one. It is mainly made up by Muslims from neighboring Fiji, but also of Muslims from Albania and Yugoslavia. Most of them settled in Auckland and its area. More recently the capital Wellington has begun to attract some Muslim immigrants, especially the educated and the professional ones.

At present (1982) the Muslim population of New Zealand could be estimated at most at 12,000 persons, or 0.4% of the total population. However, the census figures are much lower and go as low as the fourth of this figure. The greatest number of Muslims are descendants of the first Gujarati immigrants, but more and more Muslims are immigrating from Fiji. There are also Muslims from Albania and Yugoslavia and a smaller number of Muslims from Turkey, Lebanon and Malaysia. A growing number of Muslims (several hundreds) are converts of European origin (Kiwis). Most of the Muslims are located in the North Island, in Wellington, but especially in Auckland. They are in their majority unskilled or semi-skilled laborers, or small businessmen. More recently, Muslim professionals immigrated in significant numbers to New Zealand.

It was in 1952, that the Muslims of New Zealand decided to organize formally for the first time establishing New Zealand Muslim Association in Auckland. It gathered for many years the Muslim community, acquired a building where Muslims hold their congregational prayers and hired Imams to come and teach the community. It has also been active in holding week-end classes for children and Islamic education classes for adults. The association purchased a large piece of land on which it plans to build a mosque and Islamic center. In 1970, a group of Muslims broke away and formed a new association under the name of anjuman Himayat-e-Islam. In May 1976, Dr. Abdullah Al-Zayid, of Muhammad -Ibn-Sa'ud University in Riyadh came to Auckland and persuaded the different groups to unite under the New Zealand Muslim Association. Mr. Abdul-Samad Bhikoo was elected president. The present president is Mr. Abdul-Rasheed, an able lawyer, originally from Fiji. Since the beginning of 1979, the Association went ahead with the construction of its mosque in the Ponsonby area of Auckland where Muslims first settled on the turn of this century, which is now the first and largest mosque in New Zealand.

In was in 1964^{what} the second Muslim community was organized in New Zealand, the Muslim community of Wellington. The name of the organization is the International Muslim Association of New Zealand. The association is the center of all the religious activities of the Muslim community in Wellington. It also brings out a small cyclostyled newsletter called "IMAN". The association was established under the leadership of Indonesian and Malaysian students. For many years it

was under the able leadership of late Dr. Abdul-Majid Khan, a professor of History in Victoria University, originally from Bangladesh. After the death of Dr. Khan in 1976, the interference of a Muslim embassy went on such a large scale that it convinced the community to elect a second secretary in the consulate of that embassy as president of the association. He was able to do so by exploiting the naivety of the community by claiming that he would be able to secure them financial support for their mosque project. The case of the Muslim community of Wellington is thus an example to be found in many capital cities of the unhealthy interference on the part of some Muslim embassies in the affairs of the Muslim communities motivated by considerations other than the welfare of the local Muslims. It is only recently that the community is coming out of this tragic situation and trying to put its activities on the right track. In 1975, the Association established a cemetery for the Muslim community, and in December 1978 it acquired a building in the Newton part of Wellington which it uses as its Islamic center.

In 1970, the Muslims in Palmerstan North in the Northern Island organized themselves into Manawatu Muslim Association with Haji Mohammed Sharief as the first president. The Muslims in this city are still meeting in homes for their religious activity, but they are planning to acquire a center as well.

In 1980, the Waikato-Bay of Plenty Muslim Association was established in Hamilton where about 100 Muslims live.

Muslim presence in this city was since the 1960's. But they started their regular prayers only in 1975. The Association meets at present in homes and their main project is to establish an Islamic centre.

Immigration to the Southern Island started in 1918 from Gujrat, especially toward Christchurch, where the Ismail family can be considered among the first settlers. However, it was only on September 5, 1976 that the Muslims of Christchurch gathered in a large meeting and formed the "Canterbury Muslim Association" with Mr. Solayman Ismail as its first president. This association is now building its mosque, the second of New Zealand. It is turning out to be the third largest Muslim community in the country.

Other Muslim communities in the South Island are being formed in Dunedin and other towns.

In April 1979, the (later joined by the fifth) organized Muslim communities of New Zealand united under the "Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand" (FIANZ) whose first acting president was Mr. Mazhar Krasthigi, a respected Auckland businessman of Albanian origin. FIANZ developed in an effective coordinating body of all the Muslims of New Zealand.

8 - New Caledonia

New Caledonia is situated between Fiji and Australia. It has a total area of 19,103 km² made up by a large island & several smaller

ones including Ile des Pins. The territory has the status of a French Overseas Territory. Since January 1976, the state affairs are administered by the High Commissioner and the territorial affairs by a Council of Government of 7 elected members. A Territorial Assembly of 35 elected members decides on the important territorial affairs. The territory is represented in the French National Assembly and the Senate by 2 deputies and 2 senators.

The total population of the territory was about 140,000 persons in 1982. Of this total about 38% were European, mainly French, 48% were local people, mainly Melanesian, but also Polynesian and the remaining 14% were of diversified origins including Vietnamese and Indonesians.

New Caledonia was conquered by the French in 1853. By a decree of September 2, 1863, it was designated by the French government as a territory where penal settlements for hard labor could be established. On May 9, 1864 the first boat carrying condemned men arrived at Noumea with 248 prisoners. Meanwhile, France was in the middle of its war of occupation of Algeria. The first Muslims who were sent to l'Ile des Pins, the penal settlement of New Caledonia, were prisoners of war caught after the collapse of the revolt of Bachagha Mokrani in the Kabyle Mountains of Algeria in 1871. The Muslim prisoners arrived

to New Caledonia in 1872, among them were Mokrani, the brother of the Bachagha, and 'Aziz, one of the tribal leaders.

The first Muslims led a difficult life and tried to keep the teachings of their religion alive. They raised goats to avoid eating pork until November 3, 1874 when the administration of the penitentiary decided by special decree to take account of their religious prohibitions for food. Other Muslim freedom fighters followed the first batch of Algerians as France conquered more Muslim lands. These were Moroccans, Tunisians, as well as Somalis. Among the freedom fighters there were also some Muslim condemned men sent to banishment for a multitude of common law crimes. Banishment has been abolished in 1891.

The descendants of these first Muslims eventually emigrated to the main island of New Caledonia where they established communities at Noumea, Bourail and Koumac in the North. They became particularly numerous at Bourail where they settled as farmers. They had their Muslim cemetery at the village of Nessadiou, which has been recently restored due to the efforts of one of the leaders of the Muslims of Bourail, Mr. Abdelkader Bouanane. On the turn of the century a new wave of Muslim immigrants arrived from Indonesia. These Muslims settled all over the Island, but they are especially numerous in Kone. After the 1950's, yet another

wave arrived from the former French colonies, especially Djibouti, due to the growth of the nickel industry. In 1982, the number of Muslims must have reached about 14,000 persons, or 10% of the total population of the island. Some estimate that as many as 40,000 persons are partly of Muslim origin (i.e., 28% of the total population), but most of them do not identify as Muslims any more. Most Muslims are citizens and the majority are financially poor (Figure 9.3).

The Muslims of New Caledonia organized themselves for the first time in January 27, 1970 by establishing the "Association des Arabes et Amis des Arabes de Nouvelle Calédonie et Dependances" (Arab and Arab Friends Association of New Caledonia and Dependencies). To the Muslims of New Caledonia, just as to the Muslims of North Africa the word Arab is synonymous to Muslim. On August 19, 1975 the "Association des Musulmans de Nouvelle Calédonie" (Association of the Muslims of New Caledonia) was established.

The new association started a program of revival of Islamic institutions and practices. Friday prayers were held in homes where Islamic education is also delivered to children. The first president of the association was Mr. Abdou Mohammed Ragheh, other leaders were Mr. Moussa Hadj Bock (of Somali origin) and Mr. Mohammed Salaheddine Belleili (of Algerian origin). The association tried very hard to

establish contact with the rest of the Muslim Ummah. First contact was established after a New Caledonian Muslim delegation visited the Fiji Muslims on October 28, 1978. It obtained financial help from the Fiji Muslim League for the establishment of the first mosque in Noumea. On November 11, 1978, the Muslim Association bought a piece of land in the quarter of Noumea called Vallee des Colons. The land had a total area of about 1170 m² on which two old houses were built. These houses are used as a temporary Islamic center. On January 20, 1979, a Provisional Mosque Committee was established, the most important project of the Muslim community being the establishment of its mosque in Noumea. Later two teachers were sent to the Muslim community, one Tunisian from Rabitah of Mecca and one Cambodian from Da'wah Organisation of Libya.

The Muslims of New Caledonia have been struggling for 18 years now to establish their mosque. They looked for help from French authorities as well as local authorities, but they got nowhere. They even feel that some local authorities in Noumea still live in the old atmosphere of anti-Islamic fanaticism and do not treat them in the same way as they treat other religious bodies.

Unfortunately, their struggle for survival has been greatly weakened by divisions between old immigration and new immigration and Indonesia, Arab and Somali.

9- Other Countries

Of the other territories of the Pacific, Papua New Guinea is the most important and largest entity. Administered by Australia, the territory became an independent state in 1973. It has a total area of 475,300 km² and had a population of 3,390,000 people in 1982. Its proximity with Indonesia, a Muslim country, with which it shares a long border, favored Muslim immigration. However, the Muslims remained small in number and scattered. Their number would not be larger than about 500. In 1978, they established for the first time the Islamic Society of Papua New Guinea (ISPANG) with two branches, one in Lae, and the other in Port Moresby; thus making the Muslim community of Papua New Guinea the fifth after Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and New Caledonia to be organized in the Pacific.

Solomon Islands became an independent state in 1978 after 85 years of British rule. It has an area of 29,785 km² and had a population of 250,000 in 1982. It has a small Muslim population in its capital Honiara. This community is in contact with the Muslims of Papua New Guinea, but it is not yet organized.

Western Samoa became independent in 1962. It has a total area of 2,842 km² and had a population of 165,000 people in 1982. There are several hundred Muslims in the country but no Muslim organization yet.

French Polynesia has the status of an Overseas Territory of France. Its total area is 2,520 km² and its population amounted to 165,000 people in 1982. The most important island in the group is Tahiti. There are several hundred Muslims in this territory but they are not organized.

Vamatu became independent in 1980. It has an area of 14,760 km² and a population of 125,000 persons. They have a small Muslim population which is in contact with the Muslims of Papua New Guinea and those of New Caledonia. There is no Muslim organization yet.

The US Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands has a total area of 1,813 km² made up of several thousands islands and had a population of 120,000 persons in 1982. There are Muslims but they are not organized.

Guam is an unincorporated territory of the US. It has an area of 450 km² and had a population of 110,000 persons in 1982. There are many Muslims including those of Malay origin, but they are not organized.

Tonga Kingdom became independent in 1970. It has an area of 754 km² and a population of 103,000 persons in 1982. Several Tongan became Muslims in Fiji and a community is in the formation stage in this Kingdom.

The other territories of the Pacific had a total population of 112,000 persons in 1982. Few among them are Muslims and no Islamic organization is known to exist among these groups.

10- Conclusions

The Muslim community in the Pacific can be divided in two categories: an old immigration; and a new immigration. The old immigration succeeded in establishing a viable, living and dynamic community in Fiji but failed in Australia. The new immigration brought life and dynamism to the Muslim community of Australia and through Australia to the entire Pacific. Activity designed to retrieve the elements of the old immigration in the Pacific already started and the signs are those of great hope.

Muslims have organized themselves in five states of the Pacific: Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, New Caledonia, and Papua New Guinea. The efforts to organize Muslim communities in at least three other states in the area are also afoot. The most advanced community in terms of organization is that of Fiji under the Fiji Muslim League which should be commended for its efforts, especially in the field of education. Next is the Muslim community of Australia under the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils. But the latter is still beset by poor leadership. If, however, it succeeds in establishing full time Muslim schools, the way Fiji did, and combine every mosque with a community center and primary and secondary schools, then Islam in Australia would have a serious chance of survival and growth.

During the last two years, mutual consultation and help between the five organized communities started. It culminated in 1980 in

the formation of "The Regional Islamic Council for South East Asia and the Pacific" (RISEAP), with headquarters in Malaysia. Such council could help in pooling the experience gathered and support within the region those communities which are in urgent need of help for survival.

The advantage of the new Islamic organizational set-up of the Muslim community of the Pacific is due to the fact that it is based on institutions and not on charismatic leadership of individuals. The result could be lasting and going beyond the short life-span of any single individual. The test of success remains of course the ability of the immigrant generation to pass on smoothly the leadership of the community to the next locally-born generation. This test has been passed in Fiji already.

The freedom of religion applied to Muslims is a new and welcome phenomenon in the Pacific. In the past the Christian religious imperialism left no room for Islamic survival, especially in Australia. At the present this imperialism is a story of the past and Muslims are treated with complete equality with other religious groups. This is especially true of Australia and Fiji but also in the other states of the region with the possible temporary exception of Papua New Guinea, where Muslims had in the beginning difficulty in obtaining their religious rights. The only danger remains from groups within the Muslim community who are ignorant of the true spirit of Islam. There is also a danger to the community from other groups who masquerade as Muslims and who are not. These people take advantage of the ignorance prevalent among Muslims to confuse them. The most prominent among these are

the Qadianis, whose number is around 3,000 in Fiji and several hundreds in Australia. These do much harm to the Muslim community from within for they join it on the pretence of being Muslims, even though they have no love or allegiance to it whatsoever.

Finally, an important body of publications has begun to be put out by the Muslims in order to develop better awareness of their own community and to articulate their viewpoint. Prominent among them are the "Australian Minaret", the official magazine of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, and the "Muslim Voice", the official organ of the Fiji Muslim League. Most community societies and student organizations have their own magazines and news-letters.

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