

Appendix 36:

Religious Uprising in Kaduna State, an Islamic Jihad

TCNN Lecturers, 1987

The Nigerian faculty members of the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Bukuru, are deeply shocked and concerned by the Nigerian Muslims' thirst for a jihad in our beloved country. We hold that jihad is a barbaric and primitive way of propagating the Islamic faith and as such condemn the recent disturbances, caused by some Muslims in Kaduna State and other Northern States, in the strongest possible terms. This is totally unacceptable in the twentieth century and should be resisted by an enlightened government and any well-meaning institution. We observed with dismay the destruction of the churches in Zaria. The sight of the destruction of these churches in Kaduna State forces us directly to the conclusion that this was a calculated jihad against Christians in this country. We observe also with dismay that it is some of the learned (ulama) of Islam in our universities and in our society at large who were the planners and executors of this primitive method of propagating the Islamic faith. And because they are the ones in control of power and the media in the country, they have successfully distorted the facts of the origin and the extent of the brutality inflicted on Christians in parts of the Northern States and particularly in Kaduna State.

We, therefore, along with the Ahmadu Bello University branch of the Academic Staff Union of Universities, condemn "the obviously premeditated and coordinated acts of arson and assault on public peace which took place in Zaria," Kafanchan, Kaduna, Funtua, Katsina and Kano, "by a group claiming to be acting in the interest of Islam" (*Sunday Standard*, 15/3/87). The origin and the extent of the brutal acts show that it was "premeditated and coordinated" and jihadic in nature for the following reasons:

It took place just after the recent honouring of Sheik Abubakar Gumi in Saudi Arabia for his services in promoting Islam in Nigeria.

It occurred on the pretext that Christians should not quote from both Holy Books. Quoting the Koran and the Bible by Abubakar Bello is not a new thing. Muslims and Christians have been openly quoting the two Holy Books in their preaching and nothing of this nature has ever happened. For example, the book written by Dan Mai Saje, entitled *Ka San Gaskiya da Batta Akan Hujja*, and of recent the video films of Ahmed Deedat shown in Kano, Sokoto and other States in the North quoting both books have never provoked such evil acts. And therefore the use of the Holy Koran by Mr. Bello at the College of Education, Kafanchan could not have been the cause for the Muslim students to start a fight by throwing stones at Christian students at their usual worship place. If this was not a calculated plan against Christians, it certainly could not have spread into the town, leading to the loss of lives and the destruction of property.

If the origin of the chaos in Kafanchan was "caused more by protracted ethnic and socio-economic factors than religious differences," as reported in the *New Nigerian* of March 15, 1987, then why did the disturbance start as they so evidently did on religious grounds

with Muslim students rising against Christian students? Rather they would have started between the Hausa settlers who came to Kafanchan in 1810 and the Kafanchan indigenes (who are made up of both Muslims and Christians). But because it was religious or rather jihadist, the police did not come out to protect and stop the killing and destruction either in Kafanchan or in the other cities of Kaduna State.

After visiting and seeing for himself the brutal acts in Kafanchan of Kaduna State, the Governor did not take any precaution to guard against its spread into the capital city and the other cities and towns of the state, nor as he was informed of its spread by the leaders of the various Christian communities and by officers of the Christian Association of Nigeria, Kaduna branch did he take any relevant preventive action. It was only after the Governor was aware that the jihadists had completed their assignments that he ordered the soldiers and the police to go and guard the destroyed properties. The Governor continued to demonstrate his lack of concern by reporting to newsmen at Dodan Barracks that the reports in the dailies about these acts were not correct, even after he had visited Zaria and Funtuwa where the jihadists hit worst. Even though the police did not come out at the time the operation was in process and not until all was completed, the Governor is quoted in *New Nigerian* of 17/8/87 as being “impressed with the performance of the police—considering the inadequate facilities available to the force,” a reaction which to us appears totally inappropriate.

We are yet to be convinced that these evil acts, masterminded by some zealous Muslims, can legitimately be said to have been largely governed by economic and political rather than religious factors, as the Governor of Kaduna State would like the Nigerian people to believe. We are therefore shocked that the Federal Government has accepted the false report from the police and the Kaduna State Government. For President Babangida in his nation-wide broadcast on television and radio the night of 17/3/87 said *In media commentaries on the riots, religious differences have been given as the ostensible reason for this unprecedented outbreak of violence in Kaduna State. However, police investigations have shown that while the fracas in Kafanchan might have been religious in origin, the wanton destruction of lives and property in Kaduna, Zaria, Katsina, Funtua and other places in Kaduna State were carefully masterminded by evil men with sinister motives who saw the incident in Kafanchan as an opportunity to subvert the Federal Military Government and the Nigerian nation.*

We would want to ask whether the Kaduna State police and the Governor of the State are among these “evil men with sinister motives” wanting to subvert the Federal Government and the Nigerian nation. For it is the same police and Governor that failed to take action who have given the President the false account of the brutal acts of the Islamic jihadists. If the President and the Federal Government would like to say that they are not among these “evil men with sinister motives” waging a jihad against Christians in this country, we would like to know why only churches were destroyed and Christian religious leaders killed in the “fracas” except for Kafanchan and Funtua where a few Muslims were also tragically affected. And the ban on religious associations and organizations in higher educational institutions throughout the country constitutes a contradiction in terms and is a clear indication of the specifically religious nature of the troubles.

It is therefore clear that there is a cover up of facts in the reports of the Kaduna State Governor and the police. Similarly cover up is found in Sheik Abubakar Gumi. At the beginning he and the Governor told the nation that these are “Children of Satan,” and yet nothing was done to crack down on these “Children of Satan.” Further cover up of facts is seen in the utterances of the Council of Ulama of Nigeria. This Muslim group agrees that they are Muslims as they claim that they have been indiscriminately arrested and so call for “the immediate release of all innocent Muslims arrested and to stop further arrest and molestation of innocent Muslims” as reported in the *New Nigerian* of 18/3/87. The fact that some Muslims in very important circles in this country including Sheik Gumi are calling for the release of those arrested, is clear indication that these “Children of Satan” must be Islamic zealots wanting to fulfil some of the OIC goals they are anxious about. For our brief history has taught us that since independence, Muslim fanatics have been the cause of any and every religious uprising in this country from one regime to another, resulting previously as well as again now, in the destruction of churches. Yet, President Babangida would like the Nigerian people to believe that “the two major faiths of Christianity and Islam have coexisted in our society for centuries without bitterness and without violence,” as was contained in his broadcast on the night of 17/3/87. And now, when the Islamic fanatics strike again, Muslim leaders and the governments of this country want to divert the attention of the people from the truth by saying that these are “Children of Satan” or evil men with sinister motives seeking to subvert the Federal Government and the Nigerian nation without telling us who they are and at the same time trying to persuade us that the cause is “ethnic and socio-economic.”

We would therefore like to offer the following suggestions if the present administration is now prepared to take the bull by the horns. For we are aware that the administration is “able and willing to deal with all agents of disruption in the society.”

1. The Federal Government should see to it that generalizations are avoided in religious uprisings as this one. For whenever the Maitatsine or Islamic fanatics break out in this country, the governments of this country blame both Muslims and Christians, whereas they know that the Maitatsine are purely Muslims.
2. The Federal Government should hold the Governor and the Police Commissioner of Kaduna State responsible for the jihad against Christians in that State, since they took neither appropriate nor urgent action until the jihadists had completed their assignments. This is the second time there have been disturbances leading to loss of lives and property during their terms of office.
3. The Federal Government should reconsider their policy of placing only Muslims as police commissioners in charge of states, especially in the Northern States of the Federation.
4. The Federal Government should investigate the activities of the Council of Ulama of Nigeria and hold them also responsible for what happened and for calling the arrested jihadists “innocent Muslims.”

The Federal Government should look again into the various Panel Reports on past religious uprisings and consider the inaction that has followed them with a view to ensuring that the next Panel Report is given due attention and appropriate action is taken to prevent further reoccurrences of such evil acts.

The Federal Government should see to it that full compensation is given to the victims.

The Federal Government should no longer allow Muslims to make the streets and roads of our towns, places of worship on Fridays. They are public thoroughfares and not mosques.

The Federal Government should specifically withdraw the ban on Christian associations and organizations in higher educational institutions, for none of them have ever risen against any group of people or the nation, while retaining the ban on Muslim organizations if deemed necessary.

We strongly hold to the view that Nigeria must survive as a nation and as one united people, but not at the expense of some groups of Nigerians and to the glory and enhancement of a few. The Islamic theology that Nigeria is divided into *Dar al Islam* and *Dar al Harb*, both of which should be under the sole control of Muslims, is unacceptable and unimaginable to the people of modern Nigeria.

(Signed)

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On behalf of Nigerian Faculty Members, T.C.N.N. Bukuru, Plateau State, 25/3/87