

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

For some decades now, a new revivalist spirit has bestirred the hearts of the global Muslim *ummah*, the community. It has not bypassed the Nigerian Muslim community. This spirit has created a new self-awareness that is a major key to understanding the issues of this volume and, indeed, of the entire series. That revivalist spirit is, as will be obvious throughout, extremely upbeat, self-affirming, self-righteous and very angry. I undertake to do my very best to explain that spirit accurately and with as much empathy as I can muster. I will try to restrain my critical faculty, especially in this current chapter, and hope that Muslims recognize themselves in the picture about to unfold. I ask my fellow Christians to walk and feel along with them, also subduing their critical attitude and anger for a few moments.

▲ COLONIAL UNDERMINING OF THE MUSLIM FOUNDATION

This chapter presents you with a resume of some major themes in Nigerian Muslim historiography as reconstructed by the revivalist spirit. By reconstruction I do not mean to imply that they have

reconstructed the “facts” of that history so much as the colonial interpretation of these “facts.” I could have said “as rewritten” or even “as corrected.” I do in fact hold that their interpretation of that history is more accurate than the colonial version—more accurate, not fully accurate, for it is marked by exaggeration, and by an imputation of motives that is often off the mark.

It is with deep love, pride, and considerable nostalgia that Nigerian Muslims look upon the early 19th-century “Jihadist Movement”¹ that led to the revivalist empire of Shehu Usman Dan Fodio. That empire became famous as the Sokoto Caliphate. As the politically correct version has it, prior to Dan Fodio’s militant revival campaign, the northern Nigerian Muslim community was in a degenerate state. It was marked by “flagrant abuse of the sharia by the venal scholars as well as by the greedy, oppressive and ignorant nominal Muslim kings. As to the majority of the people, knowledge of the true teachings of Islam was almost non-existent.” “Syncretism was the order of the day and Islam was almost entirely confined to dry rituals. In the social, political and economic spheres, Islam was not allowed to interfere.”² Rulers and religious leaders “conspired to erect a thick wedge between the masses and the true Islamic teachings.... The total picture... was very dark.”³ That is the general Muslim opinion of the pre-Fodio degenerate Muslim climate at the end of the 19th century in Sokoto country.

Shehu Dan Fodio instituted a radical revival that had its effect on every aspect of the culture. Many of the papers in Rashid’s compilation of conference papers can be regarded as a tribute to Shehu’s restoration of a glorious Muslim empire in which the comprehensive justice of sharia was implemented in all its beautiful fullness.

It is not only Muslim scholars in Rashid’s book who have high regard for Dan Fodio. The pages of more recent popular Muslim-oriented newspapers and magazines are replete with references to the Shehu and admiration for him. In the current sharia-focused climate, the history of sharia in Nigeria that is considered relevant

usually starts with Dan Fodio as both the beginning and the standard to which many Muslims, even the rebellious Muslim Students Association, want to return.⁴ Articles with systematic analyses of his thoughts, whether theological or political, appear in some newspapers on a somewhat regular basis. His flag is on display in a museum. There is/was an institute named after him in Katsina, while the University of Sokoto has recently been renamed after him. The Governor of Zamfara State, who started the current campaign for sharia, has more than once been dubbed a modern Dan Fodio, a compliment higher than which is hardly possible.⁵ Dan Fodio was a major watershed in Nigerian Muslim history. His reputation is based on the claim that he restored Islam by establishing a political order according to the sharia. And then the British came in 1900 to spoil it all.

Though Lord Lugard, the founder and first governor of the new British colony of Northern Nigeria, promised not to interfere in the Muslim religion,⁶ he in fact interfered massively by setting into motion a process that deeply undermined Islam and led to serious deterioration of the Muslim spirit. The fact that he himself may not have realized this should not surprise us. He made this promise from his secular perspective that hardly grasps the comprehensive nature of the religion that formed the foundation of the society. He did not realize that when he inaugurated changes in the judicial system, he was in fact seriously interfering in Islam and thus breaking his promise.

The effect was serious. As Rashid puts it:

The dynamic policy towards the administration of Islamic law advocated by Uthman Fodio and others has become stagnant and static under the influence of colonialism and neo-colonialism. The emphasis has shifted from the "social relevance" and "public good" of laws, a hallmark of Maliki jurisprudence, to their so-called "modernisation," which simply means their

conformity to Western legal values. It was indeed mischievous that Islamic law was allowed to be applied only so long as it was not found “repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience...” ...without any regard to the fact that the English statute...could itself be “repugnant...”⁷

The major complaint is that colonialism brought three basic changes to Dan Fodio’s perfect legacy and thereby ruined it. It reduced the scope of the sharia, introduced the foreign and abhorrent repugnancy concept, and inserted the demonic virus of secularism. The details of these changes belong more properly in Volume 4 of this series and will thus be treated there. However, for this volume it is important to realize the strength and depth of the Muslim sense of humiliation and oppression that underlies much of Nigeria’s violence. They have been deprived of the most precious gift of Allah and been forced to submit to a foreign secular system repugnant to them. The process set into motion by Lugard acted like a drug that put the Muslim community off guard and undermined their religion.

The result of an entire century of Western interference and domination is a Muslim society in disarray. Laments Bello Sakkwato, “Muslims are aware of the desire of the West/secular states...to vanquish the Islamic ideology” and of the ways in which they pursue their goals, mostly by “deceit, treachery, dictatorship and many punitive means which include political, economic, etc., against Muslims states and peoples.”⁸ The Nigerian situation is merely a chapter of the international scene. Its sentiments are representative of the wider *ummah*. An Evangelical Press report quotes Hassan Turabi, described as “Sudan’s Islamic leader,” as saying “America incarnates the devil for Muslims. When I say ‘Muslims,’ I mean all the Muslims in the world”—and that from one who obtained his doctorate from a cradle of Western sophistication, the Sorbonne. Another example of the international attitude is Zafar

Bangash, Director of the Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought, who summarizes the common picture many Muslims around the globe have “of the true nature of the US, and why Imam Khomeini memorably called it ‘shaytan-e buzurg’—the great Satan.” He writes:

The title “rogue superpower,” or “shaytan-e buzurg” in Imam Khomeini’s celebrated phrase, commonly used for the US, is not merely political rhetoric; it is the deeply felt and perceptive view of people wounded by America’s crude and arrogant policies. What is even more revealing is that these feelings are not confined to those directly targeted by Uncle Sam; even its European allies have started to feel uneasy about the uncouth behaviour of the overbearing uncle.⁹

Another Evangelical Press report, already back in 1998, warned of Bin Laden’s intentions. He is to have said that “We, with God’s help, call on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded to comply with God’s order to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it.”¹⁰ From there it was not very far to the World Trade Center in New York. And from similar perches in Nigeria it was not very far to Kano, Katsina, Maiduguri, Kaduna, Jos, Kafanchan, Zangon Kataf and all the other Nigerian cities that hosted riots.

Exceptions, it is said, prove the rule. Though the above attitude is nearly universal in Nigeria, R. D. Abubakre of the University of Ilorin does not share it. We will soon see that the common attitude puts colonialism and Christian missions in one basket, but Abubakre insists on a distinction. “Many British officials,” he wrote, “were sympathetic towards the Muslims,” certainly more than “many present Nigerian non-Muslims.” The one and only illustration he adduces is the help they rendered to improve education for Muslims, the details of which follow below in the section on that subject.¹¹

In our post-9/11 world, Westerners have become somewhat familiar with the “satanic view” many Muslims throughout the world have of the West, especially the USA. It is too bad Westerners were not sufficiently aware of it before, since it has a history of several decades, even at grassroots level in Nigeria. Alas, as one I. I. Bello put it in a letter to the editor:

An American citizen is virtually cut from the realities of the world. He is turned into an arrogant speck of dust. He is made to believe that whatever American leadership did...is absolutely right. He is deprived of any standard of moral value or judgement. He is robbed of the spirituality of his humanity and made to believe [that] only his material aspect matters, and by so doing [is] reduced [to] the level of a beast, a mere consumer. These “achievements”—as the helpless American citizen is made to believe—have been accomplished by the endless nights of plotting and planning of the Jewish-controlled American mass media.¹²

For good measure, but to prevent overkill in the main text, I attach Appendix 1, which is a longer and typical Nigerian Muslim statement about America that needs to be understood and taken seriously. Since it was written, Western awareness of this attitude has grown to the point of familiarity due to post-9/11 events, but whether there is any Western awareness of its partial truth and significance remains to be seen. The dominant Western attitude I see is one of smug contempt for radical nonsense that is mostly shrugged off.

I rush to attach two warnings to this appendix. The first is that American missionaries should become more aware of their image as representatives of this “shaitan,” while their Canadian counterparts, whether they like it or not, should realize they are usually tarred with the same brush, because they look and sound the same. Both would do themselves and Nigeria a favour by looking for seri-

ous ways to disassociate themselves clearly from this image. Such disassociation cannot be achieved by a mere change in window dressing: It will require a process of conscientization and a serious shift in emphasis in their message.

The second warning is that the time is past that such statements can be ignored. Ignoring them in the past has led to 9/11. Ignoring them in the future will only generate more terrorism and possibly World War III. Both Nigerian and Western governments, along with their churches and citizens, had better listen to these statements and change their ways with Muslims by taking them seriously and respecting their religion. If these warnings sound like a personal aside from me, your author, they are also expressive of the global Muslim attitude.¹³

▲ SUBVERSION OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES AND INSTITUTIONS

By now it should be clear that, according to Muslim opinion, colonialism not only undermined the legal setup of the sharia, but it “unhinged” or deranged Muslim society as a whole—and not only Muslim society. The entire Nigerian society in all of its cultural aspects is said to have degenerated into unprecedented depths of vice and immorality. Sani A. Ibrahim, holder of a highly prestigious traditional Kano title, towards the end of the era covered by this study, affirmed that “ever since the Europeans entered the country, they have tried to destroy the good culture of the Hausa people. Even after independence, they have continued to send us their literature and movies that promote the evil customs of Europeans among us.”¹⁴

It is an unending litany. As Sakkwato summarizes it, “One cannot fail to recognise that the breakdown of morality, social order, peace and progress in this country was sown since the sacking of the caliphate....”¹⁵ The former military head of state, Muhammadu

Buhari, summed it up: It was from Sokoto “that the colonialists started the encroachment on Islam and our traditions.”¹⁶

This theme forms a common thread through all of Nigerian Muslim social writings ever since the Constituent Assembly of the 70s. It would take very little effort to fill several volumes describing the social, economic, political, health care, sexual, religious, legal/judicial, and moral degredation that Muslims blame on the colonial and post-colonial setups. In this section I describe a number of areas in which Muslims feel they are cheated, oppressed, or manipulated by the Christo-secular government establishment Nigeria inherited from the colonialists. It will be enough to give you a strong flavour of the anger, humiliation and both patience and impatience Muslims have been suffering for some decades.

▲ **DISTORTED GOVERNMENTS** _____

Not only was the Muslim mind deeply distorted by colonialism and its post-colonial local house boys, but so were the structures of society, especially the various governments in the country. The governments and other power structures that God ordained for Muslims have been hijacked by those *kafirai* who have established a satanic network of Christian secularism and international capitalism that is working to destroy the global *ummah* of Allah. Due to all of this, the country is sinking deeper and deeper into a morass of unprecedented immorality that continues to undermine the very foundation of Islam. The entire country is organized by Christians and their agents in the government to oppress and squeeze Islam on all sides.

The signs of this oppression are everywhere. Muslims never imposed their law on their non-Muslim subjects, according to an anonymous writer, an assertion backed up by references to Muslim rule over Jews and over Hindus.¹⁷ But in Nigeria, Christians oppose everything Muslim. Umaru Dembu, an official

of Jama'tul Nasril Islam (JNI) from Zaria, "expressed regret" that Christians had "formed the habit of opposing anything which would be of benefit to Nigeria if it had something to do with the Islamic religion."¹⁸ Even the irenic R. D. Abubakre charges that "there is a tendency among Nigerian non-Muslims to be subjective in their criticism of the institutions of Islam. They criticise *haji* indiscriminately and condemn fasting." If they were to ponder Muslim practices more sympathetically, they would have recognized the parallels in their own religion. When Ahmadu Bello, the famous Sardauna or Sultan of Sokoto, became Vice President of the Muslim World League in the early 1960s, Christians "through sustained mass communication media propaganda gave it severe criticism." This occurred even though they had their own Francis Akanu Ibiam, former Governor of the Eastern Region, who was "a leading member of a World Christian organisation" that is not further identified. Abubakre complains that though "Islam and Christianity have mountainous areas of convergence," they are "least emphasized." Instead, Christians ignore these "mountainous areas of convergence" as if they are mere "mole hills," while they turn points of divergence into mountains.¹⁹ In Nigeria, "it is only Christians that exercise their rights without limitations." Muslims, on the other hand, "are denied their rights...in the name of secularism."²⁰

It is not only secularism that leads to deprivation of Muslim rights. There are also factors like tribalism, jealousy and just plain hatred of Muslims that rear their ugly heads. Sometime in 1987, a large crowd of Bachama people from over 25 villages descended on the Hausa people living in the villages of Tinno and Tito in the Numan Local Government area and killed over 50 of them. In addition, they burnt their houses, crops and machinery. What was not destroyed, they confiscated and took to their own villages. The Bachama are mostly Traditionalists and Christians, Lutherans to be exact.

As Dangogo²¹ tells the story, these Hausa people hailed from various northern states and had lived in the Numan area for some forty to fifty years. They were a law-abiding people, peaceful and industrious. Furthermore, they had always treated the local Bachama people with respect. However, jealousy set in amongst the Bachama when they noticed that these strangers soon became more prosperous than the locals. It was this jealousy that set in motion increasing friction between the two groups. The Yola television station, manned by Bachama, began to put their Hausa “guests” in a bad light, as if they had no right to live there. This, claimed Dangogo, is in stark contrast to what exists in their states of origin where there are Bachama who live there in peace without molestation.

Another early sign of trouble was that the Bachama put a “jiz-yar,”²² or poll tax on the Hausa farmers’ harvest that went to the Bachama chief. Though unhappy, the Hausa people paid the tax. However, that was not the idea of the Bachama, who really intended that the Hausa would leave the area. Then a number of Bachama began to claim the Hausa farms as theirs, even though the Hausa had allegedly received their plots from an earlier chief and had to start from scratch by clearing uninhabited and uncultivated land. Those farms had belonged to no one and no one had to be moved or give up his property. Yet these Bachama said these farms had only been lent to them. Just in the village of Tinno, 650 farms were illegally confiscated. When the village chief of Waduku disagreed with this land grabbing, he was promptly killed along with his brother.

The Hausa took the matter to the Bachama Chief, but he supported his own people and berated the Hausa as an ungrateful people who had arrived in poverty, but now that they had become wealthy they wanted to take over power in the area. When the Hausa then went on to the police who are not local, some of them were arrested for causing trouble. They then went to the local court but, since it was dominated by the Bachama, they received no support. The next step was to contact the chairperson of the local gov-

ernment, Stella Manset, also a Bachama. She “chased them away, calling them ‘strangers’ and asking when they had come to take over local farmland.”²³ Even an appeal to the state government yielded no solution, since the people assigned to report to the government were the same chief and chairperson. However, as the situation deteriorated and violence began to escalate, the state government established a committee to serve them with advice. The committee tendered its report in December, 1987, but by July, 1988, the government had not taken any action. The Hausa people were attacked more and more. At one time a contingent of a mere fifty police had to face a crowd of over 4,000 Bachama who had come with army-type weapons. It was eventually the army that broke it up and restored a kind of normalcy—a familiar story in Nigerian confrontations. As far as Muslims are concerned, we have here a case of a local people in tandem with almost every level of government oppressing a non-indigenous group of Hausa Muslims.

Apart from the article on which the above story is based, I have not succeeded in finding any other references to this fracas except in a letter of February 9, 1989, by Wilson Sabiya to Governor Isah Mohammed of Gongola State that will constitute part of an appendix in Volume Three. That letter suggests that Governor Mohammed sponsored write-ups in the *New Nigerian* against both the Gongola State branch of CAN and Mohammed’s predecessor, Governor David Jang, the Christian governor in charge during this episode. These write-ups alleged that CAN and Jang had collaborated against these Hausa Muslims to kill and maim them.

Probably one of the worst places from the Muslim point of view is Plateau State, sometimes considered the Christian headquarters in the north, a thorn in the northern Muslim flesh. Though it claims a reputation as a peaceful state, it was the scene of two bitter riots in 1994 and in 2001 and since then has moved into a mode of perpetual violence and murder. Muslims accuse this state of discrimination on many fronts.

Among others, there is their infamous *Nigeria Standard (NS)*, a daily owned by the state government and established at least partially to defend itself and its indigenous Christian population against Muslim encroachment. An anonymous writer referred to “the Jos Christian Mafia” and “its crusading voice, the *Nigeria Standard*.”²⁴ One Adamu Ibrahim, in a letter to the editor, accused the paper of a strong bias towards Christians and against Muslims. While it featured a Christian column, he missed its Muslim counterpart. He reminded the editor that it operates on government funds that belong to everybody, a dangerous situation in a state with an equal number of Muslims and Christians. The editor responded by wondering whether Ibrahim reads the Friday edition which has a regular Muslim column.²⁵ It is a minor issue, but Ibrahim’s letter is an indication how ready Muslims are with the charge of discrimination and oppression without even a superficial glance at the facts—but, of course, they are not the only ones.

The Pen took up the Muslim case against Plateau. It reported that the local JNI complained against various offences by *NS*. A particularly gross offence was that insulting anti-Muslim cartoon.²⁶ The report further asserted, “The Standard has been the strongest anti-Islamic and anti-Hausa/Fulani establishment newspaper, even though it is funded by the public treasury. The JNI cited a provocative anti-Islamic article published in the Sunday Standard²⁷ which was carried to intimidate the Muslim populace.”

The same Plateau JNI leader had his complaints about the state’s radio and TV services with their bias against Islam:

Christian programmes are aired daily while the Muslims are given only 30 minutes a week (every Friday)! The state radio, however, allows a five-minute prayer time in the morning for the Muslims, which used to be 15 minutes. He mentioned in particular “700 Club” and “Another Life,” all Christian-sponsored programmes aired daily on television against the wishes of the dominant Muslims in the state. When the Muslims requested for

*the same airtime for their programmes, among which were videotapes of Ahmed Deedat, they were turned down on the grounds that it is a controversial series and that even if a substitute is provided, the air time has already been sold.*²⁸

The accusations against Plateau State with its Christian establishment just go on and on. There is “the growing under-representation of Muslims in the government, irrespective their numerical superiority, at least according to the 1963 census. There are only four Muslims in the state Executive Council. Equally there is an average of only one Muslim permanent secretary out of every five Christians in that position.”²⁹

As if all of this were not enough, *The Pen* accused the people of Plateau of developing anti-Muslim militarism. Under the heading “Jos: Islam under Fire—Muslims Cry out,” Christians in Plateau State are now alleged to be undergoing paramilitary training in various places in preparation for a possible religious war with the Muslims:

...Students and voluntary organisations now freely use dummy guns or locally made ones in training. It has also been noticed that Christian leaders, organisations and institutions are now fortifying their houses and compounds to provide cover and security for their nefarious activities.

*Apart from their daily preparation for an eventual showdown, the Christians are now engaged in offensive open-air preaching in spite of edicts banning open-air preaching.... To further provoke Muslims, they choose the main road leading to the central mosque as their “open-air church.”*³⁰

A controversy arose in Plateau State about mosques. Muslims had built mosques in various public places like markets, taxi parks, hospitals, government buildings and others. Then Christians, in a bid for equal treatment, began demanding plots from the government so they could also build churches there. The late Paul Gindiriri, a wealthy busi-

nessman as well as a colourful, fearless, and aggressive evangelist, built a church in the middle of the Bauchi Motor Park. He started similar moves at the Polo Ground. Faced with this demand, the Christian Military Governor, Lawrence Onoja, announced that all places of worship in public places would be destroyed so as to get rid of the problem. Muslims strongly objected to this solution, for they correctly realized that this measure would only affect them, since Christians normally had neither churches in public places nor any need for them. However, Muslims claimed they do need them since they pray five times a day wherever they are. So, the order to demolish such houses of worship was received by Muslims as another Plateau attempt to destroy Islam. As so often is the case, this issue was immediately placed in a larger contextual framework of other anti-Muslim measures in the state, such as the alleged military training at schools, Christian favourite treatment by Plateau media, and others.³¹

Editorial "Comment" from *The Pen* supported the complaints of *Alkalami*, its Hausa-language twin, forcefully, with ill-concealed threats. It declared the order "the most reckless and dangerous instruction by any governor in this administration." It was merely "a cover-up...to simply phase out towering mosques that abound everywhere in Plateau state." It was "the greatest spectre of doom." That the governor withdrew the order—"shameless eaten up his words"—was none of the Muslims' business. The "power drunk and crisscrossed governor" is warned that Muslims are "now prepared to take up any challenge, irrespective of his perceived power." The Muslims are "law abiding, peace loving and honest to all," but they "can no longer fold their arms." The governor is reminded that, according to the 1963 census, Islam is the majority religion in the state. The editor, "assisting the government to avert an impending holocaust," reminds it "that so many incidents and calamities against the Muslims are still fresh in our memories." Then he lists some: The OIC issue, the "Kafanchan massacre, unguarded provocations by CAN leaders." There were the "recent Numan genocide,

the clandestine moves to stifle *hajj* operations and the indiscriminate arrests and detention without trial of Muslim youths and their leaders.” He further warned that “efforts should be made to right the wrongs already committed and to ensure justice and fairness in the future.³² Clearly, many Muslims do not think of Plateau as so peaceful. They find it an oppressive place, which is, I understand, the main reason the Lafia and surrounding areas broke off to form their own Muslim-dominated state of Nasarawa.

It should be pointed out that the Plateau media are not the only ones accused of anti-Muslim discrimination. It is thought to be the case with most of the nation’s media. The Lagos-based Muslim magazine *Al-Madinah* reported a bizarre “Mother of All Miracles” that was considered so important that, even though the current issue had already been fully prepared, the editor decided to start from scratch to report the event. Reportedly a small snail emerged from the Atlantic Ocean at Lagos’ Bar Beach with an Arabic inscription on its shell affirming Allah and His prophet Muhammad. If humans “turn deaf ears to the true message, forces of nature now take it upon themselves to proclaim the miracle of Islam,” declared the editor. It was *Al-Madinah*’s duty to spread this wonderful news, for “apart from NTA³³ Newslines which grudgingly flashed it, we are not aware of any other coverage in any Nigeria media, print or electronic. We also know why: It is simply because the discovery is a feather in the cap of Islam. *Al-Madinah* knows its duty, though. And it has to do it.”³⁴

So, a strong sense of Muslim media mission in the face of an anti-Muslim media establishment.³⁵

The complaints about the media have continued all along the way, as recent as March, 2003, when Nasiru A. Yahya of Jalingo, the capital of Taraba State, wrote about anti-Muslim discrimination by Taraba Television. It has deteriorated “into a Christian propaganda station.” He explained:

Christian programmes are offered a regular and comprehensive coverage. The most pathetic part is that even on Fridays, the Muslim sermon enjoys only 30 minutes, while after that, a Christian programme or gospel music follows immediately. More so, transmission opens with gospel music and closes with it, instead of prayers.

Furthermore, during any Christian occasion, a comprehensive coverage is broadcast from various Christian churches, while important events concerning Muslims are blacked out. Moreover, after every programme, the interlude is a gospel music, which exhibits the worst form of religious discrimination.

I can state here without any hesitation that the Muslim community in the state constitutes a significant percentage of the state's population, but because of Muslim peace-loving attitude, we don't usually protest the discrimination. Nevertheless, we wouldn't be taken for granted, for it is becoming unpalatable, and action must be taken.

For your information, all that has been spent on the station was supposedly for the benefit of both Muslims and Christians in the state. Because of the alienation and discrimination, the Muslim ummah is losing interest and many have decided not to tune to the station. I call on all those concerned to redress the situation in the interest of peace and unity in the state.³⁶

BETRAYAL BY EMIRATE AND OTHER MUSLIM AUTHORITIES

There is friction also within the Muslim community with one section accusing the other of having been colonized and secularized. Muslim emirs and chiefs are accused of exactly that. Remember that some of the riots in Volume One were directed at least partially against them. One issue that crops up frequently, especially in Fundamentalist writings, is that Muslim emirs and

lower-rank chiefs have betrayed their people. This was alleged to be the case before the Dan Fodio revival³⁷ and once again became the case under colonialism. Emirs and chiefs retained their position and received favours by playing their assigned roles under the colonial policies of indirect rule and secularism.

It is a complaint that comes from all levels of society. One Sadik Jahun from Birnin Kudu sent in advice to MAMSER, a Federal Government agency assigned to wake up the Nigerian population from their slumber and develop themselves. His advice was that the agency should work closely with various estates in the society, such as the press, educational establishments and religious leaders. However, he warned that MAMSER should stay clear of traditional chiefs. "These chiefs have lost their respect with the people and are not interested in arousing them. Politics has separated them from the people." He warned to keep away from them, "unless MAMSER were to try to return them to their former position" by reforming the institution.³⁸

Hassan Gadam, a civil servant in Bauchi State, one who was probably very familiar with all the corruption for which the Nigerian civil service is famous, wrote a lengthy cry to Muslim traditional rulers and authorities in the civil service. He pleaded with them to live up to their Muslim obligations by fulfilling the roles to which Allah had assigned them. Failure to do so would lead to judgement. "I am calling on all of you," he wrote, "who fail to do their work according to the Word of God. You share one common destination: the fire of hell, unless you repent before you die. Thus, you chiefs and high officials, do justice and accord everyone his rights without restrictions."³⁹

His article is full of accusations that these people use their positions to their own advantage, and in the process oppress the people and ignore the laws of God.⁴⁰

Bobbyi, at the time at North Western University in Chicago, reports that the colonial yoke weighed so heavily on them that

highly-placed Muslim rulers seriously discussed resorting to *hijira*. The source is a letter from Muhammadu Buhari, Sarkin Kano Aliyu, to the Waziri of Sokoto, two highly-placed officials in the traditional Muslim setup during the early colonial period. The former suggested seriously that Muslims should resort to the *hijira*, a traditional Muslim concept of fleeing an intolerable situation by moving away. The letter states, "I have found no more useful plan for all Muslims...that we leave this country, all of us...as these dogs have surrounded us and threaten to overcome us."⁴¹ This is a clear indication how deeply the secular colonial order disturbed their spirits. If they were to remain true Muslims, they could have no peace with it.

The flight never materialized, partially because colonialism soon succeeded in undermining the Muslim spirit amongst these rulers. Pragmatism set in. Muslim rulers began to find ways to exploit the new order for their own benefit. During the course of this discussion on *hijira*, Muhammadu Marafa, who was Sultan of Sokoto from 1915-1924, "did not hide his feelings" to his predecessor, Sultan Attahiru. He wrote:

Further, I earnestly beseech you, in God's name, let no one hear a suggestion of our departure from your mouth in this land, as this would mean ruin of our affairs. Our subjects...would certainly throw off their allegiance to us on hearing such news. We should get no assistance from them of what they have promised to us. To sum up, let us sit and wait the issue of the matter...If we remain in our Kingdom, all will be ordered for us by the Great Ordainer.⁴²

A pragmatism had begun to set in that eventually led to a betrayal of the people by the ruling class. Bobboyi explains that "the incorporation of traditional Muslim institutions" into the secular colonial system led to autocracy. The Emir was now accountable to the British, not to the people, as before, or to the sharia. He

and the British Resident would have their huddle and decide “as they saw fit.” “[A] wide gulf developed between the Islamic pretensions of the Emirs and their actual deeds; between the ideals and aspirations of a Muslim society and the temporal exigencies of a secular-colonial arrangement....”⁴³

And so Bashir Isyaku laments that:

*...the vitality of the Sultanate has been eroded since the demise of its founder, and probably one could argue that it has now been brought to its feet. The honour and respect accorded to the institution has since been lost to history as it is now more of a Government mouthpiece to mobilize the Muslims into casting their vote...supporting government programmes like MAMSER, announcing the sighting of specific moons and appealing for calm when there is any civil disorder.... One would...therefore wonder whether it is necessary any longer to lament the plight of such an institution.*⁴⁴

Simultaneous with the unrest about the Sokoto Sultanate, Kano was the scene of the 25th anniversary celebration of the enthronement of its Emir Ado Bayero. The editors of both *The Pen* and its twin *Alkalami* were hardly in the mood for such a celebration; it was rather a time for mourning because of the deterioration of the emirate position.⁴⁵ The *Alkalami* editor reminds the Emir of his heavy responsibilities as “leader of the people in both politics and religion...as well as to serve as an example for the people in the way of truth.” The most important function for the “Emir of Kano and all other Muslim chiefs, is to protect the sharia and to ensure that the freedom of Muslims is not tampered with. In short, they are to enhance the position of both Muslims and their religion.”⁴⁶

However, laments *The Pen*, instead of emirs defending the supremacy of Islam and the welfare of their people, “nothing significant remains of the caliphate and its leaders.” It goes on to complain that Emirs receive their appointments from neo-colonial,

non-Muslim governments, both civilian and military, and are thus forced “to pay homage and allegiance to such regimes.” They “were to mobilise and lead their people to fight for Islam,” but they are reduced to enjoining their people to keep mute, and accepting a leadership that recognises not the Islam that made them, as the supreme religion, and the sharia as the only way of life. It is sad to note that, despite the Muslim demand for his right to sharia, the emirs never at any moment cared to use their influential position to make a strong case in favour of the sharia to the government that recognises them. Secularism and its attendant institutions continue to flourish in the domains of our emirs without a single move to stem its tide by the blue-blooded royalists.

The editor of *Alkalami* expressed himself even stronger. “Every chief must unite his people to show them what will bring them progress and to resist everything to the contrary. Doing so will bring the chief and his people closer together so that they will respect him more highly and he receive an appropriate reward from God.”⁴⁷

The point here is that the stark opposite is in fact the case. The original assignment to these Muslim chiefs from Shehu Dan Fodio himself was to “resist everything that is not according to Islam and to serve as faithful stewards of the Lord God on earth. Thus, they must fight against oppression and against the arrangements of the colonialists and others who try to force pagan law on Muslims.”⁴⁸

The editor of the same issue of *Alkalami* was so over-wrought with the oppressive situation that he wrote two editorials on the subject in one edition, both touching on the same basic concern for Muslim liberation. In the editorial “Sharhin Alkalami,” he bristled, “The insults, humiliation and the provocation to which Muslims have been subjected have long ago reached the limit of toleration.”⁴⁹ The rest of this editorial deals mostly with sharia issues that will be examined more closely in the volume on sharia.

Now, if Muslim emirs and sultans have succumbed to the secular establishment, what could be expected of lesser Muslim mortals?

The impatience of Muslims towards the “system” has been growing at every front. We will see in Chapter Four that El-Zakzaky and the Muslim Students’ Society (MSS) have long been very hostile to most Muslim authorities. The whole place has become one huge tinderbox continuously awaiting the next spark to be set off. It is obvious in the increasing resistance, especially of students to members of the secular establishment, even if they are Muslim.

In fact, it is becoming difficult to identify who is who and who favours what among Muslims. In November, 2002, it is alleged that “thugs assaulted two Islamic preachers,” named Abdulrazaq Aduagba and Sannu Shehu. They were street preaching at midnight (!) in Ilorin. They are described as “outspoken Muslim preachers who have for some time been criticising the current trend of political violence in the state and the recent upgrading of traditional chiefs.”

“Eye-witnesses” reported that “four heavily-built men bumped into the *wa’azi* (sermon) session, and produced Aduagba’s recorded cassette in which he criticised societal lapses, asking him to defend it. When he was trying to justify his thoughts, they rained blows on him, sending him to the floor before they took flight and boarded waiting Mercedes Benz and Toyota cars.”⁵⁰ My guess is that we have a case here of an attack by established Muslim politicians on Fundamentalists who are challenging the status quo, including chieftaincy vested interests, and who thus stand in the tradition of *The Pen* and *Alkalami*. There is currently a dramatic increase in political violence in Nigeria. I would describe this last case as religious/political in nature—a political attack on religious critics of corrupt chiefs and social evils.

SECULARIZED EDUCATION

I begin this section with some hard-hitting salvos against colonial education from Ibrahim K. R. Suleiman. He begins his discussion with a quotation from Edward Wilmot Blyden’s descrip-

tion of the effect of colonial education on Africans. This quote sums it all up so well that I can do no better than to simply re-quote the passage. Blyden, it may surprise readers not familiar with Nigerian history, was a Christian, but one with a difference. He was a West Indian Pan-Africanist, active in West Africa during the closing decades of the 19th century and unusually supportive of Muslims. According to Abubakre, Blyden “was convinced that Muslims are not as bad as they were being projected by the missionaries.” He fought their cause and encouraged Muslims to combine Islamic and Western education.⁵¹ He wrote:

Of a different race, different susceptibility, different bent of character from that of the European, [the Africans] have been trained under influences in many respects adapted only to the Caucasian race. Christian and so-called civilised Negroes live in foreign countries, where they are only passive spectators of the deeds of a foreign race; and where, with other impressions which they receive from without, an element of doubt as to their own capacity. Hence, without the physical or mental aptitude for the enterprises which they are taught to admire and revere, they attempt to copy and imitate them and share the fate of all copyists and imitators. Bound to move on a lower level, they acquire and retain a practical inferiority, transcribing very often the faults, rather than the virtues, of their models.

Besides the result of involuntary impressions, they often receive direct training which is not incompatible with, but destructive of, their self-respect. Having embraced, or at least assented to, these errors and falsehoods about himself, he concludes that his only hope of raising the scale of respectable manhood is to strive after whatever is most unlike himself and alien to his peculiar tastes. And whatever his literary attainments or acquired ability, he fancies that he must grind at the mill which is provided for him, putting in the materials fur-

*nished to his hand, bring no contribution from his own field, and of course, nothing comes out but what is put in it. He never acquires the self-respect or self-reliance of an independent contributor. He is not an independent help, only a subordinate help, so that the European feels that he owes no doubt and moves on in contemptuous indifferences of the Negro, teaching him to condemn himself.*⁵²

Blyden was right on. I myself have used another quote elsewhere to describe the purposes of colonial education by a highly respected advocate of colonialism, whose description, in fact, represented political correctness. H. S. Scott wrote,

*The political conception of the aim of education was that it should make useful citizens...who would be of use to us [British]. The conception was one of exploitation and development for the benefit of...Great Britain—it was to this purpose that such education...was directed.*⁵³

In my own more negative terms, the purpose of education

was to produce zombies, creatures at the behest of the colonial regime, loyal, obedient, ready to do its bidding.... Least of all was it the intention to produce critical and creative graduates who would do independent thinking, for such people could become dangerous to the establishment.

An important part of the educational policy was that of special schools for the sons of chiefs and emirs. Among the consequences, if not the goals, was “the further entrenchment of Muslim chiefs and emirs and other northern aristocrats to whom Balarabe Musa later referred as ‘crooks.’”⁵⁴ The above is a fair summary of the critical Muslim opinion of colonial education among Muslims.

In his hard-hitting article, Ibrahim K. R. Suleiman writes about “the enslavement” of Muslim “minds and intellect, and the

arresting of our development as a people” that was “made possible through an educational system carefully designed to achieve those ends.” He helps us overhear the Waziri of Sokoto, Alhaji Junaidu, addressing authorities at ABU and describing the place as “a cultural transplant whose roots lie in another tradition.” Nigerian universities, he chided, belong “to us only in their location and in their names.” The Nigerian Muslim world “has been put aside”; “African ideas and moral system” are ignored. He wonders how one can “understand or write about the events which have shaped this community without a serious study of the works of Shehu Dan Fodio” and other African Muslim classics.

“It is no wonder,” Suleiman concludes, “that the universities only produce people who are contemptuous of their society.” Their graduates “take pride in imitating the worst elements in Europe and America.” Our scholars contribute to the process of giving the leadership to the West without their consciences being disturbed. He sadly decries that

What our students admire most are the dancehalls of Europe, the bubbling wines, the naked dances and perverted morals of Europe. They lack the will, the courage and the sincerity to make sacrifices for their own people and to offer devotional services for the betterment of the society. These ‘fairest’ elements of the society are also the most corrupt, most greedy, most immoral and shameless of all elements of the Nigerian Society. [Universities] have played a negative, if not destructive, role in our society. Unfitted themselves to our society, they produce students who are also unfit. They have failed naturally to command the respect and confidence of the very society they are to serve.⁵⁵

The MSS is seldom left behind in such discussions. An anonymous writer in their magazine presents us with a full dish of Muslim political correctness on the topic of education. The role of

education “was to produce indigenes with the suitable mental disposition for the success of the colonial venture.” The schools established among Muslims were to “de-Islamise and persuade the Muslim to forget about his Islam and submit to and participate in the...colonial machinery.” They were to ensure that Muslim students “were sufficiently de-Islamised to accept to live under the English law instead of the sharia and to subscribe to Western, Euro-Christian thoughts and ideas.” Thus a class was created of Christians and some Muslims who submitted to the regime. Such a person neither possesses the self confidence to see his worth, nor does he possess the courage to think outside the frame of his European mentor. The West to him represents both the ideal and the ultimate in wisdom and excellence. His yardstick is therefore the West, which he labours day in and day out to approximate. When his master saw no reason in staying any longer—for he can do the job more efficiently—the elite was well prepared to take over the imperialist machinery.

Members of the group neither questioned “the colonial arrangement nor were they asking for any fundamental changes in the status quo. They were, simply put, aspiring to step into the shoes of their white mentors and enjoy the privileges that had until then been the exclusive preserve of the white imperialists.” Colonialists had achieved their goal. They “handed over power to safe hands; hands that will continue to preserve those same exploitative arrangements that they engineered; hands that will not venture to think outside the Western Euro-Christian frame of reference.”

An important part of the educational programme is to allow “only Euro-Christian thoughts and ideas.”

Islamic political thoughts, Islamic law, Islamic sociology, Islamic economics would not be tolerated, not because they don't exist but because they must not even be known to exist. The Muslims...are forced to learn that the only thoughts that

*exist are those of the Western Euro-Christian world. Islam has come to represent a target of hostility, a target to be vilified.*⁵⁶

Another anonymous writer in the same issue of *Radiance*—all writers in this issue are anonymous—writes in the same spirit:

*The nature of the universities of the oppressed countries is designed to produce elites whose learned values are cultivated for the sake of continuing this oppression. There is no value system taught by our universities that is not totally alien to our culture. Thus, at the end, graduates come out as total aliens dedicated to imposing and protecting the oppressive status quo.*⁵⁷

The Pen does not disappoint us in this regard and generously serves us the same fare. Aliyu Dauda accuses “so-called third-world” universities (and by implication Nigerian), of producing “Europeanized natives or some kind of Americanized elite whose ideal in life is to become British, French, American or Russian.” More, he calls their graduates

*social misfits, as typified by the half-educated, quasi-intellec-
tuals and mediocres as well as those suffering from mental
slavery in the Western Euro-American bourgeois capitalist
imperialism, or to that of the Eastern-Euro-Asian Marxist
socialist confusionism.*

He laments with Junaidu that the ideals of ABU, the North’s premier university, “have clearly been perverted, bastardised and confused.” It has become an environment totally alienated from the surrounding culture it is meant to stimulate. “The university’s bogus, artificial, and alien environment and that of the modest and natural larger environment are opposed to each other.”⁵⁸ Dauda further quotes from Junaidu, saying that “a truly universal view of human knowledge does not set out deliberately to eliminate a whole culture from the education of the children of that culture.”

Dauda continues to complain that Nigerian academicians are “haughty and arrogant.”

They are so arrogant and ideologically intoxicated that they condemn everything cherished by the very community which affectionately nurtured them, calling its ideals and social moral values “retrogressive,” “conservative,” “reactionary,” “religious bigotry” and such garbage, as well as advocating for “change,” “progress,” “peace and stability” and similar nonsensical jargon.

In reality, those graduates are merely the “house boys” of both West and East. The universities

have been gravely infected by most of the Western Euro-American societal moral ailments and the Eastern Euro-Asian cancer of atheistic indoctrination and other forms of deculturalization, dereligionization, dewomanization of women, and the dehumanisation of humanity.

In order to achieve these “destructive satanic machinations,” all sorts of “clubs, secret societies, women's ‘liberation’ associations, and Western imperialist-backed organisations and other dubious associations are daily being formed in order to subvert our national ‘flag independence’ and frustrate the revolutionary struggle of the Muslim *Ummah*.”⁵⁹

Abdul-Ghaniyy asserts that the West began to exploit the Muslim world from the 17th century onwards. Through the “dissemination of ideas and intrigues,” colonialism initiated a “period of political decline and moral decadence.” Education was their main tool. “Through this they succeeded in putting Western ideas and intrigues into Islamic books” and created bifurcated or dualistic mindsets that disabled Muslims from a legitimate understanding of Islam.

Thousands of Muslims...fell into this trap. Today, millions of Muslims are ready to practice Islam and do da'wah, but they

are doing it with ignorance; they are overtaken by religious rigidity and stagnation, which is a result of intellectual immaturity, academic inadequacy and finally their philosophical absurdity. They are preaching without understanding Islam. The basis of their knowledge of Islam is through the materials purposely designed to dismantle unity among the Muslims. The Muslim students hate the orientalist, but they are worshipping their works. They want an ideal Islamic state, but they don't give room for its operation. They are always agitating for the sharia, but they are destroying the moral values of sharia. They are fed by the information revealed by the orientalists, who designed a criminal plot for sowing discord among various sects of Islam, yet there is no important measure which has been taken for its elimination.⁶⁰

This emphasis has become standard fare in the literature right through the end of the millennium, even in the newspapers. Ibrahim Umar explains, "You only have to be a product of our educational system to know how well our people are brainwashed and programmed to perceive and treat anything that has to do with Islam with contempt, ridicule and terror."⁶¹

Given their training, those journalists were bound to respond accordingly.

Education in Plateau State has received its share of Muslim ire. *The Pen* writer charges the state with "indirect christianization" in its educational system.

For instance, St. Jones Seminary, a purely Christian theological institution, has now been officially affiliated to the Federal Government-owned University of Jos! Degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded by the seminary are now fully recognised by the university. Worse still, pupils and students of Government-owned primary and post-primary institutions are forced to recite Christian verses and scriptures against their will.

While there are adequate Christian teachers for CRK and Bible studies, there is an average of one Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK) teacher to every two schools. An IRK teacher attends to a minimum of 150 to 187 students in a particular class and period. Attempts by influential Muslims and Islamic organisations to assist have not been recognised.⁶²

We have already learned of *The Pen* accusing the people of Plateau of developing anti-Muslim militarism. The schools are allegedly incorporated in this effort:

Normal physical exercises in schools have now been turned into paramilitary training. Muslims have noticed with great concern rampant campings by Christian schools and voluntary organisations where members undergo such training. Students and voluntary organisations now freely use dummy guns or locally-made ones in training.

It is not only northerners who experience problems with the colonial educational setup. Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, a Muslim organisation in the South-West, published a communique in which it warned against various forms of anti-Muslim discrimination on the part of governments. Insisting on equal treatment for Muslims, the Society demanded that

The Federal Government should see to it that all State Governments provide adequate facilities for the study of Arabic and IRK by Muslims in Secondary Schools as well as adequate facilities to enable Muslims in such schools to say the Jumaat Prayers every week during term time. In residential colleges, Muslim students should be provided facilities to say their daily obligatory prayer.⁶³

Before leaving the educational scene, I need to pre-empt a potential misunderstanding. None of the above means that all these protestors against colonial education oppose genuine modern

academic, scientific, and technological education. Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna or Sultan of Sokoto, one of the fathers and architects of the nation, was a great Muslim evangelist and world leader. In 1963, when he was installed as the first Chancellor of ABU, he warned:

*The needs of modern society are many and varied. It requires specialist, scientific and humanistic knowledge in order to satisfy them, and we must give our men and women necessary education and training in arts, science, engineering, and technology, in order to meet the needs of the society. In a country such as ours, where the number of trained men and women is still small, maximum efficiency and competence is expected of them. These people are the spearhead of our advance into modern nationhood, and it is our duty to keep the spear-point sharp. Let there be no mistake: the challenges of the future will require the highest academic standard of any country in the world.*⁶⁴

This was no obscurantist anti-intellectual perspective. Islam, including revivalist Islam, has high respect for true education. The speech in which the Sardauna was thus quoted was delivered at a conference of northern governors and educationists, mostly Muslims, who were meeting because they were concerned about the poor level of modern education in the northern states. The group included governors who are pushing for the sharia.⁶⁵ Clearly, sharia representing a more wholistic version of Islam, and modern education, are not considered mutually exclusive. Many advocates for the one, crusade for the other.

It is not Western or modern education that Muslims oppose, but the colonial-secular version of it. Musa Adebayo, a commissioner in Ondo State and one-time MSS activist, gave a speech at the opening of a Muslim vocational school, criticizing those who emphasize Western education at the expense of its Islamic counterpart. He favoured Western education. After all, the occasion was

taking place at such an institution. However, such education “without Islamic morals would only produce half-baked scholars.”⁶⁶ Similarly, at another educational event in Kaduna, Chief Imam Abdullahi Bichi warned against one-sided education, “since Islamic religion teaches both aspects of education.”⁶⁷

Muslims continued to plead for both throughout the 90s. No one less than the Shehu of Borno appealed to the Borno government “to uphold traditional Islamic education” for which Borno was famous, but to “blend it with Western education.”⁶⁸ Dr. Karima Ahmed Sani, the senior wife of the Zamfara state governor who initiated the drive for sharia by state governments, pledged that vocational and Western education would be provided to take care of the social problem caused by *almajirai* beggars.⁶⁹ In a statement on a meeting with Professor Sam Ale, Director of the National Mathematical Centre, Governor Yerima claimed that his administration had from its inception “accorded top priority to education, especially mathematics and science.” In fact, the state had “established five well-equipped special science secondary schools,” as well as a college of arts and science. In addition, a scholarship scheme had been established for science students.⁷⁰ In keeping with this Muslim spirit, an ambitious plan is afoot for the Katsina Islamic Varsity that is expected to open soon with 5,000 students to “promote the teaching of science and the development of the Muslim society in the country.”⁷¹

Abubakar Mujahid, a former follower of El-Zakzaky who eventually separated from the latter in protest over the Shi’ite connection, sees Western education as “a necessary tool.” He compared it to a knife that cuts both ways. Technology can both build up and destroy. T.V., for example, can present “uplifting programs for the people.” “It’s a matter of introducing Islamic values,” he declared.⁷²

In fact, historically, Islam has been open to education and knowledge from every source, including ancient Greek philosophy. “Islam,” R. D. Abubakre asserts, “places great emphasis on acquisi-

tion of knowledge. It does not see the store or the dispersion of it as the monopoly of any race or group of people." Learning is exalted "without discrimination against the place or the person from whom it is obtainable." Then he refers to the fact that Islam gratefully absorbed Hellenistic ideas and "adapted Aristotelian philosophy." Thus, though northern Nigerian Islam generally professes great contempt for African Traditional Religion, it acknowledges that historically Islam made grateful use of Greek Pagan philosophy. Even Western education is highly appreciated, but minus its secular component.⁷³

ATTACKS ON THE PILGRIMAGE

Another Muslim institution colonialists have sought to destroy is the *hajj* or annual pilgrimage to Mecca, according to Mukhtar Abubakar. The pilgrimage is a strong unifying factor in Islam in that it is the largest and most regular meeting point of Muslims from all over the world. The colonialists have therefore sought to restrict it by carving up the Muslim world into separate nations, all of which require visas and other forms of control. Even after independence, Nigeria still being the "wetbaby" of the UK and the USA, the *hajj* has been subjected to increasingly restrictive legislation. This began during the 1940s with the West African Pilgrimage Agency that was set up "to control, exploit and eventually inhibit the pilgrimage. Today's *hajj* policy has deviated very little from those principles." People used to be free to go on the pilgrimage, working their way across and staying anywhere along the way as long as they liked. This made it possible for even the poor to perform this important rite. However, the restrictions imposed by each nation has made it all but impossible, except to use the official avenues, that is, the controlled and restricted.⁷⁴ This article is found in an issue of *The Pen* that emphasizes the difficulties of pilgrims due to neglect, corruption, and bad management on the part of various agencies associated with the pilgrimage, and implies that

all those problems are actually part of a continued calculated campaign against the *hajj*. Bad management is not just bad management; defective planes are not merely defective planes. All the problems associated with the *hajj*, all the suffering, they are all part of the effort to undermine and discourage it.

Alleged attempts to undermine the *hajj* continue to plague Muslims. In 1996, Alhaji Abdullahi Aliyu, publicity secretary of the Kaduna State branch of an organisation called Fityanul Islam of Nigeria, publicly appealed to the Federal Government to reduce *hajj* fares, which he described as “outrageous.” High fares, he declared, were “a calculated attempt to deny Muslims their fundamental right to worship. He advised the government “to accord religion high priority.” His courageous—and also calculated?—defense of the people’s interest paid off: He was elected chairman.⁷⁵

Some Muslims tend to look upon the government as the first port of call when there is a problem. The Bauchi State Secretary to the Muslim Pilgrim Board, Alhaji Yusuf Ibrahim, called on the Federal Government to relieve the misery of returning pilgrims whose excess luggage took too long to arrive. The government should make sure that her aviation fleet is up to the challenge and not seek to hand over the responsibility of the *hajj* to private operators.⁷⁶

During Obasanjo’s civilian regime, Muslims once again feel threatened. The Federal Government, according to reports, announced its plan “to withdraw its subsidy from *hajj* operations.” There was confusion on the issue, since government officials contradicted each other. However, the word of the Muslim Vice President Atiku Abubakar was considered to be the weightier, and his was that the government would retreat from providing full *hajj* services and, instead, provide supervisory functions over private sector bodies who would provide the actual *hajj* services themselves. The idea behind it is that the government take its hands off religious affairs. The pilgrimage re-organisation is simply a natural consequence of that new hands-off policy.⁷⁷

The leader of a rival party gave it a different twist. The decision is not surprising, according to him, considering the Obasanjo government's "past record in denying Nigerians their rights and freedom." He argued that "*hajj* is one of the five pillars of Islam which every responsible Nigerian leader should respect and make easy for Nigerian Muslims who voted him in power."⁷⁸ Thus demands for continued government support kept being aired. Alhaji Danlami Mohammed, at the time Executive Secretary of the Plateau State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board, "urged" the government "to reconsider its plan to withdraw from the *hajj* operations." This plea, he explained, was necessary because of the importance of this obligation to all Muslims. "I don't think there is anything Muslims all over the country want to enjoy more from the Federal Government [than] assistance for the *hajj*," he said, adding that "it will be completely suicidal to think of not extending a helping hand to Muslims." Apart from its religious obligation, there is the need for "security and other essential services" that make it impossible for the government to withdraw. In addition, when the operation was handled by private agencies, they "were duping innocent pilgrims." Pilgrims became destitute in Saudi Arabia so that the latter's government had to evacuate them, to the shame of Nigeria.⁷⁹ Such a vote of confidence in the government is rare and surprising, but when money is at stake...! I have not noticed from the reports that government involvement has made the exercise more efficient. Less surprising to me is the joint call from Muslim Pilgrims' Boards from Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti states to the Federal Government to decentralize the operation as much as possible by assigning most pilgrim-related functions to various zones. Federal Government should keep its involvement to a bare minimum "to reduce the hardship often experienced by pilgrims."⁸⁰

One M. T. Usman presented a summary history of government involvement in the *hajj*. During the First Republic, that is, the first independent government (1960-1966), the pilgrimage was handled

by the regional governments, especially that of the Northern Region, where the Muslims were concentrated. Usman considered that a normal state of affairs. "The mass movement of a large number of citizens over a relatively short period of time necessitated government's involvement to ease such traffic, and ensure safety, welfare, and health." There was nothing "extra-ordinary" here. Other countries, such as the USA and the UK, protect their citizens throughout the world. Even India provides pilgrimage services.

An important change took place, however. Whereas in the earlier years the officials in charge "were assigned for the duration of the *hajj* only, more recently an entire bureaucracy was developed, and permanent departments." Like all others, this is a self-serving bureaucracy, and here comes an interesting clincher: "It is the belief that it is the largesse this *hajj* bureaucracy seems to generate that emboldened their civil-service colleagues to gradually introduce and plant a programme on Christian pilgrimage!" So, the real purpose of the pilgrimage boards is simply to feed the federal and state bureaucracies. Pilgrims largely pay their own way. Government expense is mainly for medical items and consular services and simply to perpetuate the bureaucracy, including such functions as government delegations and the *Amirul Hajj*, the head pilgrim.

There is a difference, however, in the Nigerian *hajj* arrangements. Some other countries generate many more pilgrims than does Nigeria, but their services are smooth and efficient. They never get stuck at Saudi airports for lack of planes, as do Nigerians. The entire procedure in Nigeria is inefficient and corrupt, so that Nigerian pilgrims suffer great indignity every year. It is Usman's contention that all of these problems are deliberate and intentional. The minimal government expenditure on the *hajj* of some 600 million naira only adds to the problem. That sum is "dwarfed by the money spent by some members of the executive on their personal comfort." He concludes that whatever the final decision of the government, the *hajj* problems will not abate until those in charge

“throw away greed and resolve to serve their fellow countrymen faithfully, without expectation of personal gain.”

WORK-FREE FRIDAY

The issue of work-free days, especially the Muslim Friday versus the Christian Sunday, keeps cropping up. Colonialism introduced the seven-day week with the Sunday as rest day, as well as various Christian holidays such as New Year's Day on January 1. Muslims experience this arrangement as discriminatory. The Muslim Corpers Association of Nigeria called on the government to ensure “fundamental human rights and freedom of worship” in all states so that Muslims can practice their religion “in any state without fear or victimization.” Among other things, the “NYSC headquarters should give equal treatment to both Muslims and Christians at the orientation camp by ensuring that all activities stop latest 12:00 noon every Friday to allow Muslim corpers to say their prayers.”⁸¹

Only a few weeks later, M. K. O. Abiola made a similar call for Friday as a work-free day, “so that Muslims can worship just as the Christian brothers do on Sundays.” If Christians can have their day, “there is no reason why the same should not be accorded the Muslims,” he argued. In addition, he pushed for the first day of the Muslim year to become work-free, just as January 1 is a Christian holiday.⁸² It should be realized that even in fully Muslim countries, Friday is not a work-free day. It is not part of the tradition. The call comes up only because of the competition between the two religions.

Nigerian government agencies, who are, after all, largely lackeys to the West and to Christians, are often considered oppressive by Muslims even if these agencies may be headed by Muslims. Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, a Muslim organisation we have met earlier in this chapter, warned against all manner of anti-Muslim discrimination in governments.

The subtle discrimination against Muslims by Government Agencies, especially as these are financed by Tax Payers among whom are Muslims. We reiterate that Nigeria belongs to all of us and therefore we should be accorded equal treatment at all times without any prejudice.

The Friday question was one of the issues addressed:

We note with dismay the tendency for State Governments and their agencies in arranging state functions to coincide with the time for jumat Prayers, thus negating the fundamental right of the Muslims to practise their religion. Nigeria, we reiterate, belongs to all of us, and it has never happened that state functions are arranged to coincide with Sunday worship in the churches.⁸³

MEMBERSHIP IN ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC)

A bitter controversy about Nigeria's membership in OIC arose due to unbelievable clumsy maneuvers on the part of the government. The Federal Government had secretly sought to usher Nigeria into this international Muslim organisation, but the French press announced the move to the world. It started a most acrimonious debate between the two religions. Christians were dead set against it, because they saw it as compromising Nigeria's secularity as well as a further step in the alleged Muslim plot to Islamize Nigeria, while Muslims insisted on its legitimacy and expressed surprise and indignation at such Christian opposition.

Given the obvious economic advantages Nigerian membership would bring, Sheikh Gumi⁸⁴ asked why Christians should object to such membership. Other non-Muslim nations—Gabon, Burkina Faso, Chad, Benin, Uganda and Kenya—are members, and profit from it.⁸⁵ Apart from such advantages, Christians have no right to object as long as Nigeria has full diplomatic relations with the

Vatican. Why the one and not the other? It has nothing to do with overturning the secular nature of the country, as Christians fear. It is, the Sheikh continued to argue, “unfair to deny Muslims the opportunity to join their fellow Muslims in other countries.” Rilwani Lukman, Nigeria’s international oil politician, similarly argued that membership would not turn Nigeria into a Muslim country any more than it did to other non-Muslim member countries.⁸⁶

Not surprisingly, the *NN* also editorialized in favour of membership, and argued much like the previous two. Though Christian opposition to such membership is understandable, according to the editor, it is based on the false premise that secularity means “indifference or even hostility to religious values.” He favoured both connections, the Vatican as well as OIC. “Those who would rile at either one of the two connections ought to ponder before they allow emotions to get the better of them.”⁸⁷ Any Muslim-Christian subject touching on the issue of secularism will without fail bring out the emotions and charges of religious oppression from both sides.

Nigerian Muslim and Christians both have a propensity to reduce all issues to that of religious freedom and right. So, too, with the OIC controversy. The Political Bureau, a Federal agency assigned to look into constitutional matters, reported that Muslims argued against the separation of religion and state. Keeping the country out of the OIC would amount to denying Muslims their constitutional rights.

The issue brought the country to the boiling point, so that the Federal Government appointed a panel of prominent politicians “to examine the implications of Nigeria’s full membership.”⁸⁸ Obviously, the government had underestimated the heat this issue would generate. In fact, Karl Maier credits the issue with having set the stage for several years of further clashes.⁸⁹ To Muslims, membership was perfectly in order. As far as they were concerned, opposition to it was simply because Christians want nothing to do with Islam and oppose anything that might help Muslims. As long as

there is this Muslim connection, Christians will oppose it even if they were to profit from it, while they are blind to their own inconsistency about the Vatican connection. It was a bitter pill for Muslims to swallow when eventually the government of Babangida announced that it would withdraw and Christians had won the day—or had they? Kantiok claims that Babangida's successor, Abacha—and please note that both of these rulers were Muslims—announced in 1998 that Nigeria was a full member.⁹⁰

Years later the arguments still have not abated. Early in 2003, Nigeria's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and her representative on the OIC, stated that the “negative perception” of the OIC is due to “lack of understanding of its functions and the advantages inherent in being a member.” He argued that “many African countries with predominantly Christian populations are members,” including Mozambique, Uganda, Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Benin Republic. The OIC, he explained, is second only to the UN in terms of members. Furthermore, it is “more Islamic in name than in practice,” for “its conferences are devoid of strict Islamic practices.” Like “other international conferences, no time is allotted to Muslims to observe their prayers.” Some countries even send delegations that include Christians. In the meantime, Nigeria is cheating itself. Since it has delayed to ratify “agreements with the Islamic Development Bank,” an arm of OIC, Nigeria is denying itself “the opportunity to obtain interest-free loans.”⁹¹

DEGRADING WESTERN FEMALE FASHIONS

In this section I want to cover yet another area in which Muslims feel that colonialism has undermined their religion and which they want to reclaim; namely that of women's fashions. Even in this subject we have not moved far away from concerns with governments, as you will see. This subject can hardly be discussed without simultaneously touching upon the mixing of genders, since that is the context in which dress becomes important. I could have cho-

sen examples from other areas of culture, but this one serves as a good example of how deep and wide the feelings of resentment run.

Since 9/11, Western media have made the world very conscious of this issue. For a while, pictures of and discussions about and by Afghani Muslim women concerning their dress were commonplace, but it is hardly a new concern for Muslims. Throughout the period covered in this study it has been an irritant with Muslims, both men and women. It has provided them with the basis for their claim of obvious superior morality.

All public displays of female sexuality seem to be feared in Islam. Women are expected to do everything they can to avoid constituting a temptation to men. Hence, female fashions are carefully prescribed. The inspiration for this perspective is said to be derived from the Qur'an itself, which reads,

*Say to the believing women to turn their eyes away (from temptation) and to preserve their chastity: to cover their adornments except such as are normally displayed; to draw their veils over their bosom and not to reveal their finery except to their husbands, their fathers....*⁹²

The basic idea is to avoid what Islam regards as "that satanic flood of female liberty and license which threatens to destroy human civilization in the West."⁹³ The Pakistani writer Maulana Muhammad 'Ali states the general Muslim principle of appropriate feminine dress when the two genders intermingle, something that should be avoided as much as possible. On such occasions, "The Holy Qur'an requires the women to appear in their simplest dress, or to wear an over-garment which should cover their ornaments, at the same time requiring both sexes to lower their gaze."⁹⁴

Turning to the Nigerian situation, the now late but very famous and controversial Sheikh Abubakar Gumi argued that, "women have no business mixing with men and doing men's jobs." It is prohibited. In Mecca, for example, markets are run by men

only.⁹⁵ “You only find women in places suitable for them.” Women should go out only if it is necessary. When they do, “they have to cover all their body.”⁹⁶ According to Nnanna, the late Gumi spent most of his time exhorting Muslim women to wear the *hijab* and the men to dress according to Islamic law.⁹⁷ An equally prominent but more moderate southern Nigerian Muslim, Lateef Adegbite, agrees that whenever women appear in public,

*they must cover the excitable parts of their body, an injunction which aims at discouraging indecency, but which some have interpreted so strictly that they compel their women to be heavily covered from head to toe...clad in dreary and somber dark apparel.*⁹⁸

Ibrahim Suleiman discusses the issue of Muslim morality in the context of a bid to Islamize Nigerian society as a whole. Such morality would involve “the safeguarding of public morals and the suppression of indecent behaviour, the protection of the honour of the womenfolk and the introduction of modesty in all facets of national life.”⁹⁹ The protection of that honour includes preventing the mixing of genders. Suleiman is serious, for these statements are a repetition of what he wrote earlier to the government. “It is utterly unacceptable to Islam that the honour of women should be abused....” Abuse here includes the exposure of their bodies or the “public display of immodesty,” as well as the “unrestrained intermingling of male and female” as practiced by and imposed on the country by Europeans.¹⁰⁰

Muhammad Basheer Shomotun describes *hijab* as

a simple dress designed by Islam to cover and protect the beauty of a woman regarding her figure and hair. It is a modest mode of dressing which helps to preserve the dignity and personality of women, so that they are not mainly looked upon as objects of beauty and sex.

They are to be covered entirely, he explains, “with the exception of the hands from the wrist downwards, and the face.” Many Muslim women, he laments, have been taken in by so-called modern fashions and ape Western women who see “nothing wrong in moving naked in the streets.” Womanhood is reduced “to the level of animalism” and civilization is being destroyed. The *hijab* is a tool “towards purifying society from corruption and all other vices.”

He then goes on to complain that Muslim women are *forced* to disobey Allah by wearing indecent Western dress in certain jobs, such as nurses, police women, bank clerks, secretaries, students and members of NYSC. If religious freedom is guaranteed in the country, why should Muslim nurses be prevented from dressing appropriately? After all, Christian nurses are allowed to wear uniforms that conform to their religion. This is a pure case of “victimization” of Muslims and of “deprivation.”¹⁰¹

One Mu’uza Hardawa wrote a letter in Hausa in *GTFK* that appeared under the heading “He Wants to Prevent Women from Coming to Work Naked.”¹⁰² He bitterly complains about the temptations such women put before the men among whom they work. It leads them to the sin of “fornication of the eye.”¹⁰³ These are not just young girls. Many of them are important women of position dressed in ill-fitting uniforms. Like a good Muslim, Hardawa calls upon the government to put a stop to this kind of shameful attire.¹⁰⁴ On the very next page, one Yusufu I. Abubakar of Katsina writes similarly that the white man’s fashions fall short of the demands of the sharia, since “they do not cover the private parts” adequately.¹⁰⁵

The Chief Imam of a Sokoto mosque, Sheikh Abubakar Jibril, accused the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), the government service that assigns all graduates to a year of basically unpaid service anywhere in the country, of being “a prime source of the indiscipline for the upcoming generation.” The sheikh said, “Mature males and females were being kept in one place “naked” and often asked to

wrestle with one another in the name of physical exercise. He said, "How can a healthy man grab a woman in short knickers without nursing any dangerous ideas in his mind?" He "condemned the type of uniform corps members wear and said this was the same with our institutions of learning, especially where there were girls." The sheikh further charged that "the set-up had been deliberately tailored in a way that a first visitor to the country would have the impression that non-Muslims were in the majority."¹⁰⁶

One Alhaji B. T. Ogunseye expresses the disgust, wonder and amazement Muslims experience when they behold fashion and sexual mores in the West. He describes the situation in strong terms: sexual orgies, debauchery, promiscuity, pornography, licentiousness. "It is incredible and regrettable that modern man...in the so-called developed countries" can engage in all such horrors.

This is another wonderful "feat" of the civilised countries, which are not unmindful of the fact that they are inviting Allah's wrath by leading humanity through the blind alley of destruction to annihilation. These "refined people" are conversant with the Bible and the Holy Qur'an. May Allah have mercy on us. Amen.

This, the Alhaji rightly declares, "is misuse of freedom" and Islam is "vehemently opposed" to it.¹⁰⁷

Given the Muslim stand on the close relationship between religion and government, it is no surprise that some people are demanding action from their state governments regulating fashions, especially official uniforms. Some governments, in response to such pressures, actually have at one time or another announced plans to take such action. The government of Kano State announced it had designed new uniforms for nurses and nursing students so that these women no longer go about "almost naked."¹⁰⁸

The National Council of Muslim Youth Organisations (NACOMYO) entered the fray by defending this government

action. It observed that “Right-thinking, morally-conscious people have complained against the bad dressing of our women folk, especially with the nursing profession, the police, and serving youth corps members, as their uniforms are too tight and highly exposing.” The organisation praised the government for taking action towards modesty.

However, some papers from southern Nigeria,¹⁰⁹ described as “Christian” by NACOMYO, wrote strong articles against any such government move. Their attack is seen as “unjustified criticism” based on “religious parochialism rooted in ignorance.” Their “sense of judgment and sensible human reason” is “beclouded.” Furthermore, they misrepresent the Christian faith, for the latter “does not support half-nakedness and nudity. That is the reason some Christian churches have their nurses dress in “long gowns, long-sleeved with scarf.”¹¹⁰

One Alhaji Zubair, an *imam* in Katsina State, and other Muslims, call on the government to ban “indecent dress” among females throughout the country. Sheikh Abubukar Tureta warned Muslims to be on their guard against underground moves to sabotage the Kaduna State Government’s intention to stop co-education with its abhorrent gender intermingling. He also advised that the change to the Muslim dress code in schools be sped up.¹¹¹

It does appear that the process of change was slow, for already four years earlier the Kaduna branch of the MSS condemned a group called “Joint Action Committee of Kaduna State Women,” for attacking the Muslim dress code approved by the State Government for Muslim female students. The Committee apparently argued that such a move would “dichotomize the students along religious lines.”¹¹²

An article by Alifa further shows us how wide this concern for women fashions has become in Nigeria and that it is hardly a marginal concern. I will let him tell the story:

Abuja University sets up a committee on mode of dressing. Worried by the mode of dressing of female students of the University of Abuja, the Vice Chancellor, Dr. Gambo Laraba Abdulahi, has set up a committee to look into the issue. The 11-member committee, headed by Dr. A.U. Okwodishu, was set up to stem what has been described as “unsavoury criticism” from parents and other members of the public.

A statement from the university noted that the duty of the committee would be to find ways of ensuring decent dressing “for the integrity of womanhood.” But the approach would be through pep talks and persuasion. However in a furious reaction, some female students who spoke with *Guardian* frowned at the development, maintaining that the idea was an infringement on their rights. A female student who simply identified herself as Joke said:

What rights have they (university authorities) to tell us how to dress? We hope they are not planning to introduce the sharia in the university campus. We are not unaware that the Vice-Chancellor is a Moslem, while about four of the committee members are also Moslems. At least, two of them are known to be fundamentalists in their approach.

The head of the committee, Dr. Okwodishu, is optimistic that the moral campaign will be successful, because, according to her, some students have already taken the initiative to reward those who dress well. She cited the example of the Education Students Association, which, she said, gave awards to students that dressed well.

Asked if the committee would recommend any punitive action against recalcitrant students, she said she was optimistic of the success of the crusade “because some female students had expressed concern over the same mode of dressing.” She also disclosed that a female student was recently slapped by her mother in front of the

university library because of her mode of dressing. The mother who visited the university unannounced, according to her, was shocked when she saw the clothes her daughter had on.¹¹³

In view of the contentious nature of the issue, one could consider it a good thing for the issue to be dealt with. However, the good thing, like so many in Nigeria, was quickly derailed and distorted into a Muslim versus Christian issue. Hence the issue was debated with heat and emotion more than reason. This time the discussion involved not merely Muslim men, but also Christians and women. Out of the eleven committee members, only four or five were Muslims. The question of unbridled freedom came up and of the right to ignore all norms of modesty, a right neither Christians nor Muslims espouse.¹¹⁴

The write-up of Daniel has brought us up to the change of millennia. The editor of *New Nigerian* accepted an article by one Muhammad I. Memon in which failure to wear the *hijab* is said to lead straight to hell!¹¹⁵ Now, it would appear, we are reaching the outer fringe of Islam. It is a source of great amazement to me that the editor of a government paper allowed that article!

In this pro-sharia era, in Zamfara State, women are even precluded from various sports because of the sportswear associated with them. It is reported that women are banned from almost all sports, but, apparently, only for the time being. Governor Sani advises that “we should design our sportswear to cover down to our knees as mandated by our religion.” Actually, that sounds pretty liberal compared to some Muslim standards. In the meantime, the state allows them to participate in judo and karate since “authorities claim their gears cover all parts of the body, exposing only the face and hands.”¹¹⁶ The state government sought to ease the difficulties some women suffered by distributing the *hijab*, the approved Muslim female dress in public, free of charge.¹¹⁷

In 2002 the issue once again heated up to the point of riots, in the context of the Miss Universe contest scheduled to be held in

the capital Abuja. Already during the preliminaries held in the southern Nigerian city of Calabar, the home of Miss World 2001, Muslim groups objected to the event as “an abomination and parade of nudity which will promote HIV/AIDS and promiscuity,” and threatened to disrupt it. Demands were aired that “the contestants keep off the northern part of the country.”¹¹⁸

This time the resulting riots received extensive world media coverage, more than any previous riots. All the issues raised in connection with the earlier riots and fashion-related controversies came up again. It became heavily politicized and even came to be regarded as part of the anti-sharia movement. Eventually, of course, the event was moved to London, England. In the meantime, over 200 people were killed, and churches, mosques, and other properties destroyed, in what has become a classic Nigerian tradition.¹¹⁹

All the Muslim complaints about colonial and post-colonial imposition of foreign, non-Muslim culture and religion since the aftermath of the 1977 Constitutional Assembly, have remained constant right into the new millennium. They are all related to each other. The aim of the entire enterprise, including all of its various parts, was and remains the destruction of Islam and the imposition of Christo-secularism, an amalgam of two concepts that are mentioned in the same breath and considered synonymous. Fashion is just as much a weapon as are the media, economics and politics. So, it is not so strange for Muhammad Y. Ali-Agan of Bayero University to support the state government’s decision to change nurses’ uniforms in his article, *Commendable: The New Initiatives in Changing the Nurses Uniforms*.¹²⁰ In his article, references to the more general issues far outnumber those to the uniform concern itself, a fact fully understood by his intended readership. I attach the complete article as Appendix 2, for it is so typical of the general attitude, while it summarizes the situation effectively.¹²¹

In addition to this lengthy prose quote, I treat you to two poems, one in English by Jawayriyya Badamasuyi that is attached

as Appendix 3. The other is a Hausa poem, *Rikicin Kafanchan*, by Ibrahim Isa Malumfashi, attached as Appendix 4. The reason for these inclusions is that I want you to *feel* the strong emotions associated with these issues. Even if you are not a Muslim, try to empathize with them and experience their anger and frustration, not to speak of hate and fury. The poem by Badamasuyi is a passionate plea for a return to the simple fashions and life style traditionally associated with the piety and simplicity of Islam, but, ironically, expressed with much hatred, anger, disgust, and contempt—attitudes not usually associated with that traditional piety.¹²² The one by Malumfashi expresses Muslim anger about the Kafanchan episode. Both poems express Muslim emotions very well. This Hausa poem is for the benefit of northern Hausa-reading Christians, many of who cannot read this book due to their lack of English. This is one poem they can read.

The issue won't die. As long as I keep writing, so long will riots continue, it appears—and so will the *hijab* issue. In February, 2003, 51 Muslim “fanatics” were arrested in Ibadan for assaulting staff and students in post-primary schools, most of which were founded by Christians. The reason for the assault, according to Alhaji Ibrahim Mukhtar, the Deputy Commissioner of Police for the state, was “to pressure the school authorities to allow Muslim girls wear the *hijab*, head and shoulder cover over the school uniforms.”¹²³

The Kano State government has made it mandatory for all girls in state schools, regardless of their religion, to wear *hijab*. In 2001, the Bauchi State Government started enforcing Muslim-style uniforms on nurses, since Western uniforms “revealed too much of their legs.” Twelve nurses refused to comply and have since been fired. That is now becoming an international issue with the British House of Lords Deputy Speaker, Baroness Caroline Cox, “pledging to use her position and connections to see that the nurses get justice.” Christian Solidarity Worldwide is a U.K. based Christian human rights body that is pressing for their reinstatement.¹²⁴

▲ WRAP UP

As we wrap up this chapter, it is plain for all to see that, from the Muslim perspective, colonialism set in motion a process that totally disregarded “independence” as a non-event. Even throughout the post-colonial era, right up till the time of this writing, it nibbles away at the very foundations of Nigerian Islam, all the while draining it of its life sap. The Christo-secular bulldozer seems relentless. Though it is often claimed that the northern vote brought Obasanjo to power,¹²⁵ it did not take long for the Muslim northerners to feel that they “had been had.” The elite felt that power was slipping out of their hands because of Obasanjo’s alleged pro-Christian and pro-south policies. For example, at least a hundred senior army officers were released and then replaced mostly by officers from the Middle Belt and the south. M. D. Yusufu, a member of the northern elite, explained that northern leaders are angry, because they have lost power.¹²⁶ You add the anger of the elite to that of the northern peasants, who are suffering from the rising cost of living, and a lack of basic social amenities, and you have a dangerous, explosive, and seething cauldron, the ingredients of which are religious as well as economic and tribal.

Suleiman Kumo, a lawyer said to be a sharia expert, is convinced that the aim of the unholy triad of colonialism, secularism, and Christianity “is to keep the Muslims under perpetual domination.”¹²⁷ He accuses the leaders of CAN of having no regard for the truth, and of being interested only in “the perpetuation of the domination of the Judeo-Christian world view and philosophy over Nigeria...even though this is against the wishes of the majority.” He then directs a salvo against the media, which, together with “their other anti-Muslim cohorts are not even interested in trying to understand the feelings of the Muslim masses on these matters.” He warns that “if a group of people allow their rights to be trampled upon for a long time without complaining, they can only get

back their rights by asserting themselves,” something that may have begun to happen with Zamfara’s call for sharia.¹²⁸

Yes, indeed, hatred and anger are prominent components of the Muslim psychological makeup. It is those emotions and that reading of history that undergird the Muslim attitudes towards the riots described in Volume One. Without tying his comments to a specific riot, the editor of *Al-Madinah* warned the Federal Government that the fanaticism that has led to the various riots

is the result of systematic, impertinent, and unmitigated provocation. It is generally people who are subjected to quiet, calculated and prolonged religious oppression who burst into huge fire-balls in the end, particularly after all entreaties fail to change the status quo.

He continued his warning that a fire is not doused by attacking only the smoke. Governments have to pursue the “real causes” of these crises.¹²⁹

Without a strong awareness of all of this emotional turmoil through the course of an entire century against the Nigerian “system,” the readiness of Muslims to explode, sometimes at hardly any direct provocation, cannot possibly be understood—or addressed. So, Christian and secular readers, feel and understand along with your Muslim neighbours. Above all, seek ways to address this source of anger and frustration—and replace your anger and hatred with a strong dose of empathy.

▲ NOTES

¹ The term used by S. K. Rashid, p. 1.

² It almost sounds parallel to the secular dualistic separation of religion and marketplace.

³ A. A. Gwandu, pp. 10-11 and O. Bello, pp. 28-30, both in Rashid.

⁴ *NN*, 21 May/86; 4 Nov/99; 15 Feb/2000, p. 17. *The Pen*, 1 July/88, p. 1.

⁵ *NC*, 24 Nov/89. *Guardian*, 26 Feb/88. *NN*, 6 Dec/85, p. 20; 17 Nov/99; 26 Nov/99, p. 5; 30 Jan/2000.

⁶ Shaw, pp. 452-453. J. Boer, 1979, pp. 69, 212, 397.

⁷ Rashid, pp. 2-3.

⁸ *NN*, 5 Jan/2000, p. 14.

⁹ Z. Bangash, "Understanding..."

¹⁰ *CC*, 4 Sept/98.

¹¹ Abubakre, p. 64.

¹² I. Bello, 27 Feb/89, p. 13.

¹³ Bodansky's book on Bin Laden, a pre-9/11 publication, is replete with such warnings that should have been heeded. It is simply impossible to believe that 9/11 came as a total surprise. All American government claims to that effect must be regarded with deep suspicion. For those who wish to pursue this line, one of several useful resources is the website www.copvca.com of *The Wilderness Publications*. Bodansky was very courageous in publishing his book, for many people would have regarded him as a redneck, but 9/11 was the fulfillment of his predictions and he moved up from the rank of redneck to that of prophet. Though 9/11 shocked me, it was cushioned by my awareness that something was going to give sooner or later. Even if I had spoken up, who in Washington would have heeded an obscure Canadian missionary in Nigeria if they did not listen to Bodansky?

¹⁴ Hausa original: "Turawa da suka shigo kasar nan sun yi kokarin lalata duk wata al'ada mai kyau da suka sami Hausawa a kai. Haka nan kuma...a bayan da suka bar kasar nan sun ci gaba da aiko da littafansu da kuma faya-fayan sinima wadanda ke koyar da miyagun dabi'un Turawa a

kasar nan.” *GTFK*, 29 May/99, p. 1.

¹⁵ *NS*, 28 Feb/88.

¹⁶ *Weekly Trust*, 29 June/2001.

¹⁷ *NC*, 15 Oct/86.

¹⁸ *NN*, 29 Jan/86.

¹⁹ Abubakre, pp. 70-72.

²⁰ M. A. Mabdul, “W.A.I...”

²¹ Dangogo, 15 July/88, pp. 5, 15.

²² *Jizyar* is a Hausa word for the “poll-tax on conquered non-Muslims,” traditionally imposed by Muslim governments. R. C. Abraham, *Dictionary...*, p. 434. If the story is correct, this was obviously insulting the Hausa by treating them as a conquered people or *dhimmi*, and could be interpreted as a class action or revenge against all Muslim governments everywhere for having imposed that tax on non-Muslim religious minorities.

²³ Original Hausa: “*Sai ta kore su tana mai kiransu ‘Baki’ tana kuma tambayarsu cewa yaushe ma suka zo kasar har suka mallaki gonaki da filayen noma?*”

²⁴ *Radiance*, No. 4, p. 16.

²⁵ *NS*, 24 July/86.

²⁶ Under the caption “Ramadan Special,” the cartoon in question shows two Muslims bowed down on their prayer mats, while a woman in a minidress walks right past them. One of the men cannot resist the temptation to take the forbidden glance. It is indeed a disgusting, insulting and highly provocative cartoon that should not have been allowed. The original appeared in *NS*, 4 May/88. It is reproduced in *The Pen*, 1 July/88, p. 16.

²⁷ *NS*, 28 Feb/88.

²⁸ *The Pen*, 1 July/88, p. 1.

²⁹ *The Pen*, 1 July/88, pp. 1, 16.

³⁰ *The Pen*, 1 July/88. This has reference to Sunday services in Jos at Good News Church and at the Chicken Market, both about a kilometre from the main mosque, where Muslims started closing major arteries on Fridays years before Christians ever thought of doing so!

³¹ M. G. Abdullahi and A. I. Lawal, p. 16.

³² “Comment: Averting a Holocaust.” *The Pen*, 15 July/88, p. 1. Unfortunately, the article is suddenly cut off in the middle of a sentence with no continuation anywhere. There are references to some issues that will come up later in this chapter.

³³ Nigerian Television Authority.

³⁴ *Al-Madinah*, Nov/95, pp. 3, 4, 10-16.

³⁵ Again, a parallel to the complaint of many North American Christians about discrimination against them by the secular media.

³⁶ N. Jalingo, *Weekly Trust*, 8 Mar/2003. It is interesting that in the same issue a *Muslim* complains about discrimination by *Muslim*-controlled public media in the *Muslim* state of Katsina against 30 opposition parties whose local members were mostly *Muslims*! Clearly, Christians have no monopoly on discrimination.

³⁷ See, for example, A.A. Gwanda in *Rashid*, pp. 10-15.

³⁸ S. Jahun, *GTFK*, 4 May/89, p. 3. Original Hausa: “*Amma hada kai da sarakunan gargajiya bai dace da hukumar ba. Tun da sarakuna martabarsu ta rushe a idon jama'a to, ba sa jin jama'a za su yarda da fadakarwarsu, domin siyasa ta raba su da jama'a, sai dai hukumar ta yi kokarin dawo musu da martabarsu.*”

³⁹ The original Hausa: “*To, ina jawo hankalinku da cewa duk wanda bai yi aiki da abin da Allah ya fada ba, to, hanyarsa daya sai wuta, sai ko in ya tuba kafin ya mutu. Saboda haka, Sarakuna da shugabanni, a yi adalci, a bai wa mai hakki hakkinsa, ba a tauye masa ba.*”

⁴⁰ H. A. Gadam, *GTFK*, 7 Oct/86, p. 3.

⁴¹ H. Bobboyi, *The Pen*, 30 Dec/88, p. 5. Bobboyi's punctuation makes it impossible to determine whether Muhammadu Buhari is the author or the recipient of the letter. My decision is somewhat arbitrary.

⁴² Bobboyi, *The Pen*, 16 Dec/88, p. 5.

⁴³ Bobboyi, *The Pen*, 13 Jan/89, p. 5.

⁴⁴ B. Isyaku, *The Pen*, 16 Dec/88, p. 10. This was written in the context of the riots in Sokoto about the appointment of an unpopular Sultan.

⁴⁵ Comment. *The Pen*, 18 Nov/88, p. 1. “*Sharhin Labarai.*” *Alkalami*, 16 Nov/88, pp. 1,3. The materials in this paragraph are taken

from these twin editorials. Reference to Hausa language materials are from *Alkalami*

⁴⁶ Hausa original: “shugaban jama'a ta fuskar siyasa da kuma addini...da kuma yi masu jagora zuwa tafarki madaidaici.” “Sarkin Kano da sauran sarakunan Musulunci shi ne karen sharia da ganin kuma al'ummar musulmi ba a taye masu 'yancinsu ba...a takaice dai su daukaka matsayin musulmi da addinin musulunci.”

⁴⁷ Hausa original: “...kowanne sarki ya kamata ya hada kan jama'arsa su gane abubuwa da za su amfane su, sannan su yaki abin da ba zai haifar masu da alheri ba. Yin haka zai kusantar da mai mulki ga jama'arsa, su kara daraja shi, sannan kuma ya sami kyakkyawan sakamako wajen Ubangiji.”

⁴⁸ Hausa original: “su yi yaki da duk wani abin da ba na musulunci ba, da kiyaya amanar Allah Ubangiji a duniya. Don haka wajibi ne a garesu su yi yaki da danniya da tsarin Turawa da masu neman tilasta wa Musulmi su bi shariar kafirci.”

⁴⁹ Hausa original: “Takala da wulakanci da kuma tsokanar da ake wa Musulmi abin tuni ya kai matuka.”

⁵⁰ Abdulwahab, TD, 14 Nov/02.

⁵¹ Abubakre, p. 64.

⁵² In Rashid, pp. 59-61. On these same pages, Suleiman also adduces a quote from Governor Clifford that illustrates how accurately Blyden described the situation.

⁵³ H. Scott, p. 737. Boer, 1979, pp. 64-65; 1984, p. 16; 1989, pp. 7-8.

⁵⁴ Boer, 1989, p. 9. Takaya, pp. 34-35, 51. Balarabe Musa was a civilian governor of Kaduna State, who was deposed precisely because of his challenge to that class. He is the civilian counterpart to Colonel Yohanna Madaki, who was similarly deposed as military governor for taking on the same class in the defunct Gongola State.

⁵⁵ Rashid, pp. 69-71. Junaidu's speech was delivered back in 1972, according to A. Dauda, who, 16 years later, reproduces some of the same parts of that speech in his own article in *The Pen*, 1 July/88, p. 12.

⁵⁶ Anonymous, *Radiance*, No. 4, pp. 8-11.

⁵⁷ Anonymous, *Radiance*, No. 4, p. 30.

⁵⁸ A. Dauda, *The Pen*, 1 July/88, p. 12.

⁵⁹ A. Dauda, *The Pen*, 15 July/88, p. 11. In this and all other quotes, I take no responsibility for the “imaginative” English and neologisms.

⁶⁰ Abdul-Ghaniyy, “*Lesson from....*”

⁶¹ I trust you recognize the humorous inconsistency here? As Muslims analyze the educational system, an average graduate would definitely *not* be aware of the situation described, for nipping such critical attitudes in the bud is alleged to be a major goal. The above article by Umar is basically a report on an interview with Ibrahim Suleiman, a man whom we will meet more frequently in following pages and volumes of this series. He is/was director of the Centre for Islamic and Legal Studies at ABU. He is also member of the Council of Ulama.

⁶² *The Pen*, 1 July/88, pp. 1, 16.

⁶³ Communique, *National Concord*, 17 Apr/88.

⁶⁴ A. Abubakar, *New Nigerian*, 13 Feb/2000, p. 19.

⁶⁵ See *New Nigerian*, 8 Feb/00, p. 17 and 13 Feb/00, pp. 9, 19-21 for coverage of the conference.

⁶⁶ *The Pen*, 13 Jan/89, p. 2.

⁶⁷ *The Democrat*, 10 Oct/90.

⁶⁸ *New Nigerian*, 28 Dec/99, p. 24.

⁶⁹ *New Nigerian*, 9 Feb/00. *Almajirai* are children who attend Qur’anic schools and who are often sent into the streets by their teachers to beg. They often form themselves into bands of hoodlums when riots occur. In some of these schools they are taught hate for and belligerence to the secular establishment, including Christianity, and trained for militant action.

⁷⁰ J. Taiwo, *TD*, 13 Nov/2002.

⁷¹ J. Ilelaboye, 22 July/02. His vision is about as audacious as the vision of Abraham Kuyper for the Free Reformed University of Amsterdam where I did my post-graduate work. It had a similar vision for Christianity. Apart from their being based on different religions, two important differences are that Kuyper did not have an opening goal of 5,000 students, and neither did he have the backing of oil rich nations. His financial supporters comprised of his country’s peasants and middle class with their pennies and nickles.

⁷² K. Maier, p. 171.

⁷³ Abubukre, pp. 62-63.

⁷⁴ M. Abubakar, *The Pen*, 15 July/88.

⁷⁵ S. Gaya, 23 Jan/96.

⁷⁶ S. Makera, 13 May/99.

⁷⁷ Anonymous, *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, 30 May/01.

⁷⁸ *Weekly Trust*, 16 Nov/2001.

⁷⁹ Anonymous, *New Nigerian*, 16 July/2001.

⁸⁰ Adele, W., *New Nigerian*, 23 July/2001.

⁸¹ *Nigerian Standard*, 11 Nov/85. "NYSC" stands for "National Youth Service Corps." It is a federal agency administering a program of compulsory national service for tertiary graduates for one year.

⁸² *National Concord*, 3 Dec/85. The same call was also made by the National Council of Muslim Youth Organisations as per *National Concord*, 4 Feb/88. Though the demand for work-free Muslim days is heard often, not all Muslims agree as in *Nigerian Standard*, 11 Dec/85.

⁸³ Communique, *NC*, 17 Apr/88.

⁸⁴ Though there is a special section dedicated to the Sheikh below, I have chosen to place this discussion in its present location. Arguments can be made either way.

⁸⁵ Gumi's argument here is similar to Abubakre's discussion of Nigeria's failure to attend some major international Muslim conferences in 1974. Nigeria declined sending representatives without so much as an apology, Abubakre complains. Someone must have portrayed Nigeria as "less Islamised than Chad, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea Bisau, Senegal and Uganda." One sad result was that the Nigerian flag did not fly at the Islamic Secretariat in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Another sad result was that Nigeria did not share in the investments and tax-free loans the Conference gave to participants. "That," argues Abubakre, "would have saved Nigeria the trouble of having to lobby for loans with interest from the World Bank or International Monetary Fund with its stiff and counterproductive conditions" (p. 71).

⁸⁶ *New Nigerian*, 28 Jan/86.

⁸⁷ *New Nigerian*, 27 Jan/86.

⁸⁸ *New Nigerian*, 29 Jan/86.

⁸⁹ K. Maier, p. 65.

⁹⁰ Kantiok, pp. 260-261. Check here for further summary of the issue.

⁹¹ "OIC Membership'll Benefit Nigeria—Ambassador." *TC*, 6 Jan/03.

⁹² *Qur'an* 24:30.

⁹³ Donohue, 1982, p. 255.

⁹⁴ *The Religion....*, p. 661.

⁹⁵ Even the scholarly Gumi can slip up. He did not know, apparently, that long ago Caliph Omar appointed a female superintendent for the Medina market, according to Ijaz Qamar. Or did he suppress this information as inconvenient?

⁹⁶ Zakariya, *Quality*, Oct/87, pp. 34. 36.

⁹⁷ Nnanna, *TSM*, 27 Sept/92, p. 10. I suspect this statement to be somewhat of an exaggeration.

⁹⁸ Adegbite, 1976, p. 10.

⁹⁹ I. Suleiman, 1986, pp. 12-13.

¹⁰⁰ I. Suleiman, 1986, p. 17.

¹⁰¹ Shomotun, "*Hijab....*"

¹⁰² The original Hausa heading reads "*Yana so a hana mata zuwa aiki tsirara.*"

¹⁰³ In Hausa, "*Su suna sanya shi cikin wani hali na zinar ido.*"

¹⁰⁴ *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, 1 Mar/90, p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, 1 Mar/90, p. 4. In Hausa, "*Ba su da yalwar da za su rufe al'aura.*"

¹⁰⁶ *New Nigerian*, 21 July/86.

¹⁰⁷ I apologize that I have lost this document after this paragraph was written and thus cannot provide the bibliographical data.

¹⁰⁸ *Alkalami*, 20 Jan/89, p. 16. The original Hausa says "*Gwamnati ba za ta amince ta bar matan na tafiya kusan tsirara ba.*"

¹⁰⁹ *Vanguard*, 8 Jan/89. *Nigerian Tribune*, 9 Jan/89. *Sketch*, 15 Jan/89.

¹¹⁰ *The Pen*, 27 Jan/89, p. 2.

¹¹¹ *NS*, 7 Sept/93, pp. 10, 16.

¹¹² *The Pen*, 21 Apr/89, p. 16.

¹¹³ A. Daniel, *The Guardian*, 27 July/2000.

¹¹⁴ Muslims and other readers may be interested in my detailed comments on these concerns in my “*The Prophet Moses...*” Days 178-205.

¹¹⁵ M. Memon, “*Hijab and the Intention...*”

¹¹⁶ Adewole, “*Weakening...*”

¹¹⁷ L. Abdullahi, “*The True Face...*”

¹¹⁸ A. Ben-Akpan, 11 Nov/02.

¹¹⁹ *CC*, 3 Mar/2003; *TCNN Research Bulletin*, Mar/2003; *Woord en Daad*, Dec/2003.

¹²⁰ M. Ali-Agan, “*Commendable...*”

¹²¹ On the same subject written in the same spirit, see also I.I. Malumfashi, 15 July/88, Appendix 4.

¹²² Reproduced from *The Pen*, 15 Feb/91, p. 7. I confess that much of it resonates also in my Christian heart against the immodest flaunting by many Christian women of contemporary fashions hardly inspired by piety even on Christian pulpits and other leadership platforms. Apart from the name, the author is not further identified in *The Pen*.

¹²³ R. Yusuf, *TD*, 20 Feb/03.

¹²⁴ Boer, *CC*. “Islamic Dress Codes on Christian Schoolgirls and Nurses.” 17 Nov/2003. R. Ogbonnaya and N. Okon-Ekong, 2 Dec/2003. <www.compassdirect.org>, “British Nigerian Christians Launch Rights Initiative,” 15 Dec/2003. Do these Christians understand what they are doing, placing secular concepts of rights above the responsibility for modesty, whether Christian or Muslim? have they ever seen nurses in action as they wear the ugly, degrading uniforms used in Nigeria? *That* style is defended in the name of Christ? Whenever I see these nurses I am embarrassed. Has anger deprived Christians of the capacity to think straight? how far will we allow secularism to corrupt our hearts and minds?

¹²⁵ Mohammed Ibrahim Hassan, a very prominent northern Muslim politician, claimed that Obasanjo had agreed to an agenda written by the north [S. Ibrahim, 30 Dec/02]. See also M. Ikhariale.

126 K. Maier, pp. 143-144.

127 *New Nigerian*, 8 Nov/99, p. 1.

128 S. Kumo, "*Sharia Is Constitutional.*"

129 *Al-Madinah*, p. 7.

