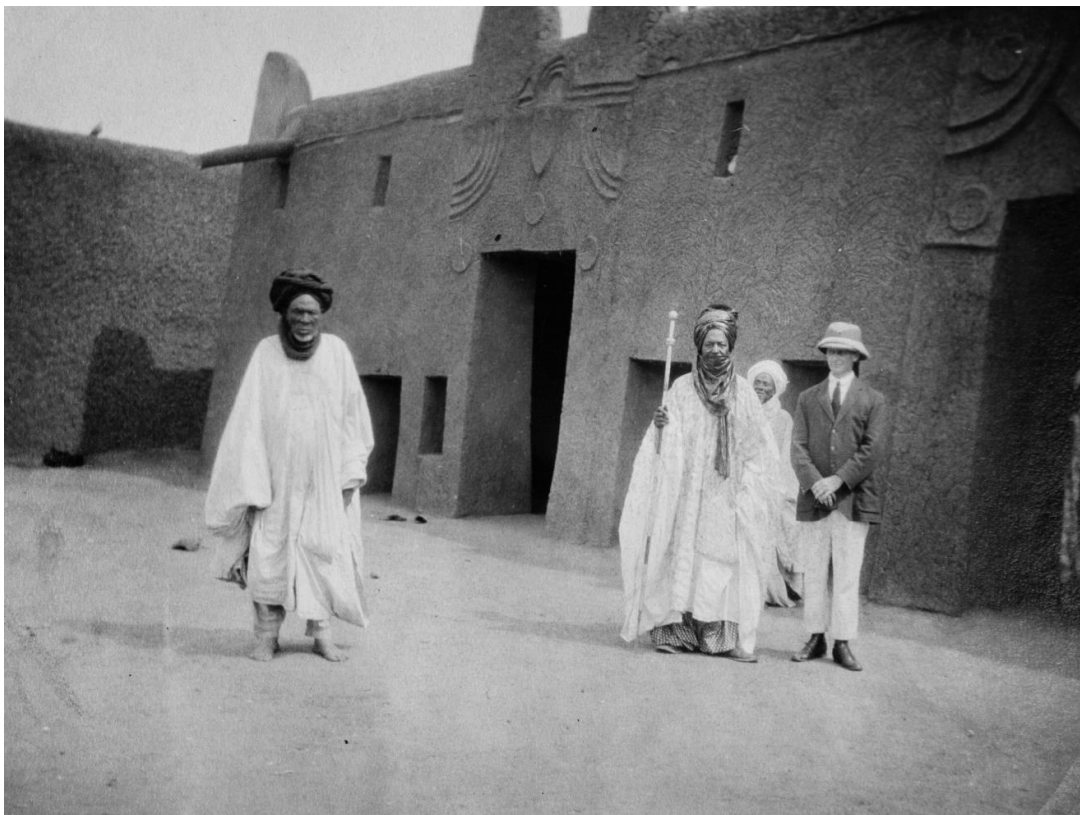


# EMIRS, EVANGELICALS & EMPIRE



by

Ian Linden

## Author's Preface

There is a back-story behind this book. The best place to tell it is in a preface. Otherwise the reader will have several questions left unanswered reading its eight chapters. For example, what sort of book is this? Why did all the interviews take place as long ago as 1975? Where is the author coming from? All will be revealed below.

I got a job teaching in the history department of Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, northern Nigeria, in the early 1970s. The name of the university gives a clue to why research for this book was fascinating and worth doing. Sir Ahmadu Bello was descended from the founder and first Sultan of the famous nineteenth century Sokoto Caliphate. By the mid-1960s, as first Premier of the Northern Region and *Sardauna* (Crown Prince of Sokoto and the right-hand man of the Sultan), he became a national champion of the cause of Islam. He became Vice-President of the World Islamic League, established lucrative relations with Saudi Arabia, founded the *Jama'atu Nasril Islam*, JNI, the Society for Support of Islam, along with the Council of Malams, and promoted and led a major campaign of reform and conversion to Islam. It is remarkable that Christianity managed to take root and thrive in this thoroughly Muslim environment.

As an outstanding political figure representing Northern interests, Ahmadu Bello was killed alongside many of the Muslim elite in the North during the military coup of January 1966. It heralded the country's descent into war, bloodshed and the tragic Biafran secession

war. But while I was in Zaria, apart from further military coups, peace reigned. The Vice-Chancellor of the university was a Christian, Dr. Ishaya Audu. He had been Sir Ahmadu Bello's personal physician and went on to become Minister of External Affairs in 1979 under President Shehu Shagari. He was detained for a year after a military coup took place led by General Muhammad Buhari.

My appointment at the university, unwittingly placed me at the bottom end of a hierarchy. Yakubu Gowon was President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria at the time. He came from the same first clutch of Northern Christians as the Vice-Chancellor who, in turn, had a warm relationship with my head of department, an expatriate Professor, Robert Gavin, formerly of Ibadan University, and also with Professor James O'Connell, a Catholic priest in charge of the Politics department. I naively neglected the fact that this placed me at the end of a Christian clientship chain with links up to the President of the Federal Republic and that this might make me vulnerable if one of the links disappeared. Especially if the link happened to be with the very top.

Yakubu Gowon, was overthrown on 29 July 1975, by a close associate, Colonel Nanven Garba with the help of junior officers. The coup ushered in as President a Northern Muslim, Brigadier Murtala Muhammad, Gowon's Minister for Communications. In a short space of time, the Vice-Chancellor, a very fine one, left the university. Some months before, Ishaya Audu had asked me to undertake research on the origins of the Hausa Christian community in the North. I was mid-way through this task in mid-1975. Bob Gavin soon went off to the University of Ilorin. Fortunately, this little house of cards seemed only to have collapsed as far as the expatriate head of the history

department. I remained. I assumed because I was well below the radar. Murtala Muhammad was assassinated on the way to Dodon Barracks in Lagos in February 1976 during another - but failed - military coup.

In late 1975, the atmosphere was tense around the campus with a strong anti-expatriate current running in the university. The research had been far from dull. Church Missionary Society (CMS) records revealed the beginning of an unexpected wave of conversions to Christianity in Zaria in 1913. A Muslim sect, the Children of the Israelites, known as the *Isawa*, came out of the bush. They had heard that the CMS missionaries had important information about *nabi Isa*, the Prophet Jesus, in whom they had a particular interest. Not all converted to Christianity. To my surprise, I discovered that the sect still existed in a few settlements between Zaria and Kano.

The journey to find them might have been a scene from a movie. We passed through idyllic savannah countryside: car, bicycle and then, when the sand became too thick, walking; past young Fulani boys tending the cattle, huts with red peppers drying on the roofs, a Northern Nigerian version of Constable country though with no hay wains. The Children of the Israelites' compounds were deliberately well off the beaten track. We arrived to find a malam under a large tree sitting crossed-legged with a large Qur'an on his lap. He looked as if he was growing out of a book. In terms of culture and belief, he was. Then came the exciting detective adventure of teasing out the sect's story from oral history accounts, finding out as much as possible about the origins of the movement.

Chapter Four of the book attempts to patch together in a narrative what information was available. But there remains a degree of guesswork about what the influences were in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that generated the sect. I sifted and pulled together all I had gathered into a paper 'The Isawa Mallams c. 1850-1919: some problems in the religious history of Northern Nigeria' and delivered it at a social sciences seminar at Ahmadu Bello University in late 1975.

It could not have been a worse moment. Zaria and Kaduna were in a political ferment. Hausa colleagues poured over *The New Nigerian* newspaper in search of who was up and who was down politically. Northern politics championed the history of the Sokoto Caliphate as a resounding endorsement of a new Northern Muslim consciousness. So the historiography of the Caliphate was a hot potato. For some, like Dr. Yusufu Usman, a fellow lecturer in the history department, the – remote – potential, and quest, for a rooted socialism in the North was a leading consideration. Although he, himself, came from a Fulani family, the ruling elite, and displayed princely manners.

None of these manners were on show when I delivered my paper on the Israelites' sect. Led by Dr. Yusufu Usman, a torrent of abuse and denial was unleashed on the paper and its unsuspecting author. 'Islam was One', I was told. I had made up the story of a sect that partly converted to Christianity. I was a CIA agent. I suddenly realized how wrong I had been to believe that I was below the radar. My work on the origins of the Christian community was seen as a deliberate political challenge to the integrity of the Muslim North. Or so it sounded. I had forgotten what Orwell had said "he who controls the past controls the

future, he who controls the present controls the past". I left the university in 1976.

I was not, though, deterred, from writing a book in which the role of the Israelites' sect featured as an important element in the birth of Hausa Christianity. I wrote on flimsy paper with a sit-up-and-beg typewriter, with regular showers to cool down my brain and restore my ability to think straight. The typescript went into one of about seven tea chests that eventually made it back to England. There it stayed in an attic.

With the rise of *Boko Haram* and Muslim-Christian conflict in Kaduna, I became involved with interfaith work involving Christian and Muslim leaders from the N.E. Nigeria. It was primarily an attempt to create a multi-faith front against the terrorists. I began to hear about, and feel for, the plight of Christian communities in the northern states, as well as the depredations of *Boko Haram* on innocent Muslims and their homes and families. The plight of the poor Chibok girls became international news.

Did the Christians in the North not have a right to as much of their own history as research had made available, particularly what I had accrued about the complex origins of their faith in the North? Things had moved on. Did I not owe it to the late Ishaya Audu to put this work into the public domain? I laboriously transferred the text to my laptop. Facing the minor embarrassment of editing my youthful writing undertaken over forty years ago, I edited it and made a few additions. The current text is the result of this process. It remains a fascinating story.

But lest it unleash a plague of trolls, I should point out that, as much as possible, given available sources, I have tried to let the historical actors speak for themselves. And they speak often from correspondence that was meant to be private and, even when in the public domain, with the racist premises and language that characterized the zenith of the British Empire between 1894-1914. Nobody, Emirs, Evangelicals or Imperial officials, would get a praise note today but neither do I set out to condemn. The past is another country.

Set against the dreadful British war crimes during the 1899-1902 Boer War – concentration camps against whites – the conquest of Northern Nigeria cannot be accused of perpetrating the worst of British military atrocities in Africa, though it produced some awful killing. Nor were the Fulani political elite the worst slavers on the continent, though slave-raiding was endemic and brutal. Nor were the intrepid evangelicals anything other than well intentioned, though they were lucky to evangelise in a Muslim community under the protection of imperial rule, and not proselytize in the very different circumstances of a Muslim country in the 21<sup>st</sup>. century.

More so than usual, it needs saying that the bulk of the views expressed in this book are those of the historical actors, living over a hundred years ago. Not mine. What emerges though is the mixture of tolerance, friendship, and commitment to Islam shown by the majority of Nigerians who encountered the CMS Mission. The missionary, Walter Miller, the main character in this story, cannot be accused of tolerance in these early years but, then, he was a passionate evangelical as well as part of what Britain believed to be a glorious imperial project. Miller is often breathing fire and brimstone about Islam and Muslim rulers.

But by 1950, he had mellowed to a very great degree and comes across in *Reflections of a Pioneer* as a thoughtful, progressive Christian thinker - with a surprising 21<sup>st</sup>. concern for animal welfare and a willingness to admit that he may have got some things wrong.

Given the struggle for good interfaith relations in Nigeria, it is my hope that nothing in this book will be taken out of context and used against contemporary members of either faith, Islam or Christianity. Perhaps the difference from the present will encourage the reader by showing how far Nigeria has come in the last century, as well as how far the past still controls the present. That, at least, is my hope.

My thanks go to the late Professor Ishaya Audu for commissioning this book and to Ken Osborne for his help at the CMS archives in Oxford. Steve Pierce's excellent photography enabled some old CMS photographs to be reproduced and Edmund Ross's IT skills did the rest in making the book accessible on-line. Professor Paul Clough at the University of Malta helped with Hausa translations. A big thank you to my wife and family for patiently putting up with my inattention to family matters while working on the text.



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## Introduction

Yakubu Gowon, President of Nigeria from 1966-1975, was born near Pankshin on the central plateau in 1935, the year an aging missionary, Walter Miller, retired from mission work in Northern Nigeria. Miller was the only boy of eight children and brought up in Bristol. Although their lives never intersected, Yakubu Gowon's background cannot be fully understood without an understanding of the world of Walter Miller. Not only was Gowon brought up as an evangelical Christian in a Muslim world, he spent his youth at the brainchild of Walter Miller, St. Bartholomew's school, Wusasa, in Zazzau (Zaria) emirate.

Lieutenant-Colonel Gowon, a young Sandhurst/Camberley graduate, came to power in 1966 emerging as the compromise candidate for the Presidency of a group of northern officers. That he was able to hold Nigeria together for nine critical years, was in part because he came from what was then a rare breed, a northern Christian. And to reference a northern Christian in those days was usually to add "Wusasa", a settlement and Christian community outside the walls of Zaria City.

This book is an account of the remarkable events that led up to the creation of the Wusasa community in 1929. It was the first Christian community of northern Nigeria and the first – pioneering - centre before the advent of numerous Christian denominations later in the century. And it was the first to have arisen from the earliest Christian Mission to establish itself inside a Muslim walled city in Northern

Nigeria, Zaria. Several of the first generation Zaria Christians became firsts in their professions. Wusasa produced the first qualified pharmacist and pediatrician from the North, the first physician, Dr. Barau Dikko, a founder member of the Northern Peoples Congress (N.P.C.), the first Nigerian Vice-Chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University, Dr. Ishaya Audu, the pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, Malam Nuhu Bayero, and the first female commissioner in the Northern Administration, Dorothy Miller. In later years it was to produce the most celebrated of Nigeria's military commanders, Theophilus Dan Juma, who became Minister of Defence.

The second generation fanned out into key posts both in Northern and national life. To describe Wusasa's alumni is to talk of a small and closely-knit intermarrying community whose members, between 1966 and 1975, became part of the Nigerian elite, the New Nigerians. They joined a Christian elite that had formed in the South during the nineteenth century so well described by Professor Jacob Ajayi in his *Christian Mission in Nigeria: 1841-1891*.

What bound them together, whether Hausa, Tiv or Angas was their schooldays. They had passed through, married into, or were in some way associated with, an African imitation of an English Public School, St. Bartholomew's. Here, like their spiritual predecessors in Victorian and Edwardian England, the New Nigerians learnt Latin and leadership skills. Some learnt them better than others. Not just on the playing fields of Eton but on the Wusasa hockey pitch, a capacity for loyalty beyond kin and ethnic group, the substance of a later nationalism, first took shape and developed. Through St. Bartholomew's Gowon transitioned from president of the Prefects Association to head of the Old Boys

Association. Sandhurst and Camberley completed the sequence, from one form of discipline to another, from Public school deprivations to the harshness of the British barrack room.

The mission school has been such a perennial feature of the colonial landscape that it is easy to underestimate its significance in modern African history. School friendships can make the difference between life and death in military coups. What every Nigerian child finds out, schools are the great sorting houses of individual destinies, with examinations as the new initiation rites into that most powerful of societies, that of wealth and privilege. At least until the 1950s, one of the wonders of British imperialism was that the vintage of the past, decanted in a classical education, was on offer in a few schools like St. Bartholomew's.

The culture of a powerful class in Edwardian England passed through the sieve of the Church Missionary Society's (CMS) educational work into the pupils at Wusasa. They may not have saluted the Union Jack or sung the national anthem on Empire Day - first invented for the deceased Queen's birthday, 24 May 1904; that was not Miller's style. But the CMS students gained a vital head start educationally.

In what sense were Mission and the British Administration part of a common process? When the historian moves away from big brush strokes and grand themes into the tangle of detail and complexity in one place, one time, one Mission, one missionary, imperialism appears as a highly contested process. The relationship between Christian missions and colonial administration varied from place to place, and changed over time. The missionaries did not escape the sense of racial superiority that informed and motivated British imperialism. But they

also brought a critique of the gulf between imperial ideology and reality. They were less frightened of being laughed at. The written records of mission governance and - Anglo-African - Indirect Rule in Northern Nigeria tell this complex story.

In the Nigerian context, to ask why a school grew up when and where it did may provide an answer to why Malam X is growing guinea-corn on two acres and Malam Y is a Federal Commissioner. Stark contingency meets simplistic determinism. To understand why St. Bartholomew's school began in Zaria, you need to follow a game of consequences back two generations to when a coal and timber merchant in Bristol denied his son Walter Miller the opportunity of attending a Public school. Such schools were too worldly. So as a missionary Miller decided to create his own in Nigeria.

Missionaries and administrators, planters and policemen, are people drawn from particular societies at a particular historical stage, not stereotypes playing allotted roles on the ideological board. Telling their story in the grand sweep of imperialism means taking this individuality seriously. George Shepperson achieved this impressive balance in his book *Independent African*, a brilliant weaving together of African biography and wider colonial history in Malawi. But it is no easy task. Like a mixed group photograph on a sunny day, either the white faces are washed out or the black faces are too dark to see features.

That much of this book focusses on the personality of a European missionary, Walter Miller, is not by inadvertence or to make a point. If an English writer is going to achieve any understanding of the past in Northern Nigeria, beginning by what is culturally easiest to understand before going on to what is the painstaking work of the anthropologist,

seems a sensible plan. A Nigerian writer might adopt the same plan with different emphases and a different outcome. Though he or she would have difficulty in finding photographs of the early emirs and Zaria Christians.

If the point of reference for this study is not the nation-state or the origins of African nationalism, but questions about the interaction of religion and imperialism, no apology for a focus on Walter Miller is needed. In addition, a full account of the origins of the Wusasa community requires consideration of the remarkable pre-colonial sect, the “Children of the Israelites”, that grew up in the walled city of Kano in the early nineteenth century. But it would be intellectually dishonest to pretend that their later conversions to Christianity had more causal significance in accounting for the importance of Wusasa than the religion and culture of Victorian and Edwardian England, brought with all its contradictions to Northern Nigeria by Walter Miller and the CMS.

So this story begins in the world of Victorian and Edwardian England and ends with the New Nigerians. It concerns the impact of one man, one mission and one emirate set in the turbulent early days of Empire in Hausaland. Walter Miller’s *Times* obituary on 27 August 1952 described him as “The Apostle to the Hausas”. To call this book an essay would give the wrong impression and be a little pretentious. It is longer and more complex and it is better described as a monograph.

## Chapter One

“It will be remembered that Bishop Tugwell went to Kano during the Ashanti (sic) against Sir F. Lugard’s wishes”

Colonial Office Minute of April 1903 from R.L. Antrobus



The publication in 1890 of Henry Morton Stanley's *In Darkest Africa* and General William Booth's *In Darkest England, and the Way Out* highlighted the uncomfortable dilemmas facing the Victorian evangelical conscience. The British poor had become no more deserving as the Queen's long reign progressed. "Washed in the Blood of the Lamb" by the Methodists, the poor still confronted the established, and less sanguine, Anglican Church with an unsavoury working class culture and, now, threatening signs of organization. Labour Unions, strikes and riots had transformed what one honest divine had called "romantic repulsiveness" into the makings of serious class conflict.<sup>1</sup> News of abominable British behavior in pursuit of Empire trickled back from Africa. The Christian struggle with Sin continued on the home front. But a condign battle was increasingly waged in foreign lands.

Religious revival, to counter growing secularization, remained a powerful force amongst Anglicans at least until the end of the nineteenth century and directly benefitted the Church Missionary Society (CMS). But by 1900 the total membership of all the Churches was estimated to be only 33% of the population. The Keswick Convention, a great generator of evangelical energy, at first kept the CMS and its Foreign Missions at bay; after 1887 it pledged its direct support.<sup>2</sup> The Great Commission to preach the Gospel to all nations provided the imperative. A Public School education provided a flow of administrators and army officers for the Empire. The Anglican schools laid the groundwork for a third vocation, that of the missionary, to join them. The muscle in a muscular Christianity was needed for a vocation overseas. Between 1883 and 1894 the CMS posted 369 men abroad,



one and a half times the number sent out in the previous decade; 164 of these were graduates, more than half from Cambridge.<sup>3</sup> Men could, and did, move from army and business to Mission and colonial service, often in that order. Many would claim that the “clean-living” District Officer was no less a missionary than the churchman, and even army officers would find moral purpose in battle, if only “to teach them a lesson”.

The Inter-Collegiate Christian Union (CICCU), founded in 1887, accounts for the role of Cambridge University in providing the CMS with many future recruits. In the lectures of the Regius Professor of History, J.R. Seeley, from 1882 they could hear about the significance and correct conduct of Empire and the ‘expansion of England’. In the intense intimacy of undergraduate rooms, Britain’s Christian youth discovered their vocation for mission in foreign parts. Their first steps were usually towards less demanding cultures: Summer camps for preparatory school children in Bournemouth. Those moved by their experience of these Children’s Special Service Missions and who persevered in their religious formation in Public Schools, took their faith to University.

While the slums of England’s industrial cities echoed to the drums of the Salvation Army, the alumni of Public Schools and Cambridge turned beyond the Christian settlement of Toynbee Hall and London’s East End to more exotic rhythms abroad. Valour and Service, the principal virtues cultivated by future missionaries, found little purchase in the drab world of tired workers, new chip shops and mass-produced clothing. The map of Africa on which contemporary cartoonists had drawn Stanley and Emin Pasha rampant became a new heraldic terrain of spiritual effort and physical heroism. Its virtuous missionaries filled

the gap in British identity between the reality of Empire, military power and violence, and its benign imperial bearers of civilization. In the London CMS headquarters the map of the world was dotted with white crosses; the Society had begun work at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The brave and the zealous felt called to plant more.

The African missions offered something different to the “romantic repulsiveness” that had drawn some to mission in the London slums. Though they were not lacking in romance or the experience of repulsion. The “Soudan” notably offered a doughty opponent: Islam. The Maxim gun had barely been functioning two years in warfare when Gordon died at Khartoum in January 1885. Gordon, obeying God as much as the Queen, provided a model of the Christian hero knowingly going to his martyrdom. His splendid death brought him further celebrity and with it a national conviction summoning Britain to prayer and vengeance. The struggle with Islam was to be waged not only with regular troops and new weapons but by lonely Christian knights-errant risking martyrdom, shedding the constraints of wing-collar for flowing *riga*. “Now, if they imprison us”, proclaimed G.W. Brooke of the “Soudan Party”, the missionaries in a new group sent to northern Nigeria, “the British Government are not to interfere; if they kill us, no reparation is to be demanded”.<sup>4</sup>

Graham Wilmot Brooke was a good example of the missionary pioneers in Hausaland. With an army career in mind, he first trained at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, then undertook a number of daring, though abortive, expeditions to Northern Nigeria. On his return to Britain in 1888, he presented plans to the CMS for the evangelization of Hausaland. Brooke advocated strict discipline, evangelical poverty, and

identification with the people including Hausa food and dress. His was a radical brand of Christianity that found little place for human weakness.

Failing to appreciate that trading, buying and selling, looked down on by his peers in Britain, was part of everyday life in Nigeria, Brooke's Soudan Party launched impassioned diatribes against the Christianity and Commerce of the Niger Mission's African agents in Yorubaland. Nigerian evangelists were viewed as venal traders and suspected of lacking in sexual virtue. The better established Niger Mission continued to support their African staff. Conflicting missiology mattered little. The Soudan Party got no further than Lokoja on the Niger-Benue confluence and died one after the other of local diseases. .

The echoes of the great battle-cry 'Christianity & Commerce' against slavery died away in the swamps of the Niger. The Soudan Party put paid to the public sanctification of commerce that David Livingstone, a man of humbler origins and different aspirations, had advocated. The Soudan Party had nobler aspirations. Kitted out in Hausa gear they gaze languorously from the pages of mission magazines, foppish perhaps, but with hearts of evangelical oak. They thought and behaved like a sect. The Niger Mission agents had been building a Church. This, the first major European attempt to move into Hausaland was, and was later acknowledged to be, a major disaster. A chapter of Nigerian missionary effort closed in 1892 in a flurry of recrimination and self-righteousness.<sup>5</sup>

But the quest for the deserving poor continued to draw the young missionary from the fleshpots and besuited pastors of the South to an ever-receding frontier of imagined native purity north of the Niger. The

South “convicted of Sin”, doubtless facilitated by the consumption of six million gallons of German Gin per annum, sank into the circle of the unredeemed reserved for striking dockers, anarchists and Catholics. “It cannot be denied”, declared Sir Gilbert Carter, Governor of Lagos Colony, “that Christianity and Drink usually go together”.<sup>6</sup> Muslim Hausaland could only gain by the comparison. The paradox of this melancholy equation, the Bible & the Bottle, chafed in evangelical circles spurring on continued interest in the Muslim North.

C.H. Robinson, brother of J.A. Robinson of Soudan Party fame, spent time in the Muslim cities of Northern Nigeria in 1894 and became a founder member of the Hausa Association. A distinguished linguist whose Hausa dictionary is still used, a man with anthropological skills, he nonetheless produced books and articles on Hausaland that contained the ethnic stereotypes that were becoming conventional wisdom. The corollary to the Liberian Edward Blyden’s and, later, Edmund Morel’s positive view of Islam as a suitable stepping stone to Christianity for Africans was that the Muslim Hausa and Fulani were elevated to an ethnic peerage. In C.H. Robinson’s opinion: “there is at least as great a difference between an educated and cultured Hausa, for example, and the savage he has left behind in the Delta”, as there was with himself.<sup>7</sup> Doubters need only refer to the racist science of the day, physical anthropology, and note “the martial bearing and frank, intelligent countenance” of the Hausa troops marching past on the Queen’s Jubilee”.<sup>8</sup> Governor Carter also noted “a dignity and self-respect about a Mohammedan negro which is looked for in vain in his Christian brother”.<sup>9</sup> Who, he did not add on this occasion, tended to be “uppity”. Such attitudes soon re-surfaced within the ideology

underpinning Lord Lugard's Nigerian colonial – military – State, based on Indirect Rule.<sup>10</sup>

Despite this tilt to Muslim society, the CMS did not believe Islam was, in practice, making progress in the Hausa States. By the turn of the century when the CMS tried again to reach the North, the missionaries had decided that Islam was the religion of Fulani conquest of the Hausa States, with only modest adherence by their Hausa subjects.

Consequently any Soudan Party needed outstanding preparation before undertaking evangelization.<sup>11</sup> The Soudan Party seemed to hold in parallel the superiority of the CMS' European knights-errant over the enfeebled CMS Yoruba protégés in the South and the Fulani-Hausa distinction in the North.

The irony was that the only sensitive attempt at evangelization of the emirates in the nineteenth century, of necessity, had to take place under the auspices of the Niger mission. Nigerian evangelists knew how to behave in the presence of emirs to achieve a degree of acceptance. Operating out of a small mission station at Kipo Hill near Lokoja, the evangelist Charles Paul won the friendship of the *Sarkin Musulmi*, and obtained an invitation to visit Sokoto where the Sultan resided. As the capital of the Caliphate forged in the early nineteenth century by Uthman dan Fodio, Sokoto meant access to the heart of the emirate system.

There followed invitations from the Emirs of Nassarawa and Kontagora both of whom had been taken by the personality of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the first Nigerian Anglican bishop of Nigeria. The Lokoja Nupe Emir accepted a leather-bound Bible sent from London CMS headquarters. But as Charles Paul recognized, it was a diplomatic

gesture; there was no intention of allowing Christianity to spread. These initiatives were brought to an abrupt halt by the blunderings of the Soudan Party and the aggressive advance of the Royal Niger Company to Lokoja.<sup>12</sup>

There were occasional subsequent visits to the emirates from Europeans seeking trading concessions. But missionary momentum was lost. Meanwhile the balance of power in Hausaland in the 1890s was undergoing tectonic shifts. The Royal Niger Chartered Company attacked the walled cities of Ilorin and Bida. Both Sokoto and Gwandu emirates, which had been receiving “subsidies” from the Company, rightly saw these defeats of their vassals as the onset of White conquest. Sir George Taubman Goldie, another alumnus of the Royal Military College, Woolwich, and head of the Niger Company, led the expedition to Bida and dreamt about smashing the Fulani Empire with the aid of 10,000 Sikh mercenaries.<sup>13</sup>

The days of polite diplomatic deals had gone. Henceforth Christian missionaries would be seen as part of a destructive British invasion, however much they might wish to dissociate themselves from the military side of imperialism. That did not stop the military attacks being applauded in CMS mission magazines. Whatever the rhetoric of the Soudan Party, the missionaries were framed in the Emirs’ minds as part of the invader’s baggage train. And that was moving inexorably north.

The Muslim communities of the North-East and North were now bottled up. French expeditionary forces were closing in from the North. The route to the East was blocked by the Sudanese Arab warlord, Rabih az-Zubayr, a slaver who had taken control in the ancient Bornu Empire. Pilgrims who wanted to go on the *hajj* to Mecca had first to

make the perilous crossing of the Sahara. Inchoate fears of subjection by the Christians, *Anasara*, (literally Nazarenes) spread throughout the emirates. By the turn of the century, Mahdist ideas, vague apocalyptic expectations of a final battle held by an oppressed peasantry, or the doctrinally more precise vision of the *Sarkin Musulmi* of *hijra*, flight (imitating the Prophet's retreat from Mecca to Medina), were flourishing.<sup>14</sup>

A constant flow of Hausa pilgrims passing through Tripoli made it an ideal centre for language training for the second Soudan Party. Caravans used to assemble in the desert town of Zinder where horses, donkeys and cattle were sold for exchange goods, and then set off with Tuareg guides across the desert. After braving the rigours of the journey and the death of his father, a Katsina Malam, Abdul Majid, reached the walls of Tripoli in 1898. He was recruited as a house-servant by L.H.W. Nott of the Niger Mission, Oxford educated and from the York and Lancashire Regiment.<sup>15</sup> Nott's future colleagues, W.R.S. Miller, A. E. Richardson, ex-Wadham College, Oxford, and J.C. Dudley-Ryder, a socialist, ex-Trinity College, Cambridge, arrived shortly afterwards to begin their language courses.

Their contact with the Hausa-speaking pilgrims in Tripoli began to call in question some of the missionaries' assessment of the shallow depth of Islamisation in Northern Nigeria. Nott was surprised by the devotion of the pilgrims he met and found that almost 90% were literate in Arabic. This *hajj* sample was, of course, a self-selecting group but it contrasted strongly with Robinson's confident claim that the malams in Kano were virtually "ignorant of Islam". The discrepancy, they came to realise, reflected the differences between pilgrims, with enough of a financial

safety net to undertake the demanding *hajj* and with a generally solid religious education, and poor malams in Kano who mostly lacked both.<sup>16</sup>

The trade routes West-East via the *bilad al-Soudan* were the channels through which religious ideas flowed. The missionaries detected elements of a Madhist undercurrent emanating from the Sudan: “there is, so we are told by all Malams who come here, a universal belief in the Soudan, that the power prophesied in all their Sacred books, which is to conquer and rule the Soudan, is to be the English and that it will now be very soon”<sup>17</sup> This end-time scenario included Jesus, *Nabi Isa*, returning at the head of a victorious army for a short period of forty months to defeat the Anti-Christ. But the missionaries produced their own interpretation of this belief: supernatural sanction for British military conquest, instead of stage one in the Mahdi’s triumphant irruption in history. It was, they imagined, further proof of their divine election to be the White saviours of the Hausa States.<sup>18</sup>

In short, by the end of the 1890s, the CMS found themselves nurturing three incompatible beliefs about Hausaland. They were prepared to accept that Hausaland was advanced, according to one observer “a civilization with which that of ancient China cannot compare”<sup>19</sup>. They increasingly acknowledged that Islam was both powerful and spreading in Nigeria, by “force, slavery and persuasion”<sup>20</sup>. There was also a more scholarly approach to Islam becoming available in Europe but mainly in studies published in German.<sup>21</sup> It took years to permeate Nigeria. Finally came the problem that the missionaries had to square what Miller called “the almost unbearable yoke of slavery of Muslimism” with their relationships with personable and devout Hausa pilgrims.<sup>22</sup>



That the Hausa had to be saved from something, be it slavery or sin, was not in doubt. Opinion soon gained ground that they needed to be saved from the Fulani. Miller again: “when I met, in Tripoli, the pick of the Hausa people, the religious, the more intelligent and educated, I heard from them, before I had ever been in Nigeria of the atrocities of these Fulani rulers, how the people everywhere were groaning under their cruel selfishness and lust for power, and how the pagan peoples were gradually becoming decimated by constant slave raids”.<sup>23</sup> This verdict on the Fulani, of course, lent a modicum of legitimacy to subsequent British military attacks on the Caliphate authorities.

Meanwhile back in London on 15 August 1899, the Anglican bishop of the new Diocese of Western Equatorial Africa, Herbert Tugwell, a Cambridge alumnus from Corpus Christi College, and for the last four years a CMS missionary in Lagos, met with the future Lord Frederick Lugard. Lugard, the son of two missionaries, but who had lost his faith, was a former Niger Company man who headed the West African Frontier Force (WAFF). Within five months he was to become the first High Commissioner of the newly formed Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, was determined to keep the encroaching French out of Nigeria. Lugard was sent to do the job. Like Bernard Shaw’s typical Englishman, never at a loss for a moral attitude, Lugard, a former Congregational Minister and Gladstonian Liberal, could be a formidable opponent and warrior.

Tugwell was not to be trifled with either. An old colonial official confided her definitive condemnation of the man: Tugwell “did not look after his ponies”.<sup>24</sup> Lugard found Tugwell difficult. He reassured Chamberlain that he would not let the missionaries, like the French, get

in the way of British imperial endeavours. “When missionaries desire to penetrate beyond the zone in which the administration can afford them effective guarantees of safety, they should undertake in the clearest manner to obey the directions of the Governor, to attempt no advance without his consent, and to be guided by the limitations which he may think fit to impose”, he had told the Bishop.<sup>25</sup> The Colonial Office saw problems ahead. “I wish that the Mission was not going” lamented the Secretary of State, Joseph Chamberlain, who saw Empire as Britain’s Manifest Destiny. “It would be a very serious addition to our duties to have to decide where missions might or not be established” chipped in his Under-Secretary, the second Earl of Selborne.<sup>26</sup> But this very serious addition was soon to be added.

With these restrictive marching orders, the group left Liverpool for Lagos in December 1900. Bishop Tugwell and the Soudan Party, singing lustily Rock of Ages and Onward Christian Soldiers, reached Ibadan in January 1900. Lugard was barely three weeks ahead of them, returning as High Commissioner to the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. The mission Party caught up with him 150 miles north at Jebba, government headquarters on the Niger. Under the watchful, monocled eye of Lieutenant A. Lewis of the 21<sup>st</sup>. Lancers, veteran of Omdurman and President of the Officer’s mess, clergy and army dined together. One impression from a government official was that Lugard, on this occasion, behaved like a “Special Commissioner of Heaven invested with authority”.<sup>27</sup> Walter Miller’s impression of Lugard, though, was of “a most interesting man and a delightful conversationalist”. The sentiments were reciprocated.<sup>28</sup> It was all most gentlemanly. One of the missionaries came away from the table convinced that Lugard

entertained “no doubts as to the expediency of our advance”<sup>29</sup>. The Bishop had less excuse for taking diplomatic niceties for approval; he knew well enough that Chamberlain, Lugard and George Goldie from the Niger Company were all concerned that the CMS should not move outside the protective range of British outposts on the Niger and Benue.<sup>30</sup> “The White man is a fish which will die if it leaves the Niger”, the Emir of Kontagora was alleged to have said<sup>31</sup>.

Lugard himself was out on a limb with a local force of only six officers and three hundred men reconnoitering up the Kaduna River towards Bida to find a site for a new administrative headquarters. Two days after their dinner together, Lugard told Tugwell to contact Major T.L.N. Morland who was in charge of the Kaduna patrols if communication with Jebba proved difficult.<sup>32</sup> Bida was in and out of British control with rumours of an uprising reaching Jebba, so the missionaries were asked to delay their departure. They finally set out from Jebba on 5 March 1900 leaving Miller and Tugwell, who were sick in hospital, to catch up later. The hazards of the journey were catching up with them.<sup>33</sup>

Once outside Lugard’s martial world, the missionaries, marching off into mission history were alone in an evangelical world of piety and heroism. That is if a trailing line of carriers with six months supplies could be described as ‘alone’. The umbilicus with Mother England was not entirely cut: a government messenger found them encamped and told them that British patrols had moved to a base in Wushishi. The local reception for the missionaries there was consequently hostile owing to the troops’ presence. But there was no sign of Major T.L.N. Morland. Their Yoruba porters, now well into slave raiding country,

prudently all fled. After waiting a week for instructions, a young officer foolishly let them proceed North.<sup>34</sup>

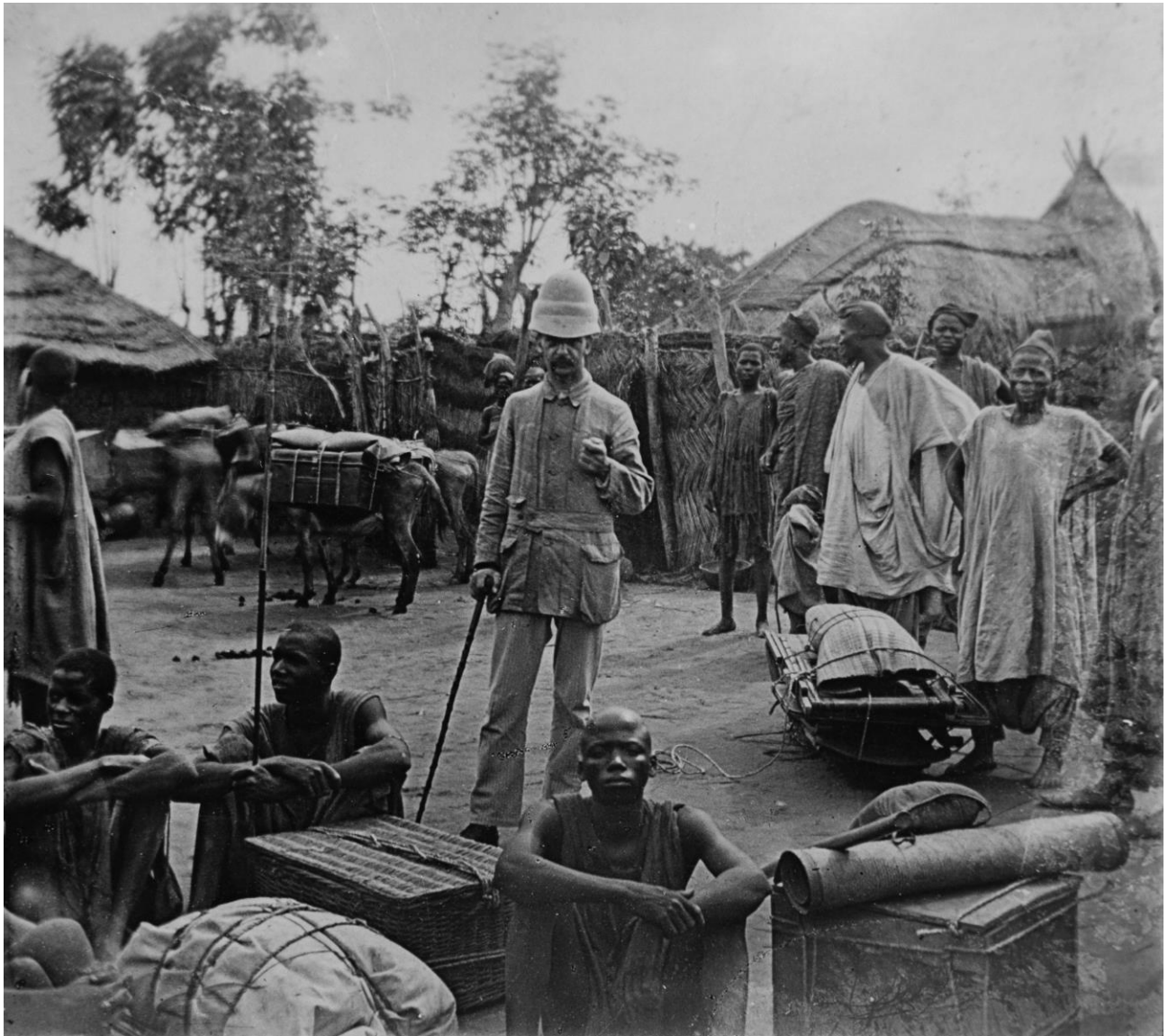
They now began passing through a highly contested region of Nigeria, uncertain what awaited them, what was going on and why. Outrunning Lugard's patrols they acquired a different armed escort, this time from the Emir of Kontagora, which accompanied them from village to village.<sup>35</sup> This delicate attention seemed as much a canny diplomatic move on the Emir's part as a gesture to protect them. "We were rather amused to find the people's resentment to suggestions that they were under Bida", wrote Miller. "Under the Queen", the escort declared.... "They seemed really afraid of the Fulahs and glad to see us".<sup>36</sup> The Soudan Party were now welcomed with gifts and general civility in the villages they passed through.

The missionaries worked out that their mixed receptions were the product of disputes between Emirates and a fast moving political situation. With his southern catchment area for slaves now occupied by the British, the Emir of Kontagora had recently invaded Zaria emirate and was gradually taking control of it. Zaria was at the intersection of the power and outreach of the two great northern Caliphates, Sokoto in the West and Bornu in the East. Each required annual tribute in slaves.

The story that the missionaries put together was that, against the wishes of the Sultan of Sokoto, Kwassau, a candidate from the Bornawa dynasty had usurped the role of Zaria Emir. On the other hand, the *Dan Galadima* - a pre-Fulani Hausa title for an emirate senior official – who sat on the war council in Zaria, had supported the candidate from the Mallawa dynasty. He was an ally of Sokoto against the British. The split allegiances in the Zaria hierarchy and families could offer little

concerted opposition to the forces from Kontagora. The little tribes, Gwari, Kadara and Katab, encountered by the British were vulnerable to slave-raiding from both Sokoto and Kontagora; not surprisingly the possible advantages of British protection assured the missionaries of a warm welcome.<sup>37</sup>

The heady optimism that began to grow in the CMS Party was boosted by their reception when they reached Zaria itself. The Emir's messengers met them some two miles from the town and discussions conducted by the missionaries' interpreter, Thomas Bako, a Nupe Christian, were welcoming.<sup>38</sup> The heavily-laden caravan was escorted through the gates of the city.



“The streets were lined with rows upon rows of people”, wrote Rev. Albert Richardson, “one of the headmen with his polished brass rod and my boy Audu with a stout stick literally beat the crowds off”.<sup>39</sup> Three hundred of the Emir’s soldiers armed with guns and spears were drawn up in the palace courtyard. In order to speak privately to the missionaries, the Emir ordered out all of his councilors save the *Sarkin Makera*, the chief of the blacksmiths, who would traditionally provide housing for visitors. “You must know that the people are afraid of

you”, the Emir said. “Now, you have your customs and we have ours. Your task in this country is to put things right. In doing so see to it that you do not overturn them”. Sage advice for an imperial power. The conversation was reported back to London by precarious mails.<sup>40</sup>

Zaria had some experience of missionaries. A Canadian member of a party of three had died not far from there in 1894. Rev. C.H. Robinson, author of *Hausaland* published in 1900, had spent several weeks in the city, leaving £25 of trade goods the lighter. The *Sarkin Makera*, an important figure, imbued with the mysterious and protective powers of the metal-workers, had housed him also, though Robinson’s interest in local culture had caused considerable anxiety.<sup>41</sup>

On this occasion the Emir’s gifts to the CMS Party were lavish: an ox, two sheep, ten bundles of corn, two hundred loads of rice, two pots of honey and palm oil, plus twenty thousand cowries (which would have weighed about 50 pounds but was worth only about five shillings). It spoke more of the perils surrounding the Emir’s court than customary hospitality.<sup>42</sup> The Emir needed to tread with great delicacy between Sokoto, Kontagora and the British. A Niger Company agent had recently visited the town to talk treaties – the missionaries spotted his tent pegs. The West African Frontier Force, WAFF, was only two days away. Kwassau quizzed Miller closely on their intentions but otherwise appeared friendly.<sup>43</sup>

The warm welcome seems to have dispelled prudence. Caution gave way to evangelical heroism. With the rains coming on, Bishop Tugwell decided to ignore Lugard’s instructions and press on to what had always been his goal, the great walled desert-edge city of Kano, one hundred miles due north. Here was the heart of an emirate that

extended 12,000 square miles with some 1.7 million people and forty smaller towns. He sent a messenger on ahead to alert Emir Aliyu of Kano.

The sense of excitement and epic deeds is palpable in a report home from the Rev. Albert Richardson: “The news of our approach had spread throughout the whole Soudan. Messengers were hurrying along the caravan tracks with all speed. Richly dressed courtiers were coursing along, bearing the latest news and still later rumours. The Sultan of Sokoto was dispatching envoys to Kano, to Zaria, to Katsena. Rumours were speeding from city to city...Then behind all this was the proclamation of the Sultan of Turkey – the King of the World as they call him – warning Kano and Sokoto, to resist the white man and do all they could to hinder the spread of the white man’s religion”.<sup>44</sup> It was 13 April 1900.

A party of Kano horsemen set out to intercept the missionaries on a track running through Makarfi, but the Soudan Party had fortunately taken a different route north. Seeing Kano’s red mud walls in the distance they broke into a *Te Deum*. But their arrival at the walled city contrasted ominously with that of Zaria; the guards at the *Goron Dutse* gate warned them away. After an anxious delay, they were finally taken with a twelve-horse escort led by the Emir’s treasurer, the *Ma’aji*, into the city and to a cool house. The next day the horse escort took them some seven miles away from the town to the Emir’s country residence at Faniso.<sup>45</sup> There they waited several scorching hours in a small hut where they were instructed on correct court etiquette: shoes and stockings off, heads bowed to the floor in obeisance. Half the day



was gone before the *Waziri* (Vizier), adviser on law for the Emir, appeared and led them into the presence of Emir Aliyu.

The encounter, which was to catch the Victorian imagination, was described dramatically by Ayandele as “rats before a ferocious mastiff”.<sup>46</sup> “Our guide motioned us to be seated just inside the door. There at the far end sat the king on a raised dais with a rich red cloth. He wore a black *rawani*, turban affair, which covered everything but his eyes. The floor was hidden by the throng of chiefs seated in compact rows. Scarcely deigning to salute us, the king turned to Bako and in a gruff voice cried: ‘Now why are they come?’ ‘Are they soldiers?’ ‘No’ ‘Are they traders’ ‘No’ ‘Then why have they come?’”<sup>47</sup> The Bishop tried a number of approaches to explain and justify their presence but in vain. The Emir, forewarned of the Party’s intentions to ‘sit down’ in Kano, made it clear that his people had a perfectly good religion and had no need of teachers. Tugwell’s worst blunder, only exacerbating the situation, was to describe the Party as “messengers of God”, for Muslim ears either redolent of blasphemy or grossly presumptuous. They were summarily dismissed.

After more pleading, the Emir allowed them to send a runner to Sokoto for confirmation of his dismissal - with no doubts about the result. After negotiations with the *Ma’aji*, they were granted leave to remain for three days and on 15 April they celebrated Easter 1900. They stubbornly took advantage of the time to try to win round the *Waziri*.<sup>48</sup> But the ultimatum stood.

Unlike the Emir of Zaria, Aliyu’s position was much stronger. He had been in charge for six years, and that allowed him to consolidate his hold on power and gain the allegiance of neighbouring emirates.

Critically, he had good relations with Sokoto.<sup>49</sup> Europeans were seen as a potential threat but not as a clear and present danger; to the north the French had helpfully conquered Kano's traditional enemy, Zinder.<sup>50</sup> The Emir's aggressive, seigneurial performance in the Faniso palace was primarily for his courtiers' consumption.

The CMS Party were in denial. Yet they could not have been in any doubt about the court's attitude to Christianity. The Emir had closed any evangelical openings by proclaiming that "there is nothing outside the Koran". They dismissed, or lost, their porters who were understandably more risk averse in these surroundings than the missionaries. During the week, the Emir sent them a gift which was refused; the missionaries thought it represented a formal part of leave-taking, a traditional token of their imminent departure. On 27 April they passed through the great bronze gates of the walled city and headed south. Rumour had it that afterwards the *ma'aji* was fined 400,000 cowries for being too accommodating to the missionaries.<sup>51</sup>

Meanwhile a patrol from the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) under Captain George Abadie had briefly visited Zaria. When the Zaria *Sarkin Makera* came out to greet the Bishop some of the former warmth had gone out of the welcome. Emir Kwassau was gracious but played the game of being the humble servant of Sokoto constrained by the Sultan's wishes. A guide to take them to Sokoto appeared. But the *Sarkin Makera* mysteriously found he was unable to recruit any carriers. The ploy was unnecessary as the Bishop, having learnt his lesson in Kano, now sought permission to visit Sokoto from the WAFF and was refused.

The missionaries' local standing now deteriorated day by day. People avoided them in the street and the inquisitive were in danger of getting a few cuts of the whip from a *dogari*, the Emir's police, posted at their door.<sup>52</sup> All of them suffered from chronic dysentery, poisoned whether intentionally or inadvertently by food sold to them. Dudley-Ryder was to die of dysentery on 1 June 1900.<sup>53</sup>

Told that they could only stay in the city until the end of the rains, they resorted to the devices of the European courtier stuck in the court of a black monarch. Dr. Walter Miller, in full Hausa dress, wheeled out two bicycles for the Emir's amusement. The telegraph promised by Lugard was also demonstrated using two tin cans and a wire. "We are the best of friends", wrote Miller naively in his diary.<sup>54</sup>

The wonders of western civilisation might have remained on display, courtesy of the CMS, had not the WAFF arrived in force with 450 men, four Maxim guns and three seven-pounders cannons.<sup>55</sup> The WAFF took the CMS retreat from Kano as a British humiliation. "It is of course all important to keep the prestige of the white man in this country", wrote Major Arthur Lowry-Cole, "and of course they do not know that you are freelance".<sup>56</sup> To remedy this Colonel George Kemball let the Zaria Emir know in no uncertain tones who, and what, authority he was dealing with: "he was not there on sufferance but as the Queen's messenger, that the kingdom of Zaria is a province of the Queen's dominions, and therefore it was necessary to insist upon the King's coming out to salute him". Kemball went on to lead the British attacks on Sokoto and Kano in 1903 and died a Brigadier-General in the First World War.<sup>57</sup>

This trading of humiliations did nothing to further the missionaries' cause. Nor did being required by the WAFF to stay in their camp which

confirmed the Emir's suspicions that the missionaries should be seen as part of a white invasion. The missionaries were told that the WAFF had put pressure on Emir Kwassau to allow the CMS Party to stay in Zaria. But even in the face of this show of force the Emir was adamant that he needed Sokoto's consent. And he was only prepared to allow the missionaries to settle in the emirate provided they would leave the emirate for good after the rains and if they were distant from Zaria city.

Bishop Tugwell appeared delighted that Colonel Kemball had shown the flag as well as bringing them supplies. Temporarily chastened, he seemed glad to have joined up again with the licentious soldiery. At the end of May, the CMS Party agreed to pull back with the WAFF to their established forward camp at Gierku, 34 miles south of Zaria, where a combined force of 14 officers and 600 troops were assembled. But within a week of the missionaries' arrival the regiment had left for the Ashanti War accompanied by an ailing A.E. Richardson. The imperial tide had ebbed and flowed leaving the missionaries high and dry, far from military help.<sup>58</sup>

Minus British fire-power, the CMS shrank both in the estimation of the Emir of Zaria and in number. Ryder finally succumbed to illness and Richardson had to be invalided back to England. Not that they grew in missiological sensitivity after their losses; by August a red flag was fluttering above their compound in Gierku with "God is Love" emblazoned in Hausa<sup>59</sup>. They tried to stop Gierku's small-scale slave raids, and complained strongly after the more massive expeditions mounted by Kwassau for slaves. The Emir replied with a novel tolerance. "When God told them (*the Christians*) in His book that they should not make slaves as for us He agreed that we should do so for the

glory of our Prophet; this is my message, we stand upon our religion, we have no need of theirs: we hold fast to ours, they to theirs, there is thus no evil on our part, there is also none on theirs".<sup>60</sup> These sentiments of surprisingly modern moral relativism were not reciprocated. Bishop Tugwell told the Emir's *jekada*, confidential messenger, who kept an eye on the missionaries and resided permanently in Gierku: "we expect opposition from the Devil but we are praying that the agents of the Devil may be overthrown".<sup>61</sup> Sokoto did not need to intervene to assure the hostility of the Emirs.

Undeterred, the ailing missionaries built a school-cum-church and Dr. Miller preached daily in Hausa to workers and young boys at the mission and to the many who came from afar to the dispensary. Kwassau could just about tolerate the missionaries as alien Christian itinerant malams, but their presence in Gierku began to afford the local headmen a degree of autonomy. Support from the mission for local leaders began to appear to the Emir as open sedition.<sup>62</sup> In the remaining months of 1900, the Emir delivered repeated ultimatums and seems to have sent men to kill the missionaries; but they stopped short. Armed horsemen were dispatched to the town in a show of force. By a mixture of bravado and bluff, the CMS Party survived. Finally the Emir sent troops to be quartered in Gierku and the mission dispensary was burnt down.<sup>63</sup>

Lugard was now moving north. To stop the Zaria troops taking reprisals on Gierku, the Bishop held out for a month until Lugard reached Wushishi, within striking distance. Then the CMS Party left for Loko on the Benue River. It was 14 January 1901. A year had gone by and the Soudan Mission was back only a few miles upstream from where it had

started on the Niger-Benue confluence. The Emir of Kontagora's warning that the white fish would die away from the river had nearly come true.<sup>64</sup>

The price of what Charles Strachey at the Colonial Office called "this missionary raid" on Kano had been very high<sup>65</sup>. The picture of a British Bishop humiliated at the court of a Muslim potentate put the most imperialist-minded of the British public in high dudgeon. As in the aftermath of Gordon's death in Khartoum government, fear of contagion, an erosion of British dominance across the world, lingered on. The Colonial Office, striving to run a cut-price Protectorate in the midst of other colonial adventures soon felt pressure for a retaliatory response. Not only was a punitive raid expensive, the new High Commissioner did not have the troops at his disposal to undertake it. And against a background of the Ashanti campaign and the ugly Boer War, nor was he likely to be given them.

So the recklessness of the CMS Party became particularly eligible for government opprobrium. Had they been butchered in Kano, as well they might have been, the repercussions might have compromised Lugard's career. "You have not adhered to the understanding arrival (sic) at between us", dashed off Lugard in annoyance.<sup>66</sup> The missionaries had been under emirate control and on their own at Gierku; there was no question of help with supplies or mails to and from the Niger.

In one year Bishop Tugwell had compromised the chances of future Christian missions in the emirates. His off-white lies by way of apology to Lugard were transparently flimsy. "I have not endeavoured to communicate...seeing that we are under close observation" he had

written from Zaria, too late for Lugard to stop him leaving for Kano. The CMS Party's manoeuvres were an unwonted wild card thrown into the Great Game just as Lugard was formulating his strategy towards the emirates.

The measure of the consequences arising from Tugwell's precipitate action can be taken from correspondence before and after his abortive visit to Kano. "The widest toleration would of course be extended to all sects", Lugard jotted down at the beginning of 1900.<sup>67</sup> The Colonial Office spoke of the Governor giving "such assistance as may be possible to the missions".<sup>68</sup> After Kano, Lugard wrote to Tugwell: "This is not a favourable moment to thrust upon Mohammedan States religious propaganda".<sup>69</sup> At the end of the year he suggested to Chamberlain that a ban on proselytising would be beneficial until the country was settled.<sup>70</sup> Bishop Tugwell's mistake lived on in Colonial office minutes, like a juicy scandal, as a demonstration of the unreliability and irresponsibility of the Bishop.

A nascent plan for Indirect Rule was already informing Lugard's judgement. He asserted, not unreasonably, the Emirs' right to refuse missionary advances. His vision was of "a little India in the Niger Soudan" and the CMS no longer recommended themselves for a part in this dream.<sup>71</sup> He correctly saw that Nigerians from the South, educated in the English language in mission schools, were likely to cause problems. Whereas he could avoid any troublesome progressive ideas in the Muslim context of the North.

Despite reconciliatory letters of thanks from the CMS, Lugard was not to be deflected from his policy.<sup>72</sup> But, the son of a CMS missionary to India himself, so considered best man for dealing with the Soudan

Party, Lugard was more lapsed Congregationalist than inveterately anti-Christian atheist and his dislike of Tugwell was personal.<sup>73</sup> It showed in his budgeting. “More than once the Chief inserted £10,000 for a church”, wrote his secretary, Popham-Lobb, “when the usual order came out for a reduction, out went the church”.<sup>74</sup> The CMS itself had not been placed entirely beyond the pale.

But for the CMS the dilemma remained: a mission committed to preaching the Gospel without government interference could not do so without government protection. In Northern Nigeria they were either the coy fellow-travellers of militaristic imperialism, or they were nothing, or dead. The point was not overlooked by the Emirs but, with a certain cavalier blindness, held in a too-difficult-to-deal-with file by the missionaries. Tilting at windmills was more than quixotic when the windmills were props for an entrenched, mainly Fulani, elite and were guarded by several thousand armed and skilful horsemen. It was suicidal. The days of the lone, courageous missionary, Bible in hand, pressing forward through the bush into danger, without quinine, were passing. By the end of 1900, the evangelical sacrifice and heroism of the CMS pioneers were reduced to a single dry reflection in the High Commissioner’s files: “Inopportune”.<sup>75</sup>

## Footnotes

1. Stock E. *The History of the Church Missionary Society* Vol. III, London 1899, 21



2. Ibid., 289
3. Ibid., 353-354
4. Ibid., 390. Gordon's death also, of course, destroyed the reputation of Gladstone who had vacillated and sent a relief expedition to raise the siege too late. Gordon's religious mania had thoroughly confused the situation.
5. Ajayi J.F.A. *Christian Mission in Nigeria: 1841-1891*, London 1965, 250
6. Sir Gilbert Carter, Letter to *The Times* 6 June 1895
7. Robinson C.H. *Hausaland or Fifteen Hundred Miles through the Central Soudan*, London 1900, 36
8. Robinson C.H. *Nigeria: Our Latest Protectorate*, London 1900, 7
9. *The Times* 6 June 1895
10. Nicolson I.F. *The Administration of Nigeria 1900 to 1960*, Oxford 1969, 124-179. It is fascinating to see how the same, unresolved issues of military anthropology crop up in Northern Nigeria as later they do in Vietnam and modern wars, see McFate M. *Military Anthropology. Soldiers, Scholars and Subjects at the Margins of Empire*, Hurst 2018
11. Note of interview with C.H. Robinson 15 November 1895, G3/A3/0; Baylis to Tugwell 19 December 1895, G3/A3/L4, CMS archives, London; Crampton E.P.T. 'Christianity in the North of Nigeria' typewritten MSS for B.D. thesis Dublin, 1972, 32-45 now published as *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, Zaria 1975; Mockler-Ferryman A.F. *British West Africa*, London 1898, quoted in Ayandele E.A. 'The Missionary Factor in

Northern Nigeria 1870-1918' *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*  
Vol. III, No. 3, December 1966, 504

12. Ayandele 'The Missionary Factor', 506-507

13. Goldie Memorandum to Niger Company 24 November 1896, MSS  
Afr. s. 59, Lugard Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford

14. For a doctrinal analysis of Mahdist themes in Northern Nigeria at this time, see Al-Hajj M.A. 'The Mahdist Tradition in Northern Nigeria' Doctoral Dissertation at Ahmadu Bello University, 1973. The Emir of Ilorin in a full council of malams specifically asked Bishop Crowther whether the Bible had any information about the Second Coming of Jesus, personal communication Prof. Robert Gavin. There had been a major Mahdist movement 1856-1857 as a Mahdist malam had passed through Hausaland, see Martin B.G. 'A Mahdist Document from Futa Jallon' *Bulletin de l'Institut Fondamental de l'Afrique Noire*, Vol. 25 Series B, 53

15. Abdul Majid 'A Bird's Eye View' typewritten MSS c. 1927 covering the period 1898-1927. I am grateful to Malam Walter Sumaila, Kaduna, for his permission to read his father's autobiography.

16. Nott to Baylis 8 April 1898, 20 May 1898, G3/A3/0. Note of interview with C.H. Robinson 15 November 1895

17. Miller to Baylis 11 June 1899, G3/A3/0

18. "The people prophesy the advent of the whiteman with the Christian religion, which all the world will accept for the short space of forty months...The sacred writings of the Hausas predict the second

coming of Christ as the victorious leader of a great army”, see *Niger and Yoruba Notes*, London, December 1899

19. Memorandum by Harford Battersby C.J, 9 January 1896, G3/A3/0

20. This new realisation was widely held at the turn of the century and lay behind the 1909 Potsdam Conference on Islam, and the informed soul-searching of the missiologist C. Mirbt in *Mission und Kolonialpolitik in den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, Tübingen, 1910, 203-220

21. Miller to Baylis 11 June 1899

22. Ibid.

23. Miller W.R.S. *An Autobiography*, Zaria, 1953, 23

24. Interview with Mrs. Leith-Ross née Ruxton at Singleton, 21 August 1975. She had come to Nigeria in 1907 and later became responsible for Women’s Education

25. Lugard to Chamberlain 17 August 1899, C.O.445/7, Public Records Office, London

26. Minutes from Joseph Chamberlain and the Earl of Selborne on Lugard to Chamberlain 17 August 1899, C.O. 446/7

27. Miller W.R.S. ‘Diary of the Hausa Party 1900’ No.54-4960, M.81, Ibadan Library, Ibadan

28. Perham M. *Lugard: The Years of Authority 1898-1945*, London 1960, 499

29. Richardson to Baylis 17 February 1900, G3/A9/01

30. Lugard to Baylis 17 August 1899; Lucas to Lugard (copy) 26 September 1899, G3/A3/0
31. Nicolson R.P. 'Northern Nigeria Notes' MSS. Afr. r.81, Rhodes House, Oxford
32. Lugard to Tugwell 17 February 1900, C.O. 446/11
33. Miller 'Diary of the Hausa Party' 15 February 1900; Tugwell to Baylis 26 February, 11 March 1900, G3/A9/01
34. Tugwell to Lugard 16 October 1900, C.O. 446/11
35. Richardson to Baylis 10 March 1900; Tugwell to Baylis 25 March 1900, G3/A9/01
36. Miller 'Diary of the Hausa Party' 8 March 1900
37. Smith M.G. *Government in Zazzau* Oxford 1960, 193-196
38. Thomas William Bako was born in Okamalonigi, near Agbaja in Oworo country and was seized aged six during a Nupe slave raid. Sold at Lokoja, he was finally redeemed in 1866 by Rev. T.C. John. He was later confirmed in 1881 in the Anglican Church after spending some time with Rev. Gollmer at the CMS Training Institute at Oyo. After working with Bishop Crowther, he was seconded from the Niger Mission to accompany Bishop Tugwell.
39. Richardson to Baylis n.d. (March 1900) G3/A3/0
40. Ibid.
41. Robinson 'Hausaland', 94
42. Richardson to Baylis n.d. (March 1900)

43. Tugwell to Baylis 8 April 1900, G3/A3/0
44. Richardson to Baylis 26 July 1900, G3/A3/0
45. Miller 'Diary' 19-20 March 1900
46. Ayandele *The Missionary Factor*, 511
47. Richardson to Baylis 26 July 1900
48. Deaville Walker F. *The Romance of the Black River*, CMS, 1931, 184-188
49. The Emir of Gumel, Ahmadu, was present when the missionaries arrived. He had helped Aliyu's brother Yusuf during the Kano Civil War of 1894-5.
50. Adeleye R.A. *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria 1804-1906* London, 1971, 206-209
51. Deaville Walker *Romance*, 191; Miller 'Diary' 20-27 April 1900
52. Richardson to Baylis 26 July 1900
53. Resident's Report No.11, 28 June 1900 LOKPROF No. 2 National Archives, Kaduna. The WAFF chaplain thought it highly reprehensible that Tugwell had permitted the Party to eat such food and assumed deliberate poisoning, see Lugard to Chamberlain 12 December 1900, C.O.446/11.
54. Miller 'Diary' 7-14 May 1900
55. Abadie G. to his mother 28 May 1900, Abadie Letters MSS Afr. s. 1337, Rhodes House, Oxford

56. Lowry-Cole to Tugwell 12 May 1900, G3/A3/0
57. Tugwell to Baylis 5 June 1900, G3/A3/0
58. Richardson to Baylis 21 June 1900, G3/A3/0; Deaville Walker *Romance* 192-3
59. Bishop Tugwell's 'Diary' 25 August 1900, G3/A3/0
60. Minutes of the Hausa Committee 11 July 1900, G3/A3/0
61. Tugwell 'Diary' 20 July 1900
62. Minutes of the Hausa Committee 11 July 1900
63. Tugwell to Baylis 6 October 1900; Miller to Baylis 18 October 1900; Tugwell to Baylis 6, 24 December 1900; Miller W.R.S. *Reflections of a Pioneer* London 1936, 42-47; Tugwell 'Diary' entries for December 1900
64. Tugwell to Baylis 4 February 1901, G3/A3/0
65. Minute from Charles Strachey on Lugard to Chamberlain 12 December 1900, C.O. 446/11
66. Lugard to Tugwell 17 July 1900, C.O. 446/11
67. Memorandum of General Policy 1900 MSS Afr. s. 65, Rhodes House
68. Chamberlain to Bingham 24 July 1899, C.O. 446/11
69. Lugard to Tugwell 1 November 1900, G3/A3/0
70. Lugard to Chamberlain 12 December 1900, C.O. 446/11
71. Notes on Kano c.1903 MSS Afr. s.65, Rhodes House; Tugwell to Baylis 4 February 1901

72. There were no communications from Tugwell to Lugard between 11 April and 6 May. By that time Tugwell had been expelled from Kano. Lugard expected military standards of obedience to his instructions and was not at all impressed with Tugwell's excuse that with 200 or so porters he could not have waited around for Morland's permission to travel north.

73. Lugard's father had been an impoverished missionary in India, and, rightly or wrongly Lugard was considered the go-to man for Missions when the Colonial Office needed delicate dealings with the CMS.

74. Nicolson MSS Afr. r. 81, Rhodes House, Oxford

75. Lugard to Tugwell 1 November 1900, C.O. 446/11

## Chapter Two

“If it came to that I would rather have Miller himself than one of those damned oily black parsons who teach the natives that all men are equal”

H.R. Palmer to A.H. Festing, 9 June 1907





The man who was to reopen the Hausaland missions and dominate their history for three decades was not typical of the Varsity men who staffed the CMS in the 1880s and 1890s. Walter Miller was born in 1872 into a family of eight, the only boy amongst seven girls, - the only son of a Honiton coal and timber merchant. His father, undereducated and a frustrated writer, was on the puritan wing of Devon non-conformity, a defender of the Salvation Army and much influenced by the Plymouth Brethren; “a typical Victorian evangelical” Miller described him, “hating Romanism, Ritualism and rationalism like the Devil”<sup>1</sup>

Miller, a sickly child, shared a governess with his sisters before being sent off to the preparatory school for Clifton College in Bristol. But Public schools were too worldly for his father; Miller ended up in a Plymouth Brethren school.<sup>2</sup> The chaste rigour of home and school life, novels and history books read secretly at night, the long struggle for permission to play the same games as other children, left their mark on a sensitive personality in a rigid self-discipline and equivocal attitude to authority. Feelings of love for his mother, he claimed, only came at twenty after he had left home for Medical School. His later relations with women were fraught. His emotional relationships with young boys, like those of his contemporary J.M. Barrie, would have raised eyebrows today.

It was an abiding resentment of his father that burdened Miller with the many ambiguities of character that impinged on his work as a missionary. At a conscious level there was his excessive esteem for the Public school education denied him, and his outspoken denunciations

of injustice and tyrannical government. His friendship with the older Lugard had a boyish quality of adulation which interpreted the soft talk of a career colonial administrator as paternal benevolence. An authoritarian father-figure, internalized and emulated, made him a domineering colleague.

Miller's religious development was more typical; a Children's Service Mission provided the occasion for his first religious experience at the age of fourteen. The second came at the Keswick Convention when he decided to become a medical missionary; his mother, delighted at a first son, had already pledged him for the foreign missions at birth.<sup>3</sup> He became an Anglican at Medical College, at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in Smithfield, London, and secretary to the Student Christian Union. A year later he spent twelve months as travelling secretary to the Student Volunteer Missionary Union, a role that brought him into contact with leading Christians throughout Britain. Despite the genteel poverty of student life, Anglican Christianity had taken Miller out of the world of merchants and Plymouth Brethren into that of the Oxbridge elite. At Toynbee Hall, an Oxbridge inner city settlement in Whitechapel where a cousin worked, he would bump into champions of organized labour like Ben Tillett and Keir Hardie. The latter, founder of the Labour Party and a former coal miner, had joined the Evangelical Union in his 20s. It pleased Miller in later years to refer to himself as a 'Socialist'.<sup>4</sup>

Socialism was not going to help him greatly in Africa though it informed much of his thinking. An understanding of Islam was more relevant. But the development of his views on other faiths is hard to chart. The Armenian massacres of his youth inspired him with "a hatred for Turkey from which I have found it hard to get free".<sup>5</sup> The Indian Civil Service as

a career crossed his mind; one of his sisters married a missionary who went to the North-West frontier. His first medical experience was gained in the tough tropical conditions of the Princess Christian Hospital in Freetown, Sierra Leone, later a maternity hospital. His decision to go to Hausaland was made in 1897 after meeting C.H. Robinson in Ripon and reading his reports on his expedition to Kano in 1894.

Miller was just 26 when he arrived in Tripoli to study Hausa under L.H.W. Nott. When Bishop Tugwell left Loko in February 1901 to return to the Niger Mission, Walter Miller became leader of the Hausaland Mission.<sup>6</sup> The CMS year at Loko on the Benue spent under Miller's direction did much to mollify Lugard. As soon as Tugwell left, Miller rushed off to Lokoja to patch things up with the High Commissioner. Instead of a troublesome 'Soudan Party', Miller's CMS colleague was 'dear old Burgin' who had been in charge of logistics, a simple pious man somewhat looked down on. When Burgin left through ill health, his replacement pined over a sweetheart, abandoned and lonely in London digs, separated because of the CMS' strict rules on marriage.<sup>7</sup> Hans Vischer, who moved from missionary to director of education in Northern Nigeria in 1908, accompanied him back to Britain.<sup>8</sup>

After the troops came back from the Ashanti War, Kontagora and Bida were crushed and brought under British rule. The High Commissioner was now under less pressure. The first few months of 1901 saw Miller making the first moves to establish a working relationship with Lugard that would prove of great value to the CMS mission.

Lugard and Miller had much in common: religious fathers whose inadequacies cost them emotionally, a childhood scraping for money, a

struggle to find a place in Society, and a pioneering autocratic spirit.<sup>9</sup> Both were willing, consciously or unconsciously, to forgo factual accuracy in dispatches if it furthered their cause.<sup>10</sup> Putting aside such similarities, Miller was useful to the High Commissioner; he translated government decrees and letters into Hausa<sup>11</sup>, and even offered to spy on the French during his travels.<sup>12</sup> He dedicated his Hausa Grammar to Lugard.<sup>13</sup> The new Residents, with only a few words of Hausa, naturally grew resentful of the relationship, and felt with some justification that Miller was becoming the eyes and ears of the High Commissioner.<sup>14</sup> Lugard even asked Miller for his comments on a draft of his Instructions to Senior Residents, showing a disregard for the niceties of bureaucratic procedure unusual even for him.<sup>15</sup>

But, however great the mutual esteem, the two men served different masters; the demands of God and those of the Colonial Office rarely coinciding in Muslim lands. After the Kano humiliation, a colleague's death and the troubles at Gierku, Miller shared with Tugwell the view that, despite some redeeming features, Fulani rule was tyrannical. "The sympathies, desires, interests of the Kings are all opposed to those of their subjects; they are hated as robbers and oppressors, feared as the indifferent dispensers of life and death, and generally loathed and detested by all except their flatterers; they live chiefly by plunder, the great Hausa race is in the hands of a small powerful clique; as in the Norman conquest the people, many of them, are much aping the customs etc. of their conquerors, but the process is not complete, and may they yet be delivered, for a more iniquitous government than the Fulani cannot exist, after giving it all credit for its courage, its unity, and its partially elevating character and semi-civilisation".<sup>16</sup> It was precisely

the final, mitigating credit that Miller gave the Fulani elite that motivated Lugard's nascent policy of Indirect Rule. "I am not an advocate of the expulsion or extinction of a race who have achieved such wonderful results in this country", he replied.<sup>17</sup> He later confessed to Miller that "he as Governor had to follow for policy's sake a course which as a private individual he might not – but that his sympathy was with us (the CMS)".<sup>18</sup> There is no reason to conclude that this sympathy was insincere; his brutal campaigns against Sokoto and Kano at the turn of 1903 were testimony to where his personal inclinations lay.<sup>19</sup>

Where the two men were able to establish a public consensus was over the necessary character and quality of mission personnel. The High Commissioner acknowledged "the value of gentlemen speaking the people's language and living in their midst". "Men who come out to this work should be men trained in University life able to deal with political men gentlemen to gentlemen".<sup>20</sup> Where Miller got the Colonial service ethos wrong was in his emotional appeals that began "surely Your Excellency, as a servant of our Common Master".<sup>21</sup> Likewise his argument that "it is an inexplicable thing to a Hausa Mohammedan that a white man should be a Christian yet put Mohammedanism before his own religion", was not going to deter an established Colonial Office policy.<sup>22</sup>

Lugard and Miller both spent the second half of 1901 on leave in England. Abdul Majid, on his way back from the *hajj* met up with Miller *en route* in Alexandria. He was the first of several boys whom Miller virtually adopted and took to see 'Christian Britain'. Abdul or 'Audu' as he was known, defiantly wore his red fez to church in Exeter. Once back in Nigeria he ate and slept in the same tent as Miller.<sup>23</sup> This kind of

relationship was perfectly acceptable in Hausa culture, and whether in pagan conversion to Islam, or Islam to Christianity, a standard path for adopting a new religion. The young 17-year old boy soon began identifying with missionary attitudes and adopting a European lifestyle. Miller was distressed to note “the keenness of his scorn and satire, and the force with which he exposes the sin...when something outrageously bad occurs”.<sup>24</sup> The vehemence of Audu’s rejection of his own culture was some measure of the strains imposed on him by the sudden Europeanisation of his life in the mission compound. He finally confessed Christianity in May 1902; “he is most anxious to be well educated”, wrote Miller.<sup>25</sup> Audu was later to leave the mission orbit for government service.<sup>26</sup>

This first mission success took place against a background of growing resentment of the British military presence in the emirates. Loko, as the missionaries liked to point out, was one of the few places where people did not flee at the sight of a white man. In most places in the North those acting as porters for the whites, ‘slaves of the Christians’ were liable to punishment when they returned home.<sup>27</sup>

The Emirs were still playing off the British against their traditional enemies. In mid-1901, Emir Kwassau of Zaria had agreed to admit a British Resident “if he was sensible”.<sup>28</sup> At the beginning of 1902 the town of Kontogora was occupied by British troops. But the Emir, Ibrahim Nagwamatse, still managed to step up his raids on Zaria.<sup>29</sup> Kwassau reluctantly calculated that he would rather deal with the British than Nagwamatse whose forces were encamped threateningly close by.<sup>30</sup> Miller was given permission to return to Gierku and rebuild.<sup>31</sup>

In February 1902, the CMS arrived back in Zaria in time to see Captain Abadie return triumphantly with his prisoner, Nagwamatse, captured in a remarkable lightening raid.<sup>32</sup> This time missionaries and troops were in sync moving north. Miller's stakes were very high; Lugard had made learning Hausa compulsory for his Residents and Miller was appointed examiner in Hausa for the Protectorate and invited by Lugard to join his administration.<sup>33</sup> Miller declined the latter but was delighted by an invitation from Abadie, soon to die in Kano, to settle in Zaria city.<sup>34</sup>

Miller was already a well-known figure amongst the caravan men passing through Zaria and the Gierku people were beginning to look on him as their '*bature*' (white man). But with the Emir of Kontagora dragged off to Lokoja in chains and the news abroad that the British treated emirs like common criminals, the balance of power was changing.<sup>35</sup> In the push-and-pull of emirate politics the British had pulled as Kwassau had hoped, and the Emir now wanted to push them out. There was even less reason to put up with the missionaries. As Miller began work on a permanent Gierku mission house in June 1902, orders came from the Emir that all building should cease or the relevant headman would be executed. As half the town prepared to flee into the bush, Miller sent an urgent appeal for help to the Zaria garrison and a patrol was sent to restore order.<sup>36</sup> "Rather a hysterical subject", thought the Assistant Resident, newly acquainted with Miller, "begged us not to touch any food sent us by the king as he had certain views that we were being poisoned".<sup>37</sup> The missionaries were now being mocked for their caution. Miller had learnt the lessons of the Tugwell fiasco.

The Emir of Zaria initially was adept at diplomatic ruses; when reinforcements under a British officer arrived in Zaria in April 1901, they were asked to leave because the *Waziri* of Sokoto was on a visit.<sup>38</sup> Reports were soon reaching the Zaria WAFF camp that the Emir was broadcasting news of a British withdrawal and asking for a leaving thanks-offering from the people. Arms supplies were coming in from Kano. There was talk of an attack.

But the Emir's circle was undecided what to do and indecision blighted any concerted opposition. Kwassau's mother and brother seem to have been in favour of conciliation while the followers of the *Wombai*, one of Emir's senior sons appointed by Sokoto, sought a showdown. But although patrols were harassed around Zaria no major attack followed. The Emir instead secretly wrote a letter to the Governor in Lagos calling for the removal of the British from his town. When even the Colonial Office was unable to restrain the 'hawks', Lugard and Abadie, from pacification by force of arms, this move was a sad misreading of the way things worked in such distant parts of the British Empire.<sup>39</sup>

By August 1901, Kwassau was in regular communication with Kano, ignoring the British and defiantly collecting his tribute of slaves for the *Sarkin Musulmi* in Sokoto.<sup>40</sup> The impact of Zaria's resistance on the Gierku mission was striking. While once Miller had claimed that "the people of a country about as big as Surrey or larger look upon me as the one protection they have from the violence, extortion and slave raids of their oppressors", now he found himself without friends or a congregation.<sup>41</sup> With rumours flying around that Miller was to be murdered, Abadie decided to call in the missionaries to the British camp in Zaria.



The arrival of a further British company gave Abadie the manpower to act. Patrols were sent out to arrest the Zaria *Dan Galadima* who slipped away to Kano. The Emir was confronted on the camp polo ground with his failings and his harassment of the missionaries. Two days later, despite many protests, he was deposed and sent to Wushishi.<sup>42</sup>

Removing Kwassau did not substantially improve the security situation. British conquest relied a lot on bluff. The Zaria camp was set on a rise one and a half miles outside the town and surrounded by an easily scaled wall. Two companies were inadequate to repel a full scale assault coming from all sides. It only took the murder of a British officer in Keffi for the camp to return to a war footing and for the new *Dan Galadima*, Suleiman, to be toying - allegedly - with the idea of a mass exodus to Kano. The missionaries pulled back into the laager and occupied some grass huts near the Residence. A big display was put on by 50 WAFF men in their shabby red jackets to impress on the Zaria nobility British omnipotence and omniscience.

Finally in mid-December a massive assault force destined to take Kano began to assemble outside Zaria town. Any local armed resistance was forestalled. Confronted by Captain Abadie with his plans for an exodus to Kano, a *hijra*, the *Dan Galadima* talked his way into retaining his position as de facto regent for a further six months. The Sultan of Sokoto then appointed his own man, the former *Wombai* and the Mallawa clan candidate, Aliyu, as Emir of Zaria.<sup>43</sup>

But Miller sought something more than a shuffling of the Fulani lineages. He was convinced "the main mass of the people expected a complete deliverance on the arrival of the British government and have

been correspondingly disappointed”.<sup>44</sup> He called quite openly for the removal of “the Fillani regime” and at times seemed to hold a strange and romantic view of the pristine purity of the Hausa States before the Fulani conquest by Uthman dan Fodio.<sup>45</sup> At this time it suited Lugard to portray emirate governance in the worst possible light to justify his militarist strategy and to refer to them as ‘alien tyrants’. He may even have considered restoring the pre-19<sup>th</sup> century Habe dynasties.<sup>46</sup> But ultimately he would need the Fulani as much as the Germans in Rwanda needed the ruling Tutsi. When it was time for Indirect Rule, the Fulani were transformed in dispatches into ‘educated gentlemen who are fully able to appreciate our ideas of progress’.<sup>47</sup> The great advantage of what could be called ‘Anglo-African Government’ was that it contained a built-in scapegoat for failure.<sup>48</sup>

In two years Miller had become an important player in the politics of Zaria emirate. The new Emir, Aliyu, sent him a turkey on Kwassau’s deposition asking him to press his candidature for the position on Lugard.<sup>49</sup> A less well-chosen advocate could scarcely have been found; Miller sent back to Zaria a curt refusal plus three shillings for the turkey. The mission in Gierku became a focus for petitioners some of whom, for example a delegation from Gwari, came to plead for the release of slaves taken in Kwassau’s time.<sup>50</sup> The idea gained ground that the Gierku people no longer had to pay taxes to Zaria. “*Ya rabba sarauta da ni*”, (“He is dividing the Kingdom’s office holders from me”), complained the new Emir.<sup>51</sup>

Once Lugard had the Kano campaign behind him and the town subdued, he deplored the “unmeasured terms” Miller used for the ruling class and counselled moderation. “We can only gradually check

abuses”, wrote the High Commissioner, “and I do not suppose that anything like justice can be introduced during the present generation who have been brought up in other methods”.<sup>52</sup> Reaction in Britain to the news of Lugard’s assaults on Kano and Sokoto brought home the sensitivity of events in Northern Nigeria. There was consternation in the Colonial Office, fulminations in the *Manchester Guardian*<sup>53</sup> and an anti-war mood reflected in *The Times*. It was a time of *entente cordiale* with the French and of liberal reaction to brutal wars in southern Africa.

CMS headquarters in Salisbury Square, London, joined in the general consternation but were also alarmed at Miller’s “unmeasured terms”. In July 1903, the General Committee of the CMS put on record that “it is very important in any fresh enterprise in Hausaland to avoid as far as possible anything which would at the outset arouse the opposition of the Moslems, or would cause such anxiety to the Authorities as to lead to restrictions being placed by them upon the work”.<sup>54</sup> Unlike Miller they had been happy with a simple medical mission at Loko that would draw in Muslims from further north.<sup>55</sup>

Dr. Miller’s attention was drawn to the CMS regulations on missionaries and political involvement, with the request that the High Commissioner have sight of them. The Group Secretary for Africa, Frederick Baylis, committed to mission in Muslim areas, wrote a kindly informal piece of advice about dealing with Lugard. Miller would never “catch his Excellency off his guard”. “You must always count on him being the official first”, he wrote “however much friendship may come in second”.<sup>56</sup> But Miller was never comfortable with the distinction.

By the time Lugard returned in late 1903 from subduing the major Fulani cities to rest a while in Abinger Common, he was in no mood for

apologizing for the use of excessive force, or vacating the moral high ground. “I have therefore always held the view that before a Mission established itself in any district the chiefs should be invited to say whether or not they desired it. If they did object, and the Mission still insisted on going, it can owe its presence and safety only to British bayonets”.<sup>57</sup> Miller could not deny these inconvenient truths. The CMS was strong when the British troops were around, weak when they were gone. The Mission objected to being portrayed as an arm of British Rule as they objected to the constraint of seeking permission for evangelisation; the Emirs and their senior councilors were dependent on British consent to rule and would most often say what they thought the Resident wanted to hear.

The other vulnerability of the Hausaland Mission was the silent reproach of the vast non-Muslim regions north of the river; why was the CMS not working there? The first missionaries from the Cambridge University Collegiate Missionary Party (CUMP) were only now beginning to arrive to settle later on the Bauchi Plateau. On the British side, the reproach was far from silent; Lugard repeatedly asked why more effort was not being made for non-Muslims, a recurrent theme of government complaints.<sup>58</sup> The CUMP team found they were afforded by the first missionaries lesser status than the pioneering Hausaland ‘crusaders’.

From the beginning Miller had shown himself to be a loyal aide to a High Commissioner who was a master at manipulating men and situations. Their relationship accounted for the Mission’s survival in Zaria emirate. “When his common-sense and experience and tact were withdrawn”, reflected Lugard, “a different result might follow”.<sup>59</sup> Miller

cut a dapper figure in his tropical jacket and small bow tie, spoke excellent Hausa and supervised the Government's Hausa examinations<sup>60</sup>. Disciplined and frugal, he ran the Gierku Mission like an army camp, regulating everything from the amount of time spent washing to who was employed as a servant.<sup>61</sup> Clothes and dress mattered. Lugard despised anything that smacked of lowering the dignity of Europeans by slovenly or improper dress, familiarity of the kind that "breeds contempt" and so on.<sup>62</sup> Contempt was dangerous for a sparsely established imperial administration. Miller was Lugard's sort of man.

It could not last. As the scaffolding of British administration was put in place, Lugard retreated into the role of otiose High Commissioner at the apex of a small colonial hierarchy. The missionaries' first point of contact was now the local Residents, some of whom disliked Lugard, most of whom assumed an uncomfortable degree of autonomy.<sup>63</sup> By the end of 1903, a Residency, barracks and stables were occupied outside Zaria city, telegraph was installed and new roads were being built. For the newly arrived officers, Miller was an embarrassing presence, a local patron receiving clients from afar, asked to judge cases, putting in complaints about prison conditions and the exactions of the tax collectors, *jekadas*.<sup>64</sup> Mission-Administration relations depended a great deal on the personality of the Zaria Residents; but none were charmed to find a 'radical conscience' established on their doorstep.

The days when a quarter of the British in Nigeria either died, mainly from yellow fever, malaria and dysentery, or were invalided home, were only a few years past. A single Resident was now 'in control' of

populations of often over 200,000 people spread over vast areas.<sup>65</sup> Captain Charles Orr, who took over in Zaria in 1904, seemed mostly preoccupied with surviving the local diseases, having something concrete by way of achievements to put in his annual report, and keeping anarchy at bay. “The whole problem in fact is to steer a course between backing up the Emir so strongly that he is enabled to carry on under the surface oppression and injustice, and encouraging the mass of the population to resent legitimate taxation and the supply of labour and produce by openly sympathizing with them in complaints”, he wrote.<sup>66</sup> Dealing with these design flaws in Indirect Rule was not helped by Miller. “One had to choose once and for all, here there was no middle choice; to help one battered, tormented, oppressed, robbed, half-murdered soul from his oppressors”, he wrote.<sup>67</sup>

Miller courted Orr throughout 1904. Although opposed to missions, a Unitarian with ten years’ experience on the North-West Frontier in India, Orr had no strong commitment to Indirect Rule. The support for Indirect Rule from others, Burdon, Cargill and Temple, for example, had a more ideological component; they would also sometimes go to mosque, anathema to Miller.<sup>68</sup>

Emir Aliyu decided in February 1905 that Miller might be better in the city where he could keep an eye on him rather than causing mischief in Gierku. He sent a gift and informed him that a house was being made available for him. Two months later, with Lugard’s assent, Miller moved permanently to *Durumin Maigarke* in the butchers’ quarter of the city, an area of low class families with a reputation for thieving.<sup>69</sup> Almost by inadvertence, the CMS had finally slipped into a major

Muslim city in Northern Nigeria. Sokoto and Kano remained out-of-bounds. Zaria was the exception the Colonial Office would regret.

Aliyu's change of tactics came in the context of a re-appraisal of the situation by some of the Northern leaders; a *modus vivendi* with the British might not only be necessary but lucrative. The proven military power of the "infidel" invaders left them little choice. For a culture in which the penalty for military defeat was enslavement, founded on the principle that religious deviance had to be corrected by the Sword, the outcome of British conquest may have appeared remarkably mild.<sup>70</sup> The mosques were still standing and Lugard had held firm to his famous speech in Sokoto where he committed not to impose his religion on the defeated.<sup>71</sup>

Yet to dance attendance on the British was humiliating. British rule brought an end to large-scale slave-raiding with Lugard's 1901 Proclamation on Slavery. So the supply of labour to the *rumada*, estates/ plantations, of the *sarauta*, the emir's title holders, dried up. Owning farm slaves was still not prohibited - immediate emancipation would have been impossible because of the numbers involved; the roads around Zaria were already clogged with runaway slaves.<sup>72</sup>

Faced with growing economic dependence on the British, the ruling class set about remedying their losses by dunning the Hausa peasantry with extortionate tax collection by *jekadas*. This could be done under cover of British agency with the threat of the WAFF for tax-resisters. The Residents knew the score and openly admitted that a large proportion of revenue found its way into the pockets of the leading Fulani lineages. Such was the nature of 'Anglo-African' government that tax-rent exploitation of the *talakawa* (peasantry) was its economic

basis, “extortion and robbery on a scale even greater than before”, Miller claimed.<sup>73</sup>

The suppression of a Mahdist uprising in Satiru, close to Sokoto, and a later British attack on Hadejia provided ample evidence that the Fulani ruling class had successfully accommodated themselves to British overlordship. Mahdism, the belief in a final conflict between *Daggal*, the force of evil in the world and the Prophet *Isa*, Jesus, prior to the Mahdi ushering in a golden age, had a significant following across the political and cultural divides of Northern Nigeria. Satiru, situated between the two capitals of the Caliphate, Gwandu and Sokoto, had attracted run-away slaves and was seen as a threat by the *Sarkin Musulmi* and Sokoto aristocracy. They sent 3,000 horse and infantry to support the British. The attack on Satiru turned into a bloodbath. Some 2,000 people, armed only with bows and arrows, spears, knives and hoes, were slaughtered and 3,000 herded off to Sokoto to the North-East. The death toll in Hadejia was less heavy but serious enough for a future Governor to describe Lugard as ‘blood-stained to the collar-stud with slaughtered Hadejias’. Both these popular revolts had been religious uprisings of the *talakawa*. Emir Aliyu swore on the Qur’an that he would support the administration. But it was the last time Lugard would use levies from the Caliphate authorities.<sup>74</sup>

A week earlier Miller had collapsed into bed in Zungeru with black-water fever to be nursed back to health by the High Commissioner himself. There had developed almost a filial-paternal bond between them. But Lugard was a Colonial servant, soon to move on. Miller spoke of Lugard’s love for him in a farewell letter and how he had been the truest and kindest friend a young missionary could have had and



how it would be very difficult “to feel towards another in your place as I have to you”. The years 1903-1906 were to seem in retrospect the golden age of Mission-administration co-operation.

## Footnotes

1. This is taken from an autobiography of W.R.S. Miller sent for comment to Ethel Miller in 1952 by H.P. Elliot, Office of the Council of Ministers, Lagos. It contains more material than the published book - typewritten MSS, 81M, Ibadan Library, Ibadan
2. ‘Autobiography’ 5
3. Ibid. 3
4. Miller *An Autobiography* 1-14
5. Ibid. 3
6. Ibid 30-35
7. Bargery to Baylis 4 March 1901, G3/A9/01
8. Tugwell to Baylis 19 February 1901, G3/A9/01
9. Perham M. Lugard: *The Years of Adventure*, London, 1956

10. Muffett D.J.N. *Concerning Brave Captains*, London, 1964
11. Miller to Baylis 22 April 1901, G3/A9/01
12. Miller to Officer-in-Charge, Loko, 26 December 1900, encl. C.O. 446/14 PRO; Lugard to Miller 12 April 1901; 15 July 1901, G3/A9/01
13. Miller to Baylis 18 March, 1 April 1901, G3/A9/01
14. Miller to Baylis 29 September 1901, G3/A9/01
15. Miller to Baylis 24 November 1901, G3/A9/01
16. Miller, Tugwell and Burgin to Lugard 14 February 1901 (Letter drafted by Miller), G3/A9/01
17. Lugard to Tugwell 27 March 1901, encl. C.O. 446/15
18. Miller to Baylis 1 April 1901
19. Muffett *Concerning Brave Captains*, 88-140
20. Miller to Baylis 1 April 1901
21. Miller etc. to Lugard 14 February 1901
22. Ibid.
23. Majid 'Bird's Eye View', 27
24. Miller to Baylis 18 February 1902, G3/A9/01
25. Miller to Baylis 7 May 1902, G3/A9/01
26. Majid 'Bird's Eye View', 32
27. Miller to Baylis 22 January 1902, G3/A9/01

28. Nicolson MSS Afr. r. 81; Wallace to Chamberlain 2 August 1901, C.O. 446/16

29. Abadie to his mother 21 February 1902, MSS. Afr. s. 1337, Rhodes House

30. According to Abadie, Kontagora forces were encamped only two days march from Zaria in December 1901

31. Miller to Baylis 27 February, 27 March 1902, G3/A9/01

32. Miller *Reflections of a Pioneer*, 77

33. Miller to Baylis 28 June, 5 September 1902, G3/A9/01

34. In Abadie to his mother 19 December 1901, it is plain that Abadie is itching to smash the Fulani. This must have endeared him to Lugard and drawn him to Miller, MSS Afr. s. 1337

35. Muffett *Concerning Brave Captains*, 37-40

36. Popham-Lobb to his mother 12 July 1902, MSS. Afr. s.64

37. Ibid.

38. Abadie to his mother 18 April 1902, MSS Afr. s. 1337

39. Nicolson MSS Afr. r. 81; Abadie MSS Afr. s. 1337

40. Popham-Lobb to his mother 6 August 1902, MSS Afr. s. 64

41. Miller to Baylis 7 August 1902, G3/A9/01. For the classic study of slavery in Hausaland see Hill P. "From Slavery to Freedom. The case of Farm-Slavery in Nigerian Hausaland" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 18, No.3, July 1976, 395-426

42. Nicolson MSS Afr.r.81; Abadie MSS Afr. s. 1337

43. Ibid; Smith *Government in Zazzau*, 203

44. Miller to Baylis 26 May 1903, G3/A9/01

45. Ibid.

46. The British administration was now accustomed to framing the political situation in ethnic terms as Fulani rulers over Hausa subjects, putting the clock back to before the Caliphate. Girouard to Lugard 28 April 1909 cites the latter's Memorandum No. 18 where the political question is mooted with some disquiet MSS Afr. s. 63; Lugard to Secretary of State 15 January 1903, C.O. 446/30 speaks of liberating the people of Kano from an alien race. Strachey at the Colonial Office seems to swallow this whole: "Any action which may be taken against Kano will be directed against the Fulani masters of the place, not against the Hausa traders and population who are friendly to the Protectorate Government. As regards this latter point, I should like to observe that the distinction between the Fulahs and the Hausas seems to be overlooked by some of the people who are accusing Sir. F. Lugard of a too military policy... If it were not for the fear of the Fulah prayers calling down curses on them, the Hausas would at once struggle for their independence" C.O. 446/26. Military conquest, as ever, was justified as liberation.

47. Memorandum re Administration in Northern Nigeria, May 1905, MSS Afr. A. 65

48. Heussler R. *The British in Northern Nigeria*, Oxford, 1968, 13-52

49. Miller to Baylis 26 May 1903, G3/A9/01

50. Popham-Lobb did have 13 of these released but, according to Miller, many dared not protest as they feared British Rule would not be permanent, see Miller to Baylis 16 May 1903

51. Miller mentions 18 Village Headmen imprisoned in Zaria on appointment of the new Emir for failure to provide adequate tribute. The Gierku headman for example was not permitted to leave Zaria until a further 40,000 cowries were added to a gift of 70,000 cowries that he had made, see Miller to Baylis 26 May 1903; Orr to H.E. Zungeru 29 September 1903, No. 196, C. 4001, Kaduna Archives, Kaduna.

52. Memorandum on Dr. Miller's paper by Lugard 9 August 1903, G3/A9/01

53. The *Manchester Guardian* 24 December 1902 contained a strong attack on Lugard's militarism.

54. Report of the Sub-Committee appointed by the Committee of Correspondence, 2 June 1903, adopted by the General Committee 14 July 1903, G3/A3/L5

55. Memorandum on Hausa Mission 5 February 1901, G3/A3/L5

56. Baylis to Miller 10 September 1903, G3/A3/L5

57. Lugard to Baylis 27 October 1903, G3/A3/01

58. See Mission activity files C.O. 446 and 583 series Rhodes House

59. Lugard to Baylis 27 October 1903. For example, Lugard took a different attitude to F. Melville-Jones and refused him a station at Ilorin, predominantly Muslim at this time, Lugard to Melville-Jones 15 April 1903, C.O. 446/31

60. Interview with Rev. Max Warren, Eastbourne, August 1975; interview with Malam P.O. Ischiaku, Tudun Wada, Zaria, September 1974. Miller speaking hidden behind a curtain could not be distinguished from a local Zaria man.

61. This was in accordance with CMS regulations, see 'Instructions to Hausaland Missionaries' 8 October 1903; Baylis to Tugwell 30 June 1904; Baylis to Druitt 30 June 1904, G3/A3/L5; Bargery to Baylis 23 April 1904, G3/A9/01

62. Lugard to Kumm 2 September 1904, G3/A3/01

63. Heussler *The British in Northern Nigeria*, 34-49; Miller to Baylis 16 October 1903, G3/A9/01

64. Miller to Baylis 5 September 1902, 12 April 1903, G3/A9/01; Orr to HE Zungeru 16 April 1904, No. 196, C. 4001, Kaduna Archives

65. In 1919, for example, Kano Emirate had one British officer who looked after 25 districts with an estimated average population of 66,000 per district, some with 190,000, see Clifford to Milner 21 October 1920, C.O. 583/92. Dress was part of the bluff.

66. Orr to HE Zungeru 16 April 1904, No 196, C. 4001 Kaduna Archives

67. Miller to Baylis 16 October 1903

68. Miller to Baylis 15 November, 24 December 1903, 26 February 1905, G3/A9/01

69. Miller to Baylis 5 April 1905, G3/A9/01

70. In theory only pagans could be enslaved but the Kontagora raiders took slaves indiscriminately. It was said that the Sultan of Sokoto had sent Kontagora 33 different letters calling on them to cease such raids on Zaria people but to no avail, see Lugard to Chamberlain 15 March 1902, C.O. 446/22

71. Lugard's pledge was also made in letter form to the Sultan, see Lugard to *Sarkin Musulmi* 22 March 1903 with his new appointments of emirs contained in it, and see MSS. Afr. s. 75

72. Bargery to Denisthorpe 21 March 1904 "Literally hundreds on the Zaria, Kano, Bautchi route", MSS, No.196, C. 4001, Kaduna Archives

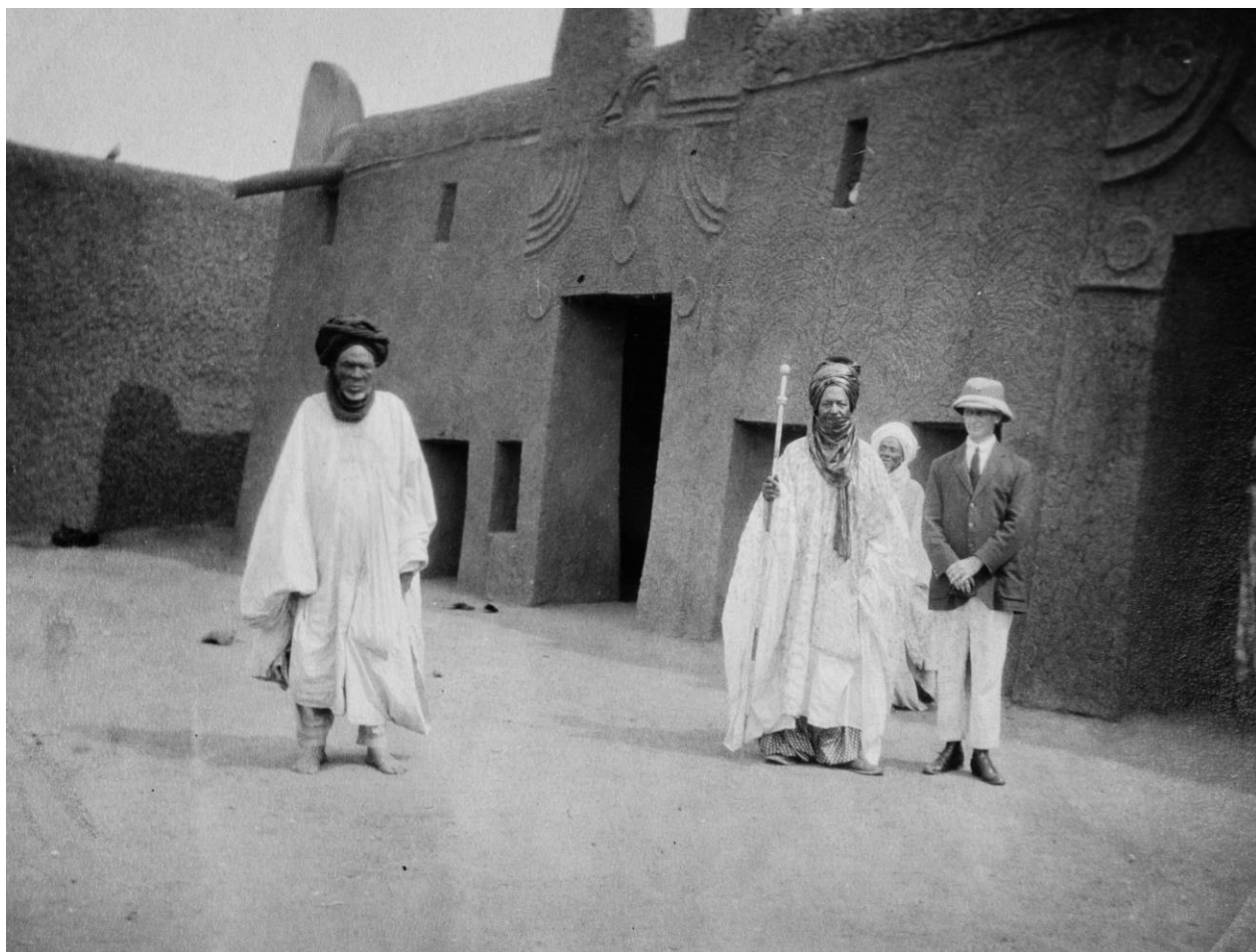
73. Miller to Baylis 26 May 1903

74. Lovejoy P.E. & Hogendorn J.S. 'Revolutionary Mahdism and Resistance to Colonial Rule in the Sokoto Caliphate 1905-6' *Journal of African History* Vol. 31, No.2, 1990, 217-244

### Chapter Three

“An attempt which was made to try a mission school at Zaria, and to practically order the sons of Mohammedan chiefs from the town and elsewhere to attend, has proved to be a failure”.

Sir Percy Girouard to Lord Elgin 17 October 1908



*Emir Aliyu and Walter Miller*



The Satiru and Hadejia massacres that marked the last year of Lugard's role as High Commissioner bludgeoned the pre-colonial structures of Northern Nigeria into submission, and ended a conquest far less honourably conducted than Bishop Tugwell's expedition to Kano. Resistance had been disorganized or indecisive with every indication that the Emirs would have accepted some sort of diplomatic *modus vivendi* with the British. Kano, for example, knew several months in advance of the impending British attack.<sup>1</sup>

The power of the Maxim gun, which "we have got and they have not", explains a great deal. But the Emirs also seem to have had genuine confusion about British intentions. The death of the Sokoto Sultan at a critical moment in October 1902 was certainly responsible for much indecision.<sup>2</sup> It fulfilled the prophecy that twelve Sultans would rule before the Fulani dynasty ended and, more important, it removed the potential leadership for any widespread revolt.<sup>3</sup> The new Sultan was able to muster an army but, beset by a Mahdist apocalyptic vision, sent his loyal troops headlong into slaughter by the blazing Maxim guns.<sup>4</sup> When it came at the turn of 1902-3, the inexorable British advance was met with fatalism. Miller believed long before that the ruling class knew "that their time is nearly run and they know that we or some other power will conquer them".<sup>5</sup>

Although the degree of disruption caused by slave-raiding in the 19<sup>th</sup> century should not be exaggerated, British Rule did bring a measure of stability.<sup>6</sup> It turned out to be not the feared oppression of the Infidel. People were "amazed that their mosques had not been razed to the ground", Miller's sister, Ethel, claimed.<sup>7</sup> There were Residents with high regard for Muslim culture. Lugard himself contributed to the upkeep of

mosques.<sup>8</sup> Forced labour used for making the new roads may not have been physically better than what went before on the *rumada*, estates. Though the chains in Zaria slave-market were gone, the numbers involved laboring may have been much the same.<sup>9</sup> But many *talakawa* were able for the first time, without fear, to leave the sanctuary of small walled towns to colonise new land.

The CMS Mission in Zaria city was initially accepted with a great degree of tolerance. For the Emir and title-holders it was part of a painful accommodation. For the *talakawa* the Mission was a potential champion. For the malams it was an object of genuine intellectual curiosity. The malams who came to visit could take up to half Miller's day in discussions about the Qur'an and the Bible. Despite a growing flow of patients to his dispensary, Miller became increasingly engaged in exegesis and preaching. His visitors were surprised to learn that educated Englishmen existed, "thinking we know nothing but guns and trade goods".<sup>10</sup>

In a town of some 30,000 people, with a shifting population of traders passing through on the major caravan routes, the Mission was able to attract both the inquisitive and the ambitious. For the timorous, the dark streets of the butchers' quarter after dusk enabled secret visits. For the bold and powerful, Miller's compound in *Durumin Maigarke* could be approached in broad daylight. The Emir himself made courtesy calls. By the end of the first year, Miller had let slip his medical role and fitted into the life of Zaria in his role as a Christian malam.<sup>11</sup>

For a mission dependent on the good will of everyone from the Emir's *dogari*, police, to the High Commissioner, Miller did not believe in

making allowances. His evangelism was both unaccommodating and pointedly anti-Muslim. Miller chose Fridays to show evangelical lantern slides to guests at a compound in town where a friendly malam lived.<sup>12</sup> For the Mission, conversion required confession that Jesus Christ was God and only Saviour and the total repudiation of the Prophet. Monogamy was insisted upon and all Muslim ritual, including fasting at Ramadan, had to be given up. In their first days of preaching the missionaries did avoid introducing the names of Jesus and Mohammed by concentrating on the Old Testament Prophets. This was the only concession to Muslim sensibilities. Later catechesis introduced a number of unfavourable comparisons between Christ and the Prophet.<sup>13</sup>

Protestant Christianity was avowedly a “religion of the Book”, so Miller was able to fit into local patterns of religious leadership and expertise deploying translation and exegesis, comparable to the expertise in *tafsir* for malams.<sup>14</sup> But beyond this, his training in the evangelical world had only equipped him to present the Christian Faith in the frame of a struggle between Cross and Crescent for the soul of Africa. Yet despite the Mission’s demand for a total break with the past and the Islamic world, Miller was soon reporting “some striking confessions by life and lips”.<sup>15</sup>

As the Mission became an established feature of the town, Miller’s autocratic tendencies increased apace. One minute he was calling for lady missionaries – the Niger Mission had several unmarried women – the next he was adamant that no missionary in Zaria should be married; he would only countenance what Bishop Tugwell called with minimal chivalry “strapping old maids”.<sup>16</sup> He also began suffering from an array

of neurasthenic disorders: from what seemed like asthma to paralysis of parts of the body. His relations with 'home', Salisbury Square HQ, were neurotic and inconsistent. He would voluntarily forgo his salary then write frantic letters that the CMS was failing to support him.

Periods before his regular furloughs to England were the worst. The background to his collapsing with black-water fever into a bed at Lugard's residence coincided with proposals for an amalgamation of the Hausa Mission into an Upper Niger Mission under a Varsity man, T.E. Alvarez. This plan evoked a number of outbursts to London.<sup>17</sup> But in other contexts the same passionate convictions could amount to heroic sanctity. On one occasion he rode all night from Gierku to Zaria to treat a patient dying of black-water fever. En route he hit a tree in the dark, broke the bridge of his nose, yet pressed on to fulfill his Hippocratic oath. On another, reminiscent of the Good Samaritan, he camped by a roadside for three days after sucking the poison out of a wound in the arm of a trader who had been attacked by hills-men.<sup>18</sup> He was quite capable of giving up his own bed, on one instance, for a boy stabbed in Zaria market.<sup>19</sup> Such actions did not go unnoticed by his colleagues.

The aspect of Miller's emotional insecurity that most affected the Mission was his manic sense of indispensability. This found much to fuel it in 1906. He was still the only polished Hausa-speaker amongst the Europeans and this enabled him to hold a position at the heart of an information network that was the envy of the British Political Officers.<sup>20</sup> Although the Mission had yet to baptize its first convert, Miller had established himself as both doctor and teacher in a Muslim town. By taking boys back with him on furlough to Exeter, he was never really detached from the Mission. Darambai, a freed slave from

Northern Cameroon, accompanied him on his second trip home. The boy acted as a kind of emotional prop to ease Miller's re-entry into Edwardian England. The CMS were thoroughly opposed to the practice as they felt it turned the boys' heads.<sup>21</sup>



*Freed Slaves Home*

Miller used his trip home to good effect, discussing with Lord Scarborough, then Chairman of the Niger Company, his plans for CMS education in Zaria.<sup>22</sup> His plan revealed another side of the Islamophobic evangelist, a different missiological approach. His vision was for malams from different emirates to live in Zaria and attend a day school for two hours each day. He wanted in addition a boarding school for the sons of Emirs, or boys from ruling class families aged between twelve and sixteen. No formal religious instruction was to be given and all teaching would be in Roman characters instead of Hausa script, *ajami*. "My aim will be" declared Miller, "so to permeate these boys with a sense of justice, righteousness, truth, purity, cleanliness, manliness (none of which they have!) that another day... they will think

of these things in connection with those they knew as Christians.<sup>23</sup> Lugard liked the idea and Scarborough was willing to back it. At last it looked as if Miller's Public School dreams would become reality.

Lugard went to Salisbury Square in July 1906 and agreed to the CMS sending lady missionaries to Hausaland. He promised to set Miller's education scheme in motion as soon as possible.<sup>24</sup> "The Committee have realized", the CMS in London told Miller, "that God's good hand has been in a special manner upon the Mission in securing for it through you the trust and confidence of the High Commissioner".<sup>25</sup>

But what the radical Liberal Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, described as "imperialist methods of barbarism" was to cost Lugard his job. In September 1906. While staying in Lugard's House in Abinger Common, Miller learnt that the High Commissioner would not be returning to Northern Nigeria.<sup>26</sup> The ground opened up under both Miller and the CMS for whom Lugard was an invaluable ally. With Lugard went the supportive ethos for CMS work in Northern Nigeria. Miller's work was soon to be absorbed into a new CMS Northern Nigeria Executive Committee and, later, taken into the Yoruba Mission.

Permission had been given to move the Mission to Kontagora, for a school and for new ladies to come, but henceforth every step forward was greeted with storms of official protest.<sup>27</sup> After Lugard was dispatched to Hong Kong, Miller and the CMS in Northern Nigeria seemed perennially on the back foot in the emirates. The initial momentum behind Miller's educational plans was sustained for a while. Lugard and S.W. Scarborough of the Niger Company made the case to the Colonial Office while Miller put pressure on the Acting-Governor,

William Wallace.<sup>28</sup> School buildings began to go up in Zaria. But an institutional clash was in the offing.

The CMS General Committee took a purist line and insisted on religious instruction being on the school curriculum. It was a reasonable demand for a mission school but went against the grain of what had been sold to Lugard and tied his hand.<sup>29</sup> Wallace sounded out the opinion of Residents and discussed the project with Emirs. Initially, all the Emirs, except the most weighty one in Kano, politely agreed to send their own, or senior chiefs' sons, to the school. But much to the surprise of the naïve Wallace, arriving back in Zungeru: "I received information that all the Emirs had expressed their disinclination to adhere to the arrangements made with me".<sup>30</sup> If this wasn't bad enough, the arrival of Sir Percy Girouard, a Roman Catholic of French Canadian descent, to take up the post of Governor proved to be worse. The Lugard-Miller educational entente for Zaria was brought to an abrupt halt, though the CMS managed a school with mainly freed slaves in Bida, which was relatively successful, and was permitted to continue.

Girouard was a railway man. Survey the terrain, build solid structures, apply well-trying, - mechanical - principles of civil administration, and the place would run *comme sur roulettes* (as smoothly as on wheels). Girouard played it by the book with none of the canny maneuvering and spin demonstrated by Lugard. Girouard liked precedent and quoted at length from the first Earl of Cromer's no-nonsense administrative writings on India and Egypt. His aim was to bring Northern Nigeria in line with the Sudan.<sup>31</sup> His greatest enemy was therefore fanaticism; he had a holy dread of outbreaks of Mahdism.

Girouard had a little disguised contempt for evangelicals. “It is a sad fact”, he told Lugard, “that the missions, as constituted, are not the slightest assistance in administering the country: on the contrary a constant source of worry. They say that their religion and common-sense bear no relation to each other”.<sup>32</sup> The idea of the CMS having “any educational functions amongst Mohammedans” did not appeal to him but he showed warmth towards Miller about some of his ideas.<sup>33</sup>

Miller and Bishop Tugwell met with an assortment of Residents in Zaria in March 1907 and the education scheme ended up being downgraded to a purely local day school for the sons of Zaria headmen “of good family”.<sup>34</sup> Informal discussions with malams continued. Miller let off steam to Salisbury Square. “So there is the fiasco of a policy proposed by Lugard, backed by Scarborough, fully agreed to by Elgin and officially communicated as such to Wallace, agreed to heartily by him and yet entirely thwarted by the enmity of the ungodly or careless or in one instance conscientiously opposed Residents”.<sup>35</sup> The trouble was that Miller heard what he wanted to hear and neglected the background music.

So, despite Miller’s idea for a Zaria school not coinciding with the Education Bill in England – which pitted liberals against clergy – it was going to be a lost cause. Miller argued somewhat academically that the only Hausa word for education *karatu* meant religious education, so the concept of secular education was meaningless.<sup>36</sup> Though he did agree not to proselytize in the school.<sup>37</sup>

At the best of times, the reception of the evangelical missionary in a British colony was mixed: tea and crumpets alternating with odium theologicum. Missionaries were competitors in the realm of authority



over the colonized, drawing on the Biblical language of prophecy and protest that sounded a discordant note in a world of official 'commonsense' and white solidarity. The stereotype of the gin-sodden, whoring Resident was just as much an object of missionaries' denunciations as the "native backslider" – perhaps more so because the missionary shared with the Colonial Office a fear that Christian civilization was being brought into disrepute. But in Miller's case there was a strong psychological charge in his reaction to anything that he felt was authority misused. This was as true of his justifiable and persistent opposition to the exaction of the ruling class in the emirates as of his complaints about junior Residents.

Miller had very little 'side' and wrote to government officers with the same passionate conviction to be found in his correspondence with Salisbury Square.<sup>38</sup> And while the CMS was in the business of channeling extreme evangelical zeal, the colonial administration, like beavers, built regulatory dams to block it. "I fear that none of us, though admiring the pluck and single-mindedness of Miller have any patience with his fanaticism", wrote Girouard.<sup>39</sup> Elgin immediately suspended Miller's school scheme when presented with some of Miller's more intemperate letters with their none- too- veiled threats to rally public opinion in Britain behind the English non-conformist conscience.<sup>40</sup> Elgin claimed that he had only been thinking vaguely along the lines of the schools in South India and regretted that "I gave any countenance to the project".<sup>41</sup>

Nor could things have turned out much different if Miller had been a paragon of bureaucratic procedure, critical reasoning and moderation. The heady days of the Scramble for Africa were past. Residents had to

coax their local empires into solvency with a watchful eye on Native unrest if they tried too hard. The administration was quietly unanimous that the missions spelt trouble for the Pax Britannica in Northern Nigeria, the more evangelical the more inadvertently troublesome and seditious.

Though the CMS was unashamedly at the evangelical end of the Anglican spectrum, Miller at times seemed to be off the end of it. He sent back plans to London for the evolution of the Zaria mission that glaringly omitted the services of an ordained minister; and he had already been caught out administering Holy Communion. He also permitted infant baptisms that bore little relationship to the Anglican practice of the standard Prayer Book Service.<sup>42</sup> He could be, at times, as much a thorn in the side of the CMS General Committee in London as that of the new Oxbridge graduates with careers as Residents to advance in Northern Nigeria.

What was most galling to Miller was that his reverses with the Colonial Administration were occurring when he had reason to believe the mission was flourishing. With strange serendipity, a young man who left the Zaria congregation after being censured for falling asleep in church, and compounded the misdemeanor with the sin of taking a second wife, was secretly teaching the Emir of Zaria to read in Roman characters.<sup>43</sup> In January 1907, echoing Miller the Emir publically called for an end to the exploitation of the *talakawa*. The Emir was in addition working his way through Miller's translation of St. John's first Epistle. A month after the Emir's surprise declaration, Aliyu appeared at the mission, produced his reading sheets, and asked the missionary to examine him.<sup>44</sup> Two members of the adult congregation were ready

for baptism. Such were the small but impressive first achievements of the settlement in Zaria.

But aside from that, Zaria, a lesser emirate, was a bad choice for a boarding school as other Emirs would lose face sending their children there. Everyone knew that those going into European employment lost their religion – pagans going into Muslim households would likewise adopt Islam – and the ruling class were unwilling to hand their children over to Miller and risk losing them. A boarding school was a non-starter. Emir Abbas of Kano wrote that “they cannot agree to give up their sons for an English Education”.<sup>45</sup> The Emir of Katsina wanted guardians to accompany the boys before he finally admitted to the Resident that in allowing them to attend at all he had only been trying to please Governor Wallace.<sup>46</sup> The Residents could have demanded attendance at Zaria school but, as they all pointed out, this would have been a direct reversal of policy and fraught with danger.

The arrival of Bishop Tugwell, his wife and three new lady missionaries in the midst of an education controversy did not help matters. On 15 April 1907 in a flamboyant public ceremony, Bishop Tugwell baptized two adults in a small river one mile from the city walls. Malam Fate and Malam Istifanus Bala, from the *ungwan karfe* section of the city leaving their friends on one bank, were immersed, and passed over to a new life with the little Christian community on the other side.<sup>47</sup> Good liturgy but bad tactics. The very public baptism was performed without the Zaria Resident’s knowledge or permission and, even given the warm relations with the Emir, could have been seen as provocative, especially as apostasy was a capital offence in Shari’a law. It was just two days

before a critical meeting on education between the missionaries and the administration.

The Biblical baptism went down badly. But Wallace merely complained about the unannounced arrival of women missionaries in the North.<sup>48</sup> Not so Girourard who, when he got wind of what had happened, cabled 'highly dangerous' to the Colonial Office.<sup>49</sup> "We must certainly stop these practices", minuted Elgin as if there had been an outbreak of female genital mutilation.<sup>50</sup> Such were the vulnerabilities of British imperialism in Northern Nigeria that a few symbolic gestures by a dusty African stream elicited worried comment from Whitehall.

The CMS were left in no doubt as to who was in command. The choice of the stick to beat them with though was more problematic. Behaviour likely to incite a breach of the peace, section 18a of the Criminal Code, was rejected by Girouard. He limited himself to vague threats that the Mission might have to be recalled if baptisms were not strictly confined to the Mission compound.<sup>51</sup> The question of unannounced ladies was more easily solved by Proclamation No.2 of 1902, the Unsettled Districts Proclamation, whereby Residents were required to give permission for Europeans to enter unstable regions. The CMS were henceforth to clear all personnel additions through the Governor.<sup>52</sup>

Open conflict between Mission and Administration was now breaking out. Miller felt no scruples about using any tactics to strike back at the Residents whom he accused of thwarting his work. The question of the WAFF's conduct during rebellions in Satiru and Hadejia during 1906 lay conveniently at hand to be dug up. Miller did not so much exercise his – legitimate - prophetic voice, which he had been accustomed to do in

the past, but rather his retrospective anger and pique at old adversaries. He then proceeded in a flanking manoeuvre via Lugard, stationed in Hong Kong, to whom he sent details of the atrocities committed in Satiru by the *Sarkin Musulmi's* forces with British connivance, and by Sokoto's levies in Hadejia.<sup>53</sup> This was the stuff of parliamentary questions from the opposition benches as Winston Churchill, sore at public criticism of the Boer War, had illustrated at the time. "How does this 'extermination' of an 'almost unarmed rabble' numbering above 2,000 compare with the execution of 12 Kaffirs in Natal after trial and conviction for murder? How long is this sort of thing going to escape Parliamentary attention and what will happen when it attracts it?"<sup>54</sup> The answer was not long in coming.

Governor Wallace had thoughtlessly let slip to Miller the following: "One sentence of his (Lowry-Cole) I may repeat to you in confidence...It would be worth Leopold of Belgium's while to pay ten thousand pounds to get hold of what we know on this".<sup>55</sup> Lugard immediately spotted the dangerous implications and set his brother in London to check on the story. Meanwhile Wallace admitted that an atrocity had taken place; at Hadejia under Lowry-Cole, the Native levies had "killed every living thing before them".<sup>56</sup> The grim story from Sokoto was that the Sultan's troops had impaled Satiru rebels and hacked off their wives' breasts.<sup>57</sup> It was impossible to confirm all the grisly details. For example, the WAFF commander reported ominously that women had been handed over to the Sultan's forces for subsequent disposal as free women. But it was equally impossible to refute the allegations.<sup>58</sup> There had been extermination and slaughter. The Sultan's horsemen had pursued the rebels cutting them to pieces in a 'mopping up' exercise. Others were

tried and executed in *alkali* courts. During the 1903 wars of British conquest, the *Waziri* of Kano's horsemen had fired on their own foot soldiers when they were suspected of wavering. So there was no reason to think they would behave with any greater delicacy against Mahdists.<sup>59</sup>

Girouard already had a lot on his plate without Miller bringing up a one year old war crime. People were fleeing from Kano to escape the exactions of the *jekada*, and there were attacks by desperate townsmen on the Residency. Only an estimated one sixth of the revenue collected from the peasantry of Northern Nigeria was actually reaching British coffers.<sup>60</sup> Lugard tried to calm things down. Miller was "a dear fellow", Lugard declared, "apt to speak in a very positive and in the superlative degree at times".<sup>61</sup> "I think less of Miller the more I hear of him" was Strachey's opinion, never at a loss for a few biting comments in the 'Mission Activity' section of annual reports during his long service in the Colonial Office. "I believe he is a dangerous man. N. Nigeria is no place for a fanatic".<sup>62</sup>

Miller's displays of emotion, some entirely justified, had reinforced negative reactions to the CMS in the North. Neither mainstream Anglican religion nor administration in Britain did Enthusiasm. There was little chance that, after a year, the Colonial Office would institute a Commission of Enquiry into the massacres. Lugard was in no position to press them.

Girouard had set about trying to remedy excessive emphasis on military force inherited from Lugard's time, beginning with regulations for the conduct of punitive expeditions. Curbing mission creep away from Indirect Rule was essential.<sup>63</sup> One of the officers involved in the

massacres was given a key post in Girouard's secretariat: "he helps...safeguard the interests of the Filani who are not very popular at the moment".<sup>64</sup> Poacher turned game-keeper. Another official was found unfit for service due to mental illness.<sup>65</sup>

The word that appeared now about the CMS in dispatches was "Underhand". They had been underhand in trying to push through their educational scheme during the interregnum between High Commissioners, and clearly "Underhand" in attempting a flanking manoeuvre via Lugard against the Residents.<sup>66</sup> Miller, opening up the Satiru and Hadejia massacres again, had scored an own-goal. Girouard began insisting that Northern Nigeria was one step away from a major Mahdist conflagration so all discussion of Mission expansion was foreclosed.<sup>67</sup>

Yet in the triangular conflict playing itself out, Mission-Administration-Fulani rulers, the rebellions inaugurated a period of warm relations between the Zaria Mission and the Emir who was well aware of the seditious potential of Mahdism for Fulani rule. Shortly after Satiru, the Zaria Resident informed Lugard, about to depart, that the Emir "has been most solicitous for the safety and comfort of the missionaries in the town".<sup>68</sup> As far as Muslim chiliastic movements were concerned, Girouard thought the dangers in Northern Nigeria "worse" than the situation Cromer had to deal with in Sudan. The ruling class of the emirates shared this disquiet about violent expressions of popular religious enthusiasm.<sup>69</sup>

The idea that Islam was a great unifying force bringing together rulers and ruled, labourers and those who benefitted from the fruits of their labour, was a pleasant fiction. But, on the other hand, Islam provided

in reality a discourse on justice as well as on obedience and authority. Unity was a prerequisite for trouble-free and penny-pinching colonial rule in straightened circumstances. “Fanatic” was the most pejorative word aimed at Miller; because fanatics created division. Many of the officers serving in Northern Nigeria had cut their spurs in India and Sudan; the fate of Gordon of Khartoum was like a scary nursery story learnt by heart by soldier and administrator alike. A British sense of victimhood coexisted happily with a sense of superiority.

By the end of 1907, Miller was at the end of his tether. At the beginning of the year, Thomas Edgar Alvarez, Manchester Grammar School and Jesus College Oxford, had been appointed executive secretary of the Mission based in Lokoja. Miller found himself under his direction.<sup>70</sup> Miller’s old autonomy as pioneer was waning fast. His educational plans had come to nothing; only from eight to twelve pupils attended his school but they were described as “dull, uninterested and too old”. Some of them were married.<sup>71</sup> He was overworked and neglected the translation that Salisbury Square pressed him to complete.<sup>72</sup> He had Miss E.F. Fox, Miss F.M. Wakefield, a qualified doctor, and his sister Ethel for company.<sup>73</sup> The Colonial officers found Ethel impossible and not even Miller got on with her very well. On one occasion she distributed violently anti-Muslim pamphlets in town. In a highly emotional state, Miller began talking in February 1908 of resigning from the CMS, setting up as a freelance missionary in Kano and defying the Resident to throw him out”.<sup>74</sup>

Yet the crisis passed. Zaria city still provided him with a degree of solace. A few months later Emir Aliyu called together all the pupils in the mission school and weeded out the weaker ones. “To the six boys

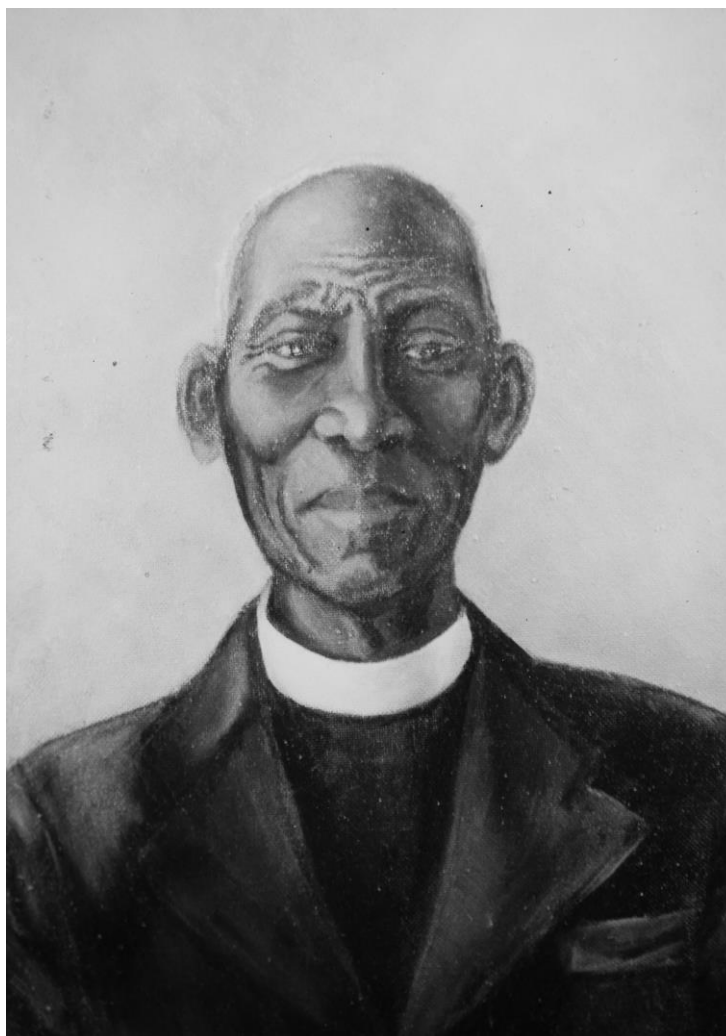


who remained”, Miller wrote, “the Emir showed great kindness, giving each a beautiful robe on which he put a distinguishing mark, and also on every possible occasion singled them out for notice”.<sup>75</sup> The boys were learning to read with the New Testament, largely from St. John’s Gospel, with the full consent of both the Emir and the Resident; one of them was the son of a Zaria *Liman* (Imam).<sup>76</sup> The Emir could see the writing on the wall, was hedging his bets with the new overlords, and realized the significance of literacy in Roman script.

Pressures eased for Miller when Audu Miller, who had been acting as a junior schoolmaster, took over the running of the school, freeing Miller to get on with the Hausa translation of the Bible. To provide a compensatory income for the pupils, the mission began a small farm at Kokato, four miles from the city gates, where they kept three cows.<sup>77</sup> Orr who returned as Resident in 1907 approved of the school; it provided an object lesson in ‘sanitation’, ‘energy’, ‘unselfishness’ and ‘cleanliness’. Nor, having allowed him in to Zaria, did he mind Miller. “The presence in the midst of the town of a European is a powerful check, especially on the ruling families, and makes the commission of serious crimes a very risky proceeding”, not a view that would have gained universal acceptance.<sup>78</sup>

Like Livingstone, another difficult personality, Miller had a small coterie of faithful followers. Two, Audu and Darambai, were special protégés. Another freed slave from the Lake Chad region, Henry Miller, had accompanied him from Kontagora; aged seventeen he was acting as Miller's house servant.<sup>79</sup> In 1909 he was baptized alongside Malam Yusufu, the mission's first rural Fulani convert. Malam Yusufu was a cattle herder from Aba, some six miles to the west of Zaria city. He had first met Miller on one of the missionary's medical rounds; the family was from Bornu and had only recently settled in Aba, which Miller frequently visited on his bicycle.<sup>80</sup> Then there was Rev. W.A. Thompson, see below, a Jamaican missionary whose struggles with Salisbury Square for proper recognition and salary made him also something of an outsider in the CMS ranks. Much liked he was one of the few missionaries of whom there is a portrait.<sup>81</sup>

But these were all Miller's subordinates. With the other missionaries from England, there was much bickering and animosity. The Zaria Mission remained essentially a patriarchate with Miller the headstrong patriarch.



Miller could sustain this role because of his status and reputation in town. He was a Big Man. Something of the recognition of his position can be glimpsed from his account of the reception he received after returning from a trip to Egypt: “during the last few days my time has practically been taken up with seeing great numbers who have come to salute and bring their offerings”, he wrote. This was behavior reserved for chiefs and men of standing.<sup>82</sup> The asymmetry of Miller’s position, between towns people and Europeans, encouraged the tendency for him to act as a spokesman for Hausa interests and thus to play a growing role in local politics. The congregation at the mission was small but it was from the many occasional visitors that Miller gleaned the kind of information that the British political officers were supposed to be collecting. The tiny numbers of baptisms, only fourteen before 1913, about two a year, gave space for Miller to move beyond narrowly Church pre-occupations.<sup>83</sup>

The congregation was largely made up of relatives of the first male converts: for example Malam Fate’s wife, Kura, was baptized two years after him and his sister one year later. Yohanna, the father of Malam Yusufu of Aba was also converted before his death.<sup>84</sup> Others, like Ali Fox Donli from Bagai near Lake Chad, taken by a British patrol in Bornu, and Musa Aitken, came up to Zaria from Lokoja after passing through freed slaves homes.<sup>85</sup> These, and several others, were extraordinary lives and stories that opened a window into the radical insecurity of daily life, changed abruptly and irrevocably by a chance raid.

This, for example, was part of Ali Donli Fox’s story: “On arrival at Chigna, we were all taken before Gauranga over a hundred of us, the King, to choose there-from...I was one of those chosen by the King; he

took only we young boys and refused to take an older man. We were supposed to be for the King's house and/or made into soldiers. He wanted some of us to be educated and some castrated. I was one of those chosen by the *Liman* for education. The King ordered that we would be brought to him every Friday. One day we were brought before him and he ordered 10 of us to be marked (*Bagarmi* tribal mark) and set us free as his own personal future bodyguard and soldiers. On the day we were to be marked a barber was called to do so and while the barber was engaged I sneaked away...."<sup>86</sup> Jacob Abdallah Baikie <sup>87</sup> and Henry Miller, later to be ordained, both came from the same region and, after narrow escapes, made it to Lokoja with the help of British patrols.

Being without kin was one step away from social death. Zaria Mission must have seemed to townsfolk a rag-bag assortment of misfits and strangers dependent on the Whites' goodwill. But the rewards of such dependence were plain to see: a small but steady income, and English education and powerful patrons. Today's slave could be tomorrow's title-holder. That was the implicit promise of clientship. British Rule had not substantially altered the sudden changes of fortune that could put the mighty into chains and the lowly into a *babban riga*, (a big gown with embroidery, a sign of wealth). As visitors skirted the walls of the mission compound in *Durumin Maigarke*, some of these thoughts might not have been far from their mind.

Miller, *Likita* (the Doctor) as he was known, had shown himself a potential source of redress for grievances against both the British and emirate government. But as the pious Muslim entered the outer reception room of the compound, he was getting perilously close to a

world that was unlawful. He was part of a political and cultural system which conformed, at least nominally, to certain Islamic precepts which had his notional assent. Yet within the context of this new system he wanted to acquire skills, such as literacy in the new Roman characters that would enable him to make his way in the world of the *bature* and their imperial administration. It was a fraught situation full of ambiguities and uncertainty. For the Emir whose earnest desire to read Roman characters was also motivated by the earnest desire to intercept mail between the Resident and his political officers, such an instrumental approach to the Mission had obvious advantages.<sup>88</sup> For the *Turaki*, (an Emir's court official who looked after the cattle market), such as Yusufu, another frequent but secret visitor, a genuine friendship and respect for Miller showed itself, though not one devoid of political expectations.<sup>89</sup>

The Cross versus the Crescent approach, as the Great Commission of Christ to go and make disciples of all nations seemed to imply, offered no immediate major threat to the Islam of the state's officials.<sup>90</sup> This did not stop the ruling families eyeing it as a dangerous political force to be contained and isolated. Miller sent for books on Islam but was no expert Islamicist. "The CMS out here have never produced a man that can argue and discuss matters with the native malams", one Resident claimed.<sup>91</sup> Walter Miller had a good try.

A few words from the Emir could make or break the school. When, with the growth of British interest in schools under the new Director of Education, Hans Vischer,<sup>92</sup> sentiment swung against western education, *makaranta boko* (European schools) the Mission languished.<sup>93</sup> However much cultural adaptation took place a not

unreasonable fear of de-Islamisation remained. If Miller remained a player in emirate politics, it was because of being accorded the role of a prominent malam in town.

The enclosed character of the Hausa compound and home meant that missionaries only had ready access to half the population. Though women's seclusion varied with social status. The lady missionaries left after a year. Miller never got used to having them around his compound and the Administration made a tremendous fuss about "propriety" and "safety".<sup>94</sup> The result was that the mission was limited to adult converts. Anxious mothers wanted to keep the level of exposure to *makaranta boko* as low as possible. Women were adamantly opposed to mission intrusion even if some of the men were willing to "lose" their children for some future gain. Even amongst converts - Istafanus Bala would be a good example - a significant time elapsed before their wives accepted baptism.<sup>95</sup> The conservative power of Zaria patriarchs was such that Miller overcame his discomfort with the opposite sex and pressed again in 1910 for more women missionaries. But the root of the problem remained: the religious instruction which remained still conspicuous in the school syllabus.<sup>96</sup> Little pretense was made as to the school's evangelical intent; weekly holidays were changed from Friday to Saturday keeping pupils from Friday prayer.

Every attempt was made by the missionaries to ensure purity of intention in those few seeking baptism, but there were one or two cases where they failed.<sup>97</sup> Mai Yan Riga was baptized in 1910 aged fifty, 'a simple stupid man knowing nothing but God's word' to quote Miller.<sup>98</sup> During several evangelizing visits to Kano Yan Riga let several

people know that *Likita*, the Doctor, was going to make him Emir of Zaria. The result was he went in fear of his life and seemed surprised that Miller refused to sponsor him as a contender to re-establish the Habe dynasty. Would it not, he wanted to know, be the quickest way to convert the people of Zaria? <sup>99</sup>

Malam Fate, less naively ambitious, still found his way to the court at Katsina where he read the Arabic and Hausa scriptures “to all and sundry in the palace” while the Emir’s guest.<sup>100</sup> Pious Muslims sometimes shunned Christians and refused to eat with them. But it was far from the case that conversion brought with it a lifetime of persecution.<sup>101</sup> It was always possible to revert to Islam, as did Malam Fate, or to abandon the mission orbit for the lower ranks of the British administration, as did Audu Miller.<sup>102</sup> Nigerian Islam was, as Miller emphasized, markedly tolerant.<sup>103</sup>

Needless to say there were great pressures against conversion to Christianity and these did not lessen as talk of Amalgamation - with the South - began to reach the Residents. The railway crept up to and beyond Zaria bringing with it the South in a new immediacy, “20<sup>th</sup> century Europe to 10<sup>th</sup> century Hausaland” as Girouard bluntly put it.<sup>104</sup> The campaign by Residents to hold on to “their North” took off.<sup>105</sup> The Residents’ ‘North’ lived, moved and had its being as part of the Islamic world constituted by Islamic government. The protective reaction of the northern Residents to the railway link and the great Amalgamation with the South was to have the gravest implications for the future of the Zaria Mission and, indeed, the history of Nigeria as a whole.

## Footnotes

1. Adeleye *Power and Diplomacy*, 245-246
2. Lugard to Chamberlain 12, 23 December 1902, C.O. 446/26
3. Popham-Lobb to his mother 26 October 1902, MSS. Afr. s. 64
4. Muffett *Concerning Brave Captains*, 143-212
5. Miller et al. to Lugard 14 February 1901, G3/A9/01
6. The grain trade continued as did other movement of other commodities. From 17 December 1901 to 20 March 1902, Popham-Lobb counted 50 different caravans passing south through Wushishi, in all 3,460 men, 2,913 women, 1,041 cattle, 15,703 sheep, 6,653 donkeys each carrying 150lbs of potash in wicker baskets. Nicolson MSS, Afr.r. 81
7. Miller E.P. *Change here for Kano: Reminiscences of Fifty Years in Nigeria*, Kaduna, 1959 (short booklet)
8. Lugard to Chamberlain 15 March 1902, C.O. 446/22
9. Abadie found, for example, 300 slaves in irons in Zaria market when he reached the town in May 1900. Abadie MSS, Afr. s. 1337
10. Miller to Baylis 17 September 1905, G3/A9/01
11. Miller to Baylis 4 December 1905, G3/A9/01
12. Miller to Baylis 17 February 1906, G3/A9/01



13. Tugwell to Baylis 31 March 1901, G3/A9/01

14. For example, *tafsir*, translation of Arabic to Hausa, and commentary on verses in the Qu'ran, a traditional specialism of religious scholars usually learnt by rote. Miller was engaged on translation of the Bible and exposition of its text throughout his time in Zaria.

15. Miller to Baylis 4 December 1905

16. Memorandum by Bishop Tugwell on women missionaries in Hausaland 11 July 1905, G3/A9//01

17. Miller to Baylis 28 August 1905, 8 February 1906, G3/A9/01; Baylis to Miller 20 October 1905, Baylis to Alvarez 24 November, 1 December 1905, 27 April 1906, G3/A9/01

18. Abadie MSS Afr.r.81

19. Tugwell to Baylis 18 December 1907, G3/A9/01

20. The first government officer to pass Miller's Hausa examinations did so only in 1905. A year later so few passed that language qualifications had to be shelved for promotions, see Temple to Girouard 29 December 1906, C.O. 446/61. It was only in 1907 that Temple and Arnett were proficient enough to take over examining from Miller, see Girouard to Elgin 4 December 1907, C.O. 446/66. It was this language barrier that gave Miller the edge over the British political officers and sustained his sense of superiority. "The hatred throughout this country to the Fillani ruler can only be realized by those who *can hear the people talking freely in their own language*" (my italics), he lamented. See Miller to Baylis 26 May 1903

21. Miller's hopes that Audu might be educated in England were emphatically turned down, see Baylis to Miller 25 June, 30 October 1903, G3/A3/L5
22. Details of this scheme are fully covered in Graham S.F. *Government and Mission Education in Northern Nigeria 1900-1919*, Ibadan, 1966, 37-50
23. Miller to Lugard 12 April 1906, G3/A9/01
24. Minute of an interview with Sir. F. Lugard, 23 July 1906, G/A3/L6
25. Instructions to Dr. W.R.S. Miller 3 October 1906, G3/A3/L6
26. Miller to Baylis 25 September 1906, G3/A9/01
27. Baylis to Lugard 25 July 1906, G3/A3/L6
28. Wallace might be described as bumbling at times. He told Bishop Tugwell in an emotional moment that he would be glad to see the CMS in Kano. The Bishop promptly tried to convert him: "he did not answer but shook my hand most heartily, his eyes filling with tears", see Tugwell to Baylis 30 October 1905, G3/A3/L5
29. The Committee of Correspondence minuted an agreement, with the idea of waiving the demand for religious instruction in October 1906, but Miller remained unaware of it. He was writing back in December 1906 and February 1907 asking to be let off the regulations on this point. In July 1907 the General Committee finally ruled against him. But by that time the boarding school was dead. Miller had confirmed to Wallace that he would not proselytize in the school and, in the event, the deliberations in Salisbury Square were more noises off. Graham

*Government and Mission Education*, 45-47, put great weight on the role of CMS in London however.

30. Wallace to Elgin 1 April 1907, C.O. 446/62

31. See, for example, Girouard's 'Education and Missionary Enterprise', a memorandum enclosed in Girouard to Elgin 31 October 1907, C.O. 446/65

32. Girouard to Lugard 25 January 1908, MSS. Afr. s. 63

33. Ibid.

34. Tugwell to Baylis 25 March 1907, G3/A9/02

35. Miller to Baylis 19 March 1907, G3/A9/02

36. Miller to Wallace 6 January 1907, encl. In Wallace to Elgin 1 April 1907, C.O. 446/62. *Boko* was used to describe Roman script and hence used for foreign/white education as in *Boko Haram*

37. Miller to Lugard 12 April 1906

38. Miller to Wallace 13 February 1907, encl. in Wallace to Elgin 1 April 1907

39. Girouard to Lugard 25 January 1908, MSS. Afr. s. 63

40. Miller to Sharpe 13 February 1907, encl. in Wallace to Elgin 1 April 1907

41. Elgin minute on Wallace to Elgin 1 April 1907

42. Baylis to Miller 16 November 1906, G3/A3/L6

43. Miller to Baylis 19 March 1907

44. Ibid.

45. Abbas Serikin Kano to Wallace 1 February 1907, encl. in Wallace to Elgin 1 April 1907

46. Festing to Wallace 24 January 1907, encl. Wallace to Elgin 1 April 1907

47. Interview with Ladi Bala, Zaria City, April 1975. Malam Bala was a local butcher.

48. Wallace to Elgin 1 May 1907, C.O. 446/62

49. Girouard to Elgin 31 December 1907, C.O. 446/66

50. Elgin minute on Girouard to Elgin 31 December 1907

51. Tugwell to Baylis 18 December 1907, G3/A9/02

52. Lucas to Baylis 22 June 1907, G3/A9/02

53. Miller to Lugard 12 May 1907, MSS. Afr. s. 62

54. Churchill minute of 29 April 1906 on Lugard to Elgin 12 March 1906, C.O. 446/53

55. Miller to Lugard 24 December 1907, MSS. Afr. s. 62

56. Wallace to Major E.J. Lugard 7, 31 October 1907, MSS. Afr. s. 62

57. Major Burdon, Sokoto Resident, who was in charge of the attacks speaks of 'extermination' and 'slaughter' admitting that women were handed over to the *sarkin musulmi* for 'subsequent disposal as free women', telegrams of 11, 12 March 1906, MSS. Afr. s. 547; Lugard to

Strachey 9 March 1908; Lugard to Miller 9 March 1908; Strachey to Lugard 20 April 1908, MSS. Afr. s. 62

58. Lugard to Elgin 12, 14 March, 11 April, 1906, C.O. 446/53

59. Lugard to Chamberlain 7 March 1903, with encl. Kemball to Lugard 1 March 1903, C.O. 446/30

60. Grier to his mother 30 October 1906, Grier Papers, MSS. Afr.s.1379; Girouard to Lugard 25 January 1908; Maitland to Lugard 21 May 1908, MSS. Afr. s. 63; Miller to Baylis 8 June 1908, G3/A9/02

61. Lugard to Orr 27 October 1907, MSS. Afr. s. 62

62. Strachey to Lugard 20 April 1908

63. Girouard to Elgin 10 July 1907, C.O. 446/63

64. Maitland to Lugard 21 May 1908

65. Wallace to Elgin 13 December 1906 C.O. 446/40; Lugard to Girouard 12 April 1908 MSS Afr. s. 63

66. Alvarez to Baylis 31 December 1907, 29 January 1908; minutes of interview at the Colonial Office with R.L. Antrobus 3 February 1908; Tugwell to Baylis 1 May 1908, G3/A9/02

67. Orr to Miller 7 January 1908; minutes of interview with Sir Percy Girouard 28 April 1908, G3/A9/02

68. Orr to Lugard 4 March 1906, MSS. Afr.s.62

69. Girouard to Elgin 31 October 1907, C.O. 446/65. Cromer had a total ban on Missions in North Sudan

70. Alvarez like many of the early missionaries had served in Sierra Leone. He was considered the 'leader' and 'gentleman' that Miller admired but despite effusive protestations of affection for him, Miller also saw him as a rival.

71. Meeting of the Northern Nigeria Executive Committee 25 November 1907, G3/A9/02

72. Tugwell to Baylis 18 December 1907, G3/A9/02

73. Ethel Miller who had only recently been convinced of the divinity of Christ, see Talbot Price to Baylis 31 October 1906, G3/A9/02, left the CMS in 1918. She was a dyed in the wool non-conformist; once in later years riding a bicycle in front of a Corpus Christi procession shouting 'No Popery', interview with Mrs. Sylvia Leith-Ross, 1975.

74. Miller to Baylis 5 February 1908, G3/A9//02

75. Education Report for Zaria School 1907-8, G3/A9/02

76. Miller to Baylis 19 March 1907

77. Meeting of the Northern Nigeria Executive Committee 15 February 1909, G3/A9/02

78. Orr to Girouard nd. c. August 1907, encl. in Girouard to Elgin 31 October 1907, C.O. 446/65

79. Transcript of a tape-recording made of the Rev. Henry Miller by Miss Iken of CMS Wusasa c.1966. Original recording lost.

80. Interview with Paul Anfani, Sarkin Wusasa November 1974. Malam Anfani was the son of Malam Yusufu of Aba.

81. Rev. W.A. Thompson was born the son of an Anglican farmer in Jamaica in 1873. He became a Sunday school teacher in 1894 and two years later began training to become a dispenser. In 1898 he went to the Anglican Training School in Mico, and after five months at Fourah Bay College in Freetown, Sierra Leone in 1901 began work as a missionary in Falaba. He was posted to Gierku in January 1905. He attended theological college in Jamaica during furloughs seeking ordination with Miller's support. CMS attitudes at this time were not radically different from racial attitudes in the rest of society.

Condescension was shown towards their West Indian agents. But similar attitudes were in evidence towards white working class missionaries also. See Baylis to Miller 16 October 1903 where he reveals objections to Thompson being on 'an equal footing' to other missionaries' – possibly a concern about educational level – and Baylis to Miller 24 April 1903 when a Mr. Gillespie is described as being 'of comparatively humble origin, *but* of very nice manners' (my italics)  
G3/A3/L5

82. Miller spent his April-May furlough in Egypt to learn more Arabic and study the experience of other Missions in Muslim lands, see Miller's annual letter for 1909, G3/A9/02

83. See Chapter Four

84. Wusasa Baptismal Register

85. Interview with Ali Donli Fox at Wusasa September 1974

86. Ali Donli Fox to his daughter Husaini 6 June 1945 MSS biography typewritten. "It was about the year 1903, one early morning about 3 to 4 am when all the town was asleep, the raiders set fire to the town and

began to kill and capture. They used Dane guns (*Asaka da Kankara*), long barreled flintlock muskets) while our people only have spears and *gario* (throwing knives). While our father and elder brother ran to mount their horses to meet the enemy, we children and our mothers make for the nearest bush for our lives. Our own compound is not very far from the town gate, and therefore was one of the first victims of attack by the enemy. My mother with child on her back, and my younger brother and myself among many other families including my father's other wives were all running to the nearest hiding place, when the horses of the enemy overtook us. A man on horseback snatched and placed me in front on his horse, I jumped down and ran again, and, while running my foot was pierced by a guinea corn stump and I sustained a deep injury the scar of which is still to be seen. As I fell down, the horseman again picked me up and placed me on his horse, my mother and brothers were struggling with others, then, and as the enemies saw our people begin to appear, they made off with us (I cannot tell the fate of my mother and two younger brothers). Those who had caught slaves galloped at full speed, leaving others to defend themselves and the rear".

87. 'Biography of J.A. Baikie' quoted in research essay by Sylvester Bature, a third year student at Abdullahi Bayero College, Kano, 1974

88. Grier to his mother 20 October 1909, MSS Afr.s. 1379

89. Interview with Steven Ibrahim Audu, Wusasa August 1974

90. Cambridge University Mission Party, Notes No. 9, November 1907, 6

91. Grier to his mother 5 July 1909, MSS. Afr. s. 1379



92. Graham *Government and Mission Education* 58-98; Miles W.F.S. *Hausaland Divided: Colonialism and Independence in Nigeria and Niger* Cornell University Press 1994, 224
93. Zaria Mission Annual Report 1909-1910, G3/A9/02
94. Tugwell to Baylis 18 December 1907, Baylis to Antrobus 4 February 1907, C.O. 446/69
95. Alvarez to Baylis 10 August 1910; Miller to Baylis 21 August 1910 G3/A9/02. Wusasa baptismal register shows Ladi Bala receiving baptism in 1915 at the same time as her two children, Ibrahim and Hannatu, an indication of a mother's importance for religious affiliation.
96. Sir Hesketh Bell, the new Governor, told Miller that letters from Cairo to the Emirs calling on them to resist British schools had been intercepted, but it is difficult to assess how important such pressures were in reality at the level of ordinary townspeople, see Miller to Baylis 31 June 1910
97. Miller to Alvarez 31 July 1910, G3/A9/02
98. Miller to Baylis 13 June 1911, G3/A9/03
99. Miller to Baylis 27 June 1911, G3/A9/03
100. Miller Annual Letter 1910-1911, G3/A9/03
101. Interview with Mallam Musa Aitken, Wusasa, September 1974
102. Ali Donli Fox also left the Mission during World War I to become an interpreter. He became a first class clerk in 1928. Steven Ibrahim Audu became *sarkin ayyuka*, Head of Government Public Works.

103. Miller W.R.S. 'Islam in Africa' *International Review of Missions* Vol. XV, No.59, July 1926, 556-558

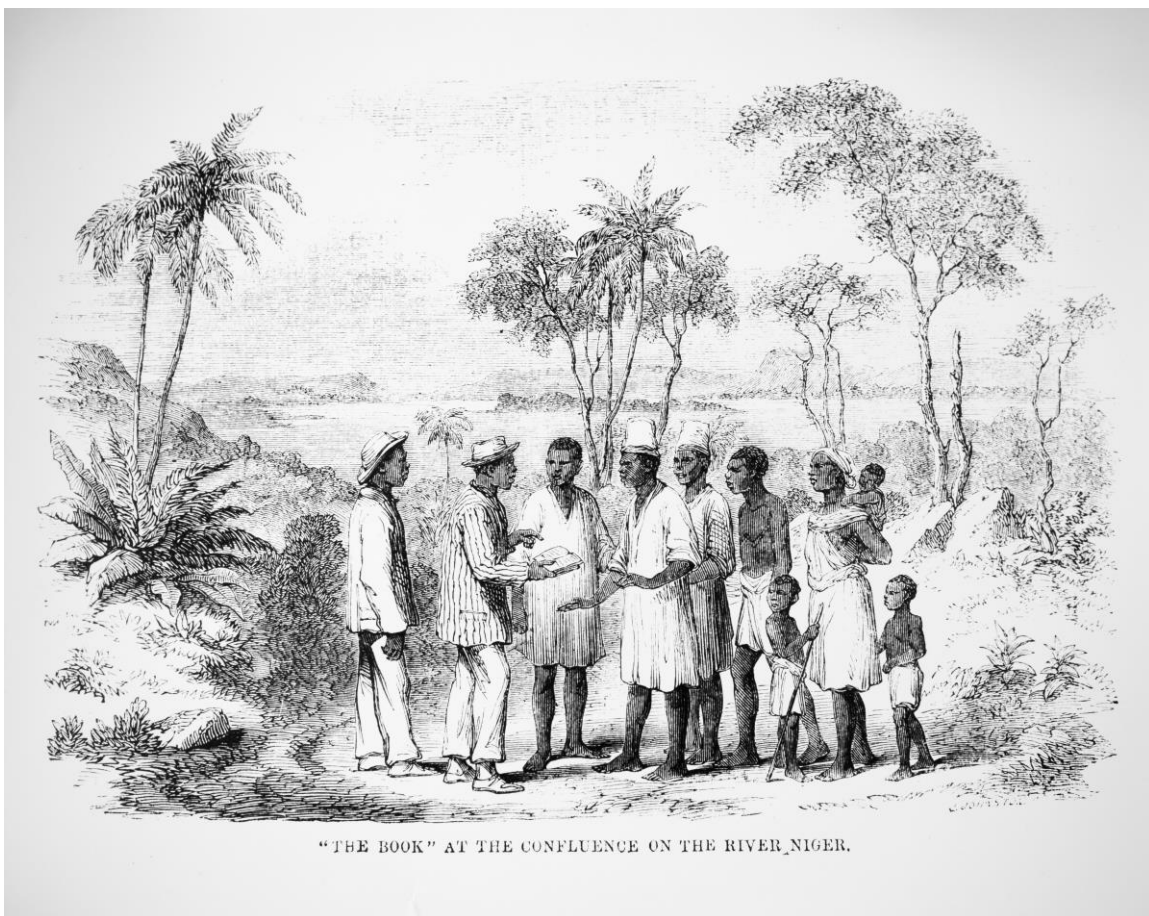
104. Girouard to Elgin 31 October 1907, C.O. 446/65

105. The campaign can be dated from the 1910 Kano Annual Durbar. It reached crisis point in the early 1920s when Sir Hugh Clifford took over as Governor-General.

## Chapter Four

“After greetings, let the Malams who preach stay where they are. The reason is that the people will be in great fear if they come, for what they do not understand the people of this country certainly fear.”

Sultan of Sokoto on the subject of Christian missionaries 1917



There was something about Northern Nigeria which generated in the cautious and pragmatic British character an unusual degree of excess and emotion. The Harmattan blowing off the Sahara was a wind that blew nobody any good, whether poor Dr. Featherstone Cargill, sent home suffering delusions of grandeur after too long as Resident in Kano, or Captain Howard, whose lechery in the guardroom and “pagan hunting” on the plateau found mention in dispatches.<sup>1</sup> The dry heat of the savannah withered the fruit of a long history of moderation and compromise, evaporated away anthropological insights to leave a hard, uncompromising kernel of imperial power. The swashbuckling and swagger became unrestrainedly cruel and militarist, evangelical zeal a competitive struggle between faiths and cultures, and the good Liberal became illiberal in the passion of his liberal convictions.

Yet Northern Nigeria was at the top of the second league of imperial posting, below in importance India, Malaya and Sudan. Nobody ever grew enough cotton or grain, or skinned enough goats, for it to take on economic importance for London. Peanuts and tin created a modicum of interest. British capitalism encountered entrenched cultures that thought more of accumulating people and offspring than capital, and economies that followed Muslim inheritance patterns. Yet for those who missed out on India and Sudan it was a good posting that could generate great enthusiasm and extreme partisanship where Indirect Rule was concerned.

A ruling class that could vie with the British in pomp and circumstance, and dissimulation, with a ruthless warrior ethic, appealed to different temperaments in different ways. For some the Fulani were figures in an Edwardian orientalist fantasy; the power and imagined sensuality

that could be clothed in gentility and hospitality were admired, or despised, according to an individual's own moral codes. The Fulani could be improved, or destroyed; no-one remained indifferent for long. So the application of the theory of Indirect Rule held inherent tensions.

Several generations of imperial rule in India, plus often a short stay in Lagos, had habituated the liberal conscience of Northern administrators to the uncomfortable dilemmas of the exercise of power. Clear principles were enunciated and widely accepted: indigenous institutions were to be preserved and, if possible, influenced for the better while Europeanisation was to be avoided. This, of course, assumed a degree of cultural self-knowledge, and far more anthropological insight than was available at the time. In practice Indirect Rule meant hands-off all things Islamic, the protection of a religion and even its furtherance. The unfortunate Dr. Cargill dispatched the Emir of Kano's *hakimai* (chiefs) out of town to administer contiguous regions in the emirate, and appointed a senior slave official as *Waziri*. This was not everyone's idea of hands-off. It probably hastened his departure.

The problem for the CMS was that they felt obliged to applaud the principle while deploring some of its inevitable applications and consequences - such as their converts' imitation of, as they saw it, decadent European behaviour attendant on their association with Whites. The Northern Nigeria Mission shared, for example, the distaste of the 1910 Interdenominational Missionary Conference, held in Lokoja for "the adoption of customs, on the part of members of the Native Races of Northern Nigeria, which may tend to Europeanise and thus Denationalise such Races e.g. the wearing of English dress".<sup>2</sup> The

missionaries complained that Audu Miller had grown accustomed to a “European standard of living”, and therefore wanted more than his £18 per month salary.<sup>3</sup> By denouncing the flow of trade spirits to the emirates, Bishop Tugwell drew down accusations of slandering Muslims.<sup>4</sup>

The hope of spreading Christianity through a European-led Mission in a Muslim town, led by a figure of Miller’s stature, was something of a dream. The very isolation of the small Christian community was bound, to some extent, to draw converts out of local life – if they were not pushed out – into the life and culture of the Mission station. In as much as a convert naturally took advantage of the opportunities afforded by this Mission world, with its entry ticket to English and *Boko* literacy, he risked becoming the “uppity mission product” generally despised by the British administration. In these early days, to become a Christian was inevitably to become, at least partially “denationalized”.

The pupils at Zaria school wore long flowing green gowns with little fez-like caps. But Miller, against the recommendations of the Protectorate’s new education officer, taught the students English and the use of Roman characters – plus training them to become a proficient hockey and football team. For a religion with a vital inner life, external cultural symbols carried importance and defined boundaries.

The missionaries showed an interesting mix of liberal and illiberal sentiments in their attitudes. The Residents were true believers in Indirect Rule and sometimes behaved like priests in a religious cult; “something of the fanatical qualities commonly associated only with passionate adherence to a form of dogmatic religion” as the skeptical

Sir Hugh Clifford described it.<sup>5</sup> Anglo-Fulani government sponsored the warrior liturgy of the durbars. The first one in 1911 drew Emirs to Kano from as far away as Ilorin: loud grating music with praise singers, splendidly caparisoned horsemen performing the theatre of harsh ruling class invincibility, were most photogenic.<sup>6</sup> The walled cities now began to take on the character of cultural sanctuaries into which the profane might not enter; strangers had to live outside the walls in the new *sabon garis*, (literally 'new town' but later meaning strangers' quarters). An importunate trading company was expelled from Kano city and their lawyers, representing the secular interests of Commerce, were driven out of town by the Resident C.L. Temple.<sup>7</sup> "It appears to me", wrote Clifford some years later, "that the ruling ideas of the Government of Nigeria have...been to keep the Native Administration and the peoples of the Northern Provinces as far as possible unspotted from the world and uncontaminated by disturbing influences". In short, there was "an organized effort to preserve the status quo".<sup>8</sup>

Like clerics, the Residents were sensitive to criticism while at the same time engaging in a form of corporate deceit. "Temple used to say to me that if we liked the whole truth we should not be able to maintain the Emirs in power", Sir Herbert Palmer, a later Kano Resident once confided.<sup>9</sup> The more defiantly the Emirs refused to be paragons of virtue and good governance and failed to live up to British hopes for Indirect Rule, the more fervently Residents publically defended them against critics, and the more direct the methods of coercing their subjects became.<sup>10</sup> The trouble with Miller was his addiction to the whole truth about Indirect Rule, his revelation of the reality of Empire, and his capacity to embellish its negative features when required.

What the missionaries found hard to comprehend was that Islam for the Residents was a species of the genus “Protected Institutions”, the species that cooperated in the task of local government. Bitter complaints about a Christian nation engaging in “pro-Muslim” government missed the point and angered even the pragmatists in the Administration.<sup>11</sup> The policy towards the missions under Governor Sir Percy Girourard, conceived out of the conflicting demands of governance, self-preservation and paying its way, was implemented with a powerful sense of superiority. “The best original missionary efforts will be the equitable rule of the ordinary British political officer imbued with the sense of British fair-play and tradition” declared Girouard one year after the Satiru massacre.<sup>12</sup> The contradictions were self-evident. Temple, the great promoter of Islamic government, must have found the missionaries’ complaints particularly galling. “I have no sympathy at all with the doctrines of Islam”, he wrote, “which appear to me to have proved themselves one of the most retarding forces which have hampered the advances of civilization and the wealth of nations”.<sup>13</sup>

The Residents were to a man loyally “pro-North”: some in the parochial sense of distrusting anyone who came from the coast, black or white, others in the more dangerous way of projecting their own high-pitched fantasies of Fulani culture on to the vast tracts of land to the north of the Niger-Benue. The reason even the pragmatic Girouard gave for Hausa as the teaching language in schools, and as such the *lingua franca* of the North, was to “preserve native customs and institutions and produce an effective virile and loyal nationalism”.<sup>14</sup> An irritated Strachey minuted at the Colonial Office on one of the Governor’s



memoranda on land reform: “there is no Northern Nigerian ‘nation’ “. <sup>15</sup> But the premise of Indirect Rule and the internal constraints of the diminutive British bureaucracy dictated that the Northern Residents imagine, or create, one.

The colonial period saw the erosion of the traditional political/religious and economic pre-eminence of the *Sarkin Musulmi* in Sokoto. The nature of British rule, scattered Residents dug in to administrative districts, attached to particular Emirs, or self-appointed experts on the Tiv, Angas or Igala, the multiplicity of small language groups on the Plateau, did nothing to foster the - notional - unity of the old Caliphate, the North’s “national structure”. Missionaries, who saw in every Hausa trader travelling down the Niger the vanguard of a pernicious spread of Islam southwards, added to the problem. Progressive emirs welcomed Christian teachers to their palace. This was the mark of a good Emir for the CMS, for example the Emir of Katsina. But the British were solidly hostile to such missionary encroachment. <sup>16</sup> Residents countenanced missionary advance into non-Muslim areas, not because they wanted it, but because it kept preachers out of their Emirate. <sup>17</sup>

Irrespective of the size of its non-Muslim population, the birth of the North was the death-knell for Christians’ hopes of immediate expansion into the emirates. <sup>18</sup> Under British rule Islam spread to many *Maguzawa* (non-Muslim) villages. Residents presided over the spread of Muslim-Hausa culture as the dominant culture of the North, not to any resurrection of the Caliphate. <sup>19</sup> That, in another form, was to come later.

If the North was to some degree a creation of the colonial imagination, it was not lacking an historical foundation. There had been two Muslim

Empires, Sokoto in the west, relying on the considerable military and symbolic power of the Sultan of Sokoto, and Bornu in the east, whose leader, the *Shehu* was a rival, though with a politically degraded Caliphate. When Emir Kwassau of Zaria wanted to persuade Kontagora to desist from raiding, he turned to the *Waziri* of Sokoto.<sup>20</sup> But expressions of fealty to Sokoto vied with pursuit of as much autonomy as could be safely obtained.<sup>21</sup> Sokoto was both a proud part of the historical memory of the Fulani, qua Islamic elite, and the hub of important economic networks.<sup>22</sup>

Adherence to Islam in the Northern provinces was uneven with many practices from the old *Maguzawa* religion retained.<sup>23</sup> This lent itself to the kind of reform movements that had birthed the Caliphate at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and underpinned the identity of the Fulani elite. Either way, the Christianity of the Zaria Mission withdrew its converts from the dominant religious community. Baptism removed them from a shared history and from the economic networks and communities of the emirates. It made them less than fully Hausa. If they were able to overcome their position as social outcasts, and many were, they were condemned to make their own history and create their own employment. The first converts found that difficult. They sought traditional paths to status, or moved off into the new niches of the colonial system. Other alternatives took them on what Girouard called “those ‘strange and unexpected paths’ at the end of which appear to lie the destruction of native institutions and of native loyalty”. It gave them the choice of being either pioneers or dissidents, or both.<sup>24</sup>

Christians were far from being the first rebels the Caliphates had encountered. An extraordinary event for the Mission came with the

conversion of men, women and families who were already in opposition to the Sultan's authority before the missionaries had arrived. They belonged to a sect that had fled to the Ningi hills south-east of Kano in the 1840s, so between the jurisdictions of Bornu and Sokoto.

The story of the *Banisa'ila*, the Children of the Israelites, also called the *Isawa*, the Jesus people, is both remarkable and seminal for the origins of the Christian community in the Hausa-speaking North. Their history is difficult to reconstruct. It may even seem like pretentious Whig history to position the Zaria Christians as the heirs of a Muslim sect. But it is an attempt to place the origins of Christianity in the North in its rightful place as part of a spectrum of responses to State Islam. For the figure of *Isa-al-Masih*, Jesus the Saviour, probably first attracted the sect's attention as the opponent of Daggal, the force of evil and the anti-Christ which had to be defeated at the end of time, and thus emerged in the context of Mahdist thought.<sup>25</sup> Numerically unimportant compared to the sufi *tariqa*, for example the Tijaniyya that crossed the desert from Fez in Morocco to embed itself in Kano, the *Isawa* brought its adherents into the shifting sands of the Christian presence north of the Niger. Their arrival indirectly strengthened Miller's stance as leading critic of Anglo-African government.<sup>26</sup>

The Sokoto *jihad* which created the political contours of colonial Northern Nigeria had lost much of its reforming zeal by the 1840s; traditional complaints about the state of mosques and the failure to distribute revenue as alms were being directed at the Sultan.<sup>27</sup> Sokoto was attempting to tighten its economic and political hold over the

emirates. In Zaria emirate fewer Habe gained titles. Taxation, tribute and slave raiding bore onerously on the peasantry.<sup>28</sup> But in many pre-jihad centres, the quest for reform lived on. Habe mallams sought alternative sources of religious legitimation to that of Uthman dan Fodio and his followers promoted by the Fulani royal lineages. One such centre was Tsokwa, south-east of Kano, where a flourishing weaving and dyeing industry supported a community of scholars whose pupils came from far and wide.<sup>29</sup> Around 1846, one of the Tsokwa malams, Hamza, though promoting the religious duty of paying the religious *zakat* tithe, led a revolt against Kano's imposition of *kurdin kassa* (a head-tax or land tax) which Barth reported made up the bulk of the emirate's revenues, and called in question *Al-Kharaj*, the main Muslim tithes.<sup>30</sup> When news of the malam's tax revolt reached the *Dan Galadima*, Abdullahi, in Kano, instructions were sent that all dissidents should be brought to the city. Forewarned, Malam Hamza fled taking with him fifteen pupils from the schools in Tsokwa.<sup>31</sup> The town seems to have had a reputation for rebellion as, two years later, Hadejia troops in revolt against Sokoto were quartering there.<sup>32</sup>

Malam Hamza would have based his criticism of unjust taxation on Islamic texts, but he was also known for his skills in *sihr*, magic, which spoke of an appeal to pre-Islamic religious practices. It was popularly believed he could rise up on his mat, resurrect ants that had been fried and make charms that bestowed immunity in battle (probably with verses of the Qur'an).<sup>33</sup> Armed with this eclectic repertoire of 'scholarship' and magic, he built up a small army of hills-men on the borders of Bauchi emirate. Like other charismatic leaders such as *Kinjikitile* in colonial Tanzania, Hamza provided a focus for resentment

against new and oppressive forms of government.<sup>34</sup> A Bauchi chronicler recorded his rallying cry: “Follow me and I will save you from the service of these tyrant Fulanis who use you and ask you for what you cannot do”.<sup>35</sup>

By the mid-1860s, Hamza’s followers and descendants had founded a powerful slave-raiding force in the Ningi hills which was to threaten Kano, Bauchi and Zaria emirates throughout the remainder of the century.<sup>36</sup> Originally a Habe chiliastic reform movement, the Tsokwa malams had mutated into leaders of a largely non-Muslim war band inspired by traditional religious themes.

Quite other was the fate of another of the Tsokwa malams who moved to Kano at the time of Hamza’s departure, a courageous step for the religiously adventurous, into the more cosmopolitan atmosphere of the town’s commercial quarter. It was this Malam, Ibrahim, who founded the *Banisra’ila*.

According to tradition, Malam Ibrahim was born at Kargi near Soba in Zaria emirate. Drawn to Tsokwa and its Muslim schools, he married into the town before moving on to study with Malam Dodo at Dugel. He would also have come into contact with the court malams from Zaria, like Malam Dan Jada. Ibrahim was said to have been called to appear before the Emir of Kano in *riga* and turban with “a sword and spear, his club and staff, and with shoes on his feet”.<sup>37</sup> His religious expertise was acknowledged by the Emir Usman and seems to have been in *tafsir*, reading and translation of Qur’an. It is not known what he taught but tradition emphasizes that the Emir accepted it. “This is indeed the helper, *ansar*, of religion; you should go and receive him”, the Emir allegedly said.<sup>38</sup>

The *Dan Galadima*, Abdullahi, who had been de facto in charge of administration for several years, was unlike the gentle and pious Usman. On Usman's death he became Emir of Kano. Sokoto was reluctant to approve his appointment and seems to have feared insubordination on his part. Whether Abdullahi continued in Usman's way of giving malams "great honour", or more dangerously seeking alternative religious leadership to Sokoto in non-Qadiriyya authorities, is hard to say.<sup>39</sup> Tradition simply relates that Malam Ibrahim continued to "read" with the Emir who "agreed with this malam" until around 1867.<sup>40</sup>

So Malam Ibrahim was given titles and was turbaned and his fate may have been that of an overreaching courtier. But there seems to have been more to the rise of his followers than that. Stories suggest some militant Mahdist influence: "they met for *wa'azi* exhortation/preaching) everyone with his shoes for example, or his battle-axe, his sword or his spear.<sup>41</sup> They were leaned against the porch wall like the Prophet Moses used to do. They said that he was collecting arms to take over the town".<sup>42</sup> Other stories emphasise that Sokoto put pressure on Emir Abdullahi to have Malam Ibrahim killed. The Sultan is said to have refused a daughter in marriage to Abdullahi until he disposed of the renegade malam.<sup>43</sup>

Whether the initiative came from Sokoto or from the Kano Emir, 1867 was a turning point. For ten years the Ningawa now under the leadership of Abubakar Dan Maje had been building up their forces, and they launched a devastating raid on Kano emirate.<sup>44</sup> Malam Ibrahim, linked via the Tsokwa school to the Ningi leadership, paid the price.<sup>45</sup> Abdullahi may have toyed with some of Ibrahim's ideas but

reasons of state now demanded a return to fealty to Sokoto. Ibrahim was taken to Jakara and impaled on the stake, the death of an apostate and blasphemer, while several of his followers were thrown into prison at Gwalle. It was claimed that he refused to say the *kalimat*, effectively the short confession of faith, and denied that Muhammad was the final prophet.<sup>46</sup>

The bulk of Ibrahim's followers fled Kano city to settle in villages on the periphery of the emirate. One group moved to Gumel. By the early 1870s some had settled in Ningi in the Tilleru ward around the market where they were welcomed by the warlord, Dan Maje's son, Malam Haruna.<sup>47</sup> The sect's teaching may not originally have diverged significantly from that handed down by Malam Hamza. By the reign of the Ningi chief Gajiri c.1885, the *Banisra'ila's* malams had become established around the Ningi chief led by Malam Adamu.<sup>48</sup> But a coup by one of the military commanders, Dan Yaya, resulted in their expulsion from the town in 1890.<sup>49</sup> Some like Malam Isa who was able to get hold of a horse fled north; others moved on to the region of their founder's home, near Soba in Zaria emirate.<sup>50</sup>

Despite this setback, under the Ningi chiefs, Gajigi and Haruna, the group had managed to get established and become the religion of the court. The Ningi troops, many former escaped slaves from the emirates, were remembered as praying in any direction rather than towards the east, towards Mecca.<sup>51</sup> The Ningi hills, at the periphery of different emirates, were an ideal base for raiding and formed a protection from Sokoto's horsemen for a sect that the Sultan had good reason to reject.

As a result of the coup in Ningi, two malams, Yahuza and Yahaya, settled in the little walled village of Turawa some 25 miles from Zaria. A Malam Ali, the son of a prosperous Bornu farmer-trader, who had returned from Qur'anic school in Kano in the mid-1880s, probably first encountered *Banistra'ila* malams at a flourishing local school in Kawuri where over sixty pupils studied. Malam Ali became Yahaya's patron, gave him his daughter Habiba in marriage plus a plot of land. From this union was born Bulus Audu who studied under Yahaya and trained in *tafsir*.

Yahaya spent some three years teaching his son Bulus all he knew of the distinctive teaching of the *Banistra'ila* while attempting to rescue one of his daughters, Mairo, from Ningi. News of the advance of British forces at the turn of the century prompted Malam Yahaya to move north to Hadejia where his subversive views found followers.

Bulus Audu was left behind. By the mid-1920s, he was the leading *Banistra'ila* scholar in Zaria emirate.<sup>52</sup> So while Walter Miller was preaching in Zaria City, a no-less threatening group were learning their religion from Bulus Audu in the countryside. Audu had established a school at Kankhanki after the increased security from slave raids enabled his family to leave the relative safety of Turawa.<sup>53</sup>

There are several clues to the content of *Banistra'ila* teaching at this time. The sect had emerged as part of the religious ferment in the Hausa Muslim community of farmers and traders in the nineteenth century. It may originally have found its inspiration in Senegambia, and moved across the savannah into Kano via Jahanke traders from present day Mali, where there is still a settlement.<sup>54</sup> In the face of Hausa veneration of spirits, *iskoki* and the related *bori* cult, it would have



shared the rigorous monotheism of the Uthmaniyya and Sokoto. The sect probably expressed at this time a Qur'an-alone source of legitimacy.<sup>55</sup> Biblical fundamentalism and a radical rejection of non-monotheistic religion as 'devil worship' was a comparable response to pressures found in the two competing world religions. Pre-Islamic agricultural traditions, *budin daji* and *bukin dubu* survived the rise and fall of the Caliphate as did the needs they fulfilled.<sup>56</sup>

The *Banlsra'ila* seem to have followed a familiar religious trajectory of militant purification by warfare for the end-of-times. Through setbacks, this seems to have been transformed into a pietistic withdrawal from the world. By comparison, the contemporary Hamza movement moved away from interiorizing reform by rallying pagan hills-men for *jihad* against Fulani rule. After the *Banlsra'ila's* defeat and flight from Ningi, the conflicting demands of soldier and teacher were resolved by the malams choosing a commitment to scholarship and teaching. And by the 20<sup>th</sup> century the *Banlsra'ila* malams were emphasizing that "religion is of the heart", politics and religion did not mix, and "our houses are our mosques". They eschewed the full Ramadan public fasting and the traditional Muslim prayer postures.<sup>57</sup>

There also seems to have been a distinctive belief that the Qur'an contained esoteric meanings known only to a select few. *Banlsra'ila* malams would say of those outside their community, "they do not know the secret reading, *asiri*, and told their followers that they alone possessed this special knowledge, *koyin*, (teaching) handed down from Malam Ibrahim.<sup>58</sup> "The light had been dimmed ...until it came to our grandparents...with this light the one who came from the east opened this road for us", in Bulus Audu's words.<sup>59</sup>

Turning to the sect involved in addition another common Nigerian radical theme: rejection of all but narrowly Islamic education. Malam Ibrahim “lost all his books of this world and seized this religion inside the Koran”.<sup>60</sup> Cut off from the high scholarship of some of the early Caliphate scholars, it was not difficult to develop idiosyncratic interpretations of the Qur’an. The *Banilsra’ila* adopted an anti-sufi stance, avoiding veneration of the Prophet as more than a messenger, *rasul*. Malam Ibrahim did not use the title ‘the Prophet of God’. But the sect acknowledged the pre-eminence of Jesus, *nabi Isa*, the Prophet Isa, encouraged by his Qu’ranic titles, for example ‘the Spirit/Breath of God and Word of God’.<sup>61</sup>

There are a number of possible explanations for this unusual exegesis. Access to Christian scriptures most notably. Traders crossed the desert to Tripoli and Cairo where there were large Jewish communities as well as access to Arabic scriptures. There were enough Arabs in Kano in 1848 for a consul to be sent from Ghadames. The Sultan of Sokoto, for example, had been presented with a leather-bound Bible. On the other hand access to Arabic scriptures does not tally with the sect’s simple Qur’an-alone piety. The *Isa* focus may also have begun in the context of Mahdism but, by routinization over the years, left only militant traces in the posture of praying. The simplest explanation is that the relative isolation of the sect encouraged spontaneous speculation about *nabi Isa* after the malams heard about the Christian Gospels, the *Lingila*, perhaps from traders visiting Kano.<sup>62</sup>

The name given the sect, *Banilsra’ila*, occurs in a number of West African traditions. It is consistent with the idea that its followers placed themselves as the spiritual descendants of the original Israelites,

thereby holding on to the purity of the original revelation before Judaism and Christianity corrupted it. The title implies that they are the true *Ahl-al-Kitāb*, People of the Book.<sup>63</sup> What is fascinating is that both Malam Ibrahim and Malam Yahaya of Ningi were said to have foretold that more information about the teaching of Jesus would arrive with the Whites. The sect was eager to hear more about *nabi Isa's* prophecies and expected to find out more from the Europeans. The Qur'an speaks of the Gospel bestowed on Jesus "in which there is guidance and light, confirming that which was before it in the Torah". So access to Arabic scriptures would not have been strictly necessary for them to develop this interest.<sup>64</sup>

The Children of the Israelites' settlements were agricultural communities with distinctive religious rules; women wore white gowns and were secluded, not taught more than the *salah* prayers, only venturing out to the market in the evening.<sup>65</sup> Their malams were remembered as having their hair gathered in a top-knot, *tuntu* as a sign of divine election. The popular use of henna was shunned as was chewing kola nut. The day had a tight religious schedule with reading of the Qur'an and *tafsir* early in the morning at 7am. But *salah*, prayers, were required only three times daily, the last being at 8pm after a meal. Despite rejection of the month-long Ramadan fast, fasting occurred in a recurrent schedule all year round, two to three days a month to reach the same total duration.<sup>66</sup>

The life of the little *Banisra'ila* communities, precariously hiding on the borders of the emirates amongst largely non-Muslim *Maguzawa* farmers, represented a peaceful repudiation of the urban, public Islam of the emirates. This distinguished it from the violent Hamza

movement. The Emirs' colourful Durbars, exported from India, were a dramatic contrast, ceremonially symbolizing the subservience of all people to the small Fulani elite in the towns. It may be fanciful to glimpse here amongst the weavers, dyers and malams of Tsokwa, or the Wangara traders in Kano, a social and spiritual dynamic, shared with an evangelical Christian such as Walter Miller. Small matter, in 1913 these two religious streams finally met and flowed together.

Here is Bulus Audu's account of how the CMS and the Children of the Israelites came to discover each other.

"When he (Malam Yahaya) came to Malam Ali, our father, he said that we have enough land and he should be given some. He established his house in the place he was allotted. At that time I knew nothing, I didn't know my right from my left...I was standing at the foot of the locust-bean tree, if it had not fallen it would still be standing; it was there that I got the message of God. I will never forget the spot till the day I die. I said: 'Malam shall I pay you to learn to read?' He said: 'My reward is in Heaven...'

"In the past we used to read, I was teaching them, we were followers, I had learned, I was the road, I was the root of Malam Sadauki with his brother Mallam Kadiri.... I told my parents I was going to the Europeans, the message of God had arrived. My father said 'No', 'No', I would suffer, the Fulani would make me suffer, that I should be patient and wait until he died. Four years past and on the fifth he died on a Thursday. Then I went to my mother, knelt down and said: 'If I have your agreement, the issue is already in my heart, you know of my sincerity'. They had accepted Islam but they agreed. No-one argued any longer; they told me to go. I was with the disciples I was teaching;

they included Malam Usman, Ibrahim the father of Ango of Kano, Malam Musa the brother of Adamu, Malam Inusa.”

“I sent four to *Durumin Maigarke*. They went on Sunday to Dr. Miller. That day all the disciples did not sleep for happiness. They had already known, they had already known of Christ the Messiah. They knew of his importance, they knew of his resurrection, they knew all about his wonderful deeds.... Then I came to this Malam (Dr. Miller) and said I have come to learn more. ‘You have come to see me?’ ‘You have come to learn from me?’ I said: ‘Forgive me Malam, it is ignorance that has brought me here but it is not through ignorance that I come’. ‘From where did you hear the story?’ I said: ‘This was the reason, so and so’. Then he came to the place where Christ the Messiah rose (Arabic scripture reference). Here Dr. Miller took over and finished the discourse. He knelt down and prayed to God. He said that we were to pray: ‘God I thank you that your servants are hidden. I am thankful that you have heeded my prayers. I thank you that you have found this your people’”.<sup>67</sup>

That day Zaria Mission gained access to a small endogamous community of probably not more than 160 followers. They were dispersed around the periphery of Zaria and Kano emirates in the villages of Turawa, Kawuri, Takalafia, Dan Lawal, Ikara, Farana and Durum. A few remained in Tsokwa and Bugau, all modest hamlets.<sup>68</sup> They might have first heard of the Mission in 1907 after Istafanus Bala was baptized and became an active evangelist in the countryside; a group of malams certainly heard the Zaria missionaries preaching in Anchau in 1910.<sup>69</sup>

According to the CMS records, it was two of Bulus Audu's pupils, Malams Usman and Ibrahim<sup>70</sup> who first tried to make contact but had to wait until after a hockey match finished.<sup>71</sup> Then they stayed a week talking with Miller. They returned bringing with them older members of the community led by Bulus Audu with his brothers and half-brothers Malams Sule, Juda, Kadiri, Sadauki and two other pupils from Kankhanki, Bako and Audu Tama.<sup>72</sup> These in turn contacted the Durum and Takalafia malams, Ibrahim and his son Ango, Musa Gajere, Dan Auta, Adamu and Inusa<sup>73</sup>, three more of Bulus Audu's pupils, Ladan, Dakiru and Lurwan and the husband of his older sister, Amadu Dogo.<sup>74</sup> By Christmas 1913, 22 older men, 3 boys and 7 women were frequent visitors to *Durumin Maigarke* where Miller instructed them from the Bible.<sup>75</sup>

The encounter with the Christian Mission in Zaria pitched the sect from insignificance into the politics of the emirates and colonial administration. The *Banisra'ila* malams feared local reaction if the missionaries visited their compounds in the countryside. Instead a member of the newly formed Zaria Church Committee, Istafanus Bala, was delegated to start teaching in Kankhanki.<sup>76</sup> Miller was more cautious than might be expected. The Zaria Resident was informed of the unexpected influx and Salisbury Square was requested not to make too much of the story until Miller was sure of the outcome.<sup>77</sup> His caution was not misplaced; Emir Aliyu in an unusual communication to Lugard was trying to ingratiate himself again, anxious that the movement might undermine his religious authority.<sup>78</sup>

From the perspective of the Zaria court, men such as Bulus Audu were 'Ningawa', a designation with the connotations of 'heretic' and 'bandit'.

One Bauchi court commentator called the Ningi people ‘Kariji’ites’ and *al-līyn*, damned apostates.<sup>79</sup> These were very threatening labels.

Dr. Miller began pressing for the founding of a new village to bring this his scattered diaspora together. He promised that his proposal, to gather them together at Gimi near Kankhanki, would create a village with complete subordination to the local authorities. But no-one much believed that a Ningi sect that gave prominence to *Isa*, against an historical background of Mahdism, would not be trouble. Nonetheless throughout January 1914, the Israelite malams from Kankhanki began clearing the bush some ten miles south of the Maguzawa village of Dan Lawal.<sup>80</sup> This meant that they neglected cutting grass for the local headman with a subsequent complaint going up the hierarchy through the *Sarkin Yaki*, the army chief and now an honorific title, to the Emir.<sup>81</sup> The Israelite malams were summoned to the city to wait on the Emir; after four days detention they were sent back to their hamlets with orders to stop all work on the new settlement forthwith.<sup>82</sup>

Miller had incredibly forgotten to inform the Emir of his intention to form a renegade settlement. He quickly fired off a round letter to England telling of twenty men ‘hounded out’ of their hamlets on orders from the Emir. By way of an example of the iniquities of the Muslim potentate, Gimi, he claimed, was to be destroyed.<sup>83</sup> The acting Lieutenant-Governor of the Northern Provinces, Herbert Goldsmith, set about trying to convince Lugard that the settlement had to be blocked. With scant regard for accuracy he described the *Banisra’ila* as “like Satiru in many ways” and “secessionist” despite Miller’s avowal of their loyalty.<sup>84</sup> Goldsmith was echoing the Emir’s fears that the Ningawa had resurfaced in a new garb to bother the emirate: “if Gimi was permitted

to grow into a large Christian settlement”, Emir Aliyu feared, “a fire would be lighted which would need considerable force to put it out”.<sup>85</sup> Lugard gamely stuck up for Miller, his old protégé, though minuting that the *Sarkin Yaki* should keep an eye on the Israelite malams.<sup>86</sup>

Hans Vischer, director of education, did some research on the sect in Kano. He was able to corroborate the details of Malam Ibrahim’s life and death in Kano in the 1860s. This dating gave the possibly Mahdist sect plenty of time in which to become more pietistic and innocuous. The Emir, pressed by the British to be indulgent, acquiesced with the proviso that Muslims were also welcome in the Gimi settlement. Goldsmith never really changed his mind: “the presence of the Hausa Mission in Zaria will always...be a danger, and will always provide a ready handle for any seditious agitator who endeavours to arouse the fanaticism of his co-religionists against the Government”.<sup>87</sup> He was to be proved broadly correct.

How much the sect was aware of the complex dynamics between Mission, Administration and the Emir’s Authority is unclear. When Walter Miller sat down with Bulus Audu he did so with both the self-confidence of white supremacy and fervour of an Edwardian evangelical. If his zeal had been sapped by years of conflict and struggle, his new disciples had rekindled it. It had also rekindled his assertive insensitivity to the religious culture around him. His new catechumens, seeking a new corporate identity based on the new learning, reinforced the evangelical emphasis of conversion as a complete break with a sinful past. The *Banisra’ila* were required to renounced their Qur’ans and adopt strictly monogamous marriages, sometimes in a public ceremony encouraged by Miller. Not surprisingly



there were only two baptisms during 1913, that of the younger unmarried Malams Bako and Tama.<sup>88</sup>

The ban on polygamy was a devastating demand for men like Bulus Audu with moral and practical responsibilities towards three wives. After much soul-searching, he finally agreed to house two separately, Salammatu and Rekkiya, while retaining a monogamous union with his senior wife, Hadiza. He was baptized in September 1914.<sup>89</sup>

It was fortunate that Miller had begun his teaching with the first of his Hausa translations, St. John's Gospel. The dense theology and mysticism of this Gospel had immediately struck a chord with the visiting malams. Terms such as a 'son of God' were deeply problematic for catechumens when explained by the missionary as referring to the divinity of Jesus; they appeared to be a direct challenge to Islamic monotheism and were seen as heretical "mixing", *shirk*. Malam Kadiri could never finally bring himself reject the literal truth of the Qur'an and later renounced Christianity.<sup>90</sup> But others did convert. At Gimi, "open confession of sins before the whole community" was practiced. Women were taught how to pray in a Christian way.<sup>91</sup> The Christianity of the CMS had brought something that chimed with the sect's former beliefs and developed them to fulfill needs that their old religion had neglected. But many deeply regretted renouncing the Qur'an and deserting their former wives.

The Israelite Christians who converted came to justify their new religion by reference to the old, giving special attention to the stories about *nabi Isa* in the Qur'an. The history of the sect began to accumulate biblical embellishments; three days of darkness covered Kano when Malam Ibrahim was impaled. Bulus Audu would later preach

Christianity with a Bible in one hand and the Qur'an in another. One of the most impressive of these first Hausa Christians, he rejected the imposition of a radical break with the past and wove the stories of Jesus in the two sacred texts together.

Leaving their families at home the Israelite malams built Gimi, erecting a church and a schoolroom. By the beginning of 1915, a community of about 120 men, women and children, had settled in Gimi with Bulus Audu acting as village headman. Gimi was a Hausa village with notable differences: "Every man has one wife, the compounds are all open, the utmost friendliness prevails throughout the whole community"...<sup>92</sup> The large mud school was staffed by Yusufu Aba and Henry Miller who earned £15 per month, much the same as an average clerk in England.<sup>93</sup> Despite repeated pleas, with Salisbury Square pressing Lord Balfour to take up the issue with the Colonial Office, permission was withheld for a European Mission station in Gimi.<sup>94</sup> Lugard's star was waning with the Colonial Office. Goldsmith and Temple controlled the North, and no help could be expected from Lagos.<sup>95</sup> Gimi had to fend for itself, avoiding the Europeanisation stemming from too close a contact with westernized missionaries. The Zaria missionaries made infrequent visits for revival sermons with only the much-loved West Indian evangelist, Rev. W.A. Thompson, spending any period of time in the village.<sup>96</sup>

The revival sermons were often heard on an empty stomach. The community planted cotton as their first year cash crop having spent all their savings on building. There was a near famine on the eastern side of the emirate pushing up the price of grain to prohibitive levels. In 1915 a second famine hit the region; over forty of the children were

unable to attend Gimi school as a result. Gradually the school in Zaria began to draw young people away from Gimi. It provided regular meals guaranteed by the missionaries. The brighter students wanted to take advantage of its better facilities. So Gimi began to cater for the youngest and the beginners while Zaria school was filled to capacity with Gimi youth. Already a second generation of Israelite Christians were taking divergent paths from their parents and entering the European world of the Zaria Mission.

Valiant efforts continued to be made to make Gimi self-supporting. Rev. Thompson had a house built there and, began a small sugar enterprise in 1917. It did so well he soon had customers in towns as far apart as Sokoto and Onitsha as well as supplying the main CMS mission circuit in Yorubaland. Demerara sugar sold at sixpence a pound, cake sugar and golden syrup at four pence a pound. By the end of 1918 Thompson had imported the first sugar-crushing machine and Bulus Audu, known widely as 'sugar Audu', was building up a network of farmers in the neighbourhood from whom he bought sugar cane. It was a new small-scale industry and gave Bulus Audu independence from the European Mission. It allowed him to live the life of a Hausa trader without being in the competitive, and exclusively Muslim, network of the grain trade. Goldsmith, whose attitude to this combination of Sweetness and Light was predictable, banned any attempt to use the sugar trade for proselytizing.<sup>97</sup>

The origins of Christianity in Hausaland might have had a different, and more diverse religious history, were it not for the ravages of Spanish Influenza and sleeping sickness. At first the symptoms were not recognized, then the source of the infection was discovered: tsetse flies

along the *Kogin Galma*, a small stream where the community drew water.<sup>98</sup> While the children at school in Zaria seemed immune to the disease, one after the other, their parents back in Gimi fell victim. It was a tragedy.

Miller requested a new site so that the community could move out but both the Emir and Resident were opposed.<sup>99</sup> The only alternative was to evacuate the settlement. A remnant of the children, some 38, were taken to the old city by Musa Aitken. But many adults perished. From 150 in 1918, the Gimi community was reduced to 50 in 1921. Kadiri, Dahiru, Ango, Momon and Bulus Audu, alone amongst the original malams, survived. Orphaned children were adopted by the Zaria Christians. Without teachers, many slipped away.<sup>100</sup> It was some measure of the distress that a strongly monotheistic sect believed almost to a man that Gimi, specially chosen and handed over by the Emir perhaps for this reason, was the haunt of evil spirits.<sup>101</sup>

For ten years, until they moved to Gimba in 1923, some Israelite Christians hung on in Gimi. It had been the pride of the CMS: “in the midst of this great Moslem Soudan this little colony...all intent on following Christ”.<sup>102</sup> By the end, several had reverted to Islam or gone back to their old Israelite faith. A remnant persevered.

Bulus Audu, with a breadth of vision that quite escaped the missionaries, accorded equal respect to the Qur’an as he did to the Bible; his Jesus was as much the Spirit of God found in the Qur’an as in the biblical Christology. He remained an itinerant malam, an unofficial evangelist who avoided aggressive preaching for the gentler ways of daily contact and conversation through trade. It was, after all, the way that Islam had spread. Measured by the slow increase in the number of

sugar crushers put in service, his was a steadily growing business and he was renowned for his generosity.

Bulus Audu had approached the Europeans with limited intent: the hope of hearing from them more about the teaching of the Prophet *Isa*. He had listened, absorbed and returned to the life of a Hausa malam-trader enriched. His children, at school in Zaria or taught by Rev. Thompson in the Gimi school, were not to be let off so lightly by history.

The trajectory through school to jobs as clerks and teachers was more common than Bulus Audu's independence. The lives of second generation Israelite Christians were diverging from those of their parents, leaving behind commerce and farming. It was this remnant, the old Tsokwa malams mixed with pagan converts from the Plateau and emirates, that would, half a century later participate in a new form of political power undreamt of in the nineteenth century. These new contenders for power were to prove no less dangerous to the rulers' interests and hold on power in the North than the Mahdists in the past.

## Footnotes

1. Lugard to Elgin 15 January 1906, C.O. 446/52; E.J. Lugard to F. Lugard 7 October 1907, MSS. Afr. s. 62
2. Resolutions of the 1910 Interdenominational Missionary Conference held at Lokoja, C.O. 446/105

3. Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Northern Nigeria Mission 15 February 1909, G3/A9/02
4. Girouard to Earl of Crewe 12 October 1908, C.O. 446/75
5. Clifford Memorandum on Native Administration 25 June 1920, C.O. 583/92
6. Alvarez to Baylis 20 May 1911, G3/A9/03
7. Lugard to Harcourt 21 April 23, June 1913, C.O. 446/112
8. Clifford Memorandum 25 June 1920, C.O. 583/92
9. Palmer to Lethem 14 September 1925, Lethem Papers, Box 11, MSS. Brit. Emp. 276, Rhodes House, Oxford
10. Muffett *Concerning Brave Captains* 156-8 points out how cordially disliked Temple was by Nigerians and this was largely due to his unbending character.
11. See, for example, the strong reaction to Bishop Smith's claim in the *Nigerian Daily Times* 20 May 1927 that the Lieutenant-Governor concurred that the government of the Northern Provinces was pro-Muslim, C.O. 583/150
12. Girouard 'Education and Missionary Enterprises Memorandum' 17 June 1907, C.O. 446/65
13. Temple to Girouard 15 August 1907, encl. in Girouard to Elgin 31 October 1907, C.O. 446/65
14. Girouard to Earl of Crewe 25 September 1908, C.O. 446/75

15. Strachey Minute on Girouard's 'Lands Committee Report', 17 October 1908, C.O. 446/75

16. Palmer to Festing 9 June 1907, No. 399, SNP 15/3, Kaduna Archives; Miller to Baylis 31 May 1911, G3/A9/03

17. Girouard was against mission education even in non-Muslim areas because it took people "out of their milieu". Temple was willing to depose an Angas chief in Kabwir who had become a Christian because he was unable to perform the necessary sacrifices attendant on his office, see Temple to Harcourt 1 June 1911. "I am inclined at once to notify our Prime Minister that there are no grounds for believing that I am officially a Christian!" Harcourt's minute could be taken in a number of different ways. C.O. 446/98

18. Crampton *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 68-75

19. But it was only in the late 1970s that conversion of *Maguzawa* to Christianity became an important element in Mission advance.

20. Abadie to his mother 16 January, 6, 8 April 1902, MSS. Afr. s. 1337

21. Miller to Baylis 18 February 1902, G3/A9/01

22. See Murray Last's *The Sokoto Caliphate* 1967 for an important scholarly account of its history.

23. Popham-Lobb told his mother in 1902, for example, that the Emir of Kano had four dwarfs sacrificed to the *iskoki* on the Kano road to stop the British advance. Whether or not this was true, the Resident's spies obviously thought it was within the realm of possibilities as a crime that

the Emir might commit, see Popham-Lobb to his mother 1 September 1902, MSS. Afr. s. 64

24. Girouard to Earl of Crewe 25 September 1908, C.O. 446/75

25. The sect called itself *Banisra'ila*. Others used the word '*Isawa*' or '*Ansar*', see Linden I. 'The Isawa Mallams c. 1850-1919: some problems in the Religious History of Northern Nigeria', paper delivered at a Social Sciences seminar at Ahmadu Bello University, 1974

26. In this context it is interesting that the radical Northern politician, Aminu Kano, praised Miller's book *Success in Nigeria*, published in 1948, for the accuracy of its criticism of the Fulani elite. In contrast Miller's *Reflections of a Pioneer* was strongly attacked by British colonial officials. See Goldsmith in *West Africa Review* January 1937

27. Tijani K. "The force of religion in the conduct of political affairs and interpersonal relationships in Borno and Sokoto", Seminar Paper delivered at Sokoto Seminar, 6-10 January 1975

28. Smith *Government in Zazzau* 157-9

29. Shea P.J. 'Black Cloth: An Export oriented industry in Kano', Kano Seminar, 5-10 January 1976

30. Barth H. *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa* Vol. II, London, 1890, 144

31. Fitzpatrick J.F.J. 'Assessment Report on Ningi District' 15 August 1914, SNP 10/2, 431p/1914, Kaduna Archives



32. Fika A.M. 'The Political and Economic Re-orientation of Kano Emirate, Northern Nigeria: 1882-1940' Doctoral Dissertation, University of London, 1965, 51

33. Malam Badamasi of Kankhanki interviewed 21 August 1974; Malams Dauda and Abdulkarim interviewed in Tsokwa 6 September 1974; Malam Salihu Labaran interviewed at Kawuri 7 September 1974

34. Gwassa C.G.M. 'Kinjikitile and the Ideology of Maj-Maji' in *The Historical Study of African Religion* ed. Ranger T.O. & Kimambo I. London, 1972, 202-219

35. *Ida't al-Ghubsh wa Il-Misbah Il-Umsh Fi Tarikh 'Umara' Bawshi* MSS, Jos Museum, 168

36. For the history of Ningi as a polity see Patton A. 'The Ningi Chiefdom and the African Frontier: Mountaineers and Resistance to the Sokoto Caliphate: 1800-1908' Doctoral Dissertation, University of Wisconsin 1975

37. Unattributable Interview A. In order to protect informants much of the following references are footnoted as unattributable.

38. Unattributable Interview B

39. Ubah O.N. 'The Emirates and the Central Government: the case of Kano-Sokoto Relations', paper delivered at the Sokoto Seminar 6-10 January 1975, on the basis of Arabic documents in the Jos Museum as his main source suggests considerable tensions at this time, and see also Palmer H.R. 'History of Daura' *Sudanese Memoirs* Vol III, Lagos, 1928, 130. The Tijaniyya brotherhood established itself in Kano where a wide range of religious opinion flourished in association with its

mobile commercial community during this period. The authority of Abd-al-Rahman Jakhité may have been challenging that of Al-Maghili at this time for position as spiritual guide in the Kano emirate, see Al-Hajj M.A. 'A Seventeenth Century Chronicle of the Origins and Missionary Activities of the Wangarawa' *Kano Studies* Vol. I, No.4, 1968, 7-14

40. Unattributable Interview C

41. Unattributable Interview D

42. Ibid.

43. Unattributable Interview E

44. Aliyu A.Y. 'The Establishment and Development of Emirate Government in Bauchi: 1805-1903' Doctoral Dissertation at Ahmadu Bello University, 1974, 543

45. Patton 'The Ningi Chiefdom', 212

46. Interview with Malam Idi of Kano living at Wusasa, 27 August 1974

47. Patton 'The Ningi Chiefdom', 213

48. Unattributable Interview F; Patton 'The Ningi Chiefdom', 251

49. Unattributable Interview F

50. Interview with Malam Muazu Audu at his house on ABU campus, 24 September 1976

51. Interview with Sarkin Takalafia, Al-Hajj Sa'idu, Takalafia, 13 August 1974; interview with Malam Idi of Turawa 15 August 1974

52. Interview with Mrs. Amina Kauye 12 September 1974 in Kaduna; interview with Mrs. Saude Baidu 17 September in Jos; transcript of a recording made by Malam Bulus Audu in Wusasa c. 1965

53. Interview with Malam Steven Ibrahim Audu at Wusasa, 9 August 1974

54. Sanneh L.O. 'The History of the Jakhanke People of Senegambia. A study of a Clerical Tradition in West African Islam' Doctoral dissertation, SOAS, University of London, 1974, 20,39,43,46,116,125,150,152; Mungo Park *Travels in Africa*, Dent, 1969, 265,305

55. Unattributable interview G; Miller to Goldsmith 21 February 1914 'Christian Settlement at Gimi' File, CMS archives; Report on the Yantubu sect of Muslims at Ninci, (sic) C.4013, ZARPROF, Kaduna Archives

56. Unattributable Interview H

57. Malam Muazu Audu; unattributable interview I

58. Bulus Audu Tape;

59. Rev. Henry Miller in the transcript of a recording made at Wusasa c. 1965: "They turned it and did not take it in the manner Malam Ibrahim taught them"

60. Unattributable Interview J

61. Ibid.; Vischer to Goldsmith 19 May 1914, ZARPROF

62. There was an international community passing through Kano so no need to posit Mecca or Tripoli as the point of contact.

63. Personal Communication from Rev. Jeremy Hinds, Bukuru Theological Seminary, Jos. The sect's title *Banisra'ila* also rekindles the prestigious traditions of Macina in *Tarikh-al-Fattash* – see Mauny R. 'Le Judaïsme, les Juifs et l'Afrique Occidentale' *IFAN* No.1, July 1949, 365
64. Interview with Rev. Harry Cox at Zobola 8 April 1975
65. Personal Communication from Rev. Jeremy Hinds
66. Malam Muazu; unattributable interviews K, L; c.f. Curtin P.D. 'Economic Change in Precolonial Africa' Doctoral Dissertation, University of Wisconsin Press, 1975, 80, 170
67. Bulus Audu transcript
68. Migeod to Secretary Northern Provinces 13 February 1914, ZARPROF
69. Interview with Mrs. Ladi Bala in Zaria City, 10 March 1975
70. Miller to Goldsmith 21 February 1914, ZARPROF; Miller to Manley 5 May 1913, G3/A2/0
71. Miller *Change Here for Kano*, 10
72. Bulus Audu transcript
73. Interview with Malam Donli at Wusasa, 24 September 1974; interview with Malam Maiwada at Wusasa, 2 September 1974; interview with Malam Binta Inusa, Tudun Wada, Zaria, 30 September 1974

74. Interview with Malam Ahmadu Musa at Bakori, 17 November 1974; interview with Malam Sai'du Ahmadu at Yarkasuwa, 21 September 1974
75. Miller to Goldsmith 21 February 1914
76. Minutes of the Zaria Church Committee 11 June, 9 November 1913, G3/A2/0
77. Melville-Jones to Manley 18 November, 9 December 1913, CMS (Y) 1/2/1 Series No. 16, Ibadan Archives, Ibadan University
78. Aliyu to Lugard 6 August 1913, trans. MSS. Afr. s. 75, Rhodes House
79. 'Tarikh 'Umara 'Bawshi', 172,183
80. Miller to Freemantle 8 February 1914, ZARPROF
81. Sarkin Yaki to Emir of Zaria 3 February 1914, trans. ZARPROF
82. Miller to Goldsmith 16 February 1914, ZARPROF
83. Miller round letter to Friends 13 February 1914, G3/A2/0
84. Goldsmith to Lugard 24 February 1914, ZARPROF
85. Goldsmith to Lugard 25 April 1914, ZARPROF
86. Ibid.
87. Vischer to Goldsmith 19 May 1914, ZARPROF; Goldsmith to Lugard 24 February 1914
88. Wusasa Baptismal Register
89. Malam Steven Ibrahim Audu interview

90. Interview with Malam Ahmadu Dogo (whose wife was the daughter of Malam Kadiri)
91. E. Miller to Manley 22 February 1915; Annual Report Zaria Mission, December 1914, G3/A2/0
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid.
94. Minutes of the Nigerian Sub-Committee of Group III Committee, 4 October 1916, G3/A2/0
95. Minutes on Lugard to Long 1 September 1917, C.O. 583/59 reveal the general Colonial Office disapproval. This had grown after Lugard's speech to the Ulster Volunteers, *Irish Times* 11 July 1914
96. Interview with Malam Muazu Audu
97. Walter Miller's Annual Letter for 1921
98. Miller to Wakeman 12 August, 9 September 1918, CMS (Y) 2/5, Ibadan Archives; Walter Miller's Annual Letter 1918 (kept in alphabetically indexed files), CMS London
99. Clifford to Milner 21 October 1920, C.O. 583/92
100. Interview with Malam Musa Aitken at Wusasa 19 September 1974; Thompson to Manley 2 January 1919, G3/A2/0
101. Interview with Malam Steven Ibrahim Audu
102. Melville-Jones to Miller 23 March 1915, G3/A2/0

## Chapter Five

“You must especially strive to stand aloof from all questions of political leadership and political partisanship”

Church Missionary Society Regulations for Missionaries Part VI, p. 39, 1897



There had been tensions during the nineteenth century between the established Niger Mission with its roots in the commercial life of Yorubaland and the evangelical quest for a faithful, austere and courageous Christianity in Hausaland in the midst of Islam. But one missiological ideal remained universal: the ultimate goal of missionary

work was the creation of a self-supporting indigenous Church.<sup>1</sup> The question was what kind of Church? European missionaries in principle were committed to eventual African independence in Church life, even though in practice they dominated the life of the local Churches and saw this as a distant future event. This meant that they had a different perspective on the future to most colonial administrators. Their goal involved a slow process of moving from Mission to Church, part of a wider transformation of Society. Like runners in a relay the missionaries had to hand on the Gospel, their beliefs, values and institutions. A point would come – it would take time - when a local congregation took control of its own affairs and the missionary moved on. Expansion was the essence of Mission, not an optimal extra to be negotiated with the colonial authorities.

Imperial rule in Nigeria depended on a gamble that a minimum of manpower could dominate and control large numbers of people spread across huge tracts of land. The transformation sought by missionaries threatened an imperial anthropology whose goal was to control change in indigenous societies. The presence of Islam raised the stakes. Mission expansion could appear to government as a competitive desire to occupy new territory and usurp legitimate authority.

After the traumatic shock to social and religious certitudes of the First World War, the evangelical missionary no longer went forth from a Britain where the upper class felt constrained at times to feign piety whilst the working class did not. Nor were the values of Empire notably Christian. The missionary could seem an anachronism, an intrusive and discordant presence encroaching on the imperial myth. British administrators were lords of all they surveyed and, under the banner of



liberal thinking, wished to keep much of what they surveyed as quiescent and malleable as possible. “It is a matter of extreme surprise to me”, wrote Palmer, soon to become Lieutenant-Governor of the Northern Provinces, “that philanthropists, and old ladies in England – unable as they are to secure acceptance of missionary teaching among their own sons, nephews, cousins and brothers – think that they are justified in using their organized influence to force this same teaching on the poor native, Muslim, who wants it just as little, and is in his way quite capable of judging of its value to himself as an educated Englishman”.<sup>2</sup>

A new generation of middle-class Anglican bishops could be ordained and reach Nigeria without acquiring the necessary skills to deal with a man like Palmer. For example Alfred Smith had been an accountant for Hastings Borough Council, attended Bethany Home School and, finally, a Church Mission College. “Intellectual power was good”, he felt, “but the Moslem needed before all a man who could appeal to his heart, who could show him the dreadfulness of sin and uplift Christ”.<sup>3</sup> Such men valued reassurance that their view of the world was shared, a feeling of prayerful support by a significant community back home. This they sought with requests for prayers, letters home and, often, lurid descriptions of the people whom they were striving to evangelise. As the number of Lords Spiritual who could be trusted to ask pious questions in the House of Lords diminished, the abrasive side of evangelical piety became more evident. Bishop Tugwell’s views on the Hausa do not make for pleasant reading: “The Hausa has no ideals, no ambitions save such as are sensual in character. He is a fatalist, spendthrift, and a gambler. He is gravely immoral and is so seriously

diseased that he is a menace to any community to which he seeks to attach himself".<sup>4</sup>

The divergence in goals and attitudes between the missionaries and administrators had grown apace since the nineteenth century, and their relationship grown pricklier. As Frederick Butler in the Colonial Office commented about the Bishop: 'It is odd that the head of an African pastorate should go about saying that his sheep are so *very black*'.<sup>5</sup> The greater the weight of sin, the greater the imperative for spiritual heavy-lifting by the missionaries and their supporters back home.

After a decade of functioning under difficult circumstances in Northern Nigeria the Imperial Administration, though staffed by the most individualistic of men, had built up a degree of corporate identity and consensus about policy. Sharing a similar trajectory through elite schools and university helped. When Sir Hesketh Bell took over as new Governor of the Northern Provinces, he encountered agreement on a number of key policy directions amongst his Residents; they were anti-Mission to a man. Although initially friendly towards the missions himself, and with experience in Uganda, he soon found he had little room for manoeuvre; the Colonial Office was staunchly behind the men with experience in the field.

Kano remained a bone of contention. It carried much emotional weight with Walter Miller. He never forgot the halcyon days when he was an honorary member of the administocracy, with Lugard a friend who commended the Zaria Mission and allowed him access to Kano from the European quarter.<sup>6</sup> Miller had come up with the idea of a free dispensary within Kano but lack of personnel made it impossible. He continued pressing for a Mission inside the walls when he went home

in 1909. Salisbury Square made quite a clever argument in favour of it with the Colonial Office. It would be a bad thing, they pointed out, if Kano got its first impression of Christianity from the railway workers pushing north.

But the perfidy of Bishop Tugwell lived on in memory. Compelling arguments for a Mission in Kano were overridden. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Crewe, was obdurate. Further approaches were made to Sir Hesketh Bell who made some vague promise to consider the matter further. A year later he agreed to make a decision when the railway track reached the city.<sup>7</sup> But there was to be no Mission creep of any sort.

While in England in 1911, preoccupied with his plans for creating a *sabon gari*, an extramural strangers' quarter, Bell granted permission for the CMS to reside outside the walls and visit a dispensary in the city. The Colonial Office had warned him not to take any irrevocable steps without consulting the Residents, but he ignored them, conveniently losing a letter from Sir George Fiddes telling him to consult.<sup>8</sup>

The railway reached Kano in December 1911 and the CMS eagerly pressed the administration for permission to begin building. Miller and Malam Fate had already paid several visits to the old city, staying in the Arab quarter where they had made contact with a number of traders from Tripoli. Temple was ready "to fight tooth and nail" to keep the missionaries quarantined outside the walled town but acceded to Miller's plan for a – staffed - dispensary.<sup>9</sup> Miller resented his relegation to the *sabon gari*, amongst what he called "the untouchable riff-raff, scallywags and refuse of the Barracks" and let it be known the CMS was not in Nigeria for the Europeans.<sup>10</sup> In the event the CMS were in no

position to take up the offer of a dispensary. Early in 1912, a small house appeared on a site once occupied by railway-men, just a few hundred yards from the Agunde gate to the city. Extramural as required, the Resident nonetheless viewed it as a Trojan Horse.<sup>11</sup>

The house close to the Agunde gate was a step too far. Sir Hesketh Bell's replies to the CMS had been conciliatory and helpful but at odds with the Colonial Office. As a result of his failure to consult the Residents, the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lewis Harcourt, was left unable "to support our action by quoting the unanimous opinion of the man on the spot" to quote a telling slip from the pen of Sir John Anderson.<sup>12</sup> But this in turn left the Colonial Office vulnerable to pressure from Salisbury Square with the threat of awkward questions in the House of Commons. Anderson, only briefly on the Colonial Office West Africa desk, and later to become Chancellor of the Exchequer in wartime Britain and memorialized in the Anderson shelters, thought the Governor had shown "great weakness and little loyalty". Viscount Harcourt, who gave his name to Port Harcourt, charitably dismissed Bell's vacillation as "mere stupidity".<sup>13</sup> The Governor was reduced to sitting down in the relative security of the Conservative Club to write a groveling letter of apology.<sup>14</sup> So the building at Agunde gate was evacuated. The CMS were obliged to keep themselves to the European quarter. Only later did they succeed in turning a bookshop in the city into an active centre for evangelization.<sup>15</sup>

The hero, or villain – viewpoints naturally differed - of these pre-war years, and the off-on story of the Kano Mission, was the railway. During the previous nine years of British Indirect Rule in the Northern Provinces, an average of 253 slaves per annum had come forward to

redeem themselves legally with a recorded cash payment. The year after the track reached Kano a total of 1,075 slaves freed themselves, seemingly thanks to earnings from railway construction work.<sup>16</sup> This was only the most striking change taking place in the Northern Provinces as they suddenly became less than two days journey from Lagos. The commercial wealth of the coast at the Lagos end of the line expanded the market for northern produce. The *talakawa* found themselves the primary producers at the ultimate tendrils of the coastal economy, where northern grain turned into southern beer, a miracle wrought by the steam-engine. Both *Sarakuna* and Residents now had to compete more intensely for labour.

Clashes between the *Banisra'ila* and village headmen over control of labour were symptomatic of the much wider competition for manpower between the British and Muslim authorities. Significantly the 1912 and 1913 *Salla* speeches of Emir Aliyu contained honeyed words indicating possible concessions in the field of religious toleration. Underlying economic issues, as so often, were being reflected through religious issues.<sup>17</sup>

The figure of Mr. Johnson in Joyce Carey's 1939 *Mister Johnson* immortalized a stereotype of the southerner that was common currency two decades earlier. The railway did provide safe passage to the North for some of the ambiguous successes of the CMS in the South. Amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Provinces into a single colony in 1914, with Lord Lugard as Governor, did much to strengthen the resolve of the Northern Residents to keep the Missions at bay and their Muslims in peace. At the same time, opposition to Christian expansion grew in the Emirs' circles. If anything the exciting

developments at Gimi distracted the Mission from work in Zaria which was being strangled by the Emir's opposition to the school, and by mothers who wanted their children safe at home or in the fields.<sup>18</sup>

Some of the missionaries simply couldn't grasp the Liberal policy framework of the Residents' thinking. They repeatedly misinterpreted it as personal quirks of individual Residents who were "despotic, antichristian, cruel and wicked" to quote from Walter Miller.<sup>19</sup> Others understood but put it down to a conspiracy led by particular Residents. T.E. Alvarez told Salisbury Square that "an absolutely definite policy – and I maintain one unprecedented in the last 60 years – to keep Christian missionaries out of a British Protectorate -... is being initiated by a strong Party of Residents headed by Mr. Temple".<sup>20</sup> Charles Temple became Resident in Kano in January 1909 and Secretary to the Northern administration from 1910. However much Temple sought to be a reluctant Erasmus of a Muslim enlightenment, this was not how the missionaries saw it. That an aristocratic English gentleman should treat the missionaries this way appeared as cultural betrayal. But the Colonial Office echoed Temple's sentiments: "We are amply justified in ruthless repression of all missionaries", wrote the under-secretary at the Colonial Office, Auberon Herbert, Lord Lucas, on the Kano file as if he were dealing with a miners' strike.<sup>21</sup>

The Amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914 was a mixed blessing for the CMS. Had the administrators in the North and South been singing from the same song sheet, things might have been different. Lugard was back again as Governor-General in Lagos, but up against a band of resolute Residents in the north determined to neutralize the impact of his appointment. The CMS had retained a good relationship with him.

G.T.M. (G.T. Manley of the CMS) reported his conversation. “Sir F.L. stated – “of course I do not want any trouble with the Missionary Societies”. “Some have said that perhaps you might welcome it as strengthening your hand in the right direction”. “Sir F.L. was silent”.<sup>22</sup> Whether Lugard would have had the will, or the desire, to force through concessions for the Missions is a moot point. The Colonial Office had been preparing for war since 1912. Its outbreak made it a foregone conclusion that all mission expansion would be halted.<sup>23</sup>

During the First World War armed resistance to British rule sprang up again causing grave concern in Lagos.<sup>24</sup> There were a number of minor uprisings and tax defaulting increased in the Northern Provinces.<sup>25</sup> Though two emirs, Bauchi and Yauri, were deposed for their part in rebellions, resistance was generally confined to spontaneous uprisings of the *talakawa*. In most instances the butt of peasant anger was as much Anglo-African government, created by the emirs sending in their *dogari* to repress outbreaks of protest, as anti-White sentiment.

The dramatic Sanusiyya-led outbreak in French Niger, from December 1916 to May 1917 underlined the dangerous potential for Islam to articulate and direct discontent.<sup>26</sup> Fear of violent Islamic movements reinforced British concerns to sustain harmonious relations with Muslim rulers. Political officers were much exercised by Ottoman Turkey being in the enemy camp and thus a threat to stability. British propaganda had Britain defending the Holy Places of Islam against ‘Germanic’ Turkey. Every effort was made to explain how the interests of ‘Orthodox’ Islam were fully compatible with the allied cause. The reaction to the Sanusiyya rebellion across the border was to fall back on well-tried methods; “our truest safeguard lies in the identity of the

emirs and N.A.s' interests with our own", Governor-General Clifford wrote after the war. This identity of interests was not difficult in wartime when all that was required was loyalty and stability. But the fear persisted that the virus of Mahdism could potentially cause a pandemic.<sup>27</sup>

The Northern Residents congratulated themselves on an uneventful war in the emirates and sang the praises of the emirs.<sup>28</sup> But come peacetime, with Lagos giving priority to the development of rural capitalism in a society dominated by patron-clientship relationships and the moral economy this entailed, divergence of governance style, if not its aims and content, was inevitable. Clifford was not naïve about the Emirs' conduct nor a neophyte in matters Islamic. "I confess", wrote Clifford, "that the experience gained by me in the Malayan sultanates occasioned me certain misgivings when I found myself so insistently invited to share an attitude vis-à-vis the Emirs and their administration which appeared to me to be one of dangerously uncritical complacency and optimism".<sup>29</sup>

So it was an uphill struggle for the CMS. During the war Lugard's hands were tied. Heavy restrictions on mission schools in the Northern Provinces hampered the usual route to successful evangelization: hooking youth with the bait of education. Salisbury Square successfully challenged the Colonial Office's refusal to provide grants-in-aid to new mission schools. But the price was conformity to government regulations which amounted to total government control over all assisted schools. Muslim parents, quite properly, had to consent formally to their children receiving religious instruction.<sup>30</sup>



Lugard did his best against entrenched opposition. “I cannot think that the proposal to discourage and if possible to eliminate Mission Schools is either likely to be effective or desirable. I regard it as impracticable because no government can permanently deny access to missionary effort in a British dependency, and I regard it as undesirable because I believe that this voluntary effort dictated as it is by a spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion, can and should be of value to a country if rightly directed”.<sup>31</sup> But such views coming only a few months after the alarming Chilembwe rising in Nyasaland, led by a mission-educated elite, were to say the least unfashionable. The Secretary of State for the Colonies did not want “the introduction in mission schools of the Europeanised system of education which has tended to produce such unsatisfactory results”.<sup>32</sup>

So it was that educational questions remained intimately bound up with the future of the CMS mission in Northern Nigeria. This gave undue prominence to good schools such as St. Bartholemew’s in Zaria, that, against all odds, did get off the ground. At the same time the large populations of the emirates suffered from a chronic lack of progressive educational opportunities. Apparently simple organizational questions, such as whether there should be two boards of education, one for the South and one for the North, were entirely overshadowed by the bogey of uppity southern invaders or ‘evangelical fanatics’. A lot of this ideological conflict was in all senses academic; in practice Emirs were able to outlaw schools or pack them with their clients and kin according to their preference and judgement whether it was advantageous to do so. The barrage of memoranda about the resultant conflicts had one principal outcome: the future of the North

within an integrated English-speaking Nigeria was blighted; schooling in the North was twenty years behind that in the South.

The harsh reality behind the lofty sentiments contained in Colonial Office communications was that after the war, the Emirs did much as they pleased. In 1919 one of the largest districts in Kano emirate with a population of 190,000 had a single British official to supervise it.<sup>33</sup> Before the war, the human rights situation gave reason for great concern. Even allowing for Miller's hyperbole, conditions in Kano were shocking. "People are driven away with no excuse, headless bodies of men executed in the market by natives are left to rot in the streets, torture is practiced, imprisonment and bribery are the rule not the exception, there is no appeal to the Resident allowed, practically every abomination of ten years ago is freely practiced".<sup>34</sup> The administration later admitted to Lagos many of these allegations. It was government as banditry.<sup>35</sup> Not surprisingly Miller always assumed that the ban placed on him visiting towns and villages after the war was provoked by fears of what he might report back to London.

The upswing in CMS fortunes, the remarkable appearance of the *Banisra'ila*, the Gimi settlement, came at an inopportune moment as the gap between myth and reality of Anglo-African government was widening. The new Christians were increasingly involved in litigation with Muslims and causing problems for the lynchpin of the Emir's authority, his control over the Muslim legal system.<sup>36</sup> The attempts of the Israelite malams to emancipate themselves from the often arbitrary exactions of village headmen only highlighted the way control of labour was slipping away from the holders of traditional office. Residents' repeated assurances to the Emir during the war about non-interference

in religion may have alerted him to the growing weakness of Miller's hand. Emir Aliyu's 1914 *Salla* speech harked back to his contempt for and disapproval of apostates from Islam and inaugurated a period of sustained opposition to the Zaria Mission.<sup>37</sup>

The Emir's first line of complaint to the Resident was Miller's visits to villages, a CMS routine called 'itineration', common practice since the time the missionaries arrived and set up shop. "The reason why we have said we do not want this preaching", wrote Aliyu, "is because we were told by the Governor (Sir Frederick Lugard) that no-one would be compelled to change their religion and this preaching appears as though it were being imposed on us"<sup>38</sup> Aliyu's next move was to 'acquire' some sugar-cane plots and attempt to move into the new and profitable sugar business controlled by Bulus Audu at Gimi.<sup>39</sup>

The suggestion of a ban on 'itineration' brought forth a typically robust response from Miller. "I deny the Emir's right to bring any such protest on religious grounds. This man has no claim to act as the champion of Islam here his own life being a public and private scandal to Moslems; his open and notorious heathen practices, 'juju' sacrifices etc; his breach of Moslem customs and laws have put him outside the pale of those who should champion the rights of Islam"<sup>40</sup> This was a clever attack but on dangerous ground. Public denunciation of the Christians provided modest cover for the Emir's sacrifices to the *iskoki*. He called openly for Miller's expulsion from the town while privately deploring the way the missionary was becoming a rallying point for opponents to his rule. The expected ban on 'itineration' was duly delivered. But Miller and his colleague, the Rev. Ernshaw Smith, continued to visit

villages freely, the latter preaching to a crowd of thirty people at Kufena, just outside the city.<sup>41</sup>

Miller was also in the firing line of the Northern administration. The Colonial Office had asked that, once the war ended, they wanted a consultation with Residents – probably to circumvent Lugard – concerning the ‘missionary problem’. After a terrible uprising in Egbaland in 1918, the loyal Emirs appeared as the heroes of the day. And the large Hausa contingent in the WAFF came back from East Africa, in Lugard’s words, after “fighting the Empire’s battles”.<sup>42</sup> Palmer painted a picture of a sea of fire around the tranquility of the loyal emirates. War and revolution in Europe had simply honed his rejection of the whole Mission project. “Christian dogma with or without emotional excitement; dogma about which the Missions do not agree ‘inter se’: dogma which is not believed by most educated men and women in England: dogma which the Natives see for themselves carries no weight with the Officers who represent Government in Nigeria – can hardly replace the native social systems, which have up to the present successfully prevented evils that baffle the ingenuity of European statesmen”.<sup>43</sup>

Another Resident was no less blunt and sanguine. “We have been careful to adjust our system of direct taxation to the requirements of Koranic Law. Let us be under no misapprehension as to what this policy means. It means that we have invoked the aid of Islam as the means, immensely powerful and wholly indispensable of carrying on our system of government. If Islam goes, that system goes too”.<sup>44</sup> How brittle government now seemed. How morally sapped a British ruling

class that had died by the hundreds for square yards of soil in Europe, after scrambling for thousands of square miles of land in Africa.

Miller greeted the appointment of the Catholic, Sir Hugh Clifford, as Governor-General in 1919, a humane man with a romantic concern for the underdog, as Christianity's last hope in Northern Nigeria. As in the Satiru affair Miller's tactics were none too subtle, though this time his flamboyant lack of caution eventually paid off. After his time in Malaya, Clifford was not about to be bowled over by the mystique of Islamophile Residents, nor Colonial Office mandarins, and quickly came into conflict with them. He saw the prevention of abuses as "one of the principal *raison d'être* of our administration of the Northern Provinces" and he had the will to implement this policy.<sup>45</sup>

The new Governor-General arrived in Kano from Lake Chad in January 1920 to be greeted with a Milleresque tirade against the Fulani *sarakuna*. Miller's letter contained general allegations and the assertion, not backed up by evidence, that Emir Aliyu took cuts of proceeds from a band of thieves and jailed people who resisted them. He had been incensed by Aliyu's pious refusal to grant a new site for the Gimi settlers on the grounds that the proposed site was a religious centre. Miller described it as a sizeable trading post, full of thieves, and on the railway line, under the jurisdiction of the *Dan Galadima* who had just married one of the Emir's daughters.<sup>46</sup>

Two months later Miller tried another tack. He claimed that the Emir converted taxes collected as coin from the villages into notes on the Kano money market at a rate of eleven shillings to the £. Then he paid them into the Emirate treasury and pocketed the mark up. He also alleged that the *Dan Galadima* had paid the Emir £80 hush money. A

group of his thieves were said to have failed to hand over the required percentage of the takings to the Emir and suffered the consequences; one was imprisoned, another beaten to death. There was also the claim that the Emir bribed *alkali* court judges to falsify the age of girls so that he could 'redeem' them after which they became his concubines (girls born after Lugard's slavery ordinances were technically free and in no need of 'redemption'). Finally Miller described the *Dan Galadima's* use of forced labour, 300 men and donkeys pressganged on one occasion; two of the men died of exhaustion. "A poor man in this country has no chance of obtaining justice against his rulers", he wrote. "The Residents support to the full the power of the Amirs, and their only source of information is from, or through, the Amirs...Surely this travesty of rule must pass away as a horrid nightmare".<sup>47</sup> If Clifford was looking for ammunition to use against his Northern Residents, he had only to knock on Miller's mission door.

But the Governor-General showed due diligence in his handling of Miller's appeals for social justice and only replied to a second letter. He reminded Miller that in 1911 the missionary had predicted a massacre of the Whites at the Coronation Durbar, and that without adequate witnesses his reliability was questionable. But privately he told Miller to come and see him in Lagos and asked the Lieutenant-Governor of the Northern Provinces, Goldsmith, to begin enquiries into the allegations.<sup>48</sup> Miller's most telling point was that the Emir was now so sure of the Residents' hostility towards the missionaries that he no longer bothered to stop stories reaching the Mission. Miller had to admit that owing to intimidation by powerful men in the town he was

unable to produce witnesses. He also slipped in a note warning the Governor-General that, disobeying CMS instructions, he had not reported these complaints back to Salisbury Square. Miller was conducting a one-man crusade.<sup>49</sup>

So the issue landed back on the desks of the Northern Residents who reacted like angry bees when their nest is poked. The Zaria Resident, Arnett, had only just returned to Zaria after several years in Sokoto and was furious to find the Mission stirring things up again. "If Dr. Miller were merely an adverse critic one would not complain, but he is habitually inculcating a disloyal attitude among the natives with whom he is in touch....He is a partisan before the tale is told".<sup>50</sup> This was true but few could claim to be non-partisan in Northern Nigeria, least of all the many arbiters of faith and morals by default amongst the administration. Moreover, the local political officer, Byng-Hall, was soon claiming that the majority of the allegations could be substantiated.

One distressing case was that of a girl whose date of birth rendered her automatically freeborn. But she was ransomed by the *Dan Galadima* despite the correct ruling of the local *alkali* court. The case went higher to the Zaria court where a bribed judge falsified her age.

There was little point in investigating the charges of forced labour; it was a well-known practice amongst *sarauta*. The Resident remonstrated with the Emir about the practice only to find a few weeks later him sending out his 'war chiefs' to round up able-bodied men. "The hearing and sifting of native complaints against their chiefs is a special work in which political officers are daily trained", he wrote. "To permit this important work to be exposed to continual mystification by

inexpert and unofficial hands (Miller) is to place them under a handicap which can bring nothing but discredit to Government".<sup>51</sup> In other words if Miller believed everything he was told, the political officers risked being pushed into believing nothing they were told.

Zaria Mission by now was deeply enmeshed in politics. On the one hand Miller was a wild card in the Governor-General's strategy for controlling the North from Lagos. On the other, he had become a key player in the politics of the Mallawa dynasty, the Emir's lineage, as a spokesman for rival dynasties' disaffection. Emir Aliyu had excluded many of the Bornawa families from power early in his reign.<sup>52</sup> "One thing that keeps him more or less straight is the fact that there are in the town numbers of people who supported the former Emir", an administrator had written in 1906..."and would be only too glad to inform against this fellow"<sup>53</sup>

At the beginning of 1912 when the British introduced a special three man Judicial Council for important cases beyond the jurisdiction of the local *alkali* courts, the Emir's authority was seriously undermined. The Council gave more power to the *Waziri*. The war years saw an unremitting struggle for control of the legal apparatus of the emirate. What Miller and his night-time informants had in common was the desire to negate Aliyu's claim that 'all Shariya was his'<sup>54</sup>

Miller did indeed have some important night-time callers. There was the *Waziri*, Abdullahi, whose secret visits kept him informed about selected parts of Council meetings. *Makama* Omaru had a boy studying with Miller as did Iya Kwassau, both from Bornawa families and both frequent visitors to *Durumin Maigarke*. Then from a Katsinawa family there was Malam Yero, the *Alkali* of Riga Chikun, who had a son at the



school. His knowledge of the Byzantine workings of the Alkali's office in Zaria proved invaluable to the Mission. Turaki Yusufu was a close friend as was Abdul Wahabu, a son of a former Katsina Emir, Sambo.<sup>55</sup>

Early in 1920 Miller finished compiling a dossier on the Emir. He believed the time was right to strike. "We have a Governor thoroughly aroused and in great measure of sympathy".<sup>56</sup> He calculated that on the Emir's *lambo*, sugar cane farms at Likoro, there were at least 550 workers employed for no pay on land that had simply been appropriated. The most serious charge brought to him was that the Emir had allowed a number of men who had resisted his demands for land and labour to die from flogging and starvation in Zaria prison. Although very few witnesses dared to come forward, Arnett felt he had enough evidence to request the Emir's deposition. There was a case of murder. The Governor-General warily advised that the Emir be called to Kaduna to provide explanations and receive an admonition.<sup>57</sup>

Compared with his Satiru campaign, Miller was showing signs of being on a winning streak. But it was taking a toll on his health; his asthma reached chronic levels and he contracted a severe bout of bronchitis. Many of the people who used to visit the Mission had been boycotting it since the Emir labelled it as a centre of opposition.<sup>58</sup> Several Residents wanted Miller removed. Instead Clifford took up his dossier.<sup>59</sup>

In June 1920, the Governor-General brought out a major memorandum on Native Administration that was a striking vindication of Miller's campaigns. In parts it amounted to a direct rebuke to the Northern Residents. "We are, I feel, and have felt since very early in my acquaintance with our system, too dependent for our knowledge and information upon the ruling class themselves...."<sup>60</sup> "One of the effects of

the Great War”, he stated, “has been to occasion the recrudescence of former evil practices, and to prevent us from discharging efficiently our obligations to the rank and file of the indigenous population”<sup>61</sup>

Sir William Frederick Gowers, Lieutenant-Governor from 1921-1925, then Kano Resident, smarted under any accusation that the administration lived in blissful ignorance. “Dr. Miller appears to maintain not merely that all the Residents are fooled some of the time and some of the Residents all of the time but that all of the Residents are fooled all of the time”.<sup>62</sup> But he was willing to admit things had got “slack”. To demonstrate the depth of his local knowledge, Gowers helpfully listed a litany of crimes and misdemeanours by the Emir of Kano. His disclosures revealed the parlous state of governance in Kano emirate.<sup>63</sup>

The Emir of Zaria duly went to Kaduna as required but his behaviour on arrival did nothing to help him. He assumed “a very aggressive posture” and left “with the evident intention of refusing Government control to the utmost”.<sup>64</sup> Palmer later put this down to Mahdist influences, but since he saw these everywhere, the threat lost much of its weight. “He keeps on exuding new Arabic letters”, wrote Clifford, “in a manner that is rather confusing”.<sup>65</sup> Aliyu’s main quarrel with the British was the onerous restraint they imposed both on his political and economic power; falling profits from agricultural production pushed office holders to extend the acreage of their farms and pull in more labour. Economic difficulties were knocked on to the peasantry. When Residents mobilised forced labour for Public Works, the *sarauta* saw it as unwarranted interference given that they were forbidden to behave

in the same way. For all the cant about Indirect Rule, the British intervened in political and economic life where it mattered most.<sup>66</sup>

The creation of a Judicial Council was another tier of restraints on the Emir's exercise of power. On returning to Zaria from Kaduna, Aliyu immediately reinstated one of his henchmen, Maga Takarda, whom the Resident had removed for misdemeanours. This was a deliberate act of defiance by a man watching his authority whittled away. The Governor-General then ordered that he be detained in Kaduna pending an investigation to be undertaken by his new Secretary of State for Native Affairs, Selwyn Grier, formerly assistant Resident in Zaria.<sup>67</sup>

Once the news that the Emir had been detained reached Zaria, witnesses in the case against Aliyu, whom Miller claimed had held back for fear of reprisals, came forward. The stories they told confirmed the worst of Miller's allegations, the deaths in prison. One of the victims had been a Malam Hassan who had remonstrated with one of the Emir's messengers after he struck Hassan's father; the old man had refused to send off his sons to work on the Emir's plantations. Evidence from the prison scribe, Momodu, and another prisoner, supported the claim that Hassan had died from mistreatment and had been secretly buried with other victims.<sup>68</sup> There was also ample proof that Aliyu had requisitioned a large number of houses in the city without compensation to their rightful owners.

What amounted to a Commission of Enquiry sat from 27-28 January 1921 in Kaduna. There were minimal legal trappings, the Emir simply being confronted by witnesses and attempting to defend himself. He produced a letter from one witness saying the accusations were made under duress. It was a transparent forgery. The Resident denied any

pressure. A second key witness had to be carried into the room. The suspicion was that he had been poisoned.<sup>69</sup> “The Emir’s triumphant tone when he said that this man could not be produced”, Arnett wrote, “and his air of defeat when I assured him that he would appear were noticeable”.<sup>70</sup>

The evidence seemed damning. Four men had died in custody from mistreatment. Food meant for prisoners had been taken by the Emir’s men. Aliyu was allegedly connected with thieves in the town. The Attorney-General advised against a formal criminal prosecution. On the strength of the prison deaths, the Governor-General deposed Aliyu. Miller had won. On 28 February 1921 the Bornawa dynasty was reinstated; the brother of Kwassau, Dallatu, who had been district *magajin gari*, (mayor) was made Emir. Aliyu was banished to Ankpa in Tivland.<sup>71</sup>

The deposition came as the culmination of a year of what can only be described as a sustained many-pronged campaign by Miller. There had been a question in the House of Commons for the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies on the abuses of Indirect Rule. Salisbury Square did some energetic lobbying.<sup>72</sup> Miller got quite carried away. It was a ‘revolution’ and ‘the whole system was doomed’. “I thank God that I have been wholly vindicated and that a new regime is likely to come in”, he wrote home in November 1920.<sup>73</sup> The kick in the tail for the Northern Residents came from the Synod of the Diocese of Lagos. “The presence of enlightened and Christian people in such Moslem States may do much to bring to light the abuses and oppression incidental to indirect rule through Moslem Chiefs”, the Synod declared rubbing salt in the wound.<sup>74</sup> What must have made it worse were the signatures

that included two Yoruba pastors, Archdeacons Ogunbiyi and Moore. The threat from the 'uppity' Southern Christians had come to pass.

The Emir's banishment might have heralded the victorious transformation of the missionaries' fortunes had not Herbert Richmond Palmer taken over as Acting Lieutenant-Governor of the Northern Provinces in April 1921. A barrister, linguist and scholar, formerly Resident in Kano, he was a firm believer in Indirect Rule, so anti-missionary and opposed to Clifford's more critical attitude. The old guard who held Palmer in great esteem had been censured. "The supervision exercised of late years over Native Administration in Zaria Province has been most perfunctory and inefficient", Clifford had complained.<sup>75</sup> On the other hand, the appearance of a Secretary of State for Native Affairs making enquiries in Zaria smacked of the sort of direct control from the coast that Northern Residents resented.

Thereupon Palmer appointed a new political officer for Zaria and reopened the case on Emir Aliyu. A report went back to Kaduna portraying Byng-Hall, who had undertaken investigations in the first enquiry, as harbouring a grudge against the old Emir and allegedly offering prisoners quick release if they testified against him. One of Byng-Hall's files containing a neurotic conviction that he was being poisoned did not improve his reputation for reliability. Palmer promptly dismissed two of Arnett's appointees to the Judicial Council who had been instrumental in Aliyu's downfall, and told the new Emir that Byng-Hall would never enter his emirate again. A month or two later, the key witnesses in the deposition were arrested for perjury. A flood of witnesses then came forward to deny their former stories. To add to the disarray in the town, the Treasury in Kaduna had got their

estimates wrong. To solve the problem the new Emir Dallatu and his Council were not given the salary rises promised by the former Resident. It looked like a calculated sleight. The net result was that people thought the days of Dallatu's rule were numbered.<sup>76</sup>

The Governor-General got back to Nigeria in December 1921 to be confronted by Palmer's putsch. On his desk were three different reports on the Aliyu case each featuring the same witnesses and each contradicting the other down to minor details. 'Impartial' was not a word that came to mind when looking at the witnesses. Malam Yero, the leading witness in the prosecution case, it transpired, had been dismissed by Emir Aliyu for frequenting the Mission and passing on stories to Miller. For good measure, he had offered his services as a spy to Byng-Hall in 1920 to ferret out more witnesses. Evidence contained in the most recent report suggested that Malam Yero knew two key witnesses to the prison deaths, and that he had promised rewards to prisoners who testified. Yero admitted that prisoners returning from Kaduna after the trial had told him that they had lied. But he stuck to his own story.

The *Waziri* now prevaricated. The change of Emirs had left him untouched. The *Maaji* spoke of Byng-Hall's fury when he heard that members of the Council had been circulating orders telling people not to testify against the Emir. One thing was clear: almost everyone had prejudged the case for or against the Emir. Truth in the Aliyu case was reduced to the product of the contending forces of intimidation at work in the town. And the truth was, like the town's open sewers, the carrier of all manner of unpleasantness.<sup>77</sup>

Clifford fretted that injustice might have been done. He was annoyed at the way discrepancies in testimonies had been overlooked. But little better could have been expected from the way the arraignment had been carried out. With rumours circulating that Aliyu was about to return to Zaria, Clifford had to act. He decided that the former Emir would remain in Tivland and Dallatu should be afforded full support. To celebrate the wonders of Anglo-African government, and British faith in in their own judgement and the new Emir, a Durbar was to be held.<sup>78</sup>

The Governor-General could control the clatter of hoofs in Zaria, but had no say over the clatter of typewriters in London. The Colonial Office was piqued by criticisms of the government of the Northern Provinces and deplored Clifford's "lack of Christian charity", a quality not normally given great prominence in decision-making.<sup>79</sup> The Governor-General was vulnerable to accusations of aiding and abetting Mission interference in politics, made worse by the interference being vindicated by government investigations. Clifford covered his back with some stern words in response to the protests of the Lagos Synod. "It is new to me", he wrote to the Anglican Bishop of Lagos, Frank Melville-Jones, "to find any Religious Body claiming that the task of attempting to discredit the *de facto* Government of the country, in which it desires to operate, is a recognised part of its duty".<sup>80</sup>

All this, though, might be described as an aspect of the unacceptable face of Amalgamation. In 1915, the Nigerian Assistant Bishop of Lagos, Adolphus. W. Howells, wrote a letter to *The Nigerian Pioneer*, a conservative, pro-British publication, decrying the poor education offered in the North.<sup>81</sup> Archdeacon T.A.J Ogunbiyi who had spent time with Miller in Zaria, returned to Lagos convinced that British policy in

the North was misguided. Whereas, before the days of the railway, Zaria had been several arduous weeks away from Lagos, by 1914 it was a little over a day. But this did not mean Amalgamation was much more than a word. Regional differences were too great.

Men like Howells and Ogunbiyi, who saw themselves as part of a wider West African and Christian community, could not be expected to fit in with the narrow ethnic contours that dominated British thinking about Nigeria.<sup>82</sup> “I do not think the African community in the South will sit back much longer”, wrote Bishop Howells to Clifford, “and allow the kindred tribes in the north to be shut out from the privileges which they themselves have so long enjoyed”<sup>83</sup> Clifford’s reply revealed just what a fragile entity, Nigeria, connected together by the Amalgamation, was going to be. “I suggest that this is not a matter in which the African Community of the South – or rather that small minority of the Community – can claim the right to dictate to the Government or to the Native Administrations of the Muhammadan States. Nor is it possible to accept the African Community of the South or any section of it, as the exponents of the sentiments of the native population of those States. The Yorubas and other principal tribes of the Southern Provinces have not even an ethnological connection with the Muhammadans of the North”<sup>84</sup> The irony was that the illiberal refusal of the Mission Societies to respect ‘Native Institutions’, and their quest for uniformity of life and practice amongst their missions could produce a consciousness of ‘One Nigeria’ denied the proponents of so-called Amalgamation.

Miller’s coup in getting Aliyu removed was his finest hour. Yet he had a sneaking affection for the old man. As his Christian vision dictated,



Miller had become an outspoken proponent of social justice. The removal of Aliyu was the political climax to his work in Zaria. But it finally made him *persona non grata* with the Northern Residents.

In later years, after he published *Reflections of a Pioneer*, his triumphalist claim of having deposed the emir still rankled with the administrators. Goldsmith, reviewing the book, went to tortuous lengths to present Miller as a charlatan, even blaming him for causing a 'deterioration' in the Emir through siding with the rival Fulani lineages.<sup>85</sup> Barely two years after he had been reiterating Miller's accusations in memoranda to the Colonial Office, Clifford felt obliged to write mockingly that Miller was "quite absurdly but genuinely convinced that he, and he alone, is the repository of all true information that bears upon native affairs in Hausaland"<sup>86</sup>

But it had been Miller's information that deposed the Emir even if his information proved impossible to substantiate beyond reasonable doubt. Miller could hardly be justly blamed for being *parti pris* when all subsequent investigators had been, as the Governor-General bemoaned, just that. Nor could he be justifiably accused of false pride in his knowledge of emirate affairs when Clifford openly questioned the competence of his own Political Officers on the basis of the missionary's information. Like the unwanted interventions of Philip Marlowe, the private detective in a Raymond Chandler police investigations, Miller was structurally a nuisance while infuriatingly well informed, not to mention instrumental in catching the criminal.

Although resistance to Christian evangelism persisted, the period 1919-1923 saw the birth of a Christianity in the North no less political at times than the Islam it sought to conquer. Two of Miller's clients, two

friends of the Mission, Malam Yero and Malam Turaki, were appointed to Emir Dallatu's Council. When Dallatu died, the first act of the new Emir, Ibrahim, was to visit and formally greet Miller at *Durumin Maigarke*. The following Emir, Ja'afaru, had attended the mission school.<sup>87</sup> "The whole attitude of Zaria Moslems is changed", wrote Miller in January 1922, "Christians are recognised...to have 'outthought, out-lived and out-died' the Moslems: and are trusted and respected as never before".<sup>88</sup> But what he didn't say was that success and recognition had demanded the ability to exercise, or manipulate, political power. Miller had shown the Northern Christians the way; education would give them the means.

### Footnotes

1. One bi-product of this, the Niger Mission's policy, was the later growth of vigorous Independent Churches led by pastors who parted company with the Anglican Church and the CMS, see Webster J.B. *The African Churches among the Yoruba* Oxford, 1962. For CMS policy, see Farrimond K.J.T. 'The Policy of the Church Missionary Society concerning the development of self-governing Indigenous Churches: 1900-1942' Doctoral Dissertation, University of Leeds 2003
2. Palmer to Goldsmith 27 July 1917, encl. in Lugard to Secretary of State for the Colonies 25 September 1918, C.O. 583/67
3. Minutes of the Miango Conference 13-18 November 1926, G3/A9/0
4. *Western Equatorial Africa Diocesan Magazine* December 1916, 388
5. Minute in Girouard to Earl of Crewe 12 October 1908, C.O. 446/75

6. Lugard had written in his 1906 Annual Report: "I believe that a great deal of good has resulted" referring to the Mission.
7. Strachey Minute on 'Mission Station at Kano' 27 August 1909, C.O.446/101; Fiddes to Baylis 21 July 1909, G3/A9/02; Tugwell to Alvarez 1 April 1909, Alvarez to Baylis 8 September 1910, G3/A9/02
8. Bell to Undersecretary of State for the Colonies 26 June 1912, C.O. 446/109
9. Alvarez to Baylis 30 May 1911, G3/A9/03
10. Miller to Mackay 6 August 1914, CMS 1/5/7, Ibadan Archives
11. Goldsmith to Harcourt 22 March 1912, C.O. 446/104; Temple to Harcourt 10 June 1912, C.O. 446/105
12. Sir John Anderson's minute on Bell to Harcourt 19 December 1911, C.O. 446/101
13. Harcourt minute on Bell to Harcourt 19 December 1911
14. Bell to Harcourt 5 March 1912, C.O. 446/101
15. Lugard to Harcourt 10 January 1913, C.O. 446/110; record of an interview with C.L. Temple 2 September 1913, G3/A9/03; Bryant to Manley 12 November 1920, G3/A2/0
16. Goldsmith to Harcourt 27 May 191, C.O. 446/105
17. Freemantle to Goldsmith 19 January 1914, 'CMS Christian Settlement at Gimi', ZARPROF
18. Report of the Superior of the Zaria Mission July-December 1913, January-May 1916; Annual Letter for 1918, G3/A2/0

19. Mrs. Sylvia Leith Ross tells the story of how Miller, who was convinced of the atheism of all Residents, was startled to blunder in on a small prayer meeting held by the Zaria Resident, Major J.M. Freemantle. Salisbury Square noted in 1911 'a danger to Dr. Miller of rash and overstrong expression in speech and writing', P.C. Committee Findings, G3/A9/03

20. Alvarez to Manley 4 July 1912, G3/A9/03

21. Lord Lucas minute on Bell to Undersecretary of State for the Colonies 26 June 1911, C.O. 446/103

22. Report of an interview between G. Manley and Sir F. Lugard, 6 August 1913, G3/A9/03

23. In preparation telegrams were ready to be sent out, see Rhodes James R. *Memoirs of a Conservative* London 1969, 19

24. Osuntokun A. 'Disaffection and Revolts in Nigeria during the First World War, 1914-1918' *Canadian Journal of African Studies* V, 1971, 171-192

25. Lugard to Secretary of State for the Colonies 18 September 1915, C.O. 583/36

26. The fall of Agades to Tuareg Forces in December 1916, in addition, had Lugard calling for reinforcements from Sierra Leone.

27. Clifford to Gowers 30 December 1923, Sir Hugh Clifford Correspondence, MSS Afr. s. 1149, Rhodes House

28. See enclosures in Lugard to Secretary of State for the Colonies 25 September 1918, C.O. 583/67

29. Clifford Memorandum on Native Administration 25 June 1920, C.O. 583/92

30. Graham *Government and Mission Education*, 138-147

31. Lugard to Bonar-Law 14 August 1915, No. 511, C.87/1917, SNPS, Kaduna Archives

32. Harcourt to Lugard 26 May 1915, No. 511, C.87/1917, SNPS

33. Gowers to Clifford 27 April 1920, encl. in Clifford to Milner 21 October 1920, C.O. 583/92

34. Miller to Baylis 31 May 1911, G3/A9/02

35. Gowers to Clifford 22 May 1920, C.O. 583/92

36. See Chapter Six

37. Emir Aliyu never really changed his mind about the incoming religion though he changed the way he phrased his position. In 1912, he would “have nothing to do with anyone who changes his religion”. This resulted in a complaint from the Mission, see Harford-Battersby to Manley 28 March 1913, G3/A9/0. In 1914 the Emir promised that ‘no-one will be coerced to accept another faith but should he do so voluntarily he will not by force be made to renounce it’. He then added: “Let everyone cling to his faith and not embrace a religion that is foreign to him” see Lugard to Long 3 May 1917 C.O. 583/57 This was a singularly soft stance towards apostasy which was punishable by death.

38. Quoted in Goldsmith to Lugard 4 June 1918, encl. in Lugard to Secretary of State for the Colonies 25 September 1918, C.O. 583/57

39. Report by E.J. Arnett on Emir Aliyu's Likoro Farms, 28 April 1922, No.9, C13/1922, ZARPFROF, Kaduna Archives
40. Miller to Secretary for Northern Provinces 15 February 1918, G3/A2/0. He would develop the theme of the problem being bad Moslems not bad Islam later in life see Chapter Eight
41. H.E. Smith to Manley 12 August, 30 October 1919, G3/A2/0
42. Lugard to Secretary of State for the Colonies 25 September 1918, C.O. 583/67
43. Palmer to Goldsmith 27 July 1917
44. G.J.F. Tomlinson to Goldsmith n.d. (c. August 1917) encl. in Lugard to Secretary of State for the Colonies 23 September 1918, C.O. 583/67
45. Clifford Memorandum 25 June 1920; Nicholson *The Administration*, 217-220
46. Miller to Clifford 31 December 1919, 25 March 1920, 16/3, C.0053, SNP, Kaduna Archives
47. Miller to Clifford 31 December 1919
48. Miller to Manley 5 January 1920, G3/A2/0
49. Miller to Manley 16 April 1920, G3/A2/0; Miller to Clifford 25 March 1920
50. Arnett to Gowers 14 June 1920, encl. in Clifford to Milner 21 October 1920 C.O. 583/92
51. Arnett to Gowers 23 July 1920, 4/4, No.8, C.14/1920, ZARPROF

52. Smith *Government in Zazzau* 207-209
53. Grier to his mother 16 October 1906 MSS Afr. s. 1379, Rhodes House
54. Sciartino to Senior Resident Zaria 15 November 1921, 4/4, No.9, C.14/1920, ZARPROF
55. Interview with Stephen Ibrahim Audu 12 August 1974; interview with Malam Omaru Tafida 29 August 1974; interview with Malam P.O. Ischiaku 13 September 1974, Wusasa and Tudun Wada, Zaria
56. Miller to Manley 12 May 1920, G3/A2/0
57. Miller to Arnett 18 May 1920, 4/4, No.9, C.14/1920, ZARPROF; Clifford to Milner 21 October 1920, C.O. 583/92
58. Wakeman to Manley 12 June 1920, G3/A2/0
59. Gowers to Clifford 21 October 1920, encl. in Clifford to Milner 21 October 1920, C.O. 583/921
60. Clifford Memorandum 25 June 1920
61. Ibid.
62. Gowers Memorandum 27 April 1920, 16/3, C.0053, SNP, Kaduna Archives
63. Gowers to Clifford 22 May 1920, C.O. 583/92
64. Clifford to Milner 7 February 1921, C.O 583/99
65. Clifford to Gowers 8 March 1921, MSS. Afr. s. 1149, Rhodes House

66. Arnett, for example, gave the Emir another warning about employing forced labour in 1920, asking him to circulate a letter to headmen to this effect. The Emir sent round a letter saying baldly that forced labour was banned – which, of course, raised the question why the British could use it when it was banned. See Arnett's Memorandum on the Aliyu case 25 January 1922 in Arnett Papers, MSS. Afr. s. 952, Rhodes House

67. Selwyn Macgregor Grier, born 1878, was son of a Staffordshire vicar and had been a school teacher before becoming a Colonial Officer. Arnett who had been two years above him at St. Catharine's College Cambridge, had been his superior in Zaria when they had served there in 1906. Grier was loyal to both Arnett and Byng-Hall, see MSS. Afr. s. 1379, Rhodes House.

68. Testimonies of witnesses Momodu and Maude, 4/4, No.8, C.14/1920, ZARPROF, Kaduna Archives

69. Arnett Memorandum on Aliyu Case 25 January 1922, MSS. Afr. s. 952, Rhodes House

70. Arnett Memorandum encl. Clifford to Milner 7 February 1921, C.O. 583/99

71. Clifford to Churchill 11 March 1921, C.O. 583/99

72. Miller's Annual Letter 12 November 1920, CMS Archives, London

73. There was an enquiry in the House of Commons on 26 April 1920 on why the missions were excluded. This had caused some concern, see Clifford to Milner 28 October 1920, C.O. 583/92



74. Quoted in Melville-Jones to Clifford 17 May 1920, G3/A2/0
75. Clifford to Milner 7 February 1921, C.O. 583/99
76. Arnett Memorandum 25 January 1922, MSS. Afr. s. 952; Clifford to Gowers 12 January, 16 November 1922, MSS. Afr. s. 1149
77. Arnett to Byng-Hall 13 August 1920, 4/4, No.8, C.14/1920; testimonies from *Maaji* Ishiaku, *Waziri* Abdullahi, *Wombai* Dawaki, *Madakin* Shamaki and Malam Yero, taken by J.C. Sciortino October – November 1921, 4/4, No.9, C.14/1920, ZARPROF; Clifford to Gowers 2 October 1922, MSS. Afr. s. 1149, Rhodes House
78. Clifford to Arnett 8 February 1923, MSS. Afr. s. 952
79. Minute by Harding on Clifford to Milner 25 June 1920. L.S. Amery to Clifford, 29 March 1921, is a strikingly curt reply to the Governor's screed on reform. C.O. 583/92
80. Clifford to Melville-Jones 11 February 1922, encl. in Clifford to Churchill 26 April 1922, C.O. 583/109
81. *The Nigerian Pioneer* 31 December 1915
82. E.O. Moore had proposed the motion protesting British policy in the North and it had been seconded by Archdeacon Ogunbiyi. There were feelings of solidarity with the CMS in the North. The congregation of Holy Trinity, Lagos, for example, raised £60 for Zaria Mission girls' travel expenses, see Melville-Jones to Clifford 22 February 1922 encl. in Clifford to Churchill 26 April 1922
83. Ibid.

84. Ibid.

85. Goldsmith to Arnett 26 November, 30 November 1936; *West Africa Review* January 1937, MSS. Afr. s. 952

86. Clifford to Arnett 25 March 1923, MSS. Afr. s. 952

87. Miller *Reflections of a Pioneer*, 155-156

88. Miller's Annual Letter January 1922, CMS Archives London.

## Chapter Six

“Native Society is every day more and more imperiled by the general failure of Missions and Missionaries to consider anything but the immediate prospect of labelling so many black bodies as duly certified Christians”

H.R. Palmer 1917



*Kassawanu*

The deposition of Emir Aliyu was a telling demonstration, had any been needed, that the handful of Zaria Christians led by Dr. Miller was playing a disproportionately political role in the town. Fulfilling the worst fears of the Northern Residents, Walter Miller, combative, determined and knowledgeable, was close to becoming the first British missionary to be expelled from Nigeria. He survived because for the Colonial Office to remove him would have aroused suspicion that government was unable to tolerate criticism.<sup>1</sup> An appeal to the conscience of Christian England was more symbolic than a real threat, but the CMS fell back on it at moments of frustration, and the Colonial Office lived with it as a potent deterrent. Neither side in the uncertainties of post-war Britain had any idea just how 'Christian' England would react to an evangelical crusade for free access to Muslim Northern Nigeria.

The very uncertainty of the situation drew Walter Miller into more combative and righteous denunciations of Muslim government. Not only had he ignored the old Emir's complaints about 'itineration', he started public preaching in Zaria market, the nearest Nigeria could get to the Greek Areopagus. Malam Fate and Henry Miller fronted these sorties. Their flamboyant outcome and character can be gauged by Henry Miller's account. "After Sunday school every Sunday we go out in large number of ten to fifteen men and stand in some part of the market, there three or four of us speak to the crowd of the love of God to the sinner by giving Jesus Christ to be our Substitution and we always get many willing ears to listen very attentively and some few whom the prince of this world instigate mock. But that is nothing to us. After the market preaching, about 8 pm we divide ourselves into companies of

four or five each and go to about four homes in town and preach the Gospel quietly in a convenient place to the people who come to hear us. The missionary generally accompany (sic) one party, so you see it is something to thank God for his Word is not quiet here".<sup>2</sup> Aliyu's deposition took place to the sound of Sunday evening hymn-singing in the streets of Zaria, a noisy provocation to Muslim sensibilities.

The core message of this preaching was that the gathered crowd failed to live up to the precepts of their own religion, which was anyway defective, and Christianity was the only salvation. To pious and learned Muslims this was simply offensive. But Miller enjoyed the adversarial drama on his village visits and admired Malam Fate's ability to argue his case. Miller described how combat-ready they were on these trips: "yet we did deal very faithfully with the failure and errors of Islam, and specially Malam Fate with sledge-hammer blows broke up their confidence in their own faith by the most telling illustrations from their own lives, by most apposite quotations from Kor'an, tradition and well known writers as Bokhari..." (in other words taken from the sayings of the Prophet, known as *hadith*, a few authentic, informing Islamic ethical teachings and belief)<sup>3</sup>

The persistent objection of the Residents was that in the small hamlets people believed this assault on their faith to be 'official' British policy, interventions from Europeans seen as having a mandate from the Colonial authorities.<sup>4</sup> Several Residents with a government school on their patch complained that Miller's arrival had a deleterious impact on attendance and increased resistance to British authority. The gap between the perceived and actual relationship between administration and Mission was a vague and ambiguous area open to manipulation.<sup>5</sup>

The Mission's militant approach to the Great Commission provoked angry reactions to the Zaria Christians, reinforcing the ghetto dynamics of their small community as a righteous/persecuted minority.

Provocative preaching in the villages sometimes ended up with stones being thrown and evangelists such as Henry Miller sleeping rough and without food in villages where resistance had been stiffened by the *sarauta's* agents.

It would be a mistake to compare these early Christian-Muslim tensions with those that gained ground some forty years later in the wake of national and regional political developments. The encroachment of the Pentecostal Churches beginning in earnest in the 1960s was far in the future. The dictates of customary hospitality, the tedium of hamlet life, and genuine intellectual curiosity, often assured the preacher of an attentive audience and a place to sleep for the night. Henry Miller had few illusions about his audiences: "some of them come to see the men who are being paid by the Whiteman to abuse Mohammed, some to hear the preachers of trees (the Cross) and some to hear what the infidels have to say".<sup>6</sup>

Many hamlets had a malam and an elementary Qur'anic school. Rural piety was sometimes as high as urban, even if lacking in scholarship, but mixed with pre-Islamic practices and agricultural rituals. In Maguzawa villages Islam was absent. Only a magical view of the Word of God would expect conversion from occasional visits by preachers. Despite the Mission's zealous commitment to preach to all nations, and defy the Emir, itineration netted almost no converts and aggravated tensions.

The unexpected growth of the indigenous Church during the First World War encouraged the combative stance of the Zaria Mission. The British administration could work through the Emirs and their officials. And, on his side, Miller could ask that the deliberations of the Zaria Church Committee, in which he was not a member, be honoured. For it was the Committee who paid the £13 and two shillings monthly salary for Istafanus Bala, and the Committee which organised preaching in the market and safe houses in the town.<sup>7</sup>

It was unclear on what grounds a Resident could apprehend a catechist, paid for and appointed by an indigenous body, unless he was openly seditious or causing a breach of the peace. The widely known *Likita*, Dr. Miller, was a formidable figure who stuck out outside the authorised domain of Zaria city. West Indian and Nigerian agents like Thompson and Douglas, blended in better, inconspicuous in their Hausa dress, and able to move around more freely. The small semi-independent Church with its eighty or so members before the sleeping sickness epidemic of 1918-1921, strengthened Miller's hand with government.

With an annual collection of only £11, the Zaria Christians could not vie with the richer Christian communities in Yorubaland, but they were an endorsement of Miller's opposition to Islam. "We who are the people of the country", Henry Miller wrote back to London, "can never understand how a man with two sons will give one all the privilege to do his work freely and restrict the other by forcing him to sit quietly leaving his duty undone without any proper reason".<sup>8</sup>

The Zaria Church community of *Durumin Maigarke* comprised three strands: the few local townspeople who had accepted baptism, the alumni of the Freed Slaves Homes who had been sent to the North, and

finally those members of the *Banisra'ila* who converted with their families, and by the 1920s consisted mainly of children. Because of their long contact with the missions, one or two of the ex-slaves were given responsible positions and one or two of the local men were from Fulani families and given some privileges. Some of the older men were respected as religious leaders, albeit from a despised sect and now practising a religion in which their former scholarship counted for little. So in these early years status was ascribed in a variety of ways. Though the community gained its definition and identity as a religious body from the missionaries, and in distinction to the prevailing Islam.

The heart of *Durumin Maigarke* was the school with its boarders, the only officially recognised function of the Christian community in the town. The shared school culture brought together the children of cattle Fulani, *sarakuna* and *talakawa*. Before long, education in English came to define the position of someone in the local Church. Education in English and the ability to read and write Hausa using Roman characters vied with membership of the town's political elite for status. The latter was, of course, until the time of Emir Dallatu, a closed shop for those with connections to the Christian community. St. Bartholomew's became the source of a new corporate identity, a symbol for the local Church, one promoted by missionaries in a quest for cultural dominance. It inevitably drew people into opposition to their home and civic life.

As much as material conditions allowed, Miller strove to make the school a slightly modified copy of the English public school he never attended. He succeeded to a great degree. A visit to the school from the Phelps Stokes Commission on African Education, studying education



in the Empire in 1920, resulted in a flattering report. While older converts experienced the friction of juxtaposed cultures, Mission and city life, the youthful boarders occupied a unique cultural environment inherited from Victorian England. At St. Bartholomew's no less than in the Victorian Public Schools, values such as service, asceticism and team spirit were inculcated, or subtly imparted, as the only valid expression of a muscular Christianity.

The school day encouraged the development of a tightly-knit and ordered community. The day began at 5.30 am with washing and prayers - echoes of Islam - then Assembly led by Dr. Miller or Rev. Thompson. After breakfast there was half an hour's work on the farm at the rear of the compound. Lessons took place between 8am and 12.00 when the students were allowed a lunch break until 2pm. In the afternoon, lessons resumed for another two and a half hours followed by laundry duty. The bell rang at 5pm to summon the boys to the playing field for hockey or football, then evening ablutions, homework from 8-9 pm followed by lights out.<sup>9</sup> This tightly regimented existence was broken for intermittent hikes around town for the older boys, to accompany the preaching bands in the market.

The great division in the school was not primarily between ethnic groups but between prefects and the rest. Perseverance and achievement took the student up the classes until, as a prefect, he reached the frontier between ruler and ruled. So even in the tiny microcosm of the school, Christianity held out the enticing promise of social mobility. And the key to mobility lay in absorbing the values and ideals taught by the missionaries. This entailed adopting the

characteristics of an aspiring class as adherents of a religion whose very survival in the context of Zaria was problematic.

For those who persevered, the passage up the school was smooth; the first pupils to learn to read in Roman characters became the first prefects. These were David Yeronson, (a translation of 'son of Malam Yero'), and the oldest sons of two Gimi malams, Steven Ibrahim Audu, son of *Sarkin Gimi* and Yahaya Inusa, son of a *Banistra'ila* malam from Durum.<sup>10</sup> These boys practically ran the school under Miller's direction, accompanying younger boys for walks in the town, helping on preaching expeditions, and leading recreational outings to places like Kufena. Younger boys such as the *Sarkin Gimi's* other sons, Mu'azu and Edward Usman, spent periods taught by Rev. Thompson at Gimi before moving on to the readers' class in Zaria.<sup>11</sup> Yahaya Inusa went on to become a pupil teacher, then a full teacher, and finally head-teacher of the school.

Yet the school, however regimented, could not remain totally impervious to the wider culture around them. The power and prestige of the settled Fulani families left its mark. There were subtle distinctions between the Fulani boys and the rest; pupils remained sensitive to the power of the *sarakuna*. The first of the Fulani minority from a cattle-herding family that had recently settled was Paul Anfani, eleven years old in 1918 when his father finally gave permission for him to go to the boarding school.<sup>12</sup> Miller had spent three long years pleading with Paul's father, Malam Yusufu of Aba, to allow him to attend. His consent paved the way for a greater prize, Abbas, later John Tafida, son of *Makama* Omaru. A nephew of Emir Kwassau, one of ten children of the *Makama* (a slave official), Abbas had spent seven

years at the famous Qur'anic school of Gwarno Fara in Zaria so was literate in Arabic.<sup>13</sup> He came to St. Bartholomew's aged thirteen along with a Gierku malam, C.I. Hassan, renowned for his heterodox teaching who accepted baptism. Malam Hassan along with John Tafida went on to help Miller with his Hausa translation of the Bible in the 1920s.<sup>14</sup> Such little successes, coming in the period before Emir Aliyu's deposition, boosted Miller's morale as a spokesman for the underdog and the dissident.

Through St. Bartholomew's, Miller was able to live in the world denied him by his father as a young man. He formed close relationships with the boys, seeing in these relationships the only sure way of facilitating those character changes prescribed in the life of an evangelical Christian. Because he shared the common preconceptions about Fulani conquest, the conventional Hamitic hypothesis that the Fulani were a distinctive race close to Europeans, he saw boys of Fulani origin as prospective Christian leaders. John Tafida was placed with Rev. Earnshaw Smith and acted as his house-servant. The natural confidence of members of the ruling class assured the particular attention of the missionaries. The charm of aristocratic bearing attracted evangelicals in Nigeria as much as it did in Britain, and correspondingly their aristocratic decadence and misdeeds repelled the missionaries just as much.

When Max Warren arrived, Miller had the whole school drawn up so that he could pick a house-servant. Warren was soon to be invalided home and later became a longstanding General Secretary of the CMS and an international spokesman for the missions. A smiling Nuhu Bayero from an aristocratic background was selected for him.<sup>15</sup>

Missionaries' identification of ruling class status by ethnic labelling ensured that such divisions seeped into the life of the Mission, though less strongly than occurred with the Tutsi in Rwanda's Catholic seminaries. The boys were well aware that Likita had his 'favourites', and that on the whole these tended to be the Fulani boys who achieved the great prize of a visit to England.<sup>16</sup> Barau Dikko from a humble herder's family and Musa Benson, both were sponsored by the Mission to travel to England to train as doctors. The privileged education given such boys fitted them for prominent careers in the 1960s.<sup>17</sup> Tafida and Anfani accompanied Miller home in 1925. But any hope the missionaries might have had of inserting a Christian elite into traditional emirate politics foundered on the solid cohesion provided by Islam for emirate government. His two protégés who alone might have qualified were subjected to enormous pressure to revert to Islam.

If education was the means of creating a cohesive Christian elite, marriage and kinship were the way of sustaining it in a hostile environment. Down the road from *Durumin Maigarke* was Ethel Miller's girls' hostel. Her favourite was a daughter of the Emir Aliyu, Hannatu, with whom she established a warm relationship. Each morning she marched her cohort of ten or so girls from *Sabon Gida Ungwan Gimbiya* to school at Miller's compound led by their teacher, Kassawanu.

Hannatu, a *mulier fortis* of Bachama origin, had formerly been a nursemaid for Mrs Tugwell in Lagos. Fluent in Yoruba, Hausa and English, Hannatu came north in 1907 with a group of four girls chosen to be the nucleus of the new girls' school. The aim was to have a group of educated Christian wives for the converts from the Zaria Mission.<sup>18</sup>

The girls had been selected from Freed Slaves Homes and were technically orphans.

The hostel had the character of a foster-home, a somewhat repressive one, with a female missionary who encouraged the girls to think of her as their mother, played with them, and advised them on everyday problems. Of those with living parents, few were there with their wholehearted consent. One runaway girl was effectively detained in the school. When her parents caught up with her they were required to refund the prohibitive cost of her board and lodging. Strict discipline applied. When Janet, Paul Anfani's sister, went to see her mother, who was opposed to her residence in the hostel, she had to be accompanied by a prefect.<sup>19</sup>

Many men must have been eyeing the little Party as it proceeded to *Durumin Maigarke*, none more eagerly than the young men of the Christian community. That the girls' training was directed at their becoming pious matrons was never disguised. They were taught the full range of domestic skills alongside reading, writing and arithmetic and a little English. The former skills were put to immediate use. Susannah Salma, the daughter of an Israelite Malam, Ladan, was employed as a cook for the CMS missionary, Miss N.H. Bryant.<sup>20</sup> They were advised to weigh up any suitor's virtues and defects – it was a seller's market – ponder carefully, and stay engaged for at least six months before consenting to marriage. One of the first decisions made by the Church Committee was that some reading ability was required before the girls could be confirmed. Girls had to be over 19, boys over 21, before they could marry.

The first wedding, one that etched itself in its white perfection on the memory of the first generation of Christians, was between Hawau, a Fulani girl who, aged of fourteen, had worked as the Resident's wife's maid, and Audu Miller, returning from Kaduna. It took place in 1914 and set the tone for all later weddings. "We wore a white blouse and wrapper with underwear as well. There was a short veil. A ring and a Bible were ordered from abroad. The ring and the Bible were very important and once they had been given everything was all right".<sup>21</sup> That the principal symbols of the union had to be brought from England said a lot about the cultural baggage carried by the Mission.

St. Bartholomew's was not just a melting pot but a place where disparate groups were destined to meet their wives and future friends. From July 1914 to January 1916 there were four weddings. In all their Englishness, they represented the founding of the first indigenous Christian community in the northern Nigeria emirates. Henry Miller married Martha Julie, an Adamawa girl, captured at an early age, who had passed through Lokoja Mission and Zungeru Freed Slaves Home. A few months later Kassawanu married a young student teacher at the boy's school, Musa Aitken. The last of the 1907 cohort, Adama, educated first at the CMS Girls' school in Ibadan, married Ibrahim Joe, a Zaria tailor baptised in 1910.<sup>22</sup> Finally, Ali Donli Fox wedded Ruth Gambo, a daughter of a Nupe butcher who lived near the Mission. Her father had allowed her to attend the school after the dispensary at the Mission saved her life.<sup>23</sup>

The cohesion of the northern Christian community was greatly enhanced by these marriages which brought together freed slaves, immigrants from the South and converts from the town. The

community was obliged to be endogamous and any divisions in it could be overcome through marriage and kinship ties. By the 1920s the children of the *Banisra'ila* were beginning to marry into the old Zaria town Christian community. The mixing gained ground in the next generation.

The - relative - autonomy of this community was limited by its financial dependence on the CMS and the white missionaries' definition of cultural norms and normative Christian conduct. The degree to which Christianity in its European package was adopted varied according to the convert's personality and origins. Bulus Audu, a farmer-trader, found little place for the Englishness of Zaria Mission in his life; 'team spirit' was not relevant to the market price of cake and cane sugar. There were men like John Tafida and Nuhu Bayero, with aristocratic backgrounds, who could move through a number of registers, from Church committees to the Byzantine politics of the Emir's court. Then there was Henry Miller, a former slave from the Lake Chad region, a pious man later to become the first Hausa clergyman, with a close identification with the values and aspirations of the Mission. He wrote without affectation of the schoolchildren's 'ingratitude' in letters full of biblical references.<sup>24</sup> Praise from the missionaries was directed largely at those who had absorbed the qualifying degree of 'Englishness' as well as pious endeavour.

As in the nineteenth century experience of the Yoruba Churches, the growth of an indigenous community spelt either cultural conflicts, or the peaceful drift to the periphery of Church life of those independent spirits able to resist cultural domination. The missionaries controlled very few souls but the level of control exerted over individual lives was

at times a profound form of benign domination that encompassed finding jobs for converts and encouraging marriages.

It was the marriage issue that almost destroyed the Zaria community. Married missionaries were absent. This meant the leadership of 'bachelors and spinsters' whose views on sex ranged from conventional prudery to Augustinian severity. Any convert taking a second wife found himself accused of being an adulterer and his wife a prostitute. Most of the Zaria Christians reluctantly tolerated an uncompromising approach to polygamy unless it clashed with an overriding imperative such as the production of a male heir, a matter of the survival of a lineage. Malam Fate who took a second wife was condemned and broke with the mission during Emir Dallatu's reign, almost splitting the congregation. After starring for many years as one of the Mission's most celebrated preachers, he reverted to Islam, and the Christians lost face in the town.<sup>25</sup> The Gimi community were understandably disturbed.<sup>26</sup> "There is difficulty before them", Henry Miller wrote, "the hot question of single marriage which is a great problem for the Africans and the problem will never be solved if the different Christian missionary societies remain of different opinions about it".<sup>27</sup> The experience of the Churches in Yorubaland would suggest that, had the Zaria congregation been larger and better established, Malam Fate might have spun off an Independent Hausa Church. Walter Miller, in later years was to wonder if the CMS had got it right, and indicated that he had moved into a much more flexible position.

The institution of Christian marriage provided the most leverage for social change in the home. Superficially it looked as if it had more to offer women than men. But the benefits accruing to female converts



need to be put in perspective. Though *alkali* judges held marital stability as an Islamic value, the reality in Hausaland was frequent recourse to divorce; marriage was essentially a conditional contract that could be broken under certain circumstances. *Alkali* courts proliferated under British rule with the Resident as backstop and court of appeal. This gave women an alternative and greater chance of a favourable hearing when seeking divorce on grounds of cruelty or financial neglect. The number of divorces per annum in the Zaria court registers rose from 4,432 in 1914 to 6,465 in 1919. Bauchi registered a spectacular tripling in number while in Kano the figures rose from 26,554 to 36,713 in the same period. The Emir thought 'avarice' was the cause, women wishing to marry richer men, or the presence in *sabon gari* of loose-living incomers. There was no doubt, though, that during the war years Muslim women were asserting their right to divorce granted them in *Shari'a*.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile Christian women were taught to shun divorce. Monogamy could spare them the psychological damage of a second marriage though not the problems caused by a feckless husband too poor to support them.

Christian women, like those in Maguzawa communities, avoided the problems of seclusion in wealthier Muslim families. They had an active social life through Church organisations whilst remaining responsible for domestic tasks: cooking, sewing, spinning and weaving. Obedience to husbands was taught as an integral demand of Christian marriage. But Nigerian women in the North were rarely ever on Church committees and never given important decision-making roles in Mission life.<sup>29</sup> Female 'emancipation' would therefore be too grand and misleading a description of the changes engendered by Mission

demands on husbands. There were exceptions. Kassawanu played a leading part in the life of the Zaria community until her death in 1927. The *Isawa* women, though country girls, were amongst the first women in Northern Nigeria able to read and write in Roman characters. Rahila Audu went on to become a teacher in the 1930s. In the 1960s the daughters of Rev. Henry Miller achieved high positions in the Northern administration.<sup>30</sup> Viewed within a timescale of two generations the changes in life-style and standing appear considerable.

The impact of Mission culture was as varied on women as on men. Many like Susannah Salma Audu and Janet Audu, with little ongoing contact with the missionaries and poor English, remained custodians of traditional values and culture. Others, such as the wife of Henry Miller, looked at ease, indeed elegant, in the European fashions of the 1920s. In contrast, in some industrious and pious families what had been successfully borrowed from the Mission was a certain austere dreariness. The first women's education officer in the North, the radical Mrs. Leith-Ross, described how Hawau Miller's appearance had altered after marriage; "five years later I met her again, married to a catechist, clothed and dimmed and lifeless...In sudden fury I gave her all the scents and coloured things I had in protest against her new enslavement".<sup>31</sup>

The quality of a marriage should not be gauged by the clothes worn, but one thing is clear: divorce was less common than in the Muslim community and some of these early marriages lasted for over fifty years. Though the role of the 1916 Marriage Ordinance, obliging Northern Christians to go all the way to the High Court level before they could get a contested divorce, should not be forgotten. Marrying out of

the endogamous Christian community was equally rare, the most common cause being age or infirmity denying a man the – relatively scarce acquisition – a Christian bride. Muslim-Christian marriages were scarce because they involved intractable difficulties not least the problem of the anomalous position of the Christian partner under Shari’a law.

It was Malam Fate in 1911 who first alerted the Mission to the legal problems confronting new converts. Sulemanu, a slave who had redeemed himself, formerly belonging to Fate’s father, died leaving an estate valued at 171,000 cowries. Death duties amounted to 16,000, a daughter received 77,500, his two wives 9,698 each and the balance should have gone to the eldest son of the slave’s deceased master, Malam Fate himself. However in Shari’a law Malam Fate as a Christian could not inherit. The *alkali* court ordered that the outstanding sum of 29,057 cowries should go to a younger and Muslim brother, Aliyu. Yet in 1909, Malam Fate and his Christian sisters had inherited goods from a Muslim relative without any difficulty; the *alkali* more at home in *fiqh*, the practice of judicial judgement, simply told them to settle it out of his court.

Miller was suspicious that behind the Sulemanu case laid an instruction from the Emir to take a hard line, and he appealed to the Resident. Grier ruled that Fate was to be given his rightful inheritance. But Fate, highly sensitive to the direction of the political wind, wishing to avoid conflict with the Emir, so declined.<sup>32</sup>

Miller’s worst suspicions about discrimination were confirmed in a case involving a Gimi Christian boy, Audu, whose brothers and father, Malam Musa, converted from the *Bani Isra’ila* sect to Islam. An

inheritance of seventy shillings was divided up amongst the brothers whilst Audu was excluded. Palmer's forensic judgement on the case is worth reading. "The right of a man to a share of a father's estate is conferred by Mohammedan law and not by English law, under which Dr. Miller must be very well aware, a father can entirely exclude any or all of his sons. If one of them chooses to cut himself adrift from the Moslem community it seems to me perfectly clear that he thereupon forfeits such rights as are conferred only by membership of that Community."<sup>33</sup>

In 1914, Miller had a case of a young woman, Rekiyya who was denied the custody of her un-weaned child because of her connection with the Mission. The magistrate ruled against her as the Christian mother. But in other cases, the British legal system in due course and on appeal found in favour of the Mission. Yet, as in divorce cases it was unlikely that Christians would have the resources, or capacity, to force every case up the colonial juridical hierarchy. Lagos was a long way away. Effective jurisdiction remained in the hands of the local *alkali*.

Such cases heralded future problems for Zaria Christians. For Muslims, mixed marriage was blameworthy but not unlawful. The Maliki school of Islamic law practised in Nigeria did not make equitable provision for the partners in marriage to *kitabiyah*, people of the Book. This hardly encouraged Muslim-Christian marriages even given the shortage of Christian women in the North. In 90% of mixed marriages it was the male spouse who was Christian, and inheritance passed through the male line. Such unions had the character of illegal contracts for the local *alkali*. So Christian husbands had difficulty guaranteeing their inheritance owing to the religious affiliation of their children. If a

marriage proved unsatisfactory and divorce ensued, the divorcing Christian spouse would have problems, as was customary, getting the nuptial gifts returned. In addition the Mission refused to consider any possibility of a church wedding for a mixed marriage. And it was only in the 1930s, in the progressive Katsina emirate, that an unusually progressive *alkali* consented to solemnise a mixed marriage.<sup>34</sup>

There was another Zaria test case in 1915 on the death of one of the town's early converts, Malam Bature. His Muslim wife who looked after the children brought them up as Muslims, except for one whom she immediately married off at a very early age. Observing that the Zaria Christian community were powerless to intervene in such a situation, another convert, Malam Hassan, on his deathbed, bequeathed his children into the custody of the Zaria Mission with the Church community and missionaries their guardians. His Muslim wife applied for a writ against the illegal detention of her children and it was upheld by the Lieutenant-Governor of the Northern Provinces. "To take a child away from his own race and people", wrote Palmer, "and hand him over to a corporation is practically treating him as a 'chattel'. It removes him from all ordinary influences and amenities of 'Native Life', and must inevitably denationalise him".<sup>35</sup> The latter part of his opinion might be considered spurious as the children were being looked after in the indigenous Zaria Christian community.

The Lieutenant-Governor's ruling was contested and went up to Lugard. The Governor-General balked at the prospect of adjudicating and handed it over to the Supreme Court. Here the ruling went in favour of the Christian community. It was treated as a triumph for the Mission. There is little direct proof but some of the later tension between

Mission and Emir, and between Lagos and Kaduna between 1918 and 1920 arose from this case.<sup>36</sup> The question of whose law applied was, of course, a question of who actually ruled the emirates. Law was the touchstone of the distribution of power in society. The alliance Miller-Lagos against Emir-Northern Administration had been foreshadowed by the temporary alliances that resulted in the conflicts about Emir Aliyu's deposition.

Palmer might phrase his judgements in polished legal terms, posing as a model of objectivity, but his political goals, sustaining the indigenous ruling class against challenges to their authority from Christians, were all too evident. "The status of a Christian", declared Miller, "both socially and economically and religiously should be precisely the same as a moslem. This is claiming the least possible from a Christian government".<sup>37</sup> But secularism was growing and the imperial government was not manifestly Christian, while the local government was manifestly Muslim and had to be taken into account if Indirect Rule was to work. So Miller was claiming a great deal.

For the new Christians in Northern Nigeria marriage and inheritance remained an area where their marginality left them most vulnerable to the authority of Residents and Emirs. Unless they completely withdrew from the rest of society, they were condemned to a legal system in which their rights were honoured mainly as a reluctant concession to pressure from the missionaries.<sup>38</sup> Hausa Christians' communal solidarity and dependence on Miller owed much to their ability to exert such pressure.

At this time, Walter Miller was described by Steven Ibrahim Audu, on the model of a Fulani prince, as "tall and handsome". Praises were

sung to him in the school: “Great man you are above being brought low even were my father a king. Honey is sweet but can sting”.<sup>39</sup> New missionaries spoke of “the extraordinary love” shown towards Miller. He had become a local patriarch and the boys felt for him that mixture of traditional respect, fear and affection naturally given to a powerful patron and guardian.

The power of Miller’s patronage was most manifest after Emir Aliyu’s deposition. With Malam Yero and *Turaki* Yusufu appointed to the new Emir’s Council, attractive jobs opened up for Miller’s best boys. Musa Aitken got a job as tax collector for *sabon gari*. Istafanus Bala was made the cotton buyer for the Native Administration, while Steven Ibrahim Audu became the Public Works department storekeeper. Two more alumni went from school into the magistrate’s office. Others remained more closely within the Mission orbit: David Yeronson found employment in a new Kano bookshop run by the CMS, and Mu’azu Audu began his training as a dispenser with the Mission. Several began careers in education, most notably Edward Usman Audu, Nuhu Bayero and Yahaya Inusa.

Members of the Zaria Church Committee continued to be largely mission ‘dependents’; in 1924 John Tafida was churchwarden and Yahaya Inusa treasurer. Though P.O. Ischiaku’s father was self-employed as a cloth trader.<sup>40</sup> The Committee broadly reflected Miller’s priorities in its deliberations. Already the career patterns of future generations of Northern Christians were being laid down: medicine and pharmacy, public administration and teaching.

The appointment of Ibrahim as Emir after Dallatu’s untimely death did nothing initially to diminish Miller’s authority in the city. On his day of

accession, instead of riding in state, the new Emir walked on foot to *Durumin Maigarke* with only a handful of servants. “He kissed my hand and thanked me in his father’s and in his own name”, wrote Miller.<sup>41</sup> It was no secret that Ibrahim had been Miller’s candidate since Aliyu’s deposition. “Dr. Miller”, wrote Palmer with annoyance, “is regarded by the local population as a person of great importance in the town whose every wish is acceded to, so much so that the question is frequently asked ‘Who is the sariki (chief) in this Town?’”<sup>42</sup> Significantly, the *Sarkin Musulmi* in Sokoto had not been consulted on this appointment while Miller claimed that he, himself, had.<sup>43</sup>

The consolidation of an incoming Emir’s power involved eliminating the clients of former Emirs from positions of influence in government and appointing and promoting his own kinsmen and followers. So, in the first years of Ibrahim’s reign the Mission had the benefit not only of a supportive Emir of its choice but also, indirectly, a friendly *Waziri*. This was Yusufu, described enthusiastically by Henry Miller as “the best man in the whole country” and given by others the dubious title of *Dan Likita*, the Doctor’s son.<sup>44</sup> He was consistently favourable to the Mission’s interests. He also combined this with accolades from the British administration as an example of wisdom and statesmanship whose advice the Emir should heed.

The new regime had clearly learnt lessons from Aliyu’s mistakes, excesses and crimes, and cultivated both Mission and Administration support. *Waziri* Yusufu seems to have been instrumental in getting rid of the old *Dan Galadima*, Maiturare, suspected of collusion with a notorious Mahdist malam. He was replaced by Ibrahim’s brother, Hayatu.<sup>45</sup> Nothing damned a man in the administration’s eyes more



than suspicion of Mahdist sympathies. No rumour was likely to be given more credence by the Lieutenant- Governor who was in touch with British intelligence in the Sudan, and was building up hair-raising dossiers on unsuspecting, and probably quite innocuous malams. Miller's Muslim clients now included high officials in the emirate. Suspicion lingered that the *Dan Galadima's* downfall had been engineered from *Durumin Maigarke*.<sup>46</sup>

St. Bartholomew's had blossomed into a small Public School, praised by the Phelps Stokes Commission on African Education, respected by the British director of Education for the North. Miller's Christian converts were moving out into important jobs. His role in town life was unprecedented in the history of Northern Nigeria. Yet Miller's pre-eminence rested on quick-sands, contingent political circumstances and policy differences within the imperial administration, and a relatively free hand given him by the CMS. These circumstances were to change in the course of five years at the end of the 1920s, and remove Miller from Zaria. A consolidation of imperial rule accompanied new missionaries arriving to serve with the Zaria Christian community.

### Footnotes

1. Minutes in Clifford to Milner 21 October 1920, C.O. 583/92
2. Henry Miller Annual Letter 17 November 1924, CMS Archives London

3. Sketch of W.R. Miller's Journey in the Hausa States 15 January – 28 February 1915, G3/A2/0
4. Burdon to Girouard 18 October 1907; Festing to Girourard, undated, c. October 1917, encl. in Girourard to Secretary of State for the Colonies 31 October 1907, C.O. 446/65
5. Burdon to Girourard 18 October 1907; G.S. Browne to Goldsmith 27 August 1917, encl. in Lugard to Secretary of State for the Colonies 25 September 1918, C.O. 583/67
6. Henry Miller Annual Letter 28 October 1925
7. Report on Zaria Mission for year ending December 1914, G3/A2/0; Melville-Jones to Manley 14 October 1913, CMS (Y), 1/2/1, Ibadan Archives
8. Henry Miller Annual Letter 17 November 1924
9. Malam Steven Ibrahim Audu's account
10. Yeronson is an anglicisation of Dan Yero. Name change was a revealing indicator of attitudes to Englishness and Mission culture. David Yeronson later left Mission employment to work for the United Africa Company
11. Malam Mu'azu Audu and Malam Edward Usman Audu. The latter became one of the first Nigerian Northern Education officers. The former trained as a pharmacist.
12. Malam Paul Anfani, *Sarkin Wusasa* was initially, in 1927, a clerk in the Zaria Native Administration but went on to work for the B.C.C.A in Kano

13. Malam John Tafida Omaru first became a teacher at St. Bartholomew's then worked as a translator in the Literature Bureau which expanded to become the Gaskiya Corporation during the Second World War. From 1946-1948 he was at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, working with Dr. Bargery. After another brief spell with the Gaskiya Corporation he went on a Local Government course in England and was given the position of *Dan Galadima* on his return in 1955. He was made District Head of Zangwan Katab in 1957, a southern Zaria district with many Christian missions. Political changes in the early 1960s obliged him to retire from this post in 1962. In October 1962 he went to Moscow where he taught Hausa and worked as a broadcaster on the Hausa service of Moscow Radio until 1965 when he returned to Jos to work on a revision of the Hausa Bible, Miller's translation. After the death of the Sardauna of Sokoto, he returned to Zaria where he took up employment again with the Gaskiya corporation. He has also written a novel. He married the sister of Paul Anfani in 1927.

14. Malam P.O. Ischiaku

15. Rev. Max Warren interviewed in East Dean, August 1975

16. Mallam P.O. Ischiaku

17. Dr. R.A.B. Dikko later became Principal Medical Officer for endemic diseases in the Nigeria Ministry of Health then, under General Yakubu Gowon, a Federal Commissioner in the 1960s. He was a founder member of the N.P.C.; Musa Benson, who also went to Selly Oak Collage in Birmingham, married in England.

18. Interview with Mrs. Salma Audu, Wusasa, April 1975; interview with Abu Tabitsha, Tudun Wada, Zaria April 1975; interview with Hawau Thompson, Wusasa, May 1975. The latter had been captured at ten years old and requested to go to Zaria school from a Freed Slaves' Home. She married a local blacksmith, John Jack Thompson (named after Rev. W.A. Thompson for whom he had worked as a steward). Her husband was the son of the *Sarkin Makera* who had been instructed to keep an eye on the missionaries in 1900. On the marriage register his father's occupation is given as 'King', a not very helpful translation of *Sarkin*.

19. Interview with Mrs. Janet Tafida, Wusasa, April 1975; Miss N.H. Bryant's Annual letter for 1923

20. Mrs. Salma Audu

21. Mrs. Janet Tafida

22. Interview with Mrs. Julie Miller and Malam Musa Aitken, Wusasa and Zaria old city April 1975

23. Interview with Ruth Gambo, Wusasa, May 1975

24. Henry Miller Annual Letter 28 October 1925

25. Miller to Melville-Jones 18 October 1914; Miller to Mackay, undated c. October 1914; Miller to Mackay 4 October 1914, CMS 1/5/7, Ibadan Archives; Miller to Manley 21 July 1921, G3/A2/0

26. W.A. Thompson to Manley 2 January 1919, G3/A2/0

27. Henry Miller Annual Letter 17 November 1924. In later life Henry Miller showed a high degree of support for these views.

28. A.C.G Hastings to S.N.P. 16 August 1920; S.N.P. to Zaria Resident 11 September 1920; Minute by Acting Lieutenant-Governor 4 February 1921, 1023, ZARPROF

29. Kassawanu was the only member of the Church Committee I was able to find information about. She was also in charge of teaching the younger girls in the school. Interview with Miss Burness, Wusasa, February 1976

30. Miss Margaret Miller became Principal of a secondary school and Commissioner for Education in the 1960s, see Crampton *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 115

31. Leith-Ross Papers MSS. Afr. s. 1520, Rhodes House

32. SNP 6/4, No. 4999, 58/1917, Kaduna Archives

33. See 4/3, C.7, No. 190, C.4001, ZARPROF

34. Station Magistrate Zaria to Resident Zaria 20 December 1933, 736.984, ZARPROF

35. Minute by H.R. Palmer 1 August 1918, SNP 6/4, No. 499, 58/ 1917

36. Lugard to Secretary of State for the Colonies 25 September 1918, C.O. 583/67

37. Miller 'Memorandum to the British administration in Nigeria 18 April 1917, SNP 6/4, No. 499, 58/1917

38. Until the 1940s, the practice seems to have been for disinherited Christians to receive a kind of ex-gratia compensation from the Emir, see 4/3, C.7, No. 190, C.4001, ZARPROF. As in marriage cases, even

when recourse to English law might have seemed more promising, Hausa Christians lacked any encouraging precedent to call upon it to their advantage. "It would be quite incorrect to say that all the persons who embrace the Christian faith, or who are married in accordance with its tenets have in other respects attained that stage of culture and development as to make it reasonable to suppose that their whole lives should be regulated in accordance with English laws and standards". *Smith & Smith v John Balfour Smith, Nigeria Law Reports* Vol. 5,102. Summing up by Mr. Justice Van der Meulen. This ruling determined that Hausa Christians would be usually stuck with 'Native Law and Customs' which in the Northern Nigerian emirates meant in practice Shari'a Law.

39. Mallam Steven Ibrahim Audu

40. Malam P.O. Ischiaku; Laing to Urling-Smith 2 February 1928, 'CMS Christian Settlement at Gimi' File, ZARPROF

41. Miller *Reflections of a Pioneer*, 155

42. Palmer to Graeme Thompson 8 September 1926, SNP 16/3, C.0053

43. Miller *Reflections of a Pioneer*, 155; Smith *Government in Zazzau*, 225

44. Henry Miller Annual Letter 17 November 1924

45. Gowers to Clifford 19 March 1924, MSS. Afr. s. 1149; H.R. Palmer 'History of Islamic Political Propaganda in Nigeria' MSS. Brit. Emp. 276, Rhodes House

46. Police intelligence reports contained in Palmer to Graeme Thompson 8 September 1926

## Chapter Seven

“The opportunity to rule, to control and even dominate men and boys in Africa – a power which I could not have had in England – has not infrequently married my work and unconsciously become a very part of myself”

Walter Miller 1950



*CMS Girls School*



“The biggest thing man ever set hand to, in design and in a certain grandiosity”, Kipling euphorically called it.<sup>1</sup> He was referring to the 1924 Wembley Colonial Exhibition reflecting contemporary optimism toward Empire. That a renewed taste for Empire should be abroad so soon after the trauma of world war, worker unrest and an epochal revolution in Russia spoke more of an escapist nationalist pride than any rational economic vision. The working class had risen where it was smallest and least lettered, and had been aided by a peasantry of feudal backwardness. The implications for those ruling the Colonies were apparent even had Lenin not spelt them out.

In hindsight an intransigent maintenance of the status quo by default had no future; the feudal romanticism which had crept into colonialism in the nineteenth century had to go. A new African class had to be created and assume their place in history, a task in which the missions could lend a hand. But not quite yet. Those who drew these conclusions believed there was plenty of time, and efficient means of repression was available as a back-stop in the interim. And within the administration of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria even such progressives with slow evolutionary schemes were far from vocal about the need for change.

While the great pavilions were being erected in the countryside at Wembley, in Cambridge a group of young men were beginning to discuss new plans for evangelizing Hausaland. In 1923, Max Warren, Jesus College via Malborough, was made secretary to a group that modestly called itself ‘the Crusaders of Nigeria’. The Crusaders were a little understaffed: three undergraduates, two medical students and a businessman.<sup>2</sup> They were to be the new elite troops for an assault on

Northern Nigeria in which it was hoped a suffragen bishop, Alfred Smith, would set up the headquarters of a diocese of Northern Nigeria.<sup>3</sup>

There was a touch of *déjà vu* about the Cambridge expedition. Here were more fresh-faced, earnest young men ready to go forth and give their lives for the salvation of Africa. Here were the same Cambridge staircases where echoes of passionate prayer mingled with the clink of wine bottles and the smell of singed crumpets. And here were England's best – or what was left of them after the War – showing that God was not dead after all, that Service, Valour and Team Spirit were still alive and well. But here also was the same disgruntled working class now finding more interest in tales from Petrograd than from Bethlehem. As the first Zaria Christians visiting England with Miller received holy communion from the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury, England was brewing up for its first General Strike. Before leaving Britain, Guy Bullen, who reached Zaria at the end of 1926, “played his part, putting up some old friends who had come to London to assist the authorities”.<sup>4</sup> Max Warren had also played his part, though he regretted it later.<sup>5</sup>

The presence of political consciousness was far from homogenous in Christian circles. The 1924 Birmingham Conference on Politics, Economics and Citizenship found prominent members of the Church of England confronting British society not with denunciations of sin and accusations of laxity but within a perspective of shared social concerns and problem-solving. The international 1926 Le Zoute Missionary Conference, which Max Warren and Lugard attended, accepted the need to build on, rather than destroy, African cultures. Education had to be “adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions

of various peoples'. Though Lugard spoke of 'the child-races' with the racism that was integral to imperialism, there was vindication of the approach taken by the administration of Northern Nigeria.<sup>6</sup> A closing of ranks was taking place, a drawing together of government and Christian 'activists' in the context of the new Mandate responsibilities given Britain by the League of Nations.

The mission societies were now loosely gathered together in the International Missionary Council led by J.H. Oldham. He deployed considerable diplomatic skills and was more adept at handling the Colonial Office than the former general-secretaries of the CMS who needed to satisfy its different factions. The Cambridge Crusaders were influenced by these developments. They were not the do-or-die pioneers of the nineteenth century; they were less combative, expected no great moral qualities in Colonial officers in whose world they counted as novices. "Our Christian attack as it were", wrote Bullen, "would change from a frontal to a flanking move".<sup>7</sup> There was to be no charge of a Christian Light Brigade.

When home on sick leave in 1925, Walter Miller met the Crusaders and they planned together for a hospital and leper settlement in Zaria.<sup>8</sup> The group's vision was of intense evangelization of a single district by a small dedicated group of men with shared goals and ideas. Miller was not a natural to fit for this team effort even if, in middle-age, he showed signs of mellowing.<sup>9</sup> Warren and Bullen who went to Zaria city became big figures in the Anglican world; neither was temperamentally inclined to play second fiddle to a prima donna pioneer.

Conditions did seem particularly good for a renewed evangelical effort in the early years of Emir Ibrahim's reign. Bishop Smith moved up from

Ilorin to Zaria and the number of female missionaries was increased by two, one in charge of the dispensary, the other managing the hostel. Ibrahim was a model of tolerance. “Go and come back in peace”, were his words as Henry Miller set out on itineration, once out-of-bounds.<sup>10</sup>

The Emir’s tolerance, more calculated than the missionaries cared to admit, was soon abused. Before long Walter Miller was asking headmen to *summon* villagers to his Gospel sessions, and denying that the disturbances that broke out had anything to do with the way he was preaching against Islam.<sup>11</sup> Ethel Miller, whose heroes were Joseph of Austria and Catherine the Great of Russia, cared not a whit for what she saw as the weak-kneed Residents. She distributed an offensive tract ‘The Truth about Muhammad’ to all and sundry. Miss Miller’s ‘Truth’, long denied the Moslems of Kano before her arrival, included the worst calumnies against the Prophet imaginable.<sup>12</sup> Fortunately many put this stance down to her being mad, though the Colonial Office concluded she was wicked. It was some measure of the power relationships at the time that she survived.

Ethel Miller had put space between herself and her brother by moving North to make her home in Kano city. The source of such spectacularly inflammatory tracts was the CMS bookshop in Kano where a missionary, Mr. Cotton, received irate complaints from the Resident. The poor man managed to get one convert and a duodenal ulcer.<sup>13</sup> But it cannot be said the missionaries lacked initiative. British royalty parading around the Empire were fair game. “The Prince of Wales is a small man in stature, with a brave heart, interesting looks and politeful (sic) gestures”, Henry Miller told an audience in London. “During the visit Hausa Christians took the opportunity of preaching to the many

tribes who had gathered there".<sup>14</sup> The Lieutenant-Governor concluded that given an inch the missionaries would take a royal mile.<sup>15</sup>

Luckily for the CMS there were a number of checks on the wrath of the Colonial Office and Northern Administration. As long as Clifford continued as Governor-General his disapproval of the '*nolle me tangere*' attitude - Clifford's own phrase - of the Residents towards emirate authorities offered Miller some leeway. Clifford had to contend with a Legislative Council in Lagos which had strong views on African educational questions. He could not simply ban mission activity as his better judgement might have suggested.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, back in London, ex-Colonial Office dissidents and mavericks were able to keep the Colonial Office on the back-foot about Indirect Rule. Lord Raglan, a former colonial officer from southern Sudan, was good for a few sharp questions in the Lords.<sup>17</sup> Articles by disaffected former Residents publicly called in question policies hallowed by several years of Palmer's administration. The Phelps-Stokes Commission on Education in Africa reported unfavourably on the restrictions placed on mission education in the North.<sup>18</sup>

The departure in 1925 of the cultivated, experienced and Catholic, Sir Hugh Clifford, to Ceylon did nothing to lessen the tension between Lagos and Kaduna. It brought in Sir Graeme Thomson as Governor-General, a man in poor health with little experience of colonial service who was no match for the Northern Secretariat.<sup>19</sup> On returning from furlough that year Miller immediately noticed the change in attitude of the British administration towards the missions.<sup>20</sup> The Lieutenant-Governor was now looking for the chance to instigate a complete ban on all mission expansion. This put the relationship between

government and mission clearly out of tune with the new spirit of co-operation that J.H. Oldham, secretary of the International Missionary Council, was struggling to create back in London.

A visit to Kaduna in 1926 of the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, William Ormsby-Gore, came at a bad time for the missions, and gave the Lieutenant-Governor the opportunity he had been seeking. Ormsby-Gore had been an intelligence officer with the Arab Bureau working in Egypt during the war. He was briefed on Miller's misdeeds and the Missions' threat to peace and order in the emirates. As something of a visual aid he met with Bishop Alfred Smith who, on cue, complained bitterly about the anti-mission policy in the North.<sup>21</sup> The bishop, a former clerk from Hastings, blurted out Anglican plans for a new diocese for Northern Nigeria mistakenly believing Ormsby-Gore was an ally. He was mistaken. Colonial Office options proposed at the time ran from suggestions that Ethel Miller should be deported to cautionary reminders that Dr. Miller "brought bogus charges against the Emir".<sup>22</sup> "One of the troubles", Ormsby-Gore noted after the meeting, "is that the Anglican Bishop of Northern Nigeria – there didn't ought to be such a person! – is a narrow anti-Mahammadan fanatic also".<sup>23</sup> He concluded "the Millers had put back the clock of any missionary advance in Northern Nigeria many years".<sup>24</sup>

The only ingredient missing from Palmer's plan of action was 'spontaneous' complaints from the Emirs which could be forwarded to London. In the past these could be elicited by the simple procedure of the Resident asking the Emir how he felt about this and that missionary demarche. Always alert to a beneficial cue, an answer from the Emir was invariably forthcoming and, if, as was usual, negative, sent on to

the Colonial Office. This time Dr. Miller had saved the Resident the trouble by asking for another compound for his dispensary in Zaria. The new influx of missionaries was creating a new range of missionary activities centred on *Durumin Maigarke* which was now becoming increasingly cramped. Ethel Miller's poisonous pamphlet had genuinely distressed the Emir. Palmer called a meeting of the Northern Residents with the mission problem on the agenda.<sup>25</sup>

By the middle of 1926, Emir Ibrahim in Zaria had successfully negotiated the first two years of his reign. Old retainers of the former Emir had been removed and new clients moved in. His position was stronger. Though he may have had a sneaking respect, even affection, for Miller, this did not preclude an attack on his mission activity. The same applied to the friendly *Waziri*, Yusufu. The *Waziri* needed, at least, to counter his nickname 'Dan Likita', the Doctor's son' if he were to reap his due rewards as a Defender of the Faith amongst the *sarakuna*, malams and Liman in the town.

Miller stubbornly refused to recognize that respectful and friendly relationships with emirate officials did not equate with lack of commitment to Islam and approval of the mission's preaching on their part. There was a possible explanation for this superficial civility. As the Zaria Resident intimated, Miller owed his honeymoon with the new Emir to "the reputation which it is alleged he gained in the Aliu case". Palmer corroborated this and claimed that Miller intimidated the Emir and Council and that no-one doubted it was the political clout he had demonstrated that produced the respect.<sup>26</sup> Emir Ibrahim's own, well-chosen, pragmatic reflections on how the veteran missionary was seen

by the people of Zaria after twenty-five years in the emirate provide a less manipulative picture.

“In reply to your enquiry as to whether the Emir is agreeable to the residence of missionaries in outstations, amongst pagans, and in Zaria Town I have to inform you that the case of Dr. Miller does not trouble us since he has been a long time here – since in fact the time of Kwasau and of our parents. Kwasau himself even gave him Hayatu and Turaki as an escort to Kano (the contemporary *Waziri* and *Dan Galadima*) and Dr. Miller on his return from there used to lodge in the city in *Sarikin Makera's* compound. He even went to live at Girku, where his companion died. Subsequently Aliyu gave him a site in *Durmin Maigarki* where he built a house. We are accustomed to him and know his ways. As to his religion he makes no converts – despite all his pains and efforts - other than a few individuals with ambitious tendencies who subsequently revert to Islam on being disappointed in their expectations. We are therefore quite agreeable to Dr. Miller's residence amongst us, since he is not a disturbing influence: but the idea of another European, whom we do not know coming and saying he intends to reside amongst us fills us with apprehension for the future of our children and grandchildren lest they become converted to the faith of these missionaries should the latter settle in numbers in the Town. It is only Dr. Miller whom we know and to whom we are accustomed since the days of our parents, and to whom we ourselves are known.”<sup>27</sup>

The ‘another European’ in question was Bishop Alfred Smith. He was now living opposite Miller's compound in a ‘little mud-palace’. Palmer had duly warned the Governor-General that if the bishop persisted in his plans to make Zaria the headquarters of a diocese, there would be



trouble.<sup>28</sup> Smith was invited to Kaduna in December 1926 and left in no doubt that a “Bishopric at the Emir’s back door” was unacceptable. It was explained that the Mission had the character of a personal concession to Dr. Miller. The push on the North was now meeting an equal and opposite reaction.

Indirect Rule badly needed a consistent strategy towards Missions. Alongside the CMS had appeared the Sudan Interior and Sudan United Missions, the United Missionary Society, the Dutch Reformed Church, the African Mission of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Church of the Brethren, and the Christian Missions in Many Lands Society. All save the last two met on a regular basis and divided up their spheres of influence. Then there were the Roman Catholics. Reports of a sighting of priests in distant parts were causing some disquiet to the Protestant Council of Missions.<sup>29</sup>

Alerted by the Resident that the British administration was trying to sweep back the missionary tide, the Emir of Zaria began to harden his position on the missionaries. A ban on all itineration was issued. Missionary reports home no longer spoke glowingly of his and the *Waziri’s* support. Miller’s response was predictable. He blamed the Resident and he wasn’t wrong. When it became impossible to ignore the Emir’s new stance, he fell back on his perennial distinction between the approval of the *talakawa* and the hatred of the *sarakuna*, as if the peasantry were perfectly content with blasphemies against the Prophet. As the dry season began, Miller set about defiantly building a new church outside the compound.<sup>30</sup>

The erection of a church in a public place in the old city had a symbolic charge for everyone which dispensaries, hostels and bookshops did not.

On the surface it was a perfectly normal development. The Mission had outgrown the old church and it had been sold by the Church Committee to the CMS to use as a classroom.<sup>31</sup> Nobody doubted that the Zaria Christians were asserting themselves in an unprecedented manner. The Emir seems to have waited for the public reaction. The walls were several feet high when he finally protested and asked that a new wall should be built around the building “for according to Mohammadan Law, a place for the practice of a foreign religion may not be built where the Mohammadan religion prevails except under compulsion”.<sup>32</sup> This was a contested legal provision (though still, of course, operative today in Saudi Arabia) but was taken at face value.

The Emir was vulnerable to accusations of being soft on the Christians and could not ignore such an obvious provocation as a new church. Miller sulked. The Emir would have to pay for any exterior wall, work would cease, and the church would be left unroofed and the rains would destroy the rest.<sup>33</sup>

Unlike previous disputes, banning the Zaria new church had the makings of a full-scale crisis because it now involved the indigenous Christian community. The Church Committee boldly - and cleverly - petitioned the Lieutenant- Governor, the arch opponent of the missions. “In our own church there are two members who lately went to England and received the Holy Communion in Westminster Abbey where the kings of England are crowned: the very kings who have given this freedom to all peoples and religions everywhere – people whom God had given them to rule over in righteousness and Truth. When they came out the great priest of all places where England rules, the Archbishop of Canterbury received them gladly showing no difference

in his treatment of them. But, behold, in our own land where we have been born, and where England rules, there is no freedom to worship God and to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all Hausa country – this very Gospel which has exalted the people of Europe and all other great lands”.<sup>34</sup>

This might appear a skillful piece of astute name-dropping and a smart appeal to odious comparisons. To the Emir it was a calculated insult. His subjects were running to the British behind his back. Furthermore, he was being insulted by one of his own relatives, John Tafida, a man of noble birth eligible to become Emir, leading a group of articulate and savvy peasants. How disturbing this was is indicated by the Emir resurrecting the ghosts from the nineteenth century in his reply. “Our religion was not the same as theirs, even of old, still less now. For they are Ningawa, and even Tafida who has joined the CMS was quite small when he joined them, while the others are immigrants, and not born in the Town”. In other words this was a petition from aliens who never had been part of, or had become separated from, the Muslim community and so could be discounted. “Where a citizen wishes to build a Mosque on the ground round his house, he need not ask permission for there is no religious difference”, the Emir’s added. “The case of a Christian church is not the same.”<sup>35</sup>

When the Lieutenant-Governor, Palmer, arrived in Zaria in 1927, the Emir let it be known through the *Waziri* that he had held back from complaining because his predecessor had been deposed at Miller’s instigation.<sup>36</sup> Miller was sure it was the Resident who had prompted this line of attack. At lunch at the Residency, Miller tactlessly informed the Lieutenant-Governor that the Emir had been ‘put up to it’. Back in

London, Ormsby-Gore found 'the suggestion that Mahammedan Emirs only did and said what the British officials wanted them to do and say on matters like this was gross libel and misunderstanding of the facts". There was little doubt who he was talking about.<sup>37</sup>

During the course of a discussion about the Mission, the Lieutenant-Governor received the surprising offer of £5,000 from the Emir. It was to pay for a new Mission in *sabon gari* with the offer conditional on the Mission in the old city being closed.<sup>38</sup> A day later a letter from the Emir arrived at *Durumin Maigarke* confirming the offer and trying to make it more palatable. "There is nothing personal in the proposal", Emir Ibrahim wrote quite sincerely, adding disingenuously, "we wish to avoid in future religious contacts with you and your converts".<sup>39</sup> Bishop Smith during his fateful meeting with the Lieutenant-Governor was informed of the offer.

The Emir's offer was a substantial carrot but the big stick was not long in coming. Had there been any doubt in the CMS' mind that Sir Graeme Thompson in Lagos might pay the piper, so avoiding Kaduna and the Colonial Office calling the tune, it evaporated with Bishop Smith's indiscretions. Newsworthy parts of his meeting with Palmer were leaked to *The Nigerian Daily Times*<sup>40</sup>. The leaks were designed to indicate that Palmer had admitted that the Northern Administration was 'pro-moslem'.

There were two propositions that the British administration in Nigeria did not wish to reach the House of Commons: one was intimations that the Emirs were mere puppets and Indirect Rule a fraud, the other was that the local Administration was espousing pro-Muslim sentiments at a time when the Ottoman Caliphate breathed its last. 'Indirect Rule' was

a convenient way to justify many imperial works and pomps which, if described in more detail, would not be well received in Parliament. Bishops Smith and Melville-Jones were summoned to see the Governor-General. The conversation was long, tortuous and, at times, apparently verging on the ridiculous as the clerics failed to grasp the arcane subtleties of Indirect Rule. Bishop Smith recanted in a later edition of the newspaper and explained that his strictures were only directed at *Islamic* government.<sup>41</sup>

The carrot of a new Mission was temptingly dangled throughout 1927 but neither of the two bishops were in favour of withdrawing from Zaria city. The final decision rested with Salisbury Square, with its committees, and the considered opinion of the General-Secretary of the CMS. The key to a decision, though, lay with J.H. Oldham. He pushed Hooper, the CMS General-Secretary, to consider more strategic and diplomatic approaches to the problem of future expansion and to move towards a less combative stance towards Islam. Sir Graham Thomson, held up as an ally by Oldham, added his own gentle pressure to the CMS General-Secretary in a meeting at Lugard's town house in Eaton Square.<sup>42</sup> But the Home Committee remained opposed to anything smacking of retreat. Efforts had to be made to win them round. By the end of 1927, the Christian community was showing no signs of leaving Zaria city.

Dr. Miller was now 55. He had begun to spend more time on his books and translation work. The Emir had been right; there had been very few converts in the 1920s. Perhaps surprised, certainly disappointed that the apples had not tumbled from the tree he had so vigorously shaken, Miller was losing some of his youthful zeal.<sup>43</sup> Predictably he had

quarreled with Bishop Smith over methods of evangelization. The Home Committee asked for the bishop's recall to the South again.

Much of Miller's year had been spent in England for treatment of his myocarditis. In his absence the young Guy Bullen began to consolidate his position as a future leader of the Mission. Bullen was a 32-year old ex-army officer, "a very lovable person" according to Miller who did not always love his enemies dearly, "but could not be content with anything less than leadership".<sup>44</sup> After Miller returned to Zaria, bringing Max Warren with him, he confronted a new world of relative government-mission harmony. "It was always a little amazing to see Guy Bullen in the Club or the WAFF Mess fraternizing with the various colonials to be found there", Bullen's biographer wrote.<sup>45</sup> The ranks were closing leaving Miller increasingly isolated and worn out.

There was now more of a communal life at the Mission. The missionaries used to dress for the evening meal. They sat down together at *Durumin Maigarke*, passionate differences subdued by self-discipline and charity, in both of which they showed proficiency. Bullen and Warren tried to convince Miller that the only way forward was to leave town.<sup>46</sup> He saw them as the proverbial young men in grey suits come to force him to retire.

The Christian community, who had suffered the tragedy of the Gimi settlement, remained strongly opposed to moving out of town. The Israelite Christians had already cleared the bush once and watched their families die one by one, so were adamant that they wanted none of it; the townspeople had no desire to leave an environment they were accustomed to simply because the Emir felt strong enough to chase them out. Soon the community was split: the intrepid Miller with

his coterie and the majority of the community, the Crusaders looking to the future with their followers and house-servants.

By March 1928 the two Crusaders had convinced Miller that he was standing in the way of the Missions in Northern Nigeria. He was certainly squandering the renewed goodwill on the government side. Sir Graeme Thomson was trying to create a new relationship between Mission and Administration. He had sent round a circular on friendly contacts and spent time with the new 'Varsity men' persuading them of the benefits accruing from new possibilities of cooperation. The administration was offering substantial concessions if the blot on the Islamic map of Northern Nigeria, Miller's Zaria Mission, disappeared. From Colonial Office to Resident, the Millers, brother and sister, spelt conflict. Strachey didn't mince words and described Ethel Miller as "this female fanatic whom I met with her equally objectionable brother in 1914".<sup>47</sup>

Miller finally convinced himself that a Mission outside the town would not mean he was leaving Zaria and gave way. For a stubborn, passionate man, it was, in Christian terms, a remarkable act of self-denial, self-effacement and abnegation. In secular terms it was a defeat that was to shape the future of Christianity in Northern Nigeria.

In an informal surrender in Government House, Kaduna, on 30 March 1928, Miller consented to move out of town and build a new Mission in *sabon gari*. A gentleman's agreement stipulated that the CMS would be granted further new sites; a policy of greater tolerance towards the Northern Christians would gradually be put in place. Any Zaria Christians who stayed in town would have their rights fully safeguarded by the Residency. Miller would be allowed to come and go freely.

Three months later the Home Committee in Salisbury Square, hostile to the agreement, reluctantly gave their assent in principle and Miller sought a suitable site. He selected a large tract of land just outside the walls of the town, by the railway line to Kano and next to the Kaduna road. There were several farms on the site but no habitations. Government consent followed swiftly. The new site was to be a second Gimi with its own *Sarkin*, John Tafida, responsible to the Emir. But, unlike its predecessor it was to include Miller's school, St. Bartholomew's. The settlement was known as Wusasa.<sup>48</sup>

After almost a quarter century inside a Muslim city, Walter Miller and the Zaria Christians had been dislodged from the only Mission at the heart of an emirate. Pressure was put on all Christians to leave. All but a handful dejectedly decided they were obliged to move out. They were aliens. Indirect Rule had decreed that aliens should find no place in the Moslem towns of the North. There were to be no blemishes on the – imagined – smooth visage of Islam.

There was an almost audible sigh of relief from all the other participants in the long-running drama. A Zaria Resident whose brother was a missionary was moved to embrace Miller. Palmer became positively effusive and promised Miller that all the Administration's promises would be kept. The CMS in London punctured the bonhomie with demands for written assurances that full religious liberty would be accorded. Again Oldham stepped in to calm troubled waters; working with Sir Graeme Thomson he extracted an agreement that the British Administration was committed to educating Emirs in the principle of religious toleration.<sup>49</sup> This was as plausible as giving them compulsory



lessons on the history of the suffragette movement and the Representation of the People Act.

Some bickering was inevitable over the cash-value of the old mission compound in *Durumin Maigarke*. But, already a new tone was creeping into the minutes on 'Missionary Activities' at the Colonial Office. The Crusaders had prevailed. Henceforth the Colonial administration and Christian missions would work together in a way impossible in the days of Miller's relentless criticism and opposition to Indirect Rule.

A small exodus began in 1929 with Christian families moving out of Zaria and building starting in Wusasa. The new school was soon taking in non-Moslems who began trickling in from stations on the Plateau. Just as the mud walls of the new St. Bartholomew's were going up, an abiding memorial to Miller's perseverance, he himself left. Shaking the dust from his feet in July 1929, he took himself off to live for a while a mile outside Kano, the walled city where he had begun his work in Northern Nigeria. John Tafida followed to help him with translation work leaving the leadership of the Christian community to Steven Ibrahim Audu. Miller's Hausa Bible was finally published in 1932.<sup>50</sup>

But it was too late to start again for Miller. He retired in 1935 to begin a miserable marriage which ended in separation.<sup>51</sup> The rest of his days were spent in Nigeria where he died in 1952. The books which Miller produced in his retirement *Reflections of a Pioneer, Success in Nigeria? An Autobiography*, continued in print his lifelong struggle with Anglo-African government.<sup>52</sup> They were a critique, a little less strident in tone than in the past, with which many Nigerians could find considerable sympathy. "I believe, as thousands of my fellow Northerners do believe", wrote the radical politician Aminu Kano in a review of *Success*

*in Nigeria?* “that Dr. Miller’s book describes much of the real state of affairs in this oppressed land”.<sup>53</sup> “The movement of files through labyrinthine channels, the laborious nothings, the noisy unsystematic native court proceedings, the out of date men in stately splendour, the degrading state of the peasantry, the sleepy self-satisfied way of dealing with matters, the discouragement of cultural activities springing from the people, the aura of mystery around the residences and traditional palaces – these and other teams of bitter facts are sufficient enough to support the author’s investigations and findings...”<sup>54</sup>

Yet Miller’s seminal critique had been marred by the past intensity of his feelings towards the settled town Fulani as a ruling class, an intensity that lacked, though not entirely, the equivocal love-hate quality that enabled Emir Ibrahim to accept him. In correspondence with the British Administration it appeared as an unbalanced loathing. He could not escape his own religious culture any more than the Fulani officials he appeared to despise. His concern for the welfare of donkeys, which was important to him, set against the harsh world of Hausaland, was quixotic at the time but a century later more acceptable. His racial preconceptions shared with colonial officials, common currency of his age, were not. But it was the limitations that his personality imposed upon his relationships that in part vitiated a heroic Christian witness. In another time and setting Walter Miller might have been hailed as a champion of social justice, defender of the *talakawa* with those innocents who died in Zaria prison honoured as peasant martyrs. But in the bright sun of African nationalism, with the exception of an Aminu Kano, he and they stay hidden in the shadows of the colonial past.

It is not Miller's books which mark his importance as an historical figure, but the products of his school and the community that was built up around it. His struggle 1900-1929 had initially, numerically scant impact. But in terms of later influence on Zaria emirate, and Wusasa's disproportionate impact on the wider history of Nigeria, it should not be underestimated.

The move to Wusasa, which marked the beginning of Miller's exit from the stage, modified the character of his little Christian community and his ersatz English Public school. One British official wrote prophetically of the move out of Zaria City and its educational possibilities. "In particular this policy would afford an avenue of gradual approach to the thorny question of non-Moslem officials in the Native Administrations. At present that is the question that simply could not be raised, but a well-educated and growing native Christian Community under Christian headmen in the Emirate, would very soon make its weight felt, and gain for itself and its members a position which Government cannot now force on the Native Administrations in the case of individuals, and which the Native Administrations will certainly be very slow to concede if they perpetually feel themselves threatened at their own doorsteps and in their own Moslem capitals by an alien religion".<sup>55</sup> A most prophetic comment.

An important task that the colonial government allotted to the Missions after the First World War, the development of an educated African class to staff the lower rungs of civil administration, could only be achieved in the Northern emirates if the new Christians did not threaten Islamic government from inside the Muslim community. This was what made the formation provided by Wusasa of such importance.

In some ways, it was a tangible expression of the cooperation going on between Oldham and the Colonial Service at a higher level. In others, it created a class of Christians with whom the Northern Muslim elite in the 1960s would find it easier to relate.

The 'collective weight' of Wusasa proved far greater than might have been contemplated in 1929. Zaria had given birth to the only Christian community with a strong Hausa-Fulani presence. St. Bartholomew's had a head-start over other schools in the North and a distinct vision and ethos. Around its nucleus of Nigerian staff, trained by Miller, were added in the 1930s a comparatively large number of English staff as cooperation paid off and more personnel were allowed in. Although there were other substantial Christian communities growing up in Jos, Garkida and Gindiri, Wusasa remained a magnet.

Students began taking the preliminary Cambridge 'local' examination from 1927 onwards and student teachers began passing the government third class teachers' examination. An influx in the 1930s raised standards and made St. Bartholomew's an exceptional school with staff/student ratios as low as 1:7, well qualified staff, and teaching in English. With the completion of a hospital on the settlement, Wusasa became the most important Christian centre in the emirates.

What was not directly attributable to Miller, and a product of Wusasa's pre-eminent position, was the way it attracted other than Hausa-Fulani students from across the North. Admissions of the major ethnic groups during the 1930s and 1940s to the Senior School were recorded as 35% designated as of Hausa origin against 8% Yoruba and, 8% Ibo.<sup>56</sup>

Admissions to the Primary school in the 1940s were 41% Hausa, 18% Fulani, 8% Yoruba, 3% Ibo. By the early 1950s, the school was

beginning to reflect the geography of mission penetration in the country as a whole. Admissions were 25% Yoruba, 16% Hausa, 13% Ibo, 6% Tiv, 3% Fulani.<sup>57</sup> Wusasa could no longer be described as a Hausa school. It was serving the wide range of ethnic groups now found in the North.

The pattern of careers of the first Zaria converts in the professions, teaching, medicine and pharmacy, continued into the 1940s and 1950s. Mallam Nuhu Bayero, headmaster of the Wusasa Middle school in the 1940s went on to become pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Lagos. Ishaya Audu, Bulus Audu's youngest son, took up a medical career and finally became Vice-Chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria in 1966.

Wusasa followed a classical curriculum and had a modest ascetic spirit in imitation of the ambience of an English Public school. Boys were issued with a Sunday, weekday, and farming uniforms, one mat, one blanket, a spoon, a tin and food bowl, pullover and hockey-stick. In the Middle school they could study the *Aeniad Book VII*, and, like British school children, *Caesar's Gallic Wars*. But some concessions were made to this being education for West Africans. In English literature *African Folk Tales* competed with Shakespeare and Aesop's fables. The recommended books for the history course were *A Short History of Nigeria*, *Notes on Moslem History* alongside *Building the British Empire*. In 1943 Niven's *Nigeria's Story* appeared on the list with Woodward's *British Empire*. The nearest to what would later come under the heading of African History was *Africa before the White Man* and *Lives of Eminent Africans*. In 1949, with Nigerianisation of the civil service on the agenda, *Tropical Africa in World History* came onto the syllabus.<sup>58</sup>

Inspectors visiting the school spoke of a “high and rising standard”. The level of spoken English was said to be “particularly satisfactory”.<sup>59</sup> It was a privileged education serving the needs of the administration, mission and its Christian students.

Nationalism and the political mobilization of the 1950s opened up spectacular chances for those able to reap the benefits of education at Wusasa. In contrast, the education policies of Palmer and Temple, on the whole, limited most Moslems to the two worlds of Native Administration and Army. These domains were jealously guarded. In the 1920s, excluding basic Qur’anic schools, which did not qualify children beyond rudimentary Arabic literacy, fewer than 5,000 pupils were attending school in the Northern Provinces against 100,000 in the South.<sup>60</sup> St. Bartholomew’s did educate Muslim students, the Emir of Zaria amongst them but, come Nigerianisation of the Northern Administration in the 1950s, it was predominantly Christians who were equipped to grasp the new opportunities. The number of admissions to the primary school at St. Bartholomew’s shot up from 100 in the 1940s to 450 in the 1950s; canny parents from Yorubaland and Iboland were equipping their children for careers in a Nigerianised Northern government.<sup>61</sup>

In the early 1960s, with the changes brought by Independence, Wusasa Christians found themselves with conflicting political interests. On the one hand they had much to gain from an ‘exclusive North’. The numbers tell the story. The establishment for the Northern Administration at Independence was 293 staff; 210 of these were expatriates and only 83 ‘Northerners’. The establishment set for education officers was 437; only 33 of these were ‘Northerners’. The

products of the longstanding missions in Yorubaland and Iboland, or the few outstanding government schools such as King's College in Lagos, were waiting at the door. So there was nothing surprising in finding a Christian, Dr. R.A.B. Dikko in 1949 as a founder of a political party, the Northern People's Congress (N.P.C), that represented, though not exclusively, traditional regional interests.<sup>62</sup>

For some exceptional Northern Christians, there did seem a possibility to make good in a culture, that of the Hausa-Fulani elite and Islam, which was no less tightly-knit and distinctive than the community at Wusasa. For others, particularly those from smaller ethnic groups and regions untouched or little affected by Hausa-Fulani influence, prospects seemed more problematic. Historical memories of *jihad* and slave-raiding in the nineteenth century did not reassure them that they would be indefinitely welcomed as fellow Northerners.

The army was a major integrative institution. The Second World War led to its expansion and refurbishment and this made for increasing demands on the educational and technological expertise of its officers. Again, Muslim Northerners felt their educational disability as an impediment. Better educated Christians joined up and quickly demonstrated themselves as officer material leading soldiers from the major ethnic groups during the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>63</sup> The career of the former Head of State, Olusegun Obasanjo, is an outstanding example of how the need for technological know-how brought Christians to the fore. But no less significant are the military careers of two other Wusasa alumni, men who might otherwise have gone into the highest levels of administration, Theophilus Dan Juma, army chief of staff 1975-1979 and *eminence grise* behind many political figures, and Yakubu

Gowon, army chief of staff during the tragic Biafran secession. Both from minority groups at ease with Hausa-Fulani culture that made them popular with older soldiers, they could thank Wusasa for their self-discipline and swashbuckling sense of service and valour that made them progress rapidly in a British-trained army. On the other hand, the army with its champagne parties and conspiratorial life at the polo club removed men from the dull realities of daily village life and prompted unruly ambitions. Military life could just as easily corrupt as well as reform and unite.

The other political dimension of army life, one that came perhaps easier to Wusasa alumni than to others, was a commitment to a wider unity than that offered by the North, the Nigerian state. The roots of this nationalism are to be found both in the mixing that took place at school and in the Christian community.<sup>64</sup> The former was a generator of shared values and wide loyalties, the latter an assimilative, intermarrying institution. For the same reasons it was a nationalism that did not easily detach itself from wider neo-colonial relationships.

Wusasa continued to assimilate different waves of Christian converts from different origins but retained a remnant of the former Hausa-Fulani village. Many of Miller's early converts went back to die there surrounded by a second generation of Hausa Christians often with spouses from other ethnic origins. But within it, in St. Bartholomew's, grew up an ersatz British culture but truly multi-ethnic community. At the same time, the first generation of Christians were providing literate home backgrounds, passing on values they had learnt in the classroom and on the hockey field, magnifying the impact of the school.



Wusasa produced men and women with a double layered level of commitment to political change viewing the Federal level of Nigerian politics as a natural and necessary arena in which to act. The young Lieutenant-Colonel Yakubu Gowon, from the minority Angas families, emerged into leadership as a compromise candidate of a group of Northern officers. It fell to him between 1966 and 1975 to carry Nigeria through the storm of ethnic politics, regionalism, and the tragedy of civil war. The archetypal old boy of St. Bartholomew's his rise to the Presidency was the - equivocal - triumph of St. Bartholomew's and Wusasa as a whole.

Walter Miller's last letter from his deathbed in 1952 was to the son of his first convert, Abdul Majid, bidding him farewell. He died without children of his own. But had he seen the young men go off to Sandhurst from the school he had struggled to create, he might have recognized his spiritual heirs.

### **Footnotes**

1. Clifford to Gowers 17 April 1924, MSS. Afr. s. 1149
2. Warren, Oswald, Cook, Clark, Bullen and Aselford to Hooper 26 May 1924, G3/A9/0

3. Report of a conference held in Zaria 10-20 March 1924; Meville-Jones to Manley 5 April 1924, G3/A9/O
4. *Guy Bullen* by his friends, London 1938, 43
5. Warren M. *Crowded Canvas*, London 1974, 37
6. Quoted in J.H. Oldham's 'Memorandum on Missionary Work in Northern Nigeria', C.O. 583/50; see the Methodist missionary, Edwin Smith, *The Christian Mission in Africa* International Missionary Council, New York, 1926, 150. The most important papers prepared for this conference are contained in the *International Review of Missions* Vol. XV, No.59, July 1926
7. *Guy Bullen* 66
8. Report of an informal conference held at Biggin House, Derby, 28 July 1925, G3/A9/O
9. In March 1925, Miller had been admitted to hospital with a septic ulcer in his lung. A year later he was invalided home with a heart infection. Because of this, Guy Bullen was de facto head of the mission for much of the time.
10. Henry Miller's Annual Letter 28 October 1925
11. Statement by the District Headman Soba, 4 February 1928, in 'CMS in Zaria' file, ZARPROF
12. Ethel Miller to Arnett 14 March 1923; Ruxton to Arnett 24 September 1926, MSS. Afr. s. 952; 'Notes on an informal meeting at Government House', Kaduna, 30 March 1928, C.O. 583/150

13. Smith to Hooper 28 July 1926, G3/A9/0; Palmer to Graeme Thomson 17 June 1926, SNP, 16/3, C.0053. Kaduna Archives; Minute to Calder and Strachey in Graeme Thomson to Secretary of State for the Colonies 25 June 1927, C.O. 583/150
14. Henry Miller's Annual Letter 28 October 1925
15. Minutes of an informal conference held at Government House, Kaduna with Rt. Rev. Bishop of Lagos 21 March 1927, SNP, 12/5, Kaduna Archives
16. Clifford to Thomas 25 September 1924, C.O. 583/127
17. Questions in the House of Lords 10 February 1925, 11 March 1925. These caused a flurry in the Colonial Office and Lugard was sent to put things right, see C.O. 583/129, 583/137
18. Fitzpatrick F.J. 'Nigeria's Curse – the Native Administration' *The National Review* December 1924; Crampton *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 65
19. Nicolson *The Administration of Nigeria*, 237-238
20. Walter Miller's Annual Letter for 1926
21. Smith to Cash 10 March 1926, G3/A9/0
22. Minutes on 'Missionary Activity in the Northern Provinces' by Strachey & Flood J.E.W. 5 May 1927, C.O. 583/150
23. Minute by Ormsby-Gore on 'Missionary Activity in the Northern Provinces' C.O. 583/150
24. Ibid.

25. Zaria Resident to Secretary Northern Provinces 20 July 1926, SNP 16/3, C.0053, Kaduna Archives
26. Miller to Laing 19 June 1926; Laing to Palmer 27 June 1926, 16/3, C.0053
27. Letter from Ibrahim *Sarkin Zazzau* to Zaria Resident 13 July 1926, SNP, 16/3, C.0053
28. Palmer to Graeme Thomson 7 April 1926, SNP, 16/3, C.0053
29. The region under consideration here was made an Apostolic Prefecture under Monsignor Francis O'Rourke in 1929 and is served, still, by the Society of African Missions (S.M.A. Fathers)
30. Palmer to Graeme Thomson 17 June 1926, SNP, 16/3, C.0053; District Officer to Zaria Resident 10 January 1927; Miller to Laing 8 March 1927, 'CMS in Zaria', ZARFROF
31. Miller to Zaria Resident 21 January 1927 'CMS in Zaria' File, ZARPROF
32. Ibrahim *Sarkin Zazzau* to Miller 2 February 1927, 'CMS in Zaria File', ZARPROF
33. Miller to Ibrahim *Sarkin Zazzau* 7 February 1927, 'CMS in Zaria File', ZARPROF
34. Petition to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of the Northern Provinces signed by J.C. Omaru, J.Y. Inusa, A.I. Audu, S.M. Audu and Mallam Isya, 'CMS in Zaria' File, ZARPROF

35. Ibrahim Sarkin Zazzau to Zaria Resident 17 February 1927 'CMS in Zaria' File, ZARPROF
36. Report of an interview between H.E. Lieutenant-Governor and Ibrahim Sarkin Zazzau 20 February 1927, 'CMS in Zaria' File, ZARPROF
37. Ormsby-Gore Minute on 'Missionary Activity in the Northern Provinces', C.O. 583/150
38. See note 36
39. Ibrahim Sarkin Zazzau to Miller 21 February 1927, 'CMS in Zaria' File, ZARPROF
40. *The Nigerian Daily Times* 20 May 1927
41. Report of an interview by H.E. Governor-General with Bishops Smith and Melville-Jones 24 May 1927, C.O. 583/150
42. Report of an interview by H.E. Lieutenant-Governor with Bishop A. Smith 22 February 1927, 'CMS in Zaria File', ZARPROF; Report of an interview between H.E. Lieutenant-Governor and Bishop Meville-Jones 21 March 1927; Report of an interview between H.E. Governor-General, & H.E. Lieutenant-Governor with the Bishop of Salisbury, J.H. Oldham and representatives of the Mission Societies 20 June 1927, C.O. 83/150
43. See Chapter Five
44. Miller *An Autobiography*, 106
45. *Guy Bullen*, 85
46. Warren *Crowded Canvas*, 55-58

47. Strachey Minute on 'Missionary Activity in the Northern Provinces', C.O. 583/150

48. Notes on an informal meeting between H.E. Lieutenant-Governor and Bullen, Miller, Warren, J. Fremantle & Urling-Smith, (Director of Education Northern provinces) 30 March 1928; Palmer to Zaria Resident 26 July 1928; Miller to Zaria Resident 10 August 1928, 'CMS in Zaria' File, ZARPROF

49. Oldham to Graeme Thomson 12 December 1930; Thomson to Oldham 14 December 1930, C.O. 583/176

50. Crampton *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 118

51. Miller *An Autobiography*, 126-128

52. Less known is *Yesterday and Tomorrow in Northern Nigeria* London 1938, dedicated to his wife, which is more moderate in tone. *For Africans Only* Lutterworth Press, 1950, is more introspective and in the genre of pastoral and spiritual writing made famous by C.S. Lewis

53. Quoted in Paden J.N. *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*, 1973 U.C.L.A. taken from a book review written by Aminu Kano in 1953.

54. Ibid. Aminu Kano founded the Northern Elements Progressive Association (N.E.P.A.) which formed the first radical Nigerian political Party, the Northern Elements Progressive Union (N.E.P.U.) in 1950 with a socialist analysis of the situation in the North similar to Miller's. Aminu Kano openly spoke of a class struggle and the need to be rid of the Northern elites. NEPU became the opposition Party to the ruling Northern People's Congress (N.P.C.) led by the *Sardauna*, Sir Ahmadu

Bello. After the military coup, Aminu Kano became Minister of Health in Gowon's administration.

55. "Proposals for the Future' unsigned memorandum, probably by J. Freemantle c. 1929, 'CMS in Zaria File, ZARPROF

56. Nicolas G. 'Les catégories d'ethnie et de fraction ethnique au sein du systeme social Hausa *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* Vol XV, 15, 1975, 399-443

57. St. Bartholomew's School Registers 1930s-1950s, loose papers held at the school and kindly lent to me by the head-teacher

58. St. Bartholomew's school stock lis, Ibid.

59. Education Officer's Report of 25 July 1949 'Wusasa CMS school' File ZARPROF

60. This amounted to 0.25% of the school age population of the North at school compared with 7% in the South, assuming the lowest likely population for the Northern Provinces

61. The change in the 'Hausa character' of the school was linked to both its teachers and personnel. For example, in 1954, the head teacher was Yoruba, H.A. Olubanjo although the Zaria Middle School Advisory Board was made up of the Sarkin Wusasa, the *Dan Galadima*, Malam Ahmadu and Malam Nuhu Bayero representing the traditional elite.

62. Nicolson *The Administration of Nigeria* 261; c.f. Dr. Dikko who had begun his medical training in London in 1932,

63. This point is buried in Crampton's *Christianity in Northern Nigeria* 173 but seems worthy of a fuller study in its own right.

64. The importance of Tiv troops at lower levels in the army may also be seen as a byproduct of 'Christianisation'.



## Chapter Eight

“I long to find a synthesis of the teaching of the Master, who loved the poor and outcast and the downtrodden with real genuine Communism”

Walter Miller 1950



*Walter Miller 2 months before his death*

In the ordered world of statistical sociology the eccentric individual finds no place. Economic history turns the individual into an empirical residue. Yet quite often the eccentric holds up a mirror to society. At first glance, Walter Miller, an evangelical missionary with socialist views in a distant part of the African continent, his story and that of the people he influenced, take the reader outside the mainstream of social history. On closer inspection a short monograph on his work reveals patterns and interactions that had repercussions far wider than a dusty town in the North of Nigeria.

This story, amongst other things, a partial biography, is a study of the origins of Christianity in a Muslim society, the emirates. Miller's life grew out of the Great Commission in the Bible, his lifetime motivating purpose. It showed a form of heroic idealism. Far from being a man "conducting events taken at the flood" he was for most of his life going against the political grain, struggling with the many contradictions inherited from the late Victorian and Edwardian world, working for justice for those around him. As a result his religious vision and purpose produced several dramatic political outcomes.

Miller's childhood weighed heavily on his behavior as a missionary. It carries the blame for repetitive re-creations of the unresolved conflicts in his past. And, as always, this was a social past in which individuals are shaped by the social structures and conflicts of their time. The Public School as the gateway to power and arbitrator of class loomed large in this story. Miller became a combative historical actor on the colonial stage, pitted against Emirs and Residents, as his Victorian childhood conflicts found resonances in the politics of Northern Nigeria:

entrepreneurial behavior versus aristocratic mores, landownership versus commerce, professional, impartial relations in distinction to patronage. But the stoic, intrepid determination that Miller showed as a missionary, despite repeated evidence of failure, was the product of a Victorian Christianity whose sheer physical courage and moral arrogance was expressed in a unique amalgam not often repeated.

By the time Miller arrived in Nigeria, the imperial enterprise had already passed through its Indian summer and was revealing seemingly contradictory pressures. On the one hand, the imperative demands of keeping to budgets, and the drive to accumulate capital, which had driven Britain's entrepreneurs around the world, showed little sign of abating. On the other, the top echelons of imperialism had become firmly in the hands of the Victorian Public schools and Oxbridge, soon to admit a growing number of Middle class aspirants. However often they joined the traders at dinner table, dabbled in a few shares, or held a quasi-religious devotion for the new railways, the new wave of administrators who came onto the African stage in the 1890s retained some old-fashioned ideas. Their role was ruling Natives, controlling labour and land. In their fiefdoms in Africa they found what the march of history denied them at home. With professional zeal they collected taxes and rents from pre-capitalist economies, provided a few services, and were tempted to behave like feudal lords. In Northern Nigeria where Islam was used to legitimate the appropriation of labour by the holders of political office, the feudal appearance of the resultant Anglo-African government was particularly apparent. The magnificence of British "dress for dinner" must have rivalled that of the Emir's and their entourage for the servants in the Residence.

Yet the importation of a western capitalist economy did not sweep all before it in the North. Indirect Rule resulted in the freezing of the local economy, or, at least, a tepid advance. To a notable degree, old patron-client relationships that dominated society retained their vigour as part of a local moral economy. The preservation of indigenous culture and religion played into some quaint European atavism. Temple, true scion of the landed gentry rather than its pale colonial imitation, arranged gaudy Durbars in Kano, and tried to throw the representatives of the United Africa Company out of the city. Putting aristocratic fantasies before entrepreneurial vigour soon proved disastrous for his career. Lugard, a warlord who knew the importance of Birmingham, a parvenu whose addiction to militarism took him too far even for the Colonial Office, was more at home with the necessary ambiguities of Indirect Rule – he after all had championed it.

The most striking feature of Indirect Rule was the *sabon gari* policy aimed at limiting the influx into the Muslim towns of non-Muslims, and maintaining a social system defined by two classes, the *sarakuna* and *talakawa*. But the struggle of the Northern Administration to protect the religion and social system was coupled with a social transformation caused by the British abolition of slavery.<sup>1</sup> The creation of a submissive peasantry linked by middle-men traders into the western capitalist relations of the South required a degree of social engineering.

The arrival of the railway bringing the South up the line to Kano brought the contradictions in British policy to a head. These contradictions were largely resolved by turning the former predatory, aristocratic ruling class into the leading – though not the only – controllers of the economy in the North. The clash between Southern

and Northern administrations arose from the different weight afforded the maintenance of entrepreneurial spirits. Miller's Christian vocation and keen sense of social justice determined which side of this clash he would find himself on. He would not allow himself the satisfaction of taking up Lugard's offer of joining the Administration and instead became a trenchant and sometimes fanatical critic of Indirect Rule. Yet Lugard, who had taken on the aura of a father-figure, was always spared his direct criticism.

An escapee from a brand of Christianity and Commerce in Exeter, he wanted the good humble Hausa trader to inherit the earth. But he still aspired to nobler relationships than trade could offer, denied by his childhood. His letters often speak of 'love', not as a general Christian habit but as a concrete description of friendships with colleagues and, particularly, boys. It was a very old-fashioned 'love', pre-Raphaelite in its sensitivities as well as paternal and pastoral. For the governors of Northern Nigeria, both black and white, whom we saw grabbing labour and tax and rent, he demonstrated antipathy, almost hate. Yet his favourites at school were the Fulani students. And he was childishly pleased at any sign of approval from British colonial officers.

His conflicts found some resolution in creating an English Public School on the savannah. When this was temporarily blocked by the northern Residents in 1907, he seems to have relived a childhood experience of exclusion. The passionate letter sent to his father-substitute, Lugard, then safely in Hong Kong, demanding an investigation of the Satiru massacres, finally cut him off from any residual sympathies amongst the Northern administration and Colonial Office alike. His asthma got worse and psychosomatic disorders developed. He began to neglect his

medical practice and became entangled in emirate politics. By now he was in the political thick of it. He heralded the long-running deposition of Emir Aliyu in the early 1920s as a 'revolution' though the only liberation it brought was largely experienced by Miller himself, and that only for a short while.

So this is not a story of Protestant Christianity and Commerce triumphing over slave ships or eclipsing the towering edifice of mediaeval Catholicism. Livingstone's dreams of rural industry in the Lower Shire Valley of Malawi turned out to be a fatal mirage as the missionaries of the 1860s discovered. Neither did the commercial agents of the Niger Mission find a welcoming place in the plans of the Soudan Party. Christian trader-farmers found few formal roles in Church life left unoccupied by literate government officials, clerks, teachers and medical workers. Throughout Nigeria it would have been hard to find much more than a handful of Missions that taught their adepts such vital commercial skills as bookkeeping.

Literacy learnt in mission schools undoubtedly gave traders an important tool for successful commercial life. But for many small-scale farmer-traders like Bulus Audu, Christianity was not essential to their economic activity nor, in Northern Nigeria, was its confession an asset. Christianity did not, of course, create commercial activity in Africa. Indeed in the British protectorate of Nyasaland, Christians like the pastor John Chilembwe, frustrated by their failed attempts to open shops, accumulate capital and employ labourers, developed a chiliastic variant of Christianity. Economic needs stimulated religious change rather than vice-versa.<sup>2</sup> In Rwanda, for example, the second great

example of Indirect Rule in Africa, a German Jewish Resident was calling in Indian traders as the British were shutting the gates of Kano.<sup>3</sup>

In England, Christian virtues and school culture overlapped around the promotion of key values: Service, Valour and Team Spirit. St. Bartholomew's, Wusasa, produced the same professional cadres as its English equivalents, competent administrators, doctors, soldiers and teachers. According to circumstance and preference, such men could be treasured as "high-level manpower" or despised as "black Englishmen". They could become conspicuous consumers like the emirs or less *conspicuously* powerful like Theophilus Dan Juma. No less than their colonial antecedents, their function became to keep Nigeria safe, through a minimum of law and order, and sound, through professional competence and luxury consumption as members of the capitalist world.

This overlap explains to some degree the inability of the CMS before the 1930s to come to terms fully with the goals and tactics of the Northern Administration. They could not believe that such exemplary Public school and Oxbridge products could react differently to them and deliberately practice the exclusion of missionaries in favour of Islam. So seamless had been the meshing with the public values of the British ruling class that it took many years for the missionaries to see the men that championed them as entrenched opponents. It was only in the 1930s with the growth of rural commerce, trading companies and tin mines, that the Administration found a place, facilitated by J.H. Oldham, for Christianity in Northern Nigeria, and made their peace.

The feudal display and militarism of early British rule in the emirates were not the products of an unrepresentative group of men at the

heart of Empire. Northern Nigeria was third in the ranking as a top posting after India and Malaya. The Residents were a disparate group of men who used the force of personality after coercion to maintain control. British 'character' on the whole had to substitute for the Maxim gun.

These same national, and personal, qualities played a role in other missions too. The conflicts between the French White Fathers and the CMS in Uganda brought many of these characteristics to the fore. The French Holy Ghost Fathers in West Africa were living in hope that the Satiru massacres would spell the withdrawal of British rule in Northern Nigeria to the benefit of their compatriots.<sup>4</sup> Long after the nineteenth century Scramble for Africa, mission societies like the CMS were behaving as if they were part of local government. Both World Wars saw a rapid sorting into national factions of mission personnel whose societies proclaimed the supranational character of universal Churches.

Simple inductive generalisations that take the historian from the world of one missionary, one mission society in one place, to general statements about Christianity and Imperialism don't work. All that might be proffered here is that transcending nationality, class and personality, missionaries most often showed some degree of antipathy towards civil authority based on the teaching of Christianity. The will to power – in the broadest sense – is the one timeless force history admits. The imperial struggle for dominance found, or tried to fashion at the point of its triumph at the zenith of imperialism, a Christianity tailored to its needs. Yet it also encountered a corresponding voice of Christian protest at its ideology and practice.



At the heart of the Christian Gospel, however much class and national cultures try to make it more palatable or reject it, lies the dilemma of the Crucifixion. The Passion spares Christians from becoming historical actors who must never fail in building the political kingdom. This is an obvious but profound difference from Islam. Walter Miller's life was played out, sometimes quite consciously, around this dilemma of Christianity as much as it was molded by the social changes in Edwardian England. The small Northern Christian communities which are his heirs, no less than Miller, have found the Cross and the Sword in the political kingdom.

Finally it should be underlined that Anglican Christianity overwhelmingly failed to convert Muslims to Christianity in the cultures of Northern Nigeria. Or put more positively Christianity has remained creatively marginal to them. Miller's views of Islam, despite the rhetoric, matured over time. He came round to the idea that it was people failing to be better Muslims, rather than Islam itself, that was the problem, and spoke out on this theme both in Hausaland and in his later writing.

But the resilience of Hausa-Fulani culture has been prodigious. The impact of Pentecostal Christianity has been no less important. The Anglican Christian community was like a graft that never quite took. Its members were drawn from far away even if, at times, it dominated local events to a disproportionate degree. Similarly Western industrial capitalism did not transform pre-existing economic life in Hausaland. The need to participate in extensive patron-client networks defined economic niches in religious terms. Maguzawa converting to the two

world religions could find Christian niches only outside traditional Muslim networks.<sup>5</sup>

Whatever the general theory that relates Christianity to imperialism, the educated Muslim elites of the North still see Christianity as the religion of imperial conquest, as dangerously alien. Or today, after the influx of Pentecostal Churches from the 1960s, as part of a neo-colonial third wave that must be taken into account in electoral calculations. It is this perspective, and its historical origins in the lives of Lugard, Tugwell Miller, Emir Aliyu and Emir Ibrahim, that informs the debate about the future of religious and regional integration in Nigeria. And it is this perspective which may ultimately prove most damaging to the unity of the nation-state.

### Footnotes

1. Hill P. 'From Slavery to Freedom: the Case of Farm-Slavery in Nigerian Hausaland' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 18, No.3 1976, 395-426, discusses the dynamics of this process
2. Linden I. & Linden J. 'John Chilembwe and the New Jerusalem' *Journal of African History* XII, 4, 1971, 629-651
3. Dr. Richard Kandt, the architect of Indirect Rule in Rwanda, was a staunch free-trader, ethnographer and linguist with an interest in Nietzsche

4. Clarke P. 'The Methods and Theology of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1905' *Journal of Religion in Africa* Vol. VI, 1976, 81-108

5. For example the first village dispensaries in Muslim villages invariably used to be run by a Christian while the grain trade was an entirely Muslim network. Trades requiring a period of apprenticeship naturally tend to result in the apprentice taking up the religion of the master. Personal Communication Richard Bruce. To be fully Hausa is often seen to require membership of the Muslim communities, see Nicolas G. "Les categories d'ethnie et de fraction ethnique au sein du système social Hausa' *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* Vol XV, 59, 1975, 399-443 – Maguzawa applies to non-Muslim 'Hausa', traditionalists who reject Islam and Christianity.