

# INTERPRETATIONS OF THE RIOTS

## ▲ INTRODUCTION

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The point of the previous chapter, I should think, is clear. From the Muslim perspective, the major context of the riots is the colonial imposition of a Christo-secular establishment that has deranged Nigerian Muslim spirituality and institutions. It has created the anger and frustration that mark the Muslim community in Nigeria and that is ever ready to explode at the slightest provocation, sometimes without any at all. However, there are also other reasons Muslims advance that need to be understood, more immediate reasons. I summarize them below under various “causes.”

As we turn to examine these other reasons, it will soon become clear that it is hard to separate them, since they are all related to the more remote historical causes and to each other. In fact, a strict separation is an academic exercise that is intended to help achieve greater clarity, but that has no parallel in reality where they are all mixed together.

## ▲ MUSLIM INNOCENCE

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The first point is a negative one. I begin by noting that there is strong resistance among Muslims against seeing themselves as cause, against accepting any blame or responsibility for riots. They are not the ones to have started the colonial process. Muslims generally think of themselves as either innocent or provoked to such an extent that the provocateur must be held responsible, even if Muslims took the initiative. In addition, there is a strong Muslim insistence that the Muslims are almost always the major victims in terms of death, destruction of properties and imprisonment.

The pro-Muslim magazine, *Citizen*, reflects the general tone. Abdullahi Pindiga from Zaria wrote the following to the editor:

*In most riots involving the Hausa, the other tribes are the aggressors. They kill and maim the Hausas before the arrival of the security agents. But in most cases, they [security agents] too take sides. They descend on the offended, shooting and arresting them. A commission of inquiry would then be set up to try the rioters, and while the aggressors would go scot-free, the offended are brought to book. This was seen vividly in the Kafanchan riot, which the Hausas did not start but were killed and jailed. During the Sayawa-Hausa Fulani clash in Tafawa Balewa [and] in Zangon Kataf, it was the same story.<sup>1</sup>*

Still in *Citizen*, Jega reports that the Cudjoe Commission investigating the Zangon-Kataf debacle, “laid blame squarely on the Kataf,” that is, on the non-Muslims. “The Hausa of Zango did not go beyond the boundary of Zango town during the riots. Furthermore, the evidence...clearly shows that the Hausa acted in self-defence. As such, they suffered most of the casualties.”

“Who carried out the killings?” Jega asks. “Many of the Kataf assailants were identified before the Cudjoe panel by the Hausa victims.” With such a strong slant, we are not surprised at the editor’s reference to “the recent massacre of Hausa-Fulani in Zangon

Kataf.”<sup>2</sup> This is the major representative attitude. The only part of this chapter in which there is a more balanced attitude is the one on manipulation.

## ▲ A POTPOURRI OF FACTORS

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As the above title indicates, I am now turning to a list of factors identified by Muslims to have played a role in the development of Nigeria’s explosive climate.

### THE INCOMPATIBILITY FACTOR OR ANTITHESIS

One explanation that deserves our attention is the problem of two incompatible systems, or of antithesis. This issue underlies most of Chapter Two and is fully recognized by many Muslim writers, as we have seen, even if the terminology is not used much. The language equating America with Satan is, of course, an expression of a basic antithesis. What greater opposite could a Muslim or, for that matter, a Christian, think of than that between Allah and Satan? The notion was very popular with the publishers of *The Pen* and *Alkalami*, and their pages full of its rhetoric. In Chapter Four we will observe that the same is true for the Islamic Movement that regards the Christo-secular setup in Nigeria as satanic.

In settings of dialogue and diplomacy it is politically incorrect to bring up the subject of incompatibility and antithesis. Abdul-Lateef Adegbite, a moderate leader, had the courage to disregard this “impropriety” at the government-sponsored NIREC conference in June, 2000. The endless sharia crises<sup>3</sup> in Nigeria, he asserted,

*...are a clear manifestation of the strains of religious pluralism in the country. The two dominant religions...diverge in their respective attitudes to Law. Whereas Islam insists on a religion-based law, modern Christianity appears to reject it. This is why Christians speak of secularity and the Muslims would have nothing of it. This dichotomy, coupled with widespread*

*ignorance of the status of sharia in Nigeria, has contributed in no small measure to the recent escalation of the sharia crises.*

Adegbite thus recognizes the basic problem as one of incompatibility and antithesis and even suggests that conflict is inevitable: “Where a number of laws and legal systems co-exist, conflicts would necessarily arise.”<sup>4</sup>

From the government side, however (even Muslim governments at various levels), this factor does not receive much attention. The reason for this is that it would force governments to look at the underlying hard-core antithetical differences between the two religions, something that could lead to some uncomfortable conclusions. A nation that is trying to forge unity of competing systems is naturally more inclined to emphasize commonalities than basic differences. Such a nation is prone to wishful thinking in hoping that somehow the differences will evaporate without either side having to make important sacrifices.

Even though this factor does not receive much overt attention, I list it as the first in this lineup of major factors, because I believe that its neglect is a gigantic mistake. It prevents Nigeria from taking the bull by the horns, and has condemned her to years of a useless search for so-called “remote and immediate causes” that hardly ever touch the basic problems and therefore never lead to the required fundamental changes. Rather than calling a spade a spade, the preferred way is to let sleeping dogs lie. The problem is, they neither sleep nor lie down. Hence the process of almost unbelievable death and destruction continues undisturbed.

#### THE MISUNDERSTANDING FACTOR

In his quote from above, Adegbite refers to “widespread ignorance” as one of the two major factors, the other being systemic. He is in the very good company of many Muslims both in and out of governments. It is one of the preferred explanations of the more

irenic Muslims. It is one of the least painful explanations and does not require any drastic surgery from anyone. All we need to do is to understand each other and things will fall into place. In fact, Muslims often expect that any non-Muslim, once he has been enlightened and come to an understanding of Islam, will surely become Muslim and the problem will have evaporated. That, in fact, was the attitude of Sheikh Gumi who took it to the extreme. The solution to all this is simply for Christians to read both Bible and Qur'an. They will surely become Muslims and we will all be friends!<sup>5</sup>

Misunderstanding is dangerous, as Justice Abdulkadir Orire has pointed out. When he was asked to present a paper on the subject, Orire was enthusiastic about the assignment and expected to do "yeoman service to break the barrier of ignorance and misunderstanding." However, he was "taken aback" upon reading some Christian anti-sharia documents from CAN and others.

*I felt bad and asked myself whether there is any way at all of convincing any Christian colleague in this country of Muslims' good intention about the sharia. There were distortions in these documents about the sharia, deliberately made to confuse anybody...and so create hatred and ill-feelings between Muslims and Christians.<sup>6</sup>*

In situations of dialogue with Christians, both parties often talk about the misunderstanding factor. At a dialogue conference, Yusufu Magaji, Chairman of the Civil Service Commission of Taraba State, emphasized "that the main issue is to reach a stage of mutual understanding and respect for each other's beliefs and way of life." Similarly, Ustaz Farouk Yunus, at the time National General Secretary of the Nigerian Muslim Youth Forum, felt that if Christians understood the reason Muslims demand the expansion of the sharia, they would not treat it as competition. Again, Tijani El-Miskin of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Maiduguri, "was convinced that if Christians

and Muslims really understood their own faith, the problems will be minimized.” Enlightened Christians would understand why Muslims cannot accept secular structures, the assumption being that if they did understand, they would accept the Muslim stance. Thus the solution to religious hostility is education of the adherents.<sup>7</sup> In his attempt to prevent clashes in Zaria, the Emir of Zaria appealed to Christians and Muslims to address “their misunderstandings.”<sup>8</sup> You do not have to scratch a Muslim leader very much and you will get to the misunderstanding issue.

One question that advocates of the misunderstanding explanation need to face is that of the earlier issue I mention, the systemic or antithetical. Adegbite mentions both in the same breath, as it were. The great importance of mutual understanding is a major premise for this project of mine. I am a firm believer in it. But can it erase the difference, or will it merely help locate the basic problems, as important as that is?

#### THE RELIGIOUS FACTOR

A major discussion hinges on the religious factor, though it is denied as often as it is affirmed. Most Nigerian governments, in common with many Muslim leaders, prefer to deny, or at least, play down the religious factor. It is safer. If you deny the religious factor, you are not forced to accuse either or both religions, something that most politicians do not consider politically correct—or that they simply would not dare.

The term “religious aspect” often causes confusion. There is the central spiritual, personal part of religion, the part that emphasizes a person’s relationship to God/Allah. It covers areas such as personal devotion to Him, prayer, obedience—in short, the heartfelt part of religion. Then there is the communal aspect, that which refers to the people or *ummah* who adhere to a religion. These two aspects do not always act in concert with each other. It is possible that the communal aspect receives priority over the spiritual. When

that happens, the people begin to act like a religious tribe or party that may ignore the personal and even act against it.

In these discussions it is the latter that takes centre stage. The problem is that in the heat of various battles in which religious communities often get caught up, the community begins to take on an interest of its own, quite apart from the spiritual, which it is meant to enhance. The so-called “religious leaders” now have developed vested interests whose relationship to the spiritual becomes increasingly remote. The vested interest of the organisation—CAN, the denomination or the local church; JNI, or the local mosque—or of some of its leaders, becomes the most important focus. The spiritual is forgotten and suppressed. It no longer functions properly. It no longer provides parameters and standards. Religion has now sunk into an abyss of distortions. It has been degraded into a political party or tribe with its own motivations that usually go contrary to the spirit of the religion in question.

In these studies, I will not accuse Christians and Muslims of having totally abandoned the spiritual aspects of their religions. At least for some, those spiritual aspects may still function. They still are deeply devoted to God and want to obey Him and serve their neighbour. However, in the situations studied in these monographs, those spiritual aspects are no longer prominently displayed. I do have the impression that for many main actors, whether people or their organisations, the emphasis has shifted to their own vested interests or that of the organisations. I cannot speak for Muslims, but in most situations where Christians kill, they are no longer guided by Christian spirituality. Anger and resentment have taken over. The characteristics of party or tribe have now become dominant. This is the face of religion that creates so much anti-religious sentiment, but it is a reaction to distorted religion that is now regarded as the real thing. People call for its abolition altogether, and for abandoning God.<sup>9</sup> This is the aspect of religion that is prominent in the current Nigerian strug-

gle. It will be to everyone's advantage to remember this distinction as we go through these studies.

According to Matthew Kukah, under pressure of northern power elite, Babangida, the President of Nigeria at the time, "denied the religious basis of the [Kafanchan] riots."<sup>10</sup> *This Week* features a cartoon showing a military representative of the Federal Government—the President himself perhaps?—denying the religious factor, while the people, dressed in Hausa garb and thus Muslims, double over with laughter while pointing to the foolish speaker.<sup>11</sup> They knew better; they experienced it all on the ground.

Bilkisu Yusuf, an otherwise very clear and hard-hitting writer, succumbed to the same temptation of denying the obvious. She, too, suffered from a reluctance to give the religious factor its due in the Kafanchan riots. After giving a nod to the initial religious impetus in the first phase, and then moving on to the political factor that allegedly dominated the second phase, she asserted that in the third phase, where the riots spread to other cities in the state, neither religion nor politics played a role. At that phase, she asserts,

*It becomes blurred; you can't see the real tribal or religious thing. In Kafanchan, it started like it was the indigenes against the Hausa-Fulani, but once it spread to these [other] places, the battle seemed to have been directed against Christians and strangers [read: Ibos].<sup>12</sup>*

The conflict in Kafanchan town, the political phase two, was, she admitted, a matter of "indigenes against the Hausa-Fulani," the exact fault line between Traditionalists and Christians versus Muslims. It was a matter of the first two resenting imposed Muslim rule. Once the riot spread to other parts of the state, phase three, by her own admission it became a conflict waged by the Muslim population against Christians. What was so "blurred" about the obvious religious fault lines during those phases? Why the denial, sister Bilkisu? What's up?

The same denial was expressed by the Secretary to the Bauchi State Government, Nadada Umar, in response to a CAN allegation that the most recent chapter of the Tafawa Balewa riot series was caused by the state government's introduction of the sharia. Not only was it a false accusation, but, it was charged, the allegation was designed to incite law-abiding people. A logically curious additional denial was offered by the Secretary: The violence could not have been due to the sharia, for the crisis started on June 15, while the sharia had begun to take effect on June 2.<sup>13</sup> Go figure, someone. Attempts to cover up the obvious are bound to result in creative logic.

Similarly, Danazumi Musa, a member of the 1977 Constitutional Assembly and spokesman for the Hausa-Fulani in Tafawa Balewa, denied that there are/were "religious overtones" in their feud. In response to Osa Director's question during an interview, Musa responded:

*No religious undertone, because there were Muslims among the Sayawas, even before the jihad. Some have been assimilated into the Hausa-Fulani culture. Though Christians are the majority among them, they try to give it religious undertone, since they hope to get the sympathy of the other tribes and neighbours. The crisis is more political and economic.*<sup>14</sup>

As to the Jos riot in 1994, various Muslim leaders reject the religious interpretation. Sheikh Ismaila Idris, a leader of the Izala group, condemned the riot as unnecessary and unfortunate. Such acts cannot be supported by true believers. The culprits should be punished, he urged. He called on Muslims and others not to be "misled into turning the political problem into a religious one."<sup>15</sup> This last sentiment is typical of the more seemingly irenic Muslim interpretation of such events.<sup>16</sup> The question then is: What is the political factor at work here? We are given no guidance on this score. It is my educated suspicion that the answer would demon-

strate a basic religious factor.

Similarly, Sheikh Abdul Yusuf Aziz, secretary to the Plateau State branch of JNI, expressed regret over this riot. His published remarks concentrate on the damage done to the Muslim community, namely the burning of mosques and the killing of a Muslim. Like his Izala counterpart, Idris Aziz feels that the incident had nothing to do with religion. So, he asks in apparent puzzlement, why burn mosques?<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, he does not tell us what he thinks is the motive. Probably he felt that the events were self-explanatory. And they were—but only to those who have experienced Islam over many years. It almost looks like he took a leaf from Ms. Bilkisu Yusuf's book, but for a Muslim sheikh that might be too much to expect!

For reasons of his own, the activist Sheikh El-Zakzaky was for once on the side of much of the establishment. He declared that the Kaduna episode “is a social problem and had nothing to do with Islam and Christianity.” As we have already heard, perhaps *ad nauseam*, “people are frustrated, so much so that at the slightest provocation they become mad.”<sup>18</sup> Is their frustration, I ask, not caused by the suppression of Islam and its fallout?

The “nays” do not necessarily have the final word. There are also strong affirmations in the Muslim community of the religious factor. The government of Kaduna State gave mixed signals in response to Kaduna 2000. Governor Makarfi himself expressed his doubt that it was a religious crisis. It seemed to him more a case of “religion being used as a vehicle for destabilising the nation.” Whether it makes sense to deny religion as a major cause for the Kaduna riots of 2000 when it was clearly provoked by the sharia controversy, I leave up to you to decide.

Another interpretation also emerged from that same government. It appointed a “Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the *religious* disturbances” in the state. This interpretation is in direct contrast to that of the governor. The notice indicates that this termi-

nology is no mere slip of the pen. For Kaduna, the event is officially dubbed as “religious.”<sup>19</sup>

Strong affirmations about the religious cause are found on the pages of *Al-Madinah*. “No other phenomenon has wreaked so much havoc on the Nigerian nation more than religious fanaticism.” True, Nigeria has had its share of political and even “football fanaticism,” but none have beaten the ignoble record of religious fanaticism. The lanes of [Nigerian] history are littered with corpses of victims of religious crisis in Kafanchan, Maitasine, Zangon-Kataf, etc.”<sup>20</sup> No fear of bluntness or political incorrectness here!

The *NV* contains many articles that affirm religion either as a cause or *the* major cause of the Kaduna 2000 riots. Abedisi Adekunle and an unnamed colleague are only two examples. Under the caption “Sharia Riots Vicious, Barbaric—House of Reps,” Adekunle leaves no doubt as to the religious nature of the fracas. “The House of Representatives has condemned the religious crisis.” He also reports that a member, Binta G. Koji, spoke to the House about “the religious violence.”<sup>21</sup> An unnamed writer uses the term “religious” generously to describe the riots. He writes of “three days of ‘religious’ riots.” Please note the quotation marks around the term, an interesting twist to which he resorts twice in the article. But he uses the term also without the quotation marks. He uses the term “religious disturbances,” the quotation marks being mine this time. The article makes clear the religious nature of the riots also by referring to the close connection with the sharia controversy and to the need for input from both Christians and Muslims. The connection with religion cannot get much closer than that.

In the same issue, on the same pages, another anonymous article relates how the Emir of Zaria, Shehu Idris, prevented the “religious riots” from spreading to his city. He “appealed to both Muslims and Christians to calm down and work out peaceful ways.” He expressed the hope that the “perpetrators of the religious crisis” would be brought to justice. He further “commended fol-

lowers of the two religions for allowing peace to reign.”<sup>22</sup> Emirs tend to deny the religious dimension of these riots, but here no such effort seems to have been made. It was all clearly in a religious context. An article in the same issue by Amos Duniya, a Christian, had as caption “N/Assembly to Tackle Religious Clashes,” language that the allegedly pro-Muslim *NN* allowed to stand.<sup>23</sup> An Izala scholar from Katsina, Sheikh Yakubu Hassan, discussed the need to punish the perpetrators of the violence of 2000. In the process he freely uses the terms “religious uprising” and “religious crisis.” It is all about sharia and that is a religious matter, not politics. Hence, he “implored President Obasanjo and other political leaders to desist from making comments on the sharia issue, because sharia is not a political matter, but the sum total of the life of Muslims as commanded by Allah.”

Nevertheless, this emphasis does not prevent him from blaming both government and political manipulators, as we will see under the appropriate headings below.<sup>24</sup>

Shittu Obassa reports that Chief Afolabi, representing President Obasanjo, said that the latter “was deeply touched by the religious riot” and that the government “was aware that the religious disturbance was politically motivated.” On the same page, an anonymous staff member referred to the “inter-religious conflict.” So, we see a mixture. Ditto for Mustapha Lamidi; though, again, you cannot be sure whether the phrase is the writer’s or that of Vice President Atiku Abubakar.<sup>25</sup>

Let us move from Kaduna to another, more recent chapter in the ongoing Tafawa Balewa crisis. Ibrahim Ahmed described the latest Tafawa Balewa crisis as “another genocidal attack on Muslims by their Christian Sayawa neighbours.”<sup>26</sup> In the Nigerian context, that amounts to ascribing a basically religious cause to that entire series. So, right up till the end of our period, there were powerful advocates for a religious interpretation. At the same time, in many cases it is difficult to determine whether some of these newspaper

references to religion are mere slips of the pen that escaped editorial eyes, or whether this was consciously chosen terminology. It is also often difficult to determine whether these references are the authors' or of the person whose views are being reported. There is an amazing and annoying sloppiness of expression with respect to this very sensitive issue.

The religious factor, combined with a good deal of suspicion, occasionally leads to tense situations. During the last quarter of 2002, I received information from a Nigerian friend that Muslim lecturers in the Religious Studies Department at the University of Jos were accusing the university authorities of planning to eliminate Muslim studies from the curriculum. The "unsubstantiated rumour" led to a "passionate discussion" between Christian and Muslim colleagues, even in this university that, together with its state, was until recently probably the most peaceful one in the north. Indeed, feelings are very touchy and it takes only a rumour to enflame them.

Religious motivations in the Nigerian context sometimes take on very raw and uncouth shape. For example, Mohammad Davou Riyom confessed that, prior to his conversion to Christ, he was "a very proud Secretary of an Islamic organisation called *Jammatu Halkatul Bidia wa Ikamatus Sunaa*," with its headquarters in Jos. A zealous Muslim evangelist, he "vowed to convert all Christians to Islam and became a great preacher against the Christians. I persecuted Christians and wrote Islamic tracts against Christ." He "preached Islam with great zeal on television and on Islamic crusades. I lived in great affluence and, because of my qualities in spreading Islam, I was dearly loved by other Muslims and received gifts in no small measure."

Continuing his story, he tells how,

*in the quest for brotherhood in Islam, I used to send Muslim thugs to cause confusion wherever there was a Christian*

*gathering in and around Jos. I went about condemning them [Christians] and used every available method to persecute the believers.*<sup>27</sup>

Open manipulation, even thugs, were used to cause confusion for a mixture of religious and financial motives.

Then there is the story of Alhaji Dan-Bauchi as he has written it. It is Islam at its rawest. Before his conversion to Christ, Dan-Bauchi, reportedly co-ordinator for all northern activities of JNl, had decided on a programme "to eliminate Christianity." He even set the date of April 24, 1978, to start the campaign. It was to be a campaign of lies and provocation, including impregnation of Christian girls, penetration of Christian institutions, creation of confusion, and publication of provocative literature.<sup>28</sup> It was meant to be an all-out war with no holds barred. The end totally justified every means. Eventually the tables turned on Dan-Bauchi when he converted to Christ and moved over to the receiving end of this hatred.

The last two stories indicate clearly the religious base of much of the turmoil. It may be distorted religion, religion turned into tribe or manipulated religion, but religion it is.

#### THE POLITICAL FACTOR

The next factor under discussion is the political factor. The first need is to discuss some aspects of the relationship between religion and politics. In Islam, these two are never far from each other. Many are the Muslims who identify the two, while attempts to separate them often sound hollow. Chapter Two shows that the identification comes naturally to this wholistic religion. Those who insist on the political aspect as the major motivation for these crises, and deny the religious, seldom spell out the specific political factors. I regard most such explanations as attempts to sweep the real cause under the carpet. *The claim itself is often a political act.*

Political concerns are often based on hidden, deeper and usually unacknowledged religious issues. The 1994 Jos riot centered on a political appointment, the chieftaincy of Jos, that the Muslims wanted to take back. In my estimation, the event was the result of a political attempt to reclaim that chieftaincy, a position of authority to which Muslims, simply by virtue of their being Muslims, the *ummah* of Allah, felt they had a right. It was a position they were once given by the colonialists, but who later took it away from them again to restore it to the indigenes. In spite of their wholesale rejection of things colonial, Muslims did readily accept every power and privilege given to them over non-Muslim peoples and are very loathe to relinquish them even today. It is the same issue that surfaced in Tafawa Balewa and Zangon Kataf. Muslims do not take losing very graciously. Their theology tends towards triumphalism and only allows for victories. It was that hidden theology, or, perhaps a better term, religious world view, that in my estimation constituted the basic motivation of the Jos episode. Political reality had to be brought into line with a deep, often unspoken, largely unconscious, religious world view of power and domination. Echoing Chapter One of this volume, Akbar Ahmed states in his video that “in Islam religion and politics are one.” This stance is often just below so-called political issues. Though those two Muslim leaders in Jos denied the religious factor, it was there, below the surface. They may or may not have been aware of it. It depends on their awareness of their own world view.

They may also have denied the religious factor for a consciously political reason, namely to avoid blaming Muslims—or would this be a religious reason? Being religious leaders, it was in their interest not to see their beloved religion blamed. So, politics is always a ready scapegoat—as long as no one asks for too many details. But that their denial was shaky was clear from the fact that religious buildings were attacked. Though he regarded it as a political event, Aziz asked with an incredible and feigned attempt at sur-

prise, why then the burning of mosques? Yes, indeed! Without apparently realizing it, he let the real cat out of the bag!

Akbar Ahmed may have an explanation for that. In his video coverage of the 1982 Kano riot, he explains that this and other incidents of violence are not anti-Christian so much as against the entire secular system. "Unfortunately," he explains with a face that exudes innocence and hurt, churches are the only visible representations of that hated system and so Muslims naturally turn on them! What, I must ask, of the omnipresence of buildings that belong to the hated secular government, both state and federal, throughout Kano state? They are the most visible and most readily available presence of the secular enemy, much more so than churches. They should have been attacked, according to his reasoning.<sup>29</sup> Churches in Kano State are few in comparison. Ahmed's presentation is based on the suppression of some crucial facts that renders its validity doubtful.

Even when riots are obviously inspired by sharia issues, some diehards will insist on a political motivation. Obed Awowede reports just that about the Kaduna 2000 riots. "Competent sources," he writes, "insist that the Kaduna crisis was beyond religion. It is not religion. It is politics."<sup>30</sup> No further explanation. Of course, if the sharia issue itself is seen as a political rather than religious issue, then the riots about the sharia could also be regarded as political, but that subject is reserved for a future volume.

This paragraph is being written during the United Nations' debate about the US-Iraq crisis. The Minister for Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory, Alhaji Mohammed Abba-Gana, feared the rise of violence in his area. As a pre-emptive measure, at a meeting with religious leaders he insisted that the problem between the two countries "was not religious and should not be seen as an avenue for another religious riot." Both countries are pursuing their own interests, he asserted. People should not misinterpret it as religious.<sup>31</sup> The motive for the denial is clear. In Nigeria it can be dan-

gerous to interpret events religiously.

As pointed out in the previous paragraphs, it is almost impossible to separate the religious and political in Islam. However, for apologetic reasons, some Muslims have separated them in the context of these riots. So, it needs to be covered under its own separate heading. However, remember that throughout this discussion we are never far from religious motivations.

The political factor has various angles, only a few of which we will explore. Some of these again overlap with each other, or with economic and sociological issues. Those we will refer to include the following issues: government partiality, internal colonialism and indigenouness, lack of appropriate government action and the manipulation factor.

### **1. Government Partiality**

Neither Muslims nor Christians ever tire of accusing the Federal Government and some state governments of being biased in favour of the other. It is perceived everywhere, no matter what the government does or does not. If Muslims do not make the accusation, Christians will. Sometimes both make the accusation for the same situation!

This perception played a major role in the Bonnke riot in Kano. We have already heard in Volume One that, while the government had refused visas to some world famous, popular Muslims, Louis Farrakhan and Ahmed Deedat, of the USA and South Africa respectively, the Christian evangelist Bonnke was allowed to come and hold his revival. This perceived government partiality led to Muslim anger. In that tense context, Christians had the bad taste of aggressively promoting Bonnke with loudspeakers in Muslim neighbourhoods. It was a riot almost engineered to happen by the government and Christians. Hence Nuuman Habib, editor of *Triumph*, declared that the “blame for the crisis fell squarely on the shoulders of the Christians and [the] regime.”<sup>32</sup>

Of course, having basically defined Nigerian governments, their institutions and agencies in terms of the Christo-secular-colonial heritage, Nigerian Muslims would expect partiality towards Christians. Ustaz Salihu experienced it personally and routinely as President of MSS at the University of Jos in matters such as “timetable palaver, poster removal, desecration of the Holy Qur’an, and bus preaching.” Then there are the larger national issues earlier identified such as “national weekend, school uniforms, OIC, National Pilgrims Commission etc.” In all of these, Christians allegedly have the upper hand. Yet they “continue to cry wolf, always alleging government favouritism to Muslims. These are sore points that need discussing honestly.”<sup>33</sup>

## 2. Internal Colonialism and Indigenoussness

Then there is Bilkisu Yusuf, at the time editor of a Kano-based Muslim paper. Though, as already seen, she recognized that the Kafanchan riots “started from religious conflict,” she felt that “other factors must have been responsible for such an explosion.” Amongst these the political is a major one.

Specifically, the political issue Yusuf recognized is the *resentment of the indigenous people about being under the Muslim Emir of Zazzau or Zaria*. Like similar arrangements in Tafawa Balewa, this one was imposed on them by the colonialists. It is usually a matter of a Muslim ruler imposed upon Traditionalists, who, after many of their people turn Christian, begin to wake up to the nature of this internal colonialism, resent it and begin to struggle against it. In the case of Southern Zaria, the area in which Kafanchan and Zangon Kataf are located, an important early stimulant to the push for liberation from the imposed Muslim regime was the doctoral dissertation of Yusufu Turaki at the University of Boston, United States. It is this resentment that led to the explosion in Kafanchan town, after it had begun at the college for religious reasons.

Five years later, Bilkisu Yusuf is now editor of *Citizen* magazine. She wrote an interesting column in which she coined a new term: “katafisation of mankind.” She displayed little sympathy for the Kataf people. While she gave some credence to the “emir problem” in the case of Kafanchan, five years later she had little sympathy for it with reference to the Kataf. She wondered whether they had an “intrinsic trait that makes genocide an acceptable method of expressing grievances.” She accused people like Yohanna Madaki, a colonel dismissed from the army for his challenge to the Muslim establishment in Muri during his tenure as Governor of Gongola State, of contributing to the troubles, with talk of Hausa-Fulani domination. In an interview he granted, he alleged that “the largely Christian Kataf never had anything to do with either the emirate of Zazzau or the Sokoto Caliphate under whom the Kataf are now subjugated.”<sup>34</sup> Yusuf gave a historical rebuttal to these claims that appears below, after the materials on Bauchi.

In reflecting on the first riots in Tafawa Balewa four years earlier, the Military Administrator of Bauchi State, Rasheed Raji, during a 1995 interview with *Newswatch*, declared that “by God’s grace, the old wounds have been healed. People are moving about without much problem.” He admitted that there were continuing clashes. Though the promised chieftaincy had not yet been established, “it can be created anytime,” he purred. At least, the administrator admitted to the basic long-standing problem regarding chieftaincy: “These are problems that have been on for years, since 1916.” It is highly unusual for both government officials and Muslims to admit this chieftaincy problem. It was an unusual venture into political incorrectness.

When asked about the number of people killed in this fracas, Raji was more honest than most government officials and Muslims, though hardly generous.

*They were killed. Why do you need to refer to that? Think about development, and forget about those who were killed.*

*You see, during crises there is no how there will be no casualties. It is very unfortunate to the party that is affected. The only thing now is for us to pray that God should forbid the occurrence of such crises in future. If I should go by the number of people killed, the old wounds will now resurface and from there people will begin to think about it again. So, it is better for us to forget it.<sup>35</sup>*

And what of the reports of the two committees assigned to study the upheaval? The answer here also bears repetition:

*What we did when I got there was to review the report from the two committees. There was a panel and another committee on the same issue. But you see, they did not actually address the issue of implementation. They were all coming out with recommendations. But how do you implement it? So we reviewed the issue; made recommendations to the federal government. After a while, we sent a reminder that we were still waiting for these our recommendations to be approved.*

You, the reader, can think of your own terms for such evasions.

Turning to the second installment of the Bauchi riots, we find Danazumi Musa strongly rejecting the religious explanation in favour of the political. His perspective represents a stark opposite to that of Baba Peter Gonto, a representative leader of the Sayawa Christians, whose perspective is described in Volume Three. You really need to read both perspectives next to each other to appreciate the difference. Without doing detailed research into the local history, one has no basis for choosing between the two opposite versions, except to indicate that the differences have to do with the distinction between the town and the local government area. While Gonto in Volume Three speaks inclusively of both town and district as one entity, Musa speaks exclusively and emphasizes the distinction, with the Sayawas being rural dwellers and the various

Muslim groups urban. I attach Musa's explanation, minus the section quoted above, as Appendix 5. It is not the first time vested interest has influenced "objective" thinking!

The Sayawa, according to Musa, had no presence in the town until very recently. They lived in the villages. However, Gonto, their primary politician, riled up the population by beginning a demand for an indigenous chief of Sayawa background. His goals included taking over power in the town. Since he had no historical or present justification for such a goal, his people never having lived in the city, he used political trickery and deceit. Please read Appendix 5 for the full story.

Astounding as the differences between the stories of Musa and Gonto may be, Musa's arguments are not unique. You will come across them throughout this volume. With apologies to the Muslim community, I must explain that he represents what seems to non-Muslims the classic haughty Hausa-Fulani-Muslim attitude towards people of Traditionalist background. They are often considered deceitful, not enterprising, jealous and irrational. Of course, the Christian counter-arguments found in Volume Three are no less classic.

Not all governments accept such "remote" historical causes as explanations for some riots. The largely Muslim Kaduna government rejected such issues advanced by Christians as causes of the Kafanchan riots. At the same time, the Donli committee did accept similar remote causes from the Muslim perspective. But then, vested interests have been known to override logic before. Kukah, always to be counted on for tasty morsels at just the right time, tells us that the issue of chieftaincy in Southern Zaria goes back to 1967. At that time, the emir stated that this attitude would lead to "the people of Southern Zaria to one day demand their own district officers, their own province, and then resident and then a state of their own and chiefs."<sup>36</sup> Apart from its rejection of the apparently hallowed designation "Southern Zaria," the Kaduna government was faithful to a

long tradition. In response to the Donli Committee's suggestion that the chieftaincy issue be considered, it said that it saw no need for change in this regard. "The case of Jama'a [Kafanchan] does not warrant any need for change in the selection procedures of the traditional ruler at this time."<sup>37</sup>

The questions of the imposition of Muslim emirs and that of indigenes cannot be separated. The Kataf claim that they are the original inhabitants of their area and that the Hausa-Fulani are merely settlers who subsequently have wrested control from the locals. Yusuf appeals to the writings of Michael Crowther and Bala Usman, British and Nigerian historians of repute, who, she alleges, both show that Kataf land, together with Southern Zaria in general, were part of the emirate of Zazzau [Zaria] since the 15th century and that Islam was there prior to the 19th century Fulani *jihad*. In addition, Bala Usman, a Muslim academic who has long waged war against what he regards as an oppressive Muslim oligarchy in the north, argues that the question of indigenes is very confusing, since there are some 50 nationalities in the area. Who, then, Yusuf asked, is an indigene? Can a people who have been there for over 300 years still be considered mere settlers without a claim?<sup>38</sup>

In the same issue of *Citizen*, Mahmud Jega also tried to set the historical record straight with respect to the Kataf, but his story does end up with their demand for their independence from the Emir of Zaria. As he tells it, "While the Kataf see the whole district, created in 1914, as their land, they concede that the Hausa arrived there in 1650 under the leadership of one Mele, whom they allowed to settle." Some time later, the "Zaria emirate took Kataf land into its fold and for many decades sent Hausa chiefs from Zaria to rule the district." In 1967, Bala Dauke Gora, a Kataf Christian, was appointed to a minor chieftaincy and as district head of Zango. "This concession has only slightly appeased the Kataf, who now want a chiefdom of their own independent of Zazzau" or Zaria.<sup>39</sup>

Matthew Kukah asked one Alhaji Nuhu Bamali about the cause of the Kafanchan riots. The Alhaji identified the same political issue as the major cause. He blamed the university graduates from the area for setting their parents against “us” by “causing confusion with all this talk about slavery.... We all used to live happily as one family.”<sup>40</sup> The students to which Bamali referred are mostly Christian. They are now blamed for no longer accepting the “happy” situation during their days of ignorance. Yeah, right! Happy for whom?

There is an interesting tidbit of history that may help answer the question. Kukah tells us the story of Emir Ja’afaru of Zaria, who in the 1950s had said that “non-Muslims were meant to feed and sustain the power quest of the ruling class.” He drew a parallel to the horse and the grass and warned that “the grass must never be allowed to eat up the horse.”<sup>41</sup> And then there is still the land issue, part and parcel of the indigene question. According to Jega:

*The Kataf resent a 1920 edict by the then district head Ja’afaru, later the emir of Zazzau, that appropriated all farmland within a four kilometre radius around Zango and declared it hurumi, that is, land directly controlled by the emir of Zazzau. The Kataf now claim that the hurumi took over their farmland, but no evidence of such appropriation was tendered before the Cudjoe panel. The Kataf demand that this land, now largely owned by Hausa farmers, be returned to them, was disavowed before the commission....*

It appears that the disavowal was due to the fact that the Kataf did not make their claims within the legal time limits.<sup>42</sup>

I find it very gratifying that during the election campaign of 2003 a number of very prominent Muslim politicians have come around to supporting the campaign for a separate Southern Kaduna state. Former Head of State, Babangida, and the Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, Alhaji Ghali Umar

Na'Abba, among them, along with Governor Makarfi of Kaduna, all have come out in favour. Babangida was even the chairman of a major public campaign in Kaduna to raise funds for that purpose. Agitation for this separate state, he declared, "was most appropriate as it was right for people to seek self-determination." Makarfi promised the support of his government for the quest.<sup>43</sup> At least on the surface, it appears that the agitation of years finally is beginning to pay off—but at a very high cost of thousands of lives and innumerable properties.

### 3. Lack of Appropriate Action by Government

Yet another political issue is the alleged *lack of appropriate action on the part of the government* in addressing the underlying problems that caused the riots, in stopping them, and in punishing the perpetrators. The police appear almost without exception in the worst of lights for either showing up too late or for being part of the problem, not infrequently complicating situations. Everywhere in the literature from both Muslim and Christian authors the same complaint is aired, namely that succeeding governments fail to take appropriate action in response to riots. It can be weak action, wrong action, or no action at all. The problem with such failure is that it encourages the next dissatisfied group to similarly resort to violence. This becomes even worse when the government rewards the community for their riotous behaviour. To top this off with partiality and alleged one-sided punishment of the Muslims, who are merely the innocent victims, while the guilty parties go free; well, we end up with situations that are simply intolerable and explosive.

The Bachama story as told by Muslim Hausa-Fulani settlers appears to be a perfect example of all of these problems. The issue was land claimed by both. The Bachama claimed it as theirs, while the settlers of half a century alleged they were given it legally and then developed it from scratch. When the latter sought government

protection against raiding and killings on the part of the Bachama, every level of government failed to take responsibility. They all were partial against the Hausa-Fulani. All the victims were Hausa-Fulani. Months after the conflagration, the government had still not published the report that a committee was assigned to create.

Lawal Yusufu Mohammed of Bauchi, in a letter to the editor, aired his strong grievance as follows:

*In 1987, Muslims were massacred in Kafanchan, and when their brothers reacted in parts of Kaduna State, they were arrested and jailed. No single Christian was arrested there. In 1991, Muslims were murdered in Tafawa Balewa; and their brothers who reacted in Bauchi were massacred by security agents, many in their own bedrooms. No single Basayi was arrested. Instead, they were rewarded with a chieftdom. Any wonder then that the Katafs attempted to annihilate the Muslims in their midst so that they too can get their own chieftdom?*<sup>44</sup>

Please remember the 1995 interview by *NewsWatch* with the then Governor Rasheed Raji of Bauchi. The first reference to this interview was to indicate that at least for once the underlying problem was admitted by a governor, something that seldom happens. This second reference is to point to the lack of action by the government about a problem that was acknowledged to have existed since 1916! The governor was asked about the reports of the two committees assigned to study the upheaval. His answer is a fine example of failure to act, and buck passing. He replied, and I repeat his answer for your convenience:

*What we did when I got there was to review the report from the two committees. There was a panel and another committee on the same issue. But you see, they did not actually address the issue of implementation. They were all coming out with recommendations. But how do you implement it? So we*

*reviewed the issue and made recommendations to the federal government. After a while, we sent a reminder that we were still waiting for these our recommendations to be approved.*<sup>45</sup>

Any need for comments?

The Cudjoe panel dealing with the Zangon-Kataf episode was dominated by Muslims. It castigated the Kaduna government for

*lack of decisive and prompt action by various governments in the state to defuse tension in Zango and other places. The Kaduna State government is yet to implement some of the aspects of its white paper on the report of the panel that investigated the 1987 Kafanchan riots.*<sup>46</sup>

It is really a dreary and shameful refrain—and it continues to be sung.

With respect to Kaduna 2000, Umar Sanda wrote that “the capability of the law enforcement and security agencies in detecting and nipping in the bud unlawful activities is seriously called to question by their performance.” As to the government itself, he did not beat around the bush: “The spate of violent communal and religious crises in the country the last few decades is symptomatic of one problem: the failure of the state. It is high time the state performed its reason for being. It is high time government governed.”<sup>47</sup>

The stories and accusations are many, far more than can possibly be recorded here.

Nigerian governments sometimes try to give the impression of being in control and of intending to take drastic action after riots have occurred. After the Kafanchan episode, President Abacha spoke toughly to the nation. He ordered the establishment of various investigative bodies at federal and state levels. He banned religious organisations from all institutions of higher education. He assured the nation the government would “not recognise any sacred cow and none will be spared. Enough is enough.” Nigerians, according to Kukah, had high hopes for some tough action this time, but, as usual, it just fizzled out through delay and inaction<sup>48</sup>—but that is for

our next volume, since his is a Christian opinion. The President's statement "Enough is enough" continued to haunt the government. Christians have not allowed it to be forgotten.

Muslim complaints in this area are nearly universal. There are, for example, the scathing comments by Muslim scholar Sheikh Yakubu Hassan, an Izala leader from Katsina. Addressing a news conference in Katsina, the Sheikh blamed the Kaduna 2000 uprisings on the "non-punishment of culprits of past riots in the state." He argued that "perpetrators of the Kaduna riots embarked on the mayhem because those who participated in the previous crises in Kafanchan and Zangon-Kataf virtually went scot free." He predicted that "unless the government fished out and punished the culprits, there will be no end to religious crises in Kaduna, as the arsonists will continue to be encouraged by government's inaction."<sup>49</sup>

It is discouraging how the same demands on, and the same promises by the government continue to be made, riot after riot. However, after the riot over the Miss World contest in Kaduna in November, 2002,<sup>50</sup> Governor Makarfi promised that the state would "leave no stone unturned in bringing the culprits to book." He continued, "Those who will be involved shall be punished according to the law. We are left with no option but to take a very much more decisive action against perpetrators of crisis and the dastardly acts." Another "high" government source was quoted as saying that "the state government had resolved to punish the masterminds to serve as good precedence in checking any future reoccurrence"—all are most familiar promises heard after every riot. At the time of writing, it is too early to predict just what will really happen, but at least "about 1,000 persons arrested by the police in the thick of the four-day violence that devastated Kaduna last week, are to be arraigned in court today." In addition, in Abuja, about 100 persons were arrested in connection with the spill-over riot that took place in the Federal Capital Territory. That was unusually quick action. The Governor promised even more: "We

must all fight these people through a resistance to violence. And the authorities have been fully mandated to take punitive measures to deal with the situation. Also, all those arrested for murder, theft, and arson will be charged to court on Monday," he disclosed. "We shall deal with individuals as they were caught committing any offence, and such shall be done no matter how highly placed the individual may be." At least, a familiar sound!

A significant development is that during the weekend soldiers arrested the Secretary General of Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria (SCSN), Malam Nafiu Baba-Ahmed, for alleged complicity in the riot.<sup>51</sup> This was not a "small fry" catch. It evoked immediate Muslim reaction. The Malam's lawyer, Alhaji Ibrahim Umar, expressed fears that the development might engender fresh protests. "It is lamentable and sad to hear that the Secretary General, Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria (SCSN), was molested and arrested yesterday, around 9:00 p.m. at his residence, by some military personnel, and taken to an unknown destination."

He further said that the "unconditional release of Malam Baba-Ahmed is a pre-requisite condition for peace in Nigeria." With the Muslim governor arresting such a prominent fellow Muslim, I am somewhat optimistic that earlier lessons are finally taking hold and that this time there will indeed be no "holy cows." As to the lawyer's demand, what else are lawyers for?

Perhaps this unusually aggressive action was due partially to international attention this riot gained. It may also be an attempt to pre-empt the "Northern youth group, Civil Rights Congress (CRC)" that,

*has pledged to assist the Federal Government expose the sponsors of the recent violent protests in Kaduna, even as they canvassed capital punishment for those convicted. Its president, Malam Shehu Sani, who spoke in Kaduna yesterday, hinted that the group had resolved to set up an independent investi-*

*gation team to trace those who sponsored the riots. He said it would make its report known to the Federal Government so that the people behind it would be brought to book. Sani, therefore, called for capital punishment on individuals or group leaders behind the incident. The northern youth leader said that the mandate of the committee was first to go the suburbs and find out who killed and who was responsible for the killing of who.*

*“We also want to find out the extent of involvement of groups and highly-placed individuals within religious circles that are involved in this massacre and we also want to know the level of involvement of security agencies, and why they were so relaxed until the protest that started the crisis got out of hand,” he added. He expressed the group’s dissatisfaction with the manner in which the state government was handling the violence, stressing that “each time there is crisis in Kaduna, people have always been arrested and released later.*

*“And sometimes, most of those arrested are not really the people on the ground when the offence was committed, and the people behind the riots are not normally arrested. But this time around, we have resolved to expose them and recommend them for severe punishment by the Federal Government,” he stated.<sup>52</sup>*

This stance may have seemed threatening to the government and even brave. However, a year later, by January, 2004, I have not heard about any report of their findings nor of any action taken. It appears this private venture ended like its government counterpart: never published and the threatened action never taken.

It is, of course, never good enough. Though, compared to earlier incidents, the government reacted fairly quickly, the CRC not only declared that they “unambiguously condemn the resort to violence that has brought about lawlessness and disorder,” but its

Secretary General, Malam Nasiru Abbas, observed that “the steps taken by the government and security agents were too belated. If action were taken earlier, many lives could have been saved.”<sup>53</sup>

I reported earlier on the perceived negative and inadequate role of the police in many riots. Other security bodies generated similar negative reports. On the whole, the army appears much better in the course of various riots than the other security forces, at least in the non-Muslim press. The army often has come in when the other security agencies were clearly unable or unwilling to handle the situation. But sometimes even they seemed involved in negative ways. I am hesitatingly wondering whether this situation is increasing under the Obasanjo regime. The Tiv people of Zaki Biam, Benue State, can testify even about an army gone amuck by gunning down hundreds of people early in the new century. Christian women, after the Miss World debacle in Kaduna during 2002, likewise asked about uniformed soldiers attacking innocent civilians. They are not the only ones.

The major Muslim complaint about all security forces, including the army, is that they are pro-Christian. The Council of Ulama accused the army of waging war against Muslims

*to defend Christianity and persecute the Muslims. The army is the crusader force that is the sworn enemy of Islam. The State Security Services (SSS) are also at war with Islam, at the insistence of a Christian clique with which they have entered into a conspiracy to undermine the Muslim community. Muslims are in the majority. There is no reason for the imposition of Christian governors over Muslims. Muslims will not accept a situation whereby the nation's armed forces, the Police and the SSS are turned into bastions of Christianity, which can be marshalled out against Islam. Muslims all over the country are called upon to take all necessary steps to defend themselves, as they can no longer rely on the state security agencies.*<sup>54</sup>

These were no mere afterthoughts. They were repeated in other contexts. In a statement to the Karibi-Whyte Tribunal, appointed to investigate the Kafanchan ruckus, the Ulama wrote that

*the army let loose a reign of terror on the innocent and defenseless Muslims and made indiscriminate arrests in Katsina, Kaduna, Zaria and other places where more than one hundred thousand Muslims are now in army cells, with many of them including women and children.*<sup>55</sup>

An ordinary Muslim in Kaduna, Mohammed Awal, caught in the Miss World mayhem of 2002, charged,

*Our security agents actually contributed a lot. Instead of them defending the interests of the community, they were one-sided. So we are using this opportunity to call upon the federal government. Let them be sincere in a situation like this, let them give us justice, and not take a side.*

His charge is supported by Dr. Abdulrahman Suleiman, a medical doctor in a hospital where many Miss World victims were receiving treatment. Of the 200 victims his hospital treated, 180 came for gunshot treatment. Most of them claimed they were shot by soldiers, he reported.<sup>56</sup>

Lack of appropriate or simply inappropriate government action has also long been recognized with respect to government appointments. A typical instance was noted just before this book went to press. The SCSN requested that the recently re-elected President Obasanjo review the list of appointments he had made to the Federal Executive Council. Muslims are under-represented, according to them. JNI demanded “an explanation for the appointment of 42 ministers out of which only 16 are Muslims.” Ibrahim D. Ahmed, SCSN President, declared at a press conference that these and other appointments were “deliberately skewed to favour Christians.” There was, for example, not a single south-

ern Muslim amongst them. Then there is the issue of advisers. "In Obasanjo's appointment of Special Advisers, out of a total of sixty, forty-seven (or seventy-eight per cent) are Christians, while a mere thirteen (or twenty-two per cent) are Muslims." This situation "defies logic" and "is in complete disregard to the religious make-up of Nigeria and its laws." Ahmed then slipped in another issue as well. He wants "authorities at the Nigeria Defence Academy to reverse the decision to abolish the study of Arabic language at the institution." The reason for this demand is "Arabic has been in this country for centuries and it is the lingua franca of about eighty million Muslims, and the official language of at least seven members of the African Union, and at least ten members of OPEC."<sup>57</sup>

Complaints about representative appointments go back many years on both sides of the fence. Both claim to be under-represented! The basis of these claims is always the census, with both sides claiming majority status. The games go on....

#### **4. The Manipulation Factor**

Manipulation is often said to be a major factor in Nigerian riots: manipulation of religion, usually on behalf of religious, political, class, and other vested interests. It is really just another name for a certain style of politics. It could be argued that it is Nigeria's major political style. Yahaya Kwande, a former Nigerian ambassador and convert from Christianity to Islam, affirmed that religious conflicts are provoked just for such reasons.<sup>58</sup> L. J. Isa, at the time Kaduna State Military Administrator, also stated that people fomenting religious crises are doing so for their own selfish interests.<sup>59</sup> That is the short of it, with the longer following herewith.

Yusufu Bala Usman, a former history professor at ABU, has given us a working definition of manipulation that will underlie the discussion on the subject. It means "controlling the action of a person or group without that person or group knowing the goals,

purpose and method of that control and without even being aware that a form of control is being exercised on them at all.”<sup>60</sup>

The Potiskum riot is an example of Muslim manipulation of other Muslims in order to get at Christians. The pretext for this riot was the claim by Muslims that a nineteen-year old Christian girl wanted to convert to Islam but was prevented by her parents and the police. One official report asserted that this issue was used as a pretext for “political machinations by the Bolewa ethnic group in active collaboration with the Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups in Potiskum.” The state’s Police Commissioner claimed that the incident was a case of “manipulation of the Islamic religion for political purposes” in the interest of “the feudal emirate institution. Islam has become a ready tool to suppress the other ethnic groups.” He blamed the crisis on the Vice-Chairman of the Local Government, Yusufu Umar Kukuri, who “mobilised the fanatics to carry out the mayhem.” His goal was to eliminate “prominent Kare-Kare personalities, who are Christians.”<sup>61</sup> So, it appears that here we have a riot that involved manipulation for politico-religious reasons.

Politics and manipulation are often used to explain inter-religious crises in Nigeria. This explanation allows Muslims to blame other Muslims without blaming Islam. For example, the Oyo State branch of the Progressive Muslims Association of Nigeria accused “some self-appointed Muslim leaders” of creating a crisis between Christians and Muslims in the state. In condemning attacks on Christians, it explained that some Muslims were manipulating religion for political purposes. The group also condemned some Christian organisations for inflammatory statements. Christians and Muslims, the group advised, must co-exist peacefully. “Religious fanatics” amongst school principals should be replaced with more “liberal-minded ones.”<sup>62</sup>

Abdulkadir Balarabe Musa, the deposed civilian governor of Kaduna State, in his preface to Danbazau’s *Politics and Religion in*

*Nigeria*, recommends this book because “it traces the way manipulation of religion for gaining political power” has taken root in Nigeria. He talks of “fraudulent misuse of religion for political advantage.” An exploiting class is using religion “to gain political power” as well as to accumulate wealth. CAN, according to this former governor, is guilty of fomenting “religious politics.” It is not out to protect Christians so much as the vested interest of its leaders. “Everybody knows,” he asserts. They exploit ordinary Christians by exacting from them great fortunes supposedly to be used for “religious purposes,” but actually used for their mansions and expensive cars.

According to Musa, Muslim organisations like JNI are no different. They have “used the sharia controversy” to protect their own vested interests. Traditional rulers especially are accused of “hiding behind Islam” to further their own interests, and they do so with the cooperation of the military, police, courts, and everyone else. It has become so bad that Muslims prefer the common court system to the Muslim courts, for the latter have become too corrupt.<sup>63</sup>

In his foreword to the same book, Mudi Sipikin recommends Danbazau’s book because it exposes “how these drummer boys of the Europeans hide behind the cover of religion to exploit the people..., and to foment violent conflicts, in order to prevent the people from understanding their hypocrisy, misdeeds and crimes.”

This exposé, he adds, is particularly valuable, because the writer saw it all with his own eyes.<sup>64</sup>

Danbazau and the authors of his Foreword and Preface were all members of Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), a largely Muslim political party in opposition to mainstream northern Muslim feudal politics. It fiercely opposed exploitation and oppression, and identified it freely among both Muslims and Christians. The party placed the entire package of manipulation, exploitation, and oppression in the wider context of Nigerian history since colonial times and even of international politics. It

viewed the relationship between the West and Nigeria in the classic Marxist perspective of metropole versus periphery. Danbazau's book must be understood in that context.

According to Danbazau, manipulation of religion for political and/or economic reasons preceded the riots that are the object of this study series. Behind it all are Western imperialist designs to break up Nigeria, or at least, to weaken it, so they could access its mineral wealth. In the process they used and manipulated various agents as well as weaknesses, as they pursued their policy of divide and conquer. The weaknesses were the ethnic, religious, and political divisions of the country that were exploited on their behalf by the Nigerian "hunting dogs" of the imperialists.

Prior to independence, the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC), the large party representing traditional Muslim feudal interests, supported by the colonialists, had already threatened to break up the country. They did this by various means, including the sponsorship of violence. In the early 1950s the NPC sponsored a terrorist youth group by the name *Jam'iyyar Mahaukata* or "Brigade of the Insane." During the 1970s, Muslim *mallams* or teachers "used Islam to campaign for their patrons seeking political office and who...were holding the reins of power." They "insinuated that anybody who did not support the party of their patrons [the NPC] has abandoned" Islam. At that time, only Muslims used this ploy.

Subsequently, Christians began similar tactics through CAN. They "openly plunged headlong into politics, ostensibly to protect Christianity and fight for the rights of Christians who, CAN leaders claimed, are being dominated by Muslims, particularly the Hausa-Fulani."

Danbazau now realized that a "new era of political rivalries using religious sentiments had arrived." "Bitter verbal exchanges" between leaders of the two religions ensued. One Muslim *mallam* asserted that a Muslim must become the next president.<sup>65</sup> A Christian leader

“promptly replied that Nigeria would burn should such an event happen.” The development of such a spirit was encouraged even though in the past the religion of the President had not been an issue, with Christians supporting Muslim leaders and vice versa. The “myopia” of these religious leaders has led to the riots we described in Monograph One, “ostensibly because of religious differences.”

Danbazau was puzzled by the Christian invitation to evangelist Reinhard Bonnke to preach in Kano. What did they think to gain? It is well known that Christian missions have minimal effect in traditional Muslim communities the world over. He wondered why they brought in this evangelist when there was no chance of gaining converts.<sup>66</sup> Christians embarked on a vigorous advertising campaign with posters plastered everywhere that used the provocative language of crusade. It is difficult to believe, wrote Danbazau, that CAN did all this unaware that “there are ambitious politicians of both religions who, in a period of elections, would capitalise on it to ignite violent disturbances for their own selfish ends.” So, many people were asking, what exactly is CAN after? Danbazau thought he knew the answer.<sup>67</sup>

During the reign of President Shagari, the Muslim civilian president from 1978-1983, a new form of manipulation allegedly took place. Several Muslim-dominated northern states voted opposition parties into power. The federal government of Shagari promptly started manipulating various elements in those states to weaken their governments. These governments and their people were put under heavy pressure and discriminated against in the delivery of development projects. Among the casualties was Musa Balarabe, the Muslim NEPU Governor of Kaduna, who was impeached.

Danbazau then goes on to accuse the Shagari federal government of encouraging the Maitatsine uprisings. These occurred in northern states that he describes as “predominantly Muslim,” that were ruled by parties in opposition to the federal government.<sup>68</sup> He is accusing the federal government of manipulating the Maitatsine

situation to achieve its own political ends, without the latter having any idea of how they were being used.

It is interesting that General Buhari, who overthrew Shagari's civilian regime and re-established the military regime, more than two decades later asked Balarabe for forgiveness for his part in the political shenanigans of that day. He wrote to Balarabe, "Your impeachment in June, 1981, might be a product of conspiracy, but you will agree that it was done in accordance with the constitution."<sup>69</sup> This was, in other words, an admission that following the letter of the law does not prevent conspiracy and manipulation. These can be practiced even within the legal system.

Religious crises, as Monograph One has amply demonstrated, increased in intensity. One reason was "the petrol poured on the issue by a few agents of imperialism in the guise of Christian leaders, who claim to fight for the rights of Christians ostensibly threatened by Muslims." This was made worse by Muslims with powerful connections in government who kept "calling on their followers to come out and fight Christians in the political arena." It led to an aborted coup by the Christian Major Orkar and his call for excising five northern Muslim states from Nigeria. Danbazau suspects that "some Christian preachers may not altogether be innocent, when viewed from the speech of the...Major, and the preachers' sermons in Jos about a week before the coup attempt."

Though there is much in Danbazau's argumentation that I consider right on,<sup>70</sup> there are parts that I dispute. For one, there is his repeated insistence that the West wants to break up Nigeria. But it was imperial interests that created Nigeria by bundling a group of some 400 ethnic groups, ancient nations small and fairly large, within one set of external borders. Nigeria is an imperial creation! The West may want to exploit, manipulate, and control Nigeria, but I see no evidence that it wants to break up the country. It was the Muslim NPC who first threatened to dismantle it. Orkar may well have learnt his lesson from them.

Secondly, Danbazau's allegation that the Church and its missionaries, through "the Pope and other Christian notables," left no stone unturned to dismantle the country during the civil war, needs to be proven.<sup>71</sup> I know the Roman Catholic Church sent food and other emergency supplies into Biafra. After all, it had many adherents there. It would be unthinkable for it to just watch its people starve. Allegations that the church had sent weapons and supported the Biafran drive for independence need more than general statements to be credible. Though not a Roman Catholic, I was a missionary in Nigeria at the time and published an article in a Canadian magazine defending the integrity of Nigeria. Until proven otherwise, I regard the Vatican innocent—of this one!

Yusufu Bala Usman, introduced at the beginning of this section, belonged to the same NEPU crowd as did Danbazau. Though a descendant of a prominent traditional northern Muslim clan, he published much against feudalism and oppression. Sometimes he would sound like a Marxist, and could not be understood without reference to that philosophy. Like Danbazau, he espoused the Marxist scheme of metropole versus periphery. That led him to see Western imperialists behind every tree. Note well, that this and other references to Marxist notions do not mean I reject all of Usman's views or explanations. Many of them were right on. My main problem is that his Marxism tended to make him doctrinaire, ideological; it sometimes led to exaggeration.

Usman asked in the opening salvo of a lecture to students, "Why presume that religion is being manipulated in Nigeria today? What is the evidence? Is it actually a pattern of manipulation that is unfolding? Or is it merely one of contestation between various religious faiths?"

There are those who view the upheavals as a "healthy development of people becoming more conscious of their religion, as a way of life, and rejecting secularism. Others would say...that 'these

Christians' are being put in their place or that 'these Muslims' are now being dealt with properly...."

He lamented that "there is a significant number of influential people...who deny that religion is being manipulated to serve particular vested interests in Nigeria today." To Usman, who came out of the very centre of Muslim power, manipulation was obvious and pervasive, both nationally and globally.<sup>72</sup>

The manipulation of religion in Nigeria is the work of the "intermediary bourgeoisie," a class created "to serve as the link and intermediary between the people and the wealthy of Nigeria and the world capitalist system. It is created to serve as the leading agent of the trading post which has been and still is Nigeria."

The main economic characteristic of this trading post is that it exports raw materials and imports manufactured goods and services without producing anything.

Usman described the position of these gate men in a rather humorous way:

*Can this sort of person come out and frankly ask the people to follow him for what he is? So that he can take a piece of paper from one bank to another; from one factory to another, and make millions? What I mean is that the...bourgeois will cease to exist once the people can see clearly what his true nature is. Can anybody come out and say "Vote for me so that I can get contracts and build foreign bank accounts and houses with my foreign partners?" or "Follow me and listen to me so that I can get a plot at Ikoyi, and get a directorship and shares in UAC or Leventis?" or "Follow me so that I can get a big job and you can derive the satisfaction that, although you do not have one square meal a day and your daughter is deformed by and dying of chronic malaria, I am eating dinner costing fifteen naira at Federal Palace Suites Hotel on your behalf and that of others in our tribe and religion?" Can anybody come out and say that?*

*No! That is why this class has to obscure its trust role and function in our political economy. You cannot...win elections...on the platform that you want to own houses in Ikoyi or London.*

*The bourgeois cannot appear as he really is.... He has to find a cover. He cannot claim political leadership openly on the grounds that he is, or wants to be, an exporter-importer, a contractor, commission agent, shareholder, rentier, or rich bureaucrat. He has to take cover as a Muslim or Christian. He has to take cover as an Ibo, Hausa, Idoma or Efik. He has to take on disguises. He has to posture as a "majority" or a "minority." The manipulation of religion in Nigeria...is essentially a means of creating the context for this fancy-dress ball, for this charade of disguises. This game of masks!*

*The real basis of the manipulation of religion in Nigeria today is the need to obscure from the people of Nigeria a fundamental aspect of our reality: that is the domination of our political economy by a class of intermediaries who are being increasingly exposed. And this is to enable this class to cover themselves with religious and ethnic disguises in order to further entrench division among our people, slow down their awakening, at any cost, even the unity of our country...*

Usman warned his students that when they describe their campus clashes as "religious," they are also victims of manipulation. "You are doing what every cheap imperialistic huckster has done and is still doing—using religion to confuse and destabilise." He reminded them that when Murtala Muhammed, the military Head of State who toppled Gowon, announced that he was going to investigate the overseas assets of all governors and federal commissioners, including those of their associates, he was assassinated within ten days! This was an economic war over vested interests in which religion was used as a tool. Having seen the Nigerian elite operate, I largely concur with Usman's description of their role.<sup>73</sup> Whether this is the *complete*

explanation for the prevalence of religious violence is another question. Here the factors of ideology and its resultant selectivity and exaggeration appear to be playing a role as well.

President Babangida's explanation of the Kafanchan riots followed the manipulation model. Rejecting the religious motive, he declared them "carefully planned and masterminded by evil men with sinister motives, who saw the incident in Kafanchan as an opportunity to subvert the Government and the nation." He called it a "civilian equivalent of an attempted coup."<sup>74</sup> Nigeria, he declared, cannot afford to "allow a group of ambitious and mindless power seekers to push us into yet another civil war."<sup>75</sup>

None of these interpreters were original. A decade earlier there was an interesting figure in northern Nigerian politics by the name of Gambo Sawaba, the first northern female Muslim politician of note. She denied that the vandalism in Zaria during the 1987 riots was perpetrated for religious reasons. She claimed,

*They are members of the Mafia who wish to hide behind the curtain of religion to pull down Babangida's government. You don't know that Babangida comes from the Northern Minority, and to these political opportunists here, anybody who does not come from Sokoto, Kano, Bauchi or Borno does not qualify to lead the country. They believe that this country is their personal property and once someone else is at the head, they cause trouble for him.*<sup>76</sup>

Such words, coming from a Muslim northern politician who can be regarded as possessing much inside information, cannot be ignored. It is the language associated with the late Aminu Kano, one of the fathers of Nigerian politics and the founder of NEPU, the party to which Danbazau, Yusufu Bala Usman, and Balarabe Musa belonged. They all speak the same language. Sawaba was really describing a climate of lawlessness where people do what they want under whatever cloak they find useful.

This climate was adduced as the real cause of the riotous atmosphere by Abubakar Balarabe Musa. Commenting on the issue of justice in connection with the 1992 Zangon-Kataf Tribunal, he dismissed the notion of justice altogether. "What justice? You cannot talk of justice where there is no law and order in Nigeria. Anytime anyone feels he can do anything and get away with it, they will do it. And in Nigeria, they will get away." He continued, "There is no law, and therefore, no justice. To me, the Zangon-Kataf crisis was not special or peculiar. Communal and religious riots are happening all over Nigeria. That is due to lawlessness."<sup>77</sup>

These lawless manipulators are often aided in their mission by hoodlums, young people and even children, especially the *almajirai*. Sometimes these "assistants" just join the fray to have a chance to loot and kill. At other times, they were encouraged by their elders and sometimes actually hired for this purpose. In Volume One we have seen their involvement repeatedly. In the wake of the Kaduna 2000 riots, tensions ran high also in Niger state. Rumours had it that Muslim youth were about to attack Christians. Governor Kure himself had to go around, assuring Christians that the "hoodlums" who were hoping to "to reap from the likely confusion...would be dealt with." It has long been one of the classic versions popular with governments, and continues to be so<sup>78</sup>—but not only of governments.

Even a Muslim leader of the caliber of Lateef Adegbite resorts to this explanation. While pleading with Muslim youths to restrict themselves to peaceful demonstrations, he felt that "it was unfortunate that miscreants often cash in on such peaceful demonstrations to embark on the killing of people and the destruction of property, saying 'true Muslims would never partake in or condone such nefarious acts.'<sup>80</sup> Though the involvement of "miscreants" is not disputable, to free "true Muslims" from all "such nefarious acts" does not have the ring of truth, as the video clipping about El-Zakzaky clearly demonstrates.

A renowned Islamic scholar, Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi, condemned the action of Muslims who attacked and killed Christians that knew nothing about a certain blasphemous publication that provided the spark for the Miss World ruckus in 2002.<sup>80</sup> These perpetrators, he asserted, “should be regarded as transgressors.” Alternatively, “Muslims should have sued [the newspaper] and the writer of the article rather than attack innocent Christians. Those who carried out that attack at this period of Ramadan cannot be regarded as true Muslims,” he stressed.<sup>81</sup> He did not identify the perpetrators more specifically, but Islam is absolved, a gimmick we keep coming across. It would appear that he regarded them either as renegade politicians or as hoodlums, a difference not all that great! A ruckus in Lagos between Hausa and Oodua Peoples’ Congress led to some 20 deaths, a lot of seriously wounded people, and burnt houses. Bola Tinubu, the Muslim state governor, blamed it on hoodlums, holding neither party responsible.<sup>82</sup>

Dan Isaacs, in the shadow of the Miss World episode, reported that many Muslims “are frustrated with the failure of government to play a part in reducing tensions between the Christian and Muslim communities.” One Nafiu Baba Ahmed of Kaduna, felt that “as long as we have this crop of leadership, who see things from a myopic point of view, from a one-track minded angle,” no relief will come. “It is political,” he charged.

It gets more complicated as we go. There is also the involvement of foreigners from other West African countries that get involved in the various fracas. A number of people from the Niger Republic were caught participating in Kaduna 2000 and arrested, with one being killed by soldiers.<sup>83</sup> Reports had it that “some bandits, allegedly from Chad and Niger Republic” invaded Plateau State and attacked the village of Fajul.<sup>84</sup>

## THE ECONOMIC FACTOR

We have seen that Bilkisu Yusuf has offered a variety of causes. However, for her the real cause of the Zangon-Kataf episode lies in the poverty of the area. There is an “army of unemployed Kataf and Hausa youth roaming around in frustration.” That has long been a “ticking time bomb” that finally exploded. Beside this problem, those of tribe and religion play an insignificant role. The theme is a common one, going way back to the Maitatsine riot. I will restrict myself to a few statements on this theme from the more recent scene.

There is a general recognition that poverty has made people eager for change at almost any price. It has contributed to the volatile climate, for it has made the people open to anyone promising almost any improvement, anyhow. Minister of Women's Affairs and Youth Development, Aisha Isma'il, declared that it is the poor and oppressed who are clamouring for change, because they are tired of exploitation.<sup>85</sup> In response to the Kaduna 2000 mayhem, the Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, Ghali U. Na'Aba, traced much of it “to the prevailing poverty in the country.”<sup>86</sup>

This is a refrain one keeps hearing in the riot literature. It really underlies some of the previously described causes. Manipulation, for example, is clearly possible only when there are enough people desperate for radical change. Hence I do not feel it necessary to spend more time and space on the subject.

## THE JEALOUSY FACTOR

The “jealousy factor” has reference to the oft-stated observation that when Hausa-Fulani people move into an area, they are often welcomed by the local people, but in due time they become more wealthy than the local people. This process sets into motion the development of jealousy in the hearts of the host people. We read earlier about the Bachama versus Hausa-Fulani conflict. The Hausa-Fulani claimed that jealousy had set in amongst the Bachama when

they noticed that it did not take long for these strangers to become more prosperous than the locals. It was this jealousy that set in motion the increasing friction between the two groups.<sup>87</sup>

With reference to the Zangon-Kataf episode, Lawal Yusufu Muhammad represented the sentiment well in his letter to the editor of *Citizen* magazine. He wrote,

*The bitter truth is that so long as people spend the whole of their time at "Burkutu joints,"<sup>88</sup> rather than engaging in productive ventures, so long will they continue to be backward. They should therefore change their profligate and indolent lifestyle and stop accusing others of dominating their economy.<sup>89</sup>*

In the same issue, Bilkisu Yusuf referred to and rejected the "so-called Hausa-Fulani domination" as "misdirected envy of the Kataf at the success of a more industrious people."<sup>90</sup> Earlier, during her days in Kano, she referred to the jealousy factor also with respect to Kafanchan. The Hausa migrants, she explained,

*are more successful and the indigenes are marginalised. They feel their powers are being usurped economically, politically, and otherwise. With that, there is bound to be some tribal rivalry and jealousy. What we need now is some incitement through religious preaching and, before you know it, there is a riot.<sup>91</sup>*

Danazumi Musa referred to certain economic factors in the second round of the Bauchi riots in addition to the political. Though the Sayawa are good farmers, he averred, they are not enterprising like the Hausa-Fulani, who inherited considerable wealth from their pre-*jihad* ancestors. Somehow, the indigenes were hoping to improve their lot by destroying the economy of their neighbours.<sup>92</sup> Though Musa calls this an economic factor, I prefer to call it simply jealousy.

That this jealousy has served as a powerful engine in these developments can hardly be denied.<sup>93</sup>

## ▲ SUMMARY

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This final section of the chapter summarizes the major points of Muslim interpretations of these riots. The overall attitude is one of deep anger and indignation that expresses itself in various ways:

- Anger at the long history of crusades and colonialism. Current developments are seen as an extension of these historical movements.
- Anger at and deep hatred for secularism, which is identified as a Christian imposition. It is the devil's tool to undermine Islam.
- Anger at an alleged joint conspiracy of Christians and government against Islam. They are partners in crime. Government security agencies refuse to safeguard the Muslim community, for they favour Christians. Together they oppress Islam.
- Anger at everyone's intolerance of Islam, while Islam is the personification of tolerance.

In addition to anger, the Muslim attitude is characterized by the following:

- General insistence on Muslim innocence in these events. Everyone else is guilty. It is my conviction that this attitude is due to an inadequate sense of sin in Islam. Islam does not know the depth of the Christian cry of confession, "*Mea culpa!*" While Christians have long ago apologized for and expressed repentance over the crusades and colonialism and taken the church and their own countries to task, I have yet to be informed of any Muslim apology for similar atrocities in their history. Given the circumstances as understood by them as a people pushed to the wall, Muslims defend their participation in these Nigeria riots as understandable and legitimate.

- Those who resort to politics and manipulation as the explanation for riots do have room for blaming fellow Muslims. However, these Muslims are then portrayed as misguided or pushed to the wall. Islam itself cannot be blamed for these events.
- Total lack of any attempt to understand the non-Muslim point of view or to exercise some empathy with respect to them.
- Ambivalence about the relationship between Islam and politics. While the classic position is that Islam and politics are one and the same, when it is advantageous to them, Muslims will seek to separate them. The attempt at separation does not seem real or genuine. It looks more like a ploy to free Islam from its own unpleasant and unpopular consequences.

In conclusion, there is the issue about the stance of the more moderate and representative Muslims in Nigeria. If they clearly distanced themselves from these riots and clearly condemned them, one might dismiss these events as mere expressions of Fundamentalist extremism. However, apart from some mumbling about generalities, political manipulation and hoodlums, no clear statement of rejection has been forthcoming. We meet here the same silence about these Nigerian riots as people have noticed with respect to 9/11—a disturbing silence that carries an ominous aura of conspiracy. Of course, there are occasional expressions of disapproval, but these are often attempts to exonerate Islam from the onus of violence. One gets the impression that “moderate” Muslims are secretly grateful for the dirty work their Fundamentalist co-religionists do for them. They would not easily be provoked to do these things themselves, for such rioting seems barbaric and uncultured. Nevertheless, it appears to me that they are happy someone is doing it. They may even fund these activities. As they see it, their purposes are achieved without the blame falling on either them or their religion. The Fundamentalists are the running dogs of the “moderates” and serve their purposes admirably.

This thesis, it will be seen in the next volume, was firmly supported by ex-Muslim Ambassador Tanko Yusuf. Without this thesis, the Muslim picture in Nigeria makes little sense to me.

Can the same be said about 9/11? It's a question ordinary people frequently ask—and sometimes answer in the affirmative.<sup>94</sup>

## ▲ NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> *Citizen*, 15 June/92, pp. 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> B. Yusuf, 15 June/92.

<sup>3</sup> Note how the speaker characterizes Nigeria's riotous history as "sharia crises."

<sup>4</sup> A. Adegbite, "*The Constitutional...*," pp. 4, 14.

<sup>5</sup> L. Omokhodion, "*We Must Enlighten....*" It must not be forgotten that Gumi and many other Muslims quoted in these studies are not always fluent in English. Hence their utterances, often off the cuff, may not always sound as intelligent or reasonable as you might expect from such leaders. They are expected to express themselves in English for the benefit of English speakers who may have learned no other language. Were they to express themselves in Hausa or Arabic, they would sound much more authoritative and reasonable. So, do not let the "creative" English put you off.

<sup>6</sup> A. Orire, "*Sharia....*" p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Second International*, pp. 5, 10, 13.

<sup>8</sup> "Emir Prevents Mayhem in Zaria." *New Nigerian*, 25 Feb/00, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> The initial draft of this material was written at a time of many scandals in America's business world. However, people recognize that these scandals do not represent the core of business and hence they do not call for the abolition of business in general. Nor have I heard calls for the abolition of government for its corruption. While that distinction is applied in most sectors, for some strange reason, many fail to apply it to religion and consider its distortions to represent its core.

<sup>10</sup> M. Kukah, 1993, p. 190

<sup>11</sup> 6 Apr/87, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> A. Akpata, "*Stamping out....*" p. 17.

<sup>13</sup> *New Nigerian*, 12 July/2001, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Director, "*The Hausa-Fulani....*"

<sup>15</sup> *Democrat*, 19 Apr/94. It may be useful to realize that the *Democrat* is generally regarded as a Muslim newspaper. See also *NS*, 26 Apr/94.

<sup>16</sup> Warnings against confusing politics and religion on the part of

Muslims puzzle me, since Muslims insist repeatedly that the two cannot be separated in Islam. Are such statements perhaps indicative of denominational differences between various Muslim groups? I rather suspect it is a ploy used to defend Islam, but not to be taken seriously in other contexts where their unity is more commonly emphasized. It is a device of convenience taken over from secularism. Such public statements can seldom be taken at face value; one must read between the lines. I can do that with Christian statements, but I am more hesitant with Muslim ones. Christians, of course, mostly identify Islam and the Hausa people. To their mind, anything the Hausa do is by definition a Muslim act. Under more normal conditions Muslims would do the same. It is curious, though, that in the context of evangelism, Christians emphasize that there are many non-Muslims among the Hausa. The reason for that curious contradiction is that the non-Muslim Hausa, called Maguzawa, are not among the movers and shakers and, until recently, have not been involved in the Christian versus Muslim struggles.

<sup>17</sup> NS, 26 Apr/94.

<sup>18</sup> *New Nigerian*, 4 Mar/00, pp. 1, 2.

<sup>19</sup> *New Nigerian*, 2 Mar/00, p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> "Calling General Abacha." *Al-Madinah*, Nov/95, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> *New Nigerian*, 24 Feb/00, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> *New Nigerian*, 25 Feb/00, pp. 1-2. Please note the ambiguous double quotation marks in the second article.

<sup>23</sup> *New Nigerian*, 25 Feb/00, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> "Kaduna Riots: Islamic Scholar Blames Govt's Inaction." *New Nigerian*, 2 Mar/00, p. 15.

<sup>25</sup> *New Nigerian*, 26 Feb/00, p. 1; 27 Feb/00, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> *New Nigerian*, 13 July/01, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> M. Riyom, "The History of..." pp. 2-3.

<sup>28</sup> A. Dan-Bauchi, "The Supremacy..." pp. 48-54.

<sup>29</sup> In fact, during the 1991 Bonnke riot in Kano, several hospitals, including those owned by government, were targeted (D. Babarinsa, "Allahu Akbar..." p. 15.)

<sup>30</sup> O. Awowede, *TELL*, 6 Mar/00, p. 16.

<sup>31</sup> K. Nwezeh, 7 Feb/03.

<sup>32</sup> K. Maier, p. 164.

<sup>33</sup> U. Salihu, "Why Do We...?" pp. 111-112.

<sup>34</sup> B. Yusuf, "Katafisation...." *Citizen*, 15 June/92.

<sup>35</sup> *Newswatch*, 20 Nov/95, pp. 31-32.

<sup>36</sup> M. Kukah, 1993, p. 202. Quote taken from *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, 9 Oct/67.

<sup>37</sup> M. Kukah, 1993, p. 202.

<sup>38</sup> B. Yusuf, "Katafisation...." In the heat of the moment, Yusuf apparently forgot that this same question was often raised in the context of apartheid. If she had realised that the application of that rhetorical question can cut both ways, she might have thought twice before applying it.

<sup>39</sup> M. Jega, "The Road...." p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> M. Kukah, p. 204.

<sup>41</sup> M. Kukah., 1993, p. 186.

<sup>42</sup> M. Jega, "The Road...." p. 12.

<sup>43</sup> J. Lohor, 14 Oct/02. G. Isenyo, 17 Oct/02.

<sup>44</sup> Lawal Y. Mohammed, *Citizen*, 15 June/92, p. 6. Remember a similar letter in the same issue from Abdullahi Pindiga quoted earlier in this chapter.

<sup>45</sup> *Newswatch*, 20 Nov/95, pp. 31-32.

<sup>46</sup> M. Jega, "The Road...." p. 16

<sup>47</sup> U. Sanda, "Avoidable...." Sanda's article constitutes Appendix 6 in Volume One.

<sup>48</sup> M. Kukah, 1993, p. 190.

<sup>49</sup> *New Nigerian*, 2 Mar/00, p. 15.

<sup>50</sup> This riot is not covered in Vol. 1, for it falls outside of our time parameters. However, it received more international attention than any other Nigerian riot due to the international nature of the spark. The dynamics and nature of the riot were no different from the previous ones. See J. Boer, *TCNN Research Bulletin*, 3 Mar/03 and *Woord en Daad*, Number 386, Vol. 43, 2003.

<sup>51</sup> Akhaine, *Guardian*, 25 Nov/02, 2 Dec/02.

<sup>52</sup> Akhaine, 6 Dec/02.

<sup>53</sup> Akhaine, 6 Dec/02.

<sup>54</sup> Kukah, 1993, pp. 195-196.

<sup>55</sup> Kukah, p. 196.

<sup>56</sup> D. Isaacs, 20 Dec/02.

<sup>57</sup> A. Madugba, 28 July/03. Not knowing anything about the Academy, I have no opinion on the demand for teaching Arabic. However, the claim about the use of Arabic in Nigeria is highly exaggerated, if not downright false. It is clearly part of the ongoing "census war." Having observed the imbalance earlier, I judge the complaint about appointments reasonable.

<sup>58</sup> *NS*, 15 Mar/94.

<sup>59</sup> Reading between the lines, I detect here an attempt to clear Islam from any blame.

<sup>60</sup> "*The Manipulation....*" pp. 11-12.

<sup>61</sup> O. Minchakpu, *TC* 1/95, pp. 10-14.

<sup>62</sup> *NS*, 25 Apr/94.

<sup>63</sup> A. B. Musa, "Preface," in L. Danbazau, pp. vii-ix.

<sup>64</sup> M. Sipikin, "Foreword," in Danbazau, p. v.

<sup>65</sup> The reference is most likely to Sheikh Gumi.

<sup>66</sup> Though Danbazau's opinion is widespread indeed, it does not hold true for northern Nigeria. One meets Christian ex-Muslims everywhere in surprising numbers. It is true that such converts are not likely to make a public show of their interest, but that says more about their fear and Muslim intolerance than about the number of such people.

<sup>67</sup> Danbazau, p. 43.

<sup>68</sup> Danbazau, pp. 25-27.

<sup>69</sup> Usigbe, *Vanguard*, 21 Nov/02. It was, apparently, the season to be gracious and forgiving. Buhari overthrew the civilian President Shegari and was, in turn, overthrown by Babangida. It was all Muslims versus Muslims. The Sultan of Sokoto brought all these violent Muslim parishioners together for a session of mutual reconciliation. In typical fashion, the occa-

sion was that they had a common Christian enemy, namely President Obasanjo, whom northern Muslim elite wanted to defeat at the next election (Ibe and Oyerinde, 13 Jan/03). It appears that the Christian Yakubu Gowon, the second Military Head of State and, at the time, chairman of the Board of Patrons of the Arewa Consultation Forum, started the reconciliation dynamics by reminding Buhari and Babangida that he, Gowon, had forgiven those who toppled him and that they should do the same. His rationale was that all northerners should help develop the north and promote its unity and interests (J. Lohor, 22 Aug/02). However, closure did not come till early 2004, when Buhari “announced the resolution of the rift between him and... Babangida.” This time the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) is given the credit for healing the rift, “arguing that the unhealthy rivalry constituted an impediment to the development of the north” (A Madugba, 7 Jan/04).

<sup>70</sup> See my *Caught in the Middle*, pp. 116-118.

<sup>71</sup> The discussion on Danbazau is based on his entire monograph. I resisted the insertion of too many footnotes at this point.

<sup>72</sup> Pp. 11-12. All references to Usman in this section are from his “*The Manipulation...*”

<sup>73</sup> Pp. 21-26. Again, see my own description of these gatemens in my *Caught in the Middle*, pp. 117-119.

<sup>74</sup> Please remember the cartoon earlier in this chapter about this being declared a coup.

<sup>75</sup> M. Kukah, 1994, p. 190.

<sup>76</sup> R. Shawulu, p. 126. Quoted from *Newsbreed Magazine*, 10 Apr/89, p. 8.

<sup>77</sup> Nnanna, *TSM* 14 Feb/93, p. 8.

<sup>78</sup> *New Nigerian*, 27 Feb/00, p. 2. “Kaduna Crises are Political—Minister.” *TD*, 22 Dec/02.

<sup>79</sup> *Gulloma*, 16 Nov/01.

<sup>80</sup> It is likely that an article dealing with this episode will feature in a later volume in this series.

<sup>81</sup> Akhaime, *Guardian*, 13 Dec/02.

<sup>82</sup> Y. Aderibigbe, *Guardian*, 5 Feb/02.

<sup>83</sup> I. Abraham, “*Agony...*”

<sup>84</sup> Abdulsalami, I. 24 Oct/02.

<sup>85</sup> *New Nigerian*, 31 Jan/00, p. 1.

<sup>86</sup> *New Nigerian*, 2 Mar/00, p. 1.

<sup>87</sup> Dangogo. “*Kisan Gillar....*”; *Alkalami*, 15 July/88, pp. 5, 15.

<sup>88</sup> Burkutu is an inexpensive traditional local beer.

<sup>89</sup> L. Y. Mohammed, *Citizen*, 15 June/92, p. 6.

<sup>90</sup> B. Yusuf, “*Katafisation....*”

<sup>91</sup> A. Akpaka, “*Stamping out....*” p. 17.

<sup>92</sup> See Appendix 4.

<sup>93</sup> *Citizen*, 21 Oct/91, pp. 7, 12-18. *TELL*, 28 Oct/91, pp. 13-16. *Newswatch*, 28 Oct/91, pp. 14-18. *African Concord*, 28 Oct/91, p. 33.

<sup>94</sup> Even today one John Nixon from Vancouver, Canada, asked, “Where is the voice of moderate Islam?” He laments that few members of the moderate Muslims “disavow in public the well-documented excesses committed almost daily in the name of their religion.” Though many Muslims, according to him, privately disagree, for example, with suicide bombing in Israel, “few will say so publicly” (*Vancouver Sun*, 8 Jan/03).