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THE FOUNDATIONS OF RADICAL ISLAM IN NGAOUNDERE : 1835-1907

Introduction

In many Black African countries where Islam has been important, for instance in Nigeria, Niger, Guinea or in Senegal, Islamic Brotherhoods or Sects (*Tariqa*) were the forum and organ for transmitting Islamic doctrine and virtues. Brotherhoods reflected pluralism in Islam as they were often in competition with each other. The Brotherhoods had their own independent administrations which were run by persons of reputation, commanding religious authority. This way the Brotherhoods guaranteed the pursuance of idealism, and functioned as forum for stimulating religious debates. They integrated individuals and provided checks and balances against personal excesses.

Under colonial rule, control of the Brotherhoods formed a major preoccupation of the administrators. The divisions fitted well into their scheme of divide and rule. They found it more convenient to manage associations of Muslims than unorganised individuals. The colonial authorities could thus reach the population through the Brotherhood structures and, in case of problems, their leaders could reach the colonial authorities through credible and committed representatives. Referring to the Mourides of Senegal, many authors described the organisation as a state

within a State⁽¹⁾. In West Africa this was true of existing Brotherhoods with large following like was the case of the Tijaniyya and Ahmadiyya because they played both political and religious roles indiscriminately.

The history of Islam in Cameroon shows that Cameroon was an exception to these developments. Progress of Islam through Brotherhoods and fundamentalist demands have not been a major feature in Cameroon. This paper seeks to explain the failure of radical Islam in Cameroon by exposing a fundamental conflict between the search for purity and the maintenance of social stability in the Lamidate of Ngaoundere.

The history of Islam in Ngaoundere can be discussed under three major phases ; the period before Ardo Njobdi's invasion in 1835, the period of Fulbe hegemony and finally the period under colonial rule. The period before 1835 is a background to this study and therefore has had only a cursory consideration.

Before 1835

In considering the first phase that is, before 1835, the focus is on Ardo Njobdi, founder of Ngaoundere, and on the conditions of the Muslim community. Ardo Njobdi belonged to a family which had led a fraction of Wollarbe Fulbe for over a century. He and his group migrated to Ngaoundere from Turua in Bundang on the confluence of the rivers Deo and Faro, tributaries of the river Benue. They were herdsman and their entire life centred around seeking prosperity in their pastoral activities. The Ardo exercised leadership by virtue of his ability to administer the affairs of the group justly and led it to prosperity. As a Muslim community Islam was a uniting factor. But living in the midst of predominantly non-Muslim peoples, the Muslims limited their practice to themselves. It is said that the reason for Fulbe migration into the region was not to proselytise and spread Islam to those who were not born Muslims, but to find

1. See, for example, J. Copans, *Les marabouts de l'arachide*, Paris, 1980 ; C. Coulon, *Renouveau islamique et dynamique politique au Sénégal*, Bordeaux, 1983 ; D. Cruise O'Brien, *The mourides of Senegal, Political and Economic structure of an Islamic Brotherhood*, Oxford, 1971.

better conditions for pastoralism ⁽²⁾. Islam was therefore a Fulbe ethnic symbol and a vector of their cultural expression. They did not seek to convert the surrounding populations to Islam, but they were willing to render services, sometimes of a medical and religious character for instance, making and selling charms (*laya*), to the non-Muslims because of the potency of Koranic prayers. This obviously led to tolerance and syncretism among the different religious expressions.

In retrospect, as more people became enlightened in Islam, the period has been described by post-jihad scholars as one of ignorance and darkness (*jahiliya*). This label should be understood within the background of a population which was very much preoccupied with the supernatural and was polytheistic. It constantly sought remedies against evil spirits and jinns, magic and witchcraft plagues, ill-luck and fear of the unknown from many and often contradictory sources. The religions of the non-Muslims were not seen as in competition with or in opposition to Islam. Under acephalous conditions, group or village isolation and independence was the order of the day. And since land and other natural resources were in abundance for a limited population, settlers in the same neighbourhoods easily developed interests around kingship, fertility cults, defence and economic exchanges. Thus, while it is true from an Islamic perspective that the period was characterised by ignorance of the Faith, the peoples inhabiting the Adamawa plateau were engaged in mixing old and new customs and remodelling their sociological environment.

Another peculiarity of the community was its isolation from important Islamic centres. Looking wider afield in Hausaland and Borno, the Fulbe settled among people who at least professed Islam. Through the visits of Sharifs, pilgrims, clerics or scholars and traders from other Muslim lands, they remained constantly exposed to currents of Muslim ideas. The situation of the Fulbe

2. E. Mohammadou, *Fulbe Hooseere : les royaumes foulbe du plateau de l'Adamaoua au XIX^e siècle*, Tokyo, 1978, p. 146 ; M.-Z. Njeuma, *Fulani Hegemony in Yola (Old Adamawa), 1809-1902*, CEPER, 1978, pp. 50ff. For pastoral potentials see J. Domergue, « La région de l'Adamawa », *Monographie camerounaise*, n° 22, 1953, Archives nationales, Yaoundé.

in the Benue region was entirely different. Not only did they bring Islam to the region for the first time, but also their region lay outside the normal trade and pilgrim routes that linked the Sudan to core Muslim centres in North Africa and Asia. This naturally stunted growth in orthodox Islamic sciences, hindered fanaticism and led to much inbreeding in their knowledge of Islam.

The steps to found the lamidate were directly linked with the successes Uthman dan Fodio of Sokoto (Nigeria) had since 1804 in replacing the Hausa and Borno rulers by new men who swore allegiance to him. Thus inspired, the Muslim Fulbe who inhabited the upper Benue river region became partisans of Uthman when he gave authority to modibbo Adama of Yola (Nigeria) to conduct Holy War (jihad) and strengthen the tradition of the Prophet. It led to political and religious revolution which the Muslims achieved by organising political units called the emirates. In order to complete the process, and in response to Uthman's instructions, Adama in turn authorised the creation of over forty sub-emirates (lamidates) including Ngaoundere⁽³⁾.

However, religious criteria could not be the only yardstick for nominating persons to leadership positions in the new construct and territorial organisation in view of the paucity of learned men (*modibbe*) in the region. Consequently most of the pre-jihad ardo'en, as in Ngaoundere, still found themselves at the head of the lamidate authority system irrespective of their understanding and commitment to achieve the purificationist objectives of the post-jihad era. But what was significant for Islam was that their roles changed. They assumed greater religious responsibilities in spreading Islam as a universal civilisation and managing the lamidate system which at the same time educated the Muslims and protected their evangelising efforts.

An obstacle to the Turua-Fulbe was their peculiar conservative nature. Among the leading Muslims were many successful cattle magnates. True, the jihad had led to Muslim ascendancy, but it meant breaking long standing friendly relations with the

3. For political history of the emirate see especially, Njeuma, *Fulani Hegemony*; S. Abubakar, *The Lamibe of Fombina; a political History of Adamawa, 1809-1901*, London/Zaria, 1977.

neighbouring non-Muslim populations. It also meant supporting a period of instability and insecurity with all the attendant risks to their cattle. Thus between 1809 and 1835 opinion in the Turua society was split on the wisdom to transform their society into a jihad machine to conquer the Adamawa plateau. The Fulbe knew the value of the plateau for the prosperity of pastoral activities because for many years this was their dry season transhumance territory. But they were also aware that the Belaka Mbum who ruled over these territories would not submit to Ardo Njobdi without a fight, probably resulting in protracted hostilities. Victory could not be achieved by sending mercenaries from Turua to the plateau. It required that the Fulbe first take up residence on the plateau and, from that base, attack the Belaka if he and his people refused to convert to Islam peacefully.

Ngaoundere and the Uthmaniyya System

About 1835 Njobdi and his followers finally settled on the plateau as guests of the Belaka Mbum by name Koiya. With the help of forces from longtime established and neighbouring lamidates of Rai Bouba and Tibati they attacked Koiya when he refused to surrender his territory and convert to Islam. The collapse of Koiya's resistance resulted in the founding of Ngaoundere as a new lamidate in the emirate of Adamawa. The lamidate of Ngaoundere prospered rapidly because the principal ethnic group, the Mbum, agreed to convert to Islam and to jointly carry on the jihad with the Fulbe. During the jihad many villages were destroyed and the inhabitants enslaved and transferred to swell the population of Ngaoundere. To join the ranks of the Muslim elite were immigrants who came from Hausaland, Baghirmi and Wadai to seek fortune and strengthen the Islamic tradition. The result was that Ngaoundere grew so fast that it superseded the earlier lamidates of Rai Bouba and Tibati in importance.

The new lamidate system by which Ngaoundere was administered fused both political and religious leadership in the lamdo's hands. Ideally at the time of their appointment, the lambe should already be mallams or at least reputable Muslims because leadership in jihad presupposed knowledge in Islamic principles. But in the case of Ngaoundere the traditional concept of

«*Ardo*», or patriarchal leadership was carried on into the post-jihad period and no new structure was founded within the Community (*Umma*) to improve the religious capabilities of the leadership. Jihad was not taken as a permanent occupation. It was carried out as a public duty at the behest of the lamdo, often to meet specific needs, for example, preparing to send tribute to Yola. Further, the Sokoto model of government kept succession in the family of the person who received the initial authority (*tutawal*) to found the emirate or lamidate as the case might be. Thus the descendants of Njobdi controlled the lamidate irrespective of their level of education in Islam.

The effect of this system in the religious domain was that religious authority was circumscribed in an essentially bureaucratic pyramid. The mallams were not free to innovate or create lateral poles of authority outside the centralised Uthmaniyya system. Only one school of thought was legitimate in public, that of Uthman dan Fodio whom they claimed had opened their eyes and removed the yoke from their necks. The system was rather monolithic and non-diversionary, a one party orthodoxy of that which is approved by the lamdo in Ngaoundere, the lamido in Yola and the Caliph in Sokoto. These «constitutional» parameters were significant in shaping the evolution of Islamic traditions in Ngaoundere throughout the period under review. It was generally felt by the ruling elite that deviating from it would lead to demagogy, a split and weakening of the Muslim tradition.

In the political domain, the entire population no matter the status and ethnic background, maintained a high sense of obedience and reverence to the lamdo and his appointees. The lamdo alone distributed land and confirmed ownership of land. The lamdo's palace (*sare*), constructed in majestic architecture, was the life-wire of all operations in the lamidate. The lamdo governed the state from here. It was the busiest spot. It had an elaborate protocol which included daily or frequent visits by all prominent citizens. On ceremonial occasions the griots, indeed the entire population, sang praises and reaffirmed their allegiance to the lamido, thus constantly cementing the bond between the ruler and his subjects.

In the social sphere, the early alliance between the Fulbe and the Mbum, two principal ethnic groups in the Adamawa plateau,

gave Islam a secure base. Mbum and Fulbe started sharing common values and traditions and imposed same to the rest of the smaller groupings. Fulbeisation of the society that is, ability to communicate in Fulfulde and adhere to *pulaku* (Fulbe moeurs) were the hallmark of elitism. The Muslims felt free to settle anywhere in the emirate without distinction of ethnic appartenance. The need for teachers of higher education led Ngaoundere scholars to invite reputable (*baban*) mallams to also come to participate in the development of Ngaoundere ⁽⁴⁾. They animated the socio-religious life of the town bearing in mind that they were in the service of the lamdo whose orders they could not defy with impunity.

The Case of Adama Gana

One way of looking at history is that history constitutes the ideas and actions of men who achieved prominence in their times and societies. Taking into account the low state of literacy and even interest in keeping records of personal activities among the peoples of the Adamawa region, we today know little of the biographies of individuals who tried to shape events outside the framework of the lamdo's authority. Oral tradition has been rich for some spectacular events, but not so with biographies, perhaps, because in a starkly theocratic society, all good initiatives were considered to come from the lamdo. This situation can, if not well handled by the modern historian, lead to reducing history to a mere chronicle of the rulers. However, an exceptional case which mirrored the dynamics of the budding Islamic society was that of modibbo Adama Gana ⁽⁵⁾. The importance of his career lay in the degree to which it demonstrated the all pervading influence of the Uthmaniyya system in tailoring Islamic growth as well as exposing the underlying currents of conflicts and rivalry among the Muslim elite.

4. Njeuma, *Fulani Hegemony*, pp. 119-121.

5. C. Vicars Boyle (a colonial Resident in Yola), « Notes on Yola Fulani », *Journal of African Studies*, X, 1910-1911, p. 86. Information about Adama Gana was supplemented by oral interview with the Alkali Ibrahim of Ngaoundere (1967).

Adama Gana was one of the greatest personalities of his time. He flourished in the 1830's and 1840's. He, like modibbo Adama, had studied in the town, Ngazzaregamu, in Borno, before returning to his hometown Turua in Bundang. He was convinced that the good health of Islam started with sound education of the royal family. Thus during visits to Yola he concentrated on teaching children of the royal family and acting as adviser to modibbo Adama. When Ardo Njobdi died in 1842, modibbo Adama appointed Adama Gana regent until Hamman Lawan, eldest son of Njobdi became of age. This decision had been reached by the King-makers (*faada*) of Ngaoundere to ensure stability since Adama Gana combined several favourable qualities in himself.

He demonstrated both spiritual and political acumen, qualities which impressed the ruling elite in Ngaoundere. He ran a popular Koranic school with students coming from within and outside the lamidate. He excelled in Koranic exegeses. He is remembered more as an introvert, mystic than as a public speaker. His greatest contribution to his society was in medicine. He was known to treat a wide range of diseases in men and cattle. Because of this he was revered as a holy man with special talents (*baraka*) by his contemporaries. In the political sphere, he maintained close relation with lamido Lawal of Yola, a *sine qua non* for strengthening local loyalties and ensuring political stability.

After eight years of regency, it became obvious to the *faada* that Adama Gana had no intentions of personally ending the regency. His self-confidence transcended all and he based his refusal to abdicate on sheer competence and the need to keep the jihad a religious rather than a political revolution. Although there is no evidence that Adama Gana ever challenged the level of purity of Islam of his colleagues, his commitment to balance the ethnic interest at court could not match Ardo Njobdi's. Furthermore, the *faada* saw in Hamman Lawan, who had in fact been groomed by its members to be lamido, someone with a less rigid and more responsive attitude to their views.

The *faada* ended by sending a formal request to Lawal to confirm Hamman Lawan successor to Njobdi not because he would be more competent in promoting Islamic purity, the fundamental principle of the jihad, but because the *faada* still

nursed Njobdi's legend of courage and unity of the ruling elite. When Lawal acceded to the request he transferred Adama Gana to Yola in a general plan to settle prominent Muslim intellectuals from all over the lamidates in Yola. Disappointed with his removal from Ngaoundere, he nevertheless lived the rest of his life as a distinguished person. Under Hamman Lawan, raids against distantly located peoples were resumed with vigour by the authorities and their successes brought in much wealth to the ruling elite who often invested in the ventures. Adama Gana died around 1854. By this time the scholarstic reputation of Ngaoundere was high to the point of attracting prominent visitors, including pilgrims to and from West Africa.

Mahdism in the Uthmaniyya System

The inherent conflict and contradiction between the pursuit of Islamic purity and excellence on the one hand and social stability on the other hand during the jihad period can be further illustrated by the failure of religious radicalism under the cloak of Mahdism. Orthodox Muslim theology holds that there are good and bad times for Islam as a way of life. During the period of low ebb, Islamic principles become debased, and the Muslims stray from the lofty principles. The society is thrown into darkness, confusion, and irreligious acts become commonplace. Under such conditions, God, in His mercy, sends a redeemer either as a Reformer (*Mujaddid*) or as messiah (*Mahdi*) to restore true Islam by guiding the actions of the messengers.

In the Sokoto Caliphate of which Ngaoundere was a part, Uthman dan Fodio foresaw a time when his followers would loose track of their spiritual obligations and become complacent. He therefore, while rejecting the claim that he was Mahdi, made belief in the coming of the Mahdi a connerstone of his teaching. Indeed the Mahdist creed and the imminence of the appearance of the Mahdi in the Sokoto Caliphate was well-known and felt all over. Ngaoundere was particularly concerned because it was one of the rich, most eastern lamidates in the Caliphate. As a consequence its Muslims would be among the first believers to meet and pay homage to the Mahdi when he manifested himself since as was stated, the Mahdi was to appear in the East of the Caliphate. During the second half of the 19th century,

immigrants came to as far as Ngaoundere in the hope of an imminent appearance of the Mahdi. Prominent personalities who visited many parts of the Caliphate preaching Uthman's Mahdism were modibbo Nakasiri, Raji and Mo Allah Yidi.

However, it was Hayatu ibn Said, great-grandson of Uthman dan Fodio, who decided to turn latent Mahdist beliefs into concrete action. When his father Said lost the election to the Sokoto Caliphate his chances to play a major role to rekindle Islam in the Caliphate through existing political system became slimmer. Uthman had listed the signs which would precede the appearance of the Mahdi but had not been categorical about how allegiance was to be paid to the Mahdi when he manifested himself. The questions whether new forms of leadership would appear to prepare and lead the population to the Mahdi or whether the Muslims would be led by the current leadership – Caliph in Sokoto, Emirs and Lamibbe – were left open. Decision on these approaches could not be delayed and Hayatu rejected the latter approach since to him, the current leaders showed less concern for religious reforms and the idea of permanent jihad. They were no longer fulfilling Uthman's vision about the growth of Islam in the Caliphate. He saw Uthman's jihad as essentially made up of two phases. The first phase was giving way to the second under his leadership, outside the framework of the existing administrative power centres.

Settling in Balda near Maroua, from about 1882, he declared the appearance of the Mahdi in the person of the Sudanese Mahdi, Ahmed Ahmed. He appealed directly to the Muslims when it became obvious that he would not succeed through the existing bureaucratic structures. His aim was to reawaken the marshal spirit among the Muslims to win more persons to Islam and educate the masses. He won many adherents among radical-minded Muslims coming from Hausaland and all over northern Cameroon because, as son of Uthman, it was easy to believe him. His sincerity and emphasis on learning and practising Islamic virtues convinced Hayatu's followers of the divine nature of his enterprise. In him many of the little mallams saw solutions to their frustrations and aspirations.

But Hayatu ran into difficulties with the established order. The current leaders felt that as descendants of the elect of

Uthman, they had been vested with powers to lead the Believers under their charge. Zubeiru, the lamido of Adamawa (1890-1901), led the way against Hayatu. He pitted loyalty to Hayatu against loyalty to himself. The traditional authorities in Ngaoundere could not switch camp even under pressure from local scholars out of respect for hierarchy. In a bloody encounter, Hayatu won the battle of Maroua against Zubeiru's forces but his town was burnt to ashes ⁽⁶⁾. The lesson to Hayatu was that for him to succeed in freeing Islam from political control in the Sokoto Caliphate, or even in northern Cameroon as a whole, he required a profound revolution such as Uthman had made and for this he had to have a greater military force at his disposal ⁽⁷⁾. This explains his alliance with Rabeh, another convinced Mahdist, who had just conquered Borno in 1893 and imposed his own brand of Islam.

The alliance did not last. As Hayatu withdrew from Borno, Rabeh's men attacked and slayed him. Hayatu's followers who survived the carnage returned to various parts of northern Cameroon. Mahdism was reduced to shambles good only for individual conviction. The general effect remained that many radical Muslims lost their lives prematurely. The lesson was that the magic of Uthman's teachings and especially linkage between classical Mahdist beliefs and his jihad had failed to create a second revolution such as Uthman had foretold. Finally, revolutionary Islam could not work within the structures Uthman had created unless the Caliph, Emirs and Lamibbe were themselves involved and took active part.

The colonial period

Hayatu's death in 1896 leads us directly to the colonial phase of our survey. Up until now religious pluralism in Ngaoundere had been a contested issue with some Muslims seeking to act

6. M.-Z. Njeuma, « Adamawa and Mahdism : The Career of Hayatu ibn Sa'id in Adamawa, 1878-1989 », *Journal of African History*, n° 1, 1971, pp. 61-77.

7. Hayatu realized the need of a strong cavalry force early. He started investing in horses soon after he arrived Yola. See, R.-M. East, *Stories of Old Adamawa*, Zaria, 1935, pp. 111-113.

independently of the political system while others claimed they acted in accordance with directives from Yola and Sokoto. This way religious radicalism split the ranks of the Believers and threatened the absolute control of political over religious activities. The colonial period wrought political disaster. It destabilised and bulkalized the Sokoto Caliphate and cut off Yola from many of its lamidates in a couple of years. It introduced new masters (*nassara*) and put a definite wedge between the population and the rulers. However, the bone of contention among Muslims shifted from liberalisation of religious life to protection of Islamic traditions from the consequences of European rule.

One can distinguish two types of resistance ; firstly, that which was led by the Lamdo of Ngaoundere and secondly, that which was organised and led by individual Muslims insisting on following their conscience and personal convictions. From 1896, the British and German troops assailed the Sokoto Caliphate from all sides. In 1900 the British sacked the Caliphate headquarters in Sokoto and the Caliph Attahiru, died a fugitive as he fled to the East ⁽⁸⁾. In 1901, a similar operation removed Zubeiru from Yola to northern Cameroon where, despite massive support from the Lamibbe, he died near Mubi. On their part the Germans attacked from the south beginning with Lamdo Tibati in 1899. The fall of Tibati opened the way to Ngaoundere and Garoua.

The Lamdo of Ngaoundere was Mohamadu Abbo (1887-1901), grandson of Ardo Njobdi. On August 20th 1901, he and a large force, mounted to resist German take-over, were annihilated ⁽⁹⁾. Contrary to the advise of the Lamdo's counsellors, the Germans appointed Mohama Yadji Mai to replace Lamdo Abbo and, from then, German rule became a reality in Ngaoundere. Abbo's death removed an important element in the

8. Lamido Zubeiru of Yola was one of the leaders Caliph Attachim was closely in touch with and shared the resolve to fight the « Christian infidels » to the bitter end. See Zubeiru to Amir Amir al-muminin, letter n° 112, in H.-F. Backwell, *The Occupation Hausaland 1900-1904*, Lagos, 1927.
9. For a detailed account almost based on a corpus of German sources, see A.-P. Temgoua, « L'hégémonie allemande au Nord-Cameroun de 1890 à 1916 », Doctorat de 3^e cycle thesis, University of Yaounde, 1990.

opposition to German authority because it meant the Germans could now handle the population as they pleased in the absence of a credible head. As observed earlier, by the constitution of the Lamidate system, the Lamdo was the symbol of the unity of the Lamidate and he alone could rally the population together in the face of generalised threat.

However the Germans still had to reckon with the revolutionary « purists » among the Muslim population. They were virtually leaderless since the collapse of Hayatu and, following that further consolidation of conservatism under the old Lamidate system. Since nature does not permit a vacuum, the new champion to whom the Muslim radicals aggregated to was Malum Muhammadu alwadawiyu, popularly known as Goni Wadai.

Originally a Shoa Arab from Wadai, he was well known in Garoua, Yola and Banyo where he had spent time after he returned from a pilgrimage to Mecca. He finally settled in Ngaoundere during the reign of Lamdo Abbo. He gained fame through the popularity of a postprimary school he opened for educating adults. Despite these strong credentials for leadership, he stayed outside the establishment though there was no evidence that he was critical of the *status quo*. His faith in his course was strengthened by the fact that he had seen every stage of the destruction of Muslim power in Ngaoundere by the Germans – the resistance and slaughter of lamdo Abbo, the nominations and rapid dismissals by the Germans of lambbe Mai (1901-1903) and Dalil (1903-1904), the current occupation of Ngaoundere by « Christian forces » and the imposition of Laws that did not have their foundation in the sacred Books of Islam.

Why did Goni Wadai think he would succeed to dysfunction colonial rule where others before him had failed ? As a creditable and knowledgeable leader his perception of the problems facing the Ngaoundere society expressed the anxiety and frustrations of all Muslims. Like many cultured and intelligent Muslims of his time, he could not understand the goals of the Europeans if they were not to destroy Islam. Their numbers were too small to seize and maintain political power in the Lamidate. They lacked the resources to rule without the connivance of the Muslim population. He was convinced that if the Muslim population,

particularly their rulers, refused to cooperate, Christian rule cannot take root, let alone, grow in Ngaoundere. He likened German invasion to Fulbe raids in distant territories, which at best permitted Fulbe victories over poorly defended peoples, but excluded the setting up a viable government. In effect he preached civil disobedience and preparedness for further armed conflicts against German occupation. His weakness was not one of having little support, but one of a structural organization capable of rapid and massive mobilisation of his followers to a target.

Goni Wadai could be discouraged by widespread fear which German brutality had created all over northern Cameroon. Not even the recent news of the German suppression of a similar movement to his, led by Mal Alhaji in Maroua ⁽¹⁰⁾, a town that was seething with mahdist activities and hatred for the Germans, could dissuade him. His final strategy was to raise himself above existing territorial organisations and appeal to Muslims directly as indeed Hayatu had done over a decade ago when he declared himself the Mahdist's representative to all the Muslims in the Sokoto Caliphate. He started preaching Mahdism and demonstrating the contradictions in trying to maintain Muslim traditions, the heritage of their forefathers, under a usurping Christian infidel government. He urged the Muslims to unite and drive out the usurpers from the land of the Believers. As if to confirm the authenticity of his position he recalled the central role of the Prophet and Koran in ordering their lives, the history of the Caliphate and the Lamidate and hoped that the heroic deeds of their ancestors should serve as model for them to face those who were destroying the fabric of their society. It was not all theory because the people were living the experiences of the humiliations and devastation of German rule and could judge for themselves.

Goni Wadai was simply repeating history in many ways. He was full of messianic optimism. He gambled on the fact that once he routed the enemies out of Garoua, this would spark off a chain reaction as Uthman's attack on Sarkin Gobir had produced for the defeat of the Hausa chiefs exactly a century

10. Temgoua, « L'hégémonie allemande », p. 297.

ago. For this to succeed he had to have dedicated leaders spread all over the territory ready to fight once he gave the signal in Garoua. But Goni Wadai could not afford to divide his resources. Just as he concentrated on Garoua, so did the Germans, and the clash that ensued was disastrous for the Mahdists.

Their massacre coming so soon after the killings occasioned by Hayatu's Mahdism, the French War against Rabeh, the German and British invasions of Yola and the entire northern Cameroon from Tibati in the south to Mora in the north, destroyed feelings towards radicalism and the population became disenchanted and lost zeal for the search for Islamic purity. After these experiences the colonial policy aimed at prevention rather than suppression of what they termed insurrections. The Germans and, later on, the French authorities saw that the crave for purist ideals was directly related to high achievement in Islam either through accomplishing the *hajj* or through influence of scholars inside and outside the lamidate. Controls were therefore instituted to check the movements and influences of itinerant scholars in the Lamidate and those who left for the *hajj* ⁽¹¹⁾.

Thus after 1907 a new era of collaboration was born, based on mutual willingness to share power between the lamdo and the German authorities. The personality of Lamdo Issa Maigari (1904-1922) was largely responsible for the recorded successes. As a great pedagogue he led his people to accommodate and reconcile with German rule, to manage the transition between German and French rule, beginning with the outbreak of the First World War. The supremacy of the Christian infidels became a living reality, perhaps not to be questioned but to be, as far as possible, manipulated to save whatever was possible for Islam. Islam definitely moved to the defensive and has remained so since then. Radicalism and the pursuit of purist goals publicly and collectively came to an end as colonial actions denuded the courage of the older generations and cut off the resources that could sustain mass action against colonial rule by the younger generations.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 316.