

Western Education and the British Invasion and Subjugation of the Muslim Land in Northern Nigeria

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Abstract: - By 1902 western European Colonists in northern Nigeria formed an alliance with the church to establish Christian oriented schools, which were used for the conversion of Muslims and Animists, and equally serve as way of extracting minerals resources of the northern Nigeria. This paper presented research on “Western education and the British invasion and subjugation of the Muslims land in Northern Nigeria”. The paper employed analytical and historical research methods, moreover it analyzed how the school subjects of standard I-VI operated at that time, and it equally identified and determined the invasion of various caliphs and Emirs within the Territories of northern Nigeria. The research findings identified that Islamic scholars should come up with some modalities that can improve student’s habit of reading history and events of such nature. The paper recommends that stakeholders and the Muslims organizations must steadfast in organizing conferences, seminar and symposium in memorizing sets of impacts led down by the colonial masters in the history of education in northern Nigeria.

Key words: Christian Missionaries, Colonists, Muslims Ummah, Northern Nigeria and Western Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

Discussion of the western educational system considered necessary because of its overbearing influence on the life-style of Nigerian Muslims. It is increasingly becoming clearer that almost everything either depends on or draws inspiration from the Euro-Christian system of education in the country. The reason for this development may be the concomitant effect of the tragic and offensive colonization of our country by the Europeans who were Christians. The western education unlike the Islamic system of education that emphasized the real acquisition of Knowledge, skills and values, emphasized the accumulation of certificate. This trend has permeated all the levels of the formal system of education in Nigeria.

A look at the history of western education in Nigeria indicates that the system has its origin traced to the arrival of the Portuguese, the first European people to set their feet on this part of Africa the Portuguese came to the Guinea of Gulf towards the end of the 15th century¹. The origin aim of the people who introduced Western education was both economic and religious. They wanted customers who would be able to understand them and served as interpreter. This they believe would boost their commercial activities. In addition, they felt strongly that in order to be good customers, the natives must

accept Christ. Hence it was their goods on the right hand, and the Bible on the left. Expectedly, neither the attractive goods nor the strange religion could persuade the indigenous chiefs who revolted against what was regarded as unwanted intrusion into their land. The resistance of the indigenes forced the Portuguese missionaries to seek for the support of the European authorities. The assistance was readily given in the form of arms. It could therefore be said that western education became enriched in Nigeria by the use of Christian evangelism and imperialist force. The structure of early western education was built on the philosophy of the white missionaries that is production of people with limited literacy but strong Christian faith and this was why the early schools were situated in the church premises. The protectorate of northern Nigeria was proclaimed on 27, Dec, 1899, and Sir Fredrick Lugard was appointed high commissioner, on the 1st January 1900. At 7:20 am the union Jack replaced the flag of the Royal Niger Company at Lokoja where both the Christian mission and the royal Niger-company had established themselves. Thus, the three civilizing agents,

1, Christianity, 2, commerce, and 3, colonialism, Formed an alliance at Lokoja to open up the Northern territories. Although the proclamation of the northern protectorate took effect as of 1900, effective occupation of the northern emirates was not complied until 1903. Lugard lunched military campaign against Kano, Katsina, and Sokoto, and brought these emirates by force of arms under the authority of British government.²

II. LORD LUGARD DECLARATION OF THE POLICY ON EDUCATION IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

The protectorate of Northern Nigeria was proclaimed on 27, December, 1899 and Sir Lord Lugard Frederick was appointed High Commissioner on January 1st 1900, at 7:20am the union Jack replaced the flag of the Royal Niger Company at Lokoja where both the Christian Mission and the Royal Niger Company had established themselves. Thus, the three civilizing agents: 1Christianity, 2- Commerce, and 3- Colonialism, formed an alliance at Lokoja to open up the northern territories. Although the proclamation of the northern

¹ Fafunwa , A. (2004), *History of Education in Nigeria*, Trust house Babangida Way Ibadan, Rep.¹

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protectorate took effects as of 1900, effective occupation of the northern Emirate was not completed until 1903¹.

Lugard declared policy on northern education in 1902, was that the Christian missions should direct their attention to the non-Muslims areas in the north. He was anxious that the Muslims should not regard missionaries and government officials as fellow-agents of administration. At Lokoja where it had its foothold, the C.M.S established Churches and Schools for quite some time. In 1898 Bishop Tugwell of the same mission sought and received Lugard's permission to penetrate Hausa land. Lugard also gave permission to the Sudan interior mission about the same time. The C.M.S established the Hausa mission in Zaria and then proceeded to Kano but was ordered out by the Emir. The mission retreated to Zaria. The type of schools that were initially introduced was called 'Home schools' as they were for ex-slaves, and children of ex-slaves. In 1903, British school master was appointed to take charge of the Lokoja school with the aid of Northern assistant².

Interestingly enough, the schoolmaster was requested to devote seven and a half hours a week to the instruction of his teachers in accordance with the 'Rules and regulations for C.M.S elementary schools' which were already in operation in the southern schools administered by the mission. In the infants and in standard (I) of the primary department children were to read in the Vernacular, after which they were to have one Vernacular, and one English reading book. Geography might be taken from standard (III), upwards but was, rather surprisingly, to be the alternative to grammar after standard (IV). Singing, subjects lesson and drill were compulsory throughout, as was scripture. Scripture consisted of set portions of the Old and new testaments, the life of Christ and certain texts. Unless a pupil passed in Religious knowledge as well as in the 3Rs, he could not move up from a standard. History was to be added from standard (V) and (VI) for those of the pupils' teachers, and in these the boys covered the wars of the Roses, the Tudor period and the Stuarts. The reformation and the Constitutional developments must have been difficult to teach, and bewildering to the pupils. The geography syllabus was far better related to his surroundings for the schedule for examinations concentrated on Nigeria and Africa³.

III. CHURCH MISSIONARIES SOCIETY (C M S) ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND THEIR TEACHING SUBJECTS

With the proclamation of Northern Nigeria protectorate, the Southern missionaries intensified their missionary activities to penetrate the north. The Roman Catholic mission of the Holy Ghost made several unsuccessful attempts to open station at

Ibi and Bassa in 1902 and finally had to withdraw from the north in 1905. the Sudan interior Mission (S.I.M) whose initial interest was industrial education established farms at pategi, Wushishi and Bida. The S.I.M missionaries were Canadians and Lugard supported their industrial aim but strongly objected to their religions preaching. Fafunwa has his to say:

I am informed that they preached the equality of European and native, which however from the doctrinal point of view, is apt to be miss-applied by people in a low stage of development, and interpreted as abolition of class distinction⁴.

At bida the C.M.S, opened a school for Mallams which was to be secular. It was hoped that this would encourage court officials to write Nupe and Hausa in Roman script it engaged two west India teachers and ran the school from 7:am to 9:am, The subjects taught were scripture geography, singing, and reading and writing in the vernacular the textbooks included Labarin Allah, the C.M.S Hausa St. mark, and Bible stories translated into Hausa and Nupe. English was added to the syllabus a few months after classes started. Lugard insisted that the school should be secular but the mission, while partially carrying out this instructions was still bent on converting the Muslims. One of the C.M.S secretaries wrote:

As we shall use the gospel as our textbook and carefully chosen texts as writing copied, I feel it will be very definitely a missionary opportunity. Also, if people see these Mallams coming to us for teaching We shall possibly later on be able open a school on more definite missionary lines⁵.

It is interesting to note that in spite of the fact that the syllabus of this school included carefully chosen texts based on Christianity; the mission still felt that this was not enough. Although the influence of the mallams was far reaching in this area (in that the Mallams represented the educated intelligentsia), the missions aimed to bring them back to school as pupils, this would naturally make the school people of the area realize that Christianity education was more powerful than the Muslims education. Report, N. N. (pp. 119-20). The Mallam's school was not entirely successful. Attendance dwindled partly because the school syllabus included religious teaching (through indirectly) and partly because the Mallams questioned the motives of the mission. Dr. W.R.S. Miller of the C.M.S improved on the Bida experiment by proposing a scheme for educating the Mallams and the chiefs' sons in Zaria. Miller was a good friend of Lugard and the friendship helped in no small measure to promote Christianity in the Muslims north, Miller, a medical doctor turned evangelist educators, opposed the encouragement of the existing Qur'anic schools and was of the view that education should never be separated from the teaching of the Christian faith. Lugard and Miller agreed on a

¹ Sonia F. Graham, *Government and mission Education in Northern Nigeria*, 1900-1919 (I.U.P, 1966),

² Op, cit.

³ Sonia F. Graham, *Government and mission Education in Northern Nigeria*, 1900-1919 (I.U.P, 1966),

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Sonia F. Graham, *Government and mission Education in Northern Nigeria*, 1900-1919 (I.U.P, 1966),

number of issues relating to the education of the northerners but disagreed on the religious aspect¹.

IV. ACTIVITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONS OF SLOW EDUCATION IN THE NORTH AND IT EFFECTS

It was obvious that Lugard wanted loyal Emirs, educated local officials, and contented clerks. But Miller, like the Zealous Christian which he was wanted religious, not secular education and wished to see the northerners forego their religion and embrace Anglican Christianity. Miller had two plans for the Zaria experiment:

a- The Mallams schools or classes, and b- A boys boarding school for the son of chiefs

Here again, his plan was to use these two types of schools to attract and convert the Mallams and the sons of chiefs, he spared no effort in his attempt to achieve his evangelical mission. He suggested that each Emir should be asked to send his sons or two children of important families in his province, aged 12-16 years. They would live with Miller, and the Emir should be told (by Lugard or a high government official) that Miller was a white Mallam in whom Lugard had the utmost confidence. Miller hoped that Lugard's emphatic declaration that in no way should the religion of people be interfered with would be taken as sufficient guarantee of the children's safety. The Emirs would be told that the pupils would be encouraged to fulfill their religious duties, but Miller warned Lugard that the resident should not say too much on this point to the Emirs for fear of arousing doubts through over-prostrations².

For Miller, the end was obviously more important than the means:

While I definitely pledge myself in no way to interfere with any part of the religious duties of these Mohammedan boys, I nevertheless must be left perfectly free to give them whatever positive religious instructions I like.... They would not attend the usual morning and evening prayers with all the rest of the household and beyond that is the atmosphere which is bound to pervade a house where the life and teaching and love of Christ are paramount, my aim will be so to permeate these boys with a sense of justice, righteousness, truth, purity, cleanliness, and manliness (none of which they have) that another day, even though not while at school, they will think of those things in connection with those they knew as Christians, and from that, weigh the claims of what was taught them of our master and savior³.

Miller's religious position, which was well known to Lugard and other officials (delayed the establishment of these schools for more than a year). In May 1907 Miller started the two schools. The boys schools was failure almost from the start as no Emir outside Zaria sent his sons or relatives. The Emir of Zaria had to pick fifteen boys from Zaria township. Even children were indifferent and preferred their local Qur'anic school. Thus the class of fifteen soon dwindled to six. Although the boys' school was a secular one, all the reading books in Hausa were Miller's (Own translation of the gospels) of St John and St Mark. The first Epistle of St. John and stories from the New Testament Miller's carefully selected translations were available in Hausa! The school neither grew nor fulfilled Miller's original dream. In 1910 it was turned into regular day school for all comers⁴.

The Mallams school fared only slightly better. It never materialized as a training institute and no Mallam came from outside Zaria Emirate. It remained a class for adult who came and went as they pleased. Miller and the C.M.S, consequently lost a very valuable opportunity of pioneering secular education in the north at the initial stages. Their all consuming preoccupation with the conversion to Christianity of the northern Nigerians at the initial stage created for long time among the people a dislike for western type schools in general and Christian schools in particular. This attitude of the Christian missions, more than anything else, was responsible for the (Slow Educational Development of the North). All was not lost however, Miller and the C.M.S. succeeded in converting their first Hausa Christian. Mallam fate, who helped Miller to translate most of his selected texts. Another convert was Mallam Audu who was trained at St. Andrew's (teacher Training) college at Oyo and return to Zaria to help with the boy's school⁵.

V. BRITISH IMPERIALIST INVADED THE MUSLIMS LAND IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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² Sonia F. Graham, *Government and mission Education in Northern Nigeria, 1900-1919* (I.U.P, 1966),

³ CMS Grammar School Lagos, 1906, Miller to Lugard Exeter (4, April 1906).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Sonia F. Graham, *Government and mission Education in Northern Nigeria, 1900-1919* (I.U.P, 1966),

brought these emirates by force of arms under the authority of British government¹.

The Berlin conference of November 1885 recognized the paramount status of Britain in the Niger Territories, including the northern Emirates, largely as a result of the treaties collected by the N. A. C. Both the French and the German had angled for the Sokoto Caliphate. But at Berlin conference, it was held to fall within the British sphere of influence mainly on account of George Goldie's success in exterminating his commercial rivals on the lower Niger. This hegemony was later reinforced by the treaties of 1885 which were signed between Sokoto and Gwandu on the one hand and Goldie's N.A.C. on the other. As the British government took over direct control of the territories formally under the R.A.C., the Union Jack was hoisted at Lokoja by Lugard. This ritual implied that the caliphate had become a British protectorate with Frederick Lord Lugard as its first high commissioner. But it was a protectorate that existed largely on paper².

The Caliph, the Emirs, and the people were not even aware of the declaration of a protectorate over their territories or of the ceremony at Lokoja. Lugard still needed to establish British presence in the caliphate. Lugard delayed straight military action to buy time. He was handicapped by the fact that he had to send 1,200 out of his 2,280 soldiers for the Ashanti campaigns in May 1900. These troops returned only towards the end of 1900. The high commissioner first sent out to the Caliph and Emirs the Arabic translation of his proclamation of 1st January, 1900, announcing the change in administration following the declaration of a British protectorate. Lugard's gesture was rebuffed: his messenger to Sokoto was hostilely conducted out of town. Gwandu's reception was no different.³

VI. BRITISH EXPEDITION AGAINST THE CALIPHS AND EMIRS' OF THE NORTHERN NIGERIA

The first major offensive was the attack on Bida (Nupe) and Kontagora in early February 1901. Bida fell on 2, September, 1901. Bauchi was occupied on 16, February 1902. and from there, the British advanced to Gombe. By April 1902, the major areas had been taken even Borno, left were Sokoto and Kano. In May 1902, the Caliph wrote to Lugard informing him that he did not wish that any white man should live with him and his people. The Caliph went on to say: "*I will never agree with you. I will have nothing ever to do with you. Between us and you there are no dealings except between Muslims and unbelievers: war, as God Almighty has enjoyed us*"⁴.

Lugard regarded the letter as a declaration of war. But in Lugard's calculations, Kano had to be dealt with first. The excuse given by Lugard for the attack on Kano was found in

the death of a British officer, Captain Moloney. During the invasion of Keffi, the officer was killed allegedly or at least on the instigation of the Magaji. The Magaji later fled to Kano where he was given a hero's welcome. This red carpet reception was interpreted by the British to mean hostility against them. The lines were finally drawn when the Emir of Kano turned down a formal request for the surrender of the Magaji. In preparation for the expedition against Kano, a force of 1,000 African troops together with 50 European officers and non-commissioned officers and two medical officers was collected at Zaria. The main body of this force, under Colonel Morland, left Zaria on 29th January, 1903, leaving behind 300 troops in reserve. They were resisted only at Bebeji, some forty-eight kilometers from Kano.⁵

On 3rd February, 1903, Kano was assaulted. The Emir was then out with all his principal officials, some headmen and their forces, to pay homage to the Emir. With the fall of Kano, a no-man's-land stood between the British and Sokoto again on 27th February, 1903, the British force now commanded by General Kemball, massed at Kauran Namoda. They left Kaura on 3rd March, arriving Sokoto twelve days later. The Caliph had organized his soldiers after the afternoon prayer on Friday 13th March. In the conflict that followed, the Caliph's forces were defeated; Caliph Attahiru escaped from Sokoto, settling first at Gusau. His subjects from various emirates joined him in his hijrah. The Caliph was finally defeated in a decisive battle fought with the British troops at Burmi, a border of Borno, on 27th July, 1903⁶.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the damage done and the threats posed to the legacies, morality and tradition culture of Islam, viability continued existence and relevance of the Islamic religious way of life by the prevalent western education system in the Muslim world. Many Islamic scholars advocated the introduction and adaptation of new channels of impacting education that are basically sciences oriented to our Islamic societies. This can pave ways to address some of the confounding problems that we are facing in our modern world of today; this idea will produce a new generation of dedicated Muslims that are productive and well organized, moreover it will equally prepare them for the challenges of contemporary materialistic civilization.

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