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Title: **The Spoken Word and the Barbed Wire : Oral Chiefdoms versus Literate Bureaucracies.**

by: **Isabel Hofmeyr**

No. 306

The Spoken Word and the Barbed Wire: Oral Chiefdoms versus Literate Bureaucracies

In 1923 the Native Commissioner of Potgietersrus, who was involved in an ongoing feud with Chief Alfred Masibi of Zebediela, wrote to his adversary. "I do not as a rule," he said, "take verbal messages - you must get your secretary to write when transacting government business."[1] A few years later a new chief, Abel Kekana, took office, but in no time the Native Commissioner was at loggerheads with him too. In May 1929 the Native Commissioner wrote to the Secretary for Native Affairs complaining about Kekana's behaviour.

> Adverting to my minute No. 2/1 of the 19th ult., and with reference to your No. 27/55 of the 6th inst. in connection with the conduct of the above named chief, I have the honour to submit [a] copy of my letter evenly numbered of the 8th inst. addressed to this chief calling upon him for an explanation as directed by you. To this letter no response was received other than an intimation that he was busy with his circumcision school and would attend to the matter later. On the 16th inst. I attended the Local Council meeting at Zebediela, and there saw the young chief to whom I at once intimated that I was not there to receive his explanation which he could either submit in writing or personally at my office at Potgietersrust. Further that if I received no response to my letter within seven days of the last mentioned date I would submit the matter for further action by you without his explanation.
>
> On the 21st inst. attended by his usual satellites who are mainly responsible for his misguided conduct, he presented himself at this Office. He appeared to be very sullen and on the questions contained in my letter of the 8th inst., being put to him he gave his explanation, which I took down in writing and a copy of which I attach hereto. His attitude was not at all reassuring, and in the interest of the Tribe I do urge that he be severely dealt with....I have seen letters addressed to members of the Royal family urging that this young man be deposed, but an open expression of their feelings [is] stifled by tradition and sentiment.
>
> However I submit a confidential report sent to me by W.S. Kekana which clearly reflects the true position....[2]

As the letter makes clear, the conflict between the Native Commissioner and the two chiefs was conducted through a variety of media and modes of communication: letters, both public and confidential, public meetings, private appointments, verbal messages, secret reports, and speeches copied down in writing. From other letters it is clear that telegrams and telephones were also mobilized in the dispute.[3] It is also clear that the opposing sides attempted to rely on different kinds of communicative strategies to maximize their advantage. The Commissioner generally wanted things in writing or favoured face-to-face situations where he was in charge. Chief Abel Kekana, on the other hand, avoided contact with the Commissioner where possible. But when forced to deal with him the chief engineered an oral interaction while accompanied by his retinue who evidently exercised a somewhat unsettling effect on the Commissioner.

Both sides, then, tried to determine the form and medium of interaction, and while the two parties had access to oral and literate resources, both, in a situation of conflict, tended to turn to the mode with which they were most familiar. Consequently, in this situation of interaction between ruler and ruled, both parties presumably felt there was some political edge to be had from insisting on a particular mode of communication.

This brief sketch of a spat between the chief and Native Commissioner raises a host of questions about the relationship between forms of communication and political authority. There is, however, one issue that emerges particularly clearly and that is the

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[1] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 2, 1/1/3, N.C. to Chief Alfred Masibi, 12/12/23. Unless otherwise specified, all officials are attached to the Potgietersrus office.

[2] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 2, 1/1/2, N.C. to S.N.A., 27/5/29.

[3] See correspondence in T.A., T.A.D., KPT 2, 1/1/2.

extent to which the forms of communication are a focus of political struggle. This question of struggle is important to stress since there have been other studies that assume that those with authority can unilaterally dictate the forms and modes of communication between factions possessing unequal power.[4] However, as Fabian in his analysis of language and colonial power reminds us, we should always consider "*simultaneously* local, creative response to communicative needs *and* restrictive intervention from above motivated by a resolve to control communication...."[5]

It is such a bipartite analysis that this paper aims to implement in order to consider some of the political dimensions of how orality and literacy interact. The general context for this paper will be aspects of the interaction between the Native Commissioner's office and the chiefdom. In order to consider the first part of Fabian's equation, we turn to analyze how the chiefdom and its officials responded to and transformed the communicative procedures with which they were confronted. The material used in this analysis is the correspondence that passed between the Commissioner's office and Valtyn as well as other surrounding chiefdoms.

In this correspondence, written roughly between the 1920s and '50s, we can observe various ways in which agents of the chief attempted to bend the language of official correspondence and bureaucracy to meet their particular needs. In transforming this language, it was, of course, on pre-existing forms of discourse, knowledge and understanding that correspondents drew. While it is often difficult to specify exactly what such pre-existing forms might have been, there is one consistent theme that emerges and that is an attempt to 'oralize' the written word and make it bear the 'imprint' of the human voices and relationships that necessitated its creation in the first place. Such 'oralizing' can be seen in things like an insistence on oral messenger and oral memory; as well as an attempt to subordinate literacy as the medium of ruling to institutions of public assembly, face-to-face government, and personal audience. While there may well be a number of ways to interpret these insistences, this paper construes them as part of the cultural resistance of a community against colonial domination. As in its confrontation with a literate religion, the oral performance politics of the chiefdom challenged the literate institutions of colonial bureaucracy by attempting to 'oralize' them.[6]

As regards the second emphasis in our analysis - what Fabian terms "the restrictive intervention from above" - we turn to consider the Native Commissioner's response to the chiefdom, but on a level far removed from the bureaucratic letter. Instead, our focus will be on a much more overt form of restriction - the fence - or as it was more popularly known, 'the wire'. The fence may, of course, appear unconnected to issues of communication and literacy. However, in so far as literacy and writing provide an important set of vocabularies, idioms and images that can be transferred to other areas of life, and can, for example, be used as an implicit justification of political domination, fencing - which is often imagined as a type of demarcation or 'writing' that fixes white authority in the countryside - can legitimately be considered within this ambit.[7]

In its drive to contain and control the chiefdom, the Native Commissioner's office did, of course, also use quotidian literacy as a more modest means of control, particularly as

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[4] For a discussion of this point see R. Grillo, "Anthropology, Language, Politics", in R. Grillo (ed.), *Social Anthropology and the Politics of Language* (London: Routledge, 1989), 14-17.

[5] J. Fabian, *Language and Colonial Power: The Appropriation of Swahili in the Former Belgian Congo 1880-1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3. See also J. Opland, "The Bible in Front, the Musket Behind: Images of White Oppression in Xhosa Oral Poetry", paper presented to the Fourth National Technological Literacy Conference, Washington, 3-5/2,89 for a fascinating discussion of how in Xhosa oral poetry, literacy is perceived as part of colonial oppression. My thanks to Jeff Opland for making this reference available to me.

[6] On this point see H. Scheub, "A Review of African Oral Traditions and Literature", *African Studies Review*, 28, 2-3, 1985, which discusses a range of points on such "spoken writing".

[7] On this point of how images of writing can be transferred to other areas of life see J. Derrida, G.C. Spivak (tr.), *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 9; and Fabian, *Language*, 78-84.

far as issues of protocol and administrative procedure went. However, while these played a subtle part in the control of the chiefdom, it was, in the long run, more coercive measures that contained the residents of Valtyn. One of these was the fence and in the second half of this paper, we examine this political 'literacy' in more detail.

I

In an analysis of the Native Affairs Department during the inter-war years, Dubow illustrates the ideological and administrative shifts that it underwent. Heavily influenced by the Transkeian model of native administration, the post-Union Department followed a policy of gradualist assimilation but subsequently moved to a more rigid doctrine of segregationism. Administratively, the Department initially relied on ideals of government through decentralized paternalism and "personal rule". This form of administration was, however, soon supplanted by a much more centralized, purposive bureaucracy.[8]

This shift from local paternalism to centralized bureaucracy probably happened more in theory than in practice. In remote areas like the Northern Transvaal, the Native Affairs Department could never properly institute the full exercise of depersonalized and distant control that a centralized, literate bureaucracy implies. The areas to be controlled were simply too huge, the people in these areas too numerous and too unwilling to be governed. Under these conditions, depersonalized, distant ruling can never take off and instead, Native Commissioners had to rule through a combination of personal audience, public meeting and oral messenger, or, in other words, the cornerstones of oral government.[9]

In this situation, as Sansom has shown, the Native Commissioner's authority - which was in theory extensive - depended on constant negotiation through which the governed gained a measure of autonomy and freedom.[10] The Commissioner's office, with its risible staff complement and miserable police contingent '..d to tread carefully and could not rile its subjects too deeply.[11]

In this context of contested authority, the conventions of ruling and protocols of interaction become an important focus of struggle. One such form of interaction was the letter which passed frequently between the chief and the Commissioner. Mostly concerned with the details of licensing and permits for churches, schools and stores, these letters probably formed the major form of communication between the chief and the Commissioner who otherwise only encountered each other for meetings every three months. In between there could, of course, be *ad hoc* gatherings, emergency visits and circuit tours, but since the chiefdom was separated from the Commissioner's office in Potgietersrus by a good two-hour walk, and since the town was noted for its hostile racism and complete lack of facilities for black visitors, the chief went to the Commissioner's as little as possible.[12] While the Commissioner was often more keen to see the chief, the non-existent roads over which he had to drive probably presented some

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[8] S. Dubow, "Holding 'A Just Balance between White and Black': The Native Affairs Department in South Africa c. 1920-33", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 12, 2, 1986. The issues discussed here are more fully treated in his book, *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1919-36* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), 77-127.

[9] On this point see Jack Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 89-90, 105, 110, 114, 124.

[10] For details of the powers of the Native Affairs Department and Native Commissioners see M. Lacey, *Working for Boroko: The Origins of a Coercive Labour System in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1980), 84-115.

[11] B. Sansom, Leadership and Authority in a Pedi Chiefdom, D. Phil. Thesis, University of Manchester, 1970, 12-53.

[12] For details of complaints see T.A., T.A.D., KPT 12, 1/15/4, Pitsu [Meeting - the spelling should be *Pitso*] of Native Chiefs and Headmen held at the Native Commissioner's Office, 16/2/34.

deterrent. Yet, despite these transport difficulties, it must be noted that compared to other chiefdoms in the area, Valtyn was comparatively closer to Potgietersrus and its degree of interaction with the Commissioner's office was consequently higher. Overall, however, such interaction was still relatively limited.

For the chief, then, writing letters held several attractions, one of which was that they minimized personal dealing with the Commissioner. Another advantage was that by using such correspondence, chiefs could borrow the power of literacy. Like medieval lords who could use their signet rings to 'sign' documents without themselves being fully literate, many chiefs surrounded themselves with the paraphernalia of writing and bureaucracy and paid great attention to things like letterheads and rubber stamps.[13] Through these accoutrements, chiefs announced themselves entitled and authorized to participate in a documentary culture.

Yet, in participating, however indirectly, in a literate universe, the chiefs and their allies were simultaneously changing the meaning and uses of documents. By bathing documents in the stream of orality, they subordinated them to the prevailing practices and procedures of an oral world. An oft-quoted example of the transformative power of orality is the way in which much writing emanating from paraliterate communities mimics speech. This cross-over is generally cited as an instance of a new technology camouflaging itself in the old.[14] Another, slightly stronger, reading of this situation is to think of the practitioners of the old technology forcing the new to conform to their values and views. In so far as a technology of communication is woven into a wider set of cultural and political ideas, this clash between forms of representation has a number of implications.

One of these concerns the way in which oral transactions focus attention on a set of social relationships and a group of actors. Literate technology shifts the emphasis away from the actors towards the text which progressively tends to be divorced from both its producers and consumers. This alienation is not something that oral communities easily allow, and in many oral situations there is a struggle to keep documents accountable to the circumstances from which they come. As part of the same process, people also try to make documents ring with the human voices that spoke them and the social relationships that necessitated their creation in the first instance.

The first strategy in this struggle was to write as one spoke. While such a style may arguably be entirely predictable, it nevertheless kept alive the idea of a letter or document as part of a conversation that linked people in particular relationships of power and obligation. In keeping with these trends, most letters to the *komosasi* (Commissioner) bear the 'imprint' of the human voice. Many of these letters also start *in media res*, a technique which inserted the letter in an ongoing relationship. One such letter began, "My Lordship, allow me please to continue my personal explanation in order to give more light in the matter." Another said, " First of all, I greet you very much. Sir, I went on safely out of Mapela's Location.....My journey took me two days, on account of the scarcity of the buses or that some of the bridges were destroyed by heavy water."[15] Another letter-writer felt it necessary to imply the social network from which he came and so signed off his letter, "I am Jeconias Lebelo. Lebelo's son." Yet another correspondent attempted to remind the Commissioner of his obligations by announcing, "I am here to inform the commissioner that I have passed carpentry."[16]

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[13] For examples see T.A., T.A.D., KPT 3, 2/3/2, Anon. to Assistant Native Commissioner (hereafter A.N.C.), Zebediela, 1/12/30; Special Justice of the Peace (hereafter S.J.P.), Zebediela to F. Madisha, 24/12/30; S.J.P., Zebediela to Abel Kekana, 17/3/31; and S.J.P., Zebediela to N.C., 5/12/32. For a comparative perspective see M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record 1066-1037*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1979), 184.

[14] Clanchy, *From Memory*, 257.

[15] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 16, 2/3/3/4, P.R. Seboa to Sub-Native Commissioner (hereafter S.N.C.), 18/6/37; and KPT 16, 2/3/3/4, J. Madisha to R.M., 26/2/34.

[16] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 29, 2/4/3/48, J. Lebelo to N.C., 24/11/38; and KPT 18, 2/4/3, A.H.P. Mako to N.C., 16/5/48.

In sending messages, most people still laid more store by the spoken, rather than the written word. Consequently, letters were often accompanied by messengers who would report the substance of the information, embellish the contents of the document they carried, or answer any questions the recipient might have. "Owing to sickness," a headman in Zebediela wrote (or had written on his behalf), "I am sending herewith two men of my section who can give you the whole proceedings of the meeting...." Another writer felt it necessary to apologize for sending a letter, "I am sorry to report this through letter. I wanted to report it personally but unfortunately my bicycle is not in order. Saturday seems too long to come on foot." Letters could also act as dramatic props, and one chief sent a woman who wanted to apply for a store permit with a document that began, "By this letter I say the Government may see herewith a girl."[17]

Another way to embed the spoken voice on the printed page was to reappropriate the written in terms of phonetic spelling. In terms of this practice, one correspondent wrote that "we spek ablcation to make shop". Another asked the Commissioner "why you naver ask awar letter" which had been for a "lessense " to "sale soap mill mill and parafin oil". Yet another letter, which like many others relies heavily on the language of supplication and clientship, combines phonetic spelling, direct translation from the Sesotho and the oral, performance language of the church. The letter concluded, "The covernorment he will look for [that is, look after] us. Amen."[18]

The full impact of this 'spoken' writing did not often reach "the ears of the government" as skilful translation often shrivelled the repetitive and additive style of oral speech into the clipped formalities of bureaucratic English.[19] In expressing their opposition to a new council system, one community wrote as follows:

> With respect Sir Amen
> I say that everybody at Kamola, they do not like the Council and its power at all. Truly we do not like it. The entire *lekgotla* of Doorndraai they do not like it one little bit. You know that we do not like the Council. We are in a difficult position, we are in difficult position, we do not like the Council. You know that we do not like it.
>
> I remain
> Johannes Mashishi[20]

A fairly tactful translator got hold of this letter and rendered it as follows:

> Sir, with respect Amen. The residents of Kamola Area are very much against a Local Council. Every body at Dorrondrae. Sir I wish to tell you every body hates a Local Council in this area.
>
> I Remain
> Johannes Mashishi

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[17] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 16, 2/3/3/4, P.M. Kekana to N.C., Zebediela, 31/3/34; KPT 16, 2/3/3/8, D. Malepe to an unspecified recipient, n.d.; and KPT 26, 2/4/3, Chief A. Kekana to S.J.P., Zebediela, 20/4/32. See also KPT 16, 2/3/3/4, P. Kekana to S.J.P., Zebediela, 10/5/34.

[18] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 16, 2/4/2, J. Ngwepe to N.C., 13/11/50; and Anon. to N.C., 7/1/51; and Headman F. Maeteletsa to N.C., 15/10/47. "Mill mill" is mealie meal.

[19] Phrase from T.A., T.A.D., KPT 32, 2/9/2, "Chief" to N.C., 19/4/26.

[20] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 54, 10/1/2, J. Mashishi to N.C., 22/6/48.
The letter which is in a Sindebele-tinged Sesotho with Afrikaans echoes reads as follows:
Kaboikokobetso Morena Amen
Kere Lekhutla le kamola gaberate eseng kakgonthe garerate kgarebeso la Councerl. Ruri garerate lekgotla. Kamoka far Dorrondrae gabaerate eseng legaele garajani. Otsebe gore garerate Councerl. Reapatana Reapatana garerate Councerl. Otsebe gore garerate.
I Rimain
Johannes Mashishi
My thanks to Kgomotso Masemola for help with translation.

Alongside this aural appropriation, many letter writers also reshaped bureaucratic language to their own ends and according to their own understandings. One typical way in which this conversion occurs is by rendering the abstract, concrete, and many abstract nouns beloved of bureaucracy like 'permission', 'notice' and 'advice', were made to render signal service as concrete nouns or transitive verbs. So, letters frequently requested "advices", "a notice" or "a permission note".[21] Similarly, chiefs requested Native Commissioners to "permission" applicants "to make shop". The noun 'bearer', which appeared on crucial papers like travel passes in the form "Allow bearer to...", was often born again as a verb. "I also bearer him as far as I know him as a good man," wrote Chief "Makapan" in recommending a butchery applicant to the Commissioner's office. Elsewhere someone appealed to the Commissioner in characteristically concrete terms: "I am going about bearing my complain...behind my back which I do not know who will take it of from my back."[22]

Another indirect way in which orality affected correspondence was to render the act of writing and authorship visible. Such a process was, of course, often unintentional but it none the less transferred the performative inflections of oral speech on to written discourse where a letter could "read for itself", a scribe could "pen off" or end by saying "This comes to the stoppage of my pen". Similarly, one author focused on the physical nature of writing itself when he declared, "I have this opportunity to draw this few line according to my application." The verb 'draw' may, of course, be indebted to a phrase like 'draw attention to', but even if this were the case, its use here focuses attention both on the activity of writing and the concrete origins of the metaphorical phrase.[23]

A further strategy through which people used to keep the authority of orality alive was to rely on oral witness and oral contract. The highest statement of trust was to say that someone "spoke the judgement from his own mouth", and people frequently repudiated written contracts, particularly those made on their behalf by browbeaten or avaricious chiefs.[24] Confronted with such situations, Native Commissioners were forced to abandon the methods of literate government for face-to-face meeting and, at times, police intervention. One such incident arose in the 1930s over the widely hated tribal levy system whereby people were burdened with extra taxation to buy more land to which the rank and file rarely got access. An irritated Commissioner described events as follows:

> They flatly refused to pay the Levy, on the ground that their Headman, Lingana Mabusela, (since dead) did not inform them of it; I pointed out that Lingana actually signed the resolution of 6/9/1929 asking for the imposition thereof, but all argument was of no avail. Ultimately it became necessary to invoke the aid of the Criminal law and some 100 were sent to prison for terms ranging from six weeks to two months.[25]

In defying the previous written agreement, the residents of the Mabusela ward were partly relying on the flexibility of oral contract. As others have shown, much oral contract, despite its claims to traditionalism, was quite contemporary in its ability to erase obsolete or unpopular law which generally dies a quiet death. As Clanchy in his study of medieval literacy says, "Remembered truth was also flexible and up to date...the law itself remains young, always in the belief that it is old."[26] Such flexibility, of course, cannot withstand the relentless record of written evidence, but the residents of the Mabusela ward made a

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[21] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 2, 1/1/2, C. Leolo to W.S. Kekana, 19/11/28; KPT 16, 2/3/3/7, Chief P. Seloane to S.J.P., Zebediela, 2/6/40; and KPT 15, 2/3/2, W.D. Seshoka to N.C., 5/9/35.

[22] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 18, 2/4/3, Chief P. Makapan to N.C., 1/10/48; and KPT 29, 2/4/3/48, D. Lamola to N.C., 24/11/38.

[23] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 2, 1/1/2, W.S. Kekana to N.C., Zebediela, 23/11/28; KPT 54, 10/1/2, T. Monene to N.C., 22/6/18; KPT 16, 2/4/2, C. Makhubele to N.C., 11/9/49; and KPT 15, 2/3/2, J.P. Kekana to S.N.C., 2/10/28.

[24] Phrase from T.A., T.A.D., KPT 31, 2/8/2, S.J.P., Zebediela to N.C., 6/5/31.

[25] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 45, 4/3/3, N.C. to S.N.A., 18/10/32.

[26] Clanchy, *From Memory*, 233.

spirited attempt to do so. Two years after the churlish report by the Native Commissioner they were still repudiating any written agreements and refusing to pay the levy. As the members of the *lekgotla* wrote to the "magerstreet":

> We shill never pay that the trable leve because we never agreed about it when we where there in the meeting we was face to face we have till every thing about this trable leve that we can't pay the thing.[27]

While literate bureaucrats believed implicitly in the durability and fixity of the printed word, this is probably not how writing must have seemed to many. As Clanchy has pointed out for medieval literacy, in the early stages of writing various forms of forgery flourish. Under such circumstances, it is the malleability and impermanence of the written word that must appear paramount.[28] While the extent of forgery in Transvaal chiefdoms is not at all clear, there is evidence to suggest that there were instances of this 'literate' crime, particularly in connection with the collection of tribal levies. In this regard, literate court messengers often cheated people or bamboozled them with the paraphernalia of receipt books and stamps.[29]

There were other instances in which the malleability of apparently fixed documents emerged. One such instance occurred in 1937 when the self-same Mabusela community hired a lawyer to challenge a levy proclamation in court. As the wording of the levy was ambiguous, it was declared *ultra vires*. It must have been a rather embarrassed Native Commissioner who had to convey this information to the people concerned. At this meeting one apparently ingenuous speaker asked him to explain exactly "how many words were wrong in the last Proclamation".[30] One would give a lot to have heard the tone in which these words were delivered but, like so many bureaucratic genres, minutes of meetings do not allow us such indulgences.

As the Mabusela episode shows, an insistence on orality had powerful political implications. These were further exploited by the tenaciousness with which people clung to any oral agreements made with the Native Commissioner's office. As the Native Commissioner was at times forced to abandon his desk and speak to the chief and people concerned, a lot of agreements in their eyes were oral and, even after years had passed, chiefs or their representatives would continue to insist on various oral promises being honoured. As written records were often lost or burned, and as Native Commissioners changed with great frequency, such requests could safely be embellished or even invented.[31]

While an insistence on orality offered some practical and material advantages, it also offered metaphorical ones whereby the idea and image of the voice became central to much political discourse. People frequently acted on advice spoken to them in dreams (another interesting non-literate form), while the call of the ancestors became a key political metaphor. Again in connection with tribal levies, a group living just north of Pretoria were hit with particularly hefty levy payments in the late 1920s. Some of their more imaginative leaders suddenly recalled that the community had historical links to the chiefdom of Mokopane, which incidentally had much lower levy payments. The Assistant Native Commissioner interviewed the leaders concerned to inquire what had brought this change of allegiance. He reported the interview as follows:

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[27] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 44, 4/3/3, "Lekgotla" to "Magerstreet", 12/12/34.

[28] Clanchy, *From Memory*, 209.

[29] P. Gurr, *Daniel Heese: Ein Lebensbild aus der Mission in Makapanspoort in Nord-Transvaal* (Berlin: Berliner Evangelische Missionsgesselschaft, n.d.), 89; and T.A., T.A.D., KPT 45, 4/3/3, Undated, unsigned document headed "The Present State of Affairs in Valtyn Location".

[30] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 44, 4/3/3, Minutes of a Tribal Meeting of the Langa Tribe under Chief Mankopane Masibi, Bakenberg Location, 28/6/37.

[31] For insistence on oral promise see T.A., T.A.D., HKN 46, 47/15/38, N.C., Nylstroom to Chief Native Commissioner (hereafter C.N.C.), 25/6/37. For allegations of invented claims see T.A., T.A.D., KPT 14, 2/54/3/21, A. Gilbertson to N.C., 30/9/50; and KPT 15, 2/3/2, H.S. Robinson to N.C., 23/5/35.

> When questioned by me as to the reason why they now, after this long lapse of years, want to come under the jurisdiction of Barend Makapan, they replied, 'That their father is calling them.'[32]

This stress on the voice as the basis of much political life also took its surreptitious toll on the procedures of the Native Commissioner's office as officials were forced again and again to explain written documents. It was, of course, the sheer number of non-literates who necessitated this verbal glossing of written documents. Yet in these interactions it was their cultural tastes which prevailed as the arcane documents of a literate culture were baptized in living practice by being explained, interpreted and covered with the spoken voice. It was just such a situation that one Commissioner encountered when he had to explain a bond to an audience that had no desire to finance the land for which their chief had signed. This is how the peeved Commissioner described his encounter in a letter to the Secretary for Native Affairs in which he demanded that the people concerned be forced to apologize.

> I strongly resent the attitude taken up by these natives. The Bond was read over word for word by me in the presence of Mr. Attorney Slabbert to some 400 or 500 natives belonging to the tribe of Jonas Makenna. It was also explained by me thoroughly so that there was no mistake about it - I am thoroughly acquainted with the Sesutto language and the interpretation of the Bond by Makenna was not faulty.[33]

This necessity for oral commentary and exegesis was a task that officials often had to undertake. Another Commissioner wrote as follows to his superiors:

> The report of the Assistant Director of Native Agriculture and the Senior Chemist of the Department of Agriculture and the map drawn by the Assistant Engineer, Native Affairs Department was explained to the best of my abilities to the meeting.[34]

This enshrouding of the written document in oral commentary formed part of a complex linguistic situation in which the Native Commissioner's office in Potgietersrus operated. While most Commissioners could speak Sesotho, they were often not entirely proficient and most letters coming into the office were translated into English. Letters sent to the chief were either in Sesotho or English. However, as the chief's court comprised Sindebele speakers (although most were proficient in Sesotho), one could have a situation whereby letters from the chief to the Commissioner could be dictated in one language (Sindebele), written in another (Sesotho), translated, and read in a third (English). Similarly, if a letter went from the Commissioner to the chief, it could be written in English, translated into Sesotho and read out in translation in Sindebele. All of this was extremely time consuming and often formed a source of annoyance to officials.

In their response to the tactics of performance politics, the Native Commissioner's office often behaved as one would expect of a literate bureaucracy. Much of their energy went into trying to promote the kind of literacy that they believed would make people governable. This battle to impose 'orderly government' on the performance politics of the "theatre state" was waged in joyless campaigns centred on issues of protocol, grammar, procedure and etiquette.[35] In endless letters and meetings, various Commissioners at the Potgietersrus office nagged and threatened on how to give speeches and compose letters (*always* with a date, *never* in pencil). Vexed by the apparent flexibility of customary law, Native Commissioners frequently requested that laws be codified and printed. In the end, most chiefs came to request such books which, along

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[32] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 32, 2/8/2, Additional Native Commissioner (hereafter AD.N.C.) to N.C., 21/10/29.

[33] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 32, 2/9/2, S.N.C. to S.N.A., 19/3/20.

[34] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 41, 2/11/6, A.N.C. to C.N.C., 8/9/39.

[35] Phrase from C. Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

with things like date stamps and letterheads, were the few risible performance accoutrements that literate power allows.[36]

Yet, try as hard as they might, the dream of making the subordinate more pliable through literacy was a far-fetched one. Apart from having a hopelessly patchy presence, literacy, if not flatly resisted, was furthermore appropriated and domesticated by the subordinate in selective ways. It was not a situation to encourage the smooth exercise of power. Or, as Benita Parry phrases it,

> the fracturing of the colonialist text by re-articulating it in broken English, perverts the meaning and message of the English book...and therefore makes an absolute exercise of power impossible.[37]

However, the exercise of power depends not only on good grammar, and in its quest for control the Native Affairs Department from the 1920s turned to more coercive and embracing forms. One part of this strategy was to write white authority into the landscape, and from the 1930s platoons of agricultural officers, vegetable garden advisors, prickly pear exterminators, surveyors, bull castrators, engineers, dipping inspectors, soil conservation officials, irrigation scheme planners, veld improvement officers, and forest rangers invaded the countryside in an attempt to mark and possess it in as many ways as possible. However, for this political inscription to have any meaning, it required a rigid 'grammar' to keep it in place and it was largely the fence that performed this function.

II

The story of fencing in the chiefdom properly begins in 1890 when the Location Commission penned the polity into 12 726 hectares from which about 10 000 people had to subsist.[38] The area was renamed Valtyn's location. The two adjoining chiefdoms suffered a similar fate and ended up being known as Mapela's location and Bakenberg location. Together these three chiefdoms lay in a narrow, solid block, 17 kilometres long and 5 kilometres wide, that housed some 30 000 people (see Fig. III).[39]

In making its decisions, the Location Commission mostly looked at where people lived and declared this the location. Much grazing and arable land was consequently lost. In Valtyn this loss was particularly sharply felt on its new western boundary which after 1890 became the Mogalakwena River. This river had always been a major source of water and most of the chiefdom's lands were situated on its banks - most particularly the eastern one but to a lesser extent the western one. Behind this narrow band of fields on the 'west bank', a range of hills rose sharply and it was here that cattle were grazed and once a year young boys were sent to be circumcised.

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[36] Paragraph based on T.A., T.A.D., KPT 31, 2/8/2, S.J.P., Zebediela to N.C., 6/5/31; KPT 12, 1/15/4, Pitsu [*sic*] of Native Chiefs and Headmen held at the N.C.'s Office, 16/2/34; and KPT 32, 2/8/2, Moses Kgobe to N.C., 6/12/29.

[37] B. Parry, "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse", *Oxford Literary Review*, 9, 1-2, 1987, 42.

[38] This section is drawn from I. Hofmeyr, "'*Nterata*'/'The Wire': Fences, Boundaries and Cultural Resistance in the Potgietersrus District", *International Annual of Oral History, 1990*, forthcoming, 1991.

[39] As with all locations, the names vary enormously. At times officials used the name of the incumbent chief to identify the location. So, for example, Valtyn was also known as Makapan's/Macapaan's/Makapaan's location. Mapela for a long time was callled Hans Masibi's location. Bakenberg often appeared as Bakeberg or Backeberg.
Figures extrapolated from T.A, T.A.D., KPT 12, 1/15/6, Report on Native Affairs for the Year 1938; KPT 31, 2/8/2, *Verslag: Naturelle Sake: Potgietersrus*, n.d.; SN 2, Report on Native Tribes in the Transvaal, 24/11/1879; and C.A.D., NTS 7748, 6/35, Extracts from the Minutes of the Late Location Commission, 26/5/1890.

It was on this 'west bank' that the silent fence war began in earnest. While this struggle around fencing often seemed quiet and invisible, the tactical and ideological battle on both sides could become fierce and was often fought quite literally over feet and inches. For the desperately overcrowded chiefdom residents, every scrap of land was crucial. As one old man said, "The Europeans are fond of shifting beacons", so fond, in fact, that when the chiefdom was surveyed in 1936 its surface area turned out to have shrunk from its official size as determined in 1913 of 14 541 hectares to 12 229 hectares.[40] Most white farmers, on the other hand, considered nothing as too much. Indeed, in later years the rabid cry of many farmers in regard to black land was to become "not an inch more".[41]

This cry, however, was only to emerge forcefully in the 1920s and '30s. Back in the 1890s, things did not appear so urgent, largely because the rather vague boundary lines that the Location Commission had ordained remained entirely unfenced and completely hypothetical. Surrounded by company-owned land or unoccupied private farm land, the residents of Valtyn paid little heed to boundaries and carried on with their lives as before. Yet, by the turn of the century, fencing had become more common and according to both oral and written sources, 'the wire' first came to the Potgietersrus district shortly after the South African War.[42] For those living within Valtyn, their first experience of fencing probably came in 1903, when the Berlin Mission station that straddled town and location land began fencing.

This limited impact of fencing soon began to broaden as improving farmers started seeping into the fertile south of the district, attracted by company land which came on to the market at this time in significant amounts. It was from this point that the first concerted attempts to "pull the wire" and "fence the line" emerged.[43] As Valtyn's location lies in the extreme south of the district, it was one of the first areas to witness systematic fencing, and in 1904 an East Coast Fever fence began to make its way along the chiefdom's western boundary.

However, in erecting the fence, it was by no means self-evident where it should go. The old South African Republic Location Commissi- .. had left ambiguous records and surveys of the boundaries, while the Mogalakwena River which putatively formed the boundary has a wide, reedy and often marshy bed, not to mention a winding course. Eventually a give-and-take policy was followed whereby the fence, like a kebab stick, skewered the bends of the river.[44]

As all three chiefdoms lay on arable soil similar to the clay and loam of the Springbok flats, some farmers soon came to regard them with avaricious eyes.[45] Other farmers who lived north-east of the chiefdom felt themselves to be trapped in a corridor between two black 'blocks' made up of the three locations 'below' them and two others - Matlala and Masasane - 'above' them (see Fig. III). If both groups of farmers could have had their way, all five locations would have been swept further north into marginal bushveld areas and it was this course of action that they recommended in their evidence to the Stubbs Land Commission of 1918. In 1925 this call for removal was strengthened when the Prime Minister, General J.M.B. Hertzog, paid a visit to the area. Platinum had been

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[40] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 13, 2/28/7/4, Minutes of Tribal Meeting at Mapela Location, 30/8/39. Figures from KPT 41, 2/11/6, Undated document headed "Valtyn's Location: Potgietersrust, Location Reclamation Survey".

[41] Union of South Africa, *Report of the Native Affairs Department for the Years 1945-1947*, UG14-1948, 1.

[42] Hosea Bowale, interviewed by Peter Lekgoathi, Tamaties, Zebediela district, 5/5/89; and T.A., T.A.D., KPT 51, 8/18/31/1, Minutes of meeting held at Zebediela location, 9/6/31, statement by Induna Charlie Kekana.

[43] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 14, 2/54/3/17, Chief Makapan to N.C., 15/9/38; and 2/54/3/12, Frans Seaneko to N.C., 23/7/49.

[44] T.A., C.A.D., NTS 7748, 6/35, S.N.C. to N.C., Waterberg, 7/6/22.

[45] J.S. Marais, "Die Landbou-Potensiaal van Potgietersrust", in A.J. Combrink (comp.), *Eeufees Potgietersrust Centenary 1854-1954* (Potgietersrust: Central Centenary Committee, n.d.), 157.

discovered near Bakenberg, Mapela and Valtyn, and because of this Hertzog called for the removal of the locations.[46]

His was a point of view shared by the Potgietersrus Town Council and the by growing number of poor whites who congregated in the village in the 1920s and '30s, many originating from farms bought by the state after 1936 when the area for black occupation was marginally increased. Most residents of this town resented living cheek by jowl with a densely settled town location and chiefdom. At every available opportunity they called for removal in language whose shrill racism increased sharply as Afrikaner nationalist campaigning got under way.[47]

These removals, however, never occurred and, having failed to move people out, farmers had to settle for the next option - fencing in. And from the 1920s farmers began calling for compulsory fencing, largely through their associations that started to appear during that decade.[48] Some of the first farms to be sold to private owners lay on the chiefdom's 'west bank' and it was from here that a renewed offensive was launched to rebuild the East Coast Fever fence. By the 1930s fencing, or attempts to fence, had gone up much of the three chiefdoms' boundaries. In addition to these private schemes, from the mid-1930s the Native Affairs Department launched various anti-erosion and rehabilitation schemes that often brought fencing inside the chiefdom for the first time. By the 1940s the impact of this fencing, both internal and external, had become far-reaching.

The first and most immediate of these changes had to do with overcrowding in terms of land and stock. By 1906 chiefdom dwellers complained of a shortage of land as well as water which the town of Potgietersrus siphoned off in increasing volume.[49] This pressure on land soon began to tell in terms of migrancy and by 1918 70 per cent of men from the Potgietersrus area were said to be working down the mines.[50] By the 1930s overcrowding had become chronic, and Valtyn was likened to the Sahara desert and singled out by betterment planners as "one of the worst in the Transvaal".[51] For this reason, Valtyn became one of the first areas in the Transvaal to experience anti-soil erosion measures, veld reclamation schemes and other such projects that clustered under the betterment banner.[52]

In addition to pressure on arable land, internal fencing aggravated the critical shortage of pasture. As far as the Native Affairs Department was concerned, the answer was to cull. However, resistance to such schemes proved so implacable that for a long time other options had to be pursued. One of these involved fencing for "controlled grazing" which heightened pressure on existing pasture. It was, ironically, a pressure that affected

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[46] T.A., C.A.D., NTS 3544, 498/30, S.N.A. to P.J.D. Pieterse, n.d.

[47] For reports on the condition of the town in the 1930s see T.A., T.A.D., MPT 131, 44/19; and MPT 137, 44/30.

[48] T.A., T.A.D., LPT 1, 4/7/49, J. McIntosh to R.M., 21/9/25, 4/7/45; L.A. de Jongh to R.M., 19/5/25; and 4/7/4/1, C. Stewart Coppen to R.M., 23/4/26.

[49] T.A., T.A.D., GOV 1085, PS 50/8/1907/9, Document headed "Native Location Commission", 2/11/06, evidence of Frans Nuku.

[50] Union of South Africa, Minutes of Evidence of the Eastern Transvaal Native Land Commission, evidence of Lester Goldsworthy [Native Commissioner for Potgietersrus], UG32-'18, 198.

[51] T.A., C.A.D., NTS 3626, 1149/308, R.M. to T.G.W. Reinecke, 10/10/35 and NTS 10211, 6/423/2, Director of Native Agriculture to Controller of Native Settlements, 5/2/36. The population and stock figures for the whole district were as follows: 11,2 people km^2 and 6 ha per cattle unit. (T.A., T.A.D., HKN 28, 35/0/17, Undated table headed "Statistics".) By the 1950s the population figure had risen to 20,7 people per km^2. (HKN 28, 35/0/17, Annual Agricultural Report for Year Ending 30th June 1952.)

[52] The main file in this connection is T.A., C.A.D., NTS 10211, 6/423/2.

small herd owners more than large ones since those with a lot of cattle generally had the wherewithal to hire grazing from the white farmers who rented out pasture in the area.[53]

By the 1930s most Transvaal locations manifested fairly sharp stratification, and in Zebediela, for example, which lay close by, one man had 171 hectares which he ploughed with eight span of oxen while others worked between a half and four hectares with borrowed cattle.[54] Valtyn was in all probability much the same, and like other surrounding locations possessed a wafer-thin stratum of 'progressive' farmers. It was often this new elite who, together with the old chiefly caste, became the beneficiaries of internal fencing and had privileged access to the land which these fences set aside.[55] In terms of land, cattle holdings and social division, fencing played no small part in reinforcing old cleavages and creating new forms of stratification.

Apart from land and cattle holdings, fencing also interfered in daily life, particularly as far as women were concerned. As was the case with the western boundary give-and-take line, fences often cut off access to water. Apart from often necessitating longer journeys to fetch household water, such fences could also deprive washerwomen who did town laundry for their livelihood.[56]

However, one of the biggest bones of contention remained reeds which often ended up on the wrong side of the fence. A standard item in house building and domestic fencing, reeds also had a wide range of other uses, and apart from being used to construct musical instruments, they also featured prominently in folklore and mythology. Many Nguni traditions, for example, associate reeds with creation, and in the central Transvaal local Ndebele historians identify Mhlanga (a name derived from 'reed') as the first Ndebele chief in the Transvaal. Not surprisingly, given the importance of reeds in everyday life, the act of their cutting, in some Transvaal societies, symbolizes one of the founding acts of human civilization.[57]

Rivers in general are seen to hold mythological power, and in the Transvaal as elsewhere they inspire any number of *dinonwane*. In addit' ..., the Mogalakwena featured in the annual initiation ceremonies in which boys were said to cross over (*go wela*) from boyhood to adulthood. In going to and from the circumcision lodge, it was the Mogalakwena that the young boys crossed.[58] In losing access to river frontage, both material and cultural wealth evaporated from people's lives.

There were other kinds of cultural changes that fencing precipitated. One concerned changes to the power of the chief who traditionally held the right to declare the seasonal start to reed cutting. With the tremendous demand on shrinking reed resources, this was probably one of the first prohibitionary powers of the chief to fall into abeyance.[59] Another cultural change concerned oral history and memory. In addition to the standard items of genealogy and battle history that skilled remembrancers recalled, a memory for beacons, meetings with Native Commissioners, farmers and agricultural officers now became crucial.

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[53] T.A., C.A.D., NTS 10211, 6/423/2, C.N.C. to S.N.A., 16/2/39.

[54] T.A., T.A.D., HKN 33, 42/0, Evidence to the Witwatersrand Mine Native Wages Commission.

[55] T.A., C.A.D., NTS 9531, 138/400(69), Assistant Erosion Officer to N.C., n.d.

[56] Job Patja Kekana, interviewed by Isabel Hofmeyr (hereafter I.H.), Westdene, Johannesburg, 5/3/89.

[57] A.O. Jackson, *The Ndebele of Langa*, Republic of South Africa, Department of Co-operation and Development, Ethnological Publication No. 54 (Pretoria: Government Printers, n.d.), 237; N.J. van Warmelo, *Transvaal Ndebele Texts*, Union of South Africa, Department of Native Affairs, Ethnological Publication No. 1 (Pretoria: Government Printers, 1930), 17, fn. 1; and R.T.K. Scully, Phalaborwa Oral Traditions, Ph. D. Thesis, SUNY at Binghamton, 1978, 145.

[58] Job Kekana interview, 5/3/89.

[59] C.L. Harries, *The Law and Custom of the Bapedi and Cognate Tribes* (Johannesburg: Hortors, 1929), 110; and Mönnig, *The Pedi*, 69.

In trying to assess the intangible cultural changes that fencing occasioned, it is important to stress that chiefdom residents did not see fencing as a discrete issue. Instead they probably understood it as part of a more general white invasion whose object was to possess the land in as many ways as possible. One aspect of this possession involved marking the land in every conceivable manner, be it with fences, ploughs, bulldozers, graders, pegs, theodolites, boreholes, roads, farmhouses, plantations, contour banks, grass strips and what have you. The slightest sign of white activity on the land was seen as presaging imminent land loss.

Fencing, then, in the popular imagination, formed part of a wider net of white control. Small wonder that today at least one old man remembers fencing and literacy as intimately tied.

> The issue of fences was brought about by literacy [*go bala*]...it was found out that when the Boers claimed land for themselves they did not know how to measure it. The English brought theodolites [*dilandmeter*] with them....The Boers never had fences. Even today no-one can say he saw them putting up a fence. They had no skills in putting up a fence. They did not know how to do the corners. [The Boers] did not measure the land. They just used their heads, now they just said, 'This area, from here to that tree...it is my land.'[60]

Given that many planners often encouraged fencing as it would make herd boys redundant and so force them to school, the old man's perceptions contain much wisdom.[61] His words also illustrate the extent to which views of fencing and boundaries are embedded in certain cultural forms of understanding and it is to this topic that we now turn.

As any number of studies of colonial culture have shown, settlers almost invariably saw the countryside as a blank page on which they could write their authority.[62] Not surprisingly, many saw boundaries as akin to the written word. Once inscribed on a surveyed diagram, a line, like the printed word, came to represent a supposedly fixed and permanent reality. However, to make a boundary meaningful one requires a fence that both fixes the line and represents it spatially as a thin, sheer wall. This verticalness of the fence is important since it embodies another aspect of colonial understandings of boundaries which are generally seen to sink below the earth's surface and rise above it.

This idea of height and depth was extremely important to colonial understandings of land possession. African agriculture, for example, was considered derisory largely because it was seen as 'shallow'. Colonial farmers, on the other hand, ploughed 'deeply' and so apparently possessed - and earned a right to - the land in a way quite distinct from African farmers. In the perception of the Native Affairs Department, Africans did not "love the soil" which under their "scratching" became "thin" and "bodiless". Europeans, on the other hand, practised "good husbandry" and made the soil "thick" by adding manure and fertilizer.[63] Alongside this folkloric language, the more scientific vocabularies of geology and surveying also embody notions of possession. Both these disciplines generate the illusion of a saturated knowledge of the earth that stretches both horizontally and vertically. Boundaries were one way of marking such deep possession.

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[60] Bowale interview.

[61] T.A., T.A.D., HKN 33, 42/0, Undated document headed "Discussion on Land Regulations of Trust Land Acquired since 1936".

[62] See, for example, T. Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa", in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). For a Northern Transvaal case study see I. Hofmeyr, "Turning Region into Narrative: English Storytelling in the Waterberg", in P. Bonner *et al.* (eds), *Holding Their Ground: Class, Locality and Culture in 19th and 20th Century South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan/Witwatersrand University Press, 1989).

[63] Quotations from Union of South Africa, *Report of the Department of Native Affairs for the Years 1944-1945*, UG44-1946, 9, 12, 68.

Apart from fixing such boundaries, fences, as far as the Native Affairs Department and their betterment schemes were concerned, played an important demarcation and 'containing' function in that they marked off the various zones set aside for grazing, residence, agriculture and so on. These zones, in turn, formed part of an ambitious scheme to survey, document, change and so control rural societies. Such visions of control were heavily tied up with notions of bureaucratic and documentary order. Central to the implementation of these visions was the fence, which increasingly came to be thought of in quasi-literate terms. Policy documents, for example, frequently included phrases like "maintenance of beacons and proper records", a juxtaposition that says a lot about the close symbolic kinship that boundaries and literate documentation enjoyed in the minds of policy makers.[64]

This cultural perception of fencing was also apparent in the role that boundaries played in marking and maintaining identity. One farmer, for example, wanted to fence not only because the chiefdom's cattle trampled his land, drank his water and inseminated his prize cows, but also because he wanted symbolically to fence off the savage darkness around - and, no doubt, within - him. Or, as he explained it, "I am alone and they are a dark multitude."[65]

These fantasies of possession and demarcation played a powerful role in shaping colonial ideologies. Once on the earth, however, they became much less clear cut. Unlike the printed page, the countryside is seldom smooth or flat, and once one has to transfer the boundary line of the diagram into the reality of the veld there are, of course, rivers, hills, trees and bumps to confound the best laid plans. While boundaries remain unfenced, such issues do not surface. However, once fencing starts going up, the problems of determining the supposedly fixed boundary become apparent. And as any number of hapless Native Commissioners were to learn, any attempt to solve such problems had to involve at least some discussion and negotiation between both parties, negotiations that furthermore had to be held in the heat of the day, on the spot and orally. These *in loco* inspections or pointing-out ceremonies, as they came to be known, had by the 1930s become a standard feature of rural life.

To the residents of Valtyn who lived in a society where property rights were transmitted, conferred and negotiated by oral testimony and contract, such ceremonies must probably have seemed like simple good manners.[66] However, if the form of the ceremony was familiar, then the idea of a pencil-thin boundary was not. As with most oral societies, the residents of Valtyn did not see boundaries as sharp lines riven into the earth by fencing. Rather, from linguistic evidence, it would seem that indigenous understandings stress the boundary as something that lies lightly on the earth. So, for example, in Sesotho, one puts down a boundary (*go bea moltwane*). As matters finally turned out, this perception had much ironic wisdom. Colonial officials and farmers frequently moved, redirected and simply gerrymandered boundaries. A boundary, then, was indeed something put on the earth that could, like a ribbon, be moved somewhere else.

This loose precolonial sense of boundary does not mean that notions of territory and demarcation were unknown. What was, of course, unfamiliar was the notion that boundaries could be marked in such precise terms. In the past, where boundaries did exist, such as between fields or homes, these were marked with broad bush fences in contrast to which the fence cut an exceedingly stark contrast. It is still this idea of thin harshness that the word *terata/nterata*, from the Afrikaans *draad* (wire), exemplifies. The official and 'polite' Afrikaans word for fence is *heining*, but by popular choice it was the

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[64] T.A., T.A.D., HKN 33, 42/0, Undated document headed "Discussion on Land Regulations of Trust Land Acquired since 1936". This discourse of documentary control characterizes most Native Affairs Department policy statements. For further examples see Union of South Africa, *Review of the Activities of the Department of Native Affairs 1944-45*, UG44-1946, 32-3.

[65] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 14, 2/28/7(38), P.J. du Preez to N.C., 18/10/45. Translated.

[66] I. Schapera, *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom* (London: Frank Cass, 1970), 200-201; and J.L. Comaroff and S. Roberts, *Rules and Processes: The Cultural Logic of Dispute* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

thinness of the wire rather than the fence as a whole that seemed most striking and it is this idea that popular parlance has preserved.

On both sides of the fence it was generally these unstated ideas that were to guide how people approached the whole issue of boundary disputes. And as the struggles around fencing got under way, it was largely these cultural conventions that people mobilized in their resistance.

In the war of the fences there were a number of crucial steps, and the first of these concerned where the fence would go. Most frequently this procedure began when a farmer whose property bordered on the chiefdom gave notice of his intention to fence. After he had lodged the official papers, the technicalities of where the fence would go and how it would be built had to be arranged. This could happen in a number of ways but generally it involved a meeting of the farmer, Native Commissioner and the chief, accompanied by a retinue of up to fifty followers. Together, they would all congregate at the beginning of the boundary and decide on the exact placing of the fence. Such ceremonies could last for several hours and on at least one occasion an elderly chief "sagged out" from exhaustion.[67] In the negotiations, both farmer and chief would indicate where they felt the fence should go, and, in most instances, the Native Commissioner would make the final decision.[68]

From the vantage of the Native Affairs Department head office in Pretoria, the issue of new fencing should have been quite straightforward. Not surprisingly for a literate bureaucracy, the Department was deeply attached to the notion of a true and fixed boundary, and in the case of any fencing dispute they would refer authoritatively to the neat lines on surveyors' diagrams which assumed the status of holy texts.[69]

However, as any weary Native Commissioner could tell you, the situation on the ground was sheer heresy. To begin with, much nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century surveying could be charmingly vague, and the possibility of determining boundaries with any exactness only came with the countrywide network of beacons known as primary triangulation. But as primary triangulation only made its way to the Northern Transvaal between 1933 and 1953, the possibility of determining boundaries with any degree of precision was remote.[70] To confound matters further, beacons took a perplexingly wide range of forms that included cement structures, cairns, wooden pegs in the ground and features of the landscape like trees. These objects were variously shifted, pinched, destroyed, ploughed over, stolen for mining pegs, and used for target practice, and many officials spent fruitless hours trying to find them.[71] Those that remained were often of an indeterminate status since the untutored eye had little way of distinguishing a boundary beacon from a subdivision beacon. To add to this unholy confusion, the landscape itself often changed over time, and in a wide river bed, for example, the channel of the river could shift by several hundred metres.[72]

Against this background, the idea of a true and fixed boundary could only be a fiction, and it was one that those in the chiefdom often exposed. "The boundary," said one chief, "is unknown. Who knows the boundary and that is it correct?...We do not trust the Europeans." He continued, "The Europeans informed me some months ago that they

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[67] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 78, Minute Book, Minutes of Special (44th) Meeting of the Bakenberg Local Council, 2/9/35.

[68] T.A., C.A.D., NTS 7748, 6/35, Correspondence from 24/11/21 to 20/9/22; and T.A.D., KPT 31, 2/8/2, N.C. to S.N.A., 14/10/31.

[69] T.A., C.A.D., NTS 7748, 6/35, S.N.A. to S.N.C., 29/10/20, 14/2/22; and S.N.C. to S.N.A., 2/9/20.

[70] Union of South Africa, *Report of the Geodetic Work of the Trigonometrical Survey, 1933-1938* and *Report of the Geodetic Work of the Trigonometrical Survey, 1939-1953*, maps.

[71] See file on beacon destruction, T.A., C.A.D., LDE 609, 7946; and LDE 273, 3023, A. Wayland to District Commissioner for Lands, 27/1/03.

[72] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 13, 2/28/7, AD.N.C. to C.N.C., 22/11/38.

had had the line surveyed because they themselves did not know the line." If, as was apparent, the line was indeed unknown, then it became crucial to find it, preferably in a favourable place.[73] Towards this end both sides mobilized all available resources to swing the decision in their favour.

The first such resource that people called on was oral memory. In any event, much of the negotiation on the spot had perforce to be orally conducted, but as the records room of the Native Commissioner's office in Potgietersrus had burned down in 1926 the role of oral memory became crucial. Most often, this memory took the form of competing versions of local history that involved genealogies of previous Native Commissioners and the decisions and determinations that they had made. So, for example, in 1920 one Native Commissioner reported that despite the 'west bank' line having been settled in 1909, a delegation from the chief "persistently st[u]ck to their story that they were told by the late Mr. W.A. King [a former Native Commissioner] that they were entitled to graze their cattle west of the Mogalakwena River and that in a dispute with the owner, King had ruled they were entitled to the ground".[74] Farmers similarly developed their own oral traditions which they passed on by word of mouth to new farmers, often, according to one Native Commissioner, having "'forgotten' or 'inadvertently' pointed out an incorrect line". This quotation, in turn, came from the letter of a previous incumbent of the Native Commissioner's office in Potgietersrus who had been asked to recall - from oral memory - his understanding of the boundary position.[75]

In this business of oral memory, the chiefly representatives were, of course, exceptionally skilled and, in certain instances, people would remember details with extraordinary clarity for three or more decades. However, coming from the powerless, as these versions did, they carried little weight. Furthermore, these oral Nestors now found themselves confronted with a literate bureaucracy whose record keeping undermined the flexibility that much oral memory presupposes.[76]

Even if the chiefdom's residents received an unfavourable decision, they never gave up entirely on the idea of negotiation, and would reopen proceedings at every available opportunity. Such opportunities arose whenever a new Native Commissioner or Magistrate took over. One of the first deputations these new officials received invariably concerned the western boundary of Valtyn's location.[77] People also actively created pretexts for reopening the boundary determination, most often by losing or burning the official diagram sent from head office. In requesting a new copy, one could simultaneously broach the issue anew.[78]

Another way to keep negotiation open was to hire one's own surveyor. When a boundary was particularly unclear, either the farmers or often the Native Affairs Department would get in a private or government surveyor. On such occasion the chief would respond by employing his own surveyor, much as one hired one's own lawyer.[79] Wedded as most white farmers were to the notion of a true and fixed boundary, they viewed this action of the chief with great mirth. Any surveyor, the farmers argued, would reach the same decision. The chief, however, knew that there was more than one way to determine a line. The shambolic history of surveying in the Northern Transvaal made every boundary worth checking, and surveyors, often working off different maps, could,

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[73] All quotations in this paragraph from T.A., T.A.D., KPT 13, 2/28/7/4, Minutes of meeting held at Mapela's Location, 30/8/39.

[74] T.A., C.A.D., NTS 7748, 6/35, S.N.C. to S.N.A., 21/9/20.

[75] T.A., C.A.D., NTS 7748, 6/35, S.N.C., Graskop to S.N.A., 1/7/22.

[76] For an example of this process see T.A., T.A.D., KPT 15, 2/3/2, J. Neitz to R.M., 21/7/28.

[77] T.A., C.A.D., NTS 7748, 6/35, Correspondence from 24/11/21 to 20/9/22.

[78] T.A., C.A.D., NTS 7748, 6/35, N.C. to S.N.A., 7/12/26; and S.N.A. to N.C., 13/12/26.

[79] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 13, 2/28/7, A.N.C. to C.N.C., 22/11/38; and KPT 14, 2/54/3/12, Frans Seaneko to N.C., 23/7/49.

indeed, reach different decisions.[80] Also, given the solidarity of white officials and "conscienceless"[81] farmers, any boundary was worth double checking. Even if the two surveyors' decisions concurred, calling them in usefully stalled the erection of the fence for a while. Finally, people could also resort to more forceful, popular forms of negotiation, and at one pointing-out ceremony, "three to four malcontents made matters difficult".[82] Yet, whatever these *de jure* findings, both sides knew this was simply the beginning of the story. What really counted in the long run was the *de facto* positioning of the fence.

In this part of the battle, the chief and his followers came into their own. Using tactics of determined procrastination, they could often effectively delay or redirect fencing with a tenacity that drove farmers to exasperation. The one major weapon they wielded in this struggle was control of labour. The cost of the fence was, in theory, to be shared jointly, although according to the Fencing Act of 1912, farmers could borrow the money from the Land Bank. The chief, on the other hand, had by the same law to pay, in some instances from tribal funds and in others from levies. The one small tactic the chief had was to offer free labour to meet the chiefdom's side of the bill.[83]

In most cases this labour would simply not arrive. If challenged by the farmer who would have had to make his way to the chief's capital across extremely indifferent roads, the chief, in immaculately polite and deferential tones, would provide any number of excuses. He was very keen to start the fencing, but a message from the Native Commissioner had instructed him to wait.[84] His people were still unhappy about the position of the fence and he would have to call another *pitso* (general meeting) to discuss the issue. The matter, he would say, requires some thought as he did not wish "to hurry by mistake".[85] In some cases the chief literally had no control over the workers who, when confronted with little or no pay, simply went on strike.[86] In other instances, the chief could, sometimes for months on end, be unavailable.[87]

However, should the farmer so much as turn his back, the chief could mobilize a work team with admirable speed. With great precision and efficiency, they would erect the fence in what they understood to be the "right place". In other instances, labourers would constantly make "mistakes" and so require endless close supervision.[88] Farmers, of course, could reply in like terms, and on a number of occasions the work team arrived to find cement poles planted along what the farmer understood to be the "right line". All that then remained was for the workers to pull the "barbert" wire through the fencing poles.[89]

With regard to fencing projects within the chiefdom, the forms of resistance were even more pronounced. Surveying equipment on more than one occasion mysteriously suffered damage.[90] In other instances, internal opposition to the chief manifested itself in

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[80] T.A., C.A.D., NTS 7748, 6/35, N.C. to S.N.A., 28/11/28.

[81] T.A., C.A.D., NTS 7748, 6/35, S.N.C., Graskop to S.N.A., 1/7/22.

[82] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 14, 2/54/3/9, Handwritten note from Agricultural Officer, 2/6/50.

[83] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 14, 2/54/3/9, Meeting at N.C.'s office, 20/9/49.

[84] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 14, 2/54/3/21, A.N.C. to A. Gilbertson, 4/4/46.

[85] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 14, 2/54/3/17, Chief Piet Makapan to N.C., 15/9/39.

[86] T.A., C.A.D., NTS 9531, 138/400(69), C.N.C. to S.N.A., 5/11/37.

[87] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 14, 2/28/7/38, P.J. du Preez to N.C., 18/10/45, and 23/4/48.

[88] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 14, 2/54/3/9, N.C. to Chief Piet Makapan, 25/7/50; and KPT 13, 2/28/7/2, J. Henkel to A.N.C., ?/3/40.

[89] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 14, 2/54/3/17, Tribal Meeting at Valtyn's Location, n.d.

[90] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 41, 2/11/6, Assistant Soil Erosion Officer to Agricultural Superintendent, 17/2/38.

resistance to betterment schemes, and in Bakenberg such opposition centred on the Mabusela ward who had previously opposed tribal levies. Following a strongly traditionalist pattern of resistance, the Mabusela leaders said that "they [had] never drunk water from a well and [could] do without it." As a result, expensive borehole machinery frequently seized up because of a few intelligently placed stones.[91]

Once fencing was in place, people responded to it in a number of diverse and creative ways. Mostly and wherever possible, people simply ignored it. Often fencing crossed customary footpaths and pedestrians then either pushed the fence over or wound its strands together so that people could pass underneath. In one instance at least, the Native Affairs Department capitulated to this pressure by erecting stiles and gates.[92] In other instances people not only broke down the fence but stole sections as well. Undertaken with the assistance of sharpened stones, this activity was generally aimed at removing offending bits of wire to "facilitate the theft of grazing" as well as to gain access to game, wood, water and pasture. In other instances, people stole wire for domestic use and snares.[93] By the 1940s officials were complaining of a "veritable epidemic of fence cutting", while in 1937 the Town Clerk of Potgietersrus thought that fencing Valtyn's location a waste of time "as not a strand would remain in place".[94]

The initial state responses to this fence destruction was more in word than in deed. Officials fulminated, farmers cursed, but in practice very little happened. The Fencing Act of 1912 threatened a £75 fine or six months' imprisonment to anyone who "wilfully injures or removes any fence, gate or other appliance or contrivance forming part or serving the purpose thereof", but as police were few and far between, and as people would seldom give evidence against one another, fence destruction often went unpunished. This situation began to change when farmers took policing into their own hands, and many old men from Valtyn have memories of farmers 'arresting' people who crossed their fences. In other instances the farmer leaned on the chief who in turn located the culprits who received thrashings that are recalled to this da[95]

If there was anything that slowed the rate of fence destruction, then it was undoubtedly such internal policing. As both progressive farmers and the chiefly elite began increasingly to benefit from internal fencing, chiefly retaliation against fence destruction accelerated.[96] Furthermore, given the frequency with which straying cattle were impounded, some cattle owners probably came to see fencing as a mixed blessing. However, in the end there was, and presumably still is, no solution to fence destruction. A symbol and consequence of the nature of social and labour relations in the countryside, fence cutting could only disappear if the character of these relations were to be transformed.

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[91] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 78, Minute Book, Minutes of Meeting of Bakenberg Local Council, 2/10/32, 3/7/31, 4/1/35, and 5/7/35.

[92] T.A., C.A.D., NTS 7475, 556/327, A.N.C. to C.N.C., 14/8/39.

[93] T.A., T.A.D., KPT 14, 2/54/3/21, A. Gilbertson to N.C., 23/3/46; and C.A.D., NTS 1631, 32/238, Munnik Farmers' Association to S.N.A., 29/10/38.

[94] T.A., C.A.D., NTS 1631, 32/238, S.N.A. to Deputy Chairman, Native Affairs Commission, 14/5/47, and Conservator of Forests to Director of Forestry, 18/9/47. T.A., C.A.D., NTS 10211, 6/423/2, Town Clerk to S.W. Naude [the M.P. for the area], 10/3/37.

[95] Job Kekana interview, 5/3/89; Leka Thinta Mokhonoane and Mosoamadite Kekana, interviewed by Jane Letsebe-Matlou and I.H., Mosate, Valtyn, 10/11/89; and Revd Asaph Tsebe, interviewed by Jane Letsebe-Matlou and I.H., Mahwelereng, 10/11/89.

[96] See, for example, the retaliation meted out against the rebellious Mabusela ward in Bakenberg. Accounts in T.A., C.A.D., NTS 3757, 2268/308; and NTS 7727, 201/333.

While the most obvious role of fencing is to enforce dispossession and make private property a reality, it does also have a number of cultural functions that are not unrelated to the preconceptions of literacy. The notion of a boundary on a piece of paper, for example, is often seen by literate societies as having the same fixity as the printed text. As the referent of the text, the fence embodies the reality of the boundary and supposedly writes it permanently into the earth. Against the 'literacy' of the fence, the residents of the chiefdom mobilized the resources of an oral performance culture. It was the same set of resources that the chief and his attendants attempted to use in their political interaction with the Native Commissioner's office. At times they successfully forced the Commissioner to deal with them on the terms of an oral world. But as the fences surrounded Valtyn, undermining the material base of the life to which people were accustomed, such victories over the commissioner became irrelevant and petty. Overall, it was the barbed wire that caged the spoken word.

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

A F R I C A N S T U D I E S I N S T I T U T E

African Studies Seminar Paper
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Title: Revolutionary Mahdism and Resistance to Early Colonial Rule in Northern Nigeria and Niger.

by: J S Hogendorn & Paul E Lovejoy

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Revolutionary Mahdism and Resistance to Early Colonial Rule in Northern Nigeria and Niger[1]

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In early 1906 the French, Germans and British faced a series of challenges to their continued subjugation of the Sokoto Caliphate. An uprising which began in December 1905 in French Niger in the region of Dallol Mawri and Dallol Bosso, 160 km south of Niamey and 250 km west of Sokoto, spread north up the Niger River valley past Niamey through Zaberma and east across the boundary with British Northern Nigeria to the vicinity of Sokoto itself. Several British and French officials were killed. Another rising erupted in German Adamawa, far to the east, and the call for revolt was heard in Bauchi, Gombe, Kontagora and other parts of recently-conquered British territory. As these events demonstrated, resistance to colonial rule did not respect the new boundaries which European imperial decisions had imposed on the Sokoto Caliphate. In the west - around Sokoto and in the Niger valley - resistance against the French and British was reasonably well coordinated, considering the difficulty of communication. The eastern uprising against the Germans does not appear to have been connected with the western movement and indeed had different roots than its western counterpart. Nonetheless, the risings of 1906 were all Mahdist, advocated the expulsion of the Europeans, and called for the overthrow of those Caliphate officials who did not join the Mahdist cause. The British, French and Germans were successful in crushing these revolts, but the dangers presented by a coordinated revolt were real enough.[2] Not until these revolts were crushed can it be claimed that colonial rule had been firmly established.

Although all the 1906 uprisings were couched in terms of Mahdist doctrines, there were significant differences between the western revolts against the French and the British and the struggle in northern Adamawa against the Germans. The western revolts were truly revolutionary, while the northern Adamawa struggle was an outgrowth of the Mahdist movement in the Nilotic Sudan and, while violent and anti-colonial, cannot be considered revolutionary. The primary intention of this article is to explore the historical background of revolutionary Mahdism within the context of the larger Mahdist

movement and the divisions within the Sokoto Caliphate at the time of the colonial conquest which explain the appearance of revolutionary Mahdism.

Because the British occupied much more of the Sokoto Caliphte than the French and Germans combined and because British territory included the capital districts of Sokoto and Gwandu and the most populous and prosperous emirates, more attention is given here to developments in the British sphere than to those of the French and German. It can be claimed with reasonable certainty that if the 1906 uprising in the region of Sokoto and Gwandu had been successful, the implications for the rest of the Caliphate, no matter which European power was involved, would have been very serious indeed. The Germans held the north-eastern and southern sub-emirates of Adamawa; the French controlled the relatively small emirates of the Niger valley and Liptako to the west of Gwandu and Sokoto; the British had the central regions, the capital districts, the overwhelming majority of the population, and the greatest land mass. Of the twenty-nine emirates and the two capital districts which comprised the Caliphate, the British occupied all but the western eight emirates and the various sub-emirates of Adamawa.[3]

The 1906 Uprisings

The French first became aware that an uprising had been organized when on 8 December 1905 a patrol which was attempting to collect tax in the area between Dallol Mawri and Dallol Bosso was attacked.[4] Two gardes-cercle and two cavaliers were killed. Another patrol went to recover the two rifles of the gardes-cercle but had to retreat in the face of strong opposition. As will be discussed below, these attacks were premature. The revolt was set to erupt in early February 1906, but after these two skirmishes, there could be no turning back. A French detachment left Niamey for the Dallols on 28 December.[5]

The first battle in the French zone occurred on 4 January 1906. The Mahdists lost an estimated 30 men, the French 12, including one French officer. The local forces of Awta, the Zarmakoy of Doso, burned Kobkitanda, the centre of resistance, as the Mahdists retreated to Sambera, a neighboring Mahdist stronghold. A series of battles followed in which another twenty Mahdists died. Saybu Dan

Makafo, the nearly-blind Mahdist leader, and many of the survivors fled east across the colonial boundary and made their way to Satiru, which they reached sometime after mid January.[6]

A second centre of revolt erupted in Zaberma, north of Niamey, under the Wangari warlord, Maru of Karma, a former student of Dan Makafo. The blind cleric had visited Karma before the revolt and had sent an emissary to Maru in December 1905 to inform him of the skirmish with the gardes-cercle. Maru threw in his lot with the Mahdists.[7] On January 8, Colonel Lamolle reported that Maru was in revolt.

The left bank of the Niger, extending 300 km from Sorbo Haoussa to Boubon, a mere fifteen km from Niamey, was lost, and there was danger of the revolt spreading across the river and among the Tuareg. The French posts at Sandire and Filingue had to be abandoned, and troops from Dori had to fight their way back to Niamey. The French launched their campaign against Boubon on January 17, which was taken despite two "vigorous" Mahdist assaults. Karma, 25 km from Niamey, was taken the next day, and Maru retreated to Simri in the semi-desert region of Zaberma Ganda. The French then waited in the hope that many of Maru's supporters would desert. Maru attacked a French patrol on March 3, but reportedly suffered 30 killed and five wounded. Simri was occupied on March 4, and once again Maru withdrew. The end came on March 5. Maru and many of his troops were killed, and the survivors were taken to Niamey.[8] Trouble also spread southward to Bariba and Dendi country and westward to Gurmanche. While some Tuareg joined Maru, many others waited to see what would happen. French reports also suspected that the emirate of Say would rise, but in fact it did not.[9]

In February, the revolt spread to British territory. The center of resistance was the town of Satiru, located only 20 km southwest of Sokoto and 60 km from Gwandu, the twin capitals of the former Caliphate.[10] The town, composed of mat compounds surrounded by a mat fence and containing an estimated population of 5,000 inhabitants, straggled north-south along the eastern face of a small valley.[11] On February 14, a British patrol under Acting Resident Hillary marched out to intimidate the Satiru community. The British were unaware of the rising in French territory. The patrol met a mob of Satirawa armed with some spears and bows and arrows but mostly with hoes, axes and other agricultural implements.[12] The WAFF detachment failed to

form a square properly; Hillary rode ahead because he thought he could talk to the mob. Separated from his troops and blocking the line of fire, Hillary and his escort were killed. In the resulting confusion, the WAFF experienced heavy losses; total deaths included three white officers and 25 African soldiers.[13] In the words of High Commissioner Sir Frederick Lugard, this defeat was the "first serious reverse suffered by the West African Frontier Force since it was raised [1898]."[14] Lugard and his subordinates feared that a tremendous upheaval would ensue from this "Sokoto Rising," as the Times headlined it.[15] The British regime was thinly spread over Northern Nigeria, and a major detachment of the WAFF was far to the south, engaged in a protracted campaign to subdue the Tiv. The situation appeared grave.

The Satiru Mahdists also suffered heavy losses in the initial encounter, 30-40 dead and wounded, with their leader, Malam Isa, severely wounded.[16] Isa died on February 16th. But the Satiru Mahdists quickly regrouped and in the aftermath of their initial victory, they wrecked havoc on neighbouring villages. The British thought the rebels were merely settling old scores, but in fact, the raids punished moderates within the Mahdist community. The Satirawa wanted to demonstrate to everyone that there could be no compromise. What was worrisome to the British was the extent of local support for the uprising. There were reports of widespread support and even revolt from Katsina and Zamfara and in Sokoto town itself.[17]

As WAFF troops were force-marched from all parts of Northern Nigeria, Resident Alder Burdon, a military man himself and former commander of the Royal Niger Constabulary, applied his considerable skills to secure the loyalty of the Sokoto aristocracy. His initial efforts were decidedly mixed. Sultan Attahiru II and his officials expressed their loyalty, and Marafa Maiturare of Gwadabawa - a Sokoto official in charge of the Sarkin Musulmi's levies who later became Sarkin Musulmi himself (1915-24) - marched on Satiru with a backing of 3,000 horse and infantry on the morning of the 17th. But the Marafa's troops refused to attack and retreated in disarray.[18] As one Sokoto cleric wrote at the time

> We have been conquered. We have been asked to pay poll tax [jizyah] and jangali [cattle tax]. We have been made to do various things, and now they want us to fight their wars for them. Let them go and fight themselves.[19]

Neither tax had been collected in Sokoto and Gwandu before the conquest. The Satirawa continued to spread their propaganda throughout the countryside, even as they laid waste to those who opposed the rebellion, and the Emir of Gwandu offered limited but significant support to the insurgents. For the next three weeks, the British were impotent to interfere.

Despite these heady successes, the Satiru resistance proved to be short-lived. On March 10th, a combined expedition of the Sokoto levies and WAFF troops marched on Satiru. Though they met fierce resistance, the ensuing slaughter was difficult to justify, even from an imperialist perspective. As has often been the case in history, religious fanaticism was no match for modern technology, in this case represented by the maxim machine gun and the breech-loading magazine rifle. The WAFF square formation laid low some 2,000 Satirawa, and the charging Sokoto cavalry hacked to death many of the fleeing survivors. An estimated 3,000 women and children, whom the Sokoto levies mopped up, were herded to Sokoto to a life of servitude.

Implausibly, the leader, Saybu Dan Makafo, survived the slaughter, although wounded in the final attack. He was captured by the local levies from Dange, whose sarki took him to Sokoto. Dan Makafo, nearly blind, suffering from his wounds, and mistreated, bravely faced an Islamic court and reasserted his defiance. Even then he was greatly feared. Dan Makafo's boy guide is reported to have shouted out at the trial, when Dan Makafo asked for water, "Don't let him have it or he'll vanish into thin air and then I shall be the only one left for you to execute."[20] The public executioner decapitated the hero of Satiru on March 22nd. His head, and those of four subordinates who suffered a similar fate, was mounted on stake in the market to serve as a dire warning to would-be Mahdists and revolutionaries.[21] The Sokoto citizenry dutifully participated in the public humilitation of the Mahdists. As Burdon telegramed to Lugard:

> All Sokoto went out yesterday [March 11th] to inspect battlefield and raze Satiru to ground. No wall or tree left standing. Sarikin Muslim [Musulmi] has pronounced curse on anyone building or farming on site.[22]

Thus ended the Satiru rebellion. Today the site is on the edge of a forest reserve. It has not been inhabited since its destruction.

Mahdists also staged an uprising in northern Adamawa in early 1906.[23] As will be discussed below, much of northern Adamawa and eastern Gombe emirates had come under Mahdist domination in the 1880s and 1890s, and hence it is not surprising that Mahdism was rife here during the first few years of German occupation. The 1906 uprisings were concentrated in Garoua and Maroua sub-emirates. Wouro Kohel, near Garoua, was the most important Mahdist stronghold, but Balda, near Maroua, was also a centre of discontent.[24]

Umar Jime, known locally as Goni Waday, a Shuwa Arab from Wadai, led the revolt in Garoua. While his early career is not well known, he was at the first battle of Bormi, 2 September 1901, which establishes him as a follower the Mahdist leader, Jibril Gaini (see below).([25]) He toured Garoua, Yola, Banyo, and other parts of Adamawa before the German conquest, and settled at Ngaundere, where he established a mosque. His following became large, so he left Ngaundere and settled at Wouro Kohel, a village south of the Benue in the territory of Garoua. By now he had attracted considerable support among some sections of the Fulbe aristocracy, but not all. The Germans sent soldiers to disperse Goni Waday's followers, and as was the case at Kobkitanda and Satiru, the Mahdist forces and their aims were not fully appreciated. Goni Waday attacked the Germans at the village of Lagdo. Now almost all the Fulbe on the left bank of the Benue threw their support behind the rebellion, and the time had come to attack Garoua. At this time, Hauptmann Strumpel, the German officer in charge of northern Cameroon was at Maroua fighting another Mahdist leader, Al-Hajj Arabu, the former associate of the Hayatu and once <u>imam</u> of Marua (see below), who resided at Balda.[26] The German force annihilitated the Mahdists and executed the Fulbe officials who had expressed support.

A number of issues need to be addressed in examining the circumstances surrounding the revolts at Satiru, Kobkitanda, Karma, Garoua and Maroua. First, to what extent was there a wide-scale plot to stage a Mahdist uprising? Second, who were the supporters of this movement? Third, were the British, French and Germans correct in assessing the seriousness of the revolt and therefore justified, from an imperial perspective, in their bloody suppression?

The Mahdist Tradition in the Sokoto Caliphate

As Adeleye, Al-Hajj and other scholars have demonstrated, Mahdist sentiments were widespread in the Sokoto Caliphate in the nineteenth century.[27] The thirteenth century of the Muslim era, which ended in 1883, was a period of particularly high Mahdist expectations, and the creation of a Mahdist state in the Nilotic Sudan in the 1880s encouraged Mahdist sympathies further. The colonial conquest of Northern Nigeria (1897-1903) provided yet another reason for Mahdists to spread their propaganda. A review of the major features of the Mahdist movement in the Sokoto Caliphate demonstrates that the colonial powers were accurate in assessing the potential danger of a Mahdist uprising, although they failed to anticipate when it would occur.

The earliest Caliphate officials, including Uthman dan Fodio, his brother Abdullahi and his son Muhammad Bello, discussed Mahdism at length. As Al-Hajj and Biobaku have observed, "Classical books of Islamic eschatology were extensively read and copiously quoted by the [Shehu and the] Shehu's companions, and their successors, in their literary output about Mahdism."[28] In Tahdhir al-ikhwan, Uthman dan Fodio denied that he was the Mahdi, but he clearly believed that the Mahdi would come.[29] As Muhammad Bello himself reported, his father sent him to Zamfara, Katsina, Kano and Daura, where he

> conveyed to them [i.e., supporters of the jihad] his good tidings about the approaching appearance of the Mahdi, that the Shehu's [Uthman dan Fodio's] followers are his vanguard and this Jihad will not end, by God's permission, until it gets to the Mahdi. They listened and welcomed the good news.[30]

Bello also instructed Modibbo Adama, the leader of the jihad in the area which was to become Adamawa, to expand towards the east in preparation for the coming of the Mahdi from that direction. As we will see, Adamawa became closely associated with Mahdism.[31] In 1820, Muhammad Bello, who by then was now Caliph, actually predicted that the Mahdi would appear in 1863/64.[32]

Premature Mahdist assertions were dangerous to the nascent caliphate. One Tuareg adherent, Hamma proclaimed himself Mahdi in

1811 but was summarily executed.[33] Despite such harsh repression, Mahdist expectations continued to be high throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, and increasingly the Caliphate leadership had to contain such beliefs. Caliph Abubakar Atiku (1837-1842), for example, issued a proclamation declaring that the time had not yet come "since there is still some good remaining among us."[34] Other caliphs ordered the execution of Mahdists or otherwise curtailed them. Muhammad Bello's prediction may have restrained some would-be activists until the 1860s, but he was not the only recognized expert on such matters.

Other committed Muslims also attempted to determine the date of the Mahdi's appearance, initially during the thirteenth century A.H. and then afterwards. The Mahdi was expected to come from the east, which was a reason why many people emigrated in that direction. He was to appear on a mountain, which was sometimes interpreted as Bima Hill in Gombe Emirate and explains why Bormi, a few miles to the north of Bima Hill in the Gongola River valley, became a place of settlement for some Mahdists.[35] He would be followed by Isa (Jesus), who would actually purge the world of unbelief (see below). Messangers were to come before the Mahdi appeared to announce his imminent arrival. These messangers were relatively common and were often misunderstood by colonial officials, who thought they were claiming to be the Mahdi.

Clerics and ordinary believers alike debated these Mahdist doctrines. On the one hand, official interpretations of Mahdism, as represented in the writings of Uthman dan Fodio and his successors in the Caliphate aristocracy, tended to downplay the immediacy of the prophesies. Stable government and Mahdist expectations of the end of the world were incompatible. Popular manifestations of Mahdism, on the other hand, were often displayed in the form of resistance to Caliphate authority.

Many Mahdists demonstrated their discontent through emigration towards the east, the direction from which the Mahdi was supposed to appear.[36] Emigration implicitly meant the rejection of the caliphate government and was a more common expression of protest than open rebellion. Emigration removed dissidents from the body politic, but most of these people were the kind of educated and devote individuals whom the caliphate needed. Furthermore, their travels spread unsettling doctrines throughout the Caliphate and, indeed, through

the regions to the east as far as the Nilotic Sudan.

The emigration of Mahdist supporters towards the east began during the jihad. Uthman's brother and co-founder of the Caliphate, Abdullahi, began such an emigration in 1806, and while his intentions are not entirely clear with respect to his Mahdist expectations, the emigration was a protest against the course of the jihad, the excesses which had been committed on the battlefield, and the inadequacy of religious dedication on the part of some jihad supporters. Abdullahi ended his hijra in Kano and returned to his place in the Caliphate leadership, ultimately becoming ruler of the western emirates and establishing the twin capital of Gwandu.[37] Another major exodus began under Caliph Abubakar Atiku in the late 1830s,[38] perhaps in part because Muhammad Bello's death in 1838 marked the end of an era. The 1850s were also a period of emigration.[39] By then a new generation of Muslims had emerged, and many clerics were not entirely satisfied with developments in the Caliphate: aristocratic rule was firmly established, some felt to the detriment of religious and scholarly pursuits, and the secular concern with amassing slaves, land and luxury goods seemed to reflect an erosion from the principles of the jihad.

As the end of the thirteenth century A.H. (1882/3) approached, popular unrest as manifested through emigration became even more pronounced. In 1878 one of the most important of these emigrations occurred. Hayatu b. Sa'id, the grandson of Muhammad Bello and the great-grandson of Uthman dan Fodio, left Sokoto after the accession of his uncle, Caliph Muazu (1877-91), which effectively ended the claims of his father, Sa'id, and thereby his own to the caliphate. Personal dissatisfaction seems to explain the timing of his move and probably influenced his turn to Mahdism. His emigration, together with thirty-three students and numerous other dependents, was halted in Adamawa, where Lamido Sanda warmly received him as a member of Uthman dan Fodio's family. He stayed in Yola until 1882, whereupon he moved further east to the sub-emirate of Bogo, on the extreme northeastern boundary of the Sokoto Caliphate. He settled at Balda, the residence of a son of the Bogo emir, and one of the centres of Mahdist revolt in 1906.[40] Hayatu became the most vocal and serious critic of the Caliphate leadership and had pretensions of overthrowing the government, particularly after he recognized Ahmad Muhammad of the Nilotic Sudan as Mahdi.[41]

The Ansar: Supporters of Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad

Hayatu emerged as the leader of Mahdism in the last two decades of the nineteenth century because of his aristocratic origins, his widely recognized learning and his support for Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad of the Nilotic Sudan. Al-Hajj has documented how emigration and the Caliphate writings on Mahdism were directly responsible for the emergence of the Mahdist movement of Ahmad Muhammad.[42] Ahmad Muhammad declared himself Mahdi in 1881 and subsequently expelled the Ottoman Egyptian colonial regime from the upper Nile valley. Mahdi Ahmad Muhammad, in turn, exerted considerable influence on the course of Mahdism in the Sokoto Caliphate. Hayatu learned that Muhammad Ahmad had declared himself Mahdi in 1883, as the end of the thirteenth century of the Muslim era approached and expectations of the Mahdi's appearance were especially strong.[43] Hayatu sent messangers to the Nilotic Sudan to pledge his loyalty and support. Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad thereupon appointed Hayatu his representative, amil al-Mahdi, in the West and amir al-mu'minin of the Sokoto Caliphate. As the Mahdi's agent in the west, Hayatu acquired considerable legitimacy in the eyes of some for his pretensions to the Caliphate.

Hayatu's movement was particularly strong in the eastern emirates and attracted a continuous stream of emigrants. For example, one large emigration, prompted by Hayatu's call, was intercepted in 1883 or thereabouts. Liman Yamusa, from Dutse in Kano Emirate, organized an exodus which the Sokoto authorities ordered dispersed. A Caliphate army confronted Yamusa's entourage at Shira; the people scattered and an official escort took Yamusa to Bauchi and apparently onto Sokoto.[44] His subsequent fate is uncertain, but he does not appear to have been a further influence on Mahdism. As this emigration demonstrates, the activities of Hayatu and his supporters remained a serious menace to the Caliphte government throughout the 1880s and 1890s.

Lamido Sanda of Yola adopted a permissive stance towards Hayatu. He neither refuted Hayatu's political claims nor discouraged people from joining the Mahdist cause, unlike emirs further to the west. Consequently, Hayatu's influence expanded rapidly. Indeed Hayatu succeeded in conquering many of the pagan communities which Bogo, Maroua and the other sub-emirates in northern Adamawa had previously failed to do.[45] As Njeuma has noted, "By 1890, a real Mahdist

community had emerged in northern Adamawa, covering the entire Marua-Mandara region as far south as Mubi and attracting adherents from several parts of the Sokoto Caliphate."[46]

Hayatu's subsequent career can be summarized briefly.[47] The death of Lamido Sanda and the accession of Zubeiru to the lamidate ended the passive stance of the Yola government towards the Mahdist cause. Hayatu had written letters to most, if not all, of the emirs in the Caliphate, calling on them to declare for the Mahdi. These overtures were rebuffed, and in 1893 Lamido Zubeiru organized a military campaign to destroy Balda. This campaign proved to be a near disaster, as many of Zubeiru's supporters refused to attack Hayatu. Balda was sacked and perhaps burned, but Zubeiru failed to undermine Hayatu's movement.

Hayatu now joined forces with Rabih b. Fadl, whose Mahdist armies had marched eastward, conquering Bagirmi in 1893 and were prepared to invade Borno.[48] In late 1893, the combined forces of Hayatu and Rabih achieved the conquest of Borno, and in 1894 Hayatu moved to Rabih's capital at Dikwa and become Imam of Rabih's Mahdist state. In 1898, however, the alliance between the two leaders collapsed. Hayatu still aspired to political supremacy in the Sokoto Caliphate. Rabih had his own agenda, and Hayatu was killed. The French subsequently defeated Rabih in 1900, thereby ending the political independence of Mahdism.[49] Nonetheless, the numerous followers of Hayatu and Rabih still controlled much of northern Adamawa from Balda. The French eliminated Rabih and Rabih's son Fadlallah (d. 1900). The Germans were left to contend with Balda and the remnents of the ansar. The revolts of 1906 in Garoua and Maroua were those remnents.

A second focus of Mahdist resistance in the eastern emirates was Bormi, near Bima Hill in Gombe Emirate. As Al-Hajj has shown, Bima Hill had special importance in Fulbe legend.[50] It was associated with supernatural manifestations, symbolized by the expected appearance of an angel on a white horse who would bring good tidings if carrying a white flag and bad tidings if carrying a red flag. The sighting of a white bird or a vulture was also interpreted as supernatural. Traditions from Morocco to the Nilotic Sudan held that the advent of the Mahdi was to occur on a hill, which was sometimes interpreted in the Caliphate as Bima Hill. Bormi, therefore, attracted numerous Mahdist supporters, the most important of whom was

Jibril Gaini, who responded to Hayatu's leadership and was appointed Hayatu's agent, amir al-jaish.[51]

Jibril settled at Bormi in about 1885,[52] from where he raided pagan villages and quickly established himself as a military force in Gombe Emirate. Caliph 'Umar ordered the emirates of the Borno marches (Bauchi, Hadeija, Katagum, Jama'are, Misau and Gombe) to destroy Bormi and end Jibril's autonomy. A combined force laid seige to one of Jibril's strongholds, the town of Bajoga, for six weeks in early 1889 but without achieving a victory. A truce was reached which left Jibril free to consolidate his control of much of Gombe Emirate. Jibril sent an escort to assist Hayatu in his abortive attempt to flee Dikwa in 1898, and from then until 1902 Jibril inherited the leadership of the ansar movement in the Caliphate. In 1902, the British stormed Bormi and exiled Jibril to Lokoja, where he died, apparently in 1904.[53] Bormi continued to attract Mahdist supporters, and it was the site of another battle in 1903, at which Caliph Muhammad Attahiru was finally defeated.[54] Even then, Mahdists still looked to Bima Hill as a rallying point for resistence, and the British found it necessary to build a fort on the hill in 1906, which they did shortly after the destruction of Satiru.[55]

As this brief summary demonstrates, the Mahdist ansar were concentrated in the eastern parts of the Sokoto Caliphate and were largely associated with the careers of Hayatu, Jibril and Rabih, all of whom were proponents and appointed agents of the Mahdist movement of the Nilotic Sudan. A number of factors -- the death of Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad in 1884, the destruction of the Mahdist state in the Nilotic Sudan in 1898, and the great distance between the Nile and Lake Chad -- resulted in the virtual autonomy of these western ansar. While the geographical focus of the movement was northern Adamawa, eastern Gombe and Borno (after its conquest in 1893), there was wide support within the Caliphate. Hayatu came from Sokoto, and there was a steady eastward drift of supporters from the central emirates. Indeed many of those in Yola who opposed Hayatu claimed that there was too many "Hausa" (as opposed to Fulbe) at Balda.[56] Such charges demonstrate that many people from the populous, central emirates had settled at Balda. Ethnic considerations as such were of secondary importance, of course. Anyone who accepted the claim that Muhammad Ahmad was the Mahdi and that Hayatu was his appointed agent was recognized as a loyal supporter.

Anti-Colonial Mahdism

The colonial conquest forced many of those who rejected Hayatu's pretensions and who did not recognize the Mahdiyya of Muhammad Ahmad to reconsider their stand on the imminency of the Mahdi's arrival. This introspection inevitably influenced the decisions of people as to whether or not they should accept colonial rule. For those who acquiesed, the apologia of Muhammad al-Bukhari, the Waziri of Sokoto (1886-1910), expresses well the agony of those who accepted subjugation to the Christian incursion. In Risalat al-Wazir'ila al-'ilm wa'l-tadabbur, he explained that the protection of Muslims depended upon accommodation; emigration would turn the land into one of unbelief. It was the duty of some Muslims to stay in office, despite the apparent treason involved in accepting colonial dictates.[57] This rationalization justified the accession to office of the colonial emirs and their subordinates, who soon found themselves in direct conflict with the anti-colonial stance of many Mahdists and their belief that the Mahdi was about to come, as heralded by the colonial conquest.

Many of those who did not accept colonial rule chose emigration (hijra) in anticipation of the Mahdi's arrival as an expression of resistance. The leader in this new phase of Mahdist activism was Caliph Attahiru, but many other Caliphate officials, such as Emir Zubeiru of Yola and others who did not actually join Attahiru, became anti-colonial Mahdists.[58] Some office holders, such as the Emir of Gwandu, who acceeded to office after the British conquest, wavered; their sympathies were with those who resisted, and they too interpreted their actions in the context of Mahdist beliefs.[59] Many commoners also flocked to Attahiru as he moved eastward through Zamfara and Kano.[60] To some extent the Caliph discouraged these people. The difficulty of supplying enough food for the masses and the many other people who wanted to join the hijra presented logistical problems of serious proportions. More than a month after the hijra, Resident Alder Burdon reported from Sokoto that "The farmers are still trying to make their way to him [Attahiru] in the belief that he would lead them to the Mahdi."[61] In the end tens of thousands of people appear to have joined the exodus.

In addition to the Caliphate aristocracy and their supporters, there were two other groups of people who stood by Attahiru at the fateful confrontation with the British at the second battle of Bormi

in March 1903. First, many followers of Hayatu and Jibril, under the leadership of Imam Mahdi, drifted back to Bormi and were now ready to join cause with these new converts to active Mahdism.[62] Second, a group of Umarian refugees from the western Sudan had also come there, perhaps because of the traditions surrounding Bima Hill.[63] The Umarians were the remnants of the emigration from Segu Tukulor, which had been conquered by the French in 1893. Their association with the Sokoto Caliphate was complicated. Al-hajj 'Umar had had pretensions to the caliphate upon the death of Muhammad Bello in 1838, and when these claims were frustrated, he moved west and subsequently initiated his own jihad. His Tijani affiliation and recognized leader of the Tijaniyya in the western sudan placed him in opposition to the predominant Qadiriyya of the Sokoto Caliphate. Segu Tukulor, the creation of his jihad, became a Tijani state. The Umarians who sought sanctuary in the Sokoto Caliphate after 1893 included the more millenial elements of the Tijaniyya. Sokoto found it expedient to welcome their immigration, but they were carefully watched. The group settled in a number of places, Dallol Bosso (1896-98), Mai Kulki, west of Sokoto (1898), Dankaba in Zanfara (1899), Gombe (1900-01), Missau (1902), where upon a part of the group moved to Zinder and others moved onto Bormi.[64]

Despite the two Mahdist defeats at Bormi, Mahdist expectations within the aristocracy did not fully subside. The emir of Gwandu, installed by the British and hence not committed to the emigration of Attahiru, is known to have harboured Mahdist beliefs, which is why he allowed Dan Makafo to pass through Gwandu territory and why he secretly encouraged the Satiru resistance.[65] The emir paid for this divided loyalty through the loss of his office one month after the destruction of Satiru. He died shortly thereafter. Undoubtedly other aristocrats secretly wondered about Mahdist prophesies. Dan Makafo and Isa are known to have written letters to governing officials in various parts of Caliphate territory,[66] as Hayatu, Jibril, Rabih and others had done before.

Although there were some aristocratic symphathies for continued resistance, the predominant view among the ruling class had come to accept colonial rule, whether British, German or French.[67] With the crises of 1906 came pledges of support to Lugard and his subordinates from virtually every emirate in the British sphere, and the British relied extensively on local military and police security.[68] The concentration of WAFF forces for the march on Satiru could not have

occurred otherwise. French and German regimes had similar support and relied on local troops, too.[69]

The accommodation of most of the Fulbe aristocracy with the colonial regimes after the second battle of Bormi partially explains why the Satiru uprising and other signs of Mahdism, particularly in the western parts of Caliphate territory, had an undercurrent of hostility to the aristocracy. But accommodation with colonialism does not entirely explain the antipathy. In contrast to the ansar movement, the Mahdist supporters of Dan Makafo at Kobkitanda and Satiru did not include Fulbe (see below). There was already a strong anti-aristocratic dimension to Dan Makafo's movement which distinguished his brand of Mahdism both from the ansar supporters of Hayatu and Jibril and from the emigrations of Attahiru and the Umarians. While it would probably be inaccurate to categorize this western Mahdism as anti-Fulbe and therefore based on ethnicity, it is striking that there was relatively little support for the Satiru community and its counterparts elsewhere among the Fulbe. There were no Fulbe among the bodies of the dead Satirawa. It appears that the reason for this can be explained by the revolutionary nature of western Mahdism.

The expectations of the aristocracy were that the Mahdi would eventually come, but usually the time for his appearance was in the distant future. The hijra of Attahiru was an emigration out of desperation, as if his flight was a symbolic act of resistance made necessary by the belief in Mahdism but without a real expectation that the time had come. While undoubtedly many of Attahiru's supporters did join the hijra as true believers, Attahiru's actions themselves have a hollow ring about them. Attahiru went through the actions but did not really expect to find the Mahdi. The time for his appearance was still in the future.

Revolutionary Mahdism

Revolutionary Mahdism can be distinguished from other forms of Mahdism in that its proponents not only wanted to overthrow the government but replace the ruling class entirely. Furthermore, revolutionary Mahdism opposed slavery (see below), which was an essential dimension of Caliphate economy and society.[70] As was the case with other Mahdists, revolutionary Mahdists believed that the

time for the Mahdi's appearance was at hand, but the implications of His appearance were different. Opposition to all established government, including that of the Caliphate was a cornerstone of revolutionary Mahdism. Because of the anti-aristocracy orientation of revolutionary Mahdism, there was little reason to emigrate. Other Mahdists were committed to emigration towards the east, in part because of the expectation that that was from where the Mahdi would come but in part because of the religious and class similarities between Mahdist emigrants and the Fulbe aristocracy. The ansar and Attahiru's supporters included many Fulbe, in contrast to revolutionary Mahdists, and the Fulbe aristocracy as a whole tended to associate emigration with Mahdism. As Hayatu's case demonstrates, emigration was essential for disaffected aristocrats who maintained political pretensions to accede to office. To remain in Sokoto would have required a renunciation of such pretensions.

Many revolutionary Mahdists believed in the second coming of Isa (Jesus), who would purge the world of unbelief and eliminate oppresive government. Hence emigration was unnecessary. The importance of the Isa tradition can be traced back to the followers of Malam Hamza of Tsokuwa, a town in southeastern Kano Emirate, although the tradition is found in classical Islam and was probably widespread in the Caliphate before Hamza's time. A local cleric, Hamza instructed his followers not to pay tax other than the zakka (tithe). Tax officials (jakadu) were beaten and sent back to Kano city. In 1848, Hamza fled to the Ningi Hills. His followers, who claimed to be Isawa (followers of Isa), continued in revolt for the rest of the century.[71] Hamza's interpretation of Mahdism is unclear, but the expectation that Isa would return continued to be an important part of revolutionary Mahdist tradition.

Two stories collected at Lokoja in the early 1880s demonstrate that the Isa tradition was widely believed. Reverend C. J. John of the Church Missionary Society must have been surprised when he heard "the news of the prophet Jesus which I heard from the mouth of the people at Lokojah who were mussulmen or Mahommedans."

> They said, He will come again at the resurrection of the world, and wage war with Duggal or Daggal [the anti-Christ of Mahdist tradition]. At that time the world will have peace, because He will slay the wicked people, but the good people will remain in the world.... Who is this Daggal?

> Daggal is a man who is doing all the wickedness in this world, who in the day of the appearance of Jesus Christ will make war with Him, but Jesus will slay him with all his followers.[72]

"Jesus" would come with the Mahdi. Other stories of Isa were also common.[73]

Because it was not necessary to emigrate, revolutionary Mahdists established communities in the heart of the Sokoto Caliphate, and their agents openly directed their appeals to people in the emirate captials. Isawa extremists were seized in Kano City in the 1850s and impalled on the stake in the market, an action which demonstrates how serious the Caliphate authorities took these clerics and how brazen the clerics were.[74] The location of the two major centres of revolutionary Mahdism in the 1890s and first decade of colonial rule further shows the intention of the extremists to remain close to the centre of political power. Satiru was located a mere 20 km from Sokoto, one of the twin capitals of the Caliphate,[75] while Kabkitanda was 50 km west of Gwandu, the other capital.

Revolutionary Mahdism was a concern of Sokoto officials in the nineteenth century, at least since c. 1848 and Hamza's withdrawal to the Ningi hills.[76] Despite Uthman dan Fodio's writings on Mahdism, in which he adamently denied being the Mahdi, and other attempts directed at curtailing popular outbursts of Mahdist expression and at discouraging people from emigrating eastward, there were periodic Mahdist outbursts.

The establishment of the Mahdist community at Satiru in about 1894 is an example of such extreme forms of Mahdism. Its inhabitants were poor clerics and their followers who came from the capital districts of Sokoto and Gwandu. The origins of these clerics is instructive of the hostility of the community to established authority. Malam Siba, who founded Satiru, came from Gindi, near Jega, but was of Nupe origin, and Nupe had been racked by civil war caused by the jihad through the 1850s; Siba may well have been a slave or the son of slaves. A second cleric, Maihafo, who was to declare himself Mahdi in 1904, was of Gobir origin, the country which Uthman dan Fodio had forced into subjugation; the destruction of the Gobir capital, Alkalawa, was one of the greatest victories of the jihad. A third cleric, Malam Bawa was from Bakura in Zamfara.

Zamfara had been in revolt against Sokoto on several occasions in the nineteenth century and was almost always dangerous country for merchants and other travellers. None of these clerics was Fulbe.[77]

Their antipathy to the caliphate is perhaps best summarized in the alleged statement of Siba:

> that he was fed up with the exactions of the ruling class and that he was not going to obey the instructions of anyone anymore... [but instead] was going to set up a new great regime.[78]

Satiru did not pay taxes or contribute corvee labor to Sokoto either before or after the British conquest. Located between four great fiefs, Danchadi, Dange, Shuni and Bodinga, it was a refuge for escaped slaves and other discontented elements. Its relations with its four neighbouring towns was far from cordial, and in the course of the revolt both Dange and Danchadi were sacked and burned.[79]

The introduction of the colonial regime intensified the appeal of revolutionary Mahdism. The principal political opponent was the Caliphte government, and the challenge to the colonial regimes, whether French, British or German, was an extension of this revolutionary position. The actions of Caliphate officials who cooperated with the colonial state only demonstrated further to the radical Mahdists why the government had to be overthrown.

Within a year or two of 1900, Mahdist agents were active in Nupe, Kontagora, Sokoto, Gwandu and further west as far as Gonja, which was outside the Caliphate but within its economic and religious sphere of influence.[80] It is also likely that Mahdist agents in Bauchi addressed similar undercurrents of discontent which do not appear to be associated with the ansar movement nor the anti-colonial Mahdism of the aristocracy. And Mahdist agents continued to operate in the areas where the ansar had been powerful -- in Gombe and northern Adamawa.

The colonial authorities, often acting through caliphate officials, made numerous arrests, but new leaders kept emerging. British officials, at least, welcomed the opportunity to let the Islamic courts handle these cases. Such devolution of responsibility was part of their perceptions of the kind of "indirect rule" which

made sense in a context in which the colonial staff was, and was certainly always to be, undermanned. In keeping with the millenial nature of the radical Mahdist movement, prophesies kept changing to take account of political developments, but, nonetheless, a pattern is clear in these teachings. A Mahdi was to come from the east. Predictions of the appearance of the Mahdi increased in their frequency, reaching a peak in 1906. There would be a great conflagration at the time of the Id el-Kabir, the end of the month of Ramadan, February 5, 1906. Many expected the Mahdi to be named Musa, and some believed that he would come with his son, Isa (Jesus). All authority would be overthrown, both colonial and aristocratic.

The anti-colonial orientation of these Mahdist preachings was made clear well before Attahiru's hijra. One Mahdist poet, in response to the West African Frontier Force march on Zaria in 1901, equated the colonialists with Gog and Magog, the eternal enemies of the Mahdi:

> Gog and Magog are coming, they approach,
> They are small people, with big ears,
> They are those who cause destruction at the ends of the earth,
> When they approach a town, its crops will not sprout....
> The fertility of the world will be taken away,
> The place that once gave seventy bushels will not give seven,
> Anti-Christ is coming,
> He will come and have authority over the world,
> The Mahdi and Jesus, they are coming
> In order to straighten out the tangle [of the world].[81]

The reference to the Mahdi and Jesus (Isa) is particularly instructive, since Isa had been associated with revolutionary Mahdism since the revolt of Hamza in Kano Emirate in 1848 and was to reappear in the uprising at Satiru in 1906. The "Anti-Christ" was none other than the "Daggal" of earlier teachings.

In 1902, Malam Mai Zanna responded to the British occupation of Bida by calling for the expulsion of the British and the Emir. It is reported that Mai Zanna claimed to be the Mahdi, but such reports

must be treated with caution. Nonetheless, he

> collected numerous followers from the neighbouring villages of Bida and the lower classes in the town. This rabble was, however, unprepared for any action and the ringleaders were surprised and quietly arrested by the Emir's dogarai [police]. The "Mahdi" was tried and sentenced by the Native Court to six months' imprisonment in the town dungeon and the followers were fined 25 bags of cowries each.[82]

The charge that Mai Zanna was of "low class" and the references to "rabble" suggest that slaves and poor farmers were his principal supporters and that the movement had no standing with the aristocracy. Note that this is a sign of revolutionary Mahdism and that hostility was directed against both the British and the Bida aristocracy. It is more likely that Mai Zanna only declared himself a Mahdist, as in other cases, rather than actually claiming to be the Mahdi.

In January 1904, Malam Maikaho proclaimed himself Mahdi at Satiru. The authorities quickly summoned him to Sokoto and tried him for sedition.[83] At his trial he claimed that he was only a Mahdi of farming, not a Mahdi of war.[84] The significance of this distinction is not clear, and at this time, there is no evidence for a connection between Satiru and Kobkitanda. As C.W.J. Orr, Acting Resident of Sokoto, reported to Lugard on February 29th,

> During the month the Serikin Mussulmin reported that a Mallam was endeavouring to set himself up as a Mahdi in the south of the Province to induce the people to rise against the Whiteman, and that had sent messages to that effect to the Serikin Kiawa of Kaura [Namoda]. The man was arrested and is now in custody in Sokoto, but is ill, so that investigation is delayed temporarily. The matter will be thoroughly gone into and the Mallam tried in the Native Court, but I have told the Serikin Mussulmin that he is to keep me informed and will not pass any sentence without previous reference to me for the consideration and information of your Excellency. I do not look upon the matter as serious, but it bears close watching.[85]

Orr's report establishes that Maikaho died on or shortly after 29 February, and while foul play is not indicated in the documents it is certainly likely that he was killed, considering Sokoto fears of Mahdism in the light of the disaster at Bormi the previous year. Lugard's marginal note on Orr's report approved of a trial before the Islamic (Native) court, "if they will punish adequately."[86] Maikaho's supporters were released "after taking an oath on the Koran to keep the peace."[87] Mahdi Maikaho's son, Hassami, became the new headman at Satiru, and when he died in the summer of 1905, another son, Isa, became headman.[88] Saybu Dan Makafo was later to make much of Isa's name, for in Mahdist eschotology, Isa was to be the successor to the Mahdi.

Although the British were ignorant of developments at Satiru, it is possible to suggest a partial reconstruction of the progressive radicalization of the community. The Mahdists continued to command some local support at least. The citizenry of neighboring towns and villages came to Satiru to celebrate the Muslim festivals, and some Muslims in the area had studied under Isa's father and had accepted his Mahdist pretensions.[89] Hassami apparently respected the 1904 order of the Sarkin Musulmi that revolutinary Mahdism be curtailed, presumably under the threat that a local fiefholder, the Sarkin Keffi of Danchadi, would send dogarai (police) to break up the town if militant Mahdism was being preached. The Sarkin Keffi was informed when Hassami died in the summer of 1905 and apparently approved the succession of Isa. By this time, however, Satiru once again was beyond control. The Sarkin Keffi had not collected taxes, and after the rebellion

> he confessed that he was afraid to do so. He knew it [Satiru] as a gathering of fanatical Malams, a hotbed of disaffection, and he neither took action nor made any report.[90]

The accession of Isa appears to have marked a shift towards militancy, but only when Saybu Dan Makafo arrived at the end of January 1906 was an uprising a certainty.

Saybu Dan Makafo was spreading Mahdist doctines in Zaberma, Say and Karma, perhaps as early as 1901 but with increased intensity by 1905.[91] Kobkitanda, along with Sambera, Tidirka, Toka, and Kofadey, was founded in 1902-3 as a place of refuge for those in the Niger

valley who opposed both the French conquest and aristocratic cooperation with the French, as represented by the succession of Awta as Zarmakoy at Doso. They were ideally located to attract adherents and to spread propaganda. From his base at Kobkitanda, Saybu sent emissaries throughout a wide area and received delegations from the Tuareg and others. By September 1905, Saybu's agents were known to have been at Anzuru, Sonay, Torodi and other places (Dokimana and Boki in the Emirate of Say). He had visited Karma, among other places, was recognized as a devote Mahdist at least 400 km from Kobkitanda. Itinerant clerics on their way to and from the middle Volta basin, one of the most heavily travelled commercial routes at the time, stopped there. One such visiting cleric from Kano, Malam Danba, came to the attention of French officials and probably to the British officials in the Gold Coast as well. Danba was predicting the imminent arrival of the Mahdi.[92] He came via Sokoto and "was said to be preaching a holy war against Europeans."[93] The rapidity with which Saybu extended his influence and the presence of clerics like Danba suggest that there was already a revolutionary Mahdist network well established by 1905, but this is circumstantial.

Mahdist activity accelerated in early 1906. In Kontagora, a Mahdist cleric "drew attention to the impending end of British rule and exhorted people to stop paying taxes to the British administration."[94] Other agents were operating at Jebba and Yelwa.[95] Another Mahdist agent, Malam Mai Layu, came to the notice of the authorities just after the destruction of Satiru in March. Mai Layu had gathered a following, principally from Raba in Zamfara. By March 10, when his activities were first reported, he was building a village in the bush at a place called Dajin Gundumi.[96] Burdon considered Mai Layu potentially more dangerous than the Satiru community. He believed that Mai Layu was a rival to Dan Makafo, but this may have been wishful thinking. Taking no chances, Mai Layu was detained by the Sarkin Musulmi on 22 March.[97] Finally the whereabouts of Malam Siba, one of the leaders at Satiru, is unknown. He left Satiru after the initial encounter with Hillary's troops on February 14th,[98] but the reason for his departure and his destination are unclear. Most likely, he was an emissary seeking to inform supporters of events at Satiru, perhaps urging other uprisings and recruiting adherents.

In Bauchi, Resident O. Howard reported the appearance of Mahdist agents in February. Ali, an "incipient Mahdi [was] in the old centre

of fanaticism near Burmi [Bormi]," that is at Bima Hill. Ali preached "the extermination of all infidels and declared that he was the precursor of the Mahdi."[99] Another cleric, Alhaji Malle, a follower of Jibril Gaini, was also arrested, tried in the Bauchi Native Court and hanged. Two other agents escaped; one headed for Wadai and the East; the other went to Mandara in German territory, where he may have joined the Mahdist resistance there.[100] The fate of yet another Mahdist, an Arab named Alhaji Ishaq, is not known but was apparently prevented from further teaching.[101] Resident Howard of Bauchi reported on February 28th that there had been predictions of the arrival of the Mahdi "within a month".[102] These predictions may well have referred to the Id el-Kabir of February 5th, but the information is simply inclusive to draw a connection with the events at Satiru.

The activities of these Mahdist agents in Bauchi and Gombe drew their inspiration from the tradition of the ansar movement and the hijra of Attahiru and do not appear to have been connected with the revolutionary Mahdism of Satiru and Kobkitanda. Nonetheless, these agents, too, were anti-colonial and hence had many similarities with the revolutionary Mahdists in Sokoto and Gwandu. Still, there is no direct evidence that the protagonists were in contact. It appears that the western and eastern manifestations of Mahdism were distinct. Bima Hill was still a prominent attraction, and while there were other elements than Fulbe in the eastern movement, the aristocracy was well represented. Mahdism had been transformed in the context of the colonial occupation into popular resistance which was rapidly changing the loyalties of some of the aristocracy, but a similar phenomenon had charactrized Hayatu's movement in the 1880s and 1890s. It is not possible to conclude how far the process of alienation among the aristocracy had progressed, although the use of Islamic Courts to try Mahdists must have accelerated the process.

Saybu Dan Makafo

Kimba Idrissa has claimed,[103] and we believe rightly, that the Mahdist uprisings at Kobkitanda, Satiru, and Karma were under the leadership of Saybu Dan Makafo, the nearly-blind cleric who was executed after the Satiru massacre. The French thought Saybu to be about thirty years old in 1906; oral traditions remember him being about forty.[104] According to French reports, he had the gift of

ventriloquism which may help explain his fame as a magician.[105] He reportedly had Tijani connections,[106] but the significance of this is unclear, since he was an avowed Mahdist and self proclaimed agent of the Mahdi. As Idrissa has noted, Dan Makafo was considered a wali, a saint.[107]

There is no evidence for a direct connection with the Mahdists arrested by the British in Nupe in 1901 or Kontagora in 1906, but the teachings are too much alike to discount the possibility of a connection. Dan Makafo was certainly in touch with and even instructing agents in the Niger valley to the immediate north of Kontagora; he seems to have known about the Satiru community, where he eventually fled, and his agents were active in northern Borgu, to the immediate west of Kontagora, in Say and other emirates along the Niger River. It is probable, moreover, that the Mahdist agent, Musa, arrested in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast was also another associate. If the estimate of Saybu's age (30-40) is correct, he was far too young to be the principal Mahdist agent of his day. He was one of many and seized the initiative in 1905 to organize a major uprising for the end of Ramadan in early February 1906.

Dan Makafo's call for a revolt was unequivical. It was to occur on the Id el-Kabir, the festival at the end of Ramadan, in early February 1906 (the Id was in fact on 5 February).[108] At that time the Mahdi, named Musa, would arrive from the east. In his early preachings there is no known mention of Isa, but he stressed this feature of revolutionary Mahdism once he reached Satiru. He instructed his supporters not to pay tax or contribute corvee labor. They were not to obey local officials who supported the colonial regime. A great Muslim army would liberate the country from the Christian occupation. To protect his followers, he devised numerous supernatural preparations:

> A cet effet, il preparait des charmes magiques ou se melent animisme et islam. Il s'agirait d'une boisson, une mixture a base de plantes (racines ou feuilles) et de versets coraniques. Les partisans le buvait afin de se rendre invulnerables aux fusils (ou que les balles dirigees sur eux se transforment en eau), developper leur combativite et leur courage.[109]

The belief that bullets would turn to water perhaps arose because the maxim machine gun was known in Hausa as bindigan ruwa (water-gun) in recognition that the barrel of the gun required a jacket filled with water to cool it. If so, it was a tragic misunderstanding, as events demonstrated.

Saybu began training his followers at Kobkitanda in late 1905, if not earlier. Letters were sent to officials who supported the colonial regime calling upon them to join the movement. His envoys were particularly active in the region of Say and Karma. Anawar, the chief of the Anzuru Tuareg, even came to Kobkitanda to enquire about the planned revolt.[110] Other Tuareg waited to see how the revolt would go. In the end they did not participate, but the French feared that they would.

The uprising at Satiru was also to begin on the Id el-Kabir, February 5th, but it was postponed.[111] British reports later credited the delay to strategy; Resident Burdon was scheduled to go on leave, and the Satirawa are said to have been waiting for his departure. The Satiru attack on the WAFF detachment under Acting Resident Hillary occurred February 14th, nine days after the Id el-Kabir and two (???) days after Burdon had left. Reports indicated that Isa was to announce a jihad at the Friday prayer, 16 February, two days after the defeat of Hillary's expedition, and raise a green flag. Whether or not this was formally done is not known; it was the day of Isa's death.[112]

There may have been some truth in this theory, but a far more significant reason for delay appears to have related to a dispute within the Mahdist community over the timing of the revolt, and indeed perhaps whether or not a revolt was wise. There was a serious incident at Tsomau, a neighbouring town where many Mahdists lived, on February 13 because the Tsomau residents had refused to come to Satiru for the Id festival. Malam Yahaya, twelve other townsmen and one woman were killed.[113] In previous years the Tsomau Mahdists had come to Satiru for the Ramadan ceremonies. Yahaya's teacher had been Mahdi Maikafo, Isa's father, and Isa and Yahaya were related by marriage. Yahaya refused to recognize Isa's leadership and particularly the claim that Isa was the successor to the Mahdi, as in Mahdist tradition. Johnston's compilation of Satiru traditions quotes Yahaya as saying: "How can we believe that you are the Prophet

Jesus...when we have known you ever since we were all children?"[114]

Subsequent attacks on neighbouring communities by the Satirawa can be explained in the same way. Danchadi was burned on March 6th and Dange on March 8th. Burdon reported that "all the thickly populated country between these two was devastated."[115] The Satirawa attempted to intimidate reluctant Mahdist sympathizers into joining the revolt, and they specifically attacked slave plantations, apparently to liberate slaves.[116] Among the places burned between 16 February and early March were Runjin Kwarai, Runjin Gawa, Rudu Makera, Jaredi, Dandin Mahe, Zangalawa, Bunazawa, Hausawan Maiwa, and Kindiru. The towns of Shuni, Bodinga and Sifawa were evacuated.[117] It should be noted that runji (rinji) signifies "plantation." Many of the other settlements appear to have been slave estates, too.[118]

The British were unaware of the uprising in French territory at this time, and they did not know the significance of the Id el-Kabir, even though Malam Isa and Dan Makafo had sent letters to Caliphate officials calling on them to join the revolt. Furthermore, Mallam, son of the emir of Gwandu, was reported to have enquired whether or not a revolt had begun the day before the Id festival, and was told by one of his followers that the revolt would begin the next day.[119] When Resident Burdon left Sokoto on leave, therefore, the British were remarkably ignorant of what was taking place, but many people were expecting serious trouble. Hillary and the WAFF detachment did not exactly walk into a trap, but they certainly misjudged the situation.

A major difference between the actions of these Mahdists and the hijra of Attahiru should be noted. The revolutionary Mahdists wanted to stay and fight. Attahiru did not want to fight but was forced into it. Furthermore, there were no Fulbe among the supporters at Satiru and Kobkitanda. Attahiru had Fulbe support, which was also in the tradition of the ansar Mahdists. Both Hayatu and Jibril were Fulbe.

Another important feature of the Mahdist uprising was the role of Dan Makafo. Because of his poor sight - makafo means "blindman" - he probably did not have the command of the written word which was usual for Muslim clerics. Rather than base his authority on the tradition of scholarship, he relied on mysticism alone. He dispensed amulets and encouraged belief in supernatural protection from

bullets. For the Satirawa, this emphasis was tragic. Dan Makafo taught that the bullets of the enemy would turn to water. Even though the Satirawa captured a maxim machine gun and other firearms in the first encounter with the WAFF, these weapons were never used. Ironically, lack of water prevented the captured maxim gun from being put into action. Its jacket, through which water circulated to cool the hot gun barrel, had been ruptured during the first battle. Instead, the Satirawa charged the WAFF square, even though they had been exposed to the devastating impact of modern weaponry. The bullets did not become water.

The Social Origins of Revolutionary Mahdism

Revolutionary Mahdism appealed to four groups: fugitive slaves, subject populations, displaced peasants seeking to escape the exactions of the colonial conquest, and radical clerics. This interpretation is consistent with the conclusions of both Mohammad and Idrissa. According to Mohammad, "peasants, slaves and petty malams saw the new situation [of colonial rule] as a continuation of their struggle against oppression and exactions which they had been waging against the Sokoto Caliphate."[120] Idrissa concludes that were no Fulbe pastoralists, Caliphate aristocrats, merchants, or other wealthy commoners among the rebels.[121] The first villages near Kobkitanda were founded in the 1890s, and their population swelled with the arrival of people seeking to avoid colonial labour and taxation. Satiru, located between four fiefs, never paid taxes, and a large proportion of its population was fugitive slaves.

The nature of the source material makes it difficult to discuss the social origins of the rebels.[122] It is clear that fugitive slaves were a major factor in the revolt, but British colonial reports attempted to hide the slavery issue as much as possible. French reports are largely silent on the subject of slavery. Oral data supplement the available written reports on this issue for Satiru but not for Kobkitanda.[123] Nonetheless the available evidence indicates clearly how important social factors were in the revolt, at least in the western portions of the caliphate.

In his report of 21 February 1906, Burdon stated: "As far as I can learn the adherents who at one time flocked to it [the Satiru cause] were nearly all run away slaves."[124] Lugard accepted this

report and relayed the information to the Colonial Office that the Satirawa were "mostly fugitive slaves, and I suspose some outlaws from French territory," a reference to Dan Makafo and his followers.[125] In his report of Marth 7th, Lugard still subscribed to this theory: "it appears that the rising was instigated by an outlaw from French territory named Dan Makafo, who gathered together a band of malcontents and runaway slaves, and forced Malam Isa, the son of a man who had previously [in 1904] declared himself Mahdi to head the rising."[126] On the basis of oral data, Mohammad confirms these reports; the Mahdist clerics "encouraged the emigration of slaves to Satiru."[127] One of the reasons why slaves appear to have flocked to Satiru was because the Satirawa are remembered as having abolished slavery. According to Maidamma Mai Zari, Dutsen Assada ward, Sokoto, "the leaders of Satiru abolished slavery and as a consequence of which slaves flocked to them. The freedom of these fugitives was effectively and strenuously guarded."[128]

The information on Kobkitanda is more sketchy and includes no reference to fugitive slaves. The inhabitants of the neighbouring villages which were part of this resistance were largely Zaberma. Those at Kobkitanda were mostly from Zigi. People from Doso had founded Sambera, but others came from Darey and Fankasa. There do not appear to have been any Fulbe in these communities. Dan Makafo is reputed to have been the son of a Zaberma noble - of what rank or significance is not known. The Zaberma were in revolt against the Sokoto Caliphate for much of the nineteenth century anyway,[129] and the population could well have included fugitive slaves. Only further research can determine this. There were appeals to the population of Say, which would have included a call to slaves, to join the revolt. Say had a heavy concentration of slaves, many of whom were of Zaberma origin, so that the ethnic and class dimensions of Mahdism would have been present but blurred. And Say did not rise.

The major grievance of Kobkitanda Mahdists, according to Idrissa, was the severity of the colonial conquest, in which the riverine communities had been expected to provide the labour and food for the march on the desert and Chad. In the context of Caliphate society, nonetheless, the Zaberma were definitely not part of the aristocracy or merchant class, and those Zaberma in the bush communities between Dallol Bosso and Dallol Mawri were the lower orders of Zaberma society. It would be surprising if fugitive slaves

had not been present.

The lowly origins of revolutionary Mahdists was also evident in Nupe in 1902. As has been noted above, Mai Zanna's supporters were considered to be the lower classes - "rabble" - and probably included fugitive slaves, considering the size of the slave population in the Bida area and extent to which slaves ran away from there masters there.[130] Specific mention of fugitive slaves is lacking, however.

The extent to which fugitive slaves were a problem in the early years of colonial rule has been examined elsewhere.[131] Slaves began to leave their masters by the late 1890s. As the conquest proceeded north, the fugitive crisis moved with it. By 1906 slaves were still running away, although by then the alliance between the new colonial regime and the caliphate aristocracy had begun to take hold. Controlling slaves was high on the agenda of this alliance. The fact that fugitives slaves were a major component of revolutionary Mahdism comes as no surprise, therefore.

An analysis of the ethnic composition of the revolutionary Mahdists at Satiru further confirms the class basis of the revolt. There were no Fulbe among the revolutionary Mahdists. Zaberma were the dominant ethnic group at Kobkitanda and Karma and along the Niger valley. Hausa predominated at Satiru. The fact that Dan Makafo could move easily between the two indicates that the Zaberma and Hausa supporters of revolutionary Mahdism faced a common enemy, the upper classes of the Caliphate and their new allies, the colonial regimes. In the context of the Caliphate, Hausa was associated with the peasantry and slaves, Fulbe with the aristocracy. Zaberma were classified as "protected people," when not in revolt. From a Fulbe perspective, both were Habe. In fact the relationship between class and ethnicity was much more complicated. Many Fulbe were not aristocrats, and some Hausa were wealthy merchants. The more important Muslim clerics, the ulema, were closely associated with both, often being of the same families and intermarrying. Wealthy merchants and aristocrats did not marry, however.[132]

Resident Burdon grasped the significance of the ethnic dimension in his report to Lugard:

> Satiru was a Hausa village and only Hausas or their kindred races have joined them. All the faces on the battlefield

> had Gobir, Kebbi, Zanfara, Katsena and other such tribal marks. Not a single Fulani talaka [commoner] joined them.[133]

Mohammed, on the basis of oral sources, presents a similar picture, with some additions. The ethnic groups included Zamfarawa, Gobirawa, Gimbanawa, Kabawa (Kebbi), Azbinawa (Azben), Arawa (Arewa), and Katsinawa:

> There might have been some non-Habe and non-Muslims among the Satirawa since quite a number of the slaves owned by the Sarakuna [i.e., title-holders] and Attajirai [wealthy merchants] were from other societies.[134]

It is significant that other non-Hausa identities are not remembered, despite the presence of fugitive slaves. By staying to fight, fugitive slaves in effect had renounced their other loyalties and were fighting as Hausa.

By contrast, the supporters of the 1906 Mahdist risings in Garoua and Maroua were Fulbe, the descendents of Muslims who had emigrated from the central emirates in the late nineteenth century, and Mahdists who come from the east with Rabih. There is no evidence that fugitive slaves joined the revolts or that local, subject populations of the Caliphate were involved. The ansar movement continued to be associated with the Fulbe and the aristocracy, to be sure those portions of the aristocracy which were not in power but Fulbe nonetheless.

Colonial Policy and the Mahdist Revolts

In Dusgate's assessent, the March 10th battle at Satiru "was the most bloodthirsty expedition in the history of British military operations in Northern Nigeria."[135] Adeleye has concluded that British policy was characterized by "misjudgements, panic and miscalculations," for which the British took "revenge."[136] Margery Perham, in her biography of Lugard, has noted that

> vengence, it must be admitted, was what most of the white men in Northern Nigeria wanted [after the initial loss at Satiru], and with them in this were those Fulani leaders

> who had accepted their rule.... It was a terrible vengence, more terrible than Lugard knew at the time.[137]

Just how "terrible" came out in subsequent reports which were kept secret.

Lugard's son and William Wallace, Acting High Commissioner after Lugard was transferred to Hong Kong later in 1906, carried out an investigation in response to enquiries from Walter Miller, the C.M.S. missionary in Zaria. They found that the "killing was very free, not to say slaughter"(italics in original); "they killed every living thing before them" so that the fields were "running with blood," while the "splitting of mallams on a stake" and the "cutting off the breasts of women" were typical atrocities.[138]

Neither Lugard, Jr. nor Wallace wanted "to wash such very dirty linen in public in view of our attitude re Congo atrocities." Lord Lugard and the Colonial Office concurred, and fortunately for the cover-up, Walter Miller did, too,[139] although an irate Winston Churchill in the Colonial Office asked the embarassing questions behind the scenes:

> How does this "extermination" of an "almost unarmed rabble" numbering 2000 compre with the execution of 12 Kaffirs in Natal after trial & conviction for murder? How long is this sort of thing going to escape Parliamentary attention, & what will happen when it attracts it? I confess I do not at all understand what our position is, or with what face we can put pressure on the Govt. of Natal, while these sort of things are done under our direct authority.[140]

Churchill was referring to case of heavy-handed justice in South Africa and the uproar in England at the time. His comparison was similar to Lugard, Jr.'s reference to the sanctimonous British position with respect to Belgian atrocities in the Congo.

How much did Lugard know? Is Perham correct that he was not fully informed but that things were worse than he knew? She claims that when he heard of the Sokoto executions, he ordered them stopped:

> The executions had been carried out without his confirmation; he at once stopped them. But there can be no doubt that he had intended that the retribution should be complete.[141]

In fact Lugard very clearly ordered the affair. As he wrote home to his wife the day before the massacre:

> There ought to be no doubt <u>at all</u> as to the result. They should <u>annihilate</u> them, and it is necessary for the recovery of our prestige that the victory be a signal one.(italics in original)[142]

After the battle, he wrote again to his wife: "I fear the slaughter of these poor wretches has been terrible - but, in the face of the death of three British officers I could hardly order them to threat them with mercy, and had to leave it to those on the spot."[143] In short, Lugard knew full well what had happened, and the subsequent correspondence with his brother, Wallace, Miller, and Strachan were part of a deliberate cover-up. Perham's claim, despite the fact that she also quotes the correspondence between Lugard and his wife, indicates that she was a later party to the cover-up.

Given the extent of the Mahdist uprisings, crossing the colonial boundaries of three European regimes and threatening to spread through the heartlands of British Northern Nigeria, Lugard made the tactical, and probably wise, decision from an imperial perspective to set a bloody example. He had only learned that the uprising at Satiru was a continuation of the revolt in French Niger after Hillary expedition. The French and British regimes communicated over the unrest, and the French offered assistance to the British after the initial debacle at Satiru. Despite the fact that the revolt crossed the border, the British still chose to act alone, and events proved that they had the resources to crush the revolt without French assistance. Lugard was less sure how far the unrest might spread in British territory. He believed that the Mahdist disturbances in Bauchi and Gombe "would appear entirely unconnected with the Sokoto disturbance [at Satiru]," [144] but there was considerable worry over other these and other events. Mai Layu was rounded up without difficulty, which confirmed Lugard's belief that most officials had decided to support the British.[145] While it appeared that the revolt was spreading to Zamfara at the time of the final assault on Satiru,

Lugard chose to interpret Mai Layu's activities in terms of rivalry to the Satiru leadership rather than as a continuation of the Satiru revolt. As with the other revolutinary Mahdists, however, Mai Layu's Zamfara followers were non-Fulbe.

Similarly, Lugard, in consultation with Resident Howard in Bauchi, determined that the Mahdist leaders there were not associated with the Satiru rising. Nonetheless, they were treated just as harshly as if they had been. And to consolidate British control and undermine Mahdism, Bima Hill was occupied and a fort constructed in late April.

The more serious problem for the British was the slavery issue. As we have argued elsewhere,[146] Lugard's policies toward slavery were a crucial aspect of the establishment of indirect rule. The reform of slavery was essential but had to be done so as not to alienate the slave holders. With respect to revolutionary Mahdism, it was essential to downplay the significance of fugitive slaves. The Colonial Office, in the first instance, followed by Lugard, attempted to shift attention to other factors. While slavery was clearly mentioned as a contributing cause to the revolt in early reports, the issue was deliberately removed from later reports. Lugard's initial cable stated clearly: "The rebels are outlaw fugitive slaves."[147] The Colonial Office announcement of the revolt stated something quite different: "The rebels are outlaw fugitives." A marginal note next to Lugard's telegram indicated how the incident was to be handled: "Better say nothing of slaves."[148] If there had a cover-up with respect to the severity of the repression, there was equally one with respect to slavery. And the reasons were interrelated. The annihilation of the Satirawa was a lesson to slaves as well as the aristocracy. It demonstrated to the slave population that the slavery reforms were to be enforced, and it cemented the alliance with the aristocracy. The destruction of Satiru was the last time the British called upon Caliphate troop levies to quell a disorder. Given the number of fugitive slaves at Satiru and the extent of violence perpetrated by those troops, the message to slaves and masters alike elsewhere must have been particularly clear.[149]

Mahdist unrest did subside thereafter. An incident at Ilorin in the third quarter of 1911 served to confirm the collapse of the Mahdist movement. A 14 year old boy who claimed to be the Mahdi was being carried around the town on the shoulders of a man. As Resident

P. M. Dwyer reported,

> I sent for the man and the boy in question and treated them with ridicule at the same time informing them that I had plenty of room in my prison and that in they would go should I hear of any more such nonsense. Owing to the fact that there is a tradition in Illorin that the coming Mahdi is a boy about same age..., the Emir was foolish enough to grant them an interview and I believe a small sum of money.[150]

Mahdism would appear again at Dumbulwa in 1922-23, but as Saeed and Ubah have shown, there was really no threat to the colonial regime. Nonetheless, the Mahdist leader, Shaikh Sa'id, son of Hayatu, was arrested. This time the British did over-react, and in any case the Dumbulwa Mahdists derived from the ansar, not revolutionary Mahdists.[151]

1. This paper is part of a larger project on the economic and social impact of the colonial conquest on the Sokoto Caliphate.

2. Ironically, Ponty, Lt-Gov of French West Africa, commented on the apparent disunity of the Mahdists: "Fortunately for us these events have once again proved that when left to themselves the natives are incapable of the combination and union necessary to carry out a preconceived plan. Otherwise the situation might been very serious." Ponty failed to note that Germans, British and French did not cooperate in crushing the insurrections. They actively independently. Offers of French assistance to the British were refused, and there seems to have been only minimal consultation between the European powers, even after the revolts were crushed. See the extract of Ponty's report on the revolts in Niger, which were forwarded to the Colonial Office by C. F. Cromie, British Consul-General in Dakar on 10 September 1906, five months after the destruction of Satiru, No. 34903 of 18 September 1906, CO 446/57, Public Record Office (hereafter PRO).

3. For a listing of the emirates of the Caliphate, see Yusufu Usman, "The Transformation of Political Communities: Some Notes on a Significant Dimension of the Sokoto Jihad," in Usman, ed., Studies in the History of the Sokoto Caliphate (Lagos, 1979), 55. Usman lists thirty emirates, including Gwandu, but Gwandu was really a capital district. For the sub-emirates of Adamawa (Fombina), see Abubakar Sa'ad, The Lamibe of Fombina (Zaria, 1977), 115-16. It should be noted that of the fifteen sub-emirates, four were larger than many of the emirates in the rest of the Caliphate; these were Banyo, Ngaundere, Ray-Buba, and Tibati. For the conquest of th Caliphate, see Richard H. Dusgate, The Conquest of Northern Nigeria (London, 1985); D. J. M. Muffet, Concerning Brave Captains. A History of Lord Lugard's Conquest of Hausaland (London, 1964); Mahmud Madiabbo Tukur, The Imposition of British Colonial Domination on the Sokoto Caliphate (Ph.D. thesis, unpublished, Ahmadu Bello University, 1979); Peter Kazenga Tibenderana, The Administration of Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu Emirates under Britsh Rule, 1900-1946 (Ph.D. thesis, unpublished, University of Ibadan, 1974); R. A. Adeleye, Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria, 1804-1906 (New York, 1971).

4. The discussion of the revolt in French Niger relies on Kimba Idrissa, Gueres et societes. Les populations du "Niger" occidental au XIXe siecle et leurs reactions face a la colonisation (1896-1906) (Niamey, 1981).

5. Idrissa, Guerres et societes, 150-51.

6. Idrissa, Guerres et Societes, 148, 152-53; Ponty, "Exract."

7. Idrissa, Guerres et Societes, 155-170.

8. Ponty, "Extract."

9. Idrissa, Guerres et Societes, 156, 176-77.

10. The scholarly literture on Satiru is extensive; see R. A. Adeleye, "Mahdist Triumph and British Revenge in Northern Nigeria: Satiru 1906," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, 6,2 (1972), 193-214; Abubakar Sokoto Mohammed, A Social Interpretation of the Satiru Revolt of c. 1894-1906 (M.Sc. thesis, unpublished, Ahmadu Bello University, 1983);

Muhammad Al-Hajj, The Mahdist Tradition in Northern Nigeria (Ph.D. thesis, unpublished, Ahmadu Bello University, 1973), 194-99; Idrissa, Guerres et Societes, 171-75; Dusgate, Conquest, 242-249; Tibenderana, Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu, 164-72; Tukur, British Colonial Domination, 283-330.

11. Burdon to Lugard, 21 February 1906.

12. Burdon to Lugard, 21 February 1906.

13. Lugard to Onslow, 28 February 1906. For a contemporary account of the reasons behind the British fiasco, see Charles Orr, The Making of Northern Nigeria (London, 1911), 173-74. Also see Dusgate, Conquest, 242-49; Adeleye, "Mahdist Triumph," 200-14; Mohammad, Social Interpretation of Satiru.

14. Lugard to Onslow, 21 February, Cd. 3620.

15. Times (London), February 21, 22, 23, 26, March 6, 1906.

16. Burdon to Lugard, 21 February 1906, Cd. 3620.

17. Burdon to Lugard, telegram, 28 February 1906, Shillingford Papers, Rhodes House.

18. Burdon to Lugard, 21 February 1906, Shillingford Papers.

19. Malam Bako to Malam Ja'faru of Argungu, February 1906; manuscript in the Nigerian National Archives, Kaduna and quoted here as cited in Muhammad Al-Hajj, The Mahdist Traditin in Northern Nigeria (Ph.D. thesis, unpublished, Ahmadu Bello University, 1973), 199.

20. See the account of H. A. S. Johnston, "Dan Makafò and the Satiru Rising," in Johnston, ed., A Selection of Hausa Stories (Oxford, 1966), 166. Johnston compiled this story from a number of sources. The portion about the trial is attributed to Malam Nagwamatse, whose father was present.

21. Burdon to Lugard, telegram, 22 March 1906.

22. Burdon to Lugard, telegram, 12 March 1906.

23. For Mahdist resistance in northern Adamawa, we are relying on Ahmadou Bassoro and Eldridge Mohammadou, Histoire de Garoua. Cite Peule du XIXe siecle (Yaounde, 1977), 53-60, 275-77.

24. Bassoro and Mohammadou, Histoire de Garoua; also see Kurt Strumpell, "Der Mahdische Aufstand in Nord-Kamerun," Kolonial Zeitung, 1908; "Die Mahdi Austande in Kamerun," Globus, 93 (1908), 210-11; A. Herfurth, "Unruhen in Nordkamerun," Kolonial Zeitung, 1907, 324.

25. See the synopsis of a letter from Zubeiru, emir of Yola, in H. F. Backwell, ed. and trans., The Occupation of Hausaland, 1900-1904, Being a Translation of Arabic Letters found in the House of the Wazir of Sokoto, Bohari, in 1903 (Lagos, 1927), 75.

26. Bassoro and Mohammadou, Histoire du Garoua; M. S. Njeuma, Fulani Hegemony in Yola (Old Adamawa), 1809-1912 (1978). On Arabu's association with Hayatu, see C. N. Ubah, "British Measures against Mahdism at Dubulwa in Northern Nigeria, 1923: A Case of Colonial Overreaction," Islamic Culture, 50, 3 (1976), 171. For his identification with Maroua, see Martin Z. Njeuma, "Adamawa and Mahdism: the Career of Hayatu ibn Sa'id in Adamawa, 1878-1898," Journal of African History, 12, 1 (1971), 72.

27. Adeleye, Power and Diplomacy; "Mahdist Triumph," 193-99; "Rabih b. Fadlallah and the Diplomacy of European Imperial Invasion in the Central Sudan, 1893-1902," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, 5,3 (1970), 399-418; Al-Hajj, Mahdist Tradition; Al-Hajj, "The Thirteenth Century in Muslim Eschatology: Mahdist Expectations in the Sokoto Caliphate," Research Bulletin, Centre of Arabic Documentation (Ibadan), 3, 2 (1967); Saburi Biobaku and Muhammad Al-Hajj, "The Sudanese Mahdiyya and the Niger-Chad Region," in I. M. Lewis, ed., Islam in Tropical Africa (Oxford, 1966), 425-39; Umar Al-Naqar, The Pilgrimage Tradition in West Africa (Khartoum, 1972); Murray Last, "Administration and Discontent in Northern Nigeria," Africa, 1970, 351-52; and Mark R. Duffield, Hausa and Fulani Settlement and the Development of Capitalism in Sudan: with Special Reference to Maiurno, Blue Nile Province (Ph.D. thesis, unpublished, University of Birmingham, 1978), 9-32.

28. Biobaku and Al-Hajj, "Sudanese Mahdiyya," 427-28.

29. As cited in Biobaku and Al-Hajj, "Sudanese Mahdiyya," 427.

30. Infaq al-maysur, as quoted in Biobaku and Al-Hajj, "Sudanese Mahdiyya," 428.

31. Muhammad Bello, as cited in 'Abd al-Qadir b. Gidado, Majmu al-rasa'il, and quoted in Martin Z. Njeuma, "Adamawa and Mahdism: The Career of Hayatu ibn Sa'id in Adamawa, 1878-1898," Journal of African History, 12, 1 (1971), 63.

32. Al-Hajj, Mahdist Tradition, 90.

33. Al-Hajj (Mahdist Tradition, 82) gives the year as 1811, but in Biobaku and Al-Hajj, "Sudanese Mahdiyya," 428, the year is given as 1813.

34. Biobaku and Al-Hajj, "Sudanese Mahdiyya," 429.

35. Al-Hajj, Mahdist Tradition, 169-70.

36. Biobaku and Al-Hajj, "Sudanese Mahdiyya;" Al-Hajj, Mahdist Tradition; Al-Naqar, Pilgrimage Tradition; Duffield, Hausa and Fulani Settlement; and Njeuma, "Adamawa and Mahdism," 63-64.

37. footnote for Abdullahi's emigration -- need a source.

38. Biobaku and Al-Hajj, "Sudanese Mahdiyya," 429.

39. Last, "Administration and Dissent," 351.

40. Njeuma, Fulani Hegemony, 182-86; Njeuma, "Adamawa and Mahdism," 64-77.

41. Njeuma, "Adamawa and Mahdism," 61-77. Note that full citation belongs in an earlier fn.

42. Al-Hajj, Mahdist Tradition.

43. Al-Hajj, Mahdist Tradition; Biobaku and Al-Hajj, "Sudanese Mahdiyya," . 13th century of Muslim era and Mahdi.

44. John Lavers, "Jibril Gaini: A Preliminary Account of a Mahdist Leader in North-Eastern Nigeria," Research Bulletin of the Centre of Arabic Documentation (Ibadan), 3,1 (1967), 20fn; Al-Hajj, Mahdist Tradition, 95-96.

45. Njeuma, Fulani Hegemony, 186-87.

46. Njeuma, Fulani Hegemony, 189.

47. Njeuma, Fulani Hegemony, 185-201; Adeleye, "Rabih," 415-18.

48. R. A. Adeleye, "Rabih Fadlallah, 1879-1893: Exploits and Political Relations in Central Sudan," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, 5, 2 (1970), 231.

49. Adeleye, "Rabih Fadlallah, 1879-1893," 236-41; Adeleye, "Rabih and European Imperial Invasion," 402-18.

50. Al-Hajj, Mahdist Tradition, 169-70.

51. Lavers, "Jibril Gaini," 20-34.

52. Lavers, "Jibril Gaini," 23.

53. Lavers, "Jibril Gaini," 32-34.

54. On the second battle of Bormi, see Al-Hajj, Mahdist Tradition, 166-69;

55. fort built at Bima Hill, see

56. Njeuma, "Adamawa and Mahdism," 72.

57. R. A. Adeleye, "The Dilemma of the Waziri: The Place of the Risalat al-Wazir 'ila ahl al-'ilm wa'l-tadabbur in the History of the Sokoto Caliphate," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, 4, 2 (1968), 285-311.

58. Njeuma, Fulani Hegemony, 201.

59. On the Emir of Gwandu's Mahdist sympathies, see Tukur, Colonial Domination, 233, 283-95; and Tibenderana, Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu, 162-63, 169-70. Mahdist sympathies were widespread among the aristocracy at the time of the conquest; see the translation of Arabic letters referring to the Mahdi which were written in the last few years of the independent caliphate in Backwell, Occupation of Haualand. The letter of a royal slave of Sarkin Kudu (emir of Yola) Zubeiru to the Sarkin Musulmi, which was written at the time of the British conquest of Yola pledges allegience "to you by Allah and the Prophet and after you to the Imam Mahdi" (p. 67-68). Zubeiru fled Yola upon the British conquest on 2 September 1901 and informed the Sarkin Musulmi that Imam Mahdi, who was widely recognized as the successor of Jibril Gaini as a representative of the ansar movement, commanded his attention (p. 74-75). Muhammadu Alhaji, brother of the emir of Missau, was also a Mahdist and joined Attahiru (letter to Sarkin Musulmi, p. 77).

60. Cargill report; Lugard, Annual Report; Tukur, Colonial Domination.

61. A. Burdon, Report No. 2, Sokoto Province, April 30, 1903, Sokprof 2/1 23/1903, Nigerian National Archives, Kaduna (hereafter NNAK).

62. Al-Naqar, Pilgrimage Tradition, 89.

63. David Robinson, "The Umarian Emigration of the Late Nineteenth Century," International Journal of African Historical Studies, 20, 2 (1987), 245-70; Gaden, "Note sur les Toucouleurs recemment arrives a Fort-Lamy," 19G2, 10 August 1906 (We wish to thank David Robinson for this reference).

64. Gaden, "Note sur les Toucouleurs."

65. Tibenderana, Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu, 162-63, 169-70; Tukur, Colonial Domination, 233, 283-95.

66. Burdon To Lugard, 26 May 1906, Shillingford Papers; Lugard, Annual Report, 1905-06, 371.

67. On the extent of accomodation with colonial rule, see Adeleye, "Dilemma of the Waziri," 285-98; Bassoro and Mohammadou, Histoire du Garoua, and Idrissa, Guerres et Societes, . It should be noted, however, that a number of scholars argue that accommodation was much less sincere than might be suggested by the accusation, and no value judgement on the degree to which the aristocracy cooperated is intended here; see Tukur, Colonial Domination.

68. Lugard, Annual Report, 1905-06, , provides a convenient summary of these pledges of support. Additional evidence is scattered in the archives; see especially

69. For the importance of local military levies in the German and French spheres, see Idrissa, Guerres et societes, ; and Bossoro and Mohammadou, Histoire du Garoua,

70. We have benefitted from the interpretation of Asmau G. Saeed, who has identified three groups of Mahdists, viz., the ansar or devotees of the Mahdi of the Nilotic Sudan, "spontaneous Mahdism" or "those who followed self-styled Mahdists" like the leaders of Satiru, and "revisionist Mahdists" who awaited the coming of the Mahdi but did not emigrate or emigrated only reluctantly but did not revolt and who generally represented the official view of the aristocracy; see her "British Fears over Mahdism in Northern Nigeria: A Look at Bormi 1903, Satiru 1906 and Bubulwa 1923," unpublished paper presented at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1986 and "The British Policy Towards the Mahdiyya in Northern Nigeria: The Study of the Arrest, Detention and Deportation of Shaykh Sa'id b. Hayat, 1923-1959," Kano Studies, 2, 3 (1982-85), 95-119. Our interpretation differs from Saeed's in several important respects, although we agree in recognizing three major divisions within Mahdism. We concur with her analysis of the ansar, but suggest that the "revisionist Mahdists" could be forced into action, as Attahiru was during his hijra, and as is clear from our analysis, those Mahdists whom Saeed considers to have acted "spontaneously" were in fact "revolutionary" in their intent, planning, and actions. Furthermore, our analysis differs in that we demonstrate that Mahdists in the ansar tradition could approach a position which was close to being revolutionary, although further research should be conducted on this important implication of our study.

The revolutionary possibilities of Mahdism, particularly with reference to Satiru, have been accurately identified by Abubakar Sokoto Mohammad (Social Interpretation).

71. For a discussion of the Hamza and the Ningawa resistance, see Adell Patton, Jr., The Ningi Chiefdom and the African Frontier: Mountaineers and Resistance to the Sokoto Caliphate (Ph.D. thesis, unpublished, University of Wisconsin, 1975); Patton, "Ningi Raids and Slavery in the Nineteenth-Century Sokoto Caliphate," Slavery and Abolition, 2 (1981), 114-45; and Ian Linden, "Between Two Religions of the Book: The Children of the Israelites (c. 1846-c.1920)," in Elizabeth Isichei, ed., Varieties of Christian Experience in Nigeria (London, 1982), 79-98; and Lindin, "The Isawa Mallams, c. 1850-1919: Some Problems in the Religious History of Northern Nigeria," seminar paper, unpublished, Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, 1975.

72. Church Missionary Intelligencer, 8, 1884, 594; also see J. Schon, Magana Hausa, 161-62.

73. "The Prophet Jesus meeting with a skull to which he restored the power of speech," in Schon, Magana Hausa, 162-63.

74. Lovejoy, "Problem of Slave Control," 263.

75. It should be noted that the location of Satiru has been the object of some confusion. Various sources have placed the village haphazardly; see, for example, Robert W. Shenton, The Development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria (Toronto, 1986), 27.

76. This important point should be credited to Abubakar Sokoto Mohammad, Social Interpretations, in which it is argued that the Satiru uprising derived from class struggle, an interpretation which Idrissa (Guerres et Societes) accepts at least in part. The argument here attempts to flesh out this earlier analysis.

77. Mohammad, Social Interpretation, 161-65.

78. Mohammad, Social Interpretation, 171.

79. Mohammad, Social Interpretation, 183-84; Mohammad, "Songs and Poems of the Satiru Revolt," (check first reference); Burdon to Lugard, 21 March 1906.

80. For a general discussion of early colonial Mahdism, see Al-Hajj, Mahdist Tradition; Lugard, Annual Reports, 1905-06, ; Tukur, Colonial Domination, ; Mervyn Hiskett, The Development of Islam in West Africa (London, 1984), Adeleye, "Mahdist Triumph," ; Idrissa, Guerres et Societes, ; Saeed, "British Fears;" and G. J. F. Tomlinson and C. J. Lethem, History of Islamic Propaganda in Nigeria (London, 1927).

81. Quoted in Hiskett, Islam in West Africa, 272.

82. E. C. M. Dupigny, Gazetteer of Nupe Province (London, 1920), 25.

83. There is some discrepency over the events surrounding Satiru in 1904. Mohammad (Social Interpretation, 159) claims that Maihafo declared himself Mahdi in January, apparently relying on E. J. Arnett, Gazetteer of Sokoto Caliphate (London, 1920), 45. Arnett is wrong on a number of points relating to Satiru, however, and it may be, as other sources suggest, that Maihafo only asserted his claim in February; see .

84. "Labarin Farkon Gabar Satirawa," in Frank Edgar, ed., Litafi na Tatsuniyoyi na Hausa (Edinburgh, 1913), III, 404.

85. Orr, Sokoto Province Report No. 1, February 29, 1904, Sokprof 2/2 51/1904 (NNAK).

86. Lugard's marginal note on Orr's Sokoto Report No. 1.

87. Burdon to Lugard, 21 February 1906, CO 446/53; and Lugard, Annual Report, 1905-06, 369.

88. Scholars have assumed wrongly that Isa become the leader at Satiru upon the death of his father in early 1903 (see, for example, Dusgate, Conquest, 242), but Burdon's report of 21 March 1906 clarifies the situation.

89. See Johnston's account, "Dan Makafo and the Satirawa," 163-65.

90. Burdon to Lugard, 21 March 1906.

91. Idrissa, Guerres et Societes, 148-49.

92. Idrissa, Guerres et Societes, 174, citing Robert Arnaud, Report No. 4, 11G4, Archives Nationales, Paris; Ponty, "Extract."

93. Ponty, "Extract."

94. Lugard, Annual Report, 1905-6), 367; Adeleye, Power and Diplomacy, 322.

95. Hiskett, Islam in West Africa, 272.

96. Adeleye, "Mahdist Triumph," 211.

97. Burdon to Lugard, telegram, 22 March 1906.

98. Mohammad, "Songs and Poems of the Satiru Revolt."

99. Lugard to Elgin [date not stated], CO 446/52, cited in B. de Houghton, Militant Islam and British Attitudes Towards Islam in Northern Nigeria, 1896-1923 (M.A. dissertation, unpublished, University of Birmingham, 1967), 31.

100. Adeleye, "Mahdist Triumph," 196, citing Lugard to Elgin, 9 May 1906; also see Lugard, Annual Report, 1905-06, 366; and Adeleye, Power and Diplomacy, 322.

101. Also known as Alhaji Muhammad; see Al-Hajj, Mahdist Tradition, 197-201.

102. Report of 28 February, as cited in Adeleye, "Mahdist Triumph," 196. Howard heard the prophecy late, or he took his time in reporting it, or local Mahdists jumbled the instructions that the uprising would begin at the Id el-Kabir, 5 February. Otherwise, the prediction of the Mahdi's appearance "in a month" does not make sense, in which case Howard's report is

117. Abubakar Sokoto Mohammad, "The Songs and Poems of the Satiru Revolt, c. 1894-1906," seminar paper, unpublished, Department of Sociology, Ahmadu Bello University, 1985.

118. For a discussion of the terminology of Caliphate slave estates, see Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Characteristics of Plantations in the Sokoto Caliphate (Islamic West Africa)," American Historical Review

119. Burdon to Lugard, 15 March 1906.

120. Mohammad, Social Interpretation, 173.

121. Idrissa, Guerres et Societes, 175-79.

122. Besides the colonial documentation, there are several contemporary accounts of the Satiru revolt, and Idrissa and Mohammad have collected oral traditions. The contemporary, indigenous accounts include "Asalin Gabar Satiru," in Edgar, ed., Litafi na Tatsuniyoyi na Hausa, I, 263-69, 431; and "Labarin Farkon Gabar Satirawa." To these should be added the poems and songs collected by Mohammad ("Songs and Poems of the Satiru Rising") and the compilation of Johnston, "Dan Makafo and the Satirawa."

123. Mohammad relies on oral material to a much greater extent than any other scholar.

124. Burdon to Lugard, 21 February 1906, CO 446/53.

125. Conference of 28 February 1906, No. 11115, CO 446/52.

126. Lugard to C.O., 7 March 1906, CO 446/53.

127. Mohammad, Social Interpretation, 171.

128. Cited in Mohammad, Social Interpretation, 171, and based on an interview by Dr. Saleh Abubakar, 14 August 1975.

129. Idrissa, Guerres et Societes, 146.

130. See Paul E. Lovejoy, "Fugitive Slaves: Resistance to Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate," in G. Okihiro, ed., In Resistance: Studies in African, Afro-American and Caribbean

History (Amherst, Mass., 1986); J. S. Hogendorn and Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Reform of Slavery in Early Colonial Northern Nigeria," in Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts, eds., The End of Slavery in Africa (Madison, 1988).

131. Lovejoy, "Fugitive Slaves;" Hogendorn and Lovejoy, "Reform of Slavery."

132. Ibrahim Tahir has provided the best analysis of the composition of the class structure of Caliphate society; see his thesis.

133. Burdon to Lugard, 15 March 1906, Shillingford Papers.

134. Mohammad, Social Interpretation, 164.

135. Dusgate, Conquest, 247.

136. Adeleye, "Mahdist Triumph," 200.

137. Margery Perham, Lugard. The Years of Authority, 1898-1912 (London, 1960), 259-60.

138. Wallace to Lugard, 31 October 1907; Lugard (son) to FDL, 7 October 1907.

139. Lugard to Strachey, 9 April 1908; Lugard to Miller, 9 April 1908.

140. Minute initialled WSC to Conference of 14 March 1906, No. 13475, CO 446/53, PRO. Churchill was Undersecretary of State for the Colonies.

141. Perham, Years of Authority, 260.

142. Lugard to Lady Lugard, 9 March 1906, Perham Papers, File 2.

143. Lugard to Lady Lugard, 13 March 1906, Perham Papers, File 2.

144. Conference of 28 February 1906, No. 11115, CO 446/52.

145. Adeleye, "Mahdist Triumph," 211.

146. Hogendorn and Lovejoy, "The Development and Execution of Frederick Lugard's Policies toward Slavery in Northern Nigeria," forthcoming.

147. Lugard to CO, telegram, 14 February 1906, CO 446/52.

148. CO 446/52, p. 567.

149. The implications of the Satiru revolt on the development of slavery policies is explored in Hogendorn and Lovejoy, "Lugard's Slavery Policies," but will be examined in greater detail elsewhere.

150. P. M. Dwyer, Report No. 59 for July-September 1911, Ilorin Province, Ilorprof 2086/1911. We wish to thank Ann O'Hear and Stefan Reichmuch for this reference.

151. Saeed, "British Policy towards Mahdiyya," 95-119; and Ubah, "British Measures," 169-83.