

RELIGIOUS-CUM-POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF
AMĪR AL-MU'MINĪN MUHAMMAD ATTAHIRU I
1902-1903

BY

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i) PREAMBLE

Muhammad Attahiru I is another personality whose period of reign was faced with internal strife and external invasions.¹ The period of his predecessor, that is Amīr al-Mu'minīn °Abd al-Rahmān b. Abubakar Atiku (1891-1902) was actually characterized with a lot of internal political-cum-religious problems. In the first instance, °Abd al-Rahmān was selected just 'some three hours' after the death of Amīr al-Mu'minīn °Umar b. Aliyu Babba. Tradition had it that °Umar was old, i.e. more than sixty years; and at the same time he was overshadowed by his senior brothers who seemed to be the most serious contenders.²

The political-religious-cum-economic crusades and venture of the British and French, and their intrusions in the Caliphate was the most serious factor and

¹H.A.S. Johnston. The Fulani Empire of Sokoto, Oxford University Press, Ibadan, 1967 pp.240-

²Ibid.

problem now than facing the Amir al-Mu'minin.³ These factors were actually the most weakening one, hence the Amir al-Mu'minin could not contend with, that is taking the cognisance of the internal crimes which had already weakened the power of the centre.⁴

The reasons mentioned above actually culminated into serious threats relating to continuity and the existence of the Caliphate. However, as stated the British invasion being the most serious one, the biased views and misconceptions which were alleged and propagated against the Uthmāniyyah Caliphate paved way for the British to succeed in the defeat of the Muslim forces at Giginya in Sokoto.

Similarly, by 1902 the British had already taken over the southern part of the present Nigeria. So also their presence was felt in most of the important towns in the Sokoto Caliphate.

ii) FAMILY, RACE AND EDUCATION

a) Family and Race

Little concern was given to the early life of Muhammad Attahiru I. This may not be unconnected with the general situations prevailing in the Sokoto Caliphate probably as at the time of his birth. It is a fact that from 1774 to 1827, and of course beyond the period up to 1903, the Muslim leadership were not

³Murray Last, The Sokoto Caliphate, Longman Group Limited, London, 1977, p.127.

⁴Ibid. 29.

⁵Ibid. Cf. Maiwurno of the Blue Nile, cit. pp.1-50.

living in one place. Macina, Maratta, Magami, Marnona, Degel, Gudu, Gwandu, Sifawa, Sokoto, Wurno, Salame, Danchadi, Chimmola, and other Ribāt centres⁶ could have been possible places at which most of the second and the third generations of the Jihād leaders including Muhammad Attahiru I, were born. Bukhārī, Bello and Atiku might have been born in Degel. Thus Gudu must have been the next place of birth of the other generations of Jihād leaders. Muhammad Attahiru I. like others must have been born in one of these places. Historical records revealed that ʿAli b. Bello, who rules from 1842-1859 was born in Sala (C. 1223 A.H/C.A.D. 1808). ʿAlki was born by a woman called Ladi.⁷ Muhammad Attahiru I. might have been born at Chimmola or Gwadabawa, hence the two places hiving emerged as new areas of Ribāt for the Atikawa in addition to Danchadi. Before he becomes the Amir al-Mu'minīn, Muhammad Attahiru I was living at Chimmola.⁸

Whatever, the Silsilah (pedigree) of Muhammad Attahiru I is: Muhammad Attahiru I b. Ahmad b. ʿAtiku b. Shaikh ʿUthmān b. Muhammad Foduye. He is

⁶Murray Last, op. cit., p.140. Cf E. J. Arnett, History of Sokoto, pp.1-37

⁷After the Shaikh ʿUthmān's Hijrah from Degel to Gudu in 1804, he was changing his headquarters from one place to the other, e.g. Gudu to Gwandu, then Gwandu to Sifawa, and Sifawa to Sokoto. At each of these Jihād headquarters, commanders of Muslim Force were assigned to strategic places as Ribāṭat (fortified settlements or frontier posts). For example, when Shaikh ʿUthmān moved to Sokoto, places like Kilgori, Yabo, Tambawal, Danchadi, Shuni, Wamakko, Raha, Dundaye, Asare, Shinaka, Kware, Zaki, Raba, Silame, Isa, Moriki, Boko, Birnin Kaya, Magacci (Modachi), Goronyo, etc. are the major centres of Ribāt in defence of the 19th century Jihād, that is from 1804-1903. See Murray Last, op. cit., p.75, 76, 276 of Shaikh ʿAbdullah b. Muhammad Foduye, Diya' al-Hukkām, (AMSS) chapter 4.

⁸Murray Last, op. cit., p.84

like the other descendants of Shaikh °Uthmān of the Torobbe (Toronkawa) clan of the Fulani.⁹ His grand grand-father was Abubakar Atiku who ruled as Amīr al-Mu'minīn from 1837-1842.¹⁰ Attahiru's line within the descendants of Shaikh °Uthmān are appellated: 'Atikawa'.¹¹ Two of Abubakar Atiku's sons became Amīr al-Mu'minīn. The first was Ahmad b. Abubakar Atiku popularly referred to 'Mai Chimmola'. The second named °Abd al-Rahmān b. Abubakar °Atiku "Danyen Kasko". Ahmad 1859-1866, while °Abd al-Rahmān ruled from 1891-1902.¹²

Relatively, Amīr al-Mu'minīn Ahmad b. Atiku b. Shaikh °Uthmān's son had also become Amīr al-Mu'minīn. They are the personality under our discussion and Muhammad b. Ahmad appellated "Maiturare" who was the 14th Sultan (1915-1924 C.E).¹³

⁹See °Abdullah Muhammad Jabir , Alfulani Īkā Ībā wa al-Sūdān, Dār al-Markaz al-Islāmī al-Ifriqī Li al-Tibā'ah, Khartoum 1977, pp.1-28. Cf. Tarihin Fulani by Wazir Junaidu b. Muhammad al-Bukhārī, published by GCZ, Zaria, Nigeria, 1959, pp.1-13.

¹⁰Ibid. p.125.

¹¹Abubakar Atiku was the full brother of Muhammad Bello. When the Jihād has started, Atiku was about twenty one years. Like Bello and Bukhārī, he too was a flag commander. In 1812, Shaikh °Uthmān appointed Emirs; thus Bukhārī was given Tambawal and Atiku Danchadi. See, Murray Last, op. cit., pp.101-115.

¹²The household of the Atikawa is at Sabon Birni Area of the Sokoto town. Most of his descendants live in this area. For example, Alhaji Mu'azu 'Hulla Uku', Kofar Atiku, one of the Sokoto Gates bears his name hence the place being closer to his house

¹³For detailed biographies of the two leaders, refer to Murray Last, op. cit., pp.114-118: 127-140

The other descendant of Amīr al-Mu'minīn Abubakar Atiku, nicknamed "Mai Katuru,"¹⁴ the encestor of the Atikawa who had occupied prominent positions include all the Atikawa of Maiwurno (Mayirno) the head of whom is the Sultan of Maiwurno in the Islamic Republic of Sudan¹⁵ are the following:

1. Sarkin Gobir Gwadabawa, 'Abd al-Rahmān (also nick-named Abdu Jatau).
2. Bunun Tangaza Hamza.
3. Marafan Gada Ibrahim Dasuki.
4. Sarkin Burmin Jabo.
5. Sarkin Zamfara Danchadi.¹⁶
6. Maiwurno (Mayirno) of the Islamic Republic of Sudan.¹⁷

b) **Education**

The problem of the preservation of the early life of eminent persons in the Sokoto Caliphate remains the most serious one. It is unfortunate that the biographers of such important personalities remained aloof to the other

¹⁴'Maiturare' means he who uses scent all the times. The appellation also means, he who possesses abundance of scent. Historical records show that Muhammad Maiturare had always dressed gorgeously and had liked new dresses all the times. This fact could be buttress with records of his pictures preserved in the Sokoto State History Bureau (now WJHCB). The other version of the oral tradition has it that the day Muhammad was born the house smelt of scent.

¹⁵See Maiwurno of the Blue Nile, cit., pp 1-40.

¹⁶Katuru is one of the monuments, i.e. places of historical importance in the history of the Sokoto Caliphate. Katuru is situated south of Isa which is now in Sabon Birni Local Government Area. It was reported that in 1842 during the month of Sha'abān and Ramadān, Atiku led an expedition against Tsibiri. In the battle, Atiku was wounded, hence he died on the way back to Katuru where he was buried. See Murray Last, op. cit., pp.79: 82: 85 and 158 of 'Umar b. Muhammad Bukhārī b. Shaikh 'Uthmān, Tanbīh al-Ikhwān (AMSS).

¹⁷Ibid. pp.1-103

important aspects of their lives. For example, very little reference were made to the areas of childhood, peer group, schools attended, teachers who taught them and the syllabus they studied.

Basically, education (knowledge in general) has been and still remains one of the major conditions for the appointments of the Amīr al-Mu'minīn to lead a Caliphate. In view of this fact, therefore, Muhammad Attahiru I, must have had possessed all the qualities of a Khalīfah before the Uli al-Hilli wa al-°Aqd selected him.¹⁶ His selection could not be out of sheer political bigotry as some non-Muslims historians and their students had proved.

iii) HISTORY, APPOINTMENT AND JIHĀD STRUGGLE OF MUHAMMAD ATTAHIRU I

"From the selection of Shehu Usman Danfodiyo as the Sarkin Musulmi at Gudu in February 1804, down to the death of Muhammad Attahiru I at Burmi in July 1903 is one hundred years less seven months."¹⁹

Muhammad Attahiru I was installed as the 13th Khalīfah in October 1902 after the death of his predecessor, Amīr al-Mu'minīn °Abd al-Rahmān and was martyred nine months later on July 17, 1903. He is the son of Ahmad and a grand-son of Abubakar Atiku. Attahiru I was not a fanatic, he was a man of integrity and pride who took his responsibilities seriously, surrounded as he was

¹⁶D.M. Last, Sokoto in the 19th Century with Special Reference to the Literature. Ph.D. Thesis. Ibadan, September 1964, p.233.

¹⁹H.A.S. Johnston, The Fulani Empire of Sokoto, Oxford University Press, London, 1967, p.255

by men who revered him as Commander of the faithful.²⁰ Immediately after his ascension to the throne, Attahiru I was confronted with a bitter challenge - war with British is indeed a challenge to his authority. As he was the Commander of the Faithful as well as the Khalīfah, the challenge was as much religious as intellectual, as political or military. His works and contributions as a Khaliīfah will therefore be highlighted within the context of his relationship with the British and his Hijrah after the fall of Sokoto Caliphate on the 15th of March, 1903 to his death at Burmi July 27, 1903.

In highlighting those aspects about Attahiru I, the situation in Sokoto prior to his ascension had to be traced. The last decade of the 19th century was one of the much increased European activity in the Caliphate. French activities, including their conquest of the Tukolor Empire in 1889-1895, the race between them and the British to Nikki in the struggle over Borgu (1894) as well as renewed German efforts at digging themselves in at Gwandu (1895) had the effect of making Sokoto and Gwandu harder their attitude towards the Europeans.²¹

By 1896, the policy of the Royal Niger Company was to seek to consolidate Sokoto by posing as the less dangerous of the European powers. When in 1897 the company's conquest of Nupe and Ilorin became a stark reality, the Caliph reacted by refusing to recognize these conquest and closing

²⁰Obaro Ikime, The Fall of Nigeria - The British Conquest, Heinemann, London, 1977, p.202.

²¹H.A.S. Johnston, The Fulani Empire of Sokoto, cit., pp.252-258

the roads to all European's. Thus by 1899 relations between Sokoto and British had become extremely hostile and uneasy. It was in the same year that, the British Government abrogated the charter of the Royal Niger Company. This was to prevent France and Germany occupying Northern Nigeria. The result therefore, was Lugard's formal proclamation of the protectorate on 1st January, 1900 at a ceremony in Lokoja.²²

Lugard's next act was to attack and conquer Kontagora, Bida and Yola in 1901 and Bauchi in February 1902. All of these were places which owed loyalty to the Khalifah, their rulers paid annual tributes to Sokoto. It is easy to see what their conquest must have meant to Khalifah in Sokoto.²³

The importance of Sokoto in the lives of these Europeans was proved by the fact that even after they had been conquered by British, they continued to pay tribute to Sokoto.²⁴ Lugard was worried by this, for it showed that these Emirates did not yet regard him as the final authority in the land, and made him even more determined to bring Sokoto itself under British control. Lugard wrote two letters to the Khalifah telling him about his conquest of Kontagora, Bida and Bauchi. But he did not receive Lugard's letter of March 1902 before he wrote to Lugard the famous letter in which he said that between him and the British there could be only one kind of relationship - war. And when he received the letter of

²²Ibid

²³Ibid

²⁴Ibid pp.252-254

March 1902 he again wrote to Lugard.²⁵ The two letters which the Khalīfah wrote to Lugard leaves no doubt as to the letter's total rejection of the British in Northern Nigeria. That he wrote both letters in May 1902 after Bida, Kontagora, Yola, bauchi and a number of other places had already been conquered by the British, shows a kind of spirit which Islām gave him. Military might of the British, shows the kind of spirit which Islām gave him. He would not willingly give up his position, not even when faced with the military might of the British. Thus Lugard began to prepare for what he now knew would be war against Sokoto, by stationing British troops at Argungu and Gwandu. This was roughly the situation up to the end of 1902.²⁶

The situation in Sokoto just before the British attack deserves to be looked at. The Khalīfah 'Abd al-Rahmān, with who Lugard, had been dealing since 1900 died in October 1902.²⁷ As so often happens in Muslim countries, there was some struggle about who should succeed him thus although Attahiru I was installed in November, there was a group within Sokoto that had only unwillingly given up the struggle for the throne²⁸. There was no guarantee therefore that in the face of this external threat Sokoto could put up a united front.²⁹ Like his

²⁵Ibid. pp.246-252.

²⁶Ibid. pp.250-251.

²⁷Ibid. pp.250-255

²⁸Murray D. Last: The Sokoto Caliphate, cit. pp.127-134.

²⁹P.K. Tiberderana, The Administration of Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu Emirates under British Rule 1900-1946, Ph.D. Thesis, Ibadan, March, 1974, p.131.

predecessor. Attahiru remained intransigent over the surrender of his sovereign powers to British. This is well born out by his refusal to accept off hand Colonel Morland's ultimatum of February 1903 to capitulate to the British without fighting or to face war with all its implications including loss of office.³⁰ Attahiru I however, evidently felt that it was impossible for him to submit, "that to surrender to a Christian power would amount to a breach of faith, it is conceivable that both factors were at work and that Attahiru's own reluctance to give himself up was forcified by the knowledge that his discard followers would never allow him to do so. Whatever the reasons had to be played out to the bitter end."³¹

Another important problem was that opinion was divided about how Sokoto was to meet the British challenge. "Having been in office for less than six months, Attahiru was unwilling to take so fateful a decision himself. As his councillors also seem to have been uncertain in their views. He made up his mind to consult the learned men of the Sultanate, who in any case regarded themselves as the spiritual heirs of the Jihād and the keepers of the public conscience, and to abide by their decision."³² His preparedness to consult and accept the decision of the learned men based on the theological interpretation, proved beyond doubt how intellectual Attahiru I was.³³

³⁰H.A.S Johnston, op. cit pp.255-256.

³¹Ibid. p.250.

³²Ibid. p.250.

³³See R.A. Adeleye, "The Dilemma of the Wazīr.... cit. pp.285-311. Cf. Dr. Omar Bello, Risālah. cit

There appeared three different opinions within the Sokoto, the first group advised that Sokoto should make peace with the British as Katsina had done at the last minute.³⁴ This group argued that Sokoto could not hope to fight successfully against the British. Another group was for war despite the fact that all who had so far fought against the British had been beaten. And the third group, to which the Khalifah belonged, advised that the people who migrate from Sokoto rather than submit to being ruled by the infidels. But no group succeeded in convincing all the others. There was thus no agreement as how to prepare against the British.³⁵

"Time was already running out when the learned men of Sokoto at length assembled to consider what the Sultan's dimension should be. The majority of them were not practical men of affairs but scholars and jurists. Consequently, they took little account of the fact that no help was to be expected from the rest of the Empire, that the city wall of Sokoto was crumbling, that the Sultan's focus had not yet been concentrated, and that in any case they possessed no answer to the modern arms of the British. Their verdict was that, it was unthinkable for the Commander of the Faithful to submit voluntarily to a Christian power and that he must fight and if necessary die. Greatly to his credit, as he disregarded with it, Attahiru accepted their judgement."³⁶

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵See. Dr. Sabo A. Albasu, Loc. cit., Compare Obaro Ikime, Loc. cit., and P.K. Tiberderana

³⁶Ibid. p 252

The news that the British were on their way led to liaison preparations for war. The clash took place on the morning of 15th March 1903. Although Sokoto was defeated but offered a very formidable and heroic resistance. It is worth noting that, Attahiru I. was more prepared to fight up to the last minute. An episode that had taken place between him and the Marafa Maiturare during the course of the war verify this issue. The Khalifah and the Marafa Maiturare during the course of the Jihād verify this situation, and which was reported thus:

"As soon as he realized that there was no hope of coming to grips with the British, the Marafa Maiturare galloped over from his position on the right to urge the Sultan to abandon the battle. 'Beware', he said, 'Let the fire be extinguished while you hold it'. By this he meant that if the Khalifah resisted in a hopeless struggle he might be guilty of destroying the whole heritage and posterity of the Fulani. But the Sultan was made of sterner stuff than his brother. 'Do you think', he demanded angrily, 'that this is my first battle?'³⁷

Another Jihād encounter which had occurred between the Khalifah and his Wazir was reported as well thus.

"The Marafa, who had already two horses hit under his, was now wounded in the scholar shoulder and the Majasirdi, one of the household slaves, was killed. At this the Wazir Bukhārī intervened and told the Khalifah that from then on the blood of all those who fell in the battle would be on his head... At this the Fulani forces began to melt away and he at last allowed his horse to be led from the field. It was the end not only of a battle but virtually of an epoch. There remained only the last act which the unhappy Attahiru had to play out the tragic part of fate had assigned to him."³⁸

³⁷The Fulani Empire, cit. p.252. Cf Obaro Ikime, cit., p.205.

³⁸Ibid p.252.

The fight of the Khalīfah and of a large number of important Sokoto officials was, as it were, a going back to the idea of a Hijrah - emigration from infidels. But not everyone could go with the Khalīfah. True Sokoto was, by the time the British marched victoriously in, almost completely deserted. But most of the people looked for some kind of direction and leadership. Many of this grouped around the Wazīr.³⁹ The Wazīr was in a difficult position. He consulted the °Ulamā, as Muslim learned Mallams advised that the Shaikh °Uthmān Danfodiyo had laid it down that it was permissible for Muslims to make friends with unbelievers when the Muslims were forced to live in fear of such unbelievers and could not successfully fight against.⁴⁰ The only condition that °Uthmān Danfodiyo attached to this permission was that this forced friendship was not to be deep. The Muslims had to wait till they were strong enough to fight back and regain their independence. In this way Bukhārī (Waziri) led a large crowd back into Sokoto and surrender to the British.⁴¹

One problem however, remained from the British to solve. The Khalīfah Attahiru I was in flight. Nothing so seriously threatened the British enterprise in Sokoto Caliphate that this Hijrah which caused great anxiety among British officials. The people of the Caliphate regarded Attahiru I as the proper Khalīfah. They know that Attahiru II was a British created leader, Sultan who had been put

³⁹See: "Risālat al-Wazīr Ilā Ahl al-°Ilm wa al-Tadabbur." (AMS) Dār al-Buhuth, Waziri'd Palace, Sokoto

⁴⁰Ibid

⁴¹Ibid

on the throne only because Sokoto was defeated in war. Relatively therefore, "The Khalifah Muhammad Attahiru I represented the symbol of the people's religion as he was their Imām, their high priest. The people saw his plight as a contribution of his struggle against the British. They saw it as an attempt to uphold the teachings of Islām which forbade Muslims to submit to unbelievers. Indeed the Hijrah of Attahiru I was a direct challenge to all those who had accepted and as a result British rule. Emirs and people alike responded to this challenge either by joining the Khalifah or by sending him assistance in the form of food, clothing, and other necessities."⁴²

"Although out of Sokoto, Attahiru I was still legally the head of the Caliphate. He had been duly elected according to laid down rules of succession, he was alive, physically and mentally fit. He had not been declared incompetent by any constituted authority within the Caliphate. The legality of his continued position as head of the Caliphate was demonstrated by the fact that he had with him an exile the flag of the Caliphate which was under the protection of Sā'i Umaru, the hereditary standard bearer. He was still seen in the eyes of his people as the legitimate Caliph and despite the British threat many people continued to send him presents and information regarding the invaders."⁴³

⁴²Sabo A. Albasu, "From Caliph to Sultan: The Changing Role and Function of the Caliph of Sokoto after British Conquest," in the State and Society in the Sokoto Caliphate, ed. A.M. Kani and Kabir, A.G., published by UDUS, 1990, p.22.

⁴³Op. cit., p.252

The British were in a hurry to consolidate their position in Sokoto after they had conquered the town by force and got the submission of the Wazīr and other officials. Five days after the battle, a new Khalīfah was appointed with the title of Sultan. Lugard himself knew that Attahiru I would never compromise with the British invaders let alone serve under infidels⁴⁴. The British had no legal right to remove him from office. And as Lugard said, even if the Khalīfah returned he would not be reinstated but would be sent to live quietly in a village outside Sokoto. The British and the caliph were incompatible and that Lugard had already made up his mind to appoint a new leader, Sultan.

The British imperial forces discovered that Amīr al-Mu'minīn Attahiru I on Hijrah was more dangerous to them than when he was at Giginya Battlefield in Sokoto. To overcome this danger and to stop people flocking to join him, the British decided to pursue Attahiru I and capture him. But they did not find this at all easy, as they were never sure where he was at any given time. The first encounter between Attahiru I and the British took place on 22nd April near Bebeji. Although his supporters suffered heavily, they forced the British party to send for reinforcement. The Commander of the British party, Crozier, was himself knocked unconscious during the encounter. Between 22nd April to 6th May, six other encounters were fought, with neither side winning any major victory but with the Khalīfah still at large.⁴⁵ The next major event was the Battle of Burmi,

⁴⁴Ibid. p.22. Cf. H.A.S. Johnston, Loc. cit

⁴⁵Ibid. pp.252-258.

13th May 1903 when Attahiru was on his way to Gwani.⁴⁶ At the end of this battle, British force accepted defeat and Captain Sword had to retreat at night. By their own records, not only was this the first defeat suffered by the British since they began the conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate, the casualties were also the heaviest.⁴⁷

The above defeat forced the British to redouble their effort to capture the migrating Khalifah Attahiru I. At the time of the first battle of Burmi, there were three different British Military parties chasing him from different directions.⁴⁸ The number of troops engaged in the chase was not increased. As for Attahiru, two months of flight had begun to tell on his followers. Many had returned to their homes, many had died in battles against the British. Although those loyal to him continued to send food and water, there was never enough for this was still the dry season.⁴⁹

After the first battle of Burmi, Attahiru was encouraged to move into the town. It was there that he took his final stand against the British. The final attack on Burmi - The second Battle of Burmi took place on 27th July 1903 - The second battle was fiercer than the first. It went on from 11:00 in the morning right up to 6:00 in the evening, the largest battle in the British conquest of the

⁴⁶Ibid p.256

⁴⁷Obaro Ikime op.cit. p 207. Cf H.A.S. Johnston, op.cit. pp 253-254.

⁴⁸Ibid pp.254-256

⁴⁹Ibid Cf Obaro Ikime, cit.

Sokoto Caliphate.⁵⁰ Amīr al-Mu'minīn Attahiru I continued to fight until he fell dead, and a martyr (Shāhid).⁵¹

iv) **The Fall of the Sokoto Caliphate and the Continued Resistance of the Amīr al-Mu'minīn and the 'Ulamā'**

It is clear that although the British had succeeded in conquering the caliphate, they did not find things very easy. The resistance of the Caliphate had very much to do with the religion of Islām which forbade Muslims to submit tamely to rule by unbelievers. But Islām did not lay down only one way of responding to attacks of this nature by unbelievers. Muslims were required by their religion to fight against unbelievers who tried to rule them. But they could also go on a Hijrah when fighting looked hopeless. They could even surrender and give half-hearted friendship to them. This kind of choice, was not always possible for the Muslims to be of the opinion when attack threatened.

This however, was to lead to the development of an intellectual resistance to British occupation of Sokoto Caliphate⁵². The responses of two custodians of the Caliphate answered the challenge strictly and uncompromisingly within the framework of Islām values. Two extremely important compilations come forth from the pens of two leading intellectuals of the Caliphate. Fortunately for the

⁵⁰Ibid. pp.255-256.

⁵¹Ibid. p.256.

⁵²The role of 'Ulamā' both in Sokoto and other places, like from Bima and Burmi is noteworthy, particularly the role of Mallam Jibrilla of Burmi, Alkali Abdullahi, Mallam Mu'alleyidi of Salame, Mallam Maikaturu, the 'Ulamā' of Zamfara, of Zurmi, Bakura and Faru, as well as 'Ulamā' of Satiru etc. remained green and on record forever

history of the resistance of the Caliphate to British conquest, a contemporary document exists explaining the options available to Muslims, and those options were deeply rooted in the Islamic traditions and writing of old. The first intellectual work of this nature is a poem written by no less than the Khalīfah himself, titled, "Wakar Zuwan Annasara Kasar Hausa".⁵³ Another book of the same category was a long treatise written by the Chief Justice of Sokoto, al-Qādī ʿAbdullah b. Ali titled, "Risālah al-Qādī Ila al-Mu'sirīn".⁵⁴ These documents played a significant role in the resistance against the British occupation of the Sokoto Caliphate particularly the pattern it took after the fall of Sokoto. The impact was so powerful that even persons like Wazīr Bukhārī, the man with whom the British negotiated the surrender of Sokoto could not but accept the cogency of the arguments advanced in these two important documents to the extent he even doubted the validity of his actions after the fall of Sokoto.⁵⁵

The second important book written by the custodian of the ʿUthmāniyyah Caliphate was the Risālah of Bukhārī the Waziri of Sokoto. The arguments in the Risālah narrowed the preferred choices available to Sokoto in the circumstances to two, Hijrah and Taqiyyah. As Bukhārī admits in the Risālah, with no knowledge of whereabouts of the Khalīfah. And entrusted with the

⁵³That is, Amīr al-Mu'minīn Muhammad Attahiru I.

⁵⁴See the edited and translated version of al-Risālah by Dr. Omar Bello, cit., pp.1-25

⁵⁵It is advisable that all the relevant materials cited in this paper be consulted for comparison and perusal, most especially the two Risālah.

responsibility of deciding the next course of actions, the Waziri decided to return to Sokoto four days after its fall to negotiate a peace settlement with the infidels on the principles of the second option, viz: Taqiyyah - coming to terms with the enemy in order to preserve the faith.⁵⁶

Since there are different options to take, with regard to relationship with unbelievers, Attahiru I responses, the hardships if entailed for him and his followers from 15th March to July 27th 1903 is the story of uncompromising resolutions deeply rooted in religious traditions. This Hijrah stands almost unique in the annals of African responses to colonial conquest. In Adeleye's words: "The scale of emigration and the long distances involved were not parallel in any other country; certainly not among non-Muslim peoples, in any part of Africa during the wars of Europeans conquests. The closest parallel was that of the Hijrah of Amīr al-Mu'minīn Ahmad and his multitudinous followers from Segou to the Sokoto Caliphate."⁵⁷

iv) CONCLUSION

In conclusion therefore, while the Hijrah of Shaikh °Uthmān b. Foduye marked the beginning of the revival of the office of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (Khalīfah) and the establishment of a Caliphate in (1804), the Hijrah of Muhammad Attahiru I put a "Landing Mark" and end to the office of Khalīfah and the Caliphate in

⁵⁶See Dr. S.A. Albasu, Loc. cit.

⁵⁷H.A. Adeleye, The Dilemma of the Wazir: The Place of the Risālat al-Wazīr ila Ahl °Ilm wa al-Tadabbur, in the History of the Conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate. JENS, Vol.IV, No.2, June, 1968, pp.285-311.

general. "More disheartening was the fact that the British had put an end to the Caliphate on 15th March 1903 and the final destruction became glaringly clear as what Lugard wanted to appoint was a Sultan not a Khalīfah, a Sarkin Muslim (SK) not Amīr al-Mu'minīn as had been known before the conquest."⁵⁸ In Tiberderana's words. Whatever political power Attahiru I to exercise was to be limited to Sokoto Emirate as he no longer had any means to enforce his commands as Sarkin Muslim ... Attahiru's position as Sarkin Musulmi was to be horrible rather than functions."⁵⁹

The martyrdom (Shahādah) of Amīr al-Mu'minīn Muhammad Attahiru I and most of his disciples and followers was yet another milestone in the history of the Muslim resistance against the European invasion, conquest and occupation of the Sokoto Caliphate. Such achievement and courageous defence of the Caliphate by Amīr al-Mu'minīn Attahiru I shall continue to remain a praiseworthy Jihād against the Christian domination. It may not be out of context to report what actually transpired between the Muslim forces before the martyrdom of Amīr al-Mu'minīn Muhammad Attahiru I and all those who stood by him to the last minute:

"On 27 July, a little before noon, the British forces appeared under the walls of Burmi and the final battle began. It was proved easily the toughest and bloodiest of the whole campaign. The die-hards of Burmi fought with fanatical courage and devotion against the infinitely superior weapons of their enemies. Some deliberately courted death. Others lashed themselves together so that they

⁵⁸Sabo A. Albasu. op. cit. p.24.

⁵⁹P.K. Tiberderana. op. cit. p 151.

should not be tempted to try to escape but would die together.

When the fighting began Attahiru went to the mosque. He remained there praying until he heard that the gates had been breached and then he emerged and went down to the walls. He was on foot, unarmed, and his intention was not to fight but to go out and meet his fate. It was a gesture not less noble than Gordon's at Khartoum. Death came to him with merciful swiftness, for when he was within a stone's throw of the southern wall he was shot through the head. Two of his sons died by his side and ninety of his followers, showing the same devotion as the bodyguards of Hayatu and Zubeiru chose to perish with him rather than save themselves in flight."⁶⁰

The views and opinions expressed regarding the resistance against the British domination which was led by Amīr al-Mu'minīn Muhammad Attahiru I were diverse. Notwithstanding the resolve of the Amīr al-Mu'minīn was a Jihād whose sacrifice led to the survival of the Sokoto Caliphate to this day. No doubt, the sacrifice made by the Amīr al-Muminin had become the fibre and facilitator for the continuity of the Sokoto Caliphate, its structures to be cherished by the Muslim Ummah within and outside Nigeria.

⁶⁰H.A.S. Johnston. The Fulani Empire, cit., p.256.

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