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MALLAM MUHAMMAD BAKATSINE AND THE *JIHAD* IN EASTERN KANO¹

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I

Mallam Muhammad Bakatsine was one of the most outstanding figures in nineteenth-century Kano history. He stands out in tradition as a figure who is almost luminescent—his virtues seem overpowering and his faults, if any, totally unrecorded. And yet we know surprisingly little about him; we don't know when he was born nor when he died. Although praised as a great scholar, we don't seem to know of anything he wrote. He was, in short, a legend in his own time, and as with most legends the personal traits and characteristics that are so necessary for us to grasp the personality of a historical character have been completely eliminated from the record. It is troublesome that the record is so vague for such an important historical figure, but even more upsetting is that the modern literature has distorted Mallam Muhammad Bakatsine's role, even to the extent of accusing him of being a collaborator with the anti-*jihad* forces in Kano and of being an opportunist.

I believe that these distortions have resulted from a very uncritical use of colonial sources. These colonial sources were not the product of careful scholarly historical research, even though they often reflect something from the oral traditions about the *jihad*. These colonial recorders were generally opportunists themselves, as indeed were many of those Kano citizens supplying them with information, and so we must be very cautious when using the information they provide. Too frequently—as with the story of Bakatsine's sister Habiba's alleged interview with Sheikh Usman dan Fodio resulting in a new name for their clan—they have been

¹An earlier draft of this paper was presented at the National Conference on 200 Years Since the Uthman Dan Fodio Jihad in Kano held at the Kano State History and Culture Bureau, Kano, Nigeria, 27-29 July 2004.

repeated over and over again in the literature without being examined to see if there is any merit in them.

All traditions agree that Mallam Muhammad Bakatsine was the son of Mallam Umaru of Utei (a town a few miles east of Wudil in Kano), and that they were of the Jobawa clan. He was most likely born *ca.* 1770 and was a contemporary of Shaikh Usman dan Fodio. As the son of a *mallam* he would have started the classical Qur'anic education quite young, while still at home, and by the time he was an adolescent he would have been quite fluent not only in his native Fulfulde but also in Hausa and Arabic.

Like other young Fulani boys of the neighborhood, he would have spent some time looking after cattle and following some of the herds in the general locality around Utei, the area of cattle tracks roughly bounded by Wudil in the west, Gaya in the northeast, Takai in the east, and Garko in the south. Presumably his religious education, begun as it was at home, taught him the correct practices and beliefs of orthodox Sunni Malikite Islam, since these were the principles of the *jihad* of Usman Dan Fodio, in which he was soon to play to so important a role. But the area of Wudil, Gaya, and Takai presented a sensitive and intelligent Muslim youth with many contradictions in the closing years of the eighteenth century. There were many Maguzawa (that is, non-Muslim Hausa people) in the area, but this probably was not too much of a problem for the young Muhammad because these people didn't pretend to be Muslims.

But right in Wudil town there were many people who claimed that they were good Muslims, but who believed in a guardian water spirit called *Uwar Wudil* (Mother of Wudil), and who actually made sacrifices to her.² Not very far away in Gaya town, just east of the Friday mosque, there was a quarter of the walled settlement called *Unguwar Mahaukata* (the Ward of the Mad), where the inhabitants regularly performed some strange rite of striking their heads with swords until blood ran freely down their faces. These stories still arouse a great deal of sentiment in the Wudil and Gaya region, but certainly in the 1780s in pre-*jihad* Kano, they must have greatly troubled our sincere and devout young scholar, Mallam Muhammad.

But it was the nearby town of Takai that must have first presented the young Muhammad with his first view and understanding of the Hausa state as it was at the time. Some time around the period of Muhammad's own birth, the ruler of Kano, Babba Zaki son of Yaji (1768-1776) built a palace in Takai and even tried to get his court to move there permanently, or so it was said.³ *The Kano Chronicle* says of this king and of this period:

²Ma'aji (1993), 6.

³Palmer (1928/1967), 126.

He made war on Burumburum, and took the town by assault, capturing many of the inhabitants and cutting the throats of some, whilst the others fled. He curbed the power of the Sarkis and head slaves and plundered them every day. He forced them to give presents under compulsion, and to go to war unwillingly. Hence he was called "Jan Rano," well named the disturber of elephants.⁴

Surely he also had a very opulent and luxurious court, for it was also said of him: "He imitated the Arabs of Kano in almost everything."⁵

Since we don't know exactly when Muhammad was born, we don't know whether he himself actually witnessed these amazing and terrible things in Takai and on the road as the king's considerable entourage passed between Kano and Takai, but most likely he did. Even if he did not, he could not have helped hearing stories from his relatives and neighbors for whom such spectacles must have an all too frequent occurrence. It was sights like these that helped mold the scholarly young Muhammad into a stern *jihadist* who, like this allegedly decadent and oppressive king, would one day war against Burumburum (not very far from Garko). But when Mallam Muhammad Bakatsine finally fought against Burumburum, he killed the ruler of Kano, Mohammed Alwali, said to be a cousin (or brother) of the very ruler who had built the palace at Takai. And thus he brought about the final collapse of the oppressive Hausa monarchy that he had grown up detesting.

Tradition tells us that Muhammad's senior sister, Habiba, was very fond of him and also close to their father. But more important than this relationship was his enduring intimacy with his younger fellow clansman, Mallam Sa'idu. Some traditionists such as Alh. Abubakar Dokaji have suggested that Sa'idu was an actual brother of Muhammad, that is, that both were the sons of Mallam Umaru.⁶ The more general tradition, however, is that they were not full brothers.⁷ The question of their exact relationship is, I believe, not very important, as even today it is considered rude to insist on calling someone a "cousin" rather than a "brother" and Muhammad would have called Sa'idu "brother" even if he were actually a "cousin." Sa'idu was also a member of the Jobawa clan, as most of the clan leaders have been descendants of Sa'idu to the present day. I. A. Kurawa has said that "they were seen together throughout their lives,"

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Dokaji (1958/1978), genealogical chart, 96.

⁷I.A. Kurawa discusses this and cites interviews with several elders of the Jobawa clan conducted in 1989; Kurawa, (1989a), 7.

and later on Mallam Muhammad treated Sa'idu's children as he did his own—and so in a very real sense they were more than brothers.⁸ They were fellow clansmen and soulmates. Mallam Bakatsine's closeness to his fellow clan members is a regular theme in his life history and was important in establishing the dynasty which came to control the mighty military (and kingmaking) title of *Makaman Kano* for most of the last two centuries to the present.

II

It had long been the tradition in Islamic west Africa for young students to travel to places where they could learn from famous scholars. Young Muhammad Umar also went out from his home area in search of knowledge, and his journeys took him westwards. It was during these scholarly travels that Muhammad was given the nickname which was to distinguish him in history, *Bakatsine*, meaning "the Katsina man." He studied for a considerable time in Katsina, and I. A. Kurawa has said that he studied with Mallam Kisko there and that he might have studied in the famous pre-*jihad* scholarly community of 'Yandoto, in southwestern Katsina.⁹ Other scholars he is said to have studied under included Mallam Mai Farar Kasa and Mallam Abdullahi Madabo. The surname *Madabo* refers to a famous scholarly section of Kano city just north of the market, and so it seems that the young Mallam Muhammad Umar was also familiar with that place.

Most likely some of the leading political figures of Kano, whom he would have seen in and on their way to Takai, were once again visible here in the capital, reinforcing his childhood visions of the power of the opulent Hausa state of Kano on the move. The famous radical preacher from Agades, Mallam Jibril b. Umar, was also said to have been one of his teachers—and perhaps it was through this contact that Mallam Muhammad came into contact with that other famous student of Mallam Jibril, Usman dan Fodio. We know that Mallam Muhammad Bakatsine became a student of Usman dan Fodio, and that they came to share many views. Ultimately, of course, Mallam Bakatsine became the principal representative of the Shehu in eastern Kano during the *jihad*. Mallam Muhammad Bakatsine achieved great respect and considerable fame for his scholarly achievements. Kurawa asserts that the famous early Sokoto

⁸Ibid.

⁹Kurawa, (1989a), 5-6. He is the source of the following list of teachers as well, although it is not at all clear what his source was, unless it was the interview he conducted with Mallam Musa Hussain Madabo, Rijiya Lemo, 23 May 1987.

Waziri, Gidado dan Laima (d. 1851) described him in his book *Raud al-Jinan* as one of the really learned *ulama* of the era, and perhaps this is so.¹⁰

The single most momentous event in Hausaland in the nineteenth century was the Islamic *jihad* of Usman dan Fodio and his associates against the various Hausa monarchies, and their neighbors, who it was charged had compromised Islam with irreligious, corrupt, and idolatrous practices. This *jihad* formally began when its scholarly leader, Shehu Usman dan Fodio, made his *hijra* (flight) from Degel (in Gobir kingdom) to Gudu (just beyond the borders of Gobir) in February, 1804, an act which withdrew the Islamic community of the Shehu from the corrupt Hausa state of Gobir. This *hijra* was a self-conscious act in imitation of the original *hijra* of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina, and thus had both practical and symbolic importance for the Muslim community. The movement spread quickly throughout Hausaland and beyond, energized largely through the former students and now disciples of Shehu Usman dan Fodio.

III

There is some debate about where Mallam Muhammad Bakatsine was at the beginning of the *jihad* in 1804. Paul Lovejoy has asserted that “Muhammadu Bakatsine studied under the Shehu, accompanied him on the *hijra* and fought at the battles of Tabkin Kwatto and the siege and sack of Alkalawa. He was one of the seven entrusted with a flag for Kano.”¹¹

This is problematic, as the Shehu’s *hijra* was in February 1804, the battle of Tabkin Kwatto was in June 1804, and the battle of Alkalawa was more than four years later, in October 1808.¹² This would have meant that Mallam Muhammad Bakatsine would have missed the entire *jihad* in Kano, of which he was in fact a principal leader. This seems to be completely wrong and should be rejected, but it is important to look to see where the story came from. Two undergraduate theses give their sources for these same ideas as the *Wudil District Note Book* and the *Gazetteer of Wudil*, and Lovejoy also cites the *Gazetteer of Wudil*.¹³ In

¹⁰Laima (1973), 50, para. 78, but actually the name as given by Malumfashi is “Biashine” and in his note 527 he wrote that “Sheikh Biashine: I found no information about him!” And so perhaps Kurawa is overly optimistic.

¹¹Lovejoy et al. (1993), 53n111.

¹²Last (1967), 25.

¹³See note 10 above. The copy of the Kano State History and Culture Bureau of the *Wudil Gazetteer* that was consulted by Lovejoy and Ma’aji no longer contained this historical section when I consulted it in 1996.

both cases the source is the same: a pious local Wudil tradition swallowed entirely and without examination by a British District Officer, perhaps in the 1950s, and subsequently regurgitated by more modern historians.¹⁴

Having rejected the claim that Mallam Bakatsine was in the Sokoto region throughout most of the *jihad*, we must turn toward a more serious allegation: that of complicity with the Hausa monarchy and of joining the *jihad* only belatedly. This charge is made most strongly by A. Mahadi:

For one reason or another, some of the Fulani leaders who had strong connections with the court or the government often acted as fifth columnists during the *jihad* wars. Mallam Muhammadu Bakatsine, for instance, while remaining as a counselor to *sarki* Muhammadu Alwali, was at the same time keeping in touch with Shehu Usman dan Fodio. When the members of the *jama'a* were migrating to Kwazzazzabon 'Yar Kwando he wavered and remained with the *sarki*. Not until the outbreak of the hostilities and when *sarki* Muhammadu Alwali had become suspicious of his activities and lost confidence in him, did he belatedly embark on his *hijra* to Wudil instead of Kwazzazzabon 'Yar Kwando, from where he launched his own military campaigns in the south-eastern parts of Kano. In addition to the opportunistic behaviour of people like Muhammadu Bakatsine, others, for instance Ardo Ga'e, played double roles in relation to the movement in an attempt to preserve their own interests . . .¹⁵

This highly critical (and ambiguous) treatment of Mallam Bakatsine's behavior at the time of the *jihad* follows an older tradition of colonial historical writing—and the most commonly cited of these was the Kano Resident W.F. Gowers, whose version of the story was:

Mallam Jemo first advanced and attacked the Kano forces at Gamo. He took this place but had to retire to Kwaozobo. The Habe ruler Alwali who was then at Takai called on Mallam Bakatsene (the great grandfather of the present "Makama" of Kano), head of the Jobawa clan, to meet him at Utai. Alwali accused him of treachery, but Mallam Bakatsene swore to his innocence on the Koran. On his return from the interview he took Gogel (17 miles east-south-east of Kano) and then proceeded on a campaign in the south-eastern parts of Kano in which he was uniformly successful.¹⁶

¹⁴Kurawa also recognized the falseness of this tradition, but he does not seem to have remembered where he read it: Kurawa (1989a), 6.

¹⁵Mahadi (1982), 344-45.

¹⁶Gowers (1933), 11. NAK, 2568, vol. II, 1933 (at Kano State History and Culture Bureau).

The published story by Gowers has been widely read, of course, but it was largely copied itself from an earlier unpublished (and until relatively recently uncataloged) report by an earlier Resident of Kano, C.W. Temple, who wrote in 1909.¹⁷ This report claimed that

They remained 7 months preparing to fight Alwali Sar.Kano. After this preparation, Mallam Jemo advanced and first attacked the Kano people at Gamo, which he took. He retired again to Kwazazaba. On hearing of this Alwali the Sar. Kano who was at Takai called Mallam Bakatsene (the head of the Jobawa, grandfather of the present Makaman Kano) to him at Wutei. Mallam Bakatsene had not gone to Kwazazaba but had remained at Wodil. Alwali asked him how this had come to pass, accusing him of having helped his fellow tribesmen. Mallam Bakatsene swore on the Koran that he had not done so; this oath did not, however, prevent him from attacking and taking the Kano town of Gogel on his way back from the interview, or from proceeding at once on a campaign in the eastern parts of Kano in the course of which he conquered Dutsi, Birnin Kudu, Shira, Gamsa, Takai, Fagewa, Galfa & Wutei in the space of about a year.¹⁸

While it is obvious that Gowers was copying, with slight modifications, from Temple's report of 1909, I shall try and demonstrate that Abdullahi Mahadi's tradition came ultimately from the same source. Temple was the Resident of Kano in 1909 and, although he did not report his source, in his own *Annual Report for Kano Province for 1909*, he clearly stated that the Kano Native Treasury was paying one pound a month for an "Historical Expert, Dan Rimi Nuhu."¹⁹ It is known that Dan Rimi Nuhu was literate in Arabic and he was doubtless aided by the existing Arabic literature. But what was Mahadi's source? In the section excerpted above, Mahadi lists three sources. One, *Kano ta Dabo Cigari* by Alh. Abubakar Dokaji, is totally irrelevant as it does not support what Mahadi has written.²⁰ Another important reference is to *Taqyid al-akhbar*, a book written by the Chief Alkali of Kano, Muhammad b. Salih, in Arabic, probably in 1868. This is certainly the most important single source for our knowledge of the *jihad* in Kano, and it was probably consulted by Dan Rimi Nuhu. The third source cited by Mahadi was Aliyu Nuhu Ibrahim, who was born in 1894, and when interviewed by Mahadi

¹⁷Temple (1909); also see Lovejoy et al. (1993).

¹⁸Temple (1909), 5-6. para. 26.

¹⁹NAK/SNP 7/10 6415 1909. *Kano Province Annual Report, 1909*, by C.L. Temple.

²⁰Dokaji (1958/1978). Mahadi's reference is to page 36, where a straightforward and non-controversial list of the *jihad* clans and their leaders is given.

in 1979 he was the Makaman Dan Rimi. He was evidently the son of the Dan Rimi Nuhu interviewed by Temple in 1909—and so the core of the tradition must be the same.

According to Mahadi, the great-grandfather of Aliyu Nuhu Ibrahim accompanied Alwali when he fled to Zaria to escape the jihadists.²¹ We can surmise that he might also have been at the battle of Burumburum, which took place shortly after Alwali's flight to Zaria. It was at that battle that the forces of Mallam Bakatsine killed Alwali, and perhaps Alwali's loyal servant (the grandfather of Dan Rimi Nuhu) had no fond memories of Mallam Bakatsine. It seems likely to me that the set of traditions presented by Temple, Gowers, and Mahadi all derived from Dan Rimi Nuhu and from Muhammad b. Salih. We cannot know exactly what Dan Rimi told Temple, nor what his son told Mahadi, but these stories would have been influenced by the palace intrigues for which the various *Dan Rimis* of Kano have been so famous.

It would also have been influenced by the turbulent politics of the period 1908-09, when the various *Hakimai* (titleholders) of Kano were first sent out from the city to the districts by the colonial government. We are forced, therefore, to concentrate on the story of the *jihad* related by Muhammad b. Salih, who was the Chief Alkali of Kano and who wrote in 1868. He himself spoke with many of the actual participants in the Kano *jihad*, and so was closer to the spirit of the times. It is against his work that we will examine the allegations of the Dan Rimi Nuhu/Temple/Gowers/Mahadi ensemble of traditions.²²

Muhammad b. Salih is quite definite and explicit about the role of Mallam Bakatsine in the *jihad* in Kano. We are told that he was involved from the initial planning stages and that he was one of the very first (perhaps the fourth) of the Kano scholars to visit Usman dan Fodio in Degel before the *hijra*.²³ We are also informed that Mallam Bakatsine was one of the clan leaders who responded to the call for *jihad*, corresponded with the other leaders, and met with Mallam Danzabuwa. We are also told that there was a consensus about making *hijra* to Fagoje, which was also known as Kwazazzabo (a gorge or a ravine).²⁴

However, Mallam Bakatsine did not meet with the others at Kwazazzabo. Why was this? Is it true, as Mahadi claimed, that Bakatsine

²¹Mahadi (1982), 2:787.

²²The translation I have used (and the only one I am aware of) is Kurawa (1989b). Unfortunately, the translation, which Mahadi and his supervisor Dr. I. U. A. Musa, promised, has not appeared in published form.

²³Kurawa (1989b), 21-22.

²⁴Ibid., 25.

was wavering? Muhammad b. Salih does not support this contention. There is, I believe, no criticism in the simple statement he made: “[a]s for ‘Alim Bakatsine the *Jama’a* had consulted him on the issue of *Hijra* and he intended to make the *Hijra* to join them but it was not possible for him.”²⁵

Why was it not possible? All traditions agree that while Mallam Bakatsine was with his family at Uteo, the Hausa ruler Alwali was at his favorite country palace at Takai, together with his usual large entourage. One of the principal tactics for the *hijra* was to assemble men, horses, and equipment for the impending struggle. It was probably convenient for the jihadists assembling to the west of Kano City that the Alwali was out of the way in Takai to the east of Kano. It would have been widely known in the Wudil-Utei-Takai area that Mallam Bakatsine had recently been to visit Usman dan Fodio in Degel. It would have been impossible for him to raise an army in the area without attracting the notice, and opposition, of the king and his forces in Takai. It was therefore necessary for him to dissemble for a while, until the war broke out and Alwali’s forces left the area to confront the active jihadist forces in the west of Kano.

Mahadi has asserted that Mallam Bakatsine was a “counselor” to Alwali. Perhaps he inferred this from the Gowers story in which Alwali asks Mallam Bakatsine to swear on the Qur’an that he had not helped his fellow Fulani. The Temple story also has Alwali accusing Mallam Bakatsine of treachery and asking him to swear on the Qur’an. Whatever these stories are worth, they are definitely not supported by Muhammad b. Salih’s report, which said that after an early confrontation between jihadists and the royalists in western Kano: “When this news reached the Tyrant he mounted immediately and left Takai in a hasten procession. He used to pass by ‘Alim Bakatsine who prays for him and he (the tyrant) gives him gifts but this time it was not possible he only stopped and made a sign to him (the royal greeting) and continued his journey.”²⁶

There is nothing wrong in a *mallam* praying for a king, and in fact later on the jihadists would still request Alwali to join them. Receiving “gifts” from a king hardly makes a person a counselor, and a counselor would have to reside near the king either in Kano City or in Takai. Mallam Bakatsine, however, seems to have eschewed any offer that Alwali might have made him, for he was living simply with his fellow clansmen and their cows in the small village of Utei.

The story about Mallam Bakatsine swearing on a Qur’an that he had not been disloyal to Alwali is not convincing, considering the nature of a

²⁵Ibid., 34.

²⁶Ibid., 26.

mallam of his stature. It is true that such an act would not have been un-Islamic if it were deemed necessary for the pursuance of the *jihad* as Kurawa has pointed out.²⁷ Nevertheless, since the judge Muhammad b. Salih has specifically mentioned the meeting between Mallam Bakatsine and Alwali at Utei, and has specifically excluded the possibility of their having had an extended discussion, I feel that the Dan Rimi/Temple/Gowers tradition is here revealing itself, but that it is not convincing on this point. This is not to disparage this tradition totally, but it must be realized that the historian cannot use simultaneously two contradictory traditions without reconciling them somehow. It is also for this reason that I reject the idea that Mallam Bakatsine was dilatory in joining the *jihad* and that he was opportunistic. Muhammad b. Salih had no such criticism, and it is difficult to see how a courtier such as Dan Rimi Nuhu—forty or so years later—could have come up with a contrary criticism that is also valid.

To build up an army from scratch is not easy. However, Mallam Bakatsine had the advice and assistance of Magajin Jobe (the leader of the Jobawa clan); that is, he had the support of his entire clan. He also had the assistance of the leading Fulani clans of eastern Kano, as Muhammad b. Salih tells us:

The *Jama'a* held consultation on what they (Magajin Jobe and Kawaje) have said and they reached a consensus that he should enter Wudil. All the clans of the East that accepted the Shaikh assembled at his presence. They included Jalube with Salihi Ibn Muhammad the '*Alim* known as Duttiwa as their leader and they have become known today as Gyanawa. And the Yaligawa a Borno tribe led by Salihi who was appointed as the Head of Dutse Gadawur after its liberation, there were also other clans that accepted the Shaikh. They camped at Wudil for nine months.²⁸

It thus took nine months to gather together the various clans and to weld together an effective army, and this would not have been possible earlier when Alwali had been resident with his court and supporters at Takai. Even though it took this long to prepare, he began to have significant successes before the jihadists in western Kano. Muhammad b. Salih specifically stated that at a time of depression after suffering losses:

²⁷Kurawa (1989a), 6, where he says that it would have been under the principle of *Taqiyya*, or prudent consciousness.

²⁸Kurawa (1989b), 34.

The situation was very difficult for the *Jama'a* and their condition became pathetic due to hunger and other difficulties and they were greatly shaken. A council meeting was summoned, some of them were of the opinion that they should advance and join 'Alim Bakatsine who was in Gaya; he had earlier sent them a message informing them of his entry into the city.²⁹

They decided, however, that this would be too difficult, and fortunately for them, soon after they won the decisive battle of Dan Yaya.

IV

It is common to disparage the achievements of others, and this leads many to assume that anything that has been achieved was done easily. And so it was with the *jihad* in eastern Kano. A. Mahadi has written that "many towns and villages surrendered to him [Mallam Bakatsine] without serious resistance."³⁰ This conclusion is supported by the jihadists themselves (later), who wished to show that god was on their side and any resistance was useless. The standard traditions in Dutse Gadawur, for instance, all stress that the submission of the Hausa ruler of Dutse was completely peaceful and that he simply chose to retire to a nearby hillock, Jigawa Sarki. This simply was not the case. The war was long and hard, and Dutse was not to be spared from the violence. Indeed, contrary to the popular tradition, Dutse was central to the military problem. Muhammad b. Salih informs us that "[w]hen the Tyrant Alwali heard of the gathering of these clans he raised a military contingent under the command of the Head of Dutse Gajabu who marched and fought with the *Jama'a*."³¹

Because Alwali was off fighting other jihadists in the west and north of Kano, the struggle in the east was between the chief of Dutse (Sarkin Dutse Gojabu) and the jihadists under Mallam Bakatsine, who was assisted by the Dutse Fulani clans the Jalube under Duttiwa and the Yaligawa under Salihu. Dutse was a well-fortified mountain top citadel (with a fresh water supply, a spring, at the summit) and was the stronghold of the jihadists' main opponent, Sarkin Dutse Gojabu. The strategy was one of encirclement. According to Muhammad b. Salih, the jihadists under Mallam Bakatsine, when they had finished their nine months' preparation, then marched on Gaya, and fighting there continued even inside the city walls.

²⁹Ibid., 32.

³⁰Mahadi (1982), 366.

³¹Kurawa (1989b), 34.

They stayed there a month recuperating and building up their strength until they moved northeasterly to Aujara, where fighting also took place inside the town. Proceeding further, they seem to have had less success at Taura. From there they turned southeasterly, apparently avoiding Dutse Gadawur, and went to Kiyawa, and then to Katanga and Wamda, thus encircling Dutse itself. For Mallam Bakatsine the moment of joy must have been when the jihadists took Alwali's eastern capital, Takai. The inhabitants, knowing that they were seen by everyone as the real loyalists of Alwali, fled from the approaching army and deserted the town. This loss must have sorely disturbed Alwali, for Muhammad b. Salih reported that "... the news of the liberation of Takai reached the Tyrant while he was in his capital city and he decided to move to Rano."³²

The joy over the fall of Takai might have diminished for Mallam Bakatsine the importance of the fall of Dutse Gadawur, but that too seems to have involved a major struggle. An elderly man, born about 1850, was interviewed in Dutse in 1911, and it was reported that

[t]he town originally founded by the Habe was surrendered to one Salu, a Filani from Bornu who came with a force of some two thousand men and horses after a victorious struggle by way of Kadawa. After installing himself as King he proceeded to subdue the surrounding countryside amongst other towns Kasakole, Gegeta and Bernin Kudu.³³

There must have been fighting elsewhere as well. Temple reported that the fighting went as far east as Shira (now in Katagum Emirate), and there is no reason to doubt this. Fremantle reported in 1910 that "[t]he Shehu had assigned the conquest of Shira to Dabo (afterwards Sarkin Kano), Mallam Bakatsina Ubangidda, and Mallam Zara."³⁴ There is still much that we have to investigate about the eastern *jihad* in Kano, but it does seem clear that Mallam Bakatsine was in the forefront of the *jihad*, and that he was not slow to action, not an opportunist or hypocrite, and that the struggle was not an easy one.

³²Ibid., 35.

³³NAK SNP 7 2715/1911, Assessment Report, Dutse District, Kano Province, 1911-12, by Mr. F.W. Bell. The man interviewed was described in this way: "Sherbu Ahmadu son of Sulimano (Alkali) who was born at Dutse some sixty years ago and who has lived there all his life."

³⁴Fremantle (1911), 310.

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