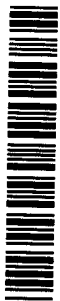


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and MONROVIA, LIBERIA. Bamako is also an important trade center for the gold mined in the west and the KOLA nuts and rice crops of the south and east. It is Mali's primary shipping port for its major exports—cotton, peanuts, livestock, and fish—and it is the country's main financial and administrative center. The economy of Bamako includes manufacturing plants that produce motor vehicles, textiles, and pharmaceuticals.

In recent years the city's prosperity has attracted many migrants from rural areas. As a result, the city has been expanding to accommodate the influx and has recently absorbed some of the small villages on the right bank of the Niger River. Despite the influences of colonialism, Bamako has retained much of its precolonial structure. It is distinct among West African capitals for the mud-brick architecture of its residential areas. In 2004, Bamako had a population of approximately 1,349,000.

See also Colonial Rule; Explorers in Africa Since 1800; Gold Trade.

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Elizabeth Heath

Bamba, Ahmadou

ca. 1851–1927

Senegalese Muslim scholar.

In his lifetime Ahmadou Bamba acquired a following of disciples who would become known after his death as the Muridiyya, a Muslim Sufi way. SUFISM is an esoteric dimension of Muslim practice and thought in which disciples seek the path to divine union in this life. The Senegalese historian Cheikh Anta Babou suggests that at the time of Bamba's death in 1927, estimates of Murid disciples totaled about 100,000.

The Murid path is founded on the teachings of Bamba, who is said to have produced over seven tons of scholarship, which is now housed in the Murid library in Tuba, SENEGAL. During his lifetime Bamba demonstrated qualities of *waliyat* (saintliness) and developed considerable spiritual authority. Bamba was a student of the Qur'anic sciences, which he studied with his maternal uncles. Local *qadis* (Qur'anic scholars) recognized that he was a master scholar. Bamba's biography, *Les Bienfaits de l'éternel*, written in Arabic by Serigne Bachir Mbacke and translated into French by Khadim Mbacke, supports his status as a *wali* (saint) by drawing out his genealogical ties, establishing his inheritance of the *wird* (litanies) and sufficient *baraka* (spiritual grace) as can be read from the miraculous episodes he experienced during his exile from Senegal imposed by French colonial authorities.

Initially, Bamba was sent to GABON for seven years, from 1895 to 1902. Later, Bamba was exiled for four years in Mauritania from 1903 to 1907, where he became widely recognized

among the Qadiriyya as a master scholar. Cheikh Sidya, a Mauritanian linked to the Kunta of Timbuktu, initiated Bamba into the Qadiriyya way. On his return to Senegal, Bamba was kept under house arrest in an isolated area of Jolof from 1907 to 1912. Bamba's exile led to the strengthening of his authority, as his exile is believed to be a reenactment of the *hijra*—the flight of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in 622 (year 1 in the Muslim calendar).

In Muslim societies across Sudanic Africa, scholars survived on the alms of the community. In addition to alms, which were usually made in cash or kind, shaykhs of the Tijani and Kadiri orders in Senegal also accepted agricultural labor in exchange for lessons in the Qur'an. Bamba not only accepted labor in exchange for Qur'anic lessons, he promulgated a practical form of Sufism in which the masses could participate. On agricultural communes organized by Murid shaykhs, disciples cultivated peanuts and in exchange shaykhs offered guardianship of their salvation. Although Sufism posits that salvation is achieved through asceticism, usually in the form of prayer, Bamba suggested a soteriology, a doctrine of salvation, whereby labor in a calling—as a form of ascetic practice equal to prayer—would lead to salvation. Bamba's early communes, in the rural hinterland on the Ferlo fringe of the WOLOF kingdom of Kayor, were organized into those who would be scholars and those who would be laborers, each meeting the needs of the other. The emphasis on work as it relates to salvation is unique to the Murid way.

See also Colonial Rule.

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Beth Ann Buggenhagen

Bambara

African ethnolinguistic group.

The million or so Bambara (sometimes called Bamana), who speak languages of the MANDE group, live primarily in MALI along the NIGER RIVER. They are descendants of the people of the ancient Mali empire, who founded the kingdoms of Segu