

Rebuttal. An event which is publicly known and acknowledged, however, not by Prof George Kanyeihamba, was the fall of Kampala to Kikosi Maalum and TPDF on April 11, 1979; Oyite-Ojok never in any way obstructed the British "stooge", Prof K Lule from taking over, writes Andrew Omara.

Prof George W. Kanyeihamba in his article published by *Sunday Monitor* of January 17 titled "I support candidate Julius Odwee for Dokolo LC5 Chair," grossly misrepresented Maj Gen David Oyite-Ojok by alleging that he "refused to acknowledge or salute the late Yusuf Lule as the president of Uganda, because Oyite-Ojok had sworn that in his lifetime, he would only know and respect Milton Obote as the only president Uganda had and would ever have. He lived and died by the oath sworn to serve the nation of Uganda."

In any case, Oyite-Ojok left behind a very rich legacy, which any career army officer would aspire to emulate. He was above the cheap intellectual and malicious talk.

Two key events are important for Prof Kanyeihamba to revisit; when Prof Yusuf Lule was imposed on Ugandans as their president in Moshi, Tanzania, there was an air of tension surrounding the main fighting group Kikosi Maalum within Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA), that they would reject Lule as their new leader, because he was purely a British "stooge".

The fall-back position was worked on which was none too pleasant; meet the Kikosi Maalum commanders and put the question to them and in the event that they rejected Lule, court martial them and put them in front of a firing squad. Oyite-Ojok handled that difficult situation very well, he had always believed in civilian authority.

"Later in the second-half of 1979, I learnt from a Tanzania colonel of a most chilling curious event which, had it occurred, all the officers of the Kikosi Maalum would have been wiped out, killed. The colonel told me in my residence in Dar-es-Salaam that after the Moshi Conference, a message was sent to the TPDF [Tanzania People's Defence Force] in Masaka.

The message was to assemble the Kikosi Maalum officers and ask them whether they accepted Lule and the UNLF or not and that should they refuse to accept Lule and the UNLF, they were all to be shot. I could not believe what the colonel was telling me.

David Oyite-Ojok, who was at the

Oyite-Ojok left rich legacy many would want to emulate



The late Maj Gen David Oyite-Ojok. FILE PHOTOS

meeting, said the assembly was held and the acceptance of Lule and the UNLF was put to the Kikosi Maalum officers. David explained that he, as acting head of Kikosi Maalum in the absence of Tito Okello in Dar-es-Salaam, gave the tactical answer that they accepted Lule and the UNLF, hoping that political matters would be sorted out between the UPC president and president Nyerere [of Tanzania]." Source: *The UPC Role in the Removal of Amin; Paper by A. Milton Obote.*

The second event, which is publicly known and acknowledged, however, not by Prof Kanyeihamba, was the fall of Kampala to Kikosi Maalum and TPDF on April 11, 1979; Oyite-Ojok never in any way obstructed the British "stooge", Prof K Lule from taking over.

"I was the first to receive in the forenoon on April 11, 1979, the news of the fall of Amin. No member of the Uganda National Liberation Front could have been the first or even among the first 100 people to receive the news. They could not because they were never involved and were not in the war against Amin and were also, as their record in office showed, not a political force. Their party, the UNLF, and their administration both became realities because the British Labour government pressurised Tanzania to ensure that the Uganda successor administration to Amin was not led by the UPC and was to be very much against the UPC.

"So Prof Kanyeihamba, may even need to reflect on the message of great hope and solidarity that was delivered by Oyite-Ojok on April 11, 1979, it clearly shows that he respected fully UNLF and UNLA."

COMMENT

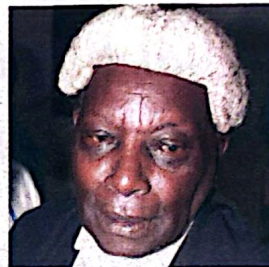


Former president Milton Obote.

No member of the UNLF administration and not even [Yoweri] Museveni who entered Uganda during the war on the coat tails of the Tanzania army had participated in the raising of the Kikosi Maalum, the Uganda militia who together with the Tanzanian army was fighting a war against Amin.

On April 11, 1979, when Kampala fell to the Kikosi Maalum and TPDF, Museveni was in Fort Portal staying with Princess Elizabeth Bagaya in the Omukama's Palace which the TPDF who had captured the town never damaged it at all. On that same day, the president of the UNLF and all his ministers who attended the conference at which the UNLF was formed except Museveni, like me, were in Dar-es-Salaam.

Before dawn on April 11 when the invading armies (TPDF and Kikosi Maalum) were around King's College Budo, the Tanzanian officers who were in overall command of the two



Prof George Kanyeihamba.

armies asked Kikosi Maalum to enter Kampala first. The ground given was that the Ugandans in the Kikosi Maalum knew the nooks of Kampala better than the Tanzanian officers.

When Kampala fell to the Kikosi Maalum, what the officers of that army wanted uppermost was a telephone to ring Dar-es-Salaam and report the fact to their political leader, the UPC president. Since the telephone lines to countries outside Uganda were down, the officers of the Kikosi Maalum worked hard to find someone who could open or reactivate telephone lines to countries outside Uganda. The officers found engineer Chris Opio who willingly and readily went with the officers to the Telephone House in a situation where pockets of Amin's army were firing various types of weapons randomly at moving vehicles.

At the Telephone House, Opio reactivated the line to Dar-es-Salaam and the late Maj Gen David Oyite-Ojok, who knew my number, placed a call to me. The news which David gave me was most exhilarating. The struggle the UPC had waged from January 25, 1971, came to an end that day when

Amin's dictatorship fell.

The first thing I did was to ring president Julius Nyerere and reported that I had heard from David who rang from Kampala which had fallen that morning. The president came to my residence immediately and we celebrated the fall of Amin. That day, we had a double celebration at the residence because Ms Oyite-Ojok delivered a baby boy in the afternoon." Source: *The UPC Role in the Removal of Amin, Paper by A. Milton Obote*

So Prof Kanyeihamba, may even need to reflect on the message of great hope and solidarity that was delivered by Oyite-Ojok on April 11, 1979. It clearly shows that he respected fully UNLF and UNLA as well as the people of Uganda despite the fact that Lule was a pure British stooge par excellence.

"The late David Oyite-Ojok announced soon after midday, on April 11, 1979, on Radio Uganda the fall of Kampala. I must disclose, for the first time that he rang me before the broadcast to ask for what to say. Telephones from Uganda and to Uganda had been cut. David went to a patriotic Ugandan engineer and put him on the job, at dawn on that day, to open the lines. The engineer and David assembled the technicians as the battle for Kampala raged and bullets and mortar bombs whizzed over them and their paths to the radio station. I was naturally elated to hear his voice and to know that he was alive and in Kampala.

My first question to him was whether he had phoned president Nyerere. When he answered "NO", I told him to ring the president before making any pronouncement on the radio and he did. David asked me what to say. I dictated a short message which he told me he was writing on the back of an envelope.

The message, as no one can deny, was a nationalist and a uniting message and was delivered in the name of the UNLF 42. That evening Lule made a broadcast from Radio Tanzania which was also connected to Radio Uganda. Lule announced his cabinet and promoted and appointed military officers that included Oyite-Ojok as chief of staff of the (Moshi) Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA)." Source: *Notes on Concealment of Genocide in Uganda by Dr A. M. Obote*

This is a passionate appeal to academics, journalists and politicians to be more responsible in whatever they write and say, because they shape society. Prof Kanyeihamba, who was even part of UNLF/UNLA governments, is expected to perform much better than this.

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