

A.D. Lubowa: Independence icon, journalist leaves powerful legacy

By Stephen Ssenkaaba

Aloysius Darlington Lubowa: veteran journalist, first speaker of the re-constituted Buganda Lukiiko in 1993 and one of the key figures in Uganda's negotiation for independence – has died after a long illness. He was 90.

Lubowa had been transferred from his home in Maya on Masaka Road to Mbalwa in Wakiso district where he breathed his last in the early hours of Friday. Despite his failing sight, he had been in relatively good health for his old age, until a few years ago when he stumbled and fell on the steps of his daughter's house in Mbalwa. He sustained a back injury and was treated at Nsambya Hospital in Kampala. He was relegated to the wheelchair for some time.

The last couple of years, however, saw him slowly return to his feet, often going around with a walking stick.

Our last interview with Lubowa was in September this year at his home. In an intimate conversation that lasted three hours, he took us through his life experiences.

From Bukalasa Seminary in Masaka district, to Bulange, Mengo where he served as a servant to Buganda royalty and all Baganda people, Lubowa exhibited an intense presence of mind. He remembered events with microscopic detail, his eloquence, only slightly affected by a weakening and shaky voice. In his concluding remarks, Lubowa, who for the most part had been narrating the complexities of the negotiations for Uganda's independence and the resulting intrigue and bad blood between Prime Minister Milton Obote and Mengo, leading to the 1966 crisis, perhaps tellingly said: "Since 1966, Uganda's politics has been chaotic. Looking back at all these problems, however, I wonder why we fight and quarrel and stab each other in the back. Ugandans should always seek a peaceful solution to problems, based on dialogue. At the end of the day, we shall all leave this earth. We should strive to leave our country a better place."

He has left a great legacy and little doubt that he played his role in making Uganda and Buganda a better place.

The Catechist's son

Lubowa was born on June 8, 1927 to Leontio and Lucia Ntaate of Bikira in Buddu – the fourth of 13 children. His father was a local catechist in Bikira parish, Masaka diocese. He also served as a sacristan in the church – helping the priests to prepare for mass and other church-related activities. He served the church for 62 years. His mother was a housewife.

"My father was passionate about the Roman Catholic religion. Seeing him serve in the church as children, therefore, had a great impact on us," Lubowa said in September. Indeed, when he became of age, he joined Bukalasa Minor Seminary in Masaka.

In Bukalasa, he met other



A.D. Lubowa, Amos Sempa, Leonard Basudde were ministers in Buganda government in the 1950's-1960's. The photo was taken on May 1, 1962

young men, such as the late Msgr. Joseph Ssebayingga, whose knack for Latin chants impressed him very much. Even though he did not proceed to the major seminary as he had hoped, Catholic priestly formation made a big impact on his life.

"The years that I spent in the seminary have guided my entire life. Everything that I experienced and learnt while there has been the foundation upon which I have lived," he told us in an interview.

Two of his brothers – Protazio Kintu and Thomas Mawanda attended Bukalasa Seminary and one of his sisters – Jane Francis Nalubowa – became a religious sister.

Journalism

Upon leaving the seminary, Lubowa attended Bikira Teacher Training College in Rakai district. He later joined the journalism profession, first working as an editor

for *Matalisi* newspaper and later joining hands with Miti Kabazzi to start *Uganda Eyogera* newspaper.

One of his most memorable moments as a journalist was covering the coronation of Queen Elizabeth at Westminster Abbey, London on June 02, 1953. It was a colourful moment that he talked about well until his old age. "It was his first visit to Britain and he made vivid recounts of the visit," Lubowa's younger brother, Protazio Kintu, says, adding that the story he wrote about the coronation was among the best journalistic coverages of the event in Africa.

However, it is the contribution of his own *Uganda Eyogera* newspaper towards the return of Sir Edward Mutesa II from exile in England that he was most proud of.

"As a newspaper, we worked very hard to provide updates and rallying the population to agitate for Mutesa's return," Lubowa said.

This, they did to the chagrin of the colonial government. Mutesa returned from exile in 1955.

Lubowa's newspaper also worked

hard in agitating for Uganda's Independence, Drake Ssekeba, a long serving journalist reveals.

"Lubowa was a prolific writer, whose work helped to inform the public at that time of the need for independence. In fact, *Uganda Eyogera* was an influential voice in the famous Uganda National Movement and Trade Boycott of 1959 and 1960s, he says.

Lubowa joined politics in 1956, contesting and winning a place as a member of Kyaddondo County in the Lukiiko. He served in this position for 10 years. In 1961, he was part of the delegates that represented Buganda at the 1961 Constitutional Conference at Lancaster House in London. He became local government minister in 1962 and was part of the team that participated in the Uganda Independence conference at Marlborough House in London. The team was led by Katikiro Michael Kintu, and included Leonard Basudde (minister of Justice), Abu Mayanja, (minister of education), Nelson Ssebbugwaawo (minister of the treasury) and Dr E.B.S Lumu, among others.

Lubowa's account of what happened at these conferences is rich. What stands out prominently, however, is his commitment to the cause of Buganda. "Our main agenda at this conference was to advocate a federal government for Buganda. This was a key issue for us as the delegates. The other issues to be discussed, included the powers of the Lukiiko, as well as the Kabaka's power. The delegates from other regions also had their own agendas," he said.

He also expressed disappointment for the political manoeuvrings of Apollo Milton Obote.

"Independence Day was joyous. There had been a lot of excitement and expectations. People were filled with expectations for the future. We thought we would be better off in many respects. The celebrations in Kololo were colourful. However, I got a strange feeling seeing the Queen's representative handing over the instruments of power to Obote. It hit me hard. I said oh, it is now Obote in charge. Mutesa too felt a jolt... We said well, we have nothing to do," he said.

When traditional kingdoms were restored, he worked as the first speaker of Buganda Lukiiko, following the Coronation of Kabaka Mutebi in 1993.

Until his death, A.D. Lubowa has been serving in different advisory capacities in Mengo, always providing wise counsel and guidance whenever needed.

Paying tribute to him, the Katikiro of Buganda, Charles Peter Mayiga, speaks fondly of a man who gave his heart to his country and to Buganda.

"I got to know A.D. Lubowa soon after the coronation when he was named the first Speaker of the re-constituted Buganda Lukiiko in 1993. Having served as minister in the Kabaka's government just before the 1966/67 crisis, and having attended the Lancaster House conference that negotiated the terms of Uganda's independence, he filled the office with knowledge and experience. He significantly contributed to the re-enactment of Lukiiko procedure and regularly advised the Katikiro on the running of the kingdom affairs," Mayiga said.

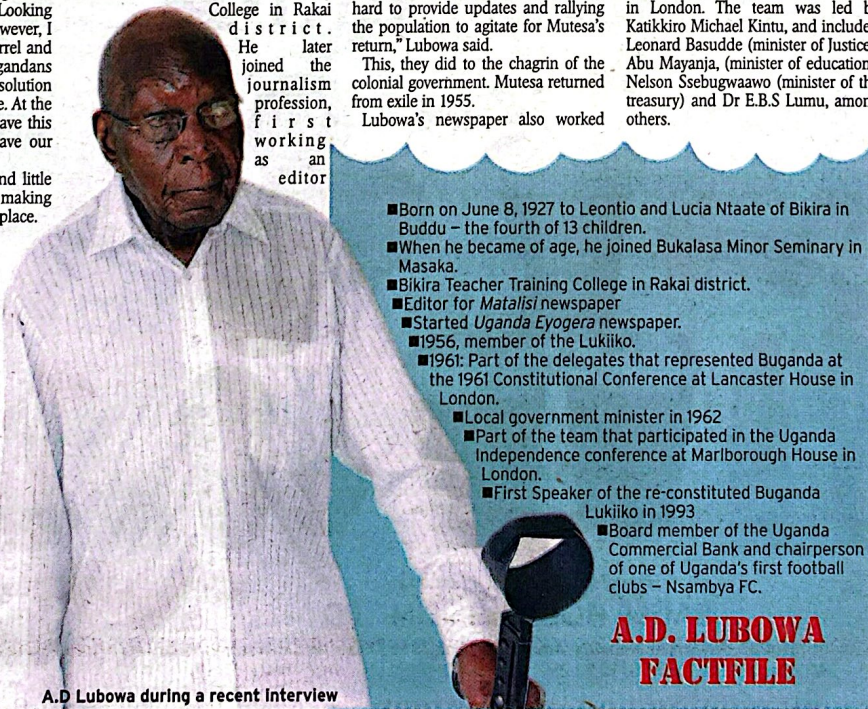
Away from his politics, A.D. Lubowa served his church with diligence. For a long time, he was a member of Christ-The King church (10:00am) choir along with the late Valerian Mayega.

He also served as board member of the Uganda Commercial Bank and chairperson of one of Uganda's first football clubs – Nsambya FC.

Kintu describes his brother as a loving, humble man who engaged people and never thought very highly of himself, despite his prominent roles in the country and Buganda.

"Even though he was much older than I was, he took me under his wings, helped me to find work and guided me well. I saw him welcome people of all walks of life. That is the kind of man that Lubowa was," says Kintu.

Lubowa lived a distinguished and long life with his wife Bernadette Nassuna Lubowa (who died in 1999) and their eight children. His service and dedication will forever shine through the years.



A.D. Lubowa during a recent interview

- Born on June 8, 1927 to Leontio and Lucia Ntaate of Bikira in Buddu – the fourth of 13 children.
- When he became of age, he joined Bukalasa Minor Seminary in Masaka.
- Bikira Teacher Training College in Rakai district.
- Editor for *Matalisi* newspaper.
- Started *Uganda Eyogera* newspaper.
- 1956, member of the Lukiiko.
- 1961: Part of the delegates that represented Buganda at the 1961 Constitutional Conference at Lancaster House in London.
- Local government minister in 1962
- Part of the team that participated in the Uganda Independence conference at Marlborough House in London.
- First Speaker of the re-constituted Buganda Lukiiko in 1993
- Board member of the Uganda Commercial Bank and chairperson of one of Uganda's first football clubs – Nsambya FC.

**A.D. LUBOWA
FACTFILE**