

Let's not demonise Obugabe

It is very unfortunate to see posts by some people demonising the era of the Bagabe. It is very easy to tell that their arguments are not balanced. These publications are normally one-sided with the writers using very convincing and polished language to taint the era of these kings. False stories have been fabricated to achieve the objective of demonising the era when Bagabe ruled Ankole. This tactic is not new as it has been used elsewhere to incite communities that have in harmony for ages against each other.

None of the writers is honest enough to highlight some of the good things or achievements registered during Bagabe reign. For those who care to read about our history, you will find out that a lot of achievements were made during this era. I will just highlight a few using Ankole as reference.

First in Ankole even before the arrival of the British, the society was well structured with the Omugabe as the leader, the Bahima as the pastoralists and the Bairu as the cultivators. Cattle-keeping was not a preserve of the Bahima, though it was their area of specialisation just like the Bairu specialised in cultivation. There was a standing army that mainly comprised of Banyakahi and



other willing and able bodied people. Different clans performed different roles like iron smelting, etc. Everything was organised. Secondly, the people of Ankole co-existed in harmony in complementary way - often bartering commodities among themselves. Therefore, this Bairu-Bahima incitements are recent development propagated by people with selfish interest. Bairu-Bahima competition is healthy because it inspired many Bairu to aspire to achieve equal social status as the Bahima, who were fortunate to have attained higher social status. But when it is taken to the level of threatening to incite hatred like some writers are doing, then it becomes an issue.

Thirdly, the 600 years of Obugabe

rule in Ankole and southwestern Uganda was a period characterised by rich culture. Cultural practices were taken very seriously and were an integral part of society. Today, the Banyankole are steadily losing their culture. It is true that some practices were oppressive, but we need to look at this in context. Sometimes people were handled with an iron hand, but as Gen David Sejusa once said during his eulogy of Prince Barigye, these were times of formation and the circumstances demanded such approach.

Gen Sejusa fought in the bush war so he knows how soldiers were handled on times of war. In war, negotiations are not tolerated and subversive behaviour is often handled with iron hand. Gen Tinyefuza himself had to face the tough hand of the high command when he tried to challenge its decisions.

During the reign of the Bagabe, our societies were transforming from backward societies into more organised one and so dissent was never tolerated. It is this tough-handedness that is being capitalised upon to demonise the regime. As much as the issue of Bbugabe is contentious, let us not distort history.

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DRUG SHORTAGES

On the story, 'How Uganda can fix the problem of drug shortages', Henry Baisi says: "I have looked at the Uganda market and yes, we have a growing population, but in money terms the market for medicines is peanuts. The same is true for the entire East African region. What drives markets in terms of value is the amount of money governments and individuals spend on medicine. In Western Europe for example, governments spend heavily on medicines. In Western Europe for example, governments spend heavily on medicines. Individuals do not have their own money to buy medicine."

