

SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT, DR. A. MILTON OBOTE,
ON YOUTH DAY, 3RD JUNE 1984 AT APAC

My fellow citizens,

It was the late Chief of Staff, Major-General David Oyite Ojok who, in June last year, first expressed the desire for this year's Youth Day celebrations to be in Apac. Soon thereafter, in his well-known energetic character, he began, virtually on his own, to make preparations for today's celebrations.

Not far from these grounds where we are now assembled you must have seen new buildings coming up. The buildings are being put up through self-help efforts by the people of Apac District. No Government funds have been used for the erection of those buildings.

The complex is to consist of a big assembly hall, for the youth. There will also be thirty-three houses to accommodate delegations from each of the Districts. Furthermore, there will be in the complex what the late Major-General called "Staté House" with its annexes.

He had also started, not far from here, a Youth Farm which was to be the centrepiece of today's celebrations. The representatives of the youth from all over Uganda, according to the late Major-General's plan, were to spend part of their time during these celebrations in that farm.

That, briefly, my fellow citizens, is the image of a man who understood the importance of the role of the youth in society. He was, for example, the Patron of an organisation of the youth whose members earn a living in Kampala by shining shoes. Major-General David Oyite-Ojok was also closely associated with another organisation of young cyclists. He was furthermore the moving spirit and advisor to the Self-Employed Youth Co-operative Societies.

The leaders of the Africa Foundation who look after the youth who were made destitute before Liberation, know of the involvement of the late Major-General and the assistance he was able to give readily to the Africa Society for the purposes of making the youth self-reliant.

The late Major-General Oyite Ojok was also the Chairman of the Coffee Marketing Board (CMB).

I would want on this occasion to repeat once more what I have said before regarding the importance of coffee in our endeavour to recovery. The youth of today are too young to know that ten or twelve years ago, Uganda economy depended on several commodities which we were able to sell in the world Market and thereby earn foreign exchange.

I have said before and because today is Youth Day, let me repeat again the ~~six~~ major sources of foreign earnings Uganda had before the coup of 1971. I have said before that it should not have been and cannot be difficult for any teacher to pass to the pupils and the students those sectors and sources of foreign exchange. The six commodities could be divided into three whose names started with 'C' and three whose names started with 'T'. The three 'Cs' were coffee, cotton and copper.

When we came to government, coffee was not being exported and cotton was not being produced in a big way and, therefore, not being exported to earn us appreciable foreign exchange.

As regards the three 'Ts' - tobacco, tourism and tea were not gaining any foreign exchange.

Now, imagine yourselves having six children and five have died and the sixth is sick; what do you do?

The Government of Uganda in 1981 did everything possible to see that the 6th child did not die, and we appointed the late Major-General David Oyite Ojok to make sure that, that child should not die. Let no-one see what is happening today and deceive us that the improvement of today existed in 1979 or 1980.

There is an International Organisation which tells Uganda not to sell all the coffee we produce. We had a ~~problem~~ and a very big problem in 1980 and 1981. We were earning very little in terms of foreign exchange. I want to assure the people of Uganda that if it was just a mere question of printing shillings and distributing them to all of you, I would have been the first person to print and distribute them to everyone in millions.

I want you to imagine a situation where you sit home everyday. You sit and do nothing and the Government prints money and distributes notes in the villages to everybody freely. Imagine that situation. The money will be delivered in sacks to you. Then there will come a time when you will want to eat; there will be no food, there will be no salt, no sugar, no clothing, there will be no transport and no buses moving from one area to another.

Do not tell me that those things will be available because everyone of you, everyone in Uganda would be having sacks and sacks of money and that it will make buses and fuel available.

Who makes a bus here? Where is the oil field here? Those people who manufacture buses do not want Uganda shillings. It is impossible to carry Uganda shillings in sacks, in millions and deliver them to London and say, here we want buses. They want their own money and their own money is not called a shilling, it is called a pound. You go to Germany, they have got their own money called the Deutsche Mark. You go to Japan, they have their own money called the Yen. You go to America, they have their own money called a dollar. If you go with your shilling, they will tell you: Are you a fool? We do not want your Uganda money, do not bring it here - take it to Apac!

But we want buses, we want tractors, we want fuel and we want a lot of things which we do not make. How do we get those things? There is a way to get it. We sell to them what they want and they sell to us what we want. If they want to buy our cotton and if we produce cotton, they pay us in their own money. If we sell ^{it} to London, we get

British pounds. If we sell it to North America, we get American dollars. If we sell it to Germany, we get Deutsche Marks. That is called foreign exchange.

In 1980 and 1981 Uganda earned foreign exchange mainly out of the sales of coffee. We had also a big problem, as I have told you, of coffee transportation to Mombasa. We had to appoint somebody who was energetic, someone who was patriotic, someone who understood that unless coffee got to Mombasa, shipped and taken to markets abroad, the people of Uganda were going to be in serious problems.

The government looked everywhere and decided that the best person to do that job for the good of all the people of Uganda was the late Major-General Oyite Ojok as Chairman of Coffee Marketing Board (C.M.B.). He did that work so well that Uganda was able to meet her quota given by the International Coffee Organisation (ICO). He was not doing all that for his own pocket. Detractors may say that the late Major-General was appointed to be the Chairman of Coffee Marketing Board so that he could get money from underneath the table and enrich some people in the government or UPC or to enrich himself. That, I beg you not to accept. That is a stupid allegation.

There are people who pretend that they should be rulers of Uganda on one ground only - that they have been to school. But look at their own arithmetics. They cannot get two plus two, equalling four.

The International Coffee Organisation said Uganda should export so many bags of coffee as our quota. Every bag has its price whether it leaves from Entebbe or from Mombasa. Then how can I, President, or how could the late Chief of Staff pocket the money when the price is known?

Today we have got a new Chairman of the Coffee Marketing Board. I am waiting to hear from those who say that once you are a chairman of the C.M.B., you have got the opportunity to pocket some of that money. Let the same

detractors indicate how the new chairman of the CMB, who is not from Apac or part of Northern Uganda, is going to pocket the money.

Fellow citizens, we mark today's National Youth Day celebrations in the absence of a man who was very close in ideas and in action to the youth of Uganda.

David Oyite Ojok was born in Apac but he did not work for Apac. He worked for the whole of Uganda.

He is no longer with us, but his work for the youth must continue. His selfless sacrifices for freedom to be enjoyed by all the people of Uganda, irrespective of tribe or religion, must be taken up and carried forward by all Ugandans who believe in the freedom of every Ugandan individual.

Youth Day - the third of June - was not appointed arbitrarily by Government. The Day has a noble history behind it.

We all know that in October of 1978 the regime of tyranny which then ruled Uganda invaded Tanzania. As is normal anywhere in the world, the Tanzanian Government ordered the Tanzanian Army to repel the invaders. When the war reached the Uganda border, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) attempted to arrange for a cease-fire, to be followed by negotiations. The OAU attempt did not include condemnation of the aggressor, that is, the regime of tyranny. Without this element of condemnation of the aggressor, the OAU "peace mission" failed and the war continued.

It was at that time that the Government of Tanzania invited Ugandan exiles, then in Tanzania, to join in the war. The Ugandan exiles answered the call most willingly and with enthusiasm. At that point the war became, for all, the War of Liberation. It was the successful prosecution by the Tanzanian Forces and our own army, then known as the "Kikosi Maalum", which ushered in a new era for the people of Uganda.

The youth of Uganda should be in the vanguard in honouring the noble sacrifices made by all those Tanzanians and Ugandans who laid down their lives and gave all the people of Uganda the present platform of freedom.

When you read scurrilous articles in newspapers such as "Munansi" and others, you must always remember that without the sacrifices of the Kikosi Maalum, the men who direct the policies of those scurrilous news-sheets are abusing the freedom which they never had before Liberation and for which they contributed nothing.

The youth of Uganda should know that without the sacrifices of the Kikosi Maalum, the Moshi Conference of March 1979 could never have taken place.

The youth of Uganda should know that without the sacrifices of the Kikosi Maalum, Yusuf Lule would never have become President, albeit for sixty-eight days; nor would the "Gang of Four", consisting of Edward Rugumayo, Dan Nabudere, Omwony Ojok and Yash Tandon, have become powerful political voices soon after Liberation.

The youth of Uganda should know that without the sacrifices of the Kikosi Maalum, Godfrey Binaisa could not have become President of Uganda.

The youth of Uganda should know that without the sacrifices of Kikosi Maalum, party politics could not have been revived in 1980.

The youth of Uganda should know that without the sacrifices of the Kikosi Maalum, general elections could not have taken place in December, 1980.

I speak of the sacrifices of the Kikosi Maalum because it was the single most instrumental unit of fighting men which made the Government of Tanzania to order the Tanzanian Army not only to enter Uganda but also to fight an all-out war and remove the regime of tyranny then ruling Uganda.

The sacrifices of the Kikosi Maalum are, of course, bound together with the sacrifices of the Tanzanian Army and those of the entire Tanzanian nation.

The political leadership of the Kikosi Maalum was aware of the extent of destruction which the regime of tyranny had wrought upon the people of Uganda. That leadership desperately wanted the Moshi Conference to succeed. The Government of Tanzania also wanted the Moshi Conference to succeed. At the time of the Conference, in

March 1979, Tanzania made her position clear in regard to the governance of Uganda.

Tanzania did not want to appoint military Governors in Uganda. Tanzania did not want to favour any particular Ugandan political party or faction.

This was a noble decision on the part of Tanzania considering the fact that many of the Ugandans who descended upon Moshi from all corners of the earth, had insulted the Tanzanian leader over the years for giving me and other Ugandans asylum in Tanzania.

When the war broke out these same Ugandans who were living, apparently comfortably elsewhere in Africa, in Europe and in North America, attacked the Tanzanian leader allegedly for waging war on Uganda for the purposes of installing me personally as the President of Uganda. When these Ugandans were given the opportunity by Tanzania to organise the Moshi Conference, they took it that Tanzania was favouring them- that the Tanzanian Army was there to conquer a country so that they should rule and all the time stay protected by the Tanzanian Army.

It was therefore with this shallow and unpatriotic mind that in Moshi no delegation of the youth of Uganda was admitted to the Conference. Representatives of the Ugandan youth who turned up at Moshi included those who came from the University of Zambia, the University of Dar-es-Salaam and those who had fought, only two weeks earlier, in Tororo in 1979.

So fellow citizens, there is only one more thing I can say about the importance of today as to my party and to my government. I have read and I suppose many of you have read the Manifestos of all the political parties which contested the elections in December, 1980. Except for the UPC Manifesto, I have not seen in the other manifestos, and I think I know how to read, any promise and propositions that any of the other parties would work for a day to honour the youth.

You know that all political parties, not only here but in other countries, do not allow very young people to join the party. Uganda basically is a Christian country.

There is a famous saying in the Bible about young people said by Jesus Christ himself. He did say on one occasion that "Suffer the children to come unto me" - Allow the children to come unto me. The other parties are silent But UPC is saying please come, we will look after you. There is nothing more I can tell you now, you belong to us and we belong to you. Let us march forward together.

Next year being the International Year of the Youth, Uganda shall be in the forefront to project the young people of Uganda as a powerful force in the rehabilitation of our Nation.

I will be wasting your time and mine to tell you that we are going to do X,Y,Z. In your own organisations, work out your programmes. Let us have all those programmes and let us work on them together. Let us show to all the people of Uganda and to the world at large that the Youth Movement in Uganda is now alive, active and means to continue to be active and shall make the Pearl of Africa to Rise and Shine Again.

When we speak of the Pearl of Africa - Uganda - we are not just talking about lands, rivers, valleys and mountains. We are talking about the people of Uganda. I accept the youth of Uganda. My party accepts the youth of Uganda. My government considers that it is its primary responsibility to work, to make conditions good for all the youth of Uganda.

These are not mere words. Look at the past. Yesterday Idi Amin was here. We struggled and Uganda was liberated. On whose behalf? Not on behalf of our grand parents, not on behalf of our parents but because of you, the youth, because tomorrow is your day.

Your grand parents are in the evening of their lives. Your parents are in the afternoon of their lives; but you are just beginning life. Now imagine that there is a sun setting down. When the sun sets down, it is dark. When it is in the afternoon, it is about to go that way; but right there in the East, it is just beginning.

We as a government, we are working for those in the evening of their lives, we are working for those in the afternoon of their lives, but above all, we are working for those who are still in the East of their lives.

I want, therefore, to end by thanking all of you the youth of Uganda for coming to this National Day of the Youth.

I want to thank all of you who have participated in making this ground big enough for all of us.

I want to thank the Apac Community for the work they have done to receive so many guests from all over Uganda.

I want to extend a special message to all the drivers who have brought the youth to Apach. You drivers have got a very, very big responsibility. You will be driving back very precious pearls to various corners of Uganda. Drive safely. You have already a licence to drive. Do not drive to show that you really can drive.

Lastly, to all the youth I say this: the country was liberated through a war some five years ago. The struggle for liberation must continue. We need the unity of the people. Without unity your base is not there. If you are in Apach or any corner of the districts in Uganda, that district is not enough for your brainpower. Once we are all united for Uganda then at least the territory of Uganda is large enough for the brainpower, for the energy, for the vision of young people.

Then there are other enemies who you will not be able to see physically. The whole of Uganda needs your energy and needs your service to fight those enemies. There is the fight against ignorance, fight against disease and fight against poverty and you must continue for you are the soldiers. That is the challenge I leave to you this year.

I now want to give certificates to some of the people who fought physically some five years ago to drive out tyranny from this land.

I thank you all for listening to me.

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