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Obote: Second Liberation by Bijay Gupta; From Obote to Obote by Akena Adoko

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personalities and political actors in the course of her life until 1981. Other merit lies in the reorganization of facts contained in earlier works than in adding new ideas. In this book, one will get close understanding of the author.

On the other hand, in situations where one expects her to be playing a national role, she is tempted to attribute credit to Toro instead of Uganda. If the author's targeted audience was supposed to be Ugandan or African, the evidence suggests that that task may not have been accomplished. Instead the book seems to have been written for the English and perhaps broadly, the western audience. She must feel and believe that she is an African nationalist who is both a beneficiary and at the same time a victim of British colonialism and neo-colonialism. On the whole, this book serves as a useful guide to understanding the author and the workings of colonial and neo-colonial education. It is also useful for the general reader.

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Gupta, Vijay, *Obote: Second Liberation*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1983. pp. 196. Index, Cloth, (No price given).

Adoko, Akena, *From Obote to Obote*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1983. pp. 336. Cloth, (no price given).

Both books provide a forum for the study of instability in Uganda. Since its independence in October 1962, this East African nation has experienced several upheavals caused by armed groups seeking short cuts to power. Each time, at the end of the day, immense suffering and loss of economic resources have been recorded. At the center of the above post-independence state of affairs, has been the constitutionalist, Apollo Milton Obote, the first Prime Minister of independent Uganda, the first President of republican Uganda, and the first President to rule that country twice.

Dr. Gupta's *Obote: Second Liberation* is an eventful story of Obote's return to Uganda after a nine-year exile (1971-1980) in neighboring Tanzania. Containing seven chapters, the book sets of

with a brief introduction to Uganda's political history. The author then focuses on Obote's life and personality, and how they shaped his political ideology. Vividly described are his social and political activities before and after independence, and his struggles against his adversaries both before and after his first overthrow in January 1971. Of special interest is the author's analysis of how Obote mobilized the mass of the Ugandan people in fighting divisive nationalism, in fighting the Idi Amin dictatorship, and after his (Obote's) return to power, in combating rightist and ultra-leftist elements.

In his conclusion, the author discusses Obote's multi-pronged proposal for leading an oppressed people and a country beset by political trauma and social and economic upheavals. In his opinion, Obote's strength lay in his policy of mixed economy for the "development" of Uganda.

In writing this book, Dr. Gupta heavily relied on Obote's own speeches which he delivered on several occasions ever-since his return to the presidency in 1980. No doubt, Dr. Gupta's survey of Uganda's political history since independence fills an important gap, particularly the period leading up to the 'second coming' of Obote to the presidency. The author writes as an ardent admirer of Obote. Though not a definite biography of Obote the statesman, the author has presented a favorable picture of Obote, who has been unpopular in Western conservative circles. His unpopularity in imperialist circles is not hard to understand; he was one of the first post-colonial African leaders to try to establish a democratic socialist state. Obote also genuinely espoused non-alignment and pan-Africanism especially during his first administration.

During Obote's second administration, Dr. Gupta acknowledges that Obote pragmatically worked in tandem with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, and changed his position of favoring the single party state of his first administration, to one of multi-party democracy of his second administration. Despite the about-turns, Dr. Gupta contends that U.S.-led imperialism never wholly forgave Obote, and instead it introduced a new element of anti-Oboteism - the president's supposed lack of concern for human rights.

Dr. Gupta also observes that Obote was not only unpopular in the West; that indeed he had numerous detractors in Africa, too. The author notes that Obote's critics ranged from reactionary elements (some in Kenya) who were sympathetic to the Baganda traditionalists, to the diverse shades of revolutionaries (in and outside Uganda) who accused the President of 'selling out the left' by his decision during his second administration to cherish the free market forces rather than state controls to rebuild the Ugandan economy impoverished by the Amin regime and

the short-lived regimes of Yusuf Lule and Godfrey Binaisa.

On the whole, Dr. Gupta's analysis is commendable. However, the author's book has several shortcomings. For instance, acknowledging the contribution of certain individuals to his study, the author misleadingly presents some of them. He writes: "There are many friends and political workers in Uganda and in particular...Professor Dent Ocaya Lakidi, U.P.C. Headquarters,...Professor Kagenda Atwoki...". It must be noted, however, that both Ocaya Lakidi and Kagenda Atwoki are *not* professors. Ocaya Lakidi, M.A. (Manitoba) left Makerere University to become Deputy Mayor of Kampala City when he was a Senior Lecturer in Political Science. Kagenda-Atwoki, M.Sc. (McGill), joined the Uganda Peoples Congress (U.P.C.) secretariat when he was a lecturer in Geography at the University of Nairobi, Kenya. It is true that Uganda has some of the best western educated people in Africa. However, suffice it to note that after the demise of Amin in 1979, many Ugandan exiles returned to their country masquerading as Ph.Ds and professors. Their major purpose was to win political favor and top positions in the post-Amin governments.

In his introduction, Dr. Gupta's language becomes skimpy and rather arrogant. He resorts to emotional journalistic style in describing Amin and his government. For instance, he calls the Amin regime a "genocide regime of Amin", and he calls Amin "devil of Humanity" and refers to Amin's behavior as "His idiotic, whimsical and haphazard actions," (p.3). The author maintains this abusive language throughout the book when he refers to Amin or his behavior. He calls Amin a "clown of a circus" (p. 88). By using such derogatory and unscholarly language, the author plays into the hands of imperialist journalists, anthropologists and politicians who apply such terms to discredit the opponents in Africa. This is far from suggesting that this review condones Amin's excesses; rather, the contention here is that at that time, there were both internal and external forces that influenced even the government in Uganda, and they must be investigated thoroughly and objectively.

The author claims that Amin's 1972 expulsion of Asians from Uganda was a racist act. It is improper to infer so without concrete evidence. The decision by Amin to expel the Asians needs to be put in its historical context and thoroughly studied. The Asian question was a political hot potato which Obote himself grappled with before his overthrow.

In sketching Obote's biography in chapter two, the author seems to give the impression that the President graduated at Makerere University with a Bachelor of Arts degree: "At Makerere he took an arts degree" (p.11). This is rather misleading because for reasons that

remain unclear to the researcher, Obote did not complete his course at the University.

In his discussion of "Ethnic Harmony-Peace and Security", the title of chapter three of the book, the author contradicts himself on many occasions. For instance, he claims that "religion should not be mixed with politics" (p.47). Almost immediately, the author admits that "...independent religious groups have played a very important role in the political life of Uganda" (p. 47).

One would expect that the author who has been editor of the well-known journal, *Africa Quarterly*, and the author of *Kenya: Politics of Independence and India and Non-Alignment* - therefore a scholar with a long and close interest in political developments in East Africa - would have been more careful in correctly spelling the names of certain Ugandan individuals and places. Such spelling errors as "Kekyon", instead of Nekyon (p. 63); "Oboya", instead of Okoya (p. 94); "Kebedi", instead of Kibedi (p. 99); "Busibema", instead of Busitema (p. 139); "Bushini", instead of Bushenyi (p. 180); and many others, cannot be taken lightly. It does not only show the author's carelessness, it also indicates that perhaps the book was hurriedly produced, probably for political reasons.

Akena Adoko's *From Obote to Obote* is in many respects related to Dr. Gupta's *Obote: Second Liberation*. Akena Adoko, Obote's cousin is a social anthropologist and a lawyer. During Obote I, he was the head of the General Service Unit, (Uganda's 'FBI'). He was therefore at the nerve center of Obote's first presidency. He, however, played a peripheral role during Obote II. While in exile in Tanzania, Akena recorded Uganda's post-independence history in his favorite style-idiosyncratic blank verse. This unique style of writing political literature has its own merits; for many, it facilitates the grasping of the complexities and intricacies of the Uganda political arena. Below is a fair sample of the author's writing:

The story of Uganda
 After independence
 Is one of the most touching
 In the annals of Africa
 It is a story
 That inflames Passions.
 It is a story
 Of conflicts and battles
 Of monarchies swept away,
 Of experimentation in socialism,
 Of military tyranny,

Of terror and despair,
Of resistance against desperate odds,
Of two presidents elected overnight
By a handful of people
And each of them toppled
Before ruling for twelve months.

In sum, it can be observed that both books propound 'second liberation' thesis in contemporary Ugandan history. The central thesis is that, the act of 'freeing' Uganda from the Amin dictatorship 1979, was in itself the 'second liberation' of the country, the 'first' having been from British colonialism at the time of independence 1962. However, the so called "second liberation" theory propounded by the authors and by Obote himself is controversial. The 'freeing' Uganda from the Amin dictatorship was not an act of liberation; it was an armed war between the armies of two neighboring countries Uganda and Tanzania. The result of this war was the defeat of the Uganda army and the gross violation of Uganda's territorial integrity and independence - a violation of international law, which is beyond description in such a short review. Tanzania's interest in removing Amin from power lay in geopolitics rather than in humanitarianism. It had hardly anything to do with stopping the violation of human and property rights in Uganda. The war was a Tanzanian solution to remove the Amin regime - a regime which was perceived to be hostile to Tanzania, and to restore Obote (by then President Julius Nyerere's friend) to the Ugandan presidency.

Despite some technical problems especially in Dr. Gupta's piece, both books are valuable studies that add to the historiography of contemporary Uganda. They provide useful avenues for a more detailed research in the continuing "Uganda Crisis".

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