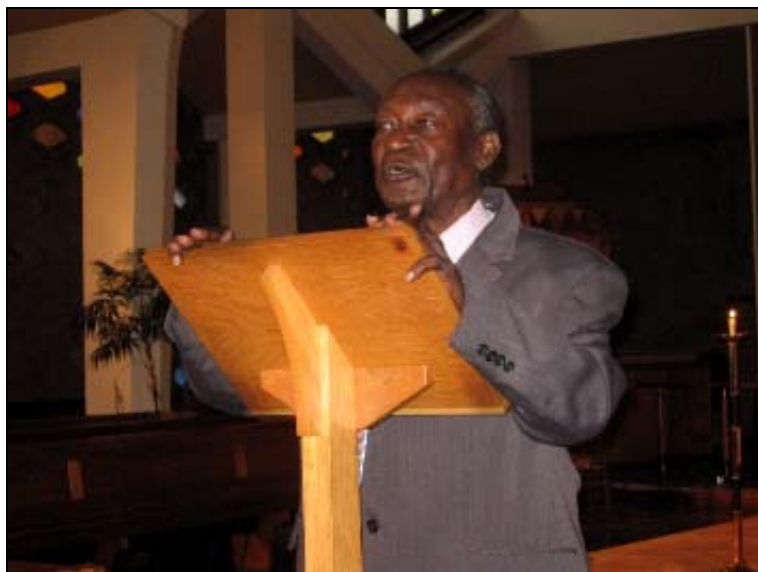


The Uganda Record

Akena Adoko is dead



Akena Adoko speaks during the memorial service in London, Dec. 9, 2007, of the late Major Bernard Olila. Photo by Robert Egwea.

The former director of Uganda's first intelligence agency, the General Service Unit, Naphlin Akena Adoko, is dead.

Akena Adoko died at the King George Hospital in London at 4:00a.m. (7:00a.m. Ugandan time) today, Friday Jan. 8, 2009. He had been ill for more than two years with cancer of the kidney.

Akena Adoko, a lawyer and cousin to the late President Milton Obote, became the head of the GSU in 1964 when it was created. He trained in intelligence gathering in Israel before assuming the task. He came to possess some of Uganda's most tightly-guarded secrets.

When in Dec. 1969 there was an attempted assassination of Obote at Lugogo in Kampala, the GSU in its investigations of the incident established that the Commanding Officer of the Second Infantry Brigade at Masaka, Brig. Perino Okoya, had tried to take advantage of the confusion and stage a military coup.

The GSU immediately created a unit within the organisation called the State Research Bureau, to gather intelligence on senior military and government officials to forestall a possible coup next time.

One of the first officers in this newly created State Research Bureau was a recent graduate from the University of Dar es Salaam called Yoweri Museveni.

It was the State Research Bureau of the General Service Unit that shot dead Brig. Okoya at his home just outside the northern town of Gulu on Jan. 25, 1970. The assassin, when he heard Okoya's wife Anne bathing in the courtyard of the house, mistook her for Okoya and shot her dead.

He later also shot Okoya dead after Okoya came to the scene to find out what was going on. Information available to the *Uganda Record* suggests that the man who shot Okoya and his wife dead himself died in 2007 or 2008.

Research by the *Uganda Record* in 2008 established another secret of Ugandan history --- the role of Akena Adoko in the 1971 military coup that brought Idi Amin to power.

Alarmed by Obote's move to leftist Socialist economic policies, the British government quietly contacted Akena Adoko, who had always felt a certain envy toward Obote, to become Uganda's new head of state in a coup the British planned to stage while President Obote was in Singapore to attend the first ever Commonwealth heads of state summit.

However, details of that coup accidentally leaked to a Uganda Army lieutenant, Isaac Maliyamungu, who passed the information on to Amin and a section of the army staged what was in essence a counter-coup, leading to Amin's rise to power in Jan. 25, 1971.

According to the *Uganda Argus* newspaper's edition of Dec. 7, 1971, Adoko had flown to Bombay (Mumbai), India for a meeting with Obote who had stopped over in India on his way to Singapore.

Obote then flew on to Singapore while Adoko flew to London.

The night before the coup found Adoko at the home of a Ugandan in London celebrating what they thought would be a coup that night that would topple Obote, little knowing that Amin had moved to stage a counter coup and by the following morning would be Uganda's new leader, not Akena Adoko.

Bitter about what had happened, Akena Adoko remained in exile.

On May 13, 1971, a Uganda government spokesman announced a reward of one million shillings to anybody who would bring back alive Milton Obote and 500,000shs each for Akena Adoko and the former Uganda Army adjutant-general, Lt. Col. David Oyite-Ojok. They were accused of working to sabotage Amin's regime.

On May 30, 1971, Amin said he had information that Akena Adoko, was in Bukoba, Tanzania, training guerrillas to fight Amin's regime.

On Thursday Oct.7, 1971, Adoko appeared on the BBC World Service's *Focus on Africa* radio programme during which he denounced the Amin government and claimed that thousands of Acholi and Langi soldiers had been massacred by the new Amin regime.

Akena Adoko and the minister of defence, Felix Onama, had accompanied Obote to the small and private wedding at Mbuya in Kampala on May 31, 1966 of the army commander Major-General Idi Amin to Mariam Kibedi.

After Amin's fall from power in 1979, Adoko returned briefly to Uganda in 1980 and in an article reflecting the widespread fear of Adoko in Uganda, a Kampala newspaper, *The Economy*, announced his return.

The editor of *The Economy* in Kampala, Roland Kakooza Mutale, published a headline that read: "Bad news --- Akena Adoko is back!"

However, by then certain circles in the UPC party had by then gotten to know the secret part Akena Adoko had played in the coup that went wrong and there was little place for him in the second UPC administration.

He returned to London to resume his legal practice and in 1982 authored a book written in poetic form titled *From Obote To Obote*.

After the NRM came to power in 1986, Akena Adoko was one of many politicians who opposed it and in the

late 1980s, he was elected the Vice Chairman of a London-based organisation called the Uganda People's Democratic Movement.

In 1991, Adoko launched the Uganda Constitutional Movement (UCM) in London. The chief coordinator of the UCM was Col. Francis Agwa, the former chief of military intelligence in the new national army, the UNLA, in 1979 after the fall of Amin.

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