

# **ZAMBIA — BULLETS FOR BREAD**

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is not difficult to place under a spotlight and expose the obvious traitors to a people. Who can seriously and sanely slip in a good word for the mass child-killer Bokassa, or for Tshombe, who competed for notoriety with Quisling, or for Mobuto, the brutal dictator of Zaire, who when he is not busy murdering opponents, is busy siphoning his country's currency to his private accounts with the Swiss Bankers.

As we said these traitors are obvious.

Not so obvious are those traitors who have a history of struggle against the oppressors and in whom the people repose their trust to carry out revolutionary tasks in their interests. What the people fail to realise is that the leader they knew in the course of the struggle for liberation has undergone a transformation. Somewhere along the line he stopped serving his people. He now serves a small layer of privileged persons and works in the interests of imperialism.

One such person is Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia.

## **KENNETH KAUNDA — HUMANIST OR OPPRESSOR**

Kenneth Kaunda does not like being called an agent of imperialism or oppressor. Rather, he likes people to think of him as a philosopher, an elder and benign statesman who sacrificed his country at the alter of Zimbabwean and South African struggle. He would also be pleased if you were to call him the leading peacebroker in Southern Africa. Nothing will endear a person more to him than for that person to ask him to expound on "his" philosophy of humanism.

But there is another side to the man which people don't know about and those who do, don't like talking about it. This reluctance to be frank and honest with the people about important things has always exacted a heavy price from the oppressed.

Robert Mugabe, President of Zimbabwe, was one of the first to publicly expose Kenneth Kaunda. We quote an excerpt from an interview between Robert Mugabe and Robin White of the BBC which took place during January 1976:

"Mugabe: Well, I think President Kaunda has been the principal factor in slowing down our revolution. He has arrested our men, locked them up, and within his prisons and restriction areas there have been cases of poisoning, and there's also been murders.

White: By who?

Mugabe: By his men. By Kaunda's army.

White: You have proof of that, do you?

Mugabe: Yes, thirteen of our people were shot dead, cold-bloodedly. And one cannot regard this as an act conforming to the principle of humanism."

Kaunda never did treat all liberation movements which sought a base in Zambia with an even hand. He had his favourites in the African National Congress of South Africa and now the defunct or absorbed Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). The others were made to feel thoroughly unwanted. Action was taken against them on the slightest pretext. When Herbert Chitepo, leader of ZANU was assassinated, all the top leadership of ZANU within reach were arrested, detained and tortured. Not even Josiah Tongogara was spared the brutality. The purpose of the Nazi-like conduct was to extract confessions from ZANU detainees to the effect that they were responsible for the assassination of Herbert Chipeto. Kaunda did not stop at that. He set up a commission of inquiry with an express instruction that Zambia ***had to be found blameless*** for the death of Herbert Chipeto.

It should therefore come as no surprise when Kaunda ordered his troops to open fire on unarmed civilian protesters against a 120% increase in the price of maize. Thirty were shot dead, 200 wounded and over 500 detained. This was not the first time either. In 1986 Kaunda tried to increase the price of maize. Then too, the people resisted. Then too he had them shot. Thirteen were killed.

## **TRUE HUMANISM**

The true humanism of a government is to be judged by the manner in which it relates to and treats the overwhelming majority of the people who create society's wealth. Food is a basic necessity. No government claiming to represent the interests of the people can ever make it difficult for the people to obtain staple food. Food, clothing, housing, medical care, peace and security are the basic needs for the well being of any society. And that is what a government claiming to be a humanist one will have high on the list of its priorities. When therefore a government attacks one of the basic needs of a people by increasing the price of a staple commodity to more than twice its immediately prior price, then there is nothing humanist about that government.

## **A RUINED ECONOMY**

Zambia, a richly endowed country and once a land of promise, today, has her economy in ruins. Graft and corruption is rampant in every circle, beginning with the government and the civil service. There are many rackets originating in South Africa or Zimbabwe but have Zambia as their destination. Crime and lawlessness is endemic. Between the imperialists, the local capitalists, the civil service and the racketeers, Zambia has been milked dry. Instead of making the exploiters and racketeers pay for this terrible crime, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have instructed Kaunda to make the people pay! And Kaunda, the butler of imperialism, dutifully obliges. When the people resist, Kaunda kills them.

## **CONCLUSION**

We, together with all the freedom loving people of the world, condemn the Zambian Government for the massacre of people who did no more than protest against the unconscionable increase in the price of a staple food. We take this stand because a vile crime has been committed against the poor of Zambia. We regard the poor of Zambia as the allies of the oppressed of this country and of the rest of the Third World in the global fight against imperialism and exploitation.

We, of the New Unity Movement, are Internationalists. We identify ourselves with the struggles and aspirations of oppressed and exploited people wherever they may be. Their struggle is our struggle; their victory is our victory and their defeats are our defeats. When they get killed, we "are diminished" and their mourning becomes our grief.

## **TWO SIDES OF A LEAF**

*The Daily News* of 19 October 1990 carried two articles that throw into stark relief the disparate conditions of existence between the rich and the the poor.

The first article is headlined:

**"Hospital's cash jab: King Edward VIII to get half of R50-m."**

The health services as a whole in Natal are to receive R50 million rand of which King Edward VIII Hospital will receive R24 million. Of this R15 million will be used to pay off existing debts.