

# WORLD'S WORKERS RALLY TO DOCKERS

**INTERNATIONAL support for the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers fighting against casualisation is building up.**

■ Already the 36,000 tonne 'Atlantic Conveyor' has been turned away from Liverpool by the International Longshoremen of America's (ILA) East Coast sector, and the West Coast ILA has pledged solidarity.

■ From Canadian dockers has come a 'first donation' of £5,000 with more to follow and pledges of practical support. They are urging Montreal-based companies to end business links with the port of Liverpool until the dispute is settled.

■ The powerful Federation of Labour in Quebec has stated that it will put pressure on shipping companies which encourage 'archaic labour relations'.

■ Spanish dockers' leader Francisco Ramon Bagos in Tenerife has invited a Liverpool delegation to meet his members who are starting a series of 24-hour strikes against casualisation. These strikes will also take place in other Spanish ports.

■ Japanese dockers, who were informed of the Liverpool dispute by seafarers, have sent greetings to the dockers and asked for more information about their action.

■ Australian dockers have already detained the 'Cornelia Verolme' in Sydney and are threatening more drastic action if ABC shipping lines do not end business links with the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company while the dispute is in progress.

This worldwide support is causing alarm among the directors and shareholders of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company. They promised the shipping companies that Liverpool would be a full-working union-free port within two weeks!

The dispute is in its ninth week. The sacked dockers' representatives are touring the world.

here. Addressed mass meeting of terminal workers this morning - looking for similar action to be placed on "Zim Line" ships. Maritime Union looking for delegation to Melbourne and New Zealand.'

In a separate communication to the Liverpool dockers they say: 'The "Cornelia Verolme" has arrived at an opportune time in Sydney and be assured that the Central NSW Branch will ensure that it does not start on time for at least 24 hours and then will receive a "good serve" when working (i.e. a go slow) and then another 24 hours before its departure. If this does not convince the ABC Line of our intention to continue our utmost support, then the next vessel may rust at the berth.'

This is the powerful response of the working class to the attempt of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company to break the dockers' union organisation and introduce casual work.

In an interview which will appear in next week's Workers Press, Jimmy Nolan, chairman of the Merseyside Dockers Shop Stewards Committee says:

'The campaign we've made on an international level proves beyond any doubt that we never saw ourselves in isolation. It proves that dock workers all over the world recognise the continuing exploitation by ship owners and port employers that has been going on for generations.'

'When 500 of us were sacked it created support amongst dock workers internationally because over the past 20-25 years we have always participated in the international conferences of dock workers. We already had relations with these dockers. They know us!'

BY DOT GIBSON

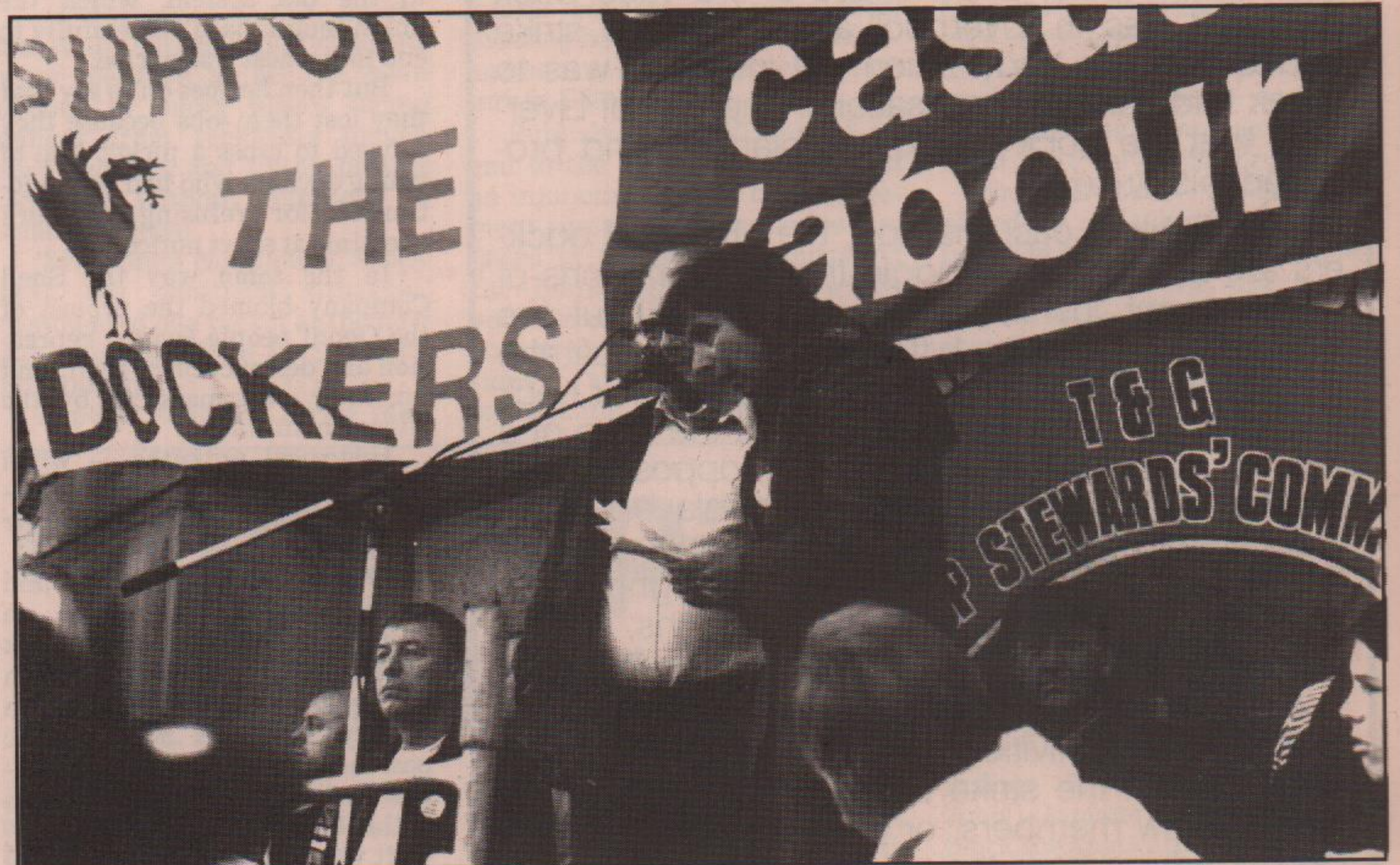
'Your lads are performing extremely well and have a lot of good news to impart on their return... Your struggle has been an inspiration to our members and you can be assured of the continued support of our members and members of other Australian trade unions,' wrote Jim Donovan and Robert Coombs, joint secretaries of the New South Wales (NSW) branch of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA).

## Solidarity

They met Ken Moore, Sydney representative of ABC Containerline NV to inform him they would be taking action in solidarity with the Liverpool dockers and asking the shipping company to take a firm line with the Liverpool employers. He replied:

'... I have passed on the proceedings of yesterday's meeting to my principals in Antwerp who were very much aware of the current events in Liverpool. This is causing us extreme concern and my European colleagues are closely watching the situation. I regret that I do not have anything more constructive to offer at this point...'

Coombs and Donovan faxed on 28 November: 'The response [from ABC management] has been rejected by the portworkers out



Striker from Pall Mall cleaning services speaks at Liverpool dockers' rally

## 'Enough is enough...' Strike movement grows

THE Tory boast that the British had 'kicked the habit of going on strike' looks increasingly hollow as industrial militancy rises, facing the government with a possible 'winter of discontent'.

The press has tried to black out the eight-week unofficial strike action of Merseyside dockers but their action is part of a mounting strike wave across British industry.

The unofficial walk-out of Scottish postal workers may for the moment have been settled but this week Vauxhall workers prepared for an overtime ban and a weekly two-hour stoppage over hours and pay. Vauxhall management are threatening to challenge the action in the courts.

This follows the walkout of Ford workers at Dagenham and Southampton in protest against management's pay and hours offer. As we went to press thousands of JobCentre staff were ready to stop work in protest against a 2.7 per cent government-imposed pay deal. This

comes after last month's successful challenge to a strike vote in the courts by the Employment Service.

There have been months of industrial action on British Rail and London Underground.

The majority of these disputes, as well as the rash of regional strikes that have been mounted over the last months, are not simple wage disputes. They have been concerned with hours of work and/or the employment of part-time and casual workers.

Liverpool's dockers are striking at the same time as city firefighters have been taking action against a management-imposed reduction in the labour force.

In London Unison has called for official strike against Pall Mall, a private contractor at Hillingdon Hospital which has sacked 56 mainly Asian women after they refused a pay cut in their hourly rate to £3.58.

This upsurge in industrial action comes from a low of 1994 when 278,000 days were lost as a

result of 205 disputes, the lowest figure recorded since 1891.

Even before this year's rail walk-outs, 350,000 days had already been lost by April and there is no doubt that the 1995 total will be sharply up.

What must concern the employers is that many of these actions have been taken against the explicit advice of union officials and often without recourse to ballot and other procedures that the law requires.

There were no ballots at Liverpool on the docks, in the Scottish postal dispute or at Fords.

Little wonder that Fords chief executive Alex Trotman issues a warning from Michigan about the danger of a return to the behaviour of the 1970s. If so, jobs would be at risk, he threatened.

Firefighters' leader Ken Cameron reflects this new mood in 'the working class when he says: 'There's no doubt people are saying enough is enough and the membership is moving ahead of the trade union leadership.'

## SUPPORT THE LIVERPOOL DOCKERS 2 DECEMBER DEMONSTRATION:

10.30am Assemble at the Roman Catholic Cathedral, Hope Street, Liverpool

11.00am March

12.00noon Rally at St. George's Hall

'Dockers Charter,' 50p (20p for unwaged) from Jimmy Davies, Secretary and Treasurer, 19 Scorton St., Liverpool L6 4AS. CASH WITH ORDER. P&P must be included: 1 copy 20p; 5 copies 50p; 10 copies £1. Orders above this can be arranged. Telephone 0151-207 3388 or 0191-222 0299.

## THE FUTURE OF MARXISM

### A Series of 10 Lectures

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London (Holborn Tube)

Friday 8 December 1995, 7.30pm

(Note: not Thursday like previous lectures)

'What is to be done — now!' (Cliff Slaughter)

Admission: £1.50 (£1.00 concs.)

### What is to be Done?

THE LAST in the present 'Future of Marxism' lectures will be given by WRP secretary Cliff Slaughter. The Stalinist bureaucracy's collapse throughout the world has created new and favourable conditions for resolving many long-standing problems that have faced the working class and its leadership.

The Stalinist bureaucracy rested on the property relations brought into being by the October revolution of 1917 and its extension in the post-1945 period. For six decades this bureaucracy presented itself as the 'heir of October' and was able to attract many of the best working-class fighters into its ranks.

We are now in a qualitatively new situation. What tasks does this new situation place before the working class? In this last lecture Cliff Slaughter sets out to answer this question, particularly in connection with the need of the working class to establish a new party.

## Workers Press Meeting — change of date

WE have decided to postpone the 10th anniversary meeting of Workers Press that was scheduled for 9 December. We do so because of a march and rally in London to be held on that day organised by the People's Embargo for Democracy in Nigeria. For details of the demonstration contact 0171-924 9033 or 0956 132143. Details of the re-arranged Workers Press Meeting will be published next week.

## The significance of the Liverpool dock strike

THE strike of Liverpool dockers involves only 500 workers. But it is a strike of the greatest significance for the whole working-class movement. Why is this?

1. From day one, this has been a highly political strike. The Liverpool dockers were forced from the outset to confront the anti-trade union laws in the face of a deliberately provoked strike by the employers. They have been obliged to engage in the fight with little or no support from their union leadership.

2. The strike is led by workers who went through the bitter experiences of the 1989 dock strike. It was in Liverpool alone that the strike ended with the trade union still intact. It was to break trade union organisation in the port of Liverpool that the dock employers planned and provoked this strike.

3. In fighting casualisation, the Liverpool dockers are taking up a struggle that faces millions of workers, not just in Britain but throughout the world. As part of the bitter struggle for profit the employers need a labour force that is at their beck and call, able and willing to work at the drop of a hat for poverty-level wages. In opposing this attempt to re-impose conditions of slave labour, the Liverpool dockers are fighting not just for themselves but for the millions throughout the world who already suffer these conditions, as well as the millions more who will face them tomorrow.

4. The leaders of the strike have been obliged to take up the activities of various 'left groups' who have seen in the strike simply the opportunity to recruit a few members, or the occasion for handing out advice from the sidelines. In some cases the stewards leading the struggle have been subject to outright abuse, condemned for their refusal to cross a picket line, or denounced as traitors who will inevitably sell out the fight.

5. Almost from the start, the strike has been international in content. A handful of workers, who the employers thought could be seen off in a matter of days, have shown that working-class internationalism is far from dead and that, with all its problems, the working class is struggling to re-establish that internationalism.

## Giving racists the green light

WORKERS PRESS has no confidence in bourgeois law as a weapon against racism in this deeply racist society. The law can often be invoked with advantage in a particular campaign, but organised struggle and systematic education, not the courts, are in the long run the only sure ways for the workers' movement to combat this scourge.

All the same, we condemn unreservedly the home secretary's decision to block attempts to adopt a common European policy against racism. This policy, vetoed by Britain, would outlaw public incitement to racial hatred.

Michael Howard's veto came on the very day that the Commission for Racial Equality unprecedently condemned as 'anti-black and xenophobic' the government's plans to withdraw social security benefits from 13,000 asylum-seekers on 8 January.

With this veto, as with his declaration of war on refugees, Howard, British-born son of a Jewish refugee, is giving the green light to the fascist gangs and their youthful dupes. He is helping to make racism respectable.

Those 'liberals' who support Howard's veto on the specious ground that the proposed common European policy would erode free speech are not the fascists' immediate targets. But they should remember that they too are on the hit-list.

## More on a 'scabby attack'

YOUR editorial in last week's Workers Press was correct in describing as a 'scabby attack', Steve Mumby's scandalous article on the Liverpool dockers' strike, which appeared in 'New Times' — the journal of the Democratic Left.

The advice by the ex-secretary of the now dissolved local Communist Party is in effect advising dockers to 'roll over and die'. And he tells them this with weasel words and historical untruths.

Weasel words — because he says that the struggle has not come out of the blue and is a result of the Mersey Docks Company's systematic work 'to return to the old system, which the union fought hard successfully to end in the post war period.'

But then he goes on to say that they lost their jobs because they refused to cross a picket line of young dockers who had been victimised for refusing to work overtime at short notice.

In the same way the Shell Company blamed the protest of the Ogoni people against repression and destruction of their land for their own massacre by the Nigerian military.

Historical untruths — when he attacks the very dockers' traditions by which they made their advances.

It was the solidarity and strong comradeship forced on them by harsh conditions of work which won them their place in the front ranks of trade union history. This was no 'romantic past' nor was it 'traditional shibboleths... an invented tradition of the 1980s.'

It was a product of hard grind and sacrifice, particularly for those at the front of the struggle. He says that CP members crossed picket lines in the 1955 strike.

I have had many sharp and bitter arguments with Mersey-

side dockers CP members and know the official policy of the Communist Party on the strike for recognition of the Blue Union (the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers' Union) helped defeat the strike.

But Communist Party members on Merseyside remained out with other Transport and General Workers Union members for the full six weeks of the strike.

In my book, 'They Knew Why Fought', I quote from Frank Deegan's autobiography 'There is No Other Way', how he and other CP dockers supported recognition but were against the breakaway. I wrote that he showed a 'certain amount of confusion on the part of a loyal Communist Party member, caught between the feeling on the docks and the training of the party.'

However, there was no question of Frank Deegan and the others he mentioned, crossing the picket line.

John MacGinnis, whose entry into dock work is recorded in the book, and who was a member of the CP and of the T&G in 1955, recalls that he and other members of the CP were out for six weeks.

Bill Hunter  
Liverpool

## A sectarian 'picket line'

A FRAUDULENT sectarian 'picket line' has been mounted at the Frensham Street depot of the Southwark Direct Labour Organisation against the democratic decisions of the workforce.

This provocative action is being carried out by an organisation known as 'The Building Workers Group'. The 'picket line' is comprised of members of this group from other parts of London and two Southwark DLO workers opposed to a majority decision of the workforce, one of whom is a member of 'The Building Workers Group'.

A public statement issued by

the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee-Building Workers of the London Borough of Southwark explains:

'Trade union action against our employer comes from collective decisions of the DLO union members that result from the particular conditions and circumstances that exist at any given time. And not by anyone else. We decide how best to fight our employer. We make our decisions by democratic means and not as a result of any provocative actions.'

Dot Gibson  
London SW8

There will be a full report in the next issue of Workers Press.

## Virulent viruses

J.J. PLANT has recently made some sceptical comments on my views on the dangers of highly virulent viruses emerging from the destruction of the rain forests (18 November).

He questions the evidence that the collection of monkeys for experimental purposes has resulted in the introduction of new killer viruses to humans.

In fact the disease Marburg is named after the German town where this virus was first encountered in 1967 — amongst laboratory workers preparing vaccines from African Green Monkeys imported from Uganda, the monkeys being the source of the disease.

Four people died out of 31 who contracted the disease. It was highly pathogenic, but confinable due to its low infectivity.

The first outbreak of Ebola outside of Africa was in a monkey laboratory in Washington in 1989 — not far from the White House!

This disease spread readily amongst the monkeys through aerial propagation, but left humans virtually untouched. It originated in monkeys imported from the Philippines.

Human HIV is closely related to viruses in monkey species and seems likely to have jumped recently to humans from this source.

HIV appeared at the time that the trade in African monkeys to European laboratories got underway resulting in large numbers of monkeys being captured and stored in close proximity.

Richard Preston's 'The Hot Zone' (Corgi Books) is an eye-opening, if rather sensational account of the Washington outbreak.

This new group of 'filoviruses' that includes the similar groups of Ebola and Marburg to date has been characterised by either high pathogenicity/low transmissibility or lack of pathogenicity towards humans/high transmissibility.

The danger is that there will eventually be a highly virulent/highly transmissible variant. This could occur through mutation of an existing species, the emergence of an unknown species or malevolent genetic engineering.

(The military machines of the world have shown interest in the many newly emerging virus species as biological warfare agents.)

The appearance of such a virus would be a disaster. It would spread rapidly around the world and cause innumerable deaths.

I agree with his comments that science cannot provide answers to moral or ethical questions. But as a scientist I am aware that certain laboratory procedures that involve sacrificing animals are necessary at present to protect human well being.

I look forward to the day when these procedures are no longer necessary. It is a human, not scientific decision that they should be replaced by more humane methods.

I have tried to cover areas not often discussed by socialists and greatly value feedback such as J.J. Plant's.

Daniel Robertson  
London E5

## They Knew Why They Fought

by  
Bill Hunter

Unofficial Struggles & Leadership on the Docks 1945-1989

Available from Index Books (0171-274 8342)

No Frontiers/The Rain Trust present a Bosnia fund-raiser

## The Troggs The Animals/The Yardbirds

Wednesday 6 December, doors open 6pm, London Astoria, 157 Charing X Road, London WC2. Tickets £9.50 advance/£11.50 (£9.50 concessions) door. Astoria box office (0171-434 0403, credit cards 0171-434 0404). By post enclosing SAE from The Rain Trust, c/o Janice Findlay, 52 Deptford Broadway, London SE8 4PH. Cheques payable to 'The Rain Trust'. Part of the proceeds to go to AIDS/HIV support and rape counselling.

A conference sponsored by Workers Press

## Crisis in the labour movement The need for a new socialist party Manchester Town Hall

24 February

11.30am-5.30pm

Please send me further details of the 'Crisis in the labour movement' conference.

Name .....

Address .....

Photocopy and send to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.



# Inside left

## Put a Foot Wrong . . .

It has been known to make the odd mistake in this column. ('Never!', cry readers around the world, 'we don't believe it!')

As a constant reader Brian Pearce pointed out once, I'd referred to Lenin as though it were under Roman rule before World War I, whereas of course it had been annexed by Austria-Hungary well before that (hence the unfortunate incident with Archduke Franz Ferdinand).

Another time I said British Stalinist Rajani Palme Dutt had visited the Indian Communist Party prisoners in 1911 to persuade them to change their minds on the war. As his former colleague Monty Johnson told me later, it wasn't allowed to enter India in those years. (I'd like to trace the source of my misremembered 'fact' on this one, if any readers can help).

I wrote that Independent Labour Party (ILP) MP John McGovern had misled fascist leader Sir Oswald Mosley in prison during the war. On reading McGovern's book *Without Honour or Favour*, I found it wasn't him, but ILP leader Jimmy Maxton, who misled Mosley.

Once, in a letter to the *Guardian*, I criticised 'your diarist Maeve Binchy'. As well as they didn't print it. Their editor Kennedy was flattered, but the leftist Maeve Binchy might not have been! My *Schadenfreude* was justified when the aforesaid 'Guardian' diarist wrote about Labour MP Ellis Hillman's efforts to brighten up the London borough of Lambeth, whereas I knew he was mayor of Lambeth.

An awful truth is beginning to seep through into the consciousness of 'respectable Britain,' wrote *Socialist Worker's* Paul Foot rather pretentiously on 17 November, apropos of Channel Four's documentary 'Edward VIII — The Traitor King', about the Duke of Windsor's links with Nazi Germany.

Oddly, writing for a paper whose approach is frequently *economist*, Foot didn't mention factory speed-up by Charles Bedaux, who arranged the Duke and Duchess's visit to Hitler, industrialist Axel Wenner-Gren, in whom the Duke remained interested after becoming governor of the Bahamas; nor did he refer to the Duke's post-war friendship with Oswald Mosley (see *Workers Press*, 18 November).

Focusing on 'the greedy, assertive, mighty, racist Wallis Simpson', Foot said 'the problem' about the Royal Marriage was that 'She worshipped Hitler'. (Actually, quite a lot of the British Establishment were married that way). He referred to 'Edward Hyams's extraordinary book, *Edward VIII*'. Edward Hyams wrote about the King and the soil, and had a column in the *New Statesman*. I expect Foot meant American author *Walter Higham's* book *Wallis*.

To err is human, but to forgive is part of a rival columnist's rule.

### Mersey Beat

SOLIDARITY from the longshoremen in the United States; Liverpool workers addressing fellow trades unionists in Belfast; and Bilbao workers not, apparently, allowed to go to a rally in Nottingham, for no reason; 'flying pickets' flown to Zealand . . .

We're still waiting for the BBC in London to mention the Liverpool workers' struggle. Is there a D-notice? Roger McGough's Radio Four programme on San Francisco last week quoted American poet Allen Ginsberg in 1964: 'Liverpool is at the moment the centre of the consciousness of the human uni-

Charlie Pottins

# CELEBRATE 10th ANNIVERSARY

This weekend the South African trade union federation, COSATU, celebrates its tenth anniversary. Today, Saturday 2 December, there is to be a big rally of workers in Durban as part of these celebrations. We publish here a leaflet to be handed out at that rally by our comrades in South Africa

WORKERS INTERNATIONAL in South Africa sends greetings and support to all COSATU members celebrating the 10th Anniversary on 2 December 1995.

This anniversary takes place at a time when the workers in COSATU are facing the biggest crisis in the history of the federation.

Workers who fought against anti-trade union laws during the apartheid regimes are suffering the same hardships at work as they did in those days. And now they are witnessing the new Labour Relations Bill of the Government of National Unity (GNU — the so-called people's government) which will make it difficult for workers to strike without being victimised.

Under the GNU, (for which COSATU played a vital role canvassing workers to back them in the 1994 general election) the workers, in the name of democracy, experience the following difficulties:

- Truck drivers, taking legitimate industrial action led by International Turning Wheels, have been accused of carrying out a manoeuvre on behalf of the past regime to undermine the ANC-led GNU.
- The exemplary action of nurses — the King Edward VIII hospital nurses and other general workers — crushed by the GNU's Ministry of Health and its Safety and Security Department. COSATU acts for the government. The NEHAWU [the

GNU-supporting nurses' union] distances itself from the nurses' action.

■ Mercedes workers in East London are being victimised by their employers with the aid of the GNU's Safety and Security Department.

■ Mine workers regularly entombed while carrying out their work, and the National Union of Mineworkers only protesting after the accidents have occurred.

■ The nurses' strike in the former Transkei homeland, which has cost 7,000 nurses their jobs with COSATU sitting on the fence again.

Many more examples could be listed — these are just a few highlights. And all this is happening with the collaboration of COSATU, its affiliates, the employers and the long arm of the state with its departments of torture, oppression and suppression.

Let us speak out about the departments of the former COSATU assistant general secretary, Sydney Mufamadi, the Labour Department of Tito Mboweni, the so-called Justice Department of Dullah Omar and about erstwhile COSATU general secretary, Jay Naidoo warning workers to stop saying: 'I demand, I demand,' but instead to say 'I shall contribute, I shall contribute.'

The nurses' 'crime' is to fight for living wages, better working conditions and a better health system for all. Now they find themselves on the streets.

## Support strikers END COSATU ALLIANCE

Is this what COSATU is celebrating?

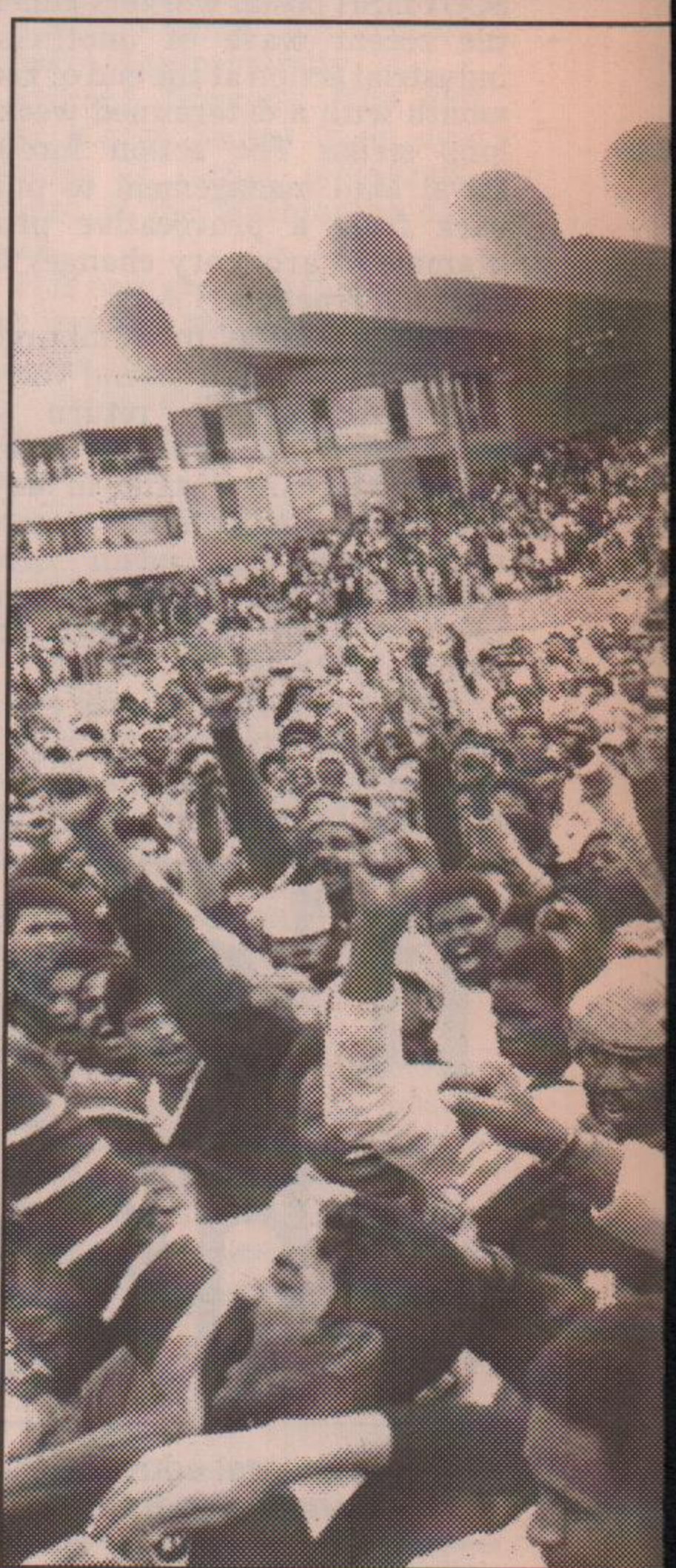
We do not believe that this is what the millions of COSATU members want. We therefore call for all workers who are celebrating this 10th anniversary to show solidarity with the striking nurses by calling on the government to immediately end all strike-breaking measures.

- Withdraw dismissal notices of those on strike;
- Address the nurses' grievances;
- End the strike through a negotiated agreement with the regional body of the nurses' independent union — the National Nurses' Forum.

It is now becoming clear to all workers that the reason why COSATU is failing to defend them is because of its alliance with the GNU, which has clearly demonstrated its willingness to support the bosses against the workers.

Now is the time for workers to demand that COSATU breaks away from the alliance and fights for workers' rights independently from the government. Last, and most important, all workers must ask COSATU: what happened to the Workers' Charter and the fight for a Workers' Party?

Issued by Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International, PO Box 48764, Qualbert, Durban, 4001.



Rally to launch Western Cape division

# Soviet disintegration dominated socialist lawyers' conference

BY JIM SMITH

THE disintegration of the Soviet Union dominated the discussion at a conference called to examine the role of the legal system as an instrument of oppression in the former colonies. Organised by the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers, it was also sponsored by the African Liberation Support Campaign (ALISC), the London School of Economics Students Union and the Brixton Community Law Centre.

Some delegates saw the USSR's downfall as evidence that Marxism had failed. Others argued that Marxism should be used as a weapon by those resisting in new ways.

Haldane Society chair **Kate Marcus** explained that the society was affiliated to the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL) which had been based in the Soviet Union and had had observer status at the UN. Marcus admitted that the IADL was 'more or less defunct' and also claimed that the working class in Britain was 'all but decimated'.

Those in the past associated with the IADL are now turning their attention elsewhere and have arranged that their next conference will be held in South Africa, where they support the ruling ANC.

**Lapido Ogunlana** of the LSE pointed out that the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his eight comrades by the Nigerian dictatorship was carried out according to the current legal system of that country.

Taking up this point, **Kofi Klu** (ALISC) drew attention to the role of

Shell and other oil companies throughout Africa. Shell had been behind the war that had devastated Angola. Where had the lawyers been? He warned that the UN and various governments endorsed slogans for freedom, justice and human rights, but did not implement them.

Mass action to stop Shell from operating was needed, said Klu. He showed that the present-day state structures, armies and police forces in Africa were created by the former colonial powers, who always saw the mass of the people as their enemies.

Former Haldane Society chair, **Bill Bowring**, joined Markus in lamenting the Soviet Union's fall. With Soviet support, IADL had helped the UN adopt policies which had assisted the struggle for national liberation, claimed Bowring.

Professor **Dan Nabadure** of Uganda said he had once been a 'Marxist-Leninist' but that the Marxist tradition must now be abandoned. He claimed that in his own country the working class no longer existed due to the devastation it had suffered. Many farm workers had returned to their villages and even state employees earned so little they were forced to rely on food produced in their own villages.

He suggested that new forces for resistance could be found in appeals to traditional ancestral spirits and the revitalisation of traditional secret societies. Calling for 'ethnic cultural revivalism', he suggested that small ethnic or clan communities might be more relevant to people's needs than established states and government parties.

Taking issue with Nabadure,

**Josef Odusanya**, a Nigerian who had come to Britain in 1947 and was an activist in the Transport and General Workers' Union until retiring, said he disagreed with returning to a 'pre-industrial society'. He said that under capitalism technology was used to enslave human beings, but if capitalism was got rid of, then technology would have the opposite effect. But he accepted that political strategy might involve using traditional institutions.

Guyana-born **Terry Leander**, who recently left Labour in disgust at Tony Blair's leadership, argued that lawyers in the Caribbean were too self-interested and had assimilated Western values. He suggested that for many purposes informal systems of mediation could replace formal courts, and could assist resistance to imperialism.

**Ludo Martens** of the Belgian Workers Party produced clear evidence that the French and Belgian governments were deeply involved in the genocide in Rwanda. He provided a historical sketch of how the colonial powers (Germany and then Belgium) invented the artificial division between Hutu and Tutsi, with Belgium first favouring the Tutsi but when they sought national independence using the Hutu petty-bourgeois against them.

**Olubisi Kuboni** from Trinidad and Tobago talked of the problems of ethnic conflict between people of African and those of Asian origin. As a Pan Africanist he wanted to see a constitution where both groups would respect each other's cultures. He condemned the British-style 'first past the post' electoral system as one

that perpetuated colonialism's policy of 'divide and rule'.

**Dr Kimini Nebusi**, representing the Pan African Grassroots Educational Network, said he favoured making alliances with all immigrant groups and with all those against imperialism. He called for resistance to racism to be built on the self-organisation of immigrant communities, in alliance with the working class. He said it was necessary to overcome the racism of sections of the working class who had been bought out by capitalism.

**Marie Therese Santana**, originally from Angola and speaking for the Pan African Women's Grassroots Network, argued that events in Angola had shown that the theories of Marx and Engels were irrelevant and that attempts to apply their theories there had proved disastrous.

**Harpal Brar** of the Indian Workers Association caused controversy by saying that Britain had brought 'civilisation' to India; he explained that he meant the replacement of handicraft industries by modern capitalist production and the creation of a working class. Later in the discussion he insisted on defending Stalin and claimed he had evidence to prove that Trotsky was a fascist!

**Shegun Sango** argued that Africa could only be united on the basis of socialism. This needed a revolution led by the working class, said Sango, who spoke on behalf of the Nigerian section of the Committee for a Workers International, which is represented in Britain by Militant Labour.

He said that many Nigerians rejected socialism because they equated it with Stalinism. We must

# ANNIVERSARY OF COSATU

## ing nurses of the former Transkei

### ANCE WITH GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY



on of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), Cape Town, 1986 (left). In the elections COSATU urged support for the Government of National Unity (GNU)

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utilise Trotsky's criticisms of the bureaucracy, he said, but added that the break-up of the Soviet Union was 'not progressive'.

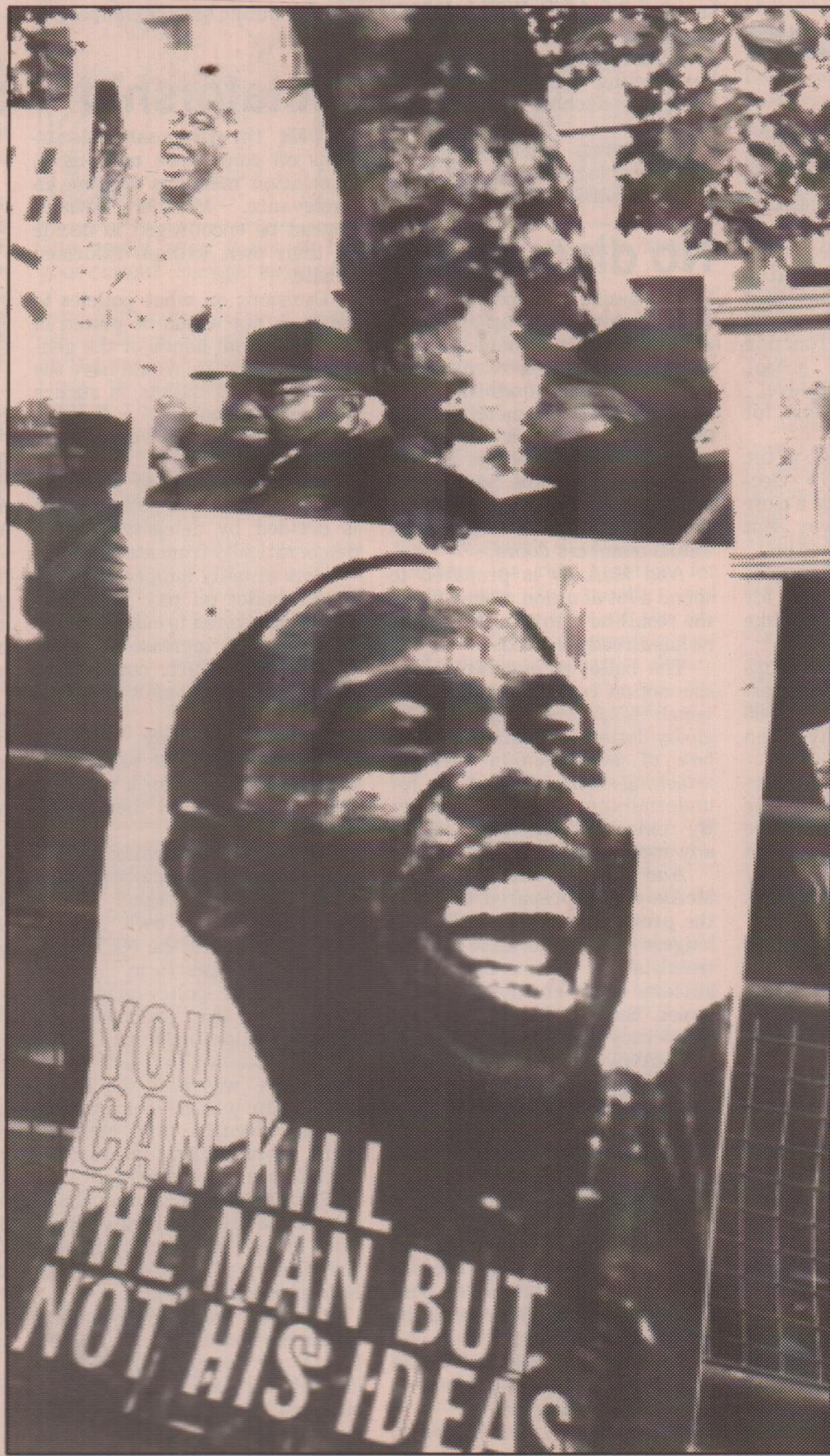
**Joseph Ochieno**, a Ugandan active in the Southwark branch of the local government union UNISON, showed that while the Ugandan constitution purports to defend liberal values it in fact allows the existing regime to delay elections for up to four years; this was akin to the decision of the Commonwealth leaders to give the Nigerian regime two years to 'reform' itself.

A speaker of Sudanese origin called for support for the African majority in Sudan in their struggle against 'Arabisation' and 'Islamisation' being imposed by the Arab minority who had been left as a controlling élite by the British.

The conference closed by passing of a resolution moved by Kofi Klu which among other things called for support for the Ogoni people's struggle and for a military and oil boycott of Nigeria. The resolution condemned the execution of Saro-Wiwa and his comrades and the threatened execution of Afro-American activist Mumia Abu Jamal.

It also demanded the lifting of the British government's ban on the Afro-American activist Kwame Ture (formerly Stokely Carmichael) who had been invited to the conference. An additional clause was added condemning enslavement in Sudan and Mauritania.

The conference was urged to support the vigil in memory of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni people on Saturday 9 December, 1 pm, the Shell Centre, Waterloo, London.



One month on . . . **REMEMBER**  
**KEN SARO-WIWA**  
 and all other victims of the  
**Nigerian dictatorship**  
**PICKET 1-4pm VIGIL 4-7pm**  
**Saturday 9 December**  
 outside SHELL'S HQ, York Rd, Waterloo  
**BOYCOTT SHELL!**

## End military rule now!

TWO weeks after the murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogonis, the Nigerian junta is threatening 19 more Ogoni activists with the death sentence.

Thousands have been killed by the police and army for the 'crime' of opposing the military government and Shell's destruction of their land; hundreds are detained without trial.

Shell makes £1 million profit a day, yet they are refusing to pass the benefits of the industry on to the vast majority of the Nigerian population. Instead, they have called in government forces to stamp out peaceful protest by force. Shell has got Ogoni blood on its hands.

The British government have continued to sell arms to the Nigerian military regime, including 80 tanks and supplies of CS gas — despite a European Union arms embargo which was put in place over two years ago. Prime Minister John Major has called for Abacha and his government in Nigeria to go — in two years' time!

How can we trust the military to dissolve their own government? How many more Nigerians will lose their lives within that period?

We support the struggle of the oppressed peoples of Nigeria for liberation from the rule of the military and the exploitation of international big business. We are opposed to 'quiet' diplomacy while behind the scenes it is 'business as usual'. We want:

- An immediate end to military government in Nigeria.
- Free all detainees.
- Freeze the assets of all military and civilian collaborators with the regime.
- International solidarity to support the struggles of workers and oppressed peoples in Nigeria.
- An international oil embargo on Nigeria.
- An end to ALL arms sales to the Nigerian government.
- The right to asylum for refugees — end deportations.
- People's repossession and democratic control of resources in Nigeria.

**People's Embargo for Democracy in Nigeria (PEDEN), PO Box 256, London SE11 5TH. Tel: 0181-202 6292.**





