



Silence Would Be Treason: Last writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa

By Ken Saro-Wiwa

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A unique collection of the last writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa that reveals the indomitable mind and spirit of the legendary campaigner for justice in the last months before his execution. The letters and poems collected here are the last writings of a man on trial for his life. They were smuggled out of military detention in food baskets.. Nigerian author and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, facing execution by the military regime on trumped-up charges, corresponded extensively with Irish nun and solidarity worker Majella McCarron during the last 18 months of his life. Clear and direct, these letters and poems are the last expression of a voice the regime was determined to silence: a voice for indigenous rights, environmental survival and democracy, many of whose battles were won despite his death and whose voice comes alive today again in these extraordinary letters. Saro-Wiwa was a leading figure in the world of Nigerian and African letters, as novelist, playwright, non-fiction writer, author of children's books and television writer. He was also a major figure in Nigerian politics, when his support for the autonomy of his own, indigenous Ogoni people led to his removal from office. Following this Saro-Wiwa threw himself into business to provide the financial basis for the movement which from 1990 took the shape of MOSOP, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People. MOSOP raised not only the issue of indigenous autonomy but also that of environmental survival in the face of massive oil and gas extraction in the Niger Delta and the associated oil leaks, gas flaring and other environmental crises threatening traditional livelihoods in the area. This was a direct challenge to those who benefitted from the situation: the oil and gas multinationals and the Nigerian military government.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Ken Saro-Wiwa, a Nigerian writer, television producer, environmental activist, and winner of the Right Livelihood Award and the Goldman Environmental Prize, was President of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), and led a nonviolent campaign against the environmental degradation of land and waters by the operations of the multinational petroleum industry, especially Royal Dutch Shell. He was an outspoken critic of the Nigerian military government. His execution on 10 November 1995 by the Abacha regime provoked international outrage and resulted in Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth for over three years.

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