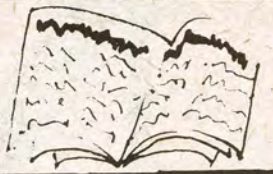


# NEWS



## namibia ahoy

The Operation Namibia ship *Golden Harvest* left Banjul on Christmas Day (see last PN) and arrived in Monrovia, Liberia, on Jan 9. It was greeted by the Liberian president, who donated \$2500 from the country's Southern Africa Liberation Fund to the project. This gift should mean that the boat won't need more funds to be sent out to it for the rest of the voyage, and money donated to the project in Britain - including over £500 from Joan Baez after her London concerts - can go to pay off remaining debts here - it is hoped that before the *Golden Harvest* reaches Namibia, ON will have finished paying for it!

With the *Fri* in the Indian Ocean heading for Mozambique, it now seems that both boats might reach Namibia at about the same time - possibly as soon as April. To start arranging support actions and publicity for the boats' arrival, there is an important meeting for all supporters of the project on **Saturday February 11, at 70 Durham Road, London N7**, starting at 2 p.m. (If you get lost on the way phone 01-263 0253).

Meanwhile for more details, stocks of the new ON leaflets, or to offer help/donations, contact: **ON, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 (tel: 01-837 9794)**



## a very small step

The departure of the British armoured cars sold to the El Salvador dictatorship (see news item last issue) was firstly delayed for a fortnight at the last moment, and then -last week- cancelled altogether. This must be the first time in recent years that an arms deal has been stopped at such a late stage - though had it been on the scale of other recent contracts, (hundreds of millions rather than just one million pounds) it might have been a different story.....

Of course, it wasn't the virtual certainty of the armoured cars being used to mow down Salvadorean workers and peasants at some stage that caused the cancellation - it was the slight possibility of their being used against Brutish soldiers garrisoned in nearby Belize. And it wasn't in the end stopped by blacking by dockers, blockades of the port by nonviolent activists or other forms of popular action that could have been extended to other shipments - rather it was stopped by the government (worried by backbench opposition) which had approved the deal in the first place.

The cancellation has set some kind of precedent; (no longer can the government claim that a contract is inviolable) but those campaigning against British participation in the death trade cannot view the government's exchange of just an ounce of hypocrisy for an iota of decency as more than a very small victory.

### — at home office

Pickets demonstrated outside the Home Office in London on Tuesday January 18, in protest at Merlyn Rees' inactivity in the face of growing fascist attacks and bombings on black, community and left-wing bookshops.

A spokesperson for Bookshop Joint Action which organised the picket said that there had been over 30 such attacks against bookshops since the beginning of 1977. He called on all individuals and organisations concerned at the growing fascist threats to write to the Home Secretary in protest at his total indifference to the attacks.

### — and at school

The National Union of School Students (NUSS) has responded to the NF's attempts to set up a youth movement. They recently leafleted two Islington schools (Clissold Park and Highbury Grove) in order to combat "Bulldog", the NF paper aimed at schoolkids. They are now planning a national leafletting campaign to keep the youth section of the NF (YNF - set up at the 1977 NF congress) out of the schools.

Contact: **NUSS, 302 Pentonville Road, London N1. 01-278 3291 Ext 24.**

Ring them if you see "Bulldog" being distributed.

Peoples News Service

## ANTI-FASCISM IN ACTION —

A Holiday Fellowship Club sounds harmless enough, you might think, and York Society of Friends didn't think twice about letting them use York meeting house. But it turned out that the club was simply a cover for the local National Front.

One senior Friend brusquely dismissed complaints from York and District Anti-Fascist Alliance (YADAF) and the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) when they offered to show him a photo of the man who'd booked the room, R.E. Wright, (an NF activist in Leeds) selling *National Front News* (or more accurately holding *NF News* and shouting "Yiddish scum!")

But after a small group from YADAF handed out leaflets before the January 8 meeting for worship, the Friends cancelled the "holiday club's" booking. It remains to be seen whether the Friends will reconsider their decision not to allow the Anti-Fascist Alliance to meet there. I think the Friends initially rejected the Alliance because they thought it was a front for the SWP.

## gay times festival

Following last month's Womens Festival at the Action Space Drill Hall (See PN January 3) comes the Gay Times Festival which opened on January 17 and finishes February 5. Throughout the three weeks there will be exhibitions of works by gay artists, a bookshop, a vegetarian restaurant and a wide range of workshops, discussions, film and theatre performances including Gay Sweatshops' "As Time Goes By", the three parts of which, Victorian Times; 1920's and 1930's; 1960's and 1970's; are performed each evening on the first, second and third weeks respectively.

Each performance is followed by a discussion, film or show relevant to the period covered by the performance. Film buffs can see "The Blue Angel" and also listen to the songs of Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht.

The whole affair has been organised by men from Gay Sweatshop.

For further information see *Gay News* of January 12 or contact: **Action Space Drill Hall, 16 Chenies Street, London WC1**

Will anyone attending the festival write a report for PN.