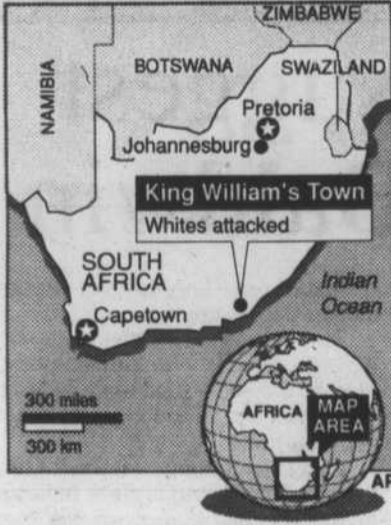


Four whites killed in South African attack



JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Blacks burst into a country club dining room and bar and opened fire with automatic rifles and hand grenades, killing four whites and wounding 17, officials said Sunday.

The Saturday night slaughter in King William's Town, 625 miles southeast of Johannesburg, was a rare mass attack on whites. No one claimed responsibility for the assault, which appeared to be racially or politically motivated.

Blood splattered the floor and dining tables at the King William's Town Golf Club. A grenade blew a hole in the floor and shrapnel brought down part of the ceiling. Drinking glasses and windows were shattered.

The assailants escaped, and police announced a massive manhunt and offered a \$17,000 reward for informa-

tion leading to arrests.

The bloody attack was the realization of many whites' worst fears in this racially divided nation, where black-on-black violence has taken thousands of black lives in recent years. Whites — outnumbered 30 million to 5 million — have feared for generations that the black majority could turn on them.

The attack came at a sensitive time politically. The government and the African National Congress, the leading black group, are scheduled to meet this week to try to restart derailed talks on ending white minority rule.

The government, reacting to the country club deaths and other week-end violence, said in a statement that it "cannot successfully deal with violence alone."

It called for the cooperation "of all our communities and of all political leaders... There must be a common resolve that our society will no longer tolerate violence."

Ray Raduc, a member of parliament, and his wife were attending the dinner and wine-tasting at the club when an undetermined number of blacks attacked the dining room and a bar just before 10 p.m.

"The result was absolute carnage," Raduc said. "The attack was a totally unprovoked act of terrorism against innocent people."

The attackers rolled grenades into the dining room and the bar, then followed up with automatic weapons fire in an assault that lasted less than a minute, witnesses said.

Two white couples were killed and 17 people were injured, several seriously, police said. About 60 people, mostly middle-aged and elderly whites, were in the dining room and the bar. The club is integrated, and blacks were among the guests at the bar.

Raduc, who was slightly injured by shrapnel, said there were three attackers, while police put the number at five.

The slaughter is the latest in a series of violent political and criminal acts that have become commonplace in South Africa.

Some 9,000 blacks have been killed in political violence in the three years since President F.W. de Klerk came to power, but virtually all the fighting has been restricted to black townships, well removed from the white suburbs.

Christmas buying upswing makes for merry retailers

NEW YORK — Americans shopped enthusiastically during the Thanksgiving weekend, showing signs of ending a long Christmas buying drought and giving retailers an encouraging start to the holiday season.

Several big retailers reported Sunday that business was up sharply from the depressed levels of a year ago. But they also noted that sales remained weak in California, which has lagged behind the rest of the country in recovering from the recession.

"We expected strong sales for the post-Thanksgiving weekend and it was strong, with the exception of California," said Kenneth Macke, chairman of Dayton Hudson Corp. At Sears, Roebuck and Co., "The buying mood was more upbeat than it was the last two years," said Matt Howard, senior vice president for marketing. "We were quite pleased with the business. It was a very good kickoff for the holiday season."

But retailers also remained wary, perhaps remembering the disappointing holiday seasons of 1989, 1990 and 1991.

"At this point, we're still cautiously optimistic about the balance of the season," Howard said.

That caution is understandable — there are still signs that many

consumers, while feeling better about the economy and shopping this Christmas, are again working within a tight budget.

Dayton Hudson's strongest business was at its lower-priced Target discount stores, spokeswoman Ann Barkeley said. The company's Mervyn's clothing stores didn't fare as well, and the most popular items sold there included gifts within a specific price range, such as under \$10 or under \$20.

But other signs indicated a potentially strong shopping season.

Sears reported strong sales for such "big-ticket" items as major appliances, as well as for video games like Sega Genesis and Super Nintendo.

The torrid pace of the first weekend is likely to slack off in the first week of December, then pick up in the last 10 days of the season, if the pattern of previous years holds. Many consumers will be waiting to see if prices come down, while others will be pressed for shopping time or just procrastinating.

Economists and retail industry analysts say this could be the best holiday season since 1988, although many retailers, especially those in depressed areas like California, won't share in the general good fortune.

German refugee center bombed

Extremist attacks continue despite police crackdown

BERLIN — A refugee center in western Germany was firebombed Sunday as violence against foreigners continued despite a police crackdown on neo-Nazis and Chancellor Helmut Kohl's call for tolerance.

In Turkey, German flags were burned amid cries of "Down with skinheads!" and "Death to murderers!" at the funeral Sunday for three Turkish victims of the right-wing extremist violence in Germany.

In Jerusalem, the Israeli Cabinet denounced German racist and anti-Semitic attacks and demanded German officials fight right-wing extremism with "the full force of the law."

At least 16 people have died this year in some 1,800 extreme rightist attacks throughout Germany against foreigners and Jews. Neo-Nazis have often found support among those suffering economic hardship, particularly in former East Germany.

The government has taken measures to curb the violence, including banning a radical-right group, but has been criticized for not doing enough.

In an attack early Sunday in Lingen, near the Dutch border, two firebombs were thrown at buildings housing 20 refugees, but no injuries were reported

and damage was minor. Officials offered a \$3,100 reward for clues leading to the arrests of the attackers.

In Eberswalde, 25 miles northeast of Berlin, a fire at around midnight Saturday destroyed a barracks housing 60 refugees. A watchman suffered smoke inhalation. Police were investigating the cause of the fire.

In an interview broadcast Sunday on Deutschlandfunk radio, Kohl vowed Germany will use the full force of the law against "the radical right mob."

But he said proposed constitutional changes to limit the number of refugees and toughen Germany's liberal asylum policy would not resolve the problems of racism and anti-foreigner violence.

He said Germany's prosperity would have been impossible without help from foreign workers such as the Turks, Germany's largest minority group, many of whom were recruited to work in labor-short Germany in the 1960s.

In Carsamba, Turkey, thousands attended the funeral of an ethnic Turkish woman and two children killed in a firebombing attack on their home in Moelln, Germany, on Nov. 23, Turkey's semi-official Anatolia news agency reported.

Anatolia said burning German flags were thrown from houses as the coffins were carried to the graveyard. A German Embassy representative as well as four Turkish government min-



isters and several parliamentary deputies attended the funeral, it said.

"Germany has not reverted to Nazi Germany, and will never do so," German Embassy official Hans Joerg Haber said in a speech in Turkish during the funeral.

Nine people arrested on suspicion of attacks against three refugee shelters are being investigated for links to the Moelln arson, the worst attack since the violence flared.

After the attack, authorities banned the extreme rightist Nationalistic Front and raided homes of its members across Germany, seizing explosives, weapons and neo-Nazi propaganda. The banned group has not been linked to the Moelln attack.

Venezuelan president stands firm in coup aftermath

CARACAS, Venezuela — President Carlos Andres Perez on Sunday defied demands for his resignation in the aftermath of a coup attempt, but conceded he has failed to convince Venezuelans that his policies aim to better their lives.

Perez spoke two days after rebel troops tried to bomb him out of the presidential palace. The government raised to 169 the death toll in the coup attempt, which Perez blamed on "military mafia" and "social rejects."

Police fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse protesters outside a prison where 62 people were slain in a rebellion that broke out in the waning hours of the coup attempt, the second in 10 months. The protesters demanded to know whether their incarcerated relatives had died.

The Peruvian government was considering a

Perez refuses rebel demands; 62 protesters slain

request for political asylum by 93 rebel Venezuelan air force officials, including one of the coup leaders, who flew a C-130 Hercules cargo plane to Iquitos, Peru, after the coup failed. Venezuela has demanded their extradition and the return of the C-130.

The capital remained jittery Sunday. Perez announced that curfews and other restrictions imposed during the coup would be gradually lifted by week's end, and the military said it would be detonating dud bombs dropped by the rebels.

Perez has been severely criticized for his strict economic austerity measures and for failing to improve the lot of most citizens.

About one-fourth of Venezuelans live in

extreme poverty despite one of the highest rates of economic growth in the hemisphere. The country, the No. 3 producer in OPEC, also has suffered from low oil prices.

At least 1,100 suspected rebels have been captured since Friday when dissident air force, navy and police factions launched the uprising in Caracas and Maracay, about 50 miles to the southwest, claiming to represent the poor.

In a nationally televised speech, Perez said the coup leaders belonged to a "military mafia" and were joined by "social rejects" involved in leftist guerrilla groups in the 1960s. He said he had the firm support of the military.

Claiming the attempt was aimed at ending 34 years of democracy, he said his departure

from power before his five-year term ends in early 1994 "is not an issue, it never has been and it will not be."

But he acknowledged that his government has failed to convince Venezuelans it was on an "orderly, sincere and courageous path to confront our errors."

He said his government has been trying to straighten out decades of mismanagement. It was not clear if that included Perez's first term in 1974-78, when he left office in disgrace amid a corruption scandal.

Perez, 70, urged Venezuelans to demonstrate support for democracy by turning out in large numbers for municipal and state elections Sunday, which opposition leaders hope will show further discontent with Accion Democratica, Perez's party.

Russian ruling could help, hurt Yeltsin

MOSCOW — Russia's Constitutional Court could provide grounds for Boris Yeltsin's impeachment if it rules Monday that he improperly banned the Communist Party last year, Russian newspapers and legal scholars say.

A ruling in Yeltsin's favor would give the president a moral boost and deprive his opponents of a major weapon before the Congress of People's Deputies, controlled by former Communists, opens Tuesday.

While it is doubtful that hard-line lawmakers who have threatened to impeach Yeltsin can muster a two-thirds majority in the 1,046-member

Congress, the court could give them the legal grounds — and political momentum — to try.

The panel of 13 judges is scheduled to rule Monday on a lawsuit by pro-Communist legislators who contend Yeltsin exceeded his constitutional authority when he banned the former ruling party after a failed August 1991 coup against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

The court wrapped up a four-month trial Nov. 13. Since then, the judges have deliberated behind closed doors and given no clues about their decision.

"We know that a bomb is going to drop" when the verdict is announced, the daily Izvestia said last week. "But we don't know how many megatons it will be, or on what side it will fall."

The court, created just one year ago, is the ultimate authority on constitutional issues but does not consider criminal cases. Nine of the 13 judges are former Communists.

Eighty-six percent of the deputies in the Congress are former Communists, but not all are hard-liners. The hard-line National Salvation Front, which consists of nationalists and former Communists, has 355 seats.

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