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THURSDAY MAY 9 1996

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Stay with us - Mandela

F W threat to quit government is 'regrettable'

Political Staff and Sapa

PRESIDENT Mandela says it will be regrettable if National Party leader F W de Klerk chooses to lead his party out of the government of national unity, but he has adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

Responding to Mr De Klerk's announcement that the NP was considering pulling out of the cabinet, Mr Mandela said he did not wish to express an opinion because he doubted that Mr De Klerk knew what the outcome would be of next week's NP federal council meeting, which is to decide on the issue.

Mr Mandela said it would be regrettable if the NP chose to leave the government. "I hope that wiser counsel will prevail and that they remain in the GNU."

He pointed out that the NP had argued during constitutional negotiations for the enforced coalition to continue beyond 1999. This had been rejected because it did not require a clause in the constitution to govern by consensus.

He said the ANC would remain committed to its position that the GNU should not last beyond the turn of the century.

As to the future strategy of the NP, Mr Mandela said: "Let's wait and see."

The African National Congress dismissed Mr De Klerk's announcement as "nothing new" and as designed to deflate the confidence engendered by the adoption of a new constitution.

Speculation of an NP withdrawal from the government sent the rand plummeting again yesterday, losing 11 US cents to close at nearly R4,50 to the dollar.

However, a measure of stability could be restored as trade union giant Cosatu has allayed fears that it would use its new constitutional gains to hold the country to ransom.

In January last year, a threat by the NP to leave the cabinet rocked the market.

Speaking during the debate on the Constitution Bill, Mr De Klerk said the NP federal executive would meet next week to consider its options after its reluctant decision to support the new constitution.

In a statement, Mr De Klerk said no decision had been taken yet. But considering a withdrawal was logical because the new constitution made no provision for continued joint decision-making.

If the era of enforced coalition was to end, people were asking: "Why not now?" Mr De Klerk said.

He said a decision would be taken in "full realisation of our responsibility to South Africa and all its people."

ANC spokesman Ronnie Mamoepa said similar statements by the NP had coincided with major events in the country, such as the opening of parliament, and now the adoption of the constitution.

By its statement, the NP was undermining nation building and eroding confidence abroad, Mr Mamoepa said.

Mr De Klerk's position has tempered South Africa's joy over the adoption of a new constitution. There was turmoil on the currency markets, with the rand tumbling on the rumours that the NP might quit the government.

The rand's new slide, coupled with rising short-term interest rates, rekindled fears that Reserve Bank governor Chris Stals might decide on a new rise in the bank rate.

The bank rate - the rate at which the Reserve Bank lends to the banking system - was raised one percent to 16 percent earlier this month.

Last Friday Dr Stals ruled out another increase in the immediate future. Money market interest rates, he said then, were not yet at levels which would make this necessary.

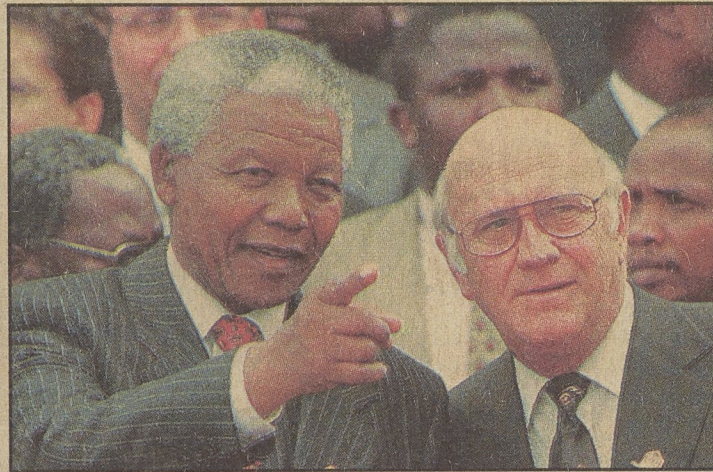
Asked yesterday whether new developments on the markets would make him change his mind, Dr Stals said the Reserve Bank would not speculate on possible future changes in the bank rate.

"As always, developments in the financial markets will be taken into account with any decision to change the bank rate", he said.

On the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, industrial shares slid to a five-month low in a market made nervous by the rand's new weakness. Dealers said worse-than-expected figures for gold and foreign exchange reserves had contributed to worries about the currency.

Meanwhile Cosatu leaders were careful to allay fears that labour would use its newly entrenched constitutional gains to hold the government and economy to ransom. General secretary Sam Shilowa indicated that the federation had no immediate plans to fight the lock-out further.

See pages 3 and 21.



Pictures: LEON MULLER and HANNES THIART, The Argus.

HIGH JINKS: Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel jives jubilantly, left, at the party held in Fernwood, Newlands, to celebrate the adoption of the new constitution. The leaders of South Africa's two main parties that approved the constitution are President Nelson Mandela of the ANC and his deputy FW de Klerk of the NP, above.

SA team plans bid on peak tomorrow

Staff Reporter

THE South African Everest expedition is expected to begin its second attempt on the summit of the world's highest mountain early tomorrow, after high winds of up to 140 km/h forced it to turn back late yesterday.

The members of the first summit team are Ian Woodall, Bruce Herrod, Cathy O'Dowd and four Sherpas who are professional climbers - one whom has been up the mountain three times.

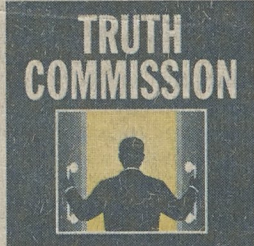
They were forced back from their camp four about 8 000m high on the slopes of the 8 848m mountain to a camp lower down by the bad weather, which was also responsible for the failure of other international expeditions' attempts on the summit earlier this week.

Expedition member Deshun Deysel said the temperatures were fine, but it was impossible to go above 7 000m in the howling wind.

The team was planning to climb back to its abandoned camp four last night to prepare for a bid to reach the summit by mid-day tomorrow.

Rights violators may lose jobs and perks

JOHN YELD on the Truth Commission



DURBAN. - The Truth Commission may recommend that perpetrators of human rights violations should not hold public office or be entitled to benefits such as pensions and promotions.

These recommendations could be made to the government before the commission's final report is drawn up at the end of next year.

This emerged after yesterday's hearings, when commission chairman Desmond Tutu and his deputy Alex Boraine reacted to the call by the family of Magoo's Bar bombing victim Marchelle Gerrard that bomber Robert McBride should not hold public office.

Archbishop Tutu said he did not think it correct to speculate publicly on any likely recommendations - but that calls such as those of Ms Gerrard's family and other victims regarding perpetrators were being taken "very seriously".

"This is a strong view which is being put forward and I want to discuss this, perhaps with the full commission. It is not an unreasonable position to have been taken by the witnesses," Archbishop Tutu said.

Dr Boraine said the request to remove Mr McBride - at present a deputy-director in the Department of Foreign Affairs -

from public office had to be seen in the wider context of the commission's mandate to establish a culture of human rights in South Africa.

This meant that being able to commit human rights violations with impunity, treating such rights with disrespect or, "even worse", being rewarded for violations had to be discouraged.

"We are not going to let this drop - it is going to be debated and discussed," said Dr Boraine.

It was an issue which the commission needed to act on before its mandate expired in December next year "You can't wait two years," said Dr Boraine.

Noting that several victims - including Ms Gerrard's family - had testified that they expected perpetrators to contact them personally and apologise, Dr Boraine said it was possible the commission would contact Mr McBride and other alleged perpetrators to discuss this issue with them.

He rejected as "absurd" an alleged remark by Mr McBride that his case had attracted more attention than other bombings because the victims had been white.

"All human life is precious - it's a principle which we feel very strongly about."

Archbishop Tutu also rejected the suggestion. "We seek to express our revulsion at ghastly things on all sides."

More reports, page 4

Seaman dies in harbour accident

Staff Reporter

A SEAMAN was killed and two were hurt when an evacuation exercise on a ship in Cape Town harbour went awry.

The three were part of a group being lowered in a lifeboat into the water from a Liberian-registered semi-container ship.

The drill aboard Astra Peak at Ben Schoeman dock 604 went wrong when one of the ropes holding the lifeboat, which was secured to the side of the vessel, snapped and the craft flipped, flinging the five men out.

An inflatable life raft was thrown to the men and, by the time the police waterwing arrived, all the men were inside it.

Attempts were made to resuscitate a seaman in his forties whose head was injured in the fall. He was later declared dead.

Taxi blockade chaos

Staff Reporter

THOUSANDS of Mitchell's Plain commuters were stranded early today as taxi drivers blocked the Mitchell's Plain town centre bus terminus.

Golden Arrow bus company spokesman Jeanne Welsh said no buses were able to pick up passengers in the town centre, but the company was running buses from the Kapteinsklop area in an effort to pick up passengers waiting en route.

Internal stability unit policemen were on the scene today.

A police spokesman said taxi drivers were intimidating bus drivers and causing "general disruption".



QUEEN ELIZABETH: The offending portrait

Portrait of puffy-faced Queen comes under fire

LONDON. - A portrait of Queen Elizabeth, which the artist claims to be a good likeness, has come under fire from critics who say it makes her look older than her 70 years.

The picture was commissioned from the up-and-coming Antony Williams by the Royal Society of Portrait Painters, whose president Daphne Todd admitted the Queen might not like it.

The loyal Times newspaper commented: "The canvas shows the Queen's face and hands as wrinkled, puffy, rubbery and distinctly elderly, whereas recent photographs of her birthday celebrations suggest she is wearing her years with grace and relaxation."

But, Ms Todd said, "It's one of the best paintings of the Queen I've ever seen because it's not superficial."

Williams said: "I haven't gone out of my way to be unflattering. I just wanted to pro-

duce a good honest painting - a good likeness."

He added: "I wasn't out to shock. I think it's just a very straightforward painting. I haven't put in anything that isn't there."

The monarch gave six sittings for Williams, who said he had a problem with her sitting still.

"I did have to bring that up with her private secretary. The Queen was constantly being distracted by things in her garden or she was quite keen to talk," he said.

"But, she was very easy to get along with as a sitter."

The Queen has yet to see the painting, which has gone on show at a gallery, not far from her residence of Buckingham Palace.

"I think she will not like it. One just has to hope that she will not be too saddened by it," said Ms Todd.

"Our intention was to honour her." -SAPA-AFP.

THE CAPE



Disgruntled tenant Graeme Morkel

FAULTY FLATS: TENANT AT WIT'S END

- page 6



MISS RAVE STEPS OUT IN WINNING WINTER GEAR

- page 17



The band, Joint Effort

JOINT JOL AT BRASS BELL - AND OTHER GIGS

- page 8

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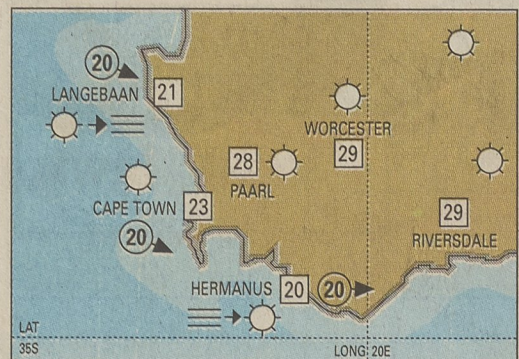
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KEY	WIND DIR. & SPEED (km/h)
☁ CLOUDY	☁ FOG
☀ PARTLY CLOUDY	☀ THUNDER SHOWERS
☀ FINE/SUNNY	☀ SNOW
☀ RAIN SLIGHT PROB.	☀ COLD FRONT
☀ RAIN MOD. PROB.	☀ BECOMING
☀ RAIN GOOD PROB.	☀ MAX. TEMP. DEGREE C

Rain	The tides	The sun
Yesterday nil	High water 0745 2033	Sunset today 1758
Month total 3.5 mm	Tomorrow 0907 2155	Sunrise tomorrow 0727
Month average 76.4 mm	Low water 0141 1406	
	Tomorrow 0302 1529	

Air temps	Water temps	The moon
Today 7am 11.4 deg C	Sea Point 12.5 deg C	● New moon May 17
Expected max 24 deg C	Sea Point pool closed	● Last quarter May 10
Yesterday 2pm 26.2 deg C	Muizenberg 13 deg C	● First quarter May 25
Yesterday min 9.4 deg C	Muizenberg pool 15.5 deg C	○ Full moon June 1
Yesterday max 27.8 deg C	Newlands pool 15 deg C	
	Long St pool 25 deg C	

TRAVELLERS' FORECAST	WEATHER DATA
Johannesburg Partly cloudy, mild 9 to 22 deg C	Sunshine yesterday 1.9 hours
Pretoria Partly cloudy, warm 10 to 24 deg C	Cloud yesterday 8am: seven-eighths 2pm: seven-eighths 8pm: four-eighths
Durban Fine and warm 18 to 27 deg C	Barometer 2pm yesterday: 1014.3 mb 7am today: 1017.2 mb
Bloemfontein Partly cloudy, mild 6 to 22 deg C	Humidity 2pm yesterday: 32 percent
Port Elizabeth Partly cloudy, hot 14 to 28 deg C	Wind 2pm yesterday: SW 4 knots

TRAVELLERS' FORECAST	WEATHER DATA
Johannesburg Partly cloudy, mild 9 to 22 deg C	Sunshine yesterday 19 hours
Pretoria Partly cloudy, warm 10 to 24 deg C	Cloud yesterday 8am: seven-eighths 2pm: seven-eighths 8pm: four-eighths
Durban Fine and warm 18 to 27 deg C	Barometer 2pm yesterday: 1014,3 mb 7am today: 1017,2 mb
Bloemfontein Partly cloudy, mild 6 to 22 deg C	Humidity 2pm yesterday: 32 percent
Port Elizabeth Partly cloudy, hot 14 to 28 deg C	Wind 2pm yesterday: (1)

Windspeed and direction				
Blouberg	561723	Kommetjie	783 2442	
Muizenberg	788 8226	Strand	024 854 7593	

OUTLOOK FOR NEXT THREE DAYS IN CAPE TOWN					
DAY	TEMP. MIN. MAX.		WIN DIR. KPH.	RAIN	CLOUD
FRIDAY 10	12	23	NW 40	☀☀☀	☀☀☀
SATURDAY 11	11	20	NW 25	NIL	☀☀☀
SUNDAY 12	11	20	NW 25	☀☀☀	☀☀☀

THE WORLD

Fiasco as new Liberia peace bid collapses

Summit off – fresh fighting looms

MONROVIA. – Liberia's suffering people are bracing for more fighting in the country's six-year civil war after a new summit-level regional peace effort ended as a fiasco.

A leaders' meeting on Liberia in Ghana was called off at the last minute yesterday as most of the heads of state shunned it.

Their foreign ministers then adopted yet new measures on ending renewed violence but many Liberians feared they left too much to the goodwill of the country's ruthless warlords.

The ministers touched on the central issue – taking arms away from Liberia's 60 000 guerrillas – but did not give the ECOMOG peacekeeping force additional means or men to do this.

"That means a continuation of war, so we may be obliged to go on living here," lamented Peter Sennah, chairman of the displaced community sheltering in the United States embassy residence.

Planning ministry economist Peter Kpangbai said: "We have been suffering for the past six years. It seems to me that the African leaders are getting tired of us."

The international community's fatigue with Liberia's long conflict that has defied

a dozen previous peace accords is a message heard repeatedly this week.

The United Nations warned warlords on Tuesday that humanitarian aid for Liberia could dry up if warring parties failed to make peace, disarm guerrillas and return property looted from international agencies since violence flared on April 6.

Ghana's President Jerry Rawlings went further, threatening a total withdrawal of the Nigerian-led ECOMOG peacekeeping force in which Ghana and Guinea also have combat troops.

"The ultimate option in the face of continuing meagre international support and intransigence and duplicity among faction leaders is for ECOMOG to pull out from Liberia," Mr Rawlings told the closing session of a ministerial meeting held instead of the planned summit.

"Liberia is in mortal danger of being abandoned by the international community," he said.

Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi added: "I hope that the Liberian people



EXECUTION: Liberian militiamen, above, loyal to Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia take aim at an enemy Krahn fighter after capturing him and stripping him of his clothes. Right: A militiaman executes his foe, who was already wounded after being shot in the back. Renewed clashes between rival factions broke out in Monrovia in spite of a ceasefire. Peace talks in Ghana were cancelled when heads of state shunned it, leaving the war-weary citizens of the West African country bracing for renewed fighting and bloodshed.

will now show their good faith. If not? Well, withdrawal of ECOMOG is only one option."

The summit was called by Ghana, which holds the rotating presidency of the 16-nation Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) that sent the ECOMOG force to Liberia in 1990.

It became necessary after fresh violence derailed a 1995 peace accord seen as the most comprehensive and promising because all the main faction leaders signed it and were given jobs.

Fighting has been exacerbated by rivalry between dominant faction leaders Charles Taylor and Alhaji Kromah on the one hand and warlord Roosevelt Johnson, the hero of the Krahn tribe that dominated Liberia under assassinated President Samuel Doe, on the other.

Attempts by Liberia's ruling council backed by guerrillas loyal to Mr Taylor and Mr Kromah to arrest Mr Johnson on mur-



der charges ignited Krahn nationalism and urban warfare in Monrovia.

The United States evacuated frightened foreigners and has kept warships with Marines off Liberia, a country founded by freed American slaves in 1847. The US remains the most influential foreign power

in Liberia but has so far resisted the temptation to get involved there militarily.

Assistant Secretary of State George Moose told a congressional sub-committee in Washington yesterday that the US still hoped that peace could be restored even though the situation was bleak. – Reuter.

War crimes tribunal hears of Serb atrocities in Bosnia

THE HAGUE. – A British military historian has told a United Nations war crimes trial how Yugoslavia disintegrated into warring factions in the early 1990s – sparking the bloody Bosnian conflict that has claimed more than 200 000 lives.

In six hours of testimony James Gow helped the prosecution build a case of atrocity against Serb paramilitary Dusan "Dusko" Tadic.

On the second day of Mr Tadic's trial here yesterday, Dr Gow, a lecturer in war studies at London University and an expert in Yugoslav history, outlined the breakup of the former Yugoslavia which sparked war between Serb separatists and the mainly Muslim Bosnian government.

Mr Tadic, 40, the first person to face an international war crimes tribunal since the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials after World War 2, has denied charges of killing, raping and torturing Muslim and Croat civilians in the Prijedor region of north-western Bosnia.

Dr Gow, the only witness to take the stand so far, outlined to the three UN judges the historic and political context of atrocities in north-western Bosnia in 1992, illustrating shifts in the political and ethnic boundaries on maps displayed on video monitors in the high-tech courtroom.

Prosecutor Grant Niemann, outlining his strategy on Tuesday, said horrific war crimes committed by Mr Tadic were part of a broader Serb policy of "ethnic cleansing" aimed at driving out Muslims and Croats and claiming Prijedor for themselves.

Other expert witnesses will testify next week, with the first eyewitness accounts of atrocities at the heart of the Tadic case not expected until the third week of the trial.

The proceedings, before judges from the United States, Australia and Malaysia – but no jury – are expected to last several months.

Mr Tadic was portrayed by the prosecution on Tuesday as a sadistic Serb nationalist who killed for fun, and by his defence as a hapless scapegoat who was the victim of mistaken identity.

The tribunal, set up by the Security Council in May 1993, marks the first attempt by the UN to enforce treaties on the conduct of war and protection of civilians.

So far it has charged 57 people with war crimes – 46 Serbs, eight

Croats and three Muslims – but holds only Mr Tadic and two others at its detention unit in The Hague.

The tribunal said yesterday that it had taken custody of a Bosnian Muslim officer accused of murder, torture and rape at Celebici camp at Konjic in central Bosnia in 1992.

"Today the German authorities transferred to the tribunal Zejnir Delalic, one of the four men accused in the tribunal's first indictment dealing with Bosnian Serb victims," spokesman Christian Chatter told reporters.

Mr Delalic was arrested by German police in Munich on March 18. The tribunal said earlier that Bosnian Muslim and Croat forces attacked the predominantly Muslim town of Konjic in May 1992, rounding up Serbs and holding them at the Celebici camp.

The Security Council yesterday called on Yugoslavia to execute without delay arrest warrants issued by the tribunal against three men accused of murdering 260 people after the fall of the Croatian city of Vukovar in 1991.

The tribunal's letter was the first to the council complaining of a lack of co-operation. – Reuter.

Tories creep back – Labour ahead 17%

LONDON. – The Conservative Party has gained some consolation from an opinion poll today showing they have cut the Labour Party's lead to 17 percent – from 21 percent last month.

The poll, for the Guardian newspaper, put Labour's share of the vote at 45 percent, down five points from April. The Tories were down one point at 28 percent with the Liberal Democrats up four at 24 percent.

The Conservatives, riven by divisions over Europe, have a majority of just one in the Commons. Prime Minister John Major's government has to call a general election by next May.

Ministers' hopes of maintaining some sort of unity ahead of the election took yet another blow yesterday when eight Tory MPs called for a referendum on Britain's future in Europe.

Euro-sceptics oppose the idea of a single European currency and another poll showed most Britons support them – for the time being at least. – Reuter.

Doctor obsessed with Diana back on trail

LONDON. – Princess Diana's obsessive fan, German doctor Klaus Wagner, has begun trailing her again after being released from psychiatric treatment ordered by a court.

Mr Wagner, who claims Queen Elizabeth is evil and should be replaced by Diana, the estranged wife of her son, Prince Charles, approached the princess as she emerged from her London health club yesterday.

A spokesman for the princess said Mr Wagner tried to give her a packet, which she refused.

He then went to St Paul's Cathedral, where the Queen and her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, were attending a service, and paraded in front of the building with a placard.

Mr Wagner, in March confined to a psychiatric hospital for 28 days, was last month struck off by the British Medical Association for possession and use of drugs. – Sapa-AFP.

Congress to probe 'buying off' claim

The Argus Foreign Service

WASHINGTON. – The United States Congress will subpoena a former American government official to divulge on May 21 whether the Clinton administration paid him a large amount of money to keep quiet about irregularities in the US foreign assistance programme in South Africa.

The House international relations committee yesterday approved the authority to subpoena Paul Neifert, who worked in the US Agency for International Development's (AID) South Africa office for several years.

After being transferred back to Washington, Mr Neifert criticised irregularities, including claims that AID contracts were being channelled disproportionately to black Americans and to Africans in South Africa at the expense of other races.

At a hearing of the international relations committee on April 25, chairman Benjamin Gilman asked AID administrator Brian Atwood whether his agency had paid Mr Neifert a large severance package to "buy his silence" about the problems in the AID office.

Mr Atwood denied that Mr Neifert had been forced out or that he had been paid to buy his silence. AID and Mr Neifert had reached an amicable settlement and it was customary not to divulge the amount of such settlements.

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'Proof' that refinery's not main cause of pollution

LINDSAY BARNES
Staff Reporter

THE thick brown layer of pollution hanging over Cape Town was "conclusive proof" that Cal-tex's Milnerton refinery, which was shut down for six weeks from mid-April, was not the main cause of the city's high pollution level.

This was said by company media manager Terry O'Donovan, who added that Cape Town had a serious pollution problem and something had to be done about it.

Yesterday's high pollution levels clearly demonstrated to local residents that the refinery, which was shut down for a major overhaul and the installation of equipment to reduce pollution, was not entirely to blame.

The choking air showed even higher levels of pollution than that recorded late in April.

At 10am yesterday, a high nitrogen oxide level of 1 970 micrograms a cubic metre was recorded, far exceeding the South African guideline of 1 504 micrograms a cubic metre. This was a considerable leap from the 1 752 reading on April 27.

The nitrogen dioxide reading of 346 micrograms a cubic metre was considerably higher than the 307 recorded late in April, but was still less than the guideline of 376.

Mr O'Donovan said there were many contributors to the overall problem, including car emissions, heavy-duty diesel vehicles and open fires in squatter settlements.

Ivan Bromfield, assistant medical officer of health for the Cape Town City Council, said the recommended maximum level of nitrogen oxide had been exceeded because of calm conditions and a low-lying temperature inversion, which trapped the pollution instead of allowing it to disperse.

The recorded level did not call for immediate action to decrease pollution, but the potential for health problems had increased.

A major study of the brown haze was being conducted by a group at the University of Cape Town's Energy Research Institute to identify the source and content of the pollution. The study was funded by the oil industry, said Dr Bromfield.

Wild ride at House of Horrors

Media puts nation on rollercoaster in the Malherbe Street police hunt

The Argus Correspondent

PRETORIA. — Day three of the House of Horrors search was a roller-coaster ride of high hopes and despair for the media contingent and the nation carried along with it.

Expectations were high as the police team arrived at Malherbe Street. But digging only started after 10am, when a Pretoria magistrate issued a warrant to hunt for a body.

As the morning dragged on, with the drone of heavy machinery behind the high walls as monotonous as the news, hopes of a key find flagged.

Then came a visit by Gauteng Commissioner Sharma Maharaj, and expectation peaked.

"We are very confident that a major breakthrough will be made this afternoon, and that bodies will be found," he told the strong media contingent.

Within minutes the news had flashed across the country.

"They must have found something. Maybe body parts or clothing. Why else lift our hopes?" was the talk outside the house.

His departure heralded the arrival of Kobie Wapenaar — mother of Anne-Marie, one of the five missing girls, sending the media into a frenzy of photographs and speculation.

Surely the police had called her in to identify something?

Speaking later from her home, Mrs Wapenaar con-

firmed she had not been invited to come but had asked.

"I had read everything in the newspapers and wanted to see for myself. I asked the police and they agreed to let me come," she said.

"I know less than you. They didn't show me much — just where they were digging. They said they hadn't found anything yet."

"It was very disturbing being in the house. I was there in 1990 when they first searched it, and it hasn't changed. It was a very emotional visit for me."

The afternoon passed with smaller bursts of camera activity. For a while the machines stopped. The angle grinder had broken, police said, and another one was en route.

It arrived about half an hour later.

Then a rare glimpse of Director Reggie Marimuthu — "No, I've nothing to tell you. I just wanted some air ... No, they haven't found a body yet."

By 4pm the ride was over. "We have found no concrete evidence. Digging has stopped," said a police spokesman.

The media contingent began to drift away.

But for die-hard hacks, determined to sit it out until the bitter end, there was a small reward at about 4.30pm: a small bone, about the size of a man's index finger, found under the main bedroom floor. Today we should know if it is human.



PARTY, PARTY, PARTY! Scrumming down at the gala bash to celebrate the approval of the new constitution are Roelf Meyer, constitutional assembly deputy chairman Leon Wessels, chairman Cyril Ramaphosa, and National Party chief negotiator

Rocking around clock to Constitutional beat

CLIVE SAWYER
Political Correspondent

IT was the night constitutional negotiators found common ground — on the dance floor at the Fernwood parliamentary club.

Opening proceedings at a glittering banquet last night at the club to celebrate the approval of the new constitution, constitutional assembly chairman Cyril Ramaphosa told the 1 500 guests: "This is a night to celebrate. Wine must flow. We want to see smiles, especially constitutional smiles."

Mr Ramaphosa sported a red plastic rose to celebrate South Africa now having a "revolutionary constitution".

In the long nights of trying to stave off an impasse, he had worn a pink or red rose to brighten his mood.

Now the mood was as bright as Mr Ramaphosa's rose.

From the guest of honour, President Mandela, there was a light-hearted avuncular warning: "Let us exercise the right to freedom of expression without infringing on the right of Fernwood's neighbours to peace."

Earlier this year, Newlands residents complained to police about being disturbed by the noise from the African National Congress's start-of-session party at the club.

Mr Mandela began his speech by disclosing he had been asked to prepare two speeches for the

occasion, depending on whether the constitution was passed.

He quipped: "I sincerely hope I have brought the right one".

Recalling his letter to former president P W Botha seven years ago, Mr Mandela said he had then tried to address the question of reconciling the demand from black people for majority rule with that of whites who did not want to be on the receiving end of racial domination.

"How far we have moved since then."

The constitution passed yesterday signalled a departure from the preoccupation with the balance of demands between race groups.

The balancees now were between tiers of government,

workers and business, universal equality and affirmative action, and protecting those with property, and balancing this with the needs of those without.

The adoption of the constitution was not the end of the negotiation process.

Speeches over, the only document for veteran negotiators to pore over was a menu, which featured an avocado and Franschhoek salmon trout starter, and Karoo lamb or kingklip as a main course.

But it was when the lights were dimmed in the big white marquee bedecked with South African flags, and the Soweto String Quartet struck up the first of its lively numbers, that the party began in earnest.

Don't send wife killer to jail, lawyer tells court

DENNIS CAVERNELIS
Supreme Court Reporter

A WORCESTER man who murdered his wife and stepson should not be imprisoned, his lawyer has told the Cape Supreme Court.

Siebert Neethling, 51, of Protea Road, Worcester, was convicted this week on charges of murdering his wife, Marendra, 44, and stepson, Wikus Pretorius, 24, in April last year.

He pleaded guilty. P A Botha, appearing for Neethling, asked the court to impose a sentence of correctional supervision on his client, and not to imprison him, while the state has called for direct imprisonment.

Neethling said in his plea explanation that his wife often belittled him, and sided with the children in questioning his authority — and on the night he killed her she confirmed his suspicion that she was having an affair.

They had argued that night, and later Wikus stormed into his bedroom, while his wife hit him with a broomstick, he said.

He took out his revolver, which at first misfired, and shot his stepson.

"I wanted to kill Marendra too. I could hear her words in my mind. 'He saw him'," he said, referring to a car he had noticed driving past the house earlier, apparently with Marendra's lover in it.

Neethling shot at his wife in their kitchen, and she ran outside with one of their other children. He fired two shots at her outside, killing her with the second shot.

Mr Botha said Neethling "poses no danger to the community".

Neethling had not, it appeared, been rejected by the community, as his employers had agreed to keep him on if he was sentenced to correctional supervision, and his neighbour had brought him food shortly after he had killed his wife, said Mr Botha.

"He will have to live with the fact that he killed his wife and stepson, and that his other children will have nothing to do with him."

"Direct imprisonment is the only option," said prosecutor, Advocate Piet Nel.

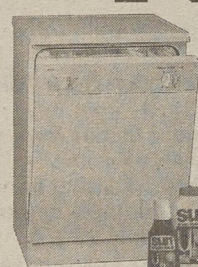
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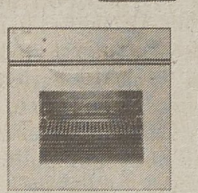
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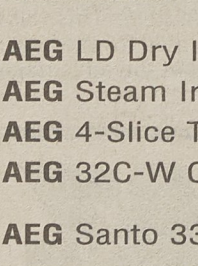


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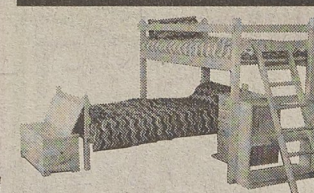


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First IFP witness recalls killing by UDF supporters

AN INKATHA Freedom Party leader and councillor has described to the Truth Commission how he was repeatedly stabbed and left for dead by United Democratic Front supporters who later burnt his house and four cars.

Silulani Nicholas Miya was the first IFP member to testify at the commission's human rights violations committee hearings in Durban this week.

He told the commission that in September 1989 he had tried in vain to save the life of a young boy who had run to his house in a township just north of the city.

The boy had come to him for help because he was a prominent IFP leader and councillor.

"They stabbed at him. He fell. He was dizzy and tried to run again. They stabbed and stabbed and stabbed at him," Mr Miya said.

Because the boy's body had been left lying in the street for several hours, he had tried to negotiate with the UDF supporters who had murdered him to remove the body.

But his attempts had been rebuffed and he had been attacked.

"I was stabbed by lots of people and I fell. I thought I was going to follow the other guy.

"As I was lying there unconscious, two people put me in the street. I was just fortunate I managed to get up again and walk to my home."

Two days later his home had been petrol-bombed and completely destroyed, and four of his cars had also been burnt out in an arson attack.

There were loud murmurs, mutterings and some laughter when Mr Miya testified that the petrol-bombs had initially failed to ignite in his home because he was using traditional medicine to protect it.

Commission chairman Desmond Tutu threatened to clear the hall if the audience did not keep quiet. "Don't interrupt - we are here to listen to everyone's story," he said.

In his evidence Mr Miya did not identify which organisation he belonged to or who his assailants were.

But in response to a question from commissioner Dumisa Ntsebeza, he said he had been an IFP chairman and councillor in his township.

"I am not hiding that ... I want to explain it clearly. It wasn't the ANC fighting Inkatha, but it was the UDF, and the UDF has been closed down now," he said.



SEARCH FOR TRUTH: Joyce Mananki Seipei, mother of murdered teenage activist Stompie, at the Truth Commission yesterday with her daughter Elizabeth. Mrs Seipei told the commission of her anguish at having to identify her son's body. Stompie was 14 when he died after being assaulted by members of the Mandela United Football Club in Soweto. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela was later found guilty of being involved in his kidnapping.

Tutu hails Inkatha's support for hearings

Party urges members to testify

THE Truth Commission has been "thrilled" to discover that the allegedly negative attitude of the Inkatha Freedom Party to its proceedings are a misconception, says chairman Desmond Tutu.

He was remarking on disclosures by IFP secretary-general Ziba Jiyani during a television debate with commission deputy chairman Alex Boraine.

Dr Jiyani had said that although the IFP was unhappy with the composition of the commission and the way it had been set up, it was encouraging its members to testify and apply for amnesty.

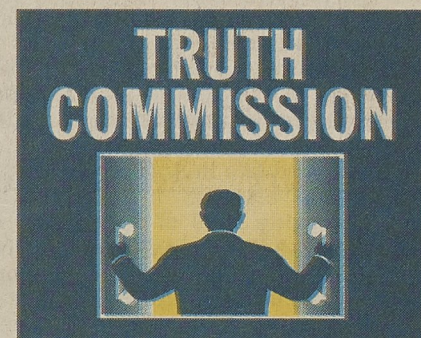
Speaking at the start of yesterday's hearings at the Jewish Club here - when an IFP leader and councillor gave evidence for the first time - Archbishop Tutu said the commission had been "very anxious" about such a significant player as the IFP not co-operating with the commission.

"This is one time when it is nice to be wrong, and I'm glad we've been proven wrong."

"Up until now we've been under the mistaken apprehension that the IFP was not co-operating with the commission."

"The IFP secretary-general said that, far from this being the case, the opposite was true and they were actively encouraging members of that party to come before the commission, and they were especially keen that its members who were behind bars should apply for amnesty."

Archbishop Tutu said that the commission had been "quite surprised" by



Report from JOHN YELD in Durban

Dr Jiyani's comments.

"Some of the public pronouncements of the (IFP) leaders had given the impression that the commission wasn't exactly their blue-eyed boy," he said.

The commission would still try to meet IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi, "in line with our policy of meeting political leaders."

Told that Dr Jiyani had later issued a statement clarifying the IFP's position and that this had included reference to the "selective" use of the commission, Archbishop Tutu said he had not seen the statement.

"But no party can avoid public scrutiny once it uses any one of the committees of the commission," he said.

"It is in the interests of all parties to tell their story. We are keen to stress that we are meant to tell the whole story."

'Suicide' dentist had 60 abrasions

DENTIST Hoosen Haffeejee, alleged by security police to have hanged himself in jail with a pair of trousers, had about 60 abrasions on his body. Some of the injuries might have been made with an implement similar to those used to compress lead seals onto string or wire.

This was the conclusion of a doctor who had experimented to produce similar marks to those seen on Dr Haffeejee's body after his death at Brighton Beach police station on August 3 1977, his brother Yusuf Haffeejee told the Truth Commission yesterday.

Holding up an instrument of the type referred to by the doctor, Mr Haffeejee said explanations about his brother's alleged suicide - accepted by inquest magistrate Trevor Blunden - were "a clumsy lie".

"We believe that if Hoosen did take his own life, then he did so because he was so sadistically tortured that he sought refuge in death, rather than undergo further torture."

The Haffeejee family had been "sorely tempted" to join the Biko, Ribeiro and Mxenge families who are challenging

the constitutionality of the amnesty provisions of the Truth Commission. Mr Haffeejee said.

"We chose to come to this commission because we agree with two of its functions: there should be a record of all human rights violations and atrocities, and not just from 1960 only, and we agree that wherever possible there ought to be reparation to victims of the family."

They were totally opposed to amnesty for those who had caused their brother's death, Mr Haffeejee said.

"Murderers, torturers and human rights abusers must be

given no amnesty. There can be no forgiveness for such people. Hoosen was our son, our brother, our colleague and comrade. No person or organisation can grant amnesty on our behalf."

Appealing to the commission to help the family in its quest for justice, Mr Haffeejee said he believed its amnesty hearings should be as open as the human rights violations hearings he was taking part in.

Commission deputy chairperson Alex Boraine assured him the amnesty committee hearings would be in public.

ANC 'created an orphan' with blast

ANC 'created an orphan' with blast

"IT'S hard, growing up without brothers and sisters, without parents - I don't want to see other kids, especially today, end up an orphan like me."

This was the statement to the Truth Commission from 18-year-old Kasavan "Terrence" Rengasamy, whose parents, Anamalai ("Daya") and Leelavathi, were killed by a bomb blast on the Durban's Esplanade on April 3 1984.

Another person died in the blast and several were injured.

Mr Rengasamy said he would like to know who had planted the bomb.

"I would forgive him if he told me why he did it," he said.

The bomb had definitely been planted by the African National Congress, Mr Rengasamy's brother, radio journalist Gary Govindasamy, told the commission yesterday.

Mr Govindasamy, who took Terrence into his own family after the death of his parents, told the commission that after the blast he had made media statements condemning the then P W Botha government and putting the legal blame for the deaths on that government.

"I called on them to unban the ANC and other banned organisations and to allow all exiles to return home, and I also called for the release of Nelson Mandela and other political leaders.

"I called on the Nationalist government to begin talks earnestly to stop the carnage which was at the time engulfing the country."

"I said we could not allow innocent people to be killed by these types of atrocities ... I was branded a traitor and a betrayer ... I was completely ostracised by my family."

Mr Govindasamy was also highly critical of the ANC.

"The ANC knows full well that they planted the bomb on the Esplanade and that they refused to accept responsibility because of certain statements I made," he said.

"The ANC has a duty to accept responsibility for the blast - they created an orphan in the name of Terrence sitting here by me."

The ANC had played no part in his brother's funeral.

"They never offered us any money, no sympathy card ... no nothing."

"It is sad that even people who are now in parliament and people who knew us so well failed to arrive at the funeral."

Asked by the commission what he expected from it, Mr Rengasamy said he would like a hall or something similar to be named after his parents.

"And probably any funds you should give to the needy people, like Stompie Seipei's mother, who needs it," he added.

Woman who hid MK trio tells of shocks

AN ELDERLY woman has told the commission SA Defence Force soldiers made her lie on the ground as three young uMkhonto weSizwe soldiers she had been sheltering in her house were killed by a grenade explosion.

Umlazi resident Tryphina Jokweni, 72, who was 63 at the time of the shoot-out in 1987, was introduced to the commission as the first woman combatant to testify to its human rights violations committee.

She told the commission she had been detained and tortured after the incident.

While being taken to the police station, she had been tightly handcuffed and a bag had been placed over her head.

"I didn't know where I was. I couldn't distinguish between day and night."

"These police did all the cruel things to me. They put an electric shock all over me."

"I collapsed. I was urinating. I had no food, no water - the only thing I wanted was water."

Mrs Jokweni said she had been wearing only a thin nightdress when arrested, and she had not been allowed a change of clothing.

"I had urinated in my nightdress and they said to me I was smelling ..."

"They said, 'We're going to beat you in a way that the doctors won't be able to recognise, you dirty old woman'."

She had not been able to see without her glasses, and at one stage her hand had been handcuffed behind her for three days.

"I said, 'God, if you could let me die!'" Mrs Jokweni told the hearing.

In her written statement to the commission, Mrs Jokweni said she had been constantly hit on the head and electric shocks had been administered to her ears, stomach, feet and private parts.

She named one of the men responsible for interrogating and torturing her.

ANC call to East Rand victims

VOSLOORUS. - The Vosloorus branch of the African National Congress on the East Rand has called on victims of human rights violations in the area to testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

A spokesman for the branch said they believed few from the Vosloorus area had attended the commission's recent hearings in Gauteng. This was due either to the limited time allocated for the hearings or a lack of understanding about the advantages of giving evidence. - Sapa.

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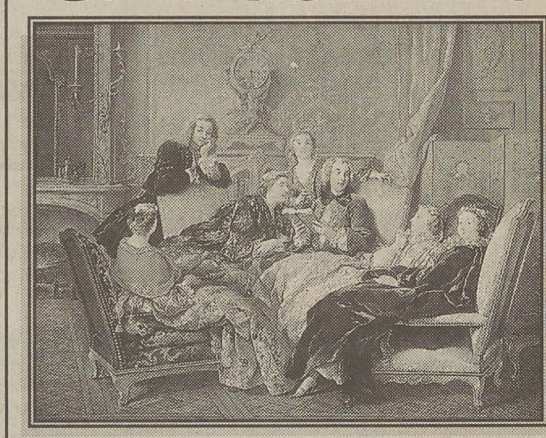
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UCT is back on international map

Schools of art and architecture are singled out

Education Reporter

THE University of Cape Town is proving that international interest in its academic programme is alive and well.

In the Vice-Chancellor's Report of 1995, Stuart Saunders says UCT students have enjoyed significant recognition and acceptance in the international community, following the demise of apartheid.

The international standing of UCT's architectural degrees, for example, was once again confirmed following a re-inspection of the degree by the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Commonwealth Association of Architects.

The unanimous finding of both professional bodies was that recognition be made retrospective to 1982, the year in which recognition

was withdrawn in protest against the government's apartheid policies.

In a similar gesture of international recognition, the Michaelis School of Art was one of 12 leading art schools selected to take part in the Hiroshima '95 International Exhibition of Art Colleges, held as part of the 50th anniversary of the bombing of that city at the end of World War 2.

Dr Saunders reports that the World Health Organisation also conferred the status of an official Collaborating Centre on an initiative undertaken by Peter Folb, head of UCT's Pharmacology Department.

The centre will be known as the World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre for Drug Policy, Information and Safety Monitoring at the Universities of Cape Town and the Western Cape.

UCT's department of Anatomical Pathology was also selected last year as one of eight international sites to participate in the International Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma Classification Project.

According to Dr Saunders various other university departments were invited to host prestigious international conferences at UCT last year, and a significant number of UCT researchers and scholars honoured internationally.

• The increase in UCT's international contacts since the demise of apartheid, and the growing demand for formal exchange programmes with UCT, has led to a decision to establish an International Office this year.

This office will be responsible for centrally-based international programmes and research partnerships.

Black students make up the majority of first-year intake

Education Reporter

BLACK students (including those classified as coloured and Indian) comprised 52 percent of the total first-year enrolment at the University of Cape Town and 42 percent of the enrolment for all years, the Vice-Chancellor's Report of 1995 has revealed.

The report said that nearly two-thirds of those enrolling for first-year engineering at UCT last year were black.

Sixty percent of students at UCT are registered in the faculties of Commerce, Medicine, Engineering or Science.

Women comprised 43 percent of student enrolment in 1995.

Thirty percent of the university's students were studying at postgraduate level last year.

And of the first-year African student enrolment, about half were admitted via UCT's special admissions programme.

Support group for abused parents restarted

Health Reporter

IT happens behind closed doors. Like other abuse, the victims stay silent, ashamed that it's happening to them. It's parent abuse, and it's seldom spoken of, because parents feel guilty and think they have failed.

Now Porch (Parents of Rebellious Children), a self-help support group for abused parents, is being relaunched in Cape Town due to demand from parents.

Jay (not his real name), himself an abused parent, started Porch six years ago, and is behind the relaunch.

Parent abuse is often physical abuse, says Jay, but it can also be emotional.

"I get calls about physical manhandling and beating up of parents, and of children who demand unrealistic financial requirements for their lifestyle," he says.

But, stresses Jay, Porch does not offer solutions to the problems of abusive children, but rather supports embattled parents.

"The intention of this group is support."

"We cannot offer instant solutions, but we can offer empathy, understanding and strength for a fresh start."

Porch is a lay group for parents of adult children (older than 16 years).

Porch will be relaunched on Tuesday, May 14, at 7.30pm at 227 Stanhope Building, Ground Floor, Main Road, Claremont.

Inquiries should be directed to 461 2984.



THANKS, BUDDY: Dixie did not need a broly on Saturday when the rain came down during the SPCA's fun day and Mutt of the Year event, because big old Oscar was there to cover for his vertically challenged little friend. Pity he could not close the windows...

Dogs have their day in the spotlight

CHECK THIS OUT! The proof of the pudding is in the eating thereof? No, Ziggy, left, is not trying to sabotage an opponent's winnings. He is merely boasting with his hard-earned rosette after taking top spot in the mini dog jumping contest during the SPCA's fun day last Saturday.



Pictures: ROY WIGLEY, The Argus.

JUMP MADAM, JUMP! Tammy tries her best to show owner Carole Germishuys of Table View how to do the hurdles, but to no avail. Jokes aside, Tammy took part in the fun of the dog show last Saturday when the SPCA held its Mutt of the Year day to raise funds.



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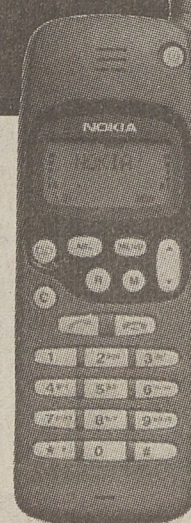
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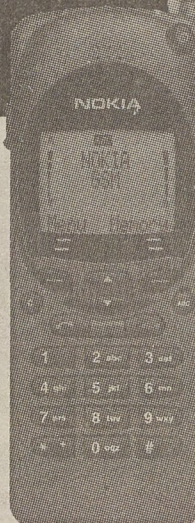
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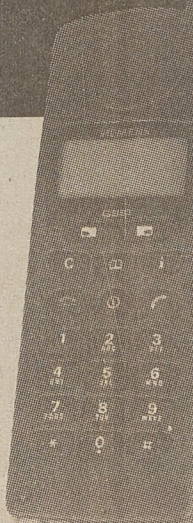
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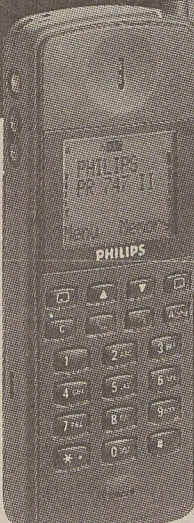
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Trial puts focus on Nazis who got away

ROME - Just months ago, the name of Erich Priebke lay in peace at the bottom of the world's memory hole.

The former SS captain who has admitted his role in one of the worst atrocities in Nazi-occupied Italy was lost in the ether of the past.

"Nobody ever mentioned him," said Elvira Paladini, the curator of a small museum in Rome's old Gestapo headquarters, a dreary stone building where the personal effects of the massacre victims repose touchingly in glass cases: a monogram from a fine hand-tailored shirt, a rope used to bind a pair of wrists, a father's last letter to his son, urging him always to come home before curfew.

Now, Rome's Historical Museum of the Liberation teams with visitors and their questions, and a sense of expectancy is abroad that after five decades, the Priebke case will be tried at last.

When Priebke's trial began yesterday in Rome, the 83-year-old became possibly the last German to be prosecuted for Nazi-era war crimes.

A central, enduring lesson of the case, observers say, is the ease with which middle-ranking Nazis were able to elude apprehension after the war.

"We don't want to persecute

him, but history is about the truth, and we want the whole truth to come out," says Ms Paladini, whose husband, a wartime intelligence agent for the Allies, escaped death but had his ribs broken during torture sessions in an upstairs cell at the headquarters long ago.

Priebke, who slipped out of Europe in 1948 and resurfaced in Argentina only two years ago, is charged as a prime accomplice to the machine-gunning on March 24, 1944, of 335 Italian civilians in retaliation for a resistance bombing in Rome the day before that left 33 German soldiers dead.

Hitler demanded 10 dead Italians for each dead German - and within 24 hours, Priebke is accused of shooting two and, significantly, of keeping the list of those to be killed.

No attempt was made to find the partisans who had tossed the bomb. The victims - most of whom were dragged out of prison cells, where they were awaiting sentencing on other resistance-related charges - were roped together in small groups and herded into a quarry known as the Ardeatine Caves. It was on the south side of Rome.

"As soon as the first 10 men went on their knees, the machine-guns mowed them down," says Eric Weiss, a for-

mer British staff sergeant, who, at the end of World War 2, interrogated participating German soldiers and drew up a detailed account.

"They toppled over and fell into a kind of trench, and then the next batch was marched in.

"To heighten their agony, they could see before them, down below, the bodies of those on whom they would fall seconds later. This went on and on, the whole night.

"The air was filled with the screaming of those who were on the verge of insanity when entering their tomb, and those who lay already on the heap of bodies but were only mortally wounded and not yet dead."

Mr Weiss, retired and living in Portland, Oregon, gave his notes to the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Los Angeles last year after an Argentine court ruled

that Priebke could be extradited to stand trial in Italy.

The massacre is of huge emotional importance in Italy, where presidents each year still lay a wreath at the site, and where uncomfortable questions still are asked about the role of the Holy See in accommodating fascism.

And Ms Paladini is not the only observer hoping the trial will be a reminder to a world whose attention has moved on.

"The importance is not the fate of this 83-year-old man," said Tullia Zevi, head of the Italian Jewish community in Rome. "The importance of this is that we can interrogate the defendant, ask certain witnesses to appear and broaden the scope of the trial.

"It is our duty to document things as they were. This is important today, when the trend [in the apportioning of war

guilt] is toward revisionism."

At the end of World War 2, Priebke found himself in a British prisoner-of-war camp on the Adriatic coast. But he escaped with four other inmates and headed for the northern town of Vipiteno.

There, he lived unemployed for about a year. Asked who supported him, his lawyer, Velio di Rezze, credits "friends" the SS captain had made in wartime Rome, when he served as a liaison officer between the Vatican and the occupying German forces.

Priebke wangled sea passage to Argentina for his family. A court-martial warrant remained outstanding against him in Italy until 1962, when federal prosecutors abandoned hope of finding him.

He could have been found, though, had anyone bothered to look.

"I [was] not running away from any accusation," Priebke said in a letter published in April in the leading Italian newspaper, Corriere della Sera, trying to explain why he moved to South America. "It was simply impossible to go from Vipiteno to [his former home in] Berlin [in 1949], because that city was completely destroyed. We had no relatives elsewhere in Germany who could take us in. So I came to Argentina with my wife and two children and nothing in my pockets but my two bare hands."

As for the killings, Priebke has admitted that he was there, but he justifies his involvement by saying that he was obeying orders and had no choice.

Indeed, post-war interrogator Weiss wrote in his account that there were not many full-fledged SS guards in Rome at the time of the massacre and

that the Nazi commander had a great deal of killing to do in the 24 hours allotted to him. "He had to think of some way to cope with his manpower problem," Mr Weiss says, "so he ordered the Gestapo clerical staff - all the typists and filing clerks in SS uniform - to take their part in the human target practice."

"It soon became clear that these pen-pushing SS men were not made of the proper stuff to do that kind of work," Mr Weiss adds. "They soon started shaking like reeds, and many vomited and fainted on the spot. Thus, the longer the infernal spectacle went on, the more the victims were only wounded by the wildly veering machine guns in those incompetent, trembling hands."

Priebke confessed to pulling the trigger twice during the night-long spree.

"If anyone tried to get out of this horrible business, he was told he would be shot," said Di Rezze. "Priebke is the only one alive anymore, so now he's got everything on his shoulders."

But Nazi hunters say Priebke's long disappearance suggests nothing about innocence of any crime but rather says everything about the world's unwillingness to go after German war criminals in general.

"[There is] a case file on any Nazi who has ever been looked

for," said Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean of the Wiesenthal Centre. "The Catch-22 is, there are no detectives in the field."

Certainly, Argentina has often seemed a kind of Bermuda Triangle for Nazis on the run. Far bigger fish than Priebke ended up there: Josef Mengele, the Auschwitz physician known as the "Angel of Death" for his evil-minded medical experiments on death camp inmates, reached Argentina in May 1949 and reportedly worked as an abortion doctor there for 11 years. By the time the Argentine authorities bothered to issue an arrest warrant, he had moved to Brazil, where authorities and other international investigators say he died in 1979.

But Rabbi Hier says all Western countries - not just Argentina - should share the blame for letting lesser Nazis disappear, unpunished, in the postwar era.

"If the Allies had had the determination, in the first 10 years after the war, to really go after Nazi war criminals, then tens of thousands could have been apprehended," he said. "But it just didn't happen, because of a lack of political will. So the Nazis had a picnic. They thought nobody was looking for them. And the proof of the pudding was how easy it was to find someone like Priebke." - The Los Angeles Times.



TRACKED DOWN: Former SS captain Erich Priebke, 82, enters Rome's military court surrounded by para-military police. He is accused of helping to carry out the 1944 Nazi massacre of 335 civilians outside Rome.

Two charged for sending paedophile pictures on Net

PARIS - The charging of two French managers of Internet services for transmitting paedophile pictures has again raised the question of responsibility for what goes on the system.

The two unidentified people charged with "distributing pornographic pictures of minors under 15 years old" ran two networks in Paris, police said.

The men, 27 and 35, face up to three years in jail and a 500 000 franc (about R440 000) fine on conviction. They were freed on police bail after a hearing at a Paris court.

Gendarmier Gerard Browne told a press conference that that two computers in Paris received, stored and distributed the pictures but did not originate them. He said the material was "very gross."

Lieutenant-Colonel Browne said inquiries were continuing to try to find the source of the pornographic material which could have come "from any country in the entire world."

The material found its way on to the Internet through two of the largest French providers, WorldNet and FranceNet, to be used in the so-called newsgroups, the discussion forums where anonymous freedom of expression is total.

Both providers hastened to emphasise that they were merely conveyors and not distributors of the information,

storing images and text from various sources for their subscribers to access.

"WorldNet handles some 6 900 newsgroups daily and we receive between 50 000 and 100 000 contributions to them every day from all over the world along the lines of France Telecom," said WorldNet director Xavier Niel.

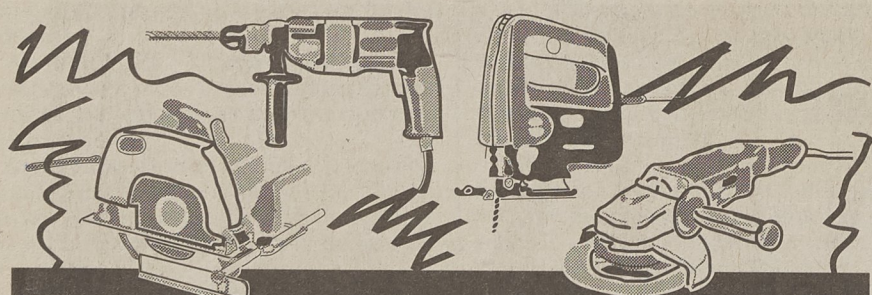
Mr Niel said it was impossible to monitor closely such a mass of messages. "We would have to assign five or six people permanently to watch the newsgroups," he added.

Since police searched the premises of WorldNet in connection with the pornography case, the firm has put two of its staff of 50 on the spot. But they have only time to check the names of the newsgroups and not what goes on inside them.

"Given the context of suspicion, we suppressed a newsgroup which contained the word 'babies'," Mr Niel said, calling for a "clean-up" committee which would monitor the Net on behalf of all French providers.

In January already, Francois Beneviste, the head of CalvaCom, one of WorldNet's providers, took the step of barring access to a dozen newsgroups whose contents he said were morally intolerable.

This followed the decision by the US giant CompuServe to suspend 200 newsgroups allegedly disseminating pornographic material. - Sapa-AFP.



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