S. Africa attempts to calm rising tension in mining town

WELKOM, South Africa— The government tried to defuse a tense racial conflict in a conservative gold mining town where Blacks are boycotting White - owned businesses to protest rising vigilantism.

Surrounded by some of the world's largest gold mines, Welkom shopping areas were virtually deserted by Blacks who live in the nearby township of Thabong and withdrew their mighty buying power May 7.

Since two extremist movements began night patrols in March coinciding with a right - wing backlash over President Frederik de Klerk's racial reform initiatives, at least one Black has been beaten to death in Welkom. Several others have been assaulted.

Thabong leaders said a Black woman driving through Welkom was grazed in the neck by a bullet fired by a White man in a passing vehicle.

"At the moment business is quite bad," said one storekeeper.

What finally sent boycott organizers into action was the deployment of extra police patrols in the area that they said directed their action against Thabong residents and adopted a hands - off policy toward the vigilantes.

Amid a nationwide crime crackdown, police swept through Thabong and briefly detained 2,156 residents. All but two were released, a spokesman said.

"They're bringing more police into our areas than into the White areas," said boycott organizer Mbulelo Bungane. "What we are seeing now is harassment of our people instead of a crackdown on the vigilantes. The government has a duty to protect the residents of Thabong."

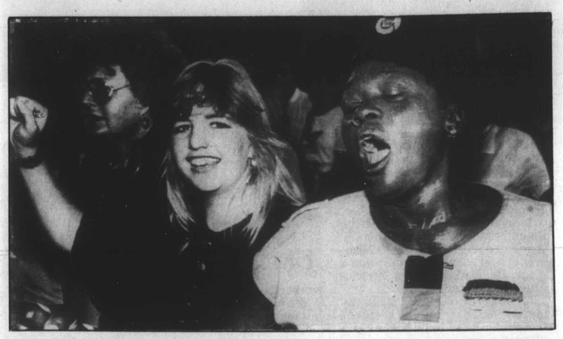
Searching for an end to the "confrontational politics" that have characterized the country's racial conflict for decades, Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok flew to Welkom May 10 to negotiate with Thabong leaders, the extremists and worried local businessmen.

Mr. Vlok insisted the local police were "loyal to the government of the day." He denied they had favored the White vigilantes and said allegations that the gunman involved in the shooting was a policeman were under investigation.

At the same time, he expressed concern that Welkom may become the flashpoint for a rise in vigilantism across the country.

"The sooner we can stop it where it started the better . . before there is the danger of it spreading to other parts of the country," he said at a news conference. "Welkom will be here always and Thabong will be here always. The moment we decide to accept that fact we can try to work out something to live in peace."

After a day of meetings, one extremist group, the Blanke Veiligheid (White Security), agreed to a three-month suspension of its vigilante patrols at Mr. Vlok's request.



White Johannesburg residents mingled with residents from the neighboring Black township of Alexandria after a march through the streets to the community center where the group sang and shared food in an event that showed larger White support for Blacks than ever before in the area.

Slow economic growth predicted for Africa

BASEL, Switzerland — Asia, especially its newly industrialized nations, will enjoy continued growth but countries of Black Africa are rapidly becoming a "Fourth World," an economic research institute said.

A study by Prognos Ag said democratic reforms in Latin America will bring economic benefits although, with the exception of Argentina, they will be largely cancelled out by debt - repayment burdens.

Prognos is a shortened name for the European Center for Applied Economic Research. It has branches in the United States, Belgium and West Germany.

"All attention is currently centered on the economic potential of an opening East Europe but that can lead to forgetting the possibilities and problems of other economic regions," the latest study said.

Growth forecasts based on per capita gross domestic product for the year 1994 were made for 36 developing and newly industrialized countries (NICs) of Asia, Latin America and Africa.

Of 14 Asian countries, steady and in some cases sharp growth was predicted for 11 — Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iraq, South Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

Declines were forecast for Iran, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

The biggest gains were forecast for Hong Kong, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

"The three NIC 'tigers' of Taiwan, South Korea and Hong Kong will continue to show above-average growth, although the double - digit rates of the mid-1980s are a thing of the past," the study said.

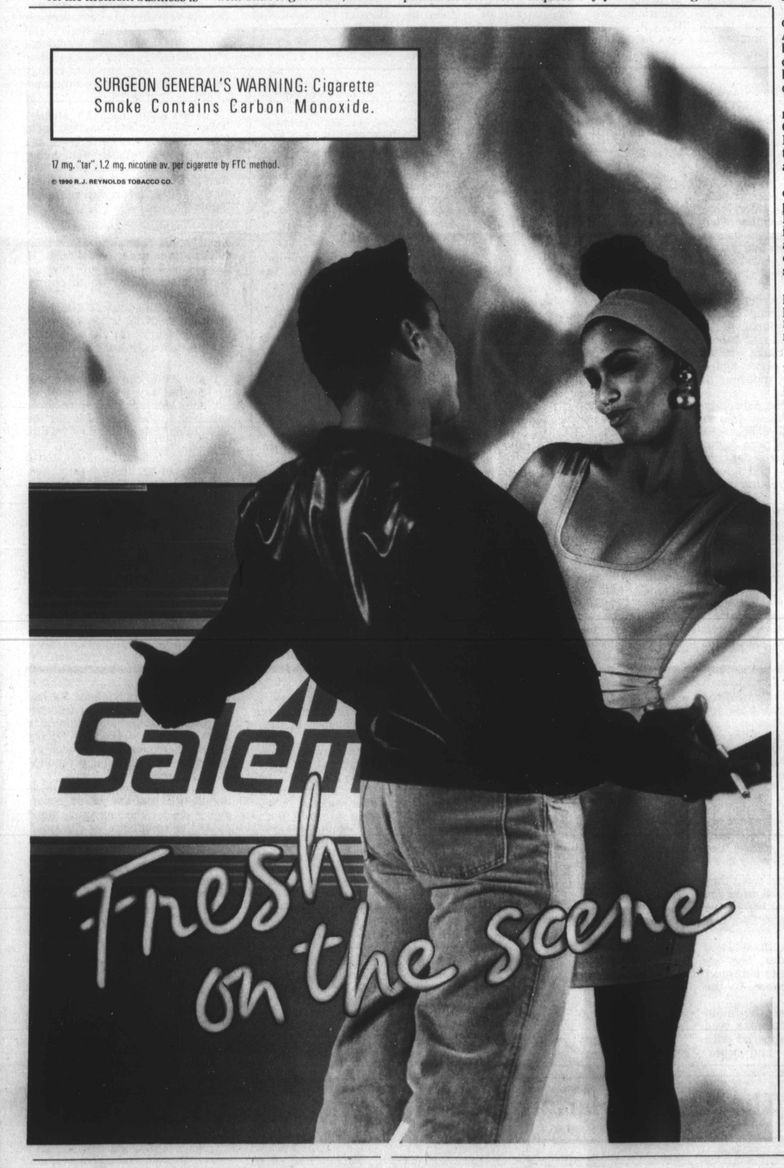
In Latin America, the study said, seven countries can expect small growth — Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela. But there will be declines in Chile, Ecuador and Peru, it added.

Finally, looking at Africa, the study said "Black African countries remain in increasing measure the problem children of the world."

"Some of them like Kenya and Zimbabwe can and do achieve respectable growth rates but all successes in this underdeveloped part of the world are nullified by a fast - growing population," it said.

"The problems are even worse in some countries like Zaire and Zambia where population growth is not nearly compensated for by a corresponding growth in income," it said. "Per capita income is even sinking below already-low levels.

"In this way the Black African countries of the Third World are increasingly turning into a Fourth World while the newly nations of Asia are fast catching up on the industralized countries."



Reform begun in Zaire

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast — Wearing a tie will no longer land you in jail in Zaire. Nor will Zaireans be required to call their countrymen "citizen."

The trappings of independence forced on the country by President Mobutu Sese Seko to "Africanize" the old Belgian Congo were scrapped recently when the 59 - year old leader bowed to rioters by announcing the establishment of a multi - party state and an effective end to his despotic rule.

Although Mr. Mobutu will remain president, a prime minister is to be appointed. A one - year transition government will be set up and has been given the task of organizing multi - party elections for April 24, 1991.

Three parties will contest the election, the first of its kind in Zaire's history.

Throughout west and central Africa, iron - fisted presidents finally are seeing their armor crack as rioting and violence force change where only months ago change seemed impossible.

Much of the engine pushing for change is fueled by the deep discontent of millions of Africans watching their countries slip far behind the successful economies of the West and Far East.

But whereas eastern Europe is experiencing a revival of democracy where it once existed, African states are starting from scratch. The absence of genuine political debate and the opportunity for conflicting voices to be heard without hindrance have left the way clear for political ineptitude and inexperience, political experts say.

Economic crises and corruption have been at the heart of months of popular protests against the old regimes of Africa.

The fall in world commodity prices has affected most countries in the region and underminded the stature of leaders like Mobutu, Felix Houphouet - Boigny in the Ivory Coast and Matheiu Kerekou in Benin.

They now are viewed as being incapable of ending their economic crises.

In all three countries, mass popular protest has erupted in the past six months, with demands for greater democracy and a broader platform for political and economic decision - making.

Bush meets with Black leaders

WASHINGTON — President Bush backed away from earlier opposition and agreed with Black leaders to seek "a common ground" on the proposed Civil Rights Act of 1990 that would strengthen job protection for minorities.

Black civil rights lawyers will meet with Justice Department attorneys this week to try to resolve concerns that changes in civil rights laws will lead to job quotas, which are opposed by the Administration.

"We agreed to try to find a common ground," said Arthur Fletcher, chairman of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. "Attorneys from both sides will meet to see if we can hammer out differences. I'm confident."

Initially, the White House maintained that the Supreme Court rulings needed no legislative remedy. But this spring, under mounting pressure, the White House reviewed its position and decided to introduce an alternative civil rights bill.

Supporters of the Kennedy-Hawkins bill, however, contend that the President's proposal is inadequate, particularly since it would not include punitive damages.

Black leaders say the Civil Rights Act of 1990 is the president's first real test on civil rights, and that if he vetoes the measure his approval rating will plunge.

The Senate version of the bill is to go to the floor later this month. The House version is still in committee.

Rep. Corrine Brown, a Democrat from Jacksonville, Fla., hugs Rep. Stephen Wise, a Republican from Jacksonville after they reached a compromise on a budget item. Rep. Wise agreed to put $133,000 back in the budget at Rep. Wise's request in return for her promise to help with one of his pet projects.

3 lawmen sentenced

TYLER, Texas — An all - White jury handed out prison terms to three former law officers convicted of murder in the beating death of a Black jail inmate.

The stiffest sentence was given to former Hemphill Police Chief Thomas Ladner, 43, who was sentenced to 28 years in prison.

The two other defendants, former Sabine County deputy sheriffs James "Bo" Hyden, 36, and Bill R. Horton, 60, were sentenced to 14 years and 10 years respectively by the Tyler jury. Hyden and Horton remain free on bond pending appeals because their sentences are less than 15 years.

Jurors, who were sequestered after racial slurs were found scrawled on a restroom wall in the courthouse April 23, deliberated about four hours before the sentences were announced.

As State District Judge Joe Tunnell read the sentences aloud, relatives of the defendants cried.

The jury deliberated for four hours before convicting the three in the death of truckdriver Loyal Garner, Jr., of Florien, La.

SCLC alleges race bias at Allied

RICHMOND, Va. — A civil rights organization has filed a class - action complaint against the Allied - Signal plant in Chesterfield, Va., alleging that a Black worker was demoted because of racial bias.

The plant "has a history of under - representing Blacks in high echelon jobs" and also women; charged Curtis Harris, president of the Virginia Unit of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

He said the organization filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

I. C. Deaner, the plant's manager of employee relations, said company officials had not been notified of the complaint yet. "We've received nothing, so I really can't comment at this time," he said.

The Allied Corp. plant employs about 1,900 in the production of nylon yarn and molded polymers. Three hundred workers hold salaried positions, but only 22 are Black, according to Mr. Harris, who spoke at a news conference at the State Capitol.

The company recently has been "reshuffling" employees, Mr. Harris said. "It always catches the Black employees at the bottom of the totem pole."

He also said if the company did not rectify the SCLC's allegations of racial bias the organization would seek to pressure the federal government to cancel contracts with Allied.

Mr. Harris declined to describe the circumstances under which the man was demoted in order to protect the employee's confidentiality.

...and is also sued for bias

ATLANTA — The Southern Christian Leadership Conference's former national AIDS coordinator said she was fired because she refused to discriminate against a dark - skinned co-worker and rejected the "lustful pursuit" of SCLC President Joseph Lowery.

Brenda Taylor - Hines made the charges in a 15-page lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court against the civil rights group founded by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Rev. Lowery and his wife, Evelyn, were out of town at a funeral and unavailable for comment, but their lawyer, Randy Gepp, said the couple "emphatically denies" the charges.

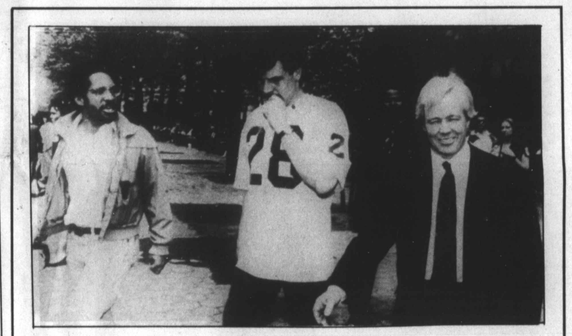
Mrs. Taylor-Hines's suit said she was fired June 20, 1989, after working nine months for the SCLC. Her discharge resulted from her refusal of repeated demands by Evelyn Lowery, the SCLC women's division director, to fire an employee "solely because of her dark skin color and ethnic features.

Mrs. Taylor - Hines, who is Black, said she was "discriminated against because of color since she would not oppress or treat darker complexioned Blacks differently.

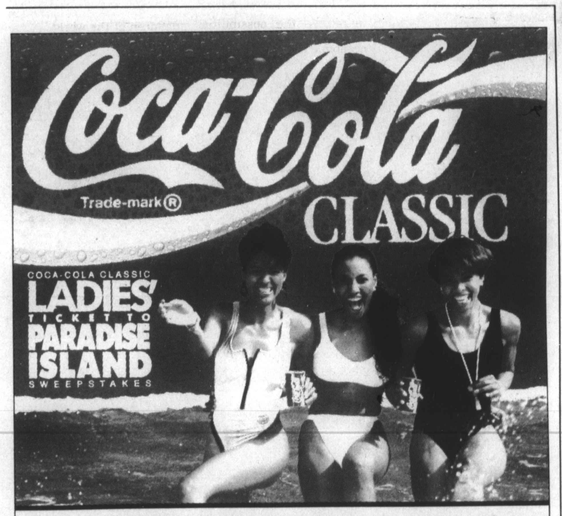
The suit, which seeks $486,000 in damages, also claims that Rev. Lowery sexually harassed Mrs. Taylor-Hines and turned their discussions of AIDS into "sexual innuendo and direct sex talk."

Her rejection of Rev. Lowery's "lustful pursuit" was another reason for her dismissal, Mrs. Taylor-Hines charges.

The skin color suit is similar to one filed against the Internal Revenue Service by former employee Tracy L. Morrow, who claimed she was fired because her skin is lighter than that of her supervisor.



Stephen Murphy (right), the attorney for accused triggerman Joseph Fama in the Bensonhurst slaying of a Black youth, is heckled by an unidentified man (left) as he leaves court in New York City for lunch. In center is a plainsclothes detective who escorted Mr. Murphy from court. The attorney was later punched in the jaw by one of a group of protesters as he was entering a restaurant. The murder of 16-year-old Yusef Hawkins during an attack by a White gang in Brooklyn has created racial tensions in the city.



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Black-business revenues flat

NEW YORK — The nation's Black - owned businesses posted revenues of $6.81 billion in 1989, up just 0.3 percent over 1988, according to a report released by Black Enterprise magazine.

The magazine's editor and publisher blamed the economic climate and governmental policies for the flat performance by Black-owned businesses.

"A sluggish economy has wreaked havoc on major industrial sectors from auto manufacturing to finance," Earl G. Graves said in a statement.

"And the Reagan administration's legacy of exclusion has been realized with the subsequent retrenchment of affirmative - action plans and minority business set - aside programs."

In 1988, Black - owned businesses showed revenues of $6.79 billion, according to the magazine's "Annual Report on Black Business."

"Black entrepreneurs will have to rethink their strategic focus and restructure their organizations if they are to keep their competitive edge and reap profits from the ensuing chaos," Mr. Graves said. "In other words, Black business is going to have to get leaner, stronger, better."

Heading the magazine's list of the nation's top 100 Black-owned industrial - service companies was TLC Beatrice International Holdings Co., a New York - based foods processor and distributor, which had revenues of $1.5 billion.

Ranked second was Johnson Publishing Co., Chicago, with 241.3 million in revenues.

Average sales among the industrial - service companies was $34.1 million, the report said.

Thirty - seven companies were new to the magazine's top 100 list, including New York - based Granite Broadcasting Corp., which posted $38.6 million in sales last year to rank 18th.

Savage won't be prosecuted

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department said it found no evidence warranting the prosecution of Rep. Gus Savage, D.-Ill., but sent its findings in a "ghost employee" investigation to the House ethics committee.

The 15-month investigation involved the hiring of Mr. Savage's son Thomas, by Democratic Del. Walter Fauntroy, the District of Columbia's non - voting congressional representative.

Parallel investigations of Mr. Fauntroy and Thomas Savage also have been closed without prosecutions.

Thomas Savage was on Mr. Fauntroy's payroll while he also was campaigning for office in Illinois. Under House rules, congressional employees must work in Washington or in a member's district, which in Mr. Fauntroy's case is the capital city.

David Runkel, spokesman for Attorney General Dick Thornburgh, said the Justice Department's Public Integrity Section had decided against prosecuting Gus Savage.

"We are declining prosecution against Rep. Savage," Runkel said.

Mr. Runkel said the decision was made by officials in the Public Integrity Section and Mr. Thornburgh "did not get involved in that decision."

However, Mr. Runkel said department officials have passed along "information of interest" to the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, as the ethics panel is known.

A spokesman for the committee would not discuss the matter.