

# WORLD & NATION

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## City approves Greensboro massacre memorial

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No one disputes that on Nov. 3, 1979, neo-Nazis and members of the Ku Klux Klan shot and killed five people, wounding 10, in Greensboro during a demonstration by the Communist Workers' Party. But beyond that, it is hard to find agreement on anything about the incident.

Nevertheless, the City Council voted 7-2 on Tuesday to approve the placement of a monument to the victims of the shooting, including a controversial phrase referring to the incident as a massacre.

The name is commonly used, but it remains a sticking point for some, including Councilmen Zack Matheny and Tony Wilkins.

Both voted against the measure on the grounds that they opposed the use of the term in question. Matheny proposed alternate wording, including adding the names of the victims (which are not in the original proposal) and changing "massacre" to "shootout."

"I, respectfully, have some different history that I've read, and I think that's fair ... I'm not asking for, necessarily, a compromise, I'm asking for consideration," Matheny said.

He received little support, however, and some of the crowd even booed.

In 1979, the CWP had been in the area trying to organize its impoverished and largely African-American textile workers. They organized a "Death to the Klan" demonstration on Nov. 3 in a local housing project.

Midway through the rally, Klan and neo-Nazi gunmen opened fire.

Greensboro has wrestled for years with tough questions about the events of Nov. 3, and passions ran high during the meeting. A long succession of citizen speakers forcefully denounced the idea of altering the monument's phrasing, and many in the crowd broke into a standing ovation when the measure was passed with the wording intact.



Central to the controversy is the fact that not all of the Communist demonstrators were unarmed, although by most accounts, the Klan and neo-Nazi aggressors sported considerably more powerful weapons, and no members of their groups were killed. The shooters were acquitted of wrongdoing by an all-white jury.

But many in Greensboro's civil rights and social justice communities insist that the incident should be called a massacre. Patricia Priest, chairwoman of Beloved Community Center, urged Mayor Nancy Vaughn to keep the original wording.

"(The incident was) a massacre of one group that was in no way prepared to defend itself from a heavily armed Klan and Nazi caravan that drove across the state for the purpose of attacking the march," Priest said in a letter.

A key point raised by many speakers was the alleged indifference of law enforcement to the potential for violent confrontation at the rally, particularly since they had been warned about it by informants embedded within white supremacist groups.

"The Greensboro Police Department, the FBI and the BATF had foreknowledge that the Klan and Nazis planned a violent attack on the Nov. 3 rally," said Sydney Waller-Foxworth, widow of shooting victim Jim Waller, in an emotional speech.



A tombstone commemorates the victims of the 1979 massacre in Maplewood Cemetery.

"It seemed that almost everyone knew about the attack in advance except us."

A federal jury agreed and found the Greensboro Police Department liable for the demonstrators' deaths in 1985, but the department has never issued a formal apology.

It is not the kind of event that most Greensburghers like having associated with their city.

"For us and people who come after us, future generations, for there to be this tangible sign of history," said Sherry Giles, professor of justice and policy studies.

"And it was a tragedy, and if we don't look at it, study it, talk to each other about it and create greater understanding, something like that can happen again."

## PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament, London

Each week, The Guilfordian will feature a picture from students' experiences abroad. Whether you have studied or are currently studying in London, Sienna, Munich or somewhere else, we would love to see photos from your trip. Please email photos to Sara Minsky at [minskysj@guilford.edu](mailto:minskysj@guilford.edu) with information about the subject and where & when you studied.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Egypt



Australian journalist Peter Greste has been released by Egypt's military government after being held for 400 days on suspicion of working for the Muslim Brotherhood, according to CNN. Greste, who works for Al Jazeera, was being held with two colleagues, Mohamed Fadel Fahmy and Baher Mohamed. All three maintain their innocence, but Fahmy and Mohamed remain in prison. Fahmy has gone so far as to renounce his Egyptian citizenship in a bid to be released. "It's a relief and excitement but also real, real stress at having to say goodbye to my colleagues and friends," said Greste.

### Fiji

SUVA



After gaining independence from the UK in 1970, the island nation has kept the British flag — the Union Jack — on its flag. Besides this, the flag retains other British heraldic symbols — a lion and a St. George's Cross — along with a dove, bananas, sugar cane, and a palm tree. In October, however, a new design will be released that removes the Union Jack from the flag. "We need to replace the symbols on our existing flag that are out of date and no longer relevant, including some anchored to our colonial past," said Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama.

### United Kingdom

LONDON



Members of Parliament in the House of Commons voted to allow a baby to be born of three parents, using DNA from two women and one man, according to the BBC. It is the first country in the world to allow the procedure, whose intent is to counter genetic diseases being passed along to babies. Specifically, the procedure prevents faulty mitochondria — organelles in cells responsible for energy production — from being passed down to children. If the law passes in the House of Lords, the procedures could begin as early as next year.

### United States



The United Steelworkers Union has declared the largest strike — and first nationwide walkout — of oil workers since 1980, according to the BBC. The walkout happened at nine refineries that, together, account for more than 10 % of U.S. refining capabilities. The USW contracts expired on Sunday without a deal being reached. "The problem is that oil companies are too greedy to make a positive change in the workplace and they continue to value production and profit over health and safety, workers and the community," said USW International Vice President of Administration Tom Conway.

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