

irresponsible agitators and people with evil intentions. He reminded them that they were given free food,, a beer ration and free medical attention by the mine, and that they had been perfectly satisfied until pamphlets had been issued to them. 19 pleaded guilty, and at the request of the mine management their contracts were cancelled. One who pleaded not guilty, and whose contract had expired, was cautioned ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> discharged.

A further fifty-three African workers from Simmer and Jack then pleaded guilty to the same offence. Their contracts were also cancelled, and the magistrate said it would be for themselves and the mine management to decide whether they returned to work or not.

In the afternoon, officials of all the non-European Trade Unions, representatives of the African National Congress and other African bodies, assembled at Rosenberg Arcade in the offices of the Council of non-European Trade Unions. James Phillips was in the Chair. The meeting, he explained, had been called to meet a deputation from the Johannesburg City Council to discuss the maintenance of essential services during the general strike. Councillors McPherson, Weinbrenn, <sup>Mayor of Johannesburg</sup> and Legum <sup>all of the Labour Party,</sup> were present. They were asked to state their case.

They appealed to the meeting to keep essential services running during the strike, in order to avoid outbreaks of disease and unnecessary suffering for the people. After a long debate, the meeting agreed in principle to keep essential services going. The issue now turned on what constituted "essential services". Water supply was easily agreed upon. There was a debate on sanitation, and it was finally agreed that hospital services as distinct from cleaning would be maintained. Councillor Weinbrenn, Chairman of the Municipal Water, Light and Gas Committee, appealed for the maintenance of electric power. "Think, gentlemen," he said, "what would happen if tomorrow morning your wife gets up and wants to make a cup of tea for the family. She plugs in the kettle, but there is no power." As soon as he had finished his appeal, well inter-larded with references to his activities ten years ago to organise African trade unions, an African trade unionist jumped to his feet. He had only one question to put to the representatives of the City Council. "How many houses built by the City Council for Africans were wired for electricity?"

There was no reply. The meeting voted overwhelmingly against maintaining the power supply.

From the "Star" - Wednesday August 14th:

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"General Smuts told the Transvaal Head Committee of the United Party in Pretoria today that he was not unduly concerned over what was happening on the Witwatersrand Gold Mines today, because the strike was not caused by legitimate grievances but by agitators. The Government would take steps to see that these matters were put right. .... The agitators were trying to lead the natives and the country to destruction. The agitators secretly distributed pamphlets, and incited the natives. The natives had to be protected from these people."

"General Smuts said that a few years ago the Lansdown Commission fully investigated the working conditions and wages of the native mine workers, and the recommendations of the Commission were carried out practically in full by the Government.

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"4,000 - 5,000 strikers coming from Simmer and Jack to Johannesburg were dispersed by police this morning. 800 later told the police they were prepared to go back to work."

The Stock Exchange; "The market was less firm at opening this morning."

Visions of Karl Marx over Johannesburg, and the 'March' on the cities had caused a minor panic. But there was no panic outside, ~~the brokers offices~~ away from the corrupting air of the stock exchange.

In the Native Representative Council, the Government sponsored 'Advisory Parliament' of the African people, there was no panic.

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From the Star: "Councillor Mosaka gave notice of motion 'That the chairman makes an official statement on the events leading up to the present disturbance on the gold mines of the Witwatersrand; the number of mines and labourers affected; extent and nature of the disturbances; including the number of persons killed, injured or arrested; the steps which the Government is taking to deal with the situation; and whether any negotiations have been entered into with the African Mine Workers Union with a view to the settlement of the strike, and if not why not,'"

"The Chairman, Undersecretary for Native Affairs, Mr. F. Rodseth,

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explained that as the position was uncertain, he would prefer to make a statement later.

"Councillor R.H. Godlo moved that the Council do not proceed with the agenda until it was given a full statement in reply to these questions. 'It is obvious that the Government did not intend to consult the leaders fo the African people. Even the strikers leaders were being arrested. How could discipline be maintained without leaders?'

"The Chairman refused to accept the motion."

The Puppet character of the Native Representative Council was never more apparent. It could talk, yes; and advise, yes; but the gold mines, their profits and the conditions of their slaves was 'not acceptable' for discussion.

At the University of the Witwatersrand, the Federation of Progressive Students had called a meeting to discuss the Miners Strike. The principal of the University, Professor Humphrey Raikes, who in 1938 banned a students 'Stand by the Czechs!' meeting while Chaimberlain flew to Munich, banned the meeting without giving reasons. The Transvaal Chamber of Mines are heavy contributors to the University funds. Education must dance to the music of those who pay the piper.

FROM THE STAR.

Editorial: ..... "The origins of the strike are complex and to some extent obscure ..... The native mine workers differ from most o others in being drawn from a very wide and distant field; they are largely illiterate and at a fairly primitive level ..... not racially homogeneous and almost entirely lacking in organisation. Nevertheless they are moved by the same motives of self interest as any other group .... This was recognised by the appointment in 1943 of the Mine Natives Wage Commission whose report the following year must be regarded as the starting point of the trouble. The Government's decisions on that report fell considerably short of the recommendat~~ie~~ tions. ....

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"According to the calculations made by the commission, the annual wages of the lowest paid native mineworker fell short of his minimum cash requirements by from £9 to £10 ..... To meet this

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shortfall it was proposed to grant increases totalling £2,600,000 annually. .... The Government agreed to surrender £1,850,000 and native wages were raised by that amount. If the commission's calculations were correct, the native miner was still not able to meet his minimum expenses and sooner or later an outbreak was bound to occur. It has probably been precipitated by the food shortage ....

"There is however another factor which determines the undesirable form this demonstration has taken. Native mineworkers have hitherto been unorganised and therefore almost inarticulate. The law does not recognise native trade unions, and although some form of recognition has long been contemplated, it is by no means certain that it will be extended to organisations on the mines. A war regulation, still in force, prohibits gatherings on proclaimed land. In such circumstances, such bodies as do exist - and they can scarcely be truly representative - must lead a precarious existence. ....

The whole history of industrialism shows that merely sitting on the safety valve can cause nothing but explosion. ...."

Wednesday, August 14th:

By sunset, the first batches of printed leaflets announcing the general strike were coming off the presses. At the same time, in many spots in the city, typists, duplicators, got busy, preparing duplicated leaflets with the same text, to augment the supply. All evening a shuttle service of cars ran from the printers shops to Rosenberg Arcade, where the officials of the Non-European Trade Unions were gathered, waiting for the leaflets. As the batches were delivered, the officials took bundles with them, and went home to give them out in the Townships where they lived. By 9 p.m. Rosenberg Arcade was deserted and in darkness.

But the printers presses kept turning, the duplicators clacked, the leaflets kept on coming off the machines. The shuttle service collected them at one central spot.

At 10.30 came the news that the 'Africans Own' printing works had been raided by the police, the type for the leaflets and all available leaflets confiscated. But the stockpile kept on growing, as supplies came in, some printed, some duplicated. At 2.30 the job

was done. Once again cars began to arrive at a central spot. The drivers were given bundles of leaflets, and told to deliver them to the pickets lines which should form at bus, tram and train termini in the various townships. By 3 a.m. all the cars had left, headed for every large township in Johannesburg, and for the East and West Rand.

Issue No. 3. of the daily Miners Strike Bulletin appeared shortly before sun-up, and by 8 a.m. was in the post.

There were no leaflets to the miners that night. And the next day the return to work started.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 15th: FOURTH DAY.

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Thursday morning, thirty six hours since the meeting at Rosenberg Arcade had decided on a general strike in all industries. No one had been quite sure when the 'forty-eight hours' in the resolution expired; some calculated it to be Thursday morning as the nearest; some still waited for Friday morning.

The Strike Committee had fixed Thursday ~~12~~ noon for a meeting at the Market Square; leaflets had been printed and duplicated throughout the previous day, throughout the previous night, calling the workers away from the factories and the shops, calling them to the Market Square and the General Strike. In every non-European area in Johannesburg, and in scattered spots along the Reef, leaflets had been handed out, the general strike was being discussed.

During Wednesday night the police struck. It was near midnight when police arrived at the 'Africans Own' printing works, where leaflets were still coming off the press. ~~All leaflets still on the premises were confiscated, together with the type forms for them.~~

On Thursday morning, just after the last batch of leaflets had been delivered from the other printer, Saraswathi Villa, police arrived, confiscated the type and threatened the printer with prosecution. But the leaflets were out and read.

At 6,30 a.m. Abner Kunene was in a car in Alexandra, cruising slowly around the streets. With him were Jacob Mogai, ... Lucas ... Bokaba, Esau Molobi and Gilbert Coka. A loudspeaker apparatus was mounted on the roof of the car and Kunene was talking through a microphone from inside, calling the people to come to No. 2 Square in the afternoon for a meeting, and to come to the Market Square in the morning for a meeting called by the General Strike Committee. A police van drew up alongside, waved them to a stop. All were arrested and taken to Wynberg Police Station. Later in the day, they were taken to Marshall Square and the following day released on bail.

At 5.15 a.m. in a car parked near the bus terminus in Sophiatown, John Hertslet, Mannie Brown and Reggie Lai were sitting, waiting for something to happen. Brown was asleep. Plain clothes detectives and policemen came and asked them what they were doing. They said they were

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just sitting. They were taken to Sophiatown Police Station.

There were two young African girls under arrest at the police station - Gweñ Palmer and Babsie Palmer. They had been arrested for being in possession of leaflets. Hertslet, Brown and Lai admitted that they had brought the pamphlets from town. Capt. Muller of the Police told his Constable "sit die Jode met die Kaffers. Vat hulle jasse weg an laat hulle vrek met die koue" (Put the Jews with the Kaffirs...Take their jackets and let them die of the cold). They were locked in the cells and brought cold mealie-meal at 9 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. No water was given all day.

At 4 p.m. they were lined up, called "bloody half-castes" and asked questions. Brown stated that he had been born in Palestine. The policeman asked him "been neutralised yet?" They were then put in a troop-carrier and the police recruits were brought out to have a look at them. One young African who had gone back to his room to fetch his mealie meal, arrived at the troop-carrier after the high flap at the back had been closed. When he reached the troop carrier a policeman picked him up, and threw him over the top. His knee was badly hurt. The accused were taken to Marshall Square and locked up. The following morning they were taken in an open truck through the streets of Johannesburg to the Magistrate's Court and released on bail.

THURSDAY

at 11.30, police arrived at the Market Square; lorry-loads of police formed up all around the square; senior police officers in sedan cars; further lorry-loads of police 'standing by' just around the corner; plain-clothes detectives in batches. African workers began to assemble, and by 12 noon several hundred were gathered on the square. Members of the Strike Committee were about to open the meeting, when the Acting Chief Magistrate for the Witwatersrand came forward, and in a quiet voice which did not carry to the outer ranks of the crowd announced that...."under a special authority of the Minister of Justice and having reason to apprehend that the public peace would be seriously endangered by a public meeting to be held in a public place in Newtown at noon..."he was forbidding the holding of the meeting.

Few of the African workers understood what was being said.

"....anyone who attends the meeting commits an offence" said Mr.

McLeod. "You have five minutes in which to disperse. Otherwise action will

be taken to disperse you." The senior police officials walked up and down in and around the crowd, with five-foot sjamboks, swinging ~~them~~ and striking their boots, as though their hands were itching to get to work, sjamboking and hitting out.

The African workers who understood what had been said, shouted bitter protests. Most of the crowd stood around idly, waiting for the meeting to start, unaware of what had been said. The uniformed police drew up in military formation, platoons of three ranks facing inwards on both sides of the meeting. One minute passed. Nothing happened.

Johannesburg's lone Communist City Councillor, Hilda Watts, was in the crowd. As the seconds trickled out, she approached the three most senior officers present, Colonel Mickdal, District Police Commissioner, Major Kriek, District Commandant, and Major Reay, Divisional Chief of the C.I.D. She pleaded that one of the organisers of the meeting should be allowed to speak from the platform to tell the people to go home quietly. Her appeal was refused. No one could speak to explain the dispersal order.

Three minutes to go. The police officers cut the air with their sjamboks.

Trade union organisers, Communists, the few who had understood the order, pushed their way through the crowd, explaining rapidly in several different languages, urging everyone to go home, and go home fast. They passed from person to person.

Two minutes to go. The first groups started leaving the square at a rapid walk. Others followed. One minute. Half-a-minute. The square was almost empty, except for three rows of police on either side, shifting from foot to foot, swinging their sjamboks, disappointedly. Ten minutes later the police left.

The general strike had been called, but its explanation save by leaflet had been forestalled.

In Industria, <sup>workers at</sup> two factories had ~~struck work~~ <sup>decided to march in to the market</sup> supporting the General ~~Strike call~~. <sup>Square meeting</sup> Both tobacco factories, John Chapmans and Rand Tobacco<sup>s</sup>. The <sup>workers,</sup> Coloured men and women and a few Indians, gathered in clumps outside the factories to hear what the Union Secretary would have to say. Anna Möller, who had organised the Union, was on the spot. Talking to the workers, congratulating them, telling them to stay together, organising them to march to the Market Square for the midday meeting.

The little column, two hundred strong, set out just before 11 a.m. It marched at a leisurely pace through Industria, towards Langlaagte. No disorders, no trouble; no trouble until it reached Fordsburg. There <sup>they came</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>on</sup> a troop-carrier, packed with police, armed with rifles. The commanding officer stopped the little procession, gave them five minutes to disperse. There were cries of 'Shame!' but no argument. The procession turned about, and started marching back to the place from where they had come. Without warning, the police attacked them from behind, batoning right and left; young women and old women rolled in the road; police trampled on them as they rushed forward; the procession broke up; the workers scattered. But six women lay in the roadway, waiting for the ambulance to take them away. Anna Müller went up to the police to protest at what they had done. She was met with jeers, abuse from men sitting back in the troop-carrier, laughter and shouts about her "coolie friends".

Thursday afternoon. Hilda Watts and Mrs. Margaret Ballinger met, decided to try and mobilise liberal opinion in Johannesburg against the unchecked police brutality and in support of the miners' right to negotiate around a table with the Chamber of Mines. A meeting of representative people was to be held at the Carlton Hotel the following day, a statement was to be drawn up, and signatures canvassed.

All afternoon and evening the telephone buzzed. Citizens with a reputation for fair and liberal thought were approached. Many agreed with the scheme; several agreed to come to the meeting on Friday; many agreed to sign a statement to the press. But Sir George Albu, President of the Joint Council of ~~the~~ Europeans and Coloureds, President of the Coloured Ex-Servicemen's League, United Party City Councillor with a reputation for being a 'pink', thought that the 'police had done a magnificent job' and refused to participate. Sir George is a Director of *Gold Mining Companies*....

Dr. Bernard Friedman, the leading United Party 'Liberal' member of Parliament (rumour has it that he reads Karl Marx), promised to discuss it with his colleague, Mr. Frank Waring, United Party M.P. Frank Waring thought that the idea was acceptable, if criticism of the police was omitted. Later he had to consult his caucus. Mr. Morris Kentridge "hummed and ha-ed." When the statement finally appeared, without any of the things Mr. Waring didn't like, neither Friedman nor Waring, nor Kentridge signed. Not a single United Party 'liberal' was liberal enough for this!

Mr. Julius Lewin, leading light of the Institute of Race Relations, felt that it might prejudice his position as Dean of the non-European Students Hostel at the University of the Witwatersrand.

But the meeting was arranged and the statement was being drafted.

*Meanwhile, police had raided the Mines of the Council of Non-European Trade Unions, removed stacks of documents.*

From the "Rand Daily Mail", Thursday, 15th August:

"...declared the Prime Minister, General Smuts in Pretoria yesterday..the wages and working conditions of Native Mine Labourers had been fully investigated by the Lansdown Commission, and the Government had carried out practically in full the Commission's recommendations."

Front Page Headline: "Several Hundred More Police Sent to Rand".

"..Yesterday...about 4,000 natives from Simmer and Jack..... began a march to the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association's compound in Johannesburg, where they intended to demonstrate in support of their claims for an increased wage..The column was intercepted... by two forces of police....."

"When the strikers saw the troop carriers, they scattered in all directions. One body of police charged the main group of strikers..... while the rest, remaining in their transport, were rushed to the East to intercept the end of the column.

"Most of the natives escaped, but there were a number of individual encounters between police and strikers, and many natives hiding in holes in the vicinity were rounded up.

"The second body of police cornered 800 natives in the angle formed by a deep donga and an old ash dump...Some natives risked the jump into the donga while others tried unsuccessfully to climb the crumbling sides of the dump. Eventually the whole group indicated its willingness to surrender, the natives putting up their hands..."

Yes, this is not a labour dispute in the ordinary sense of the term.

It is more like a war.

"When 500 strikers from the van Ryn Estate Mine set out from Benoni yesterday morning on a march to Johannesburg "to see the Chamber of Mines" they were met by police near Elandsfontein. A fight

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ensued, in which the natives were routed and sent scurrying over the veld...The police used batons, and a number of strikers were injured, but none seriously."

"At Chris Shaft, Robinson Deep, yesterday morning.... 290 police under the command of Captain J. Taillard, stood outside the compound....and when there was still no move by the natives to go on duty, the police were ordered into the compound to clear the rooms.

"When the Pondos saw the police, they leaned out of their doors laughing, jeering and hurling insults. A detachment armed with rifles with fixed bayonets and revolvers appeared. The attitude of the Pondos changed, and they returned to their rooms.

"After all the police had been drawn up in the compound, they were ordered to clear the rooms. Many of the natives adopted a defiant attitude, and in some cases the police were compelled to use force. Hundreds of natives streamed out of the compound gates."

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Caption to a photograph: "Dawn scene at Nourse Mines. After police and officials at Nourse Mines yesterday had been told of the natives' refusal to go on shift, they took measures to force them out of the compound and warned them to go to work."

Nourse Mines: "When all the natives willing to go to work were underground, the police began to clear each room of malcontents, driving them in sections to the centre of the compound.....A large number of natives were seriously injured in clashes with the police, several police received light injuries....."

"Mr. Lawrence....addressed the strikers...He gave them a further half hour in which to dress and proceed to the shaft heads, and warned them that if they did not do so, the police would not only deal with them seriously, but might counter any offensive movements with rifle fire....."

Bob Conolly's cartoon shows hundreds of little blanket-clad characters, looking like Mexican peasants at a fiesta, marching away from a mine-dump. In their midst, and all over them is a

gigantic, shadowy figure, labelled "Local Communism". He is dangling a note labelled "ten shillings" from a fishing rod over the heads of the procession, which is labelled "March on Johannesburg."

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London Stock Exchange Report: "Conflicting reports with regard to the Labour troubles in South Africa caused some uncertainty in the Kaffirs market....The market again became depressed on the receipt of news that 18 native trades unions affiliated to the Council of non-European Trade Unions had decided to strike within forty-eight hours in sympathy with the native mine workers..."

Local Stock Exchange Report: "There was some uncertainty...owing to native labour troubles."

From the "Rand Daily Mail", Thursday 15th:

"In the Native Representative Council yesterday, Mr. Mosaka said:

"We cannot be satisfied with a Cabinet sub-committee. We hold the Government responsible for the wanton shooting which took place on the Reef. We can only assume that the instructions to shoot came from the Government. As we represent the native people we would have been more satisfied if the Government had consulted us in the matter.

"A.W.G. Champion said the strikers were on their way peacefully to the Chamber of Mines or the Native Recruiting Office. When they were stopped by the police, they sat down peacefully. It was the police who charged them with batons and bayonets."

"Z.K. Matthews said that an alarming state of affairs existed, and the Council could not be asked to continue with routine matters when there were affairs of such magnitude....."

"R.H. Godlo said that the Africans had tolerated the Government's actions for a very long time. Unlimited tolerance leads to the disappearance of tolerance. We would regret to reach the stage where we lose our tolerance. He moved that the Council adjourn until the Government had made a statement ~~about~~ <sup>about</sup> the disturbances and had

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indicated what steps were being taken to remedy the situation.

"Mr. Rodseth said that he could not accept the motion...Such a motion savoured of a threat to the Government....We must remain level headed. No one regrets it more than the Government that these unfortunate incidents have taken place. I can assure the Council that everything is being done to investigate the situation."

"S. Thema pointed out that the Press had urged the Government to take a very strong line against the strikers.

"When we say that we blame the Government for this, we mean what we say. The Press says that Communists and agitators have started the strike, but 50,000 people will not leave their work because of agitation. The cause goes much deeper."

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Councillor Moroka then moved that the Council adjourn as a protest against the Government's "breach of faith" towards the African people.....

The motion stated that since its inception the council had "brought to the notice of the Government the reactionary nature of the Union's native policy of segregation in all its ramifications", and that the council "deprecates the Government's post-war continuation of a policy of Fascism which is the antithesis and negation of the letter and spirit of the Atlantic Charter and the United Nations Charter."

"The Council therefore, in protest against the breach of faith towards the African people in particular, and the cause of world peace in general, resolves to adjourn this session, and calls on the Government forthwith to abolish all discriminatory legislation in this country."

....This motion was still being discussed when the council adjourned until tomorrow.

From the "Star", Thursday, August 15th:

"The proceedings of the Native Representative Council in Pretoria collapsed completely today when the council carried unanimously a motion to adjourn the session 'as a protest against the Government's breach of faith with the African people.'

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...This morning Mr. R.V. Selope Thema again referred to the strike position in Johannesburg. He said that matters were becoming more serious, and that a general strike was possible amongst the African people. He moved, therefore, that the council should adjourn, and discuss in caucus the events in Johannesburg and the Reef.

"The Chairman, Mr. R. Rodseth (Under-Secretary for Native Affairs) said that he was not prepared to accept the motion. The position was well known to the Government....."

"After the Chairman's ruling, Mr. Mosaka asked: 'How long must gold be rated above human values?'. The natives were determined to save themselves and the white people in spite of themselves.

"Native soldiers were being used to assist the police in attacks on the strikers on the Rand." "The native soldier who fought Nazism during the war, is now being used to establish and defend a similar system at home..."

The Council then adopted the motion to adjourn."

It was the closing of a chapter of South African history, which had opened in Parliament in 1936, when General Hertzog had led a Parliament into taking from the few remaining African voters their last democratic right, and substituting for it a puppet show, a 'Representative Council' elected on a narrow and undemocratic basis, without the power even to decide its own agendas, or to choose its own motions for discussion. The mine strike was shaking more than just the stock exchange, and the Gold Producers Committee. It was shaking and threatening to bring down the outer fringes of the vast, reactionary colour-bar dictatorship which maintains 'white supremacy' and black slavery in South Africa.

From "The Star", Thursday, 15th August:

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"All but two of the Rand's 45 producing mines are now working normally. ....This afternoon there is a total stoppage of one (Nigel) and a partial stoppage on one (Robinson Deep.)

Headline: "Strikers sit at bottom of two shafts."

"...There was some trouble at City Deep this morning, when one compound refused to resume work. Police cleared the compound, and then batches of natives were escorted to the shaft heads.

"At two shafts, the first batches of natives to descend the mine staged a 'sit-down' strike a mile under the ground and refused to let any further batches leave the cages.

"Mine captains and underground managers then went down the shafts concerned, and the natives dispersed.....

"There was a similar experience at Nigel mine this morning. Natives there went down with the early shift and then refused to work.

"There has been no violence. The natives say they will maintain their 'sit-down' strike at the bottom of the 2,700 foot shaft until four o'clock this afternoon when they are due to come up.

Thursday night. In the Board-room of Shakespeare House, the Witwatersrand and Vereeniging Local Committee of the Trades and Labour Council was meeting under the Chairmanship of Jan Venter, President of the Johannesburg Municipal Transport Employees' Union. There were.....unions represented, spokesmen for 40,000 trade unionists. The Secretary of the Committee, Ronnie Fleet - Secretary of the Hairdressers Employees Union and one of South Africa's <sup>others' representatives</sup> delegates to the last conference of the <sup>International Labour Office</sup> ~~World Federation of Trade Unions~~, reported. He had been assisting the African miners in every stage of their long struggle to negotiate with the Chamber of Mines. He had been in touch with the officials of the African Mine Workers' Union throughout the week, and present at the Conference of non-European trade unionists when the General Strike decision was taken.

The people present were grave; graver than they had ever been, sensing the gravity of the problem with which they were dealing. Late in the evening a resolution was moved, seconded and passed.

"The Witwatersrand and Vereeniging Local Committee of the S.A. Trades and Labour Council is deeply perturbed at the violent intervention of the Government in the strike of the African mineworkers. We strongly condemn the attempts of the Government to force the workers back to work at the point of the bayonet. We also strongly protest

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against the raids carried out by the police on offices of trade unions and the seizure by them of records and equipment belonging to the workers. This Committee sees in these actions an attempt to deprive the trade unions and the striking miners in particular, of every possibility of putting their case before the public.

"The Committee is of the opinion that the soundest solution to the present disturbances is the immediate recognition of the right of the Mineworkers to a living wage and also the recognition under the Industrial Conciliation Act of the trade unions of the African workers.

"The Committee therefore proposes that immediate direct negotiations be opened between the African Mineworkers Union and the Chamber of Mines, and suggests further that representatives of the S.A. Trades and Labour Council and the non-European Council of Trade Unions be invited to take part in the negotiations for an immediate settlement of the present dispute.

"We fully support the African Mine Workers' Union in their struggle, as we would support any section of workers fighting for elementary rights. The Committee further demands the immediate release of the leaders of the workers, the stoppage of all intimidation, the withdrawal of the charges against the arrested strikers, and the immediate repeal of the Proclamation 1425, of August 1945, which prohibits the holding of meetings of more than twenty persons upon Proclaimed ground.

"We call on all trade unions and on all progressive citizens to support the miners in their struggle against the policy of exploited cheap labour."

Fleet rushed it across to the offices of the "Daily Mail" in time to catch the Friday morning edition.

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The resolution of the Trades and Labour Council Local Committee did not appear in the Rand Daily Mail.

From the Rand Daily Mail: Friday:

"Native Mine Strike Likely to Peter Out."

"There is every prospect that all Rand Mines will be working normally today..... Five thousand natives at the Main compound at City Deep were involved in a fight with the police yesterday and afterwards went underground readily. At No. 5 compound, 2,600 resumed duty after they had been addressed by mine officials in the presence of 400 police.

"Following their clash with the police on Wednesday, all the native workers at Nourse Mines ceased their strike yesterday.

"At noon the police chased strikers at Chris Shaft, Robinson Deep, off nearby dumps. They surrendered, and said that they would return to work. ....

"All was quiet on the East Rand after police had dealt with an underground "sit-down" strike at Nigel, and with truculent strikers at Van Dyck."

"Police go 1,000 feet Underground to End 'Sit-down' Strike". More than 400 policemen went 1,000 feet underground in the Nigel Gold Mine yesterday to deal with 1,000 natives who were staging a 'sit-down' strike. This is the first time in South African history that the police have been compelled to take such action. ....

The acting station-commander at Nigel, Sergeant du Plessis,.... decided to go underground to investigate the position, and found the natives were in a truculent mood. A fight developed in the stopes.

They drove the natives up stope by stope, level by level, until they reached the surface. A hundred and twenty police had meanwhile been sent from Springs. The natives were gathered together and addressed by police officials..... Afterwards the strikers indicated their intention of resuming work. They were sent underground, and no further trouble occurred."

Some native strikers were injured at the main compound of the Rose Deep Mine yesterday as a result of a baton charge by about 200 police.

.... about 2,000 strikers ..... advanced to the gate and were

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warned by the police to go back. They refused.

"Major D.G. Coetzee, the District Commandant, said that shortly afterwards the strikers rushed the mine offices. The police moved forward to the attack, and using batons and heavy sticks, drove the natives back 60 yards.

".....they decided to return to work. In batches of about 100 they were marched to the shaft-heads, and there was no further trouble."

"More than 50 natives and two policemen were slightly injured in a clash between 400 policemen and 5,000 strikers at the main compound at City Deep early yesterday morning.

"During the night the strikers were told by mine officials that x they were expected to return to work. Few responded ... Others tried to dash into the veld but were driven back. ... The District Commandant, Major J.C. Kriek, ordered his men to drive the natives back to their rooms. There was a general stampede, and the police used their batons freely.

"Not long afterwards, the natives came to the gate and offered to return to work. They marched out, and, in a happy mood, went underground,

"During the disturbances a small crowd of natives from Goerge Goch marched towards City Deep. They were intercepted and chased back by the police."

"Strike Threat Issued in Pretoria".

"A meeting of the join committee of African Trade Unions has resolved that all African workers in Pretoria will go on strike on Monday.

"More than 10,000 natives may be involved if the strike threat is carried out, 1,800 of them being employed by the City Council.

"Police headquarters stated yesterday that police precautions are well advanced, and that any violence will be dealt with drastically."

London Stock Exchange: "Near the end of the Session the market became strong on rumours that the strike had been settled."

Friday, August 16th.

In Alexandra Township, preparations for the general strike were in the hands of the Transport Emergency Committee, representative of every organisation in the place and established during the great

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Bus boycott of a few years before. They had calculated the 'Forty-eight -eight hour' time limit as expiring ~~on~~ that morning.

3 A.M.  
~~At three a.m.~~ When the bus queues started forming in the pitch dark streets - there are no street lights in Alexandria - almost everyone in the township had heard that Friday was General Strike Day, and been asked to stay at home. The strike was to take place, not at the factories and the shops, but in the townships which circle the city.

Key to the success or failure of the strike in Alexandria were the bus drivers. If they struck the Township was marooned, with over 50,000 people cut off from the city. If the bus drivers had struck, Alexandria would have been on strike for the day.

3.30 a.m. People who stayed home, waiting anxiously to see what would happen, heard the buses start to rumble into the Township from their garages outside. Fear that everyone else was going to work, struck at the hearts of many. Curiosity dragged them out to the bus-ranks - 'just to see what was happening'. There were uniformed policemen, travelling alongside the drivers in the bus cabs. There were uniformed policemen in truck-loads and on foot standing around in clumps about the bus queues.

Leaders of the townships organisations, started to form a picket-line, to keep the people from the buses. They were promptly arrested. A block ~~was~~ away, others started distributing leaflets to the workers on the way to the queues, telling them to go home. They were arrested. The first buses pulled away from the terminus, full. Those who saw it began to lose heart. Workers from the factories began to ask themselves: 'What will happen in my factory? Perhaps I am the only striker, and the other wrkers from here, from Sophiatown from Orlando will be at work'. The trickle towards the bus queues began to grow. And grow. Until they stretched around the block, almost like a normal day in Alexandria.

There is something about the dark. It saps confidence, and encourages false fears. In the dark the people began to go to work. But for that day, Friday August 16th, the bus companies returns showed that after 7 o'clock - after sunrise - only 20% of the normal members used the buses. And missing Friday's work meant missing

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payday, after a week's hard work had been done.

Friday, August 16th:

~~At~~ 10.30 a.m. Lieutenant Botha of the C.I.D. and some of his henchmen entered the Communist Party Offices in Progress Buildings. Brian Bunting, of the Cape Town staff of the Guardian was there. He had arrived the night before from Cape Town to see his brother who was out on a flying visit from England. The police took his name, asked him what he was doing there. Shortly afterwards, Danie du Plessis, District Secretary of the Communist Party arrived. He was shown a warrant for a search of the offices.

The police searched. What they were searching for is still a mystery. They took away with them 3,000 copies of a pamphlet 'The Ghetto Act' (written by Dr. Dadoo, and on sale at the Peoples Bookshop.)

They took a file of letters written to Hilda Watts from her constituents

IND  
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EM.  
- Dear Councillor Watts, There is grass growing on the pavement outside. Please see what you can do about it. Dear Councillor Watts, The buses make an awful noise as they come around this corner..... Dear Councillor Watts, My congratulations for the stand you have taken at the City Council meetings over the proposal to raise tramfares ...;

They took a typewriter and a few blank stencils; from the storeroom they took dusty bundles of documents dating back to 1939 and 1940. When they left after an hour, there were forty reams of duplicating paper, delivered from the merchant just before the raid, still standing stacked neatly against the wall. Ten minutes after they left, the printer delivered the last batch of 3,000 copies of Dadoo's Ghetto Act pamphlet.

Friday Midday. In the Carlton Hotel a small meeting of Europeans came together, adopted the draft statement placed before it by Mrs. Margaret Ballinger and Councillor Hilda Watts, signed it, and delegated Hilda Watts, Cecil Williams and Julius Baker to get more signatures to it.

IND  
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EM.  
"We wish to place on record our belief that the tragic incidents of the last few days could have been avoided had channels of negotiations between the African Mineworkers and their employers existed."

"We cannot accept the statement that the strike was the work of agitators. The existence of serious economic grievances was fully

established by the Lansdowne Commission a considerable proportion of whose recommendations .... were not implemented.

" ..... The facts themselves and the Press presentation of the facts have left the impression that the authorities were relying solely on force to settle any dispute which might arise.

" We Europeans are seriously distrubed in our consciences by the policies which have given rise to this situation.

- Signed by: Margaret Ballinger; M.P. Native Representative.
- Jessie McPherson; Labour Mayor of Johannesburg,  
Chairman of the S.A. Labour Party.
- Archdeacon R.P.Y. Rouse; Archdeacon of the  
African Diocese of the Anglican Church.
- W.G. Ballinger; President, Friends of Africa.
- Douglas Cowin; President, South African Institute  
of Architects.
- Rene de Villiers; Editor of the 'Forum'.
- Rev. L. du Manoir;
- F. Friedgut; Sub-Editor of the 'Forum'.
- Advocate A. Fischer.
- I.R. Glyn-Thomas; Registrar of the University of  
the Witwatersrand.
- J.Y.T. Grieg; Professor in English, University  
of the Witwatersrand.
- J.T. Haarhoff; Professor in Classics; University  
of the Witwatersrand.
- Norman Hanson; Member of the National Housing  
Commission.
- Eleanor Hawarden:
- Rev. F.M.M. Haythornthwaite.
- A. Hepple; Member Provincial Council, Acting  
General Secretary, S.A. Labour Party.
- Rev. Hubert R. Higgs.
- Margaret Inglis; Actress.
- Uys Krige; War correspondent, ex Prisoner of War,  
leading Afrikaans poet and dramatist.
- Hilda Kuper.

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