

### 1907 STRIKE

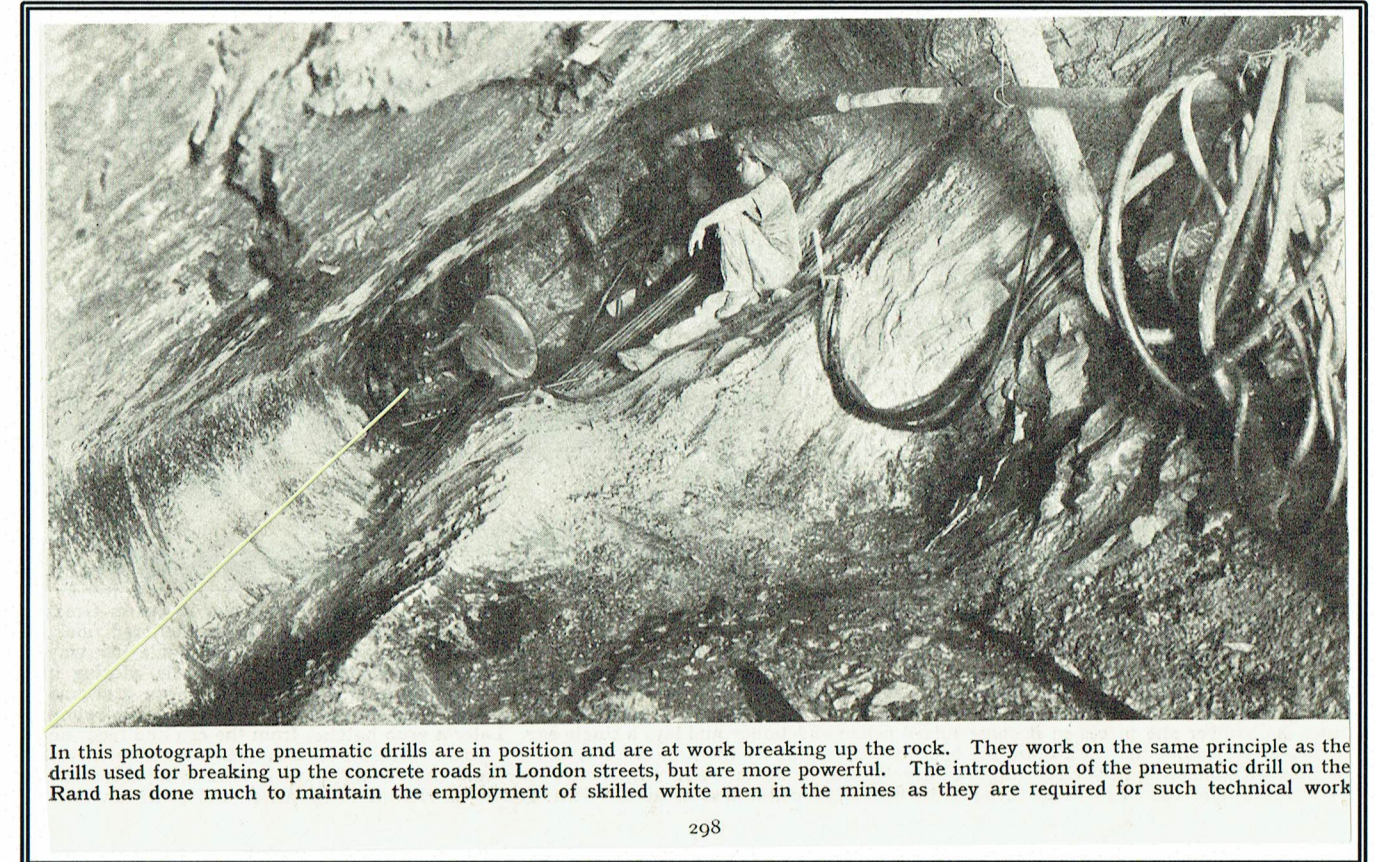
The introduction of the Chinese workers after the War resulted in controversy between mine management and white workers. Until May 1907, the practice was for white miners to supervise a maximum of two rock-drilling machines. The Chinese mineworkers became skilled in rock drilling, a skill preserved for white miners, and black miners that worked beside the Chinese workers profited from their example, learning the necessary skills. This transfer of skills contributes not only to the elimination of white unskilled labour, it also disrupted the position of white skilled labour.

Postcard posted at Johannesburg to Paris, France dated 14 Jan. 1907. The 1d KE VII stamp cover the postal rate to Europe and is tied with a Johannesburg double circle cds.



Labour policies appreciated the transformation of skills and that it would be possible to keep an eye on more drills. This policy and the process of re-positioning skilled white miners caused the 1907 strike:

#### **The first major industrial action on the Witwatersrand gold mines**



In this photograph the pneumatic drills are in position and are at work breaking up the rock. They work on the same principle as the drills used for breaking up the concrete roads in London streets, but are more powerful. The introduction of the pneumatic drill on the Rand has done much to maintain the employment of skilled white men in the mines as they are required for such technical work

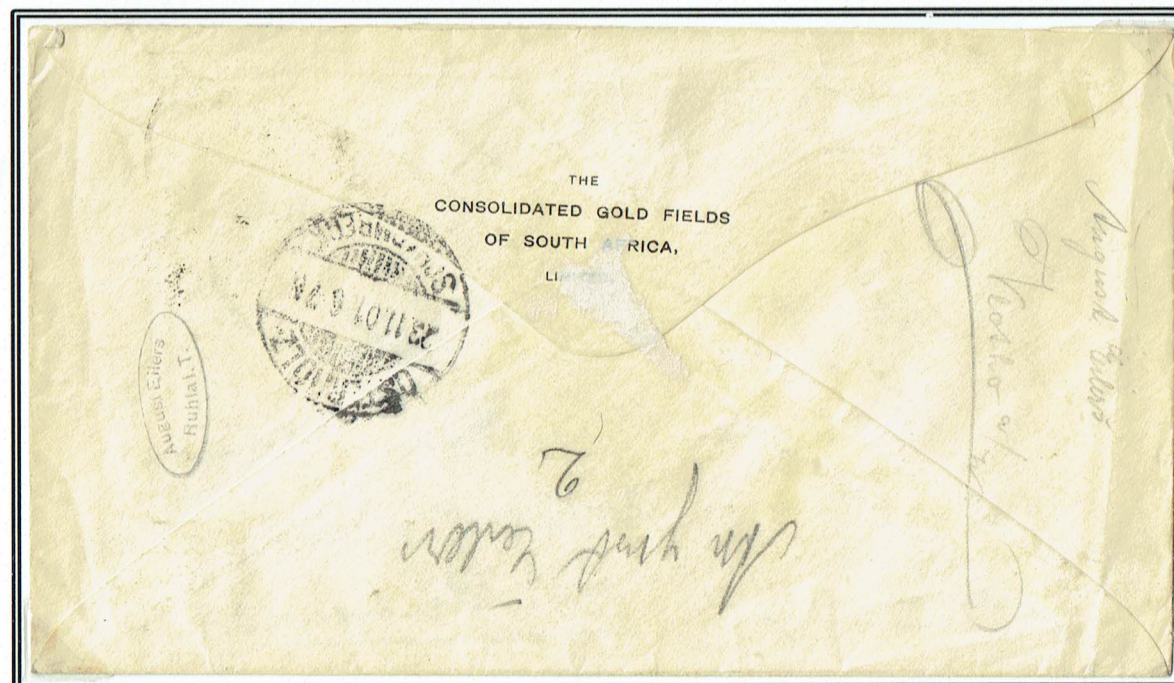
298

Source: Marvels of Engineering

To reduce cost, Management directed supervision of three instead of two drills (referred to as the "three machine drill" plan) and reducing shift payments. The white miners protested, fearing it might force white skilled labour out of the mines.

The Transvaal Miners Association (TMA) objected to the new decree and negotiate with mine management and government. No settlement could be reached, and the TMA called for a general strike. On 1 May 1907 the strike started at the **Consolidated Gold Fields** controlled Knights Deep mine on the East Rand near Germiston.

Back of a Consolidated Gold Fields of South Africa, Ltd, bearing an Ostenhof, Germany cds dated 23 Nov. 1901. Franked with two 1/2d and 2d Transvaal Coat of Arms stamps overprinted "ERI" at front cover the postage to Germany dated 1 Nov. 1901



By 8 May over 1 000 miners on the East Rand had downed tools.

The strike extended to the central Rand and to mines other than those controlled by Consolidated Gold Fields.

The lack of a policy to deal with labour unrest and a determined effort by the mines to replace white miners with strike-breakers, incited the strikers beyond peaceful persuasion.

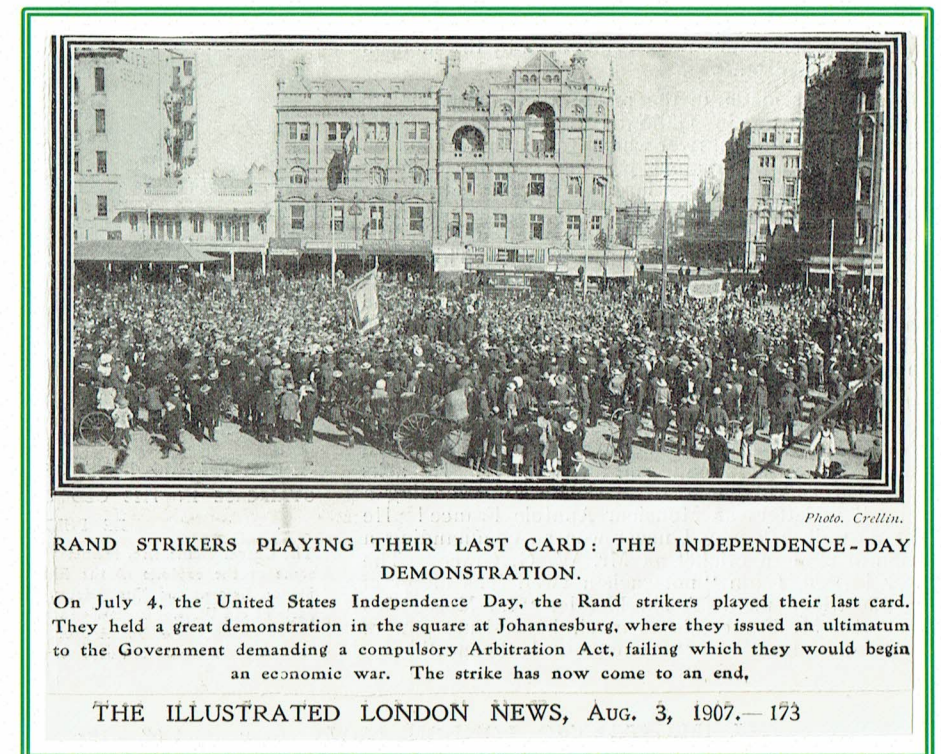


Photo: Crillon.

**RAND STRIKERS PLAYING THEIR LAST CARD: THE INDEPENDENCE-DAY DEMONSTRATION.**

On July 4, the United States Independence Day, the Rand strikers played their last card. They held a great demonstration in the square at Johannesburg, where they issued an ultimatum to the Government demanding a compulsory Arbitration Act, failing which they would begin an economic war. The strike has now come to an end,

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, Aug. 3, 1907.—173

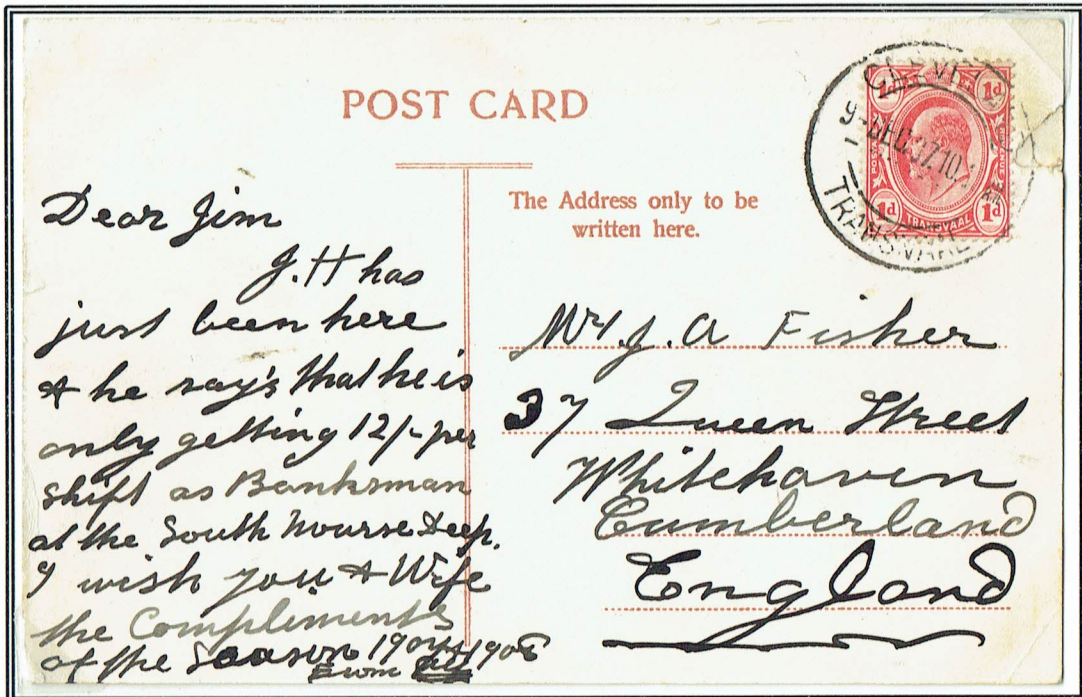
Original image of the strike from a limited retained copy of "The Illustrated London News" of 3 August 1907

### 1907 STRIKE

When the first serious incidents of violence occurred in mid-May and the Government mobilized its forces for military action to protect mine property and scab labour.

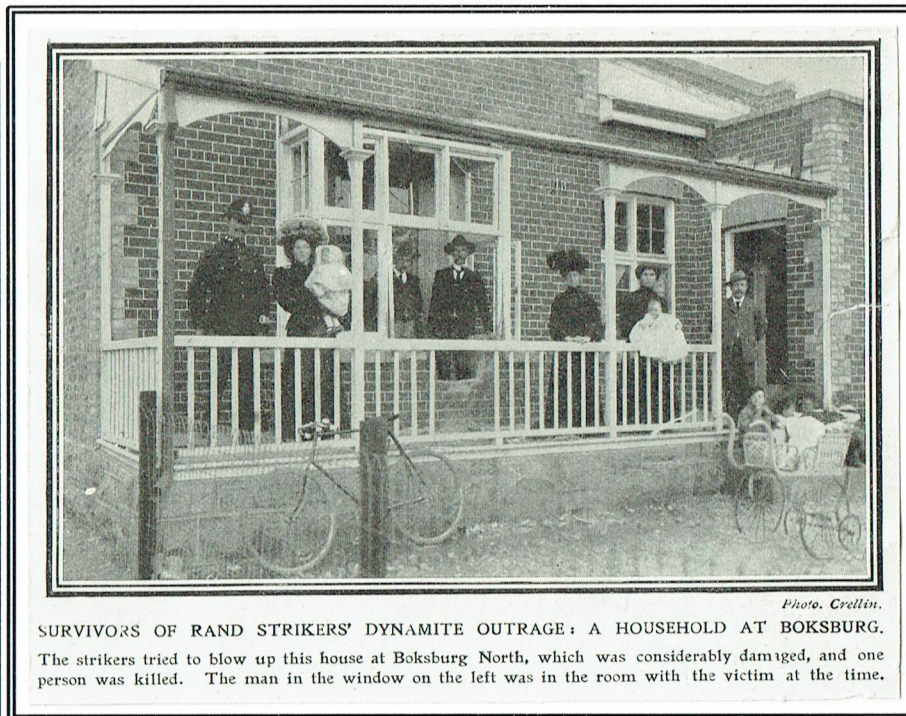
The strike **ended** on 28 July 1907 and hundreds of strikers found themselves workless and victimized. Many of the foreign miners left South Africa and the white workforce were increasingly dominated by young Afrikaans speaking men.

Postcard mailed at Cleveland, Transvaal (East Rand) with mine related remarks addressed to England dated 9 Dec. 1907. The 1d KE VII stamp cover the International Postcard postage and is tied by a Cleveland double circle cds



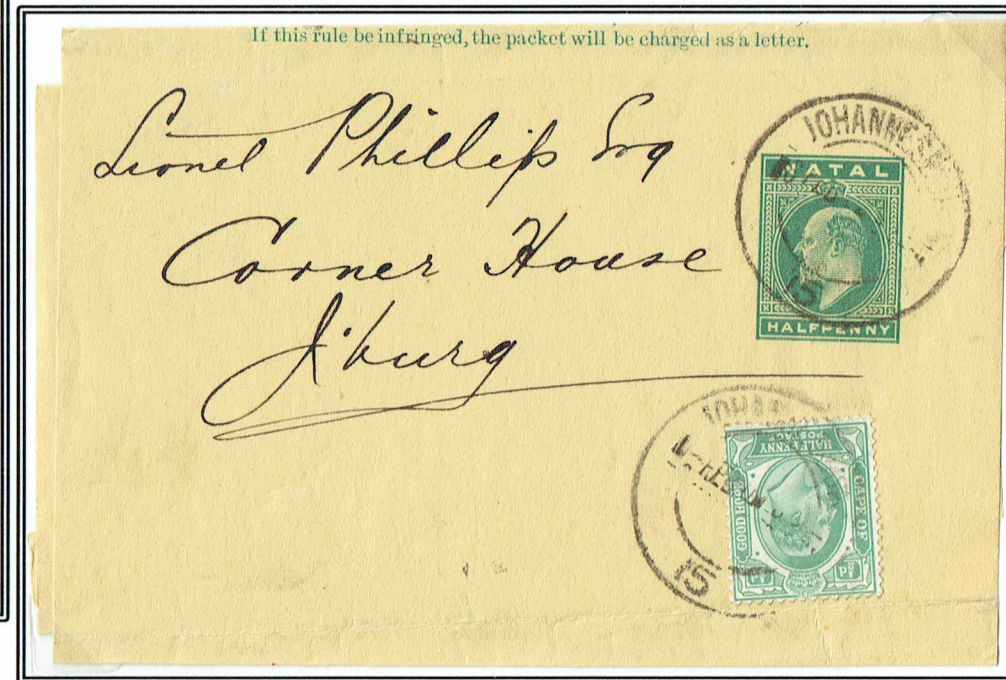
The writer wrote that: "...he says he is only getting 12/- per shift as Banksman at the South Nourse Deep (mine)"

Published by Braune & Levy, Johannesburg with serial number 1511, DB in red



Original image of the strike from a very limited retained copy of "The Illustrated London News" of 20 July 1907

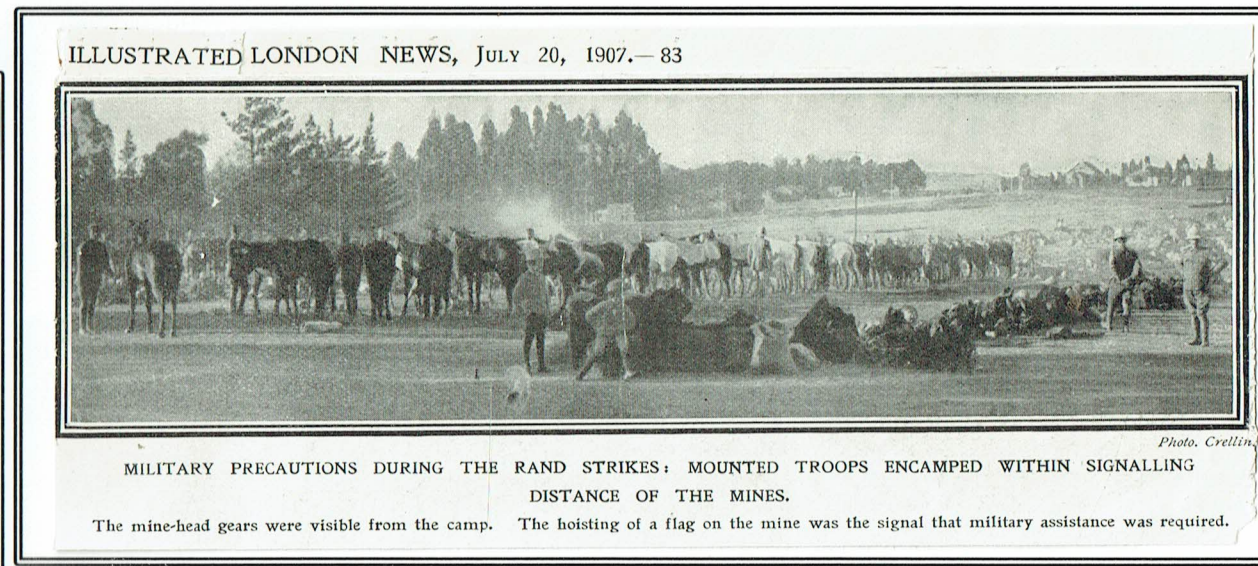
Locally used wrapper addressed to Lionel Phillips, Corner House, Johannesburg franked with 1d Natal stamp, uprated with a Cape of Good Hope 1/2d stamp (Interprovincial usage) to cover printed matter postage for 4 oz and tied with a Johannesburg double circle cds with unreadable date



Lionel Phillips was the Chairman of Rand Mines, Ltd with the SA Head Office at Corner House, Johannesburg

Lionel Phillips toured the Rand Mines holdings, addressing the white workers in an informal way. Obstinate workers at the Crown Deep mine were told "that it was for their own special benefit to run three machines".

Local used registered cover from Johannesburg to Crown Mines, Johannesburg with imprinted 4d KG V stamp to cover the 4d registration fee and uprated with two 2d KG V stamps to cover the postage of 4d (overweight - normal 2d/oz) tied with a Registered Johannesburg double circle cds dated 24 July 1925 with arrival Crown Mines double circle cds dated 29 July 1925



Original image of the strike as published in a very limited retained copy of "The Illustrated London News" of 20 July 1907

Although the strikers lost the day, this was the first example of the power of trade unionism in influencing industrial relations, at least in the gold mining sector.

### 1913 STRIKE

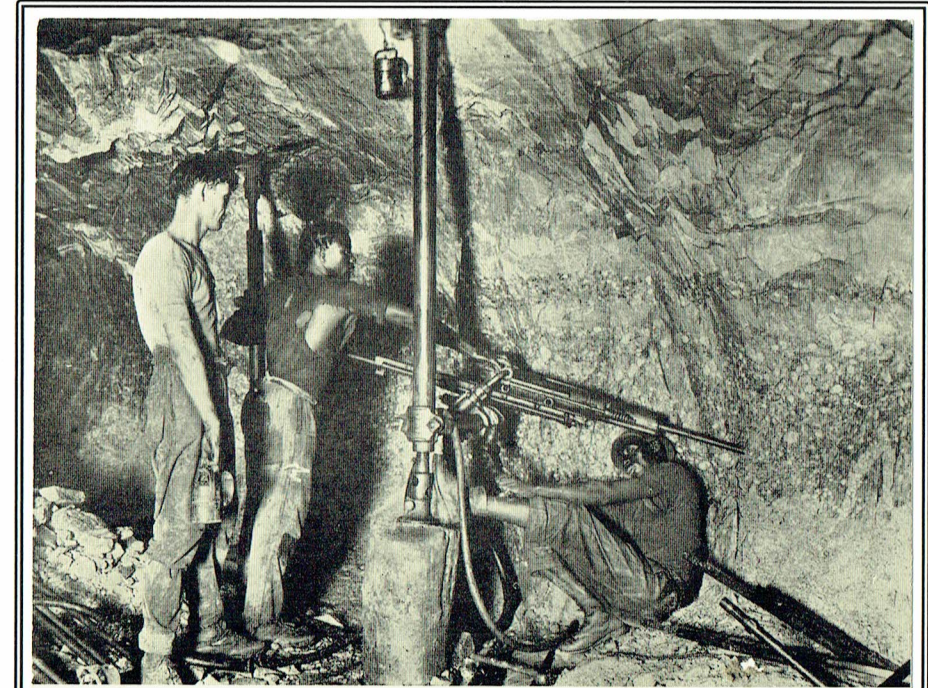
The deep-rooted dissatisfaction of the white workers over the graduation of native workers from unskilled to semi-skilled jobs came to a head in May 1913 at the **New Kleinfontein** mine in Benoni.

Management introduced changes to working hours when five underground mechanics refused to comply and left the mine on 10 May.

On 26 May most of the white workers at the mine voted to support the five men and a white mineworker strike was declared with a strike committee appointed.

Management refused to negotiate with this committee and decided not to reinstate the strikers.

They opened the mine on 11 June 1913 with the assistance of scabs (strike breakers). The scabs (mostly black) were assaulted by the strikers and the strike spread to some 63 mines on the Rand.



Thousands of feet below the surface. Drillers at work in a particularly well defined section of banket reef.

Working side by side but black mineworkers were excluded from the strike as they were not regarded fellow workers by the white workers

Source: Fifty Golden years of the Rand

Government adopted an impartial attitude but, as the strike spreads from mine to mine, it was accompanied by growing violence and Government take the first steps to intervene.

General Jan Smuts met with the strike leaders and management on 22 June 1913, but was unsuccessful in resolving the deadlock between the two parties.

Back of a New Kleinfontein Company, Ltd envelope franked with a 1d KE VII at front to cover the postage to Blair Atholl, Scotland and redirected to Dunkeld. Backstamped with Blair Atholl cds on 14 Jan. 1906 and Dunkeld cds dated 16 Jan. 1905



Smuts mobilized the Imperial forces to assist the Police.

The violence lead to the first instance in South Africa's history in which there was a spilling of blood as a result of Industrial disturbance.

Transfer of Shares or Stock.

*East Rand Proprietary Mines, Ltd*  
of *Johannesburg.*

in consideration of the sum of *One thousand ninety six pounds, 7/6, sfg.*

paid by *New Kleinfontein Company, Ltd.*  
of *Johannesburg.*

Signed, sealed, and delivered by the above-named  
*New Kleinfontein Co. Ltd.*  
in the presence of

Witness's { Signature, *Geo. Burman Co*  
Address, *Pr. 2927, Johannesburg*  
Occupation, *clerk*

FOR NEW KLEINFONTEIN CO., LTD.

*John A. Demission* }   
*Mertrud* }   
*Edw. Austin* }   
*ACTING Secretary.*

Signed, sealed, and delivered by the above-named  
in the presence of

Witness's { Signature, \_\_\_\_\_  
Address, \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation, \_\_\_\_\_

Signed, sealed, and delivered by the above-named  
in the presence of

Witness's { Signature, \_\_\_\_\_  
Address, \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation, \_\_\_\_\_

REGISTERED  
16 OCT 1917

REVENUE SOUTH AFRICA 10s  
REVENUE SOUTH AFRICA 1s

When a transfer is executed out of Great Britain, and is to be presented for registration in London, it is recommended that the Signatures be attested by H.M. Consul, or Vice-Consul, a Magistrate, Notary Public, Justice of the Peace, or by some other person holding a public position, as most Companies refuse to recognise Signatures not so attested.

In every instance names and addresses should appear in full on this document.

Transfer of Registered Shares document of East Rand Proprietary mines, Ltd to New Kleinfontein Company, Ltd validated a 10s and 1s KG V revenue stamps with manuscript cancel dated 25 Sep. 1917

### 1913 STRIKE

At the beginning of July, no resolution to the dispute was reached and some 19 000 white workers were on strike. The mines ceased to operate, and the strike reached its climax on 4 and 5 July 1913.

The strike committee arranged for a mass demonstration on Johannesburg's Market Square on Friday 4 July. Although the meeting was banned, white miners from Benoni and Brakpan, joined by others, were marching on to Johannesburg determined to hold the meeting.

Anarchistic speeches were made by the leaders and the meeting was dispersed by the police. Violence started when the crowd started stoning the police, the Imperial infantry were called upon to assist the Police.

*An unfortunate weekend of violence was underway...*



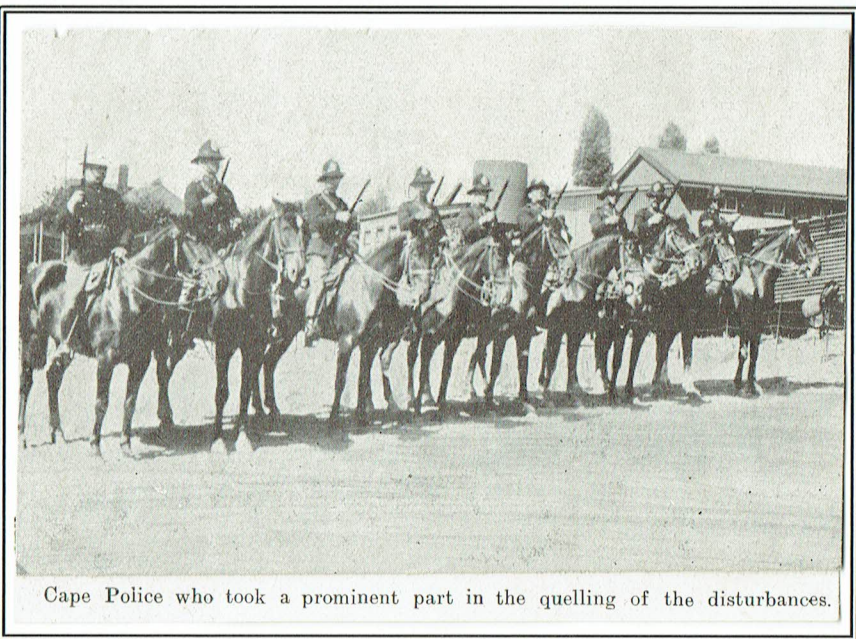
2d ZAR Coat of Arms stamp overprinted "V R I" with Benoni cds dated 2 March 1902

The "Illustrated Star: Town and Country Journal" carried an article of the strike on 19 July 1913  
On right are original images from this printing

P/Stationary card from Brakpan to Johannesburg dated 22 Oct. 1917. The 1d imprinted KG V stamp cover the inland postage and is tied by a Brakpan double circle cds



One of the charges by the police at the height of the disorder.



Cape Police who took a prominent part in the quelling of the disturbances.

Source: Like it was The Star 100 years in Johannesburg



The 1913 strike revealed a new facet in labour unrest – women Under the leadership of Mary Fitzgerald, they took an active part with the extreme section and were charged with "inciting to violence"

Correctly franked cover from Germiston to Benoni franked with a 1d KE VII stamp tied by a Germiston double circle cds dated 8 Apr. 1913



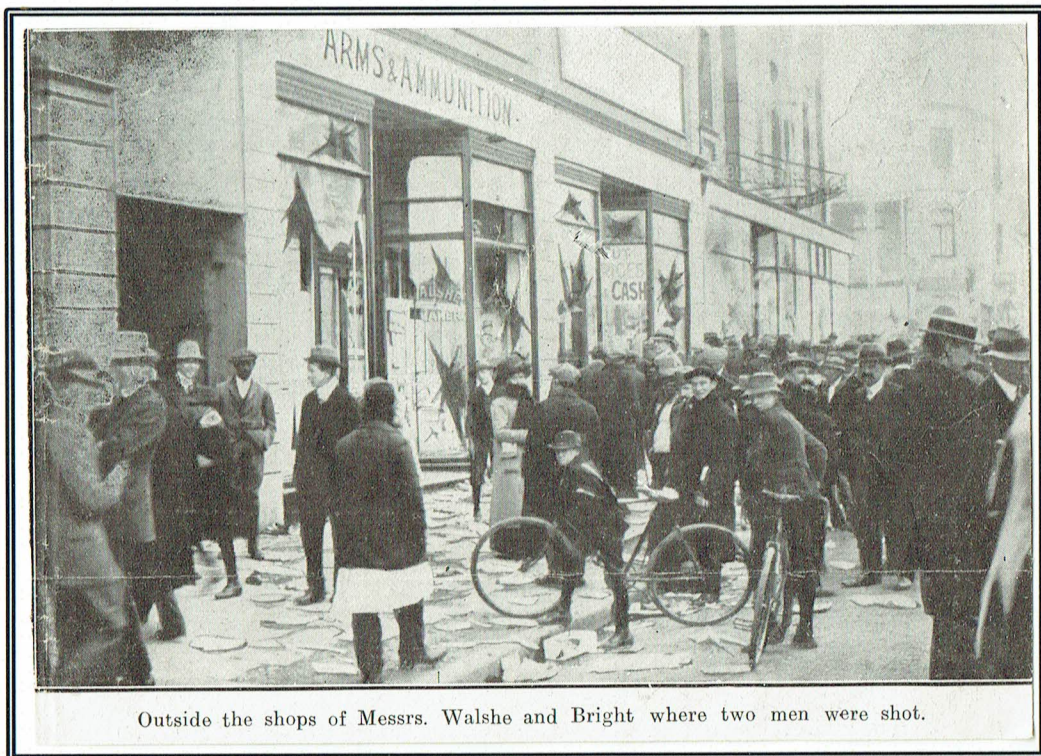
The fury of woman. Some women showed a mad devilry; led the way where men paused.

### 1913 STRIKE

The crowd broke up in smaller groups that roamed Johannesburg. It was eminent that there would be more violence, the only question be where it will start.

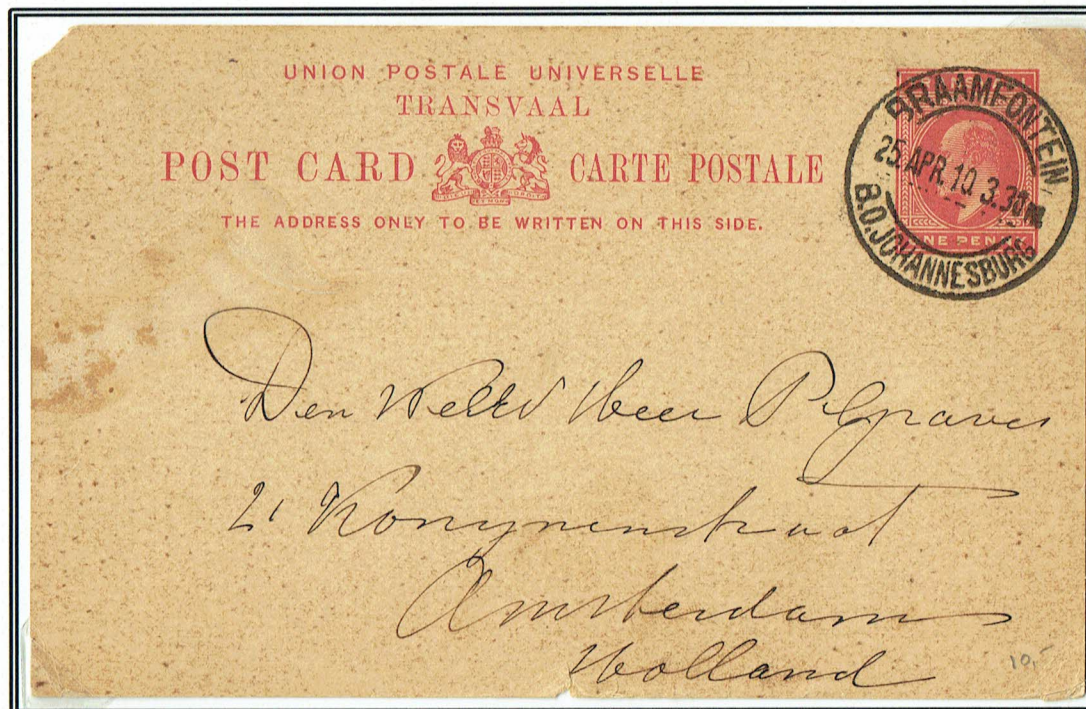
At about eight o'clock that evening a jam-packed crowd had gathered opposite the Post Office. Several of the self-appointed leaders, including Mary Fitzgerald, delivered speeches preaching open revolt. One speaker incites the crowd to get rifles and ammunition to arm themselves.

Transvaal P/Stationary card from Braamfontein to Amsterdam, Holland dated 25 Apr. 1910. The imprinted Transvaal 1d KE VII stamp covers the postal rate to Europe and is tied with a Braamfontein double circle cds



Outside the shops of Messrs. Walsh and Bright where two men were shot.

Original print image of the strike from "The Illustrated Star: Town and Country Journal" of 19 July 1913



One of a kind original photo from a private family photo album showing the damage at Park Station after the burning

Another speaker boasts about the railway traffic and lines that were disrupted in the afternoon. Remarks from the crowd could be heard as the trains were still running and a clear voice instigating the torching of the railway station – this was the proverbial spark in the powder keg.

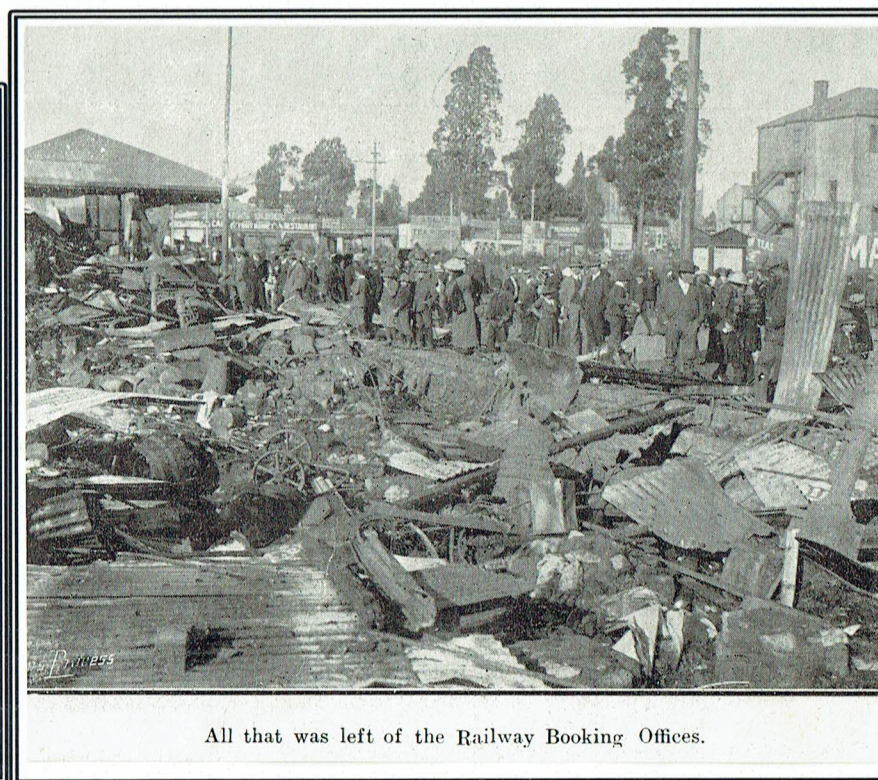
A hooligan element took over and the crowd advanced to Park Railway Station in Braamfontein looting gun shops for arms and ammunition on their way. At Park Station the frontline clashed with the police but around thirty men managed to took possession of the station, setting the booking office and goods shed on fire.

Postcard franked with a 1d KE VII stamp, correct postage to Europe, tied by a Johannesburg double circle cds sent from Johannesburg to France on 19 Sep. 1908



Park Station, Johannesburg

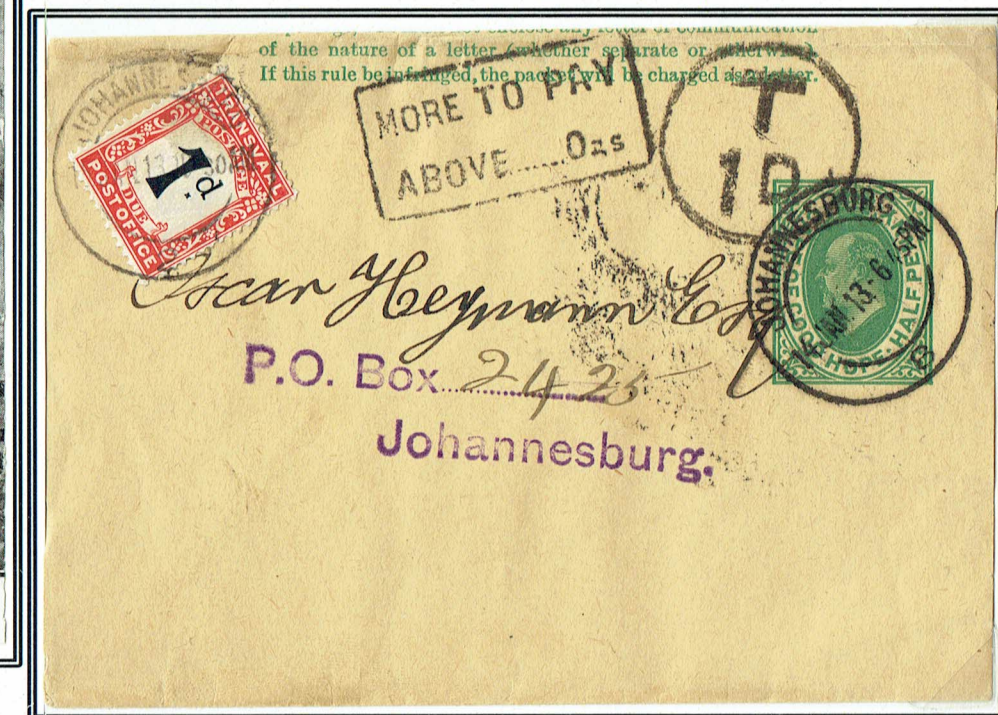
Published by Braune & Levy, Johannesburg with serial number 4206, DB in red



All that was left of the Railway Booking Offices.

Original prints of the strike from "The Illustrated Star: Town and Country Journal" of 19 July 1913

Wrapper, Johannesburg to Johannesburg dated 13 Jan. 1913. Underfranked with imprinted 1/2d Cape of Good Hope KE VII stamp (Interprovincial usage) and taxed. The tax was paid with a 1d Transvaal Postage Due stamp



### 1913 STRIKE

From the Railway station the mob moved to the offices of **The Star** that was plundered and ruined by fire. The Star was regarded by the strikers to be more interested in the well-being of black workers than that of whites.

They also threatened to attack "Corner House", the mining house of H Eckstein & Co, who they considered to be a symbol of capitalism.

Reinforcements from the Military and Cape Police were deployed to assist the Police to suppress the strike. On the way the picketers were attacked by the Military and Police that opened fire trying to restore the order.



After this incident fighting and hostilities by the strikers subsided but was far from over. On Saturday morning 5 July it started again. Reports indicated that the strikers were on their way to burn down the Rand Club – "the haunt of the capitalist classes". The violence that roamed the city since the previous day reached its climax with the attack on the Rand Club.

Two one of a kind original photos from a private family photo album showing military tents and the damage to the Star's office after the scorching

People gathered outside the club and a small group entered and vandalized the club, trying to set it alight. Within minutes the police and military arrived and, what was described as a battle to protect the Rand club (and Johannesburg) commenced.

It started with an unfortunate incident when a young miner appeared in the street and shouted "Shoot, you bastards" upon which he bared his chest. A volley of bullets followed in which he was fatally wounded. Crossfire between the armed forces and strikers followed, killing more people and the strike went beyond control. Alarmed by the violence and deaths, Generals Botha and Smuts arrived in Johannesburg on 5 July 1913 to intervene.

They met with the mining executives and leaders of the demonstrators to negotiate a truce. Most of the strikers' demands were met and the strike was called off – the strikers won the day.

In total twenty-one people were fatally wounded with more than 200 injured, including the police and military.

Postcard franked with a 2 1d KG V stamps, the correct postage to Europe, tied by Johannesburg cds, sent from Johannesburg to Switzerland on 5 Nov. 1908

Postcard franked with a 1d KE VII stamp, the correct postage to Europe, tied by Johannesburg double circle cds, sent from Johannesburg to Switzerland on 5 Nov. 1908



Corner House, Johannesburg  
Published by Braune & Levy, Johannesburg with serial number 792, DB in red



Rand Club – Inaugurated 1904

Source: GOLD Their Touchstone



P/copy of obverse  
Scarce Trade Union Commemorative medal in memory of the victims of the strike

A funeral for most of the victims were held on Monday 7 July 1913, which were attended by about 60 000 people.

*Miners' Strike, 1913: death of a Gold Fields miner. J.L Labuschagne, a striking miner from Knights Deep, stands at the corner of Loveday and Commissioner Streets and invites the troops – 'Shoot me!' They complied.*



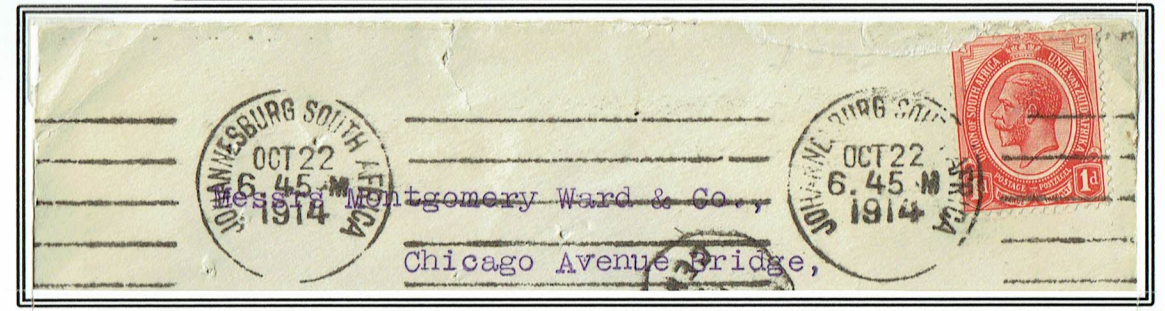
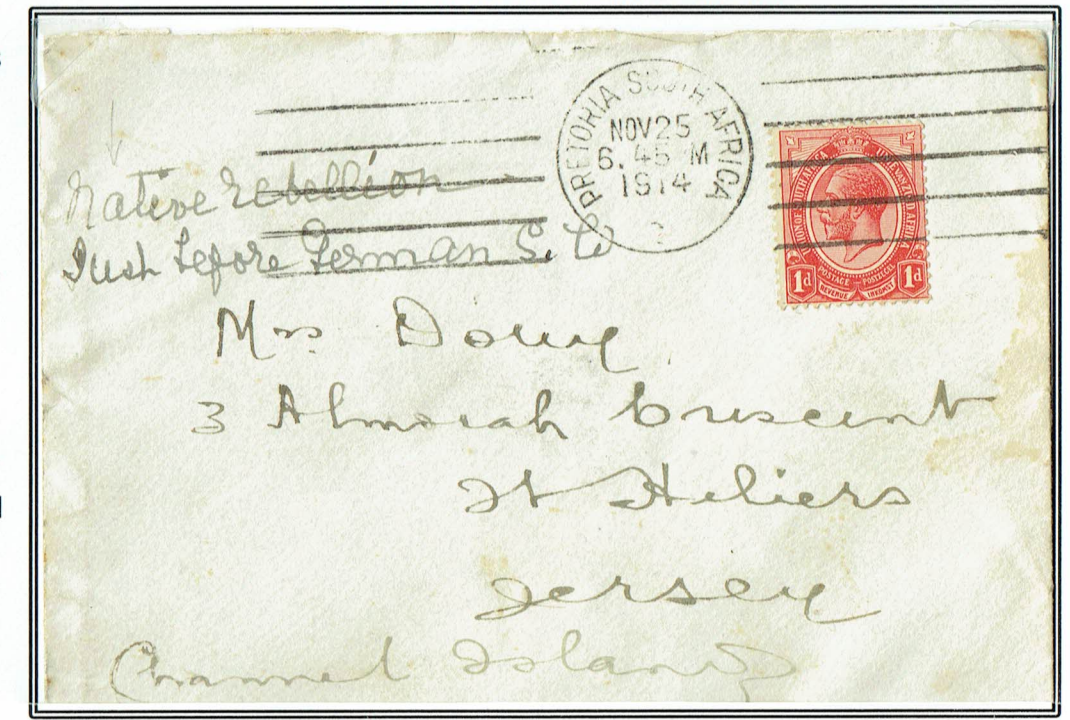
### 1914 STRIKE

On 6 January 1914, at a mass meeting in Pretoria, the Amalgamated Society of Railway and Harbour Servants (ASRW&H) decided to call a general industrial strike of white railway workers to begin on the 8 January. By 13 January all sections of Railway workers **Nationally** had joined the strike, followed by the Coal and Gold miners. Acts of sabotage on railway lines were committed, which resulted in major unrest in the Witwatersrand. The government replied with a declaration of martial law, taking control and the strike was crushed on 18 January.

Letter with strike related remarks addressed from Pretoria to the Channel Islands dated 25 Nov. 1914 and correctly franked with a 1d KG V stamp tied with a Pretoria machine canceller

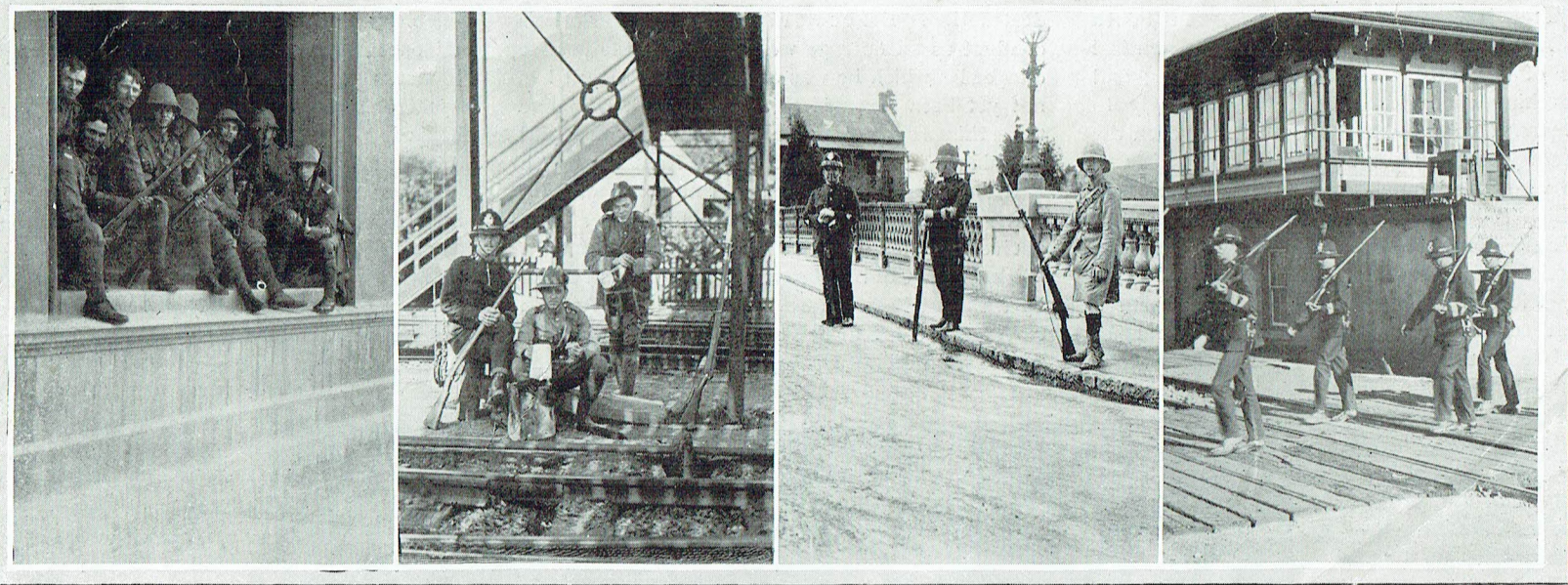
Several arrests were made and nine of the strike leaders were deported without a trial.

Below: 1d KG V stamp cancelled with Johannesburg machine canceller dated 25 Nov. 1914



## SOUTH AFRICA UNDER MARTIAL LAW

HOW THE GOVERNMENT MET THE LABOUR TROUBLES



AT CAPE TOWN: THE CITIZEN DEFENCE FORCE ON DUTY AT PRETORIA: SOLDIERS AND POLICE GUARDING BRIDGE AND RAILWAY



IN MARKET SQUARE, JOHANNESBURG: A MASS MEETING OF RAILWAY STRIKERS ON JANUARY 11

### INCIDENTS OF THE GENERAL STRIKE. JANUARY 1914.



Commando of Burghers in the Neighbourhood of Trades Hall. Passed by the C.I.D. W. M. Berlein, P.O. Box 2262, Johannesburg.

1914 Strike, Johannesburg Commemorative Postcard Published by WM Berlein. PO Box 2262, Johannesburg. No serial number with no writing at back and passed by the Central Information Department

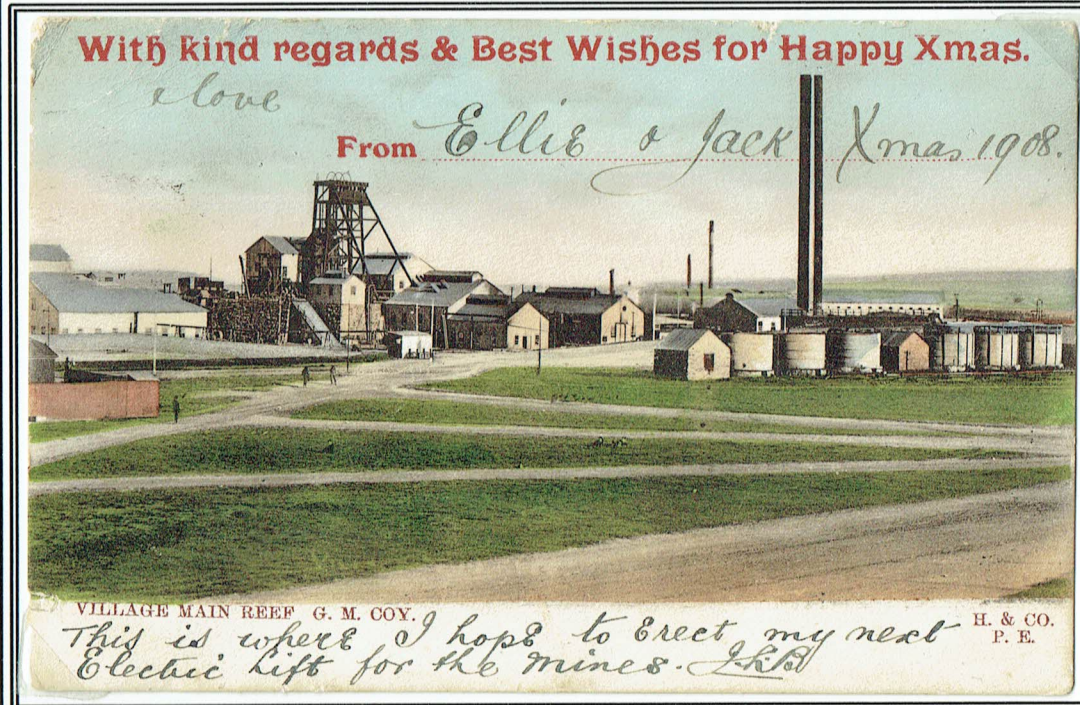
TIMELINE – 1915 TO 1921

During 1913 black workers at the New Primrose Mine in Germiston, Village Main Reef and City Deep mines in Johannesburg made unsuccessful attempts to join the strike, police drove them back to the compounds, arresting the leaders. Towards December 1915 Black miners realized their collective power and started an upheaval at the Van Rhyn Deep mine demanding a pay rise. Armed forces assisted in settling the dispute.



Effecting the arrest of the ringleaders.

Original print of the strike from "The Illustrated Star: Town and Country Journal" of 19 July 1913.



Overview of Village Main Reef mine, Johannesburg Published by H & Co, Port Elizabeth, no number, and DB in brown

Registered cover from City Deep, Johannesburg to England dated 28 Oct. 1950. The two 4d Union stamps cover the 4d registration fee and the postage of 4d (overweight - normal 2d/oz) tied with a City Deep, Johannesburg double cds



TIMELINE

1918

Feb. 1918 Black miners boycott concession stores on the East Rand.

May - Black sanitary worker's strike arrests made; the ANC threatened with a General Strike - workers released.

11 May - White Power Station worker's strike.

1 July - Black miners down tools, violent clashes with the police.

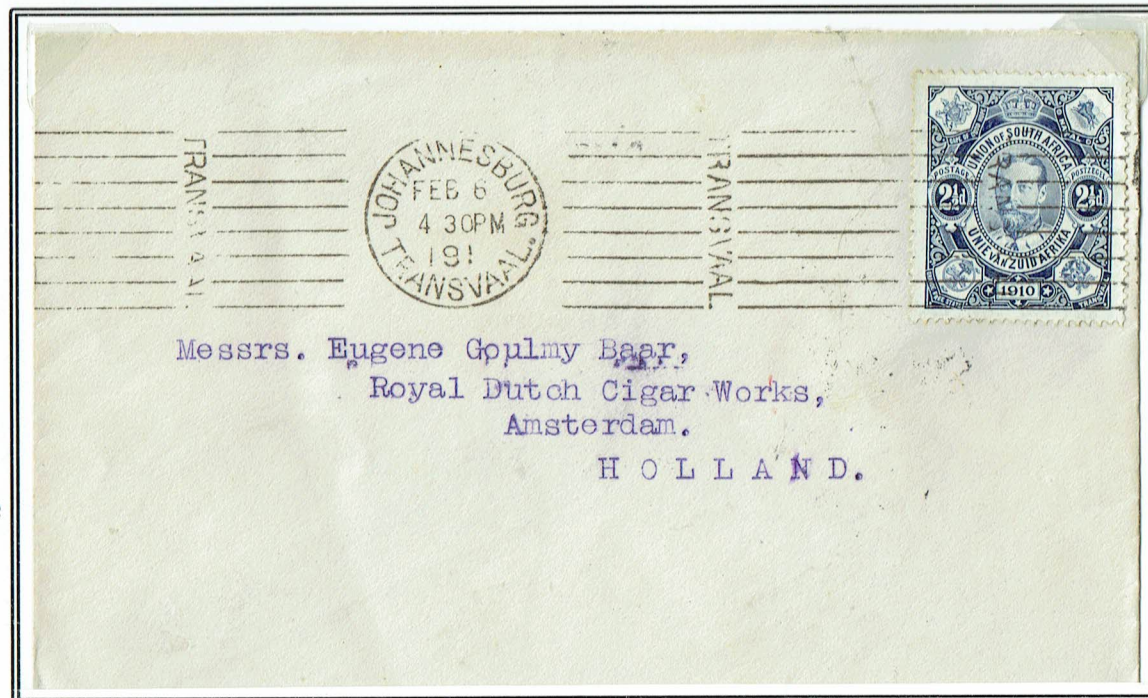
September - White mineworkers persuade the Chamber of Mines not to fill white jobs with African or Coloured workers.

The first Trade Union to organize black workers was the Industrial Workers of Africa (IWA)), formed in September 1917 by the Revolutionary International Socialist League.

The IWA merged into the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa in 1919 and was the first Nationally organized union for black.

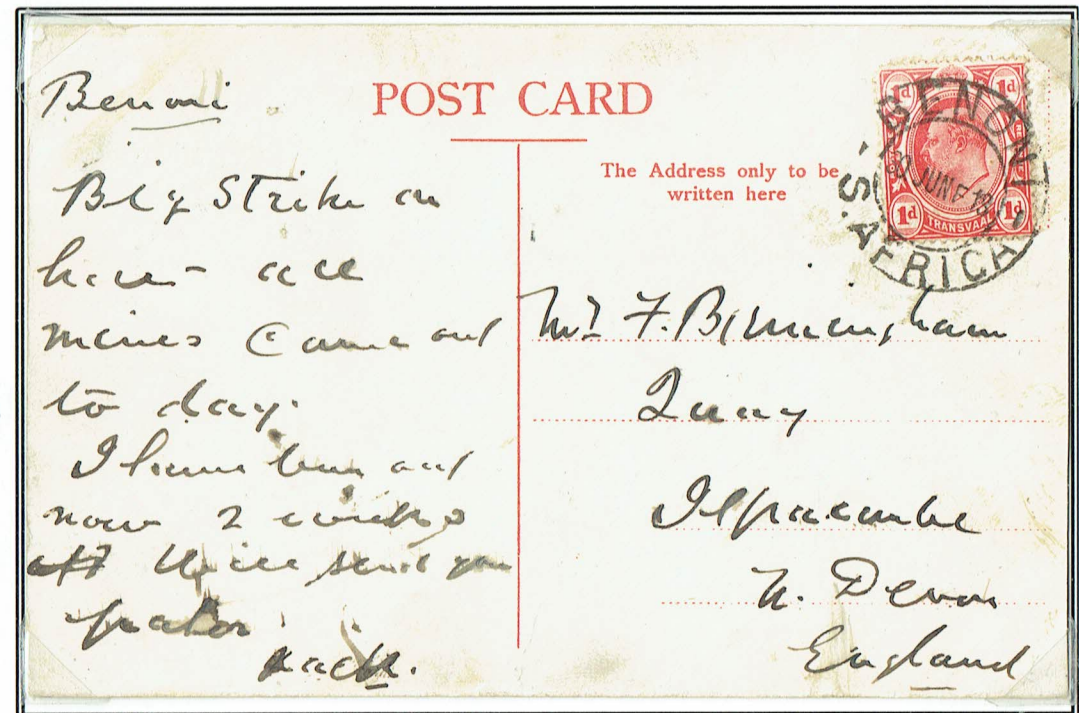
In 1918 black miners, hard hit by the rising cost of living, boycott concession stores on the East Rand.

Cover addressed to Amsterdam, Holland dated 6 Feb 1917 and franked with a Union of SA 2½d stamp, tied by a Johannesburg Transvaal postal slogan canceller. The 2½d postal rate was introduced on 31 May 1910



71 000 black miners strike in 1919 for an increase in wages. The Police intervene and eleven strikers were killed at City Deep mine.

Letter addressed from Benoni to England 30 June 1918 dated 25 Nov. 1914 with strike related remarks and correctly franked with a 1d KE VII stamp (late usage) tied with a Benoni double circle cds



TIMELINE

1919

Black miners strike for increase of wages. Eleven Africans killed at City Deep Mine

1 February - White building trade worker's strike.

29 March - White power station worker's strike.

31 March to 1 April - White municipal workers.

1920

January - Black miner's strike.

29 February - Black worker's riot.

4 to 21 May - White tramway worker's strike.