**KALGOORLIE RIOTS**

**By A. PARENTICH for the Croatian History Group (www.croatiansinwa .com.au)**

**INTRODUCTION**

**During the early 1930s- the Depression years- times were difficult throughout the world. It was no different in 1934 on the goldfields of Kalgoorlie/Boulder where, at the time, there was a scarcity of work and, with the Australians (Britishers) and foreigners (Yugoslavs, Italians and Greeks) competing for the same jobs, the atmosphere between the two groups was not good. The Australians considered that the foreigners were given preference by paying shift bosses for the ‘privilege’ of getting a job.**

**With this kind of atmosphere it is not surprising that the unfortunate death of Edward Jordan was the catalyst for the Goldfield Riots of 1934.**

**OUTLINE OF EVENTS**

**The rioting that swept through Kalgoorlie and Boulder between Sunday, January 28th and Tuesday, February 1st was an event waiting to happen. It started with an altercation between Edward (Tiddler) Jordan- a prominent and popular footballer and sportsman- and Claudio Mattaboni, a barman at Gianatti’s Home from Home Hotel- which resulted in the death of Jordan and, after much burning and pillaging, finished with 140 special and 60 regular policemen arriving from Perth (1) to quell it.**

**The altercation between Jordan and Mettaboni began on Saturday, February 28th when Mattaboni refused Jordan a drink because he considered that he had had enough and, after some argument, had put him outside the hotel. Jordan returned to the Home from Home the next day and, after being refused credit by Mattaboni and an exchange of blows, went to the nearby Star and Garter to complete his drinking. Fortified with alcohol and supported by two of his friends, Martin and Dillon, Jordan returned to the Home from Home to avenge the indignity he suffered at the hands of Mattaboni.(2)**

**In the ensuing scuffle between the two, Jordan was felled by a punch from Mattaboni, fractured his skull on the kerb and, after being taken to the Government hospital, died in the early hours of the morning.**

**Following the tragedy there were many and varied rumours on what had taken place. These just inflamed the situation and many in Kalgoorlie believed that Jordan’s death should be avenged. As a consequence and in the expectation of trouble, hundreds of men, women and children gathered in Hannan Street outside the Home from Home Hotel at the western end of the street. Nearby was the All Nations Boarding House, which was occupied by foreign boarders, and the Kalgoorlie Wine Saloon. Many of the young in the crowd urged each other on (many were not miners) until a boy of fifteen threw a stone though the window of the Wine Saloon. This signalled the beginning of the rioting with many in the crowd forcibly entering the saloon and destroying furnishings and fixtures.**

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**Another portion of the crowd charged the Home from Home hotel destroying fixtures and furniture in the rooms on the ground floor.**

**Although momentarily the hotel was cleared by the police, rioting continued with the crowd becoming more hostile. The rioters carried kegs of beer and bottles of wine and spirits onto the roadway and then became intoxicated by partaking of their spoils. They first set fire to the Kalgoorlie Wine Saloon and then the Home from Home Hotel.**

**When the Boulder and Kalgoorlie Fire Brigade’s engines arrived to put out the fires the firemen faced such an emotional, hostile and intoxicated crowd that the Boulder Brigade attempted to turn their hoses on them. The rioters then cut the fire hoses with axes from nearby wood heaps so that the brigades were hopeless in their efforts to save the buildings.**

**Now completely affected by alcohol, the rioters raided the All Nations Boarding House – its tenants had wisely left- and then torched the building. Intent on ‘getting even’ with the rest of the foreigners, they moved down Hannan Street smashing windows, looting and torching all the foreign owned shops. With many buildings along Hannan Street ablaze the rioters proposed that the foreigners in Boulder should be treated in the same way. With this in mind they took control of a Kalgoorlie-Boulder tram and headed for Boulder where they destroyed two fish shops and a fruit shop before heading for South Boulder where they looted and set fire to Maffina’s Main Reef Hotel, which was patronized by the Slavic community and Osmetti’s Crown Hotel which was an Italian centre. The International Club, which had only been opened about a fortnight earlier, was also torched before the rioting subsided at about 1.30 am. Steadily the rioters made their way home with their ill-gotten spoils. (KM, Jan 30)**

**In the early hours of the morning the police arrested any people who had been apprehended with any stolen property. In fact the “Kalgoorlie Police Station had the appearance of a restaurant (or as one observer put it , a ‘second hand shop’, the result of the hauls made when the men were arrested.” (KM, Jan31)**

**At this stage there had been no personal conflict between the Australians and the foreigners mainly because the latter avoided the riotous drunken mob.**

**On the morning of Tuesday 30th January a stop work meeting of over 1000 miners was held at the corner of Lane and Burt Streets, the two main streets of Boulder. At the meeting the miners decided that they would not return to work until all the foreigners had been dismissed from the mines and they appointed a committee of seven men to approach The Chamber of Mines to discuss the decision. (KM, Jan 31)**

**Although Mr Alex McCallum (Minister for Works) and J.J.Kenneally ( Minister for Employment ) attended the meeting that evening, the Chamber of Mines, with two of its members absent, failed to arrive at a decision.. This greatly angered the meeting and the hostile mob cried “let’s deal with them ourselves “(KM, Jan 31 )**

**At about this time an explosion was heard from the direction of the Boulder Block- an area known as Dingbat Flat. This area, which was on the mining leases and which extended between the Boulder Railway Station and the Fimiston treatment plants, consisted of about two hundred camps most of which were occupied by foreign miners and their families.**

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**The explosion completely disintegrated the meeting with all present, most of whom we affected by alcohol, rushing off to investigate the disturbance.**

**Seeing a number of young men, who had foolishly gone into the Boulder Block area where a confrontation had taken place, return with gunshot wounds, the crowd reacted strongly with many arming themselves.**

**This was the start of a pitched battle between the ‘Britishers’ and the foreigners- the first personal conflict between the two groups.**

**The relatively small group of foreigners, outnumbered and overpowered, then, with their families, fled either across the mining leases into the bush or into a few British homes in the area for protection. The angry mob then fired the foreigner’s homes in the area which extended from the Ivanhoe Dump north to Hainault Road and Launceston Street and east from the railway line to Boulder Block road. It is surprising that, although there were many wounded during the confrontation, only two people, a Croatian, Joseph (Christo) Katich (32) and an Australian, Charles Stokes (28) were killed.**

**Following the torching of the camps and houses the nearby Launceston Motel and Horseshoe Inn were looted and burnt.**

**CROATIAN FAMILIES ON THE BOULDER BLOCK**

**Most of the families in the Hainault Road, Launceston Street area of the Block were Croatians and Montenegrins (Yugoslavs). Ivan Antunovich, a widower, had a house in Hainault Road and his sister Milka and her husband, Ivan Parentich and their three children Tonka (11), Maria (3) and Anthony (3) living with them. At that time Milka was expecting her fourth child, Theresa, and also Ivan Antunovich had a daughter Theresa (4) boarding at the All Hallows Convent in Boulder. His wife Mary and son John (7) had died the year preceding the riots. Both men worked in the mines as didIvan Lalich and Jakov Yagmich, their two boarders. Other Croatian families in Hainault Road were the Gabric , Tomas and Skender families in addition to the Montengrin Lazar Radanovich and his family.**

**There were many Croatian families in Launceston Street. These included Ivan and Perina Matulich, their son Joseph (Goza) and his family, Martin and Mare Parentich, Tome and Kate Berich and families and the Franich family. It is interesting to note that all the foreign owned houses in Haunault Street were burnt down whereas those in Launceston Street were not. It seems that Joseph Matulich, who was born in Western Australia, knew at least some of the rioters and hence was able to convince them to spare the foreign owned houses in the street.**

**The above mentioned families constitute only a small fraction of the Croatian families that had their lives devastated by the torching of their homes and belongings. In all about eighty homes were burnt down – homes of families who only wanted to work and earn a living and also bring up their children in Australia.**

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**HERO OF THE RIOTS**

**A hero of the riots was Marinkie (also known as Mark) Levis. The Levis family, initially from Croatia, had a market garden on the outskirts of Kalgoorlie and Marinkie, who was 18 years old at the time using his father’s Ford truck transported people and their belongings to his parent’s property for their safety. Over 300 people sought refuge on the property as Kalgoorlie and Boulder blazed.**

**THE CAUSE OF THE RIOTS**

**It is generally thought that the riots occurred because of the atmosphere in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. This arose from the Depression and the lack of work at the time, kickbacks by the foreigners to the shift bosses to obtain work and the fact that no assurance was given that any person not naturalized would not be allowed to work on the mines. The foreigners (Croatians, Montenegrins , Greeks and Italians), who comprised 600 of the 2500 men working on the mines, were seen as taking the jobs that the Australians should have. This climate contributed to a young alcohol fuelled mob, angry at the death of Jones, losing control and going into riot mode.**

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

**On Tuesday 30th of January the Premier, Mr Collier, condemned the outbreak and stated that it had its start in the ‘machinations of a few communists’- this was not true. Businessmen asked the Premier for protection so that on Wednesday 31st of January 3 sergeants, 4 detectives and 26 uniformed police arrived on the fields followed by 140 special and 60 regular policemen the next day. The deployment of the ‘specials’ worsened the situation so that, following a union meeting and an approach to the inspector of police, they were moved back to Perth.**

**THE AFTERMATH**

**During the rioting, the Yugoslavs (Croatians and Montenegrins), Italians and Greeks were either taken into British homes to receive food, shelter and protection- the majority of the Goldfielders were horrified and ashamed at the havoc and terror-or fled into the bush for safety. Those in the bush, completely destitute and possessing very little beyond what they stood in, were give blankets food and clothing. Al of them told stories of loss of homes and belongings which had taken years of careful saving and hard work to accumulate.**

**Many stories describing what had taken place during the rioting appeared in the newspapers. The following stories were published in the DAILY NEWS on Thursday, February 1.A sub-heading of an article on the front page read as follows: “ALLEGATION BY FOREIGNERS THAT RIOTERS WERE LED BY MEN OF YUGO-SLAV BLOOD”**

**In the article it stated that five Yugoslavs called at the Detective Office and alleged that four men prominent in the disorder were Australian born sons of Yugo-Slav parents and also that they excited the rioters. It was alleged that their motive was loot as they had been seen staggering under the loads of their spoils. The names of the men alleged to have been involved were furnished to the detectives.**

**There were also many pitiful stories of devastation and loss.**

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**Mr Steve Bozikovich , who had just arrived in Perth after fleeing from the Boulder Block, stated that he had lost everything and was now penniless. He denied that the foreigners had entrenched themselves along the Ivanhoe dump when the confrontation began. He asserted that he and his compatriots, with some Italians, had been attacked by a crowd who arrived in motor cars. He also declared that Joseph Katich, who was killed, was fired upon from one of the cars and when the bullet struck him in the head he was standing with folded arms.**

**Mr Bozikovich went onto describe how there was distress among the women and children of the foreigners. They had been hurried out to the bush with little or no protective clothing and no food.**

**He also stated that some foreigners fled from the fields on bicycles travelling up to 50 miles (80km) in order to escape the riotous mob. They then caught the westbound trains at stations west of Coolgardie. At that time Mr Bozikovich had been a naturalized Australian for 15 years.**

**Mr H. Sarich, who after being lost in the bush for the night, cycled 60 miles (96 km) to Bulla Bulla to catch a train to Perth. He was now homeless and penniless and had no idea how his wife and child in Boulder were faring. He, with his family lived in a hut on the mining leases (Dingbat Flat) and when the rioters stormed the area, sent his wife, child with other women away, before escaping on a bicycle.**

**Mr John Erceg, a miner, told the Daily News that he had been a naturalized Australian for 25 years, all of which he had spent in Kalgoorlie. Fearing for his life, he with his wife and children fled to Perth. Mrs Erceg had a 10 month old child in her arms with her three year old daughter holding onto her hand. She related that her mother, Mrs Gerovich, who had been living at the mining lease, had her home looted and burnt and now had nothing left but the frock and shoes she was wearing. She was now in a state of shock and, because she had no money to enable her to leave, was staying with friends.**

**Mr N Grljusich, a miner, had been a naturalized Australian for 27 years. He was married to an Australian woman and with his wife and three children had fled to Perth. Mrs Grljusich tearfully spoke of her horrible experience and how she had lost everything.**

**These are only a few of the stories of terror and loss that occurred- there are many others.. After the riots many of the Croatian families left the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area to work elsewhere. Of those living in Hainault Rd, the Gabrich and Tomas families eventually moved to the Swan Valley to go into the grape growing industry. Jakov Yagmich brought his wife and son (Ned) out from Croatiaand also settled in the Swan Valley. Ned married Bilsi Banovich and they had a son Denis. Ivan Antunovich and Ivan Parentich and his family stayed in Boulder. The Parentich family stayed in a shed at the rear of Martin Parentich’s home in Launceston Street until the family was able to build a house in Hainault Road. Many of the Croatians who had lost their homes were waiting for compensation to replace them, either stayed with friends or constructed small shanties from old corrugated iron to tide them over.**

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**GENERAL ATTITUDE TO THE RIOTS**

**The majority of the Goldfields were horrified and ashamed of the havoc and terror caused by the rioters. In fact many foreigners were taken into British homes to receive food, shelter and protection. There is the story of one Britisher who stood on his front verandah with a shotgun to protect his foreign friends.**

**As a group the miners deplored the action of the rioters. At a meeting in the Boulder Town Hall on Thursday, February 1st, the miners stated that it was not the miners who participated in the burning and looting of the homes of the foreigners which left their women and children destitute.**

**No clean minded miner would the camps of anyone, foreign or otherwise, and steal all their worldly possessions. It was stated that they had wives and families of their own and they would not send defenceless women and children, perhaps to perish, in the bush. Thunderous applause greeted these remarks.**

**After the riots about 90 people were arrested and charged in the local courts. Mainly men and youths and some women were charged with offences such as unlawful possession, wilful damage, stealing and receiving, being on premises with unlawful purpose and rioting.   
Although some were acquitted, most were given sentences ranging from the payment of 3 bonds of 12 pounds each for 12 months to serving 12, 16 and 24 month prison sentences.**

**Claudio Mattaboni who had been charged with unlawfully killing Edward George Jordan, stood trial on March 21st and was acquitted – a verdict popularly received by both Britishers and foreigners. In a Medical report it was stated that Jordan had very thin skull bones, hence the blow on the pavement, which caused his death, would not have had such a drastic outcome in another person.**

**The papers of the day gave detailed accounts of the the events and published graphic pictures od the devastation and havoc.**

**The Kalgoorlie Miner and the West Australian concentrated on giving detailed descriptions of the events. In addition the West Australian Newspaper Ltd raised in the order of 17,000 pounds by setting up a relief fund The West Australian Fund to help the refugees. The money, raised over a two week period, ensured that the refugees got help very quickly. Over 600 peopletook advantage of the fund to receive relief. Similarly The Daily News described what had occurred and also also reported on interviews with refugees arriving in Perth.**

**The Mirror did publish graphic pictures of the ‘Goldfields Upheaval’ in the February 3rd, 1934 edition but wrote more on what it considered was the real problem in its reports.**

**Excerpts from a front page in this edition with the headings:**

**“WHY NOT A ROYAL COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE FOREIGN LABOUR ON MINES” and “ALL NEW JOBS OF THE FUTURE SHOULD GO TO OUR OWN PEOPLE” With the following comments:**

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**“The Mirror asks this blunt question: Are any new contingents of foreigners to be given work on the mines in the future?**

**We say without hedging that whatever adjustment is made with regard to the men on the ‘Fields, foreigners should not be used to fill any vacancies occurring on the mines”**

**“This does not mean that foreign immigrants should be barred altogether. It simply means that foreigners should not be encouraged to come to take jobs in that have been built by the initiative, labour and even at the cost of the lives of British people.**

**There are many miners who have spent their lives in the industry and look to it to provide employment for their growing sons, for whom there is little other prospect on the ‘Fields. Haven’t they a special claim on jobs that will periodically become available?”**

**‘Foreigners’ (Yugoslavs, Italians and Greeks) had been migrating to Western Australia since the end of the 19th century. With a considerable proportion of them working in the mining industry, it is difficult to understand how it could be considered that these people and their descendants did not qualify to be employed in the mines.**

**There were reactions to the Riots throughout Australia and the world. The following telegram from Innisfail , Queensland, was sent to Premier Collier on February 12th- “ at a meeting held in Innisfail on Sunday night last, the following resolution was carried unanimously: ‘That this meeting of citizens of Innisfail protest against the brutal outrages committed against the foreign nationals at Kalgoorlie and Boulder City WA and call upon the West Australian Government to fully compensate all those who suffered loss as a result of mob violence….L Lock (Chairman) CARE Box 153 Innisfail**

**The London Times, the Rome ‘La Tribuna’ as well as Yugoslav and Italian Governments expressed their deep concern that such a thing could happen.**

**Immediately after the riots, Mr N Marich, the Consul for Yugoslavia in WA was jnterviewed and stated that there were 900 of his countrymen in Kalgoorlie and Boulder, about 400 on the Kurrawang Woodline and 300 in other sections of the eastern goldfields. Yugoslavs, he said, were greatly alarmed at the riotous behaviour of the mob in Kalgoorlie and Boulder.**

**Also a meeting of some 300 Jugoslavs was held on the site of the ruins of the International Club, Boulder (The Launceston Motel) on Saturday, February 3rd. The meeting was addressed by Mr Marich, who speaking in Serbo- Croatian, gave assurance to the gathering that the Government had given an undertaking that those who had suffered through the riots would be protected.**

**Another meetings of Yugoslavs was held the following morning with the Consul reporting that there had been talk of the Government providing timber and galvanised ironto those whose homes had been destroyed by the rioters, so that they could begin rebuilding.**

**Before leaving for Perth that evening, Mr Marich stated in an interview, that all his countrymen had been billeted by compatriots and, as all had returned from the bush, there were many cases of overcrowding with as many as 20 to 30 people living under the same roof. He also reported that a local committee of Yugoslavs, the Yugoslav Homeless Committee with Mr Ivan Antunovich as Secretary, had formed to oversee the interest of their countrymen and one of their first tasks would be to more evenly distribute the homeless among their benefactors. He also stated that that the urgent necessary work of building new homes would have to begin soon.**

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**EFFECT OF RIOTS ON EMPLOYMENT ON THE MINES**

**Although the miners were generally appalled by the rioting, there was a strong reaction to employment of foreigners. Following the meeting held in Boulder on Tueday 30th January, when approximately 1000 miners voted not to work with foreigners, a further meeting of the A.W.U. (most of the miners belonged to this union) held on Friday, February 2nd, decided that all future engagements should be made through the union office and that everyone, including naturalized citizens, should join the union.Following a meeting of the Chamber of Mines on Thursday, February 1st and a meeting of the workers on Saturday, February 3rd, the decision to resume work was made so that, after a six day break, work resumed on the mines on Monday, February 5th.**

**The Mines Regulation Act, Section 42, stated that, any person not speaking English intelligently, was not to be employed in any mine. This Act was to be enforced. In addition, in the future, no Australian was to be dismissed in favour of a European and, only in the case of the Australian leaving work, could a European be put in.**

**At the time, as far as the Britishers were concerned, the enforcing of the language tests had to be dealt with. At a meeting on Sunday, February 16th, the Minister for Mines, Mr Munsie, announced that all foreigners in the industry were to be tested by the Senior Inspector of Mines, the Workmen’s Inspector of Mines in the presence of an A.W.U. representative and a representative of the mining management to ensure protection of the underground workers.**

**It was maintained that the enforcement of the regulations, in regard to language, would bring about the elimination of foreigners from the mining industry. It is ironical that after al the language tests carried out on the foreigners, only one person failed the test and he was a naturalized Australian.**

**It was generally believed that foreigners, who paid $10 to $12 to shift bosses to secure jobs, were given favourable jobs to earn more money, because a part of their pay went to the shift boss. The Chamber of Mines denied there was any truth in this belief. It was stated that whether or not the foreigners paid for the privilege of securing the job and then paid the shift boss a portion of their earnings was not the point. It was considered that a major part of the blame should have been directed at the Australian shift bosses who accepted the payment. It was accepted that the foreigners had a greater aptitude for hard work than the Britishers. Also it was considered that the latter would not risk his life in some of the “favourable” spots worked by the Yugoslavs and Italians.**

**ESTIMATED LOSSES DUE TO THE RIOTS**

**It has been stated that the full amount of the loss to the community from the rioting and the stoppage of the mines will never be known accurately but it was considered that a figure close to 100,000 pounds would be close to the mark.**

**Eighty buildings, including three hotels, four clubs and a wine saloon were either gutted by fire or almost totally wrecked by the rioters. The breakdown of cost, in pounds, is as follows:**

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**Hotels shops and contents 60,000 52 houses 5,000 Furniture and personal belongings 3,000 Loss to miners (wages) 18,000 Loss of profits by mining companies 13,000 Sundries (Municipality, electricity, equipment) 1,000**

**COMPENSATION**

**The Governments proposal for the compensation to the foreign victims of the goldfield riots was belatedly revealed by the Premier, Mr P Collier, on July 24th, six months after the riots took place.**

**In essence, State Cabinet proposed the provision, at a cost of 6,500 pounds, material for the re-erection of the homes for the foreigners. Officers of the Public Works Department would visit the goldfields to advise the foreigners on such details as class of house and their size.**

**The Premier stated that the timber would be cut ready to be put together and delivered to the building sites (at this stage no building sites had been allocated)**

**It was considered that, under these conditions, the erection of the homes would be a simple matter, which would easily be done in the foreigner’s spare time. One room places, occupied by a single man, could be constructed in a single day.**

**Mr Ivan Antunvich, the Secretary of the Yugoslav Homeless Committee, well aware of the inadequacy and impracticability of the proposal, was severely critical of it.**

**In accordance with the Premiers proposal, the following letter outlining a compensation offer to 51 Yugoslavs, was sent by the Under Secretary of Works and Labour to the representatives of the Consul of Yugoslavia:**

**“Messrs J Vujcich and Ercegovich**

**Representing Consul of Yugoslavia**

**Mining Leases, Boulder**

**Dear Sirs,**

**With regard to recent conferences with yourself and the Yugoslav Consul relative to the Government’s decision to assist in the rehabilitation of those residents on the Boulder Mining Area, whose private dwellings were destroyed at the time of the Goldfield riots, I have to advise you that the following is a known list of residents for whom building material is to be provided, together with the type of house , according to the sketch plans accompanying this letter , to be erected on behalf of the owner concerned.**

**NAME TYPE NAME TYPE**

**Ajduk, Andrija & Juri, Joze II Miocevich, Petar IV**

**Bozich, John V a & I a Miocevich, Josip II**

**Bozovich, Marko III Mrkonjich, Ivan II**

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**Brajcich, Jakov III Pavich, Josip IV**

**Brajkovich, Nikola IV Pavlovich, Tonio IV**

**Bugarin. Ivan II Pervan, Ivan II**

**Civrian, Remiggio II Radanovich, Lazar V**

**Covak, Mat II Radich, Jure V a**

**Covich, Simun II Roki, Ana IV**

**Covich, Martin II Rosa, Anton II**

**Culjak, Mijo II Ruljancich, Kate IV**

**Dapcevich, Duro IV Skender, Stjipan V**

**Erceg, Peter II Simunovich, Jure II**

**Franich, Cvitan IV Stajinsich, Krsto I b**

**Gabrich, Ante V Tolj, Ivan IV**

**Gericevich, Elizabeth V Tomasich, Frank, Bilas, Mijo IV**

**Gericevich, Parina, Perich IV Vidakovich, Tony I**

**Grbovac, Jure V Vlahovich, Mijo II**

**Grljusich, Stjipan II Vranjes, Andro III**

**Ilich, Ivan II Vujcich, George V**

**Juranovich, Andrija III Vulich, Petar V**

**Markovich, Ivan II Yurisich, Simun VI**

**Masanovich, Petar III Zonga, Nikola III**

**Kraljevich, Jozo I b Zuvich, Luka IV**

**Zuvich, Ivan I**

**It will be noticed, that for the present, no provision is being made for reinstatement of known boarding houses or of any building of a business nature at the time of destruction. It may be possible later to provide limited accommodation to meet the requirements only of the owner and his dependants residing with him at the time.**

**Classification of house types:**

**Type I (a) consists of 1 room skillion to replace a backyard humpy.**

**I (b) “ 1 room, ridge roofed to replace a single room camp**

**II “ 2 rooms, one ridge roofed and one skillion roofed**

**III “ 3 rooms including one skillion roofed**

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**IV “ 4 rooms including two skillion roofed**

**V “ 5 rooms including three skillion roofed**

**V (a) “ Same as V but with veranda**

**VI “ 6 rooms including four skillion roofed**

**VI (a) “ Same as VI but with veranda**

**It is with respect to Types V and VI only the front veranda will be provided and then only where a camper formerly had one. Each Type includes an R.C. and 2.5 chains of fencing.**

**As soon as it has been decided by the residents concerned where the respective buildings are to be erected, that is to say, on which block of land the building is to be erected, the Government will provide an experienced carpenter to assist with the erection of the new premises.**

**Please let me know at once the names, mentioned in this letter, of those campers who desire the building material etc. to be sent forward immediately for their requirements. It is desirable that all material should be cut and sent forward at the same time.**

**Yours faithfully,**

**(SGD) C.A. Hunt Undersecretary for Works and Labour**

**Similar offers would have been made to other foreign nationals**

**Over 200 people who suffered losses as a result of the riots and concerned about the inadequacy of the Government’s offer of compensation, had a meeting in the Boulder Town Hall on Sunday August 5th, to discuss the issue.**

**Mr. Manos, elected to preside over the meeting, pointed out that the aim of the meeting was to obtain more equitable compensation for the victims of the riots and to ensure that businessmen, who had sustained heavy losses and who had in most cases rebuilt their business premises, would not be ignored. He also stated that compensation should be paid for loss of furniture and personal effects. A committee of six, two representatives each for the Slav, Italian and Greek speaking communities was elected to discuss the matter of adequate compensation with the Government. Those elected to the committee were:**

**Messrs. I. Antunovich and M. Lalich (Slav)**

**J. Maffina and P.Fendoni (Italian)**

**G. Kalaf and N. Rizos (Greek) with Mr. Manos as the Chairman.**

**The following resolution was carried unanimously by the meeting:**

**“ That this meeting of those who sustained losses as a result of the recent riots on the goldfields appeal to the Government to consider provision of more adequate compensation and more equitable relief for all parties. It urges that provision should be made for recouping for those whose homes were destroyed, for losses of furniture, clothing, personal effects etc. ad asks also that further consideration be given the question of compensating business people who suffered such heavy losses.”**

*11.*

**Mr. Ivan Antunovich, secretary of the Yugoslav Homeless Committee, a very capable and articulate representative of the Yugoslav community, stated that, under the Premier’s offer of compensation, only 50 of the 178 Slav victims of the riots would receive compensation.. He also made the point that most of the proposed new buildings were of two rooms only and, when made up, would look like new fowlhouses.**

**With regard to building of the houses, another factor that had to be considered, was the provision of building blocks, because it was not permissible to build on the mining leases.**

**The Premier, Mr. P. Collier, very quickly responded to the statements made and the resolutions passed at the Boulder Town Hall meeting of foreign nationals. He considered that some of the statements made were inaccurate and that the position was not fully understood. He made particular reference to Mr. Antunovich’s comments on ‘fowlhouses’.**

**Mr. Antunovich, in an interview with “The West Australian” continued his criticism of the Government’s compensation offer, stating that skilled labour would be required to build the homes.**

**Finally, a deputation comprising Messrs. Williams MLC, Manos, Antunovich, Maffina and Fendoni waited on the Premier, Mr. Collier, and made the following requests:**

* **Provision of skilled assistance to construct the houses**
* **Suitable blocks of land for building**
* **Replacement of furniture**
* **Compensation for losses sustained on business premises**

**As a consequence, the Government decided that it would now actually build the houses and also that it would supply bedrock furniture ranging from $5 to $15 in individual cases. Land was available and could be rented at about ten shillings a year and also the Government would look sympathetically at compensation for business premises.**

**Offers of compensation for business premises, although still a problem for the Government because of the cost, were finally made through the respective Consulates of the foreign nationals. Offers made to Yugoslav businessmen, with amendments made by the Consulate are as follows:**

**RECIPIENT AMOUNT OFFERED (pounds) CONSUL AMENDMENT (pounds)**

**International Club, Boulder**

**Felicio Zukovich & Vince Ercegovich 300 300**

**257 Hannan St Kalgoorlie**

**Mick Vuletich (barber) 230 200**

**Croatian Slavonic Society 200 180**

*12.*

**116 Brookman St, Kalgoorlie**

**James Erceg 20 20**

**Angel Hostel, Boulder**

**Josek Bizzaka 10 20**

**At Angel Hostel, Boulder**

**Franko Kosovich 10 10**

**Total: 770 770**

**It should be pointed out that these compensation payments were made in January 1935, a year after the riots.**

**CONFLICT BETWEEN DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES**

**Following the riots provisional committees were appointed in Kalgoorlie and Perth so that relief, to those in need, could be distributed more efficiently and so that they could negotiate for adequate compensation from the Government.**

**The Yugoslav Homeless Committee, with Mr. I. Antunovich as Secretary, was appointed in Kalgoorlie to look after the interests of the Yugoslav victims of the riots and a similar group headed by the Yugoslav Consul, Mr. N. Marich, was appointed in Perth. In addition to this a protest meeting, convened by the Yugoslav Consular Educational Clubs, was held in Arundale Hall, James St. Perth on August 12th. Mr Marusich, who chaired the meeting, spoke about racism and how a Fascist mined hoodlum element caused the rioting.. He was supported by Mr. John Kosovich a representative of the Jugoslav Educational Clubs, Mr. G. Strang and by a member of the audience, Mr. Foxley. These four were then elected to a committee to assist the one operating in Kalgoorlie.**

**The Relief Committee in Kalgoorlie, headed by Mr. Manos, disassociated themselves completely from the meeting in Arundale Hall and sent a telegram to the Premier, to that effect. As a consequence, the Premier did not recognise the protest meeting. Mr. N. Marich, the Yugoslav Consul, also denied any connection with the group, which he considered had “Communist elements”.**

**There was also some conflict between Mr. Marich and Mr. Antunovich. Mr. Marich accused Mr. Antunovich of appointing himself as secretary of the Yugoslav homeless Committee (this is not supported by any historical evidence). Mr. Antunovich, in his reply, made reference to the fact that the Perth Committee, through a donation from the Mother Country, had raised 130 pounds compared to the sum of 2000 pounds raised by the people of Western Australia.**

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**Fortunately, sanity prevailed and the confrontation between the different committees was overcome with the Government deciding, on compensation matters, to negotiate only with the Kalgoorlie Committee of six, namely, Antunovich, Lalich, Maffina, Fendoni, Kalaf and Rizos with Manos as chairman.**

**CONCLUSION**

**The Goldfield riots were the consequence of the environment at the time. They caused great suffering and loss to the foreigners and their families and also financial losses to the mining industry and the Government of about 100,000 pounds.**

**The Government, under pressure from victims of the riots, eventually paid adequate compensation to those affected.**

**The attitude of the general community was one of shock and horror with many Australians not only protecting foreigners during the riots but also providing aid to the victims afterward.**

**The riots changed very little. Although some foreigners left the goldfields for employment elsewhere, the majority continued to work, in relative harmony with their Australian counterparts, for many years.**

**30 April 2020**

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*RIOTS*

*Main Points*

*A Summary:*

* *Rioting in Kalgoorlie/ Boulder an event waiting to happen – climate in the region*
* *Confrontation between Australians and “foreigners” – essentially Yugoslavs (Croatians, Montenegrans and Serbians), Italians and Greeks.*
* *Compensation offered by the Government considered inadequate- too little, too late.*
* *Many groups involved in the compensation debate- friction between groups.*

*Outline of events:*

* *Fight ending in death of Jordan – Sunday 28th January at Home from Home Hotel -Jordan died early Sunday morning.*
* *Start of unrest with crowd gathering at Home from Home Hotel – young men gather outside hotel - Monday 29th January.*
* *Fuelled by alcohol, crowd (approximately a thousand) wrecked and torched the hotel, the Kalgoorlie Wine Saloon and the All Nations Boarding House. Crowd then moved down Hannan Street looting shops on way.*
* *Commandeered the tramway to Boulder where the crowd wrecked two fish shops and a fruit shop and in South Boulder fired The Main Reef and the Cornwall Hotels in addition to the newly opened International Club.*
* *To date no confrontation between Australians and foreigners because the latter stayed away from the drunken and riotous mob.*
* *Tuesday 30th January, stop work meeting of miners decided that non- Australians should not hold a job at the expense of an Australian. Meetings continued all day.*
* *About 6 o’clock in the evening, meeting of 2000 odd at Maritana Street, Hannan Street intersection. Many rumours and mood generally unsettled. Meeting stormy and chaotic.*
* *Crowd moved to Boulder to attend meeting on Richardson Street Reserve. Too much drinking for sober discussion.*
* *Representative of the Chamber of Mines stated that the demands of the miners could not be acceded to at that time. Seen as procrastination and led to pandemonium.*
* *At that time explosion heard coming from direction of the Boulder Railway Station.*
* *At the station half a dozen men with buckshot wounds as a result of a skirmish with foreigners on “dingbat Flat”. This is the beginning of a pitched battle between the groups.*
* *On July 25 (Kalgoorlie Miner) 6 months after the riots Premier Collier explained proposal for compensation.*
* *6500 pounds for materials for foreigners homes.*
* *Officers of the Public Works Department to place offer before the foreigners with info on size and type of dwelling and to ascertain willingness to accept offer.*
* *Foreigners to build in spare time under the supervision of a carpenter.*
* *One room dwelling could be built in an afternoon.*
* *New homes for old.*
* *Meeting of 200 people who had suffered losses (August 5) and committee elected to discuss adequate compensation with the Government.*

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* *Committee comprised of: Mr. Manos (Chairman), Messrs. I. Antunovich and Lalich (Slav), Maffina and P.Fandoni (Italian) and G. Kalaf with N. Rizos (Greek).*
* *A committee headed by Mr. G. Marusich and including Mr. John Kosovich of the Yugoslav Consular Educational Clubs, Mr G. Strang, secretary of the Anti-war Council and Mr Foxley was formed at a meeting in Perth to assist the committee operating in Kalgoorlie.*
* *Friction between the two committees, the latter being accused of having communist elements. Kalgoorlie Committee disassociated itself from the Perth Committee.*
* *Kalgoorlie Committee made four requests to the Government (K.M. Sept 3) for skilled assistance in building homes, land on which to build, provision for furniture and household effects and compensation for business people.*
* *In reply the Government decided to undertake actual building, land would be available at an annual rent of 10 shillings, compensation of 5-15 pounds would be made available to individual cases for furnishings and the Cabinet would consider compensation for business people.*

*The Aftermath*

* *Although a significant number of foreigners had moved, normality returned to the region.*
* *Relations between the Australians and foreigners improved considerably with the two groups working together in the mines.*

*16.*

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