

THE SOUTH AFRICAN

INDIA

Following the 'Coloured' and Indian August elections, the threat of conscription for the two races into the SADF is looming like never before.

The case of private Mark Abraham is a sad reminder of the fate awaiting thousands of 'Coloured' troopies who will be drafted into the South African Defence Force in future.

Mark, a chef with the Cape Corps at Faure, went awol (absent without leave) to visit friends and attend a wedding. While waiting in the car outside the church where the wedding ceremony was held, two armed military policemen and a staff sergeant approached. They cocked their rifles and ordered him out of the car. The staff sergeant instructed the military policemen to open fire if Mark tried to escape.

He got out and stood by the door. "The bridal couple was about to come out (of the church) when Mark made a run for it. He only took three paces when they opened fire. While still in the road, he was struck by a bullet... After several more shots, he collapsed in a field next to the church... While Mark was lying there bleeding, he asked for water, but the military police standing over him refused to let anyone go near him... There was blood coming from his shoulder, arm, lung and stomach. The shirt he was wearing was in tatters". (Sunday Times, 22/1/84)

Mark suffered the fate of a colonial slave who offers his life for the defence of his master and the system that enslaves him and his people.



Your real enemy is the Pretoria

BACKGROUND

Uniform, the SADF newspaper (March 1982) boasts: "Did you know that the South African Cape Corps is the oldest corps in the South African Defence Force?"

The Cape Corps came into being in 1795 when certain sections of the 'Coloureds' were mobilised and used in a military capacity against our forefathers

CAN CAPE CORPS

DEFENCE OF

SLAVERY



government not the the people of Namibia or of the neighbouring countries.

during the wars of resistance. Battles in which they were employed include the Graff-Reinet rebellion and the fourth frontier war (1810-11), the Slachter's Nek rebellion and the Makana war in 1835. They were also used to patrol the Fish river 'border' to repel the Xhosa who were rightfully claiming their land.

According to Janet Cherry's research paper (A Feather in the Cap?, The South African Cape Corps, Ruling Class

Ideology and Community Opposition), the Cape Corps existed until 1896, participating in sixth frontier war (War of the Axe) against Sandile, the Basuto and Zulu wars (1878-79), and against the Ndebele (1896). During those early years they were called the Pandours.

The Cape Corps was re-established in 1915, after the outbreak of World War 1.25,000 'Coloureds' enlisted, most from Stellenbosch, Worcester, Port Elizabeth,

Kimberly, and missions at Saron and Mamre. The regime reports that in one battle (at Jibeit) the Cape Corps (then called the 1st Cape Corps Battalion) suffered 152 casualties, sustained in a bayonet charge on enemy machine-gun positions. We can not help wondering how many whites were in that first echelon.

During World War 2 the Cape Corps was again mobilised. 45,000 'Coloureds' enlisted, deployed mainly in Madagascar, Egypt, Italy and Palestine. However, during this war the Cape Corps was used in a non combat capacity, i.e. as a service and support group.

When World War 2 ended all black soldiers were demobilised. The Cape Corps was constituted again in 1947, this time as a Permanent Force unit. However, when the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948 the Cape Corps was disbanded. The SADF, being one of the most conservative institutions of apartheid rule, had to be snow-white.

MASS RESISTANCE

Following the heroic mass resistance of the late 50's and early 60's; the Sharpeville massacre, the banning of the ANC and the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe, The Cape Corps was re-established in 1963 at Eersterivier. It had already dawned in the minds of the military, the present rulers of our country, that to prolong apartheid's life span certain sections of the oppressed had to be co-opted.

By 1967 490 men had undergone training in the Cape Corps. Throughout the 60's the Cape Corps was not armed nor regarded as a component part of the Permanent Force. It performed non combat functions, particularly in the navy. Most 'Coloureds' filled posts such as storekeepers, Stewards, chefs, waiters and engineer room mechanics. The highest rank a member could attain was Warrant Officer Class 1.



Fighting against himself, his people, his country and his future.

The Cape Corps only became an integral part of the Permanent Force in 1972, to change its name to S.A.C.C. (South African Cape Corps) Service Battalion in 1973. A year later the then minister of defence (today's executive president), Piet Botha, described it as a "feather in the caps of the defence force and the coloured population as a whole".

In 1975 the Defence Act was amended to give members of the Cape Corps the 'same status' as whites. Seven 'Coloured' soldiers attained the rank of full lieutenant, the first Black officers in the history of the SADF. At this stage 400 had received training since 1973. Two platoons were operating on the border, and in August 1976 the first company of 'Coloured' infantrymen left South Africa for border duty.

By 1979, out of 7,000 South African Black troops who were being trained and deployed, 'Coloureds' accounted for 4,000. 100 was in the Transkei Defence Force, 1,000 in the Bophuthatswana



With medals of dishonour, rape and murder.

National Guard, 600 Africans in the SADF and 750 Indians. 'Coloureds' and Indians alone made up 10 percent of the South African Air Force.

During the same year the S.A.C.C. Service Battalion is reported to have grown to full battalion strength. The following year it divided into three: the Cape Corps school, the S.A.C.C. Maintenance Unit, and the 1 S.A.C.C. Battalion. Members of the Cape Corps ceased to exist as a separate unit of the Permanent Force and were incorporated into it. 'Voluntary' national service was also extended to two years for the 'Coloureds':

ECONOMIC CRISIS

There are plans to establish a second Infantry Battalion but the economic crisis the racist regime has plunged into does not allow the allocation of the necessary resources. Nevertheless, today 40 percent of the racist forces in the

operational area are Black, and, with the support of the South African Air Force, they do most of the fighting.

If during World War 2 the South African regime would rather have our country taken by fascist Germany and militarist Japan than arm the 'Coloureds' to defend it, why then the drive to recruit them into the SADF now, at this point in time? The reasons are:

— Political: To sow divisions and disunity among the oppressed. It is in pursuance of its same old policy of 'divide and rule'. That was the objective behind the use of 'Coloureds' in the colonial army during the Wars of Resistance.

— Ideological: To change the form of our war from Blacks fighting white colonialism to Blacks fighting Blacks. This, the racists hope, would give some credibility to their propaganda that we are 'terrorists' and 'communist lackeys' bringing discomfort on all South Africans.

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— **Economic:** Black labour is relatively cheap. In 1977 Black wages in the SADF averaged between 54 and 63 percent of white salaries—at comparable ranks. With the regime's finances drained as they are, hiring Black labour is economic.

Back during the 1882 wars one sir Thomas Scanlan, discussing the recruitment of 'Coloureds' noted: "If a force drawn this class could be raised, say 5,000, we should have confidence in them, and I think they could be more easily maintained..." Apartheid's job reservation also have its special effect. South Africa experiences a serious shortage of skilled labour and, consequently, the long periods the white males spend in the army have a disruptive effect on South Africa's industry.

— **Military:** The illegal occupation of Namibia, the endless invasions and occupation of parts of the People's Republic of Angola, and extensive use of the SADF in the regime's campaign of destabilising the neighbouring states have imposed enormous strains on SADF's 4.5 million manpower resource. Add to this the increasing use of the SADF in manning roadblocks, conducting house searches and suppressing mass demonstrations and protests, functions that used to belong to the police.

The changes in the duration of national service in the decade 1972-82 provide sufficient evidence. In 1972 national service was increased from nine months to twelve months, followed by a compulsory 19 days a year in the Citizen Force for the following five years. In 1977 national service was again extended to twenty-four months, while service in the Citizen Force was increased to 240 days spread over eight years. Citizen Force commitments were raised to 720 days spread over twelve years in 1982, and provision was made for compulsory commando service and



Your place is among these young people, in the army of your people Umkhonto we Sizwe.

the conscription of white men up to the age of 55.

AUGUST ELECTIONS

The enemy's defeat in the August elections displays vividly the 'Coloured' people's rejection of apartheid and all its institutions, particularly the SADF. Conscription into the SADF was among the principal mobilising issues during the anti-election campaign. From all surveys conducted on reasons for the 'Coloureds' opposition to the new constitution, conscription was common. Correctly so for the sole purpose of the new constitution is to divide the oppressed and win over certain sections for the defence of apartheid.



Mk stands in defence of the people and for a free democratic South Africa.

In the words of F. W. de Klerk, the racist minister of energy affairs and Transvaal leader of the National Party: "You can't ask a man to fight for his country if he can't vote. Among the terms of the new dispensation is the guarantee that coloureds and Indians will get full voting rights. It follows that their responsibilities will increase accordingly, which means they will hold obligations to defend those rights".

However, though we can rejoice at the fact that the overwhelming majority of 'Coloureds' are opposed to conscription, the reality facing us is that thousands do participate in the SADF.

These are misled sons of our people who should be helped to find their place in the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the army of Basil February (Paul

Peterson) and Clifford Brown.

Most of the 'Coloureds' in the SADF, as was the case during the second world war, are from the rural areas. There's no doubt that unemployment is the main reason for joining the SADF. In its advertisements, the SADF is portrayed as offering security, regular pay, cheap alcohol, and skills-like driving, mechanics, etc.

NO POLITICS

No description of Blacks in the SADF can be better than Grundy's who described them as "Soldiers without Politics". They are like slaves who willingly defend slavery, not even knowing who the enemy is.

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"It was only when all else had failed, when all channels of peaceful protest had been barred to us, that the decision was made to embark on violent forms of political struggle, and to form Umkhonto We Sizwe. We did so not because we desired such a course, but solely because the government had left us with no other choice."

On the same point, Commander-in-Chief O.R. Tambo goes further to say the question is not whether the ANC is prepared to talk to the racists or not. The main question is what we are to discuss. It is only the question of complete dismantling of apartheid that we can discuss.

"The fact that the enemy is prepared to talk proves that we are a force. It proves that we are an indestructible force.

Comrade Joe Slovo's address ended with a profound analysis of these racist moves. He said:

"The fact that the enemy is prepared to talk proves that we are a force. It proves that we are an indestructible force.

"This has not come about by magic, but through blows delivered by Umkhonto We Sizwe, which have earned the ANC this reputation. It is through sacrifice by our heroes and martyrs, through patience, morale, belief in our victory and trust in our revolution.

"Despite problems which we will find solutions to, the situation at home gives a feeling of optimism. It will lead to a greater advance in our struggle. We are victorious, that is why the enemy wants to talk to us!"

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The following excerpts from interviews conducted with two members of the S.A.C.C. reveal how pathetic their position is:

1). Q. Who is the enemy?

A. It's a good question. When they told me to shoot somebody I asked them why, but they didn't give me a straight answer, they said that if you don't shoot him, then he will shoot you. It's not an answer... It's communists, Russians and Cubans, they want South Africa, it's very rich. But people in South Africa are fighting among themselves, the people in SWAPO are from SWA. People who leave and join 'ander regering', SWA is independent now (Another C.C. member corrects him: No only next year). If there's an election, South Africa will win.

Q. But the election is only for SWA people?

A. Ja, then SWAPO will come in, it will become the government.

Q. So why fight?

A. I don't understand - it's not a war. I don't know what it is.

2). Q. Who is the enemy?

A. They say it's the terrorists, but they are ordinary people like us. They are just well-trained. They are 'n bietjie slim'. If maybe they come in and blow up a building, then they are called terrorists, but they are just people like us.

Though the inflow of the 'Coloureds' into the S.A.C.C. necessitated changes to the Defence Act, the equal status spoken of will always remain a pipe-dream as long as apartheid exists. The SADF, being the armed repressive machinery of the apartheid state, cannot present an image different from the South African society. Racial discrimin-

ation is rife. Black wages, as pointed out above, average slightly above half the salaries of their white counterparts, while Blacks do most of the fighting.

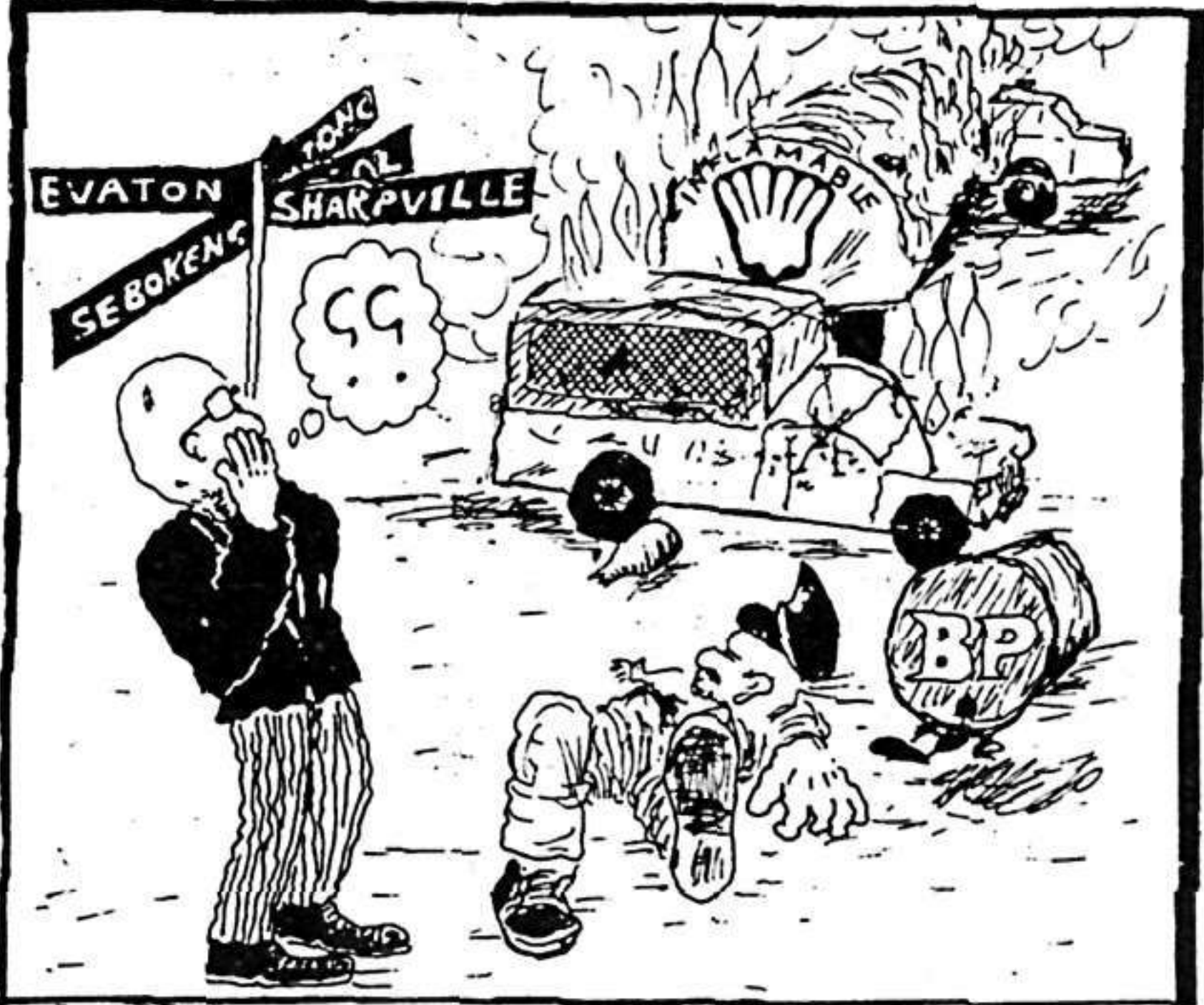
BRUTALITY

SADF's brutality towards these soldiers is appalling. The case of Private Mark Abrahams is one out of many

We can conclude that seeds for deep grievances exist among these 'Coloured' soldiers. They need to be nurtured and developed into a mutinous

situation where these soldiers will turn those guns against the white oppressor. In 1850 many C.C. soldiers deserted and joined Chief Sandile. This can still be done today!

A fair share of our propoganda must be directed at these unfortunate sons of our country. We must send our political workers to the S.A.C.C. to pump in ANC and MK politics with the aim of winning the S.A.C.C. over to our side. And that shall have been a giant stride towards the realisation of our goal, a free, united and democratic South Africa.



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