

in this role, Brigadier Muller van Eyck, Divisional Commissioner of Police in northern Natal, mentioned 'camps' that could only accommodate 40 pupils at a time, and he was also reported to be planning the use of schoolboys 'on patrols in small towns without any unnecessary risks'. He saw the exercise as recruiting for the SAP and as relieving the critical staff shortage in the SAP, said to stand at 2 500 men of all races in 1980.

RESPONSES

THE matter was by now getting too much publicity and official responses were being demanded. The Sunday Times (20.04.80) reported that the SAP 'are planning to launch a national force of schoolboy auxiliaries to help ease their manpower shortage'. The report stated that the SAP hoped to be ready for the first 'intake' by the time of the July holidays. It said that the reason why the boys would not be armed was that there would not be enough time to train them. They would not be paid but given a 'small memento' after completion of their 'term of duty'. A dossier was said to be in the hands of the secretary for National Education, DJT van Wyk.

The reported move was strongly condemned by the Transvaal Teachers' Association and the PFP. The Minister of Police denied that there were any official moves to form a schoolboy reserve (Star, 21.04.80). The Citizen put it as strongly as an 'emphatic denial' by Louis le Grange, whom they quoted as saying that the previous day's Sunday Times report 'was not only wrong' but was an example 'of how a newspaper in South Africa or elsewhere should not act' (21.04.80).

Die Transvaler, in a report headed 'No chance of police boys', was far less adamant than the Citizen that there would be no schoolboy

police. They quoted Le Grange (obviously a man who speaks with a forked tongue, if the newspapers are to be believed) as saying that he would not hesitate to make it easier for scholars to help the police 'if something lovely (moois (sic)) can come from it' (21.04.81).

An editorial in the same newspaper said that a peaceful society depends on the white population but that there was, however, a shortage of police. Schoolboy police were, therefore, a good idea. It attacked the PFP's Ray Swart, and said that the plan is not 'abhorrent (afskuwekkend)' - 'practical necessity counts for more than bourgeois (sic) notions of the role of the youth' (!)

Not much more was said until, in September this year, the same Minister le Grange announced the formation of a 'junior police reserve force'

- * 16 years or older
- * voluntary
- x physically suitable
- * during school holidays
- x no remuneration, but transport and 'equipment' to be provided
- * no uniforms, but 'visible mark of identification would be worn'.

The plan has since come in for a lot of criticism, and support. Rapport quoted headmasters at Afrikaans-language schools as supporting the idea wholeheartedly. Criticism has come from English-language newspapers, especially of the powers of arrest that the schoolboys will have ('always subject to supervision and control'), the Black Sash (the kids could be used in the enforcement of the pass laws), Professor John Dugard of the Centre for Applied Legal Studies at Wits, and a clinical psychologist. Dr Ntatho Motlana's quoted response is less clear in its condemnation - he asked 'why young boys were being recruited for a reserve force when

thousands of black men were unemployed and would eagerly (sic) perform such a duty' (Sunday Express, 20.09.81). The Sowetan said that the Minister had stated that all race groups would be given the opportunity to serve the community in this way (16.09.81).

Contributions on the issues raised by these moves are welcome.

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