

Dr Kit le Clus, of the National Maize Producers' Organisation (NAMPO), said that any 'millers' cartel would be fought tooth and nail'.

(The maize producers also have it in for the state's policy of subsidising and protecting local industry, such as steel, tractor engines, etc, which push up costs to agriculture. Said the NAMPO journal: 'Despite the role the protected domestic industry plays in pushing up maize prices, the State expects the maize producers to bear the brunt of the losses incurred on foreign markets' - the export of maize could earn R800-million in foreign exchange).

The Minister of Agriculture has repeated his threat to re-introduce price control on meal 'if the consumer should be exploited'. When and how will he decide that the consumer is being exploited? Starvation, malnutrition and poverty is there already - will it need food riots?

## SCHOOLBOY POLICE

THE use of 'schoolboy police' arises directly out of the starvation and land hunger that characterises the bantustan regions, and indirectly out of the 'militarisation' of white society that is essential to the maintenance of white political domination.

This briefing will trace the origins of the present moves to include white boys formally in the repressive structures of the South African state. It needs to be situated within a wider analysis that looks at other examples of such political and ideological preparation of, primarily, white society; and that looks at the range of 'police' forces that exist in South Africa at present (from industrial commandos to pistol clubs (see, for example, WIP 7:15-21)).

### CATTLE THEFT - TERROR OR STARVATION

ONE of the first reports that appeared on the use of schoolboys to aid the regular South African police said that cattle were having their tendons slashed, in the same way as the 'terrorists' had been doing in Rhodesia in order to 'help along' the depopulation of certain border agricultural areas. In this case it was the northern areas of Natal being spoken about, and the operations being reported on were against cattle rustlers.

Twenty boys, aged between 16 and 18 from the Vryheid and Newcastle High Schools were being used to aid the police operating in the Ubombo area of northern Natal. The boys manned (sic) roadblocks 'to search vehicles for dagga, weapons and illicit liquor', patrolled routes thought to be taken by poachers, and

searched for snares. This was at the end of 1979.

One article quoted SAP Public Relations Officer Lt Col Leon Mellet (the one who wore camouflage uniform to appear on television) as saying:

We're undermanned and asking the schoolboys for help seemed like a good plan. It also gave them some idea of what being a policeman is all about, and as a result several have indicated they want to join the force when they leave school. That's great - we really need them (Scope, 21.03.80).

Another report on the same incident spoke of the scale of the poaching that was going on - 'an average of 25 stock thefts a month were reported in the past. In the first six months of the year 425 cattle were stolen from farms' (Natal Mercury, 14.12.79).

During 1979 the SAP investigated 27 000 cases of stock theft involving 130 000 animals, and initiated 8 000 prosecutions involving 12 000 people. 'Most thefts were for the pot', concluded the same article (Sunday Tribune, 04.05.80).

### DAGGA - CORRUPTING THE YOUTH?

DURING the early part of 1980 schoolboys were used in several raids against dagga plantations in Natal. For example, in January 32 schoolboys were enlisted to help with the pulling out of dagga plants after crops had been spotted by an air force helicopter (Star, 17.01.80). This was at Paulpietersburg in Natal. Early in April a report said that 'Volunteer schoolchildren, police reservists and South African Defence Force aircraft helped destroy huge dagga plantations in Northern Natal' (ADM, 02.04.80).

Later that month the man who was said to have introduced the idea of using schoolboys

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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