he was locked in battle and, in exigent circumstances, fought alongside him. The Barolong and the Voortrekkers joined forces against Mzilikazi's Ndebele in 1837; Swazis participated in the Boers' campaign against the Pedi in 1876 and General Wolseley mobilised 6,000 Swazi for the expedition against Sekhukhune in 1879.

White opponents to the arming of blacks claimed that at least during the Anglo-Boer War, their forefathers did not involve blacks as combatants; therefore it was not justified to arm them now. But historians P. Warwick, S. Marks and A. Atmore have conclusively proved that this is simply not true. (154) Although there was no formal agreement between the British and Boers that they would not employ black people as combatants during the War, there was a tacit agreement to this effect. On both sides, however, there was a dichotomy in the attitudes of the warring parties: exigencies vitiated principle and prejudice. Both the British and the Boers availed themselves of black labour and, sometimes, used blacks in a combatant capacity as well. Moreover, the constitution and martial law regulations of the Boer Republics specifically made provision for all inhabitants between the ages of sixteen and sixty to do military service during war. (155)

At the time of the First World War, old prejudices and stereotyped ideas about the dangers inherent in utilising blacks were very much in vogue again. The arguments that it was a white man's war, that it would endanger the political structures of society and that the white man would lose his prestige were reiterated. Nevertheless, pragmatism in a war situation once more superseded opposition and, as the South African Native Labour Contingent (SANLC), the blacks made a noteworthy contribution to the war effort. This exercise was acceptable in white circles because the blacks were used in a non-combatant capacity doing ordinary manual labour just as in South Africa; so there was no threat to the status quo. K.W. Grundy has emphasised the fact that racial domination was a capitalist method of securing an adequate supply of compliant labour. The frequent employment of blacks for military purposes was therefore never seen as a severe threat as long as the traditional labour practices were still adhered to. Grundy continues:

"It has never been seen as a transitory stage that would enable blacks to enhance their political and social standing outside of the military. Likewise, in each stage of South African history there has been a voice warning against both the spillover of this precedent into nonmilitary fields and against the more direct danger of armed black men breaching the control mechanisms designed to keep them in check. An element of white South Africans has never been reconciled to armed black soldiers." (156)

As has been explained above, (157) this was also true during the Second World War. Ultimately, therefore, the whites' decision whether to employ blacks in a military capacity was determined by white prejudices of black insurgency directed against them after a war. These would decline under pressure of the threat from an external enemy and increase as the threat diminished, (158)
ORGANISATION : THE FORMING OF THE NATIVE MILITARY CORPS

Already in May 1939 a conference was held under the auspices of the Department of Native Affairs where suggestions were made regarding the recruitment and supply of black labour in the event of war. (159) Shortly after the outbreak of the war there was still no definite policy although Brig.-Gen. F.H. Theron mentioned the probability that blacks would soon be used as a military labour force. (160) In February 1940, Col. J. Mitchell-Baker reiterated that "native labour battalions" would be formed in the event of mobilisation; (161) but by April 1940 nothing had materialised. This can to a certain extent be explained by the uncertainties of the war situation and the tremendous task of reorganising the UDF. Definite policies had not yet been laid down in all the sections of the UDF. Nevertheless, the Government still intended to form units in which blacks could take part in the war "by becoming members of labour, transport and other services in the same way as in the past." (162)

This clearly implied that the blacks would be non-combatants and, as in the rest of Africa (163) would serve as general military labourers or pioneers doing mostly manual labour. (164)

Then, on 14 May 1940, the Government reversed this policy and vetoed the scheme to raise "native labour battalions" because it feared that such a step might adversely affect the supply of cheap labour to farmers. (165) Influential officers such as Colonels B.W. Martin, E.T. Stubbs and J. Mitchell-Baker and Sir P. van Ryneveld as well as D.L. Smit were fairly adamant, however, that black labour battalions be established in order to strengthen the war effort. To this end Sir P. van Ryneveld undertook to persuade the Government to rescind its decision of 14 May 1940. (166) Apparently, he was successful because approval was given on 26 June 1940 for the establishment of a "Native Labour Corps" as a non-combatant unit of the Active Citizen Force in terms of Section 7 of the South African Defence Act of 1912. (167)

Although blacks were not consulted when this decision was made, some of their leaders acquiesced in the formation of such a corps. Councillor Selope Thema of the Native Representative Council, however, qualified his concurrence with this measure:

"I have no objection provided the men, although non-combatants, will be part and parcel of the Defence Force of the country, enjoying the same rights and privileges during and after the war, as other members of the Force. Further... these corps should under[go] training as other units of the Force. I think all this could be done without invoking the wrath of those who are opposed to the arming of Africans." (168)

This request to treat blacks the same as whites in the UDF was, as we shall see later, (169) ignored. Other black leaders were opposed to the idea of employing their kindred as ordinary manual workers only; (170) such a step would only serve to confirm the authorities' resolution to perpetuate the discriminatory nature
of the South African society in the UDF during the war. Black opposition to this policy became more evident during the recruiting campaign when Sir P. van Ryneveld reported that the blacks were most reluctant to join up as labourers. (171)

Despite the decision of 26 June 1940 to establish a "Native Labour Corps", the scarcity of labour in East Africa and the requests to raise six Pioneer Battalions, (172) it was eventually decided that no labour units would be established in South Africa. (173) This meant that the NMC was not a labour corps and therefore did not include any pioneer or labour units. In its explanation why it had refused to sanction the raising of black military labour units in South Africa, the Government for once took cognizance of the fact that the blacks would be most unwilling to volunteer if this meant only to work with a pick and shovel during the war. Interference with the labour supply to farms and mines and the fact that there was already a strain on "Non-European" resources to maintain two divisions in the field, were other reasons for this decision. (174)

The question of the status of blacks in the UDF now arises. Would a black member of the NMC be regarded as a "soldier" which would entitle him to the provisions of the Citizen Force and Active Citizen Force Regulations? By February 1941 it was clear that this would not be the case; he would therefore be excluded from regulations pertaining to white soldiers. (175) The Government therefore was not prepared to treat blacks in the UDF as labourers, nor would it regard them as genuine soldiers (176) - for the blacks an ambiguous situation, between Scylla and Charybdis. Tacitly the colour bar thus prevailed (177) and black volunteers were still relegated to the menial jobs in the army. (178)

In view of the above, the establishment of a "Native Military Labour Corps", as authorised on 26 June 1940, did not materialise. Instead it was decided, as a first step, to recruit and train a brigade of four battalions of "native" police, each with a strength of 1 000 under the title of "Native Military Guards". This was in agreement with the general policy to release whites for combatant duties. These blacks were to guard strategic areas in the Union and were to be recruited from the following areas: Natal (1 000), Transkei (1 000), the Northern Areas (1 000), Ciskei (500) and the Reef (500). (179) Soon afterwards the strength of the Brigade was increased from four to eight battalions. Subsequently, the name was changed to "Native Military Police" with an authorised strength of 4 000 with effect from 1 August 1940; the idea was that they would be employed to assist internal security. This, however, caused much speculation about the ultimate function of the brigade.

There was indeed some confusion and uncertainty as to the way blacks would be organised within the UDF and how they would be employed. On 16 August 1940 the original authority for 8 000 "Native Military Guards" was again altered to 4 000 "Native Military Police" and a new brigade of 4 000 "Native Military
"Levies" was established. Another change took place in October 1940 when a new unit, the "Native Military Corps" (NMC) was created in order to expand the activities of the original units. Apart from guarding strategic points, blacks could now be recruited for special duties, such as batmen, motor transport drivers, cooks and waiters. The "Native Military Police" and the "Native Military Levies" were absorbed into this Corps. By December 1940 the NMC was thus the only military organisation for blacks in the UDF. Simultaneously, the already established Cape Coloured Corps and Indian and Malay Corps were incorporated with the NMC under the auspices of the umbrella organisation for "Non-Europeans" in the UDF - the "Non-European Army Services" (henceforth NEAS) with Col. E.T. Stubbs as its Director as well as Officer Commanding the NMC.

One of the first questions that had to be resolved was whether the NMC would be organised on ethnic lines. It is noteworthy that the British military and colonial policy was based on ethnic grounds, mainly because it facilitated social control. During the First World War in Kenya the British civilian administration for instance, feared that integrated military service would break down ethnic barriers, leading to a sort of pan-African opposition to European rule. (180) In South Africa it was also normal practice to divide the labour force along ethnic lines and a similar attempt was made with the SANLC in France during the First World War. However, practical military considerations necessitated the integration of different tribes and this had favourable results. (181) Urgent representations were made to keep the different black "tribes" segregated into companies or battalions as far as possible during the Second World War as well. Amongst the reasons for this step were that "mixing of tribes in the NMC personnel has adverse effects on discipline and training, and complicates the feeding arrangements - different tribes have different tastes." (182)

It can be accepted that the former reason was the most decisive of these suggestions as it was in accordance with the labour practice in South Africa to exert discipline by segregating the "tribes". Nevertheless, Col. Stubbs, probably because of his experiences with the SANLC, decided that there would be no segregation of "tribes" or ethnological groups into separate units:

"In this Corps all men would come in irrespective of tribal affinities as soldiers and would learn to know each other and to respect each other's qualities." (183)

It can safely be assumed that practical military needs were the most important reasons for this deviation from normal labour practices. Therefore, although it was initially the idea that the units of the NMC would be organised along ethnic lines and to some extent by region, (184) this did not materialise eventually.

The NMC started as a small organisation. War circumstances, however, necessitated rapid expansion. For the first six months this led to organisational uncertainty and confusion. During the existence of the NMC, however, further steps to reorganise the
Corps were taken of which the policy of dilution was the most drastic. (185)

This rapid expansion also meant that blacks were utilized in a wider capacity than merely performing guard duties. Military operations required a variety of general labour as well as a vast range of trade skills. As the war progressed and the need for more man power became imperative, black labour assumed an increasingly important auxiliary role, relieving white troops for other, especially combatant, roles. Black non-combatants served as labourers performing unskilled duties such as batmen, "hygiene staff" (a euphemism for toilet diggers), loaders, stablemen, waiters, stretcher-bearers, pioneers, keeping military camps tidy and aeroplane refuellers; semi-skilled men and tradesmen were employed as motor transport drivers, cooks, clerks, typists, telephone operators, interpreters, bootmakers, tailors, mechanics, medical and artillery aids, bricklayers, carpenters and painters. (186) While the NMC was thus nominally not a labour corps, the duties blacks eventually had to perform somewhat contradicted this claim.

During the exploratory discussions on the utilisation of blacks, the question where they would perform above-mentioned duties cropped up. Before the NMC was formed the idea was not to send them outside the boundaries of the Union because large numbers of Africans were available in the Northern territories at lower wages than in the Union and there was, moreover, a severe shortage of transport. (187) By June 1940 the Secretary for Defence, C.H. Blaine, categorically stated that there was no intention of sending any blacks out of the Union. (188) The British Colonial Office also investigated the question but to them the issue was not whether Africans should only serve anywhere in Africa but indeed anywhere in the world. (189) The War Cabinet accepted that African troops might be used outside the continent. (190) The South African authorities eventually followed suit and attested blacks for duty anywhere in Africa but stopped short of allowing them outside the continent. (191)

The scene was therefore set for one of the most challenging enterprises the UDF had ever embarked upon: to recruit and train eventually more than 75 000 black South Africans - of whom almost all had had no formal military experience whatsoever.
FOOTNOTES

1. Archives of the Secretary of the Department of Native Affairs (henceforth NTS) Box 9114 File 64/363, Director of Native Labour to Quartermaster General (henceforth QMG), 24/5/1940 and South African Institute of Race Relations (henceforth SAIRR) Papers J.D.R. Jones Collection O. World War II AD 843 Box 109, J.D.R. Jones to Minister of Native Affairs, 12/6/1940. There were, of course, also dissenting views in the Native Representative Council, notably that of R.V. Selope Thema and Richard Godlo who, in a resolution, made their loyalty conditional to the abolition of the colour bar in the army. But T. Mapikela's resolution that the Government must not be embarrassed by such demands because of the white political situation, was accepted. (M. Roth, "'If you give us rights we will fight': Black involvement in the Second World War" in South African Historical Journal, 15, 1983, pp. 88-89 and 98-99; K.W. Grundy, Soldiers without politics. Blacks in the South African Armed Forces, p. 68. See also Archives of the Governor General (henceforth GG) Box 1456 File 50/1627, Secretary for Native Affairs (henceforth SNA) to Secretary for External Affairs, 29/4/1939; NTS Box 2396 File 3/287, United Transkeian Territories General Council Session, 1941, matters tabled for discussion, 16/4/1941; Archives of the Native Military Corps (henceforth NMC NAS) 3/4/1 B3 Box 2, motion adopted during 1942 session of the United Transkeian Territories General Council Session, accompanying letter, SNA to Director of Non-European Army Services (henceforth DNEAS), 19/8/1942; Union War Histories (henceforth UWH) Box 300 BI:45, Paper Clipping from Rand Daily Mail, 2/7/1940 on a meeting of the All African Convention; NTS Box 9653 File 520/400(7), Secretary All African Convention Pretoria Branch to Native Commissioner (henceforth NC) Pretoria, 1/6/1940; J.C. Smuts Papers A 1 Vol. 151 no. 39, Y.M. Dadoo, Secretary Non-European People's Conference to J.C. Smuts, 12/9/1942; GG Box 1455 File 50/1627, J.P. Mutsuana, Chairman of the Synod of the Independent Methodist Church of Africa, to SNA, 26/1/1942; GG Box 1454 File 50/1504, M.S. Dube, President of the African Congregational Church to King George VI, 27/7/1942.

2. NTS Box 7204 File 12/526, Resolutions passed at the Annual Conference of the African National Congress (henceforth ANC), 15-18/12/1939.


5. NTS Box 9624 File 502/400, List of messages of loyalty, undated; Secretary for Defence (henceforth DC) 1561/1 Box 3115, Magistrate Butterworth to Chief Magistrate, Umtata, 2/4/1940; J.C. Smuts Papers A 1 Vol. 245 No. 153, Basotho Chief Matatiele to Private Secretary, Prime Minister, 15/12/1939; DC 1473/32 Box
3090, Appeals by various chiefs to their tribes; NMC NAS 3/21/A A 1 Box 15, Appeals published in News of the War numbers 130, 131, 135, 145; SAIRR J.D.R. Jones Collection O. World War II AD 843 Box 105, News of the War number 1 and E.T. Stubbs Collection A 954 B 6, Proceedings at recruiting meeting, 6/11/1940.

6. DC 1473/32 Box 3090, Appeal by Chief Abraham Moiloa of the Bahurutshe, Linokana, undated.


8. NTS Box 7204 File 12/326, Resolutions passed at the Annual Conference of the ANC, 15-18/12/1939; UWH Box 300 BI:45, Paper Clipping from Rand Daily Mail, 2/7/1940; M. Ballinger Papers A 410 B.2.14.10 File 1 and W.G. Ballinger Papers BC 347 C5 IX 3, Declaration by Mr. Self Mampuru during presidential election for Transvaal African Congress, February 1943 and NTS Box 9610 File 455/400, Report on Transvaal Non-European People’s Conference, undated.

9. SAIRR J.D.R. Jones Collection AD 843, Manuscript written by J.D.R. Jones titled "Attitude of the African people towards the Government's Conservation Schemes and Relations between their Representatives and the Administration", undated.

10. Z.K. Matthews Papers BZA 78/9-78/13 B4.34, Manuscript for article in Commonsense, 1942. I am grateful to B. Hirson for his comments on this aspect.


12. Roth, 'Black Involvement', p. 86.

13. DC 1473/32 Box 3090, Appeal by Chief Abraham Moiloa of the Bahurutshe, Linokana, undated. See Also DC 1473/32 Box 3090, Appeal by Chief Mangope, undated.


15. GG Box 1454 File 50/1504, M.S. Dube to King George VI, 27/7/1942.

16. UWH BI:31 Box 281, Paper clipping from The Star, 19/6/1940.

18. NTS Vol. 1681 File 2/276, P.J. du Plessis, District Commandant No. 19 District to Deputy Commissioner South African Police, Umtata, 4/7/1940.


22. See NTS 9629 File 511/400, Secretary for Defence to SNA, 18/12/1939; NTS 9629 File 511/400, H.C. Lugg, Chief Native Commissioner (henceforth CNC), Pietermaritzburg to Native Commissioners Ingwavuma, Uboombo, Hlabisa, Nongoma, Louwsburg, 3/6/1940; NTS Box 9629 File 511/400, NC Nongoma to CNC, Natal, 15/11/1939; NTS Box 9629 File 511/400, Chief Magistrate of Transkeian Territories to all Magistrates in Transkeian Territories, 18/9/1939; NTS Box 9629 File 511/400 D.L. Smit to C.P. Alport, 19/2/1942; UWH Box 263 BI:19, Paper clipping Rand Daily Mail, 4/6/1940. G.O. Olusanya remarked that some of the Nigerians likewise believed in Hitler as "a beast that came out of the water in the morning and went back in the evening." (G.O. Olusanya, The Second World War and politics in Nigeria, 1939-1953, p. 44).


24. SAIRR Records ("B" Box) B56.1.5, Draft Manifesto of Transvaal Non-European People's Conference, 4/7/1942; W.G. Ballinger Papers BC 347 C 5 IX 1, All African Convention Committee (Western Province): Manifesto on elections (1943); NTS Box 7204 File 12/326, Resolutions passed at the Annual Conference of the ANC, 15-18/12/1939 and Roth, "Black Involvement", pp. 88-89.

25. NTS Box 9629 File 511/400, Gushum 'Nqayi to a friend, 24/12/1939.

27. SAIRR Records ("B" Box) B43.7.3, Preliminary inquiry into reception of Government War News Service, undated; Archives of the Adjutant General (henceforth AG) (3) 154/33/0 Box 154, AG to Deputy Chief of Staff (henceforth DCS), 20/12/1941; NMC NAS 3/4/1 B2 Box 2, Some views on the recruiting of natives by Sgt. Tranchell, undated. See also conclusions of Roth, "Black Involvement", pp. 87 and 103. G.O. Olusanya noted the same lack of knowledge in Nigeria. (Olusanya, Politics in Nigeria, p. 41.)


30. GG Box 1456 File 50/1629, A.C. Majuba to P. Duncan, 7/11/1939.

31. SAIRR J.D.R. Jones Collection AD 843 Box 3 S.2 Senatorial Correspondence, Tom and Mika Tshabalala to J.D.R. Jones, 15/5/1942.

32. NTS Box 9630 File 520/400, Report by Native Recruiting Corporation's representatives on "Native unrest" in Natal, 16/9/1939 and NTS Box 9630 File 520/400, D.H. James, Kuruman District, to Minister of Native Affairs, 8/9/1939.

33. NTS Box 9630 File 520/400, C.H. Cooper, senior representative Native Recruiting Corporation to The General Manager, Native Recruiting Corporation, 15/9/1939. Cooper emphasised that his runners who recruited blacks reported a confusion in the minds of many blacks because of rumours that the Germans were on the point of invading Natal.


36. Roth, "Black Involvement", p.98.


41. NTS Box 9629 File 511/400, Report by P.Moshoeshoe on a meeting of the Communist Party held at Sophiatown, 4/2/1940.


43. SAIRR Papers. J.D.R. Jones Collection O. World War II AD 843 Box 109, Notes by J.D.R. Jones, 24/6/1940.


45. NTS Box 9629 File 511/400, G. 'Nqayi to a friend, 24/12/1939.

46. NMC NAS 3/4/20 B 8 Box 7, R.E. Symons to O.C. 2nd BN. NMC, 20/7/1942.

47. NTS Box 9629 File 511/400, Report by P.Moshoeshoe on a meeting of the Communist Party held at Sophiatown, 4/2/1940. See also Z.K. Matthews Papers BZA 78/9-78/13 B.4.34, Manuscript titled "Africans and the War" by Z.K. Matthews for publication in Commonsense, 1942.

48. NTS Box 7606 File 49/328, Report by Criminal Investigation Department, Durban on a meeting held by A.W.G. Champion, 2/7/1940.

49. NTS Box 9629 File 511/400, G. 'Nqayi to a friend, 24/12/1939.

50. NTS Box 9127 File 68/363/18, Memorandum on Internment of Non-Europeans, 19/6/1942.

51. Z.K. Matthews Papers BZA 78/9-78/13 B.34, Manuscript titled "Africa and the War" by Z.K. Matthews for publication Commonsense, 1942.

52. Friedlander Papers BC 58D H.1.1, Minutes of Joint Council
for Europeans and Africans, 4/8/1942.

53. NMC NAS O(M) 14/1 A 5 Box 63 and Chief of the General Staff (henceforth CGS) 32/10 V I, B.W. Martin to QMG, 15/5/1940.

54. SAI RR Papers J.D.R. Jones Collection O. World War II AD 843 Box 109, J.D.R. Jones to Minister of Native Affairs, 12/6/1940.

55. NMC NAS O(M) 14/1 A 5 Box 63 and DGS 32/10 V I, B.W. Martin to QMG, 15/5/1940. This initial reluctance was also prevalent in other parts of British Africa. (R. Headrick, "African soldiers in World War II" (Unpublished paper, University of Chicago, 1976), p. 4.

56. NMC AS 3/4/1 A 3 Box 4, J.F. Philip to DNEAS, 16/7/1943.


58. NTS Box 9653 File 520/400(7), C.H. Blaine to SNA, 23/4/1940.


60. NMC NAS 3P/4/1 Vol. II B.6, Box 1, E.T. Stubbs to AG, 1/11/1940.

61. NMC NAS 3/4/1 B 5 Box 1 and NTS Box 9127 file 68/363/20, Minutes of recruiting conference, 10/6/1941.

62. See supra, p. 18.


64. NTS Box 9114 File 68/363, A. Rodseth to D.L. Smit, 8/11/1940.


66. J.C. Smuts Papers A 1 Vol. 254, H. Abrahamson to J.C. Smuts, 18/7/1942; House of Assembly Debates Vol. 41 column 2316, speech by J.G. Strydom; Vol. 41 column 5245, speech by D.F. Malan; Vol. 44 column 3676-3677, speech by G.H.F. Strydom, 12/3/1942. Even before the First World War there were signs in British military circles that they recognised that the idea of utilising blacks in a military capacity in South Africa was taboo. Maj. Gen. R. Baden-Powell stated that "it must not be overlooked that there are great local objections... They do not like these black people being taught modern soldiering, for fear that difficulties may occur with them any day... there is that danger of using them in their own country, that they might rise against us at any time." Colonel H.B. Jeffries reiterated this
opinion especially with regard to the position in Natal: "The people of Natal are dead against doing anything which will foster the military spirit amongst the natives, because they look on it as a danger." (H.B. Jeffries, "The Native Races of South Africa: From a military point of view" in Journal of the Royal United Services Institution Vol. LI July to December 1907, pp. 1121 and 1123. This attitude can be understood in the light of the then recent Bambatha rebellion of 1906. (See S. Marks, Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906-1908 Disturbances in Natal, especially pp. 144-168). These ideas were by no means rescinded later.


70. UWH B I:45 Box 300, Zeesen Broadcast no. 24, 27/10/1939.


72. R. Headrick points out that only the Mau Mau resistance movement proved white fears to be correct in the whole of Africa. (R. Headrick, "African Soldiers", p. 31.

73. E.T. Stubbs Collection A 954 B 6, Bishop of Pretoria to E.T. Stubbs, 30/7/1940.

74. NTS Box 9323 File 80/378, Paper Clipping, The Natal Mercury, 21/6/1941.

75. CGS (War) 32/5 and NMC NAS 3P/4/1 Vol. II B 6 Box 1, E.T. Stubbs to P. van Ryneveld, 8/10/1940. See also the following references for similar calls: NMC NAS 3P/4/1 Vol. II B 6 Box 1, S.F. Peck, Town Clerk, Bloemfontein to CNC, Bloemfontein, 17/7/1940 and NMC NAS 3/21 A 7 Box 12, Pamphlet of the Communist Party of South Africa (hereforth CPSA), accompanying letter, Acting Public Relations Officer "The Tea Market Expansion Bureau" to Lt. Horwitz, 15/8/1942.

76. CGS (War) 32/10, CGS to Director-General Medical Services (hereforth DGMS), 20/6/1940.

77. J.C. Smuts Papers A 1 Vol. 247 No. 65, Pamphlet by C.S. Richards titled "Total war and the mobilisation of resources in South Africa. A plea for a war economy", reprint from The South African Accountant and Secretary, June 1940. See also Chapter 10.

78. NTS Box 9126 File 68/363/21, M. Muller, Secretary Joint Council of Non-European Trade Unions to Minister of Native
Affairs, 21/10/1942. See also the following references for appeals by black organisations: NTS Box 7204 File 12/326, resolutions passed at the Annual Conference of the ANC, 15-18/12/1939; A.B. Xuma Papers ABX 401217D, Minutes of the Annual Conference of the ANC, 15-17/12/1940; NTS Box 2396 File 3/287, matters tabled for discussion of 1940 session of the UTTGC, 22/4/1940; SAIRR Papers J.D.R. Jones Collection O. World War II AD 843 Box 109, J.D.R. Jones to Minister of Native Affairs, 12/6/1940; J.C. Smuts Papers A1 Vol. 152 No. 33A, Y.M. Dadoo to J.C. Smuts, 12/9/1942 and DC 1396 Box 3030, SNA to Secretary for Defence, 17/4/1940. Military service of blacks alongside whites does not only have historical precedents inside South Africa but also in other parts of Africa. Algerian troops were used in the Crimean War and the tirailleurs senegalais distinguished themselves in the Franco-Prussian War. During the First World War blacks from British West and East Africa, the High Commission Territories and French West Africa served in the Allied Forces. Shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War, they participated on a large scale; as a matter of policy, the British War Cabinet agreed without any reservation "that the maximum use should be made of our Colonial resources." (British Cabinet Papers (henceforth CAB) 65/1 53 (39) 3, Conclusions of a meeting of the War Cabinet, 19/10/1939, p. 443.) By the end of 1940 there were black fighting troops in many parts of Africa. This fact and the historical precedents, strengthened the case of the fairly strong lobby calling on the South African authorities to utilise blacks in the war effort. (See C.M. Andrew and A.S. Kanya-Forstner, "France, Africa and the First World War" in Journal of African History XIX, 1 (1978), p. 14 and NMC NAS 2/21 (A) A 5 Box 14, Typescript titled "The Native as a Soldier" by S. Horwitz).


80. CGS 32/4 Vol. I and NMC NAS 3P/4/1 B 7 Box 1, CGS to DCGS, AG, QMG and DGMS, 25/6/1940; NTS Box 9126 File 68/363/21, Minutes of a speech by Gen. G.E. Brink, 15/10/1940 and Hallack, "Record of the NEAS", p. 38.

81. NMC NAS 3/1/1 A 11 Box 37, SNA to Col. J. Mitchell-Baker, 4/10/1939. See also later statements in this regard: AG (3)154/51/658/) Box 224, Review of NEAS by DNEAS, 29/3/1941; NMC NAS 3P/4/1 B 7 Box 1 CGS to DCGS, QMG and AG, 20/6/1940; NMC NAS 3P/4/1 Vol. II B 6 Box 1, E.T. Stubbs to QMG, Memorandum on NEAS, 22/8/1940 and CGS (War) 32/10 CGS to DGMS, 20/6/1940.

82. CGS (War) 32/10, Notes on a conference at Defence Headquarters, 23/5/1940; NMC NAS O (M) 14/1 A 5 Box 63, Summary of views of the Director of Native Labour, 19/5/1940 and Hallack, "Record of the NEAS", p. 3.

83. NMC NAS O (M) 14/1 A 5 Box 63, Summary of views of the Director of Native Labour, 19/5/1940; NTS Box 9114 File 68/363, B.W. Martin to QMG, 24/5/1940 and Hallack, "Record of the NEAS"
84. NMC NAS 3/21 A 1 Box 14, Memorandum on "The Non-European in the Army", undated; Narep Unfo 23, Historical Record NMC, p. 14190 and UWH Box 263, News of the War for week ending 1/9/1945 No. 285.

85. NTS Box 9114 File 64/363, Note by B.W. Martin for information of D.L. Smit on letter of B.W. Martin to QMG, 24/5/1940.

86. NMC NAS O (M) 14/1 A 5 Box 63, Summary of views of the Director of Native Labour, 19/5/1940.


88. CGS Group 2 G2/1/9/1 Box 1, DNEAS to O.C. Infantry Training Centre Depot, Piet Retief, 18/3/1941; NMC NAS 3/28/15 A 5 Box 56, DNEAS to O.C. Natal Command, 14/5/1941; NTS Box 9115 File 68/363, Box 9114 File 67/363 and Box 9130/69/363, Recruitment of Natives for the NMC. Note of interview with Col. Stubbs by D.L. Smit on 29/5/1941; NMC NAS 3/16/4 A 11 Box 40 Deputy Adjutant General (henceforth DAG) (O) to DNEAS, 23/6/1941; NTS Box 9126 File 68/363/21, E.T. Stubbs to SNA, 29/9/1941 and A.B. Xuma Papers ABX 411113b, H. Rogers for SNA to Rev. J.A. Calata, Secretary-General ANC Cradock, 13/11/1941.

89. NTS Box 9669 File 585/400/1 SNA to B.G. Paver, 1/10/1943. It was precisely for this reason that the South African authorities persuaded the British in command of the forces from the three High Commission Territories not to arm their troops with firearms. They argued that if blacks from the British Protectorates were armed, those from South Africa would want the same. (K.W. Grundy, Soldiers without politics, pp. 81-82


91. General George Brink Collection Box 47, Memorandum on matters affecting the 1st South African Division, accompanying letter, G.E. Brink to Force, 23/1/1941.

92. My italics.

93. NMC NAS B 2 Box 66, News of the War Statement No. 24 for week ending 22/7/1940.

94. NMC NAS B 2 Box 66, News of the War Statement No. 24 for week ending 22/7/1940.

95. NMC NAS 3/21/A A 1 Box 15, News of the War Statement No. 132 for week ending 29/5/1942.

96. National Film Archive, FA 302, "Die storie van die
Suid-Afrikanse Militære Naturelle Korps, commentary.

97. NMC NAS Authorities/3 A 15 Box 37, Speech by Brig. C.H. Blaine, undated.

98. NTS Box 9127 File 68/363/19, Recruiting address by W.A. Seymour, Matatiele, accompanying letter Magistrate Matatiele to Chief Magistrate Umtata, 22/9/1942; NTS Box 9128 File 68/363/20, Appeal by Chief Botha Sigcau, accompanying letter DNEAS to SNA, 23/9/1942 and NMC NAS 3/21 A 7 Box 12, Typescript by D.J. Darlow, "The South African Native soldier in the march of time".

99. DC 1516/1 Chapter I Box 3115, Paper clipping Cape Argus, 16/4/1940. See also DC 1516/1 Chapter 1 Box 3115 and NTS Box 9653 File 520/400(7), Secretary for Defence to SNA, 23/4/1940.


101. Ibid., p. 548.


103. Ibid., p. 524.


112. NMC NAS 3/1/14 A 1 Box 37, Conference on armament and reorganisation of Security Battalions, 26/1/1943, accompanying letter AG to DNEAS, 2/2/1943 and DC 17926/83 Box 3513, CGS to AG, 29/5/1942.

113. AG (3)154/X/1014/14, Box 104, Telegram from Dechief to AG, 15/2/1944 and NMC NAS 3/26/15 A 1 Box 48, DNEAS to QMG, 5/8/1942.

114. NTS Box 9114 File 67/363, Note by Maj. G. Tylden on telephonic conversation with H.E. Priestman, 28/7/1941.

115. NTS Box 9126 File 68/363/21, CNC, Natal to Acting Secretary for Native Affairs, H. Rogers, 25/7/1942. See also CGS 32/8 V I DNEAS to AG, 28/10/1941.

116. NMC NAS 3/26/15 A 1 Box 48, DNEAS to QMG, 5/8/1942. See also similar comments by Visiting Officer NEAS to Clairwood Camp when armed Mauritian troops were quartered in the same lines as troops of the NMC. (NMC NAS 3/41/1/2 A 9 Box 43, Report on "C" Company 2nd Battalion NMC Clairwood, 7/11/1942.


118. DC 1887 Box 3250, H.E. Priestman to Brig. C.H. Blaine,
22/4/1941.


125. NTS Box 9629 File 511/400, Remarks by Mr. Hamel, secretary for the Communist Party of the Transvaal during a Communist Party meeting, 17/3/1942.


130. AG (3)154/667 Box 504 and NMC NAS 3/4/1 A 1 Box 2, Notes on conference held in Durban on recruiting 2/3/1942; AG (3)154/33/0 Box 154, R.D. Pilkinson Jordan to DCS, 20/12/1941; NTS Box 9117 File 68/363(3), Paper Clipping Ilanga lase Natal, 14/2/1942 and NTS Box 6815 File 38/318, Minutes of a meeting of Chiefs, Headmen and people held at Mafeking, 20/6/1940.

131. NTS Box 7606 File 49/328 Criminal Investment Department Durban to O.C. Criminal Investment Department, 2/7/1940, Report on a meeting held by A.W. Champion, 2/7/1940; CGS 32/14, SNA to Secretary for Defence, 6/11/1942. See further discussion on refusal to enlist Chapter 3.

132. A.B. Xuma Papers ABX 420316c, H.S. Nkabeni to Mr Mphahlele, 16/3/1942.

133. CGS 32/8 VI and NMC NAS 3/1/17 A 6 Box 23, E.T. Stubbs to AG, 28/10/1941. See also AG (3)154/315/2/0 Box 413, Col. J.J.C. Venter to AG, 15/3/1941; NMC NAS 3/26/15 A 1 Box 49, E.T. Stubbs to QMG, 5/8/1942 and NTS Box 9126 File 68/363/21, CNC, Natal to H. Rogers, 25/7/1942.
134. Interview with F. Sexwale, 6/2/1986. See also Z.K. Matthews Papers BZA 78/9-78/13 B 4.34 Manuscript titled "Africans and the War" by Z.K. Matthews for publication in Commonsense, 1942 and NTS Box 9653 File 520/400(7), NC Johannesburg to Director of Native Labour, Johannesburg, 24/6/1940.

135. A.B. Xuma Papers ABX 431215a, Presidential address to ANC, 15/12/1943.

136. Archives of the Union Defence Force (henceforth UDF) SAB 1/14/1 Box 196, Minutes of UDF Administrative Headquarters Staff Conference, no. 40, 31/7/1942; NTS Box 9115 File 68/363, Capt. Rodseth to D.L. Smit 9/7/1942; SAIRR Papers J.D.R. Jones Collection C. World War II AD 643 Box 109, E.H. Brookes to J.C. Smuts, 13/6/1940.

137. NMC NAS 3/4/1 B 8 Box 1, Minutes of Conference at Defence Headquarters, 29/10/1940; NTS Box 9130 File 69/363, G.P. Wallace, NC, Msinga to C.P. Alport, 17/9/1942; NTS Box 9130 File 69/363, NC Kranskop to CNC, 22/9/1942.


139. NTS Box 9114 File 68/363, J.D.R. Jones to Col. Reitz, 4/10/1940.

140. A.B. Xuma Papers ABX 420304b The ANC Deputation to Cape Town by A.B. Xuma, 4/3/1942.

141. CGS (War) 32/5, Van Ryneveld to Cunningham, 24/2/1941.

142. UDF Miscellaneous File Box 196, Progress report from 1 December 1941 to 31 January 1942 on matters affecting the office of the QMG S.A. Base, 23/2/1942; UDF SAB 1/14/1 Box 196 UDF Administrative Headquarters Staff Conference no. 40, 31/7/1942; AG (9)213T/4 DAG (P) to DCS 3/12/1942; NMC NAS Authorities/3 A 15 Box 37, Minutes of a speech by Gen. G.B. Brink, 15/10/1940; NTS Box 9315 File 40/378 "Zoutpanseberg Review", 15/9/1942 and interviews with J. Theledi, D. Masuku, J. Kgabo, E. Minnaar, 6/2/1986, R. Sitole and S. Ngcobo, 27/4/1981.


144. NMC NAS 3/41/13 A 2 Box 45, DNEAS to AG, 15/4/1943.

146. CGS Gp 2 137/1 Vol. 5 Box 69, DMT to DCS, 30/1/1942 and Hallack, "Record of the NEAS", p. 107.


148. NMC NAS 3/21 A 7 Box 12 and CGS 32/14, DNEAS to Director of Information, 12/8/1942. See also NMC NAS 3/21 A 6 Box 12, Director of Information to DNEAS, 8/9/1942 and NMC NAS 3/21 A 7 Box 12, Deputy Director of Military Intelligence to DCS, 30/7/1942.

149. DNEAS 3/1/1 (Coast) No. 33 Box 1, Director of Military Intelligence to GOC Coastal Area.

150. NMC NAS 3/21/B A 3 Box 15, P. de Waal to Director of Military Intelligence, undated.


152. Interview with W. Ngqunqwa, 6/2/1986. See also NTS Box 9127 File 68/363/18, Memorandum for meeting of Sub-Committee for Non-European Propaganda, 30/6/1942.


156. K.W. Grundy, Soldiers without politics, p. 31.

158. The preceding exposition is based on the following sources:
15-22; K.W. Grundy, Soldiers without politics, pp. 3-4 and 22-62;
S. Horwitz, "The Non-European War Record in South Africa" in E.
535.; E.T. Stubbs and H.S. Mockford, "A plan for the development
of manpower", p. 28; F. Warwick, Black people, pp. 11-27, 33-35,
41-42, 50, 76, 96, 117-121 and 130-134; Narep Unfo 23, Historical
Record NMC, p. 14190; UWH Box 263, News of the War for week
ending 1/9/1945 no. 285; NTS Box 9126 File 68/363/21 Paper
clippings Sunday Times 24/8/1941 and Cape Argus, 19/3/1942,
20/3/1942 and 21/3/1942 and J.D.R. Jones Collection O. World War

159. Narep Unfo 12 p. 11132; Halack, "Record of the NEAS" p. 6a
and NMC NAS 3P/4?1 B 7 Box 1, D.L. Smit to Secretary for Defence,
6/6/1939.


161. NMC NAS 3P/4/1 B 7 Box 1, J. Mitchell-Bakerto Col. B.W.
Martin, 18/2/1940.

162. NTS Box 9653 File 520/400/7, C.H. Blaine to SNA, 23/4/1940;
DC 1516/1 Chapter I Box 3115, Paper Clipping Cape Argus,
16/4/1940 and DC 1516/1 Chapter I Box 3115, C.H. Blaine to SNA,
23/4/1940.

163. D. Killingray, "Labour mobilisation in British Colonial
Africa for the war effort, 1939-1946". Paper delivered at SOAS
Conference on Africa and the Second World War, May 1984, pp. 1, 3
and 4.

164. See discussion on duties blacks would be assigned to,
infra, p. 35.

165. SAIRR Papers J.D.R. Jones Collection O. World War II AD 843
Box 109, B.W. Martin to J.D.R. Jones, 15/5/1940; NMC NAS 3P/4/1 B
7 Box 1, Note by B.W. Martin, 14/5/1940; NMC NAS O (M) 14/1 A 5
Box 63, B.W. Martin to QMG, 15/5/1940 and NTS Box 9114 File
64/363, H.C. Lugg to D.L. Smit, 21/5/1940.

166. CGS (War) 32/10, Notes on a conference at Defence
Headquarters, 23/5/1940.

167. DCS 109 Box 3593, A.G. to All Sections, 26/6/1940.

168. SAIRR Papers, J.D.R. Jones Collection O. World War II AD
843 Box 109, Selope Thema to J.D.R. Jones, 18/4/1940.

169. See Chapter 4 for conditions of service.
170. NTS Box 9629 File 511/400, Gushum 'Ngayi to a friend, 24/12/1939 and SAIRR Papers J.D.R. Jones Collections O. World War II AD 843 Box 109 J.D.R. Jones to SNA, 24/12/1940.

171. AG (3)154/51/658/2, Van Ryneveld to Cunningham, 25/1/1941.

172. CGS Gp 2/1/9/1 Box 1 DCT and O to DFAE, 12/3/1941.


175. DNEAS NAS 3/5/6 Box 6 DNEAS to DGMS, DAG, Training Area Commandant, Welgedacht and Officer in charge Non-European War Records, 10/2/1941 and War Records (henceforth WR) 93/6 Box 181, Officer in charge of Non-European War Records to AG, 14/2/1940.

176. See Chapter 4 for the implications of this decision.


178. See Chapters 5 and 6.

179. UWH MS 50 Box 90 and DC 1473/32 Chapter I Box 3090, B.W. Martin to all attesting officers, 9/7/1940. This allocation was later revised as follows: Natal (1 000), Transkei (1 000), Northern Areas (Transvaal other than the Reef plus Orange Free state and North West Cape) (1 300), Ciskei (500) and Reef (200). (SAIRR Papers J.D.R. Jones Collection O. World War II AD 843 Box 109, Capt. Rodseth to Assistant Secretary SAIRR, 8/8/1940). A Caprivi Zipfel Company was also formed for intelligence and guard duties on the northern border. The authorities feared the probable danger of an enemy approaching the Victoria Falls Bridge from the West. (NMC NAS 32/1/7 A 2 Box 22, E.T. Stubbs to CGS, 11/11/1940; NTS Box 9121 File 68/363/9,SNA to D.P. Forsyth, Secretary for SWA, 16/7/1940).


184. K.W. Grundy is wrong when he leaves the impression that the NMC was segregated ethnically. (K.W. Grundy, Soldiers without politics, p. 75.)

185. See chapter 5.

186. AG (3) 154/X/1012 Box 104, Director of Air Personnel and Organisation to OC's NMC Wings (South), 31/12/1945; NMC NAS 3/20/1C A 4 Box 31, B.T. Stubbs to AG, 10/2/1941, A.G. (3) 154/51/658/0 Box 224, memorandum on NEAS, 29/3/1941; AG (1) E 128/35/1/73 Vol. I Box 481, E.T. Stubbs to all attesting officers, 26/10/1940. Troops in the rest of Africa had to perform more or less similar duties. (See D. Killingray, "Labour mobilization", p. 7; B. Mokopakgosi, "The case of the Kweneng", p. 5 and J. Warner, "The recruitment of East African troops in World War Two" Paper delivered at SOAS Conference on Africa and the Second World War, May 1984, p. 14.

187. CGS (War) 32/10 and NTS Box 9114 File 64/363, Notes on a Conference at Defence Headquarters, 23/5/1940.


189. CO 820/44 File 34428, GOC East Africa to War Office, 16/6/1940; CO 820/44 File 34428, Secretary Colonial Office to Governor Dar-es-Salaam, 25/6/1940, Note by A.J. Dawe, 24/6/1940.


191. AG (1) E 128/35/1/73 Vol. I Box 481, DNEAS to all attesting officers, 26/10/1940.
CHAPTER 3

RECRUITMENT FOR THE NMC

The question arises whether the labour pool in South Africa would be large enough in order to recruit sufficient blacks for the army. According to the census of 1936 there were 1 539 758 male blacks in the Union between the ages of 18 and 45 years. It is fairly safe to assume that, at the outbreak of the War, this number had grown to approximately 1 600 000 of whom approximately 1 000 000 were employed in agriculture and industries, leaving 600 000 men of military age available for other occupations. (1) Moreover, Lt.-Col. Martin estimated conservatively that there were always between 4 000 and 5 000 unemployed urban blacks in Johannesburg alone, not to mention the thousands who were unwilling to work on the mines or farms. As an example, he cited the unemployment position in the building trade. Because of the war, business was so severely curtailed that at least 50% black employees were entrenched. A number of them might have been employed elsewhere, but because this class of skilled black man was not prepared to work on the mines or farms, about 6 000 were likely to remain unemployed until the building trade revived at the end of the War. (2)

In the light of this apparently large untapped labour force, the Chief of the General Staff, General P. van Ryneveld, believed that they would have little difficulty in obtaining recruits without interfering with the labour supply to the mines, industries, farmers or other employers in the Union. (3) Until as late as April 1942 the precise objective of the number of recruits required varied constantly. This can probably be attributed to the uncertainty what the ultimate aim of the NMC would be and to the changing requirements of the war. The initial estimates were set on 4 000 men, only to be changed to 8 000 two months later. (4) In November 1940 Col. Stubbs conveyed his intention of recruiting an additional 25 000 men and in the next month estimated that the total requirement would not be less that 100 000 men. Therefore, no limit was laid down as to the number of blacks to be recruited. By March 1941 he again drastically revised his figures, estimating that 500 000 blacks would be needed to replace white soldiers before the end of the war. (5) In May 1941 he intimated that for the time being, he required an additional 40 000 men. Eventually, however, by April 1942, the ceiling for the NMC was fixed at 60 000 men; but recruitment to replace wastage would continue. (6) This remained the goal until it was decided to cease recruiting as from February 1943. Whether this goal was reached and whether it was such an easy task as the CGS considered it to be, will now be examined. This examination will entail, inter alia, a consideration of the methods of recruitment and black responses.

Although there was a Director of Recruiting with Col. G.C.G. Werdmuller in charge (who recruited whites, colourads and
Indians), the recruiting of blacks was undertaken separately by the Directorate of the NEAS in close collaboration with the Native Affairs Department (henceforth NAD). In effect it was the Native Commissioners who bore the brunt as they were regarded to be "in the best position to obtain a ready response to the Government's call." (7) When Col. Werdmuller suggested that all recruitment should be carried out by his directorate, the DNEAS vehemently resisted the idea because the personnel of the Director of Recruiting did not have "sufficient knowledge of the conditions applicable to...native people"

and "They are not conversant with the psychology of...the native..." (8)

It appears that the DNEAS was adamant that, in order to ensure complete control of blacks in the NMC, all activities had to be carried out strictly under his supervision.

METHODS OF RECRUITMENT

The methods of recruitment used before 1942 were, as the DNEAS's admitted, "on a rather hit-and-miss basis." (9) The dire need for manpower, aggravated by the defeat of the Allies at Tobruk, pressed the DNEAS to organise the recruiting effort on a more efficient basis.

After this reorganisation, the methods used can broadly be divided into two sections: (a) utilisation of, improving and expanding on the existing communication media; (b) emphasis being placed on a more personal approach when the recruitment authorities resorted to, inter alia, recruitment tours undertaken by specially selected recruitment staff. Both methods corroborated the official view that blacks were particularly impressed by ostentatiousness and therefore special attempts were made in this direction.

This attitude was clearly expressed by Lt. J.B. Bruce in his report on recruiting propaganda amongst the blacks. He argued on racial lines that "colour" appeals to blacks:

"While a blaze of colour might offend the susceptibilities of Europeans...almost any colourful reproduction will appeal to natives... a 'motion' picture of doubtful educational value would be better than a large number of 'still' pictures of proved educational value for Europeans... Nothing takes the place of 'personal contact' with the natives. Consequently all forms of propaganda media must be supplementary to personal contacts. This is, of course, not true of Europeans, who resent the persistency of salesmen and other personal mediums of advertising."

(10)

Films and mobile film units were ideally suited to this purpose as Lt. Bruce noted in flowery language:

"Such films, depicting the native being transformed from an insignificant atom of a native territory to a swash-buckling brave of the NMC, have an enormous propaganda
Definite requirements were laid down for these recruiting films. Lt. Bruce's suggestions were closely adhered to: apart from presenting the NMC in as favourable a light as possible it had to create enthusiasm and a strong desire to enlist. These films were clearly designed with propaganda value in mind and had to be simple and direct so that even the "unsophisticated and often illiterate audiences" (12) could comprehend them. In particular, the writers of the different scenarios stressed that blacks should be regarded as "genuine" soldiers - but "genuine" as perceived from a white perspective. (13) Hence the anachronistic depiction of black soldiers wearing modern uniforms but armed with assegais was considered a happy combination between the warriors of the nineteenth century and the changed conditions of the twentieth century. The scenario writers clearly thought that blacks' loyalty would be aroused by such a portrayal which also referred to their nineteenth century mode of warfare:

"Now this is a soldier of today. See how differently but how well he is dressed... You will notice that he still carries an assegai." (14)

Clearly, for the authorities, blacks lived in a timeless void; customs of the nineteenth century also applied to the twentieth century.

These films which were shown in townships, hospitals, beer halls and reserves, attracted much attention and were well attended. Although this was officially interpreted as proof of success, (15) it is a moot point whether the blacks attended the shows because of their contents or because of their sheer novelty. In all likelihood, however, the entertainment factor was the main drawcard.

Besides the use of films, recruiting posters in the vernacular were drawn up and displayed at Magistrates' offices, Native Commissioners' offices, police posts, beer halls, railway stations, cinemas, clubs, schools, buses, trams and trains. The posters accentuated the danger of a German victory and the need for recruits. In a fairly dramatic poster, reminiscent of the famous World War I poster "Your country needs you", the blacks were called upon to rally to the flag in the face of the possible devastation inherent in a Nazi victory. (16) Later it was realized that this approach was too general and vague to appeal to blacks and the poster was substituted by one having a more direct and immediate message - the pay of a recruiting sergeant. (17) In addition, loudspeakers were used to inform blacks in townships about the recruiting campaign and special radio broadcasts were also considered. However, this was turned down, apparently not to offend the susceptibilities of a section of the white population. (18)

Apart from the weekly News of the War of the NAD, arrangements were also made with B.G. Paver, Managing Director of the Bantu Press, that articles dealing with the life in the Army be published. An amount of 500 pounds was also budgeted for
advertisements in the black newspapers circulating the Union. It was believed that these advertisements and the two weekly columns in the newspapers, "Soldiers Gossip Column" (concerning the personal activities of the soldiers who had joined up) and the "Soldier's Friend Column" (where general enquiries pertaining to the NMC were discussed) would encourage recruiting. (19) Reports on black response to these newspapers and the news bulletins are contradictory: from Rustenburg it was reported that the News of the War "was eagerly anticipated and read throughout the district". (20) However, it was also remarked that these bulletins were hopelessly out of date and failed to keep the blacks in touch with the war effort. Moreover, very few blacks read newspapers at all. (21) The recruiting officials also believed that the publication of letters, speeches and circulars by the various chiefs to their followers would contribute substantially to the recruiting effort. (22) These appeals, however, assuming that blacks owed a loyalty to South Africa and to the British Government, proclaimed in obviously hollow rhetoric that if they join the NMC, they would "assist the forces that stand for freedom and liberty" and, ultimately, that they would then be recognised by other nations of the world. (23)

Furthermore, a few military training camps and depots were established in African territories such as Zululand and Transkei with the objective of generating local interest in the war and promoting recruitment. It was hoped that these camps would address the blacks' reluctance to enlist after they had learned that they would be sent off to a distant camp and also overcome the fear and suspicion of their being immediately sent to the Witwatersrand and housed in compounds after enlistment as happened to mine recruits. (24) Such a training camp and an artillery battery were established at Eshowe. Representations were subsequently made and authority given to establish similar camps in Umtata, Matatiele and Nongoma. It is interesting to note that these camps were established in the areas where the response to the recruiting effort was the poorest. Despite this expensive undertaking, the training camps evidently did not meet the expectations, as the DNEAS concluded:

"...until recruiting results reveal that the principle of establishing...additional camps are [sic] justified, I do not see my way clear to consider additional camps." (25)

The fact that only two or three blacks actually attested at Eshowe in Zululand per month, (26) emphasised the failure of this attempt to make the military more visible and alive to African communities.

This method was enhanced by sending black soldiers into African communities to enlist their kinsmen. For instance, those on leave, were exhorted to use their influence amongst their own people in persuading them to enlist and it was suggested that they might receive a pecuniary reward for every recruit they brought in. (27) The urgency of acquiring more recruits and the lengths to which the authorities would go, to reach this goal, became clear when selected blacks were ordered to return from the
Middle East to assist in recruiting. (28) However, this method was not wholly successful as is evident from a letter written by Lance Corporal M. Mqali. When he was on leave he tried to persuade his friends to enlist:

"I met them, they took no notice about this which when I spoke the thing you sent us to people that we should ask them to join in when we have gone for leave they answered in the form of a question as this how can you join because when you have joined the children are troubled. Others asked me why I have not ploughed and yet I have joined for the Government..." (29)

Other soldiers, perhaps regretting their decision to enlist, actually discouraged prospective recruits from enrolling by informing them of the hardships of army life. (30)

Perhaps the most important method of recruiting and the one most commonly used in the rest of Africa, was by employing chiefs and headmen as recruiting agents amongst their people. The authorities thought these leaders had considerable influence and that their people might therefore more readily respond to their appeal than that of Native Commissioners who were not always popular with the blacks and sometimes viewed with suspicion. (31) It was argued that

"tribal instincts are still strong amongst the Natives and if chiefs could be made to feel that they, rather than Native Commissioners, were regarded as being responsible for producing recruits, such an interest would possibly result". (32)

Furthermore, the authorities believed that they erred by asking for volunteers. They would have been able to obtain more recruits if they adhered to the custom whereby the chiefs themselves took the lead and joined the army and had the power to conscript their followers. The official view was that

"it was an acceptable tradition with the Bantus that when chiefs sit on their 'arm chairs' and command his warriors to go out to meet the enemy, he is not serious about it until he takes to the arms himself and set [sic] the example of what must be done." (33)

By adopting this attitude the authorities could, of course, waive their formal policy of only enlisting volunteers and simultaneously proclaim that they were piously respecting tribal traditions.

The DNEAS also arranged with all the principal chiefs to submit written appeals together with their photographs. Large quantities of these appeals were printed and the Chiefs were requested to see to it that their appeals were pinned up in every household in their area.

M. Roth erroneously stated that

"it was very noticeable that none of these chiefs asked their followers to join up for South Africa - they only recruited men for 'Great Britain' and the 'King'". (34)

There is sufficient evidence, however, that some chiefs
(irrespective of whether it was their sincere intention or not) specifically exhorted their men not only to enlist for "Great Britain" and the "King", but also for the sake of the South African Government and country. This is borne out by the following expressions of loyalty:

"We, the Africans are a part and parcel of the Union Government and it is therefore our duty to prove how trustworthy we are to the Government of our country" (35)

and

"We the Natives... ought to regard ourselves as the... inhabitants of South Africa... That is to say that the young men have to join the Army to testify that the Country is theirs" (36)

and also quoting from an appeal by Chief Mohlabo of Tzaneen (to which Roth also referred),

"...if we... do not do our full share in meeting the very grave position, we will not be able to point out to the Government that by doing our duty and shedding our blood in support of the country (37) we have shown ourselves worthy of still further privileges and improved conditions." (38)

Moreover, the authorities undoubtedly thought the chiefs and even the Councillors of the Native Representative Council wielded considerable power because they made special arrangements for selected chiefs and councillors to visit various training units where the chiefs were generously treated. D.L. Smit was a strong supporter of this idea:

"We want to make a bit of a fuss of the Native members of this Council because they exercise a lot of influence among the educated Natives throughout the country. If we have them on our side in the recruiting it will be all to the good". (39)

The chiefs were, however, by no means unanimous in helping the Government with the recruitment campaign. Some of them were hostile and did not hesitate to oppose the recruiting campaign openly. Their lukewarm and unenthusiastic attitude was one of the reasons for the poor recruiting results. (40) Some chiefs objected to the fact that they were not consulted beforehand as to the conditions of enlistment. Chief David Dalindybo (Chief of the Tembus) and Chief Victor Poto (Chief of Western Pondoland) apparently viewed this in such a serious light that they boycotted recruitment meetings. The Chief Magistrate of the Transkeian Territories, R. Fyfe King, considered this action utterly presumptuous and noted

"that they have in fact placed the dignity of their positions before the needs of the country." (41)

A similar incident took place at Ndwedwe the following year when the Ndwedwe chiefs ignored a meeting to discuss ways and means for obtaining recruits. The Chief Native Commissioner for Natal at that stage, H.C. Lugg, regarded their attitude as most reprehensible and contemplated depriving them of their stipends for twelve months. (42) This action can also be construed as proof that some of the chiefs and influential leaders were not
prepared to act as Government collaborators. They clung to their only bargaining power – their freedom to render or withhold their labour.

However, there were also those who willingly assisted the authorities, though they might not have represented the wishes of their kinsmen and followers. This contributed to the lowering of their esteem in the eyes of their people and to a weakening of their authority. Chief Kaka from the Matatiele district, a staunch supporter of the war effort, dearly experienced this when, in an election, he lost his chieftainship to headman Beyman. W.H. Seymour, Native Commissioner of Matatiele, explained this from his own perspective:

"His [Kaka's] sentiments about getting natives into the army were far in advance of the people amongst whom he was living and like all men of advanced ideas, he suffered for them". (43)

That his followers might have had "advanced ideas" themselves by not following the Government line, apparently did not occur to the Commissioner.

When evaluating the efforts by chiefs and headmen to obtain recruits, the dilemma in which some chiefs must have been, must also be appreciated. Knowing it was unpopular, they could either coerce and alienate their subjects, or by avoiding it altogether, fall into disfavour with the authorities. Therefore, many simply prevaricated. It must also be borne in mind that conditions varied greatly in the different areas. It is therefore difficult to estimate the actual value of the chiefs by merely looking at the number of recruits who attested as a result of their efforts. Furthermore, there is a definite duality in the official assessment of the chiefs' contribution. On the one hand some of them were indeed willing supporters of the recruiting drive so that their contribution was in no way a small one. For example, the weekly average of recruits from Natal rose from 27 to 65 after the chiefs had been appointed. (44) On the other hand, when representations from the chiefs reached the Department of Native Affairs after the war, claiming "small gifts" in recognition for their services, the Chief Native Commissioners did not regard the chiefs' contribution worthy of any special recognition or gift. (45) In the Northern areas of the country, for example, the chiefs were responsible for only 16 per cent of the recruits. (46) This represented 7 per cent of the total paying population. The Commissioners' refusal can, of course, also be explained by the fact that the war was over and four years had already elapsed since the height of the recruiting campaign; the authorities could therefore easily dismiss their claims.

Apart from the chiefs and the headmen who participated in the recruiting campaign, the DNEAS decided to utilise some of the pick of the NMC in combing the black areas for further recruits. This was done to alleviate the burden on the Native Commissioners and because the blacks viewed the white officials with suspicion and would rather listen to their own people. (47) Numerous members of the NMC volunteered to recruit (48) and even such a
distinguished person as Dr. P. ka I. Seme, law adviser and secretary for the ANC, offered his services. (49) Some black teachers had declared their willingness to assist with the war effort but later complained and resented that they had never been approached. (50)

In keeping with the whites' somewhat stereotyped conception of what might appeal to blacks, recruitment marches were held in large centres as well as ostentatious military displays of bands playing loudly and with great gusto. In addition, it was considered that "Musical Chairs" with vehicles and other skilful driving, squad drill, physical training displays, fire drill and first aid demonstrations would also capture the imagination of the blacks. (51) It certainly succeeded in drawing the crowds; however, as was the case with the films, the majority of blacks enjoyed the spectacle but remained unmoved by its message.

On most of these occasions it was particularly noticeable that only women, children and elderly men were present. Senator E.H. Brookes and W.H. Seymour explained that the absence of young men could be ascribed to the custom amongst the blacks that only the older men attended these meetings. (52) However, as only young men were enlisted and the recruitment drive was specifically geared to net the young men, their absence must seriously have militated against the success of the recruitment meetings. Those young men who did attend, were certainly not interested in enlisting. Some of them asked the officials pointed questions such as

"What had the Government done for them? Would they be armed? Where is the land you promised us? You do not tell us the truth. The Europeans are cheating us." (53)

This prompted officials to report that the blacks were "hostile" and "insolent". (54) Other youths were simply scared:

"A large number of young natives who would have made likely recruits, appeared to be afraid to enter the hall and no amount of coaxing could induce them to do so." (55)

Eventually, fewer and fewer demonstrations were held, partly because of their limited yield, but also because white opinion baulked at such brazen displays of military "power" to impress blacks.

As in most wartime recruitment campaigns in Africa, "sweet persuasion" was not the only method used. The borderline between voluntary and compulsory recruitment was often very vague. (56) Officially the Government disapproved of any form of coercive action to increase the number of recruits. This was clearly stated by the Secretary for Native Affairs:

"If the intention is that they should be allowed to compel members of their tribes to enlist in the Native Military Corps I must state quite emphatically that this Department cannot countenance any such action. The principle underlying the creation of military forces in the Union is one of voluntary enlistment and the Government cannot be expected to acquiesce in any departure from such principle." (57)
Nevertheless, there is evidence that some chiefs used compulsion ordering their men to enlist. From the Zoutpansberg area in the Northern Transvaal blacks complained that recruiting officers with the help of the chiefs rounded up men without giving them any explanation why they should join up, forcing them to choose between enlisting or paying a fine in cattle and goats. Furthermore, they graphically described the hardships caused by such methods:

"It is not taken into consideration that a man's brothers may be in the Army and he may be the sole support of his family... In fact it actually hinders the War effort because it interrupts the people's production and undermines the confidence of the people in the Government." (58)

The view was also expressed that forced recruitment was quite acceptable as it was not an African custom to ask for volunteers to go to war; the chiefs should merely have ordered their men to comply. (59) This appeal to former customs was of course a convenient pretext to mask the racist assumption that blacks had no right of choice in these matters. This was bluntly expressed by one of the recruiting officers, the Magistrate of Vryheid:

"It is useless to ask a native whether he will kindly join the Forces, he should be compelled to do so by his Paramount Chief in the interest of their Country and not by the Government." (60)

Likewise, W.O.H. Menge, an Assistant Native Commissioner for Marico, argued that

"If we go along and say recruits are wanted on a purely European basis [i.e. voluntarily], this is not appreciated by the Natives". (61)

Officially, the authorities did not condone coercion. Unofficially, however, a fair degree of force was used so that the recruits obtained in this way could not be described as genuine volunteers but rather as "conscripted volunteers." (62)

CONTENTS OF THE RECRUITING APPEAL

Turning to the ideological contents of the recruiting campaign, articles to drum up enthusiasm were written in a typically war propaganda vein, simplifying the war as being a conflict between oppressed and liberated people. The conventional cliches of the Anglo-Saxon democracy such as the refrain to fight for and to defend their so-called "freedom" were repeated. If the South African blacks supported the Allies' war effort, their so-called "liberty" would be secured because

"they are fighting together with the three greatest liberty-loving nations of the world - Britain, Soviet Union and America." (63)

The problems in devising ways and means to make a widespread and direct appeal to a largely illiterate people, (64) to make the war issue a live one to the blacks, to rally them to the cry of "Defend Democracy", to convince them that democracy held rights and privileges for them too, was indeed no easy task. Considering the discrepancy between the lofty ideals of freedom and democracy and their actual abject political, social and economic situation,
it was, at best, a crude attempt to ignore the divisions of class and race in South Africa. Although such an appeal might have had some relevance to whites, it was to a large extent inappropriate when directed at prospective black recruits.

Propaganda of this sort, however, would not have been effective unless the authorities were also able to convince blacks that their lot would be significantly worse under Axis rule than under the South African Government. Therefore, the ruthlessness of the Germans, Italians and Japanese was expressed in dramatic language:

"They have murdered women and children and old men. They have burned their houses; they have destroyed their families; they have burned their fields and killed their cattle... They make slaves out of [sic] their own people."

(65)

Therefore, it was considered incumbent on blacks to assist the Government against this purported menace.

In order to allay any fears about their welfare in the army, elaborate descriptions of how well the soldiers who had enlisted were cared for and how happy they were, were not only published in the press or mentioned in recruiting speeches but also portrayed in the recruiting films. The emphasis of the propaganda was on the radical changes that the army could make to a man's life; a film and an issue of the News of the War showed the arrival of recruits in torn clothes and how they changed into smart uniforms. Simultaneously, these propaganda appeals drew attention to the fact that the families of those who had enlisted, were also properly looked after by way of family allowances. (66)

It was also thought that the blacks would be impressed by the achievements of black soldiers. Therefore, some appeals were construed in such a way as to create a kind of hero cult or worship. (67) On the other hand, harsher approaches in which the blacks who did not enlist were regarded as cowards, were also adopted. This kind of appeal was frequently used by the chiefs:

"Join up! Are we cowards...? The time to sit or to stand or to put our hands on our foreheads, looking about, is past." (68)

In these appeals by the chiefs, group and moral pressure also played a role. They hinted that others of their tribe had already joined and that the rest therefore also had to respond. (69)

Despite strict instructions that promises should not be made or the terms and conditions of service misrepresented, (70) evidence reveals that some enterprising recruiting agents deliberately made false promises to induce blacks to enlist. Some blacks were therefore under the impression that they could, inter alia, expect promotion, would not serve longer than six months and that that service would be restricted to the area in which they dwelled, that they would be exempted from poll tax, would be given grants of land and that they would be armed when sent to North Africa. (71) Influential politicians also made vague
promises about the post-war position of blacks. In a speech before the General Council of the Transkei, the Minister of Native Affairs, Col. D. Reitz, said that he was "proud of the part our Native soldiers played in the war and of their loyalty... In plans for reconstruction after the war, steps will be taken to ensure that the Native people are included." (72)

Although some appeals may not have promised anything, the ambiguous way in which they were formulated may unintentionally have conveyed hints:
"There will be thousands of new motor cars and commercial trucks on the road after the war. This is therefore a golden opportunity for the natives to equip themselves for the future by becoming qualified drivers." (73)

The implication is clear: these vehicles would be readily available to them after the war. These promises led not only to inflated and imaginary expectations amongst a number of potential recruits and enlisted black soldiers, but also to confusion and disillusionment later because these promises were not kept.

REASONS FOR NOT ENLISTING

Despite the major effort, the recruiting campaign met with such a poor response that the authorities were extremely disappointed and concerned. (74) The initial declarations of loyalty and support which raised high but misleading expectations were not matched by large numbers willing to join the NMC. Particularly distressing was the very poor response from Natal, Zululand, Transkei, Ciskei and the Eastern Province. In the Umzinto, Vryheid, Dundee, Ladysmith and Newcastle districts, for example, only 1,5 % of the taxpayers had enrolled by July 1942. (75) This begs the question as to what factors this partly unsuccessful and (for Natal and Transkei at least) disastrous campaign can be ascribed.

For blacks, the contradictory ideological milieu and structural constraints of the South African ideological society in which recruiting took place, loomed large in an evaluation of the reasons why they refused to enlist. Under these circumstances blacks saw no reason to show their allegiance to "democracy". Members of the black intellectual elite such as Z.K. Matthews and D.D.T. Jabavu, argued that if the blacks participated, they would only be fighting to maintain the status quo of the present policy towards them - and surely, the black people could not be expected to be enthusiastic about that. (76) A leading article in a black Natal newspaper also explained:
"What is needed is not mere drugging of the Non-Europeans with assurances that this is his war. He would not need to be told twice if he believed it to be really so... The exhortations and assurances are sounding very hollow...when what he knows immediately is that in the Union’s version of Democracy eight million Bantu are denied the citizen's duty to work in the manufacture of war equipment for his country's fighting forces for no reason other than that he has a dark skin." (77)
As reform measures to grant them more substantial civil rights were not forthcoming, the current mistrust prevailed and consequently also the blacks' apathy in response to recruiting campaigns.

For some blacks the real and immediate war was not in Europe or in North Africa, but much closer to home in South Africa. Many blacks argued along the lines that as far as their own position and struggles were concerned, there has never been "any peace" (78); they had to wage a continuous war to alleviate their hardships and improve their circumstances. In a large measure, therefore, the structural position of the blacks was responsible for their apathetic attitude towards the war effort. Recruiting officials consistently complained that blacks were "not interested", "lukewarm", "complacent", and "lacking in enthusiasm". (79) As it was clearly a "white man's war", they could not see why they should assist where the ultimate result would not be to their advantage. (80) In particular, they were not prepared to defend the white man's interest in a country where "everything worthwhile is a privilege of the white man". (81) After all, they had little to defend and therefore little to lose—hence the simple, but important question was asked: "What have we to fight for?" (82)

Moreover, when news was received of Allied setbacks in 1942, certain blacks did not see why they should fight as it appeared that the Germans would in any case be victorious. Some, it would seem, were actually prepared to welcome a German Victory—to them any change, of whatever nature, was an improvement on the status quo. (83)

To other blacks the war was simply too far removed to be of any real concern. "This is a war", an elderly man of Peddie told M. Ballinger, "for people thousands of miles away on the other side of the world. It has nothing to do with us, and already it is making life harder for us." (84)

In some instances this apathetic attitude changed into overt resistance. Various reports stated that "individuals had forestalled the recruiting effort" and "the youth of 20 to 30 years loafing in the kraal is not only not interested but is obstructive." (85) The Non-European United Front of the Transvaal issued a pamphlet publicly exhorting the blacks not to enlist unless their grievances had been redressed. (86) Although some recruited soldiers dissuaded would-be recruits from enlisting, the main thrust, obstructing the campaign, came from the educated section of the black population. (87)

In the midst of the recruiting campaign the Deputy Chief of Staff seemingly impatient, posed the question

"What is holding up the NMC recruiting? Is it the lack of European officials and NCO's or Native recruits or what is the reason?" (88)

The fact of the matter is that it can be ascribed more to a lack of recruits than a lack of white officers.
A myriad of factors deterred blacks from enlisting. For one, inequality in black and white service conditions was a consideration. Probably the biggest rebuff the blacks received when their service conditions were laid down, was the instruction (strictly adhered to) that they would only be armed with assegais and knobkerries. Many blacks were estranged by this decision. They felt that as they were not fully trusted, there was no sense in joining the army. Non-combatant service simply did not appeal to them. (89) Furthermore, the hazardous duty of guarding military property with primitive and outdated "weapons" was considered sheer folly. Because the authorities followed this policy the blacks found themselves at a loss as one explained the dilemma:

"...the officer has told us that natives should not have arms but should have assegais. I cannot use a rifle, thanks to master, but I cannot use an assegai either, thanks to master." (90)

Certain officials and even Col. D. Reitz, were well aware of the detrimental effect the non-arming of blacks had on recruitment. They openly stated recruiting would be brisk, should permission be granted to arm blacks. (91) Others were so insensitive that they cold-shouldered the objection as a mere superficial excuse for not enlisting. (92)

Inequality with regard to the rates of pay was also an impediment for prospective recruits. The basic pay was 1/6 per day for recruits without dependants and 2/3 for recruits with dependants. Recruits in the Cape Coloured Corps and the Indian and Malay Corps received 2/6 per day while the remuneration for the whites was 5 shillings a day. The idea that blacks would enlist because of patriotic motives was a pipe-dream; they wanted substantial financial inducement:

"If you can pay me eight pounds and ten shillings in the military service I will join. But there is always a cloud before me - three pounds seven shillings six pence for a month - I find it a very meagre subsidy to a man with a family. This worries my mind every time but I wish to defend our country and our things - this I find as my bounden duty." (93)

A sense of duty did not, however, override the pecuniary considerations. The success or failure of recruiting to a large extent hinged on economics, especially as many blacks did not want to jeopardise the welfare of their families because of inadequate remuneration.

Despite this realisation and remarks amongst high-ranking army officials that the pay was indeed inadequate, Col. Stubbs emphasised that their remuneration package together with free quarters, rations, clothing, medical service, leave privileges and free rail warrants once a year, was a challenge to other employers and therefore sufficiently attractive. (94) As head of the NEAS and with no prospect of increasing the pay, it is understandable that he had to defend the rates of pay; but in effect, he therefore ruled out insufficient pay as a reason for
the poor response. This contradicts the above-mentioned overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Linked to their concern for their families’ welfare, were the attestation conditions that they had to join for an indefinite period and serve anywhere in Africa. This was a strange and vague concept to them and created an atmosphere of uncertainty because they foresaw that their dependants might be subject to unforeseen and extraordinary expenditure. The army pay would be inadequate to cope with such an emergency and then for a long time they would be unable to help by doing extra work to supplement their income. This was a real obstacle to their joining up.

The package offered to the blacks for enlisting did not seem at all very attractive; moreover, as late as June 1942, there was no scheme for the re-employment of discharged volunteers, and there prevailed the general impression that army conditions, when compared with those of the whites, were bad. (95) Dr Xuma was therefore fully justified when he wrote that:

"it is the consensus of opinion among African people of all classes in the Union, both urban and rural, that the conditions of service for the African soldiers and the pin-pricks and humiliation he is subjected to at times, apparently to put an inferiority complex in him, tend to discourage the African people from joining the Native Military Corps and cognate units... We cannot maintain these peacetime discriminations in the army and expect the victims of such discriminations or their friends and relatives to rush in their thousands to the army to defend them." (96)

That they were not prepared to be treated as second class citizens was borne out by the fact that they refused to perform labourers’ work as was the case in the First World War when they served in Labour Battalions. They attested as soldiers and expected to be treated as such. Not only would it have been hypocritical but also humiliating to be called a soldier but doing ordinary hard labour. (97)

A leitmotiv underlying their reasons for not enlisting was a growing feeling of distrust in whites generally and the Government in particular. Apart from the cumulative effect of obvious factors such as pass laws, they also had ample other grounds for such an attitude. At the conclusion of the First World War they, in contrast to the whites, received neither any recognition for their services by way of medals nor any pensions. They furthermore bitterly resented the fact that the dependants of soldiers who perished in the First World War were also discarded by the Government, received no pensions and were left as a burden on their relatives’ hands. It was indeed a case of once bitten, twice shy. (98) The treatment meted out in the past by officials of the Department of Native Affairs and other Government officials, especially the police, also created a sense of suspicion, reluctance and hostility when these very officials exhorted them to enlist. (99) The following incident cogently
illustrates the distrust amongst the blacks. When the Department of Native Affairs tried to introduce fertilizer cheaply in the Bulwer district, the blacks intimated that they would not avail themselves of the offer
"as the Government had failed to get them to join up and were now going to poison their crops with this fertilizer."

This attitude permeated great parts of black society and militated strongly against the recruitment effort.

Furthermore, their fear that they would be arrested for their taxes which had been in arrears if they presented themselves for enlistment also contributed to the reluctance of the blacks to enlist. Blacks without passes who wished to enlist were also not accepted but ordered to return to their homes to obtain the relevant documents. In most cases they were penniless and had no train fare to return home. This treatment had far-reaching ramifications: they felt that the Government did not really need them so that their already meagre trust in the Government dwindled further. Of course they did not return but spread word of their humiliating experiences.

Not only were they discouraged by administrative red tape. When some of the prospective recruits, sometimes after arduous journeys, eventually reached the recruitment office, large numbers were turned down for sometimes trivial medical defects. By then many had already given up their previous employment and received no compensation from the Government. This was an obvious reason for not signing on.
"They ask what good it is to try and join up when strong strapping young men are sent back as unfit."

When recruiting was made as difficult as this for some blacks, it is difficult to see how they could play their part in the war effort.

In addition, prevailing labour conditions also influenced the recruitment campaign in various ways. Some felt it would be disloyal and therefore impossible to leave their employment in the absence of their white employers who had left on Active Service. Others had no choice - they lived on white farms and were therefore not free to enlist because of their tenancy obligations. They were afraid of being evicted if they did not honour their contracts. Some farmers, fearing that they might lose their farm labour in spite of tenant obligations, also spread rumours amongst their labourers that many blacks were killed in North Africa - thus trying to discourage them from enlisting.

The threat recruitment for the labour demands of the army posed to the domestic labour market was indeed another important factor. The authorities had to determine their priorities to balance military demands against the labour needs of the farms and the mines in particular.

Even before the start of the war a general shortage of black
labour was experienced. This situation continued during the war because large numbers of workers had been recruited for military service in areas which usually supplied additional manpower to South Africa, such as Nyasaland (Malawi) and the High Commission Territories; furthermore, the situation was aggravated by the rapid expansion of industries partly to fulfill war demands. This significantly drained manpower from established employers. The withdrawal of white and of coloured labour for military service and substitution by cheaper black labour was also responsible for the greatly increased employment of black workers. The shortage was so general that no re-arrangement of labour forces could prevent it. (106)

It must be borne in mind that it is always difficult to evaluate pronouncements of "labour shortage", since the "shortage" is in response to employment offered at certain wage rates. If these were low, compared to other avenues of employment, there would obviously be a "labour shortage". Available evidence with regard to "labour shortages" on farms tend to corroborate this concept. Conditions of employment on farms compared unfavourably with those offered by the mines and industries. (107) The poor conditions, on a large percentage of farms, made farm work generally unpopular and unprofitable. (108) The white farms were therefore the first to be hit by the labour shortage and the hardest because it was especially the young and able-bodied workers most suitable for agricultural work, who migrated to urban areas. (109)

It is against this background that the numerous demands by farmers to stop recruitment for military service must be viewed. According to them the critical labour shortage on their farms could be attributed to a large degree to the fact that blacks joined the army in preference to working on farms; this in turn had a serious detrimental effect on agricultural production. (110) The DNEAS, however, quoting recruitment figures in Jacobsdal, Fauersmith, George, Wepener and Winburg saw no justification for these demands; the scale of recruitment for the NMC was too limited to interfere with the supply of labour to the farms. (111) Likewise, the Acting Secretary of Native Affairs drew the farmers' attention to the fact that it was the poor service conditions on the farms rather than recruitment for military service that was responsible for the shortage of farm labour. (112) Blacks who were feeling the economic pinch sought employment where their services were best remunerated.

Nevertheless, the authorities were still very sensitive about the demands of this powerful pressure group. When it was, for instance, proposed to send a recruiting platoon and band through various districts of the Transvaal, Col. Reitz had grave reservations. in the light of representations which the
Government had received from the farming community about the general shortage of labour in the Transvaal districts, such a recruiting tour might have had "very serious political repercussions for the Government." (113) Consequently, arrangements for the tour were cancelled.

It was of paramount importance to the Government that there should be no dislocation of the farming industry. Over and above laws and proclamations restricting blacks to white farms such as the Natives Service Contract Act of 1932, Passes Proclamation No. 150 of 1934 and the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936, as well as the Native Labour Registration Act of 1911 prohibiting recruitment on farms for mines and industries, additional strict regulations were laid down to the effect that recruitment of black farm labourers for the NMC was forbidden. A farm labourer could not be recruited unless he had written consent from his employer to enlist or if he had not been employed for six months prior to his enlistment. (114) In conjunction with these measures, magistrates were given the authority to close districts where, in their opinion, further recruitment would detrimentally affect agricultural activities. (115) The DNEAS was even willing to discharge a member of the NMC upon application of any farm owner who could convince the Native Commissioner that the soldier was at the time of enlistment, resident as a labour tenant on the applicant's farm. (116) The chances of black farm labourers joining the military service was in the last instance also obstructed by the farmers themselves: on the one hand by the firm control farmers exercised over their labour tenants who were obliged to render service under their contracts and on the other hand by the fact that most platteland farmers were anti-war and therefore refused to release their labourers to join up as it would further the Government's war effort. (117)

Despite these regulations, blacks still sought alternative employment so that the Secretary for Native Affairs somewhat desperately had to admit that

"whilst the Government has done everything in its power to ensure an adequate supply of labour to farmers, I have to point out that the problem is an economic one which cannot be solved by administrative regulation."

(118)

With regard to the mines, the main and most active competitor for black labour, the authorities reached an agreement with the Chamber of Mines to refrain from actively recruiting volunteers in the Transkei and Ciskei from where the mines drew most of their labour. Volunteers from these areas would, however, be attested. (119) Later, in April 1941, Col. Stubbs pointed out that the Defence Force urgently needed more man power. He therefore requested the Chamber of Mines to remove the embargo agreed upon six months previously to which the Chamber willingly agreed. The mines would place no obstacle in the way of recruitment for the NMC in Transkei but the mines were also left