BRITAIN'S IMPERIAL WAR: A QUESTION OF TOTALITY?

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Over the last twenty years, historians have come increasingly to recognise the often pivotal role played by war and conflict in historical development, a theme characterised by Leon Trotsky's observation that war was the "locomotive of history". In particular, the concept of "total war" has become generally familiar as a means of describing the nature of the two world wars of the twentieth century, and also as a means of differentiating them from other conflicts. The term itself originated towards the end of the First World War, being associated primarily with Erich Ludendorff, but also with Georges Clemenceau; the French writer, Léon Daudet; Ernst Jünger; and Giulio Douhet.[2]

In its modern sense, total war conveys a linkage between war and social change, and is most associated with the analytical framework postulated by Arthur Marwick in the 1960s and early 1970s. The concept of total war as a determinant of major change had a profound historiographical impact. The interpretation of the two world wars as marking a significant discontinuity with the past, however, has been frequently challenged. So, too, has Marwick's apparent contention that, even where change might have been attributable to longer-term evolutionary trends, total war was likely to accelerate the pace of changes already occurring. It is clear, of course, that total war is a relative concept since, as an absolute akin to Karl von Clausewitz's concept of absolute war, it was unrealisable until the development of an instantaneously destructible weapon at the very end of the Second World War. In any case, no state has yet been able to totally subordinate all civilian needs to those of the military. Like universal conscription, therefore, wartime mobilisation, as Richard Bessel has remarked, is "always necessarily partial".[3]

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2 Ian Beckett, "Total war" in Gary Sheffield and Colin McInnes (eds)., **Warfare in the Twentieth Century: theory and practice** (London, 1988), pp. 1-23; John Horne, "Introduction" in John Horne (ed.), **State, society and mobilisation in Europe during the First World War** (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 3-5, 242 n.10.

3 Richard Bessel, "Mobilisation and demobilisation in Germany, 1916-19" in Horne, pp. 221-2.

It is also the case that historians of earlier conflicts have suggested that warfare prior to 1914 was not limited, either in terms of the means available to belligerents, or the perceived erosion of what Brian Bond has characterised as the "fragile barrier" separating soldiers from civilians. John Childs, for example, has suggested that the period of incipient European warfare between 1648 and 1789 could be regarded as limited only when compared with "the holocaust that had gone before", namely the Thirty Years War, and the "new totality" of the Napoleonic Wars that followed it. Compared to the twelve years of total war in the twentieth century, France was involved in major wars for a total of 64 years in the seventeenth century, 52 years in the eighteenth, and 32 years in the nineteenth. In the case of the subjects of the Habsburgs, it was 77 years of warfare in the seventeenth century, 59 years in the eighteenth, and 25 years in the nineteenth.[4]

Nor was it the case that these supposed "limited" wars were confined to Europe. A French popular writer has recently characterised the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars as the real first world war, and the same has now been claimed for the Seven Years War by a British popular writer: both are amateur rather than professional historians, but their basic premise has some merit. Certainly, prior to 1914, the British used the term, "The Great War", to describe the great struggle with France between February 1793 and June 1815, a period of 22 years of warfare with just two short intervals - the fourteen months of the Peace of Amiens, and the eleven months between Napoleon's abdication and his return from Elba. AD Harvey is one historian who has attempted a comparative history embracing British experience in the Napoleonic Wars and the two world wars. Indeed, it is almost certainly the case that there was a higher proportion of the British male population under arms during the Napoleonic Wars than in either world war, and that British losses were higher in terms of the proportion of men under arms.[5]

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4 Brian Bond, **War and Society in Europe, 1879-1970** (London, 1984), pp. 168-9; John Childs, **Armies and warfare in Europe, 1648-1789** (Manchester, 1982), p. 2; Béla Király, "Elements of limited and total war" in Robert A Kann, Béla Király and Paula Fichtner (eds), **The Habsburg Empire in World War I: Essays on the intellectual, military, political and economic aspects of the Habsburg war effort** (New York, 1977), pp. 135-56.

5 P Fregosi, **Dreams of empire: Napoleon and the First World War, 1792-1815** (London, 1989); Tom Pocock, **Battle for empire: The very first world war, 1756-63** (London, 1998); AD Harvey, **Collision of empires: Britain in three world wars, 1793-1945** (London, 1992); Clive Emsley, **British society and the French wars, 1793-1815** (London, 1979), pp. 133, 169; M Greenwood, "British loss of life in the wars of 1794-1815 and 1914-18" in **Journal of the Royal Statistical Society** 105 (1942), pp. 1-16.

American historians, as one might expect, have also pushed back the notion of total war to embrace not only the American Civil War, but even the American War of Independence. More recently, there has been a tendency to recast this particular debate in terms of "people's war" rather than total war, thus embracing both the War of Independence and the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Starting with the elder Moltke's declaration in 1890 that, "(t)he age of cabinet's war is behind us, now we only have people's war", a recent collaboration between American and German historians has further refined the American Civil War and the Franco-Prussian War as "industrialised people's war". Thus are apparently solved some of the undoubted difficulties of describing the Franco-Prussian War in the same terms as the Civil War.[6]

Without arriving at any greater acceptance of an agreed definition of total war, this collaboration has usefully focused attention on the varying ways in which limitation of military violence has broken down as a departure point for the analysis of totality. The process has now been taken a stage further by a second American-German collaboration focusing on the period between 1871 and 1914, in which particular consideration is given to the German campaigns in their African colonies between 1904 and 1908, and to the bitter guerrilla war which followed American occupation of the Philippines between 1898 and 1902. A concept emerges of "unlimited wars of pacification", which incorporated elements of totality, but which represented only a variation in methods applied previously elsewhere. Significantly, the examples cited are the Spanish campaign on Cuba between 1896 and 1898 and, of course, the British campaign in South Africa during the guerrilla phase of the conflict following the fall of Pretoria. Collectively, the results of such colonial campaigns are interpreted as preparing nations psychologically for dehumanising the enemy. Indeed, Glenn May has argued that "total war" in the twentieth century was no more than "colonial warfare writ large".[7]

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6 Stig Förster and Jörg Nagler, "Introduction" in Stig Förster and Jörg Nagler (eds), **On the road to total war: The American Civil War and the German Wars of Unification, 1861-71** (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 1-28; Mark E Neely, "Was the Civil War a total war?" in **Ibid.**, pp. 29-52; Roger Chickering, "The American Civil War and the German Wars of Unification: Some parting shots" in **Ibid.**, pp. 683-91.

7 Trutz von Trotha, "The fellows can just starve': On wars of 'pacification' in the African colonies of imperial Germany and the concept of 'total war'" in Manfred F Boemeke, Roger Chickering, and Stig Förster (eds), **Anticipating total war: The German and American experiences, 1871-1914** (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 415-35; Glenn A May, "Was the Philippine-American War a 'total war'?" in **Ibid.**, pp. 437-57.

The context of this comparison between colonial warfare and total war, of course, is that of the degree of violence involved in pacification rather than the extent of industrial mobilisation. Nonetheless, it is worth considering how the South African War fits into the pattern, not only of the British experience of war, but also of the emergence of totality in modern war. While criticised and, indeed, subsequently modified by its own author, Marwick's celebrated "four-tier model" of total war is at least a useful starting point for such an analysis. It will be recalled that this suggested that a total war was one in which there was enhanced destruction and disruption on an unprecedented scale; the emergence of a testing challenge to the existing social and political structures of states and societies; greater participation in the context of the total mobilisation of the state's resources; and, lastly, a cataclysmic socio-psychological impact upon existing attitudes and values.[8] In its focus purely on the British experience, this paper will not consider the impact of the war upon either Afrikaner or African society.

I

Turning first to the scale of the war and the nature of the challenge faced, as well as being the greatest conflict ever waged in southern Africa, the South African War was by far the largest conflict involving Britain between 1815 and 1914. Britain had despatched some 30 000 men to the Crimea in 1854, while its next greatest military effort was the expedition to Egypt in 1882, involving a field force of some 16 000 men. By comparison, between October 1899 and January 1900, Britain despatched some 112 000 regulars to South Africa. By the end of the war, of course, Britain had deployed over 448 000 men from Britain and the empire, and also employed perhaps 120 000 blacks and coloureds in auxiliary roles. In contemporary context, this was still not that great a scale of mobilisation. In March 1864, for example, US Grant assumed the responsibility for the direction of some 533 000 men of the Union armies, while the elder Moltke directed some 850 000 men in the closing stages of the Franco-Prussian War. Yet, for Britain, it was clearly far more than simply the 226th colonial campaign fought since the Queen's accession.[9]

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8 Arthur Marwick, **Britain in the century of total war** (London, 1968), pp. 11-7; **ibid., War and social change in the Twentieth Century** (London, 1974), pp. 11-4; **ibid., (ed.), Total war and social change** (London, 1988), pp. x-xxi; **ibid., The deluge: British society and the First World War**, 2nd edn (London, 1991), pp. 11-48.

9 Howard Bailes, "Technology and Imperialism: A case study of the Victorian Army in Africa" in **Victorian Studies** 24 (1980-81), pp. 82-104; Edward Spiers, **The army and society, 1815-1914** (London, 1980), pp. 209-10; G Ward, R Burns and K Burns, **The Civil War** (London, 1991), p. 276; Michael Howard, **The Franco-Prussian War** (London, 1981), p. 62; Byron Farwell, **Queen Victoria's little wars** (London, 1973), pp. 364-71.

Rather than costing the British government no more than £10 million for a three or four month campaign utilising a maximum 75 000 men, as originally expected, the war lasted 32 months and cost £230 million. In 1902 this represented 14,4 per cent of net national income, a proportionate cost exceeding that of the first eight months of the Great War, which represented only 12,6 per cent of net national income. The war contributed significantly to government expenditure as a proportion of GNP rising from nine per cent in 1890 to fifteen per cent during the war, before declining to thirteen per cent by 1910. The National Debt increased by £160 million, reaching its highest point since 1867. This was far more costly than any of the other wars during the Queen's reign. Both the Zulu War and the First Boer War had each cost about £5 million and even the Crimean War only about £68 million, while the recent reconquest of the Sudan between 1896 and 1898 had been the cheapest campaign on record at a cost to the British Treasury of under [Egyptian] £800 000.

It must be recognised, however, that the unexpected war costs did not create a fiscal crisis although adding considerably to steadily rising national expenditure. The market could be sensitive to events in South Africa. Thus, the news that Buller had withdrawn from Spion Kop in January 1900 resulted in the London markets becoming "flat" and the Manchester Stock Exchange being plunged into depression. Nonetheless, while a little difficult to disentangle the recouping of the cost of war from subsequent expenditure on Liberal social reforms after 1906, it was met largely from revenue and short term loans. This still involved, however, the largest increase in direct taxation prior to 1914, with income tax rising from 8d in the pound to 1s.3d in the pound, although this did not involve a substantial increase in the numbers paying tax as was to occur during the Great War. Duties were increased on tobacco and tea and a new duty imposed upon imported grain. The loans raised were also sufficient to damage British credit, with the addition of a temporary adjustment in the bank rate from three to six per cent to compensate for the potential loss of gold supplies from the Rand. The Sinking Fund was also suspended. In the longer term, both the Unionist government and its Liberal successor sought not only to reduce military expenditure, but also defence commitments through securing new international arrangements. Thus, Britain entered into an alliance with Japan in 1902, and reached rapprochment with France in 1904 and Russia in 1907 though these agreements also reflected wider security concerns than simply the difficulties encountered in South Africa.[10]

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10 Iain R Smith, **The origins of the South African War, 1899-1902** (London, 1996), pp. 2, 346, 412; Marc Yakutiel, "Treasury control and the South African War, 1899-1905" (Unpub. D.Phil., Oxford, 1989), pp. 23, 26; James Cronin, **The politics of state expansion: War, state and society in Twentieth Century Britain** (London, 1991), p. 28; Craig Robinson, "General Buller's telegrams regarding the abandonment of Spion Kop and Trichard's Drift, and their impact upon

While the financial cost of the war could be accommodated, a degree of economic mobilisation was required in order to meet the severe shortages of shells and heavy guns experienced by the British army in South Africa. Already by 20 November 1899 there was only eight weeks' supply of .303 ammunition left and the supply of shells had been exhausted even before that. British firms were capable of producing only 2,5 million rounds of .303 ammunition a week when the demand exceeded 3 million rounds. As is well known, Sir Henry Brackenbury threatened to resign as Director-General of Ordnance in December 1899 unless there was a rapid improvement in the provision for artillery and shells, remarking in his memorandum of 15 December 1899 that Britain was "attempting to maintain the largest Empire the world has ever seen with armament and reserves that would be insufficient for a third class military power".

The programme finally agreed with the Treasury fell short of Brackenbury's requirements, but it was still the case that, in 1900, the Director of Army Contracts was purchasing in a month supplies which would have been regarded previously as sufficient for twenty years. In some cases, the arms manufacturing companies were still two years behind completion of orders by May 1901. Not only were the government-owned ordnance factories severely stretched but, as Clive Trebilcock has remarked, "the greatest private manufacturing concerns in Britain were pushed to the limits of their productive resources". Moreover, firms like Vickers and Armstrong's were regarded as the leading technological concerns of the day. Unfortunately, since the war ended before an even greater economic mobilisation became necessary, the lessons were not absorbed. Thus, the Murray Committee of 1906-7 concluded, in a spirit of continued economy, that government ordnance factories should be cut back and that the private sector could supply any wartime needs in the future.[11]

Instead of the modest casualties anticipated, the British and imperial forces suffered almost 22 000 dead, the majority from disease. To place the loss of British lives in context, FW Hirst, a pro-Boer opponent of the war prominent in the League of Liberals Against Aggression and Militarism, used figures produced by the **Manchester Guardian** to point out after the First World War that, compared to the

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the garrison towns of Lancashire: An analysis" (Unpub. M.A. dissertation, Leeds, 1997), p. 26; Niall Ferguson, **The pity of war** (London, 1998), pp. 119, 127; David French, **The British way in warfare, 1688-2000** (London, 1990), p. 155; Bill Nasson, **The South African War, 1899-1902** (London, 1999), pp. 285-6.

11 **Report of the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa**, Cmd 1789 (London, 1903), paras.158-61, pp. 84-7; Clive Trebilcock, "War and the failure of industrial mobilisation: 1899 and 1914" in Jay Winter, (ed.), **War and economic development: Essays in memory of David Joslin** (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 139-64.

5 774 actual combat deaths in South Africa, a total of 7 125 Britons had died in road accidents in 1933 alone, with a further 216 401 injured. Of course, this was not how it appeared at the time when such casualties were unprecedented within recent memory. As Thomas Pakenham has noted, the British army had lost over 100 men killed in a single action only twice since 1857. The numbers killed or died of wounds totalled 102 at the Modder River, 171 at Colenso, 348 at Paardeberg, and 383 at Spion Kop. Such, indeed, was the effort and cost required to subdue no more than 78 000 Boers that contemporaries feared for the very future of the British race amid the apparent evidence of national physical deterioration.[12]

More will be said of the issue of national deterioration later, but it suitably illustrates the sense in which the war was regarded as necessary to the survival of the empire. Of course, it is apparent that most of the Cabinet believed, at least until August 1899, that British aims could be achieved without war. There was a clear reluctance to undertake the most elementary of military preparations until absolutely necessary. Faced with the unwelcome news on 12 August that it would take £1 million to reduce the timescale for mobilising the army corps from four months to three, the Cabinet declined to spend money which, in the words of the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, "we cannot recover if we do not go to war". As is well known, the reinforcement of Natal by 10 000 men was not agreed until 8 September and mobilisation only finally commenced on 7 October, four days before the Boers invaded Natal. Similarly, the City was confident that war was not imminent when Parliament broke up for its summer recess on 9 August. Parliament itself was not recalled until 17 October.[13]

Yet, whatever the unwillingness to confront the possibility of actual hostilities in the summer and autumn of 1899, the risk of conflict was never one entirely ruled out. Moreover, there was an over-riding totality of aim in terms of achieving the supremacy in southern Africa deemed essential by those like Chamberlain and Milner for the consolidation of British imperial unity and power, the frustration of the efforts of European rivals to infiltrate the region, and the safeguarding of the route to India. As Iain Smith has argued, this aim did not require actual annexation of the Transvaal, merely the certainty of a co-operative government, and, in the

12 FW Hirst, **The consequences of the war to Great Britain** (Oxford, 1934), p. 298; Thomas Pakenham, **The Boer War** (London, 1979), p. 572; Leo Amery (ed.), **The Times history of the war in South Africa, 1899-1902**, 7 vols (London, 1900-9) VII, p. 24. Julian Whybra, **The roll call for Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift** (Reading, 1990), pp. 36-7 shows that the worst single action involved the loss of 706 regulars among 854 whites killed at Isandlwana in somewhat untypical circumstances in January 1879.

13 Smith, pp. 323-6, 337-46, 413-4; Keith Surridge, "British civil-military relations and the South African War, 1899-1902" (Unpub. Ph.D., London, 1994), pp. 54-86.

longer term, this is what the post-war settlement achieved with the restoration of self-government in 1907.

In the shorter term, however, the hostility of Kruger precluded such a solution and, once the war began, a policy of annexation was adopted. Moreover, as Bill Nasson has most recently demonstrated, once the war became prolonged, the Boers were increasingly cast in the role of "the other" with a new intensity given to the already prevailing image of Afrikaner society as backward and uncivilised. The controversies over alleged Boer abuse of white flags and use of dum-dum bullets, which the British government refused to allow to be used by British troops in South Africa, accentuated the process of dehumanisation. In such circumstances, it became easier to adopt what Campbell-Bannerman memorably characterised as "methods of barbarism" though, of course, these were no more than standard pacification techniques as applied to uncivilised opponents. It also became easier to view the death rates in detention camps as resulting primarily from the Boers' own insanitary habits. In effect, the Boers became viewed as just another native opponent.[14]

Yet, there is the paradox that, at the same time that they frequently despised the conduct and character of their enemy, British soldiers could also find much to praise in a rural society which accorded with many of their own values. Indeed, as Keith Surridge had shown, many leading soldiers not only displayed a distaste for a war conceivably being fought to benefit Jewish capitalists, but also increasingly advocated a compromise peace. Some were uneasy with the methods being used against Boer guerrillas. Kitchener was hardly squeamish in his prosecution of the war, but he and his closest advisers such as Ian Hamilton were instrumental in forcing through a far more magnanimous peace than Milner would have imposed. At the same time, Milner himself feared the long-term political consequences of the application of martial law by the military authorities in the Cape Colony.

In the last analysis, of course, the opponents were white. Consequently, though there were mixed views on the potential employment of Indian troops, they were not deployed because, as Chamberlain made clear to the Commons in August 1901, it was regarded as "bad policy" in the circumstances of South Africa. Indeed, one justification for the concentration camps was to protect Boer women from

14 Andrew Porter, "British Imperial policy and South Africa, 1895-99" in Peter Warwick, (ed.), **The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902** (London, 1980), pp. 37-56; **ibid., The origins of the South African War: Joseph Chamberlain and the diplomacy of Imperialism, 1895-99** (Manchester 1980), pp. 257, 264; Smith, pp. 413-23; Nasson, pp. 37-42, 241-6; Edward Spiers, "The use of the dum-dum bullet in Colonial warfare" in **Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History** 4 (1975), pp. 3-14.

native depredations. Though a convenient cover for what was regarded as military necessity, this perhaps gives a slightly different complexion to JFC Fuller's well known and improbable description of the conflict as the "last of the gentleman's wars". Subsequently, of course, Fuller was to characterise the war as one of the "roots of armageddon".

Yet, conceivably as many as 30 000 of the 120 000 Africans used by the British army were armed. Indeed, fear of the very kind of social revolution Chamberlain and others wished to avoid, but which was provoked by the active encouragement of African resistance to the Boers, played a role in the erosion of Boer morale. Nonetheless, SB Spies has concluded that the methods employed by Roberts and Kitchener in the guerrilla phase of the war, while a violation of the accepted conventions of war as recently codified at the Hague in July 1899, but not signed by the Boer republics, fell short of the total destruction of the enemy implied by total war. They were certainly not new. Not only do they bear comparison with Cuba and the Philippines, but also with Union measures against Confederate guerrillas in the American Civil War and German measures against francs-tireurs in the closing stage of the Franco-Prussian War.[15]

There are similar paradoxes, of course, in purely military terms. There were certainly many modern elements to the war with the use of railways, steam tractors, aerial reconnaissance by balloon, the telegraph, electric illumination, breech loaders, smokeless powder, blockhouses, wire entanglements, and entrenchment. Indeed, as Sir Frederick Maurice was later to write, the British army "was dealing, as no European army has yet done, with the new conditions of war" amid what GFR Henderson characterised as the "second tactical revolution" enduced by smokeless powder, repeating rifles and quick firing artillery. Equally, there was still a reliance upon horses, mules and oxen for transport. Similarly, while the army was prepared to embrace X-rays, the handling of the outbreak of bubonic plague in Cape Town in 1901 demonstrated that it was not yet prepared to adopt what has been characterised as the "talisman of modernity", namely bacteriology, or

15 Surridge, "British civil-military relations", pp. 135-206; **ibid.**, "'All you soldiers are what we call pro-Boer': The military critique of the South African War, 1899-1902" in **History** 82 (1997), pp. 582-600; **ibid.**, "Rebellion, martial law and British civil-military relations: The war in Cape Colony, 1899-1902" in **Small wars and insurgencies** 8 (1997), pp. 35-60; Nasson, pp. 224-5, 248; **ibid., Abraham Esau's war: A black South African war in the Cape, 1899-1902** (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 12-23; Paula Krebs, "'Last of the gentleman's wars': Women in the Boer War concentration camp controversy" in **History Workshop Journal** 33 (1992), pp. 38-56; JFC Fuller, **The conduct of war, 1789-1961** (London, 1979), pp. 139-40; Peter Warwick, **Black people and the South African War, 1899-1902** (Johannesburg, 1983), pp. 15-27; **ibid.**, "Black people and the war" in Warwick, pp. 194-6, 201; SB Spies, **Methods of barbarism: Roberts and Kitchener and civilian in the Boer Republics: January 1900- May 1902** (Cape Town, 1977), pp. 10-5, 293-8.

inoculation. It is at least some defence of the conditions in the concentration camps to acknowledge that the British army was no better at preserving the lives of its own men from disease.

Rather like the First World War, the South African War is best regarded as a transitional military conflict. The war did seem to suggest that firepower was the most decisive factor in warfare and that manoeuvre was required to avoid the destructive defensive power of modern weapons. Through the perceived reluctance of officers and men to face modern firepower on occasions in South Africa, however, there was also a new emphasis upon morale and the offensive spirit. The success of manoeuvre, moreover, would equally rely upon the offensive power of modern weapons. As Stephen Badsey has pointed out, even for the cavalry, the lessons were not as clear cut as often supposed since, in many instances, sword and lance had been just as effective as carbine. Indeed, the military lessons were ambiguous, particularly when viewed alongside those of the Russo-Japanese War, enabling different commentators to pick and choose examples to fit their own perceptions.[16]

II

Turning to the question of participation, if the scale and intensity of the war did not require the kind of economic and industrial mobilisation associated with total war, the mobilisation of manpower was still significant. It needs to be borne in mind, of course, that this was the first large scale war Britain experienced within the context of the emergence of a mass urban-based industrial society. Since the Reform and Redistribution Act of 1884, some 60 per cent of adult males enjoyed the franchise. Moreover, it was a relatively literate society exposed to a modern

16 Major-General Sir JF Maurice and Captain MH Grant, **History of the war in South Africa**, 4 vols (London, 1906-10), II, p. 204; Colonel GFR Henderson, **The science of war** (London, 1910), p. 372; Howard Bailes, "Military Aspects of the war" in Warwick, pp. 67-9, 101; Edward Spiers, **The late Victorian army, 1868-1902** (Manchester, 1992), pp. 305-33; Marion Harding, "'Chariots of War': Steam road transport in South Africa, 1899-1902" in Marion Harding (ed.), **The Victorian soldier** (London, 1993), pp. 192-5; Molly Sutphen, "Striving to be separate?: Civilian and military doctors in Cape Town during the Anglo-Boer War" in R Cooter, M Harrison and S. Sturdy (eds), **War, medicine and modernity** (Stroud, 1998), pp. 48-64; Emanoel Lee, **To the bitter end: A photographic history of the Boer War, 1899-1902** (Harmondsworth, 1986), pp. 66-84; GFR Henderson, **The science of war: A collection of essays and lectures, 1891-1903** (London, 1908), pp. 24, 74, 179; Tim Travers, **The killing ground: The British Army, the Western Front, and the emergence of modern warfare, 1900-18** (London, 1987) pp. 43-5; Stephen Badsey, "Mounted cavalry in the Second Boer War" in **Sandhurst Journal of Military Studies** 2 (1991), pp. 11-28; John Gooch, "Britain and the Boer War" in George J Andreopoulos and Harold E Selesky (eds), **The Aftermath of defeat: Societies, armed forces, and the challenge of recovery** (New Haven CN, 1994), pp. 40-58.

mass media characterised by the launching in 1896 of Harmsworth's **Daily Mail** as the first half-penny daily newspaper, the first demonstration of the moving film image by the Lumière brothers in the same year, and the introduction of the pocket Kodak in 1897.

In many ways, it was also a militaristic society, saturated, as Stephen Badsey has expressed it, "with the images, advertising and propaganda of empire". School, popular literature, the illustrated periodicals, and music hall all contributed to the process. By 1898, moreover, conceivably 22,4 per cent of the entire male population of the United Kingdom and Ireland aged between 17 and 40 had some current or previous military or quasi-military experience in youth organisations, auxiliary forces, or the army itself.[17]

Despite the conclusions expressed by JA Hobson concerning working class enthusiasm for the war, modern historians of the left have invariably questioned the extent to which imperialism penetrated the British working class, portraying the "jingo crowd" as essentially lower middle class youths. Thus, the excessive reactions of Mafeking Night on 18 May 1900 become a simple exercise in collective relief, in which the working class acquiesced in recognition of the opportunity for having a good time. Similarly, wartime recruitment into the army and into special wartime creations such as the City Imperial Volunteers (CIV) and the Imperial Yeomanry (IY) are portrayed initially as middle class responses with a subsequent larger working class presence due not to growing war enthusiasm among the latter, but to difficulties in the labour market. Thus, both generally, and in relation to evidence of the Fifeshire coalfield, Richard Price argued that the displacement of the middle class by working class elements in the second and third contingents of the IY was a result of trade depression.

The logic of such an interpretation is that the Unionist triumph in the "Khaki Election" in September 1900 was also due more to divisions among the Liberals, who did not even contest 143 seats, than to the appeal of jingoism and a popular patriotic war. Indeed, it is argued by Price that the election was marked by voter apathy, the only real passion being experienced in the 64 seats with pro-Boer

17 Stephen Badsey, "A print and media war" in Craig Wilcox (ed.), **Recording the South African War: journalism and official history, 1899-1914** (London, 1999), pp. 5-16; MD Blanch, "British society and the War" in Warwick, pp. 210-38; **ibid.**, "Imperialism, Nationalism and organised youth" in J Clarke, C Critcher and R Johnson (eds), **Working class culture** (London, 1979), pp. 103-20; Ian Beckett, **The amateur military tradition, 1558-1945** (Manchester, 1991), pp. 198-200.

candidates, of which the Unionists took only twelve. This interpretation of the war, however, as unpopular among the working class has been largely discredited.[18]

It is true that public interest in the war fluctuated, the peril facing the European legations in Peking taking the war off the front pages in the summer of 1900. If, however, there was less of note after the fall of the Boer capitals, the national press still returned to the war in December 1900, the **Daily Mail** urging one of its correspondents to increase his coverage due to the public demand. Soldiers' letters were an increasingly important supplement to correspondents' despatches and the regional press had never lost its interest in the activities of local regiments, volunteer service companies and IY companies.

The return of the first contingent of the IY in June 1901 most certainly provided a focus for widespread celebration. In Buckinghamshire, for example, from which the 37th and 38th Companies of the 10th Battalion, IY had been recruited, there was an elaborate county reception in High Wycombe on 17 June followed by another large scale affair at Buckingham on 25 July. Lord Chesham, who commanded the Royal Bucks Hussars and had taken the 10th Battalion to South Africa, later commanding the whole IY, received his own rapturous reception at Chesham on 13 July. Even individual members of the first contingent were treated as celebrities in their own villages. At Whitchurch, for example, Charles Gray, who had served with the 38th Company, was met at the foot of Whitchurch Hill on 17 June and drawn up the hill in a carriage pulled by the villagers themselves. He was presented with a silver salver outside his home and that evening, as the village history records, "a huge bonfire was lighted in the Butts".[19]

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18 Henry Pelling, **Popular politics and society in late-Victorian Britain** (London, 1968), pp. 82-100; Ross McKibbin, **The ideologies of class: Social relations in Britain, 1880-1950** (Oxford, 1991), pp. 23-4; Richard Price, **An Imperial War and the British working class: Working class reactions to the Boer War, 1899-1902** (London, 1972), pp. 97-232; **ibid.**, "Society, status and jingoism: The social roots of lower middle class patriotism, 1870-1900" in Geoffrey Crossick (ed.), **The lower middle class in Britain, 1870-1914** (London, 1977), pp. 89-122; Nasson, pp. 237-41; **ibid.**, "Tommy Atkins in South Africa" in Warwick, **South African War**, pp. 123-4.

19 Ray Sibbald, **The war correspondents: The Boer War** (London, 1993), p. 177; Jacqueline Beaumont Hughes, "The press and the public during the Boer War, 1899-1902" in **The Historian** 61 (1999), pp. 10-5; Ian Beckett, **Call to arms: Buckinghamshire's citizen soldiers** (Buckingham, 1985), pp. 59-61; GW Wilson, **Chronicles of Whitchurch, Bucks** (Whitchurch, 1909), p. 66.

As Michael Blanch has also demonstrated, recruitment into the regular army brought in a higher number of working class recruits than would have been normal, with a "massive rise in enlistment in 1900 from those groups that had traditionally filled the ranks in peacetime". Blanch suggests that additional working class recruitment over the war years may have reached over 72 000 men. The overwhelmingly working class militia also largely volunteered for overseas service, 59 battalions serving in South Africa, six in the Mediterranean, three on St Helena and the remainder in garrison in Britain and Ireland. Blanch also argues that those accepted for the volunteer service companies and the IY were more a reflection of the physical fitness of the middle class than an unwillingness on the part of the working class to enlist.

The CIV, of course, was unrepresentative of the volunteer movement as a whole in that the so-called "class corps" of the metropolis, from which the CIV was largely raised, had continued to reflect the original middle class composition of the volunteers from the 1860s rather than the dependence upon artisans that now characterised the majority of the volunteer units in the country. On the other hand, the composition of the volunteer service companies did reflect the bias towards artisans in the volunteer force as a whole. To dwell upon the nature of working class participation in the volunteer units that went to South Africa, however, is to miss the point that the volunteer movement was far more representative of society than the regular army precisely because it did embrace elements of the middle classes together with those artisans who, because they were in receipt of regular wages, would never have contemplated service in either the regular army or the militia.

Thus, the response to the call for volunteer service companies and the IY was very significant given the unrepresentative nature of the regular army and what might be regarded as the non-active participation of the middle classes and artisans in the defence of empire. Indeed, there was a resurgence of middle class enthusiasm for the volunteers. The volunteer force at home increased its strength by over 58 000 men in 1900 and 1901 and the home yeomanry also raised fifteen new regiments before the end of the war, some in counties which had not previously had a yeomanry presence. Price calculates that 41,6 per cent of the IY were not working class. Bearing in mind that volunteers were men in regular employment, it is remarkable that over 19 000 served in South Africa with the active service companies inclusive of the CIV while the IY raised 34 078 men for South Africa in the three contingents. In fact, the social composition of the active service companies was so mixed as to suggest that class is not very relevant to a universally popular response to the war.

New quasi-military youth organisations also emerged including the Lads' Drill Association and the Boys' Empire League. National Rifle Clubs were also stimulated by the war, Salisbury leading the call for their establishment in May 1900. At the end of the war, however, there was a predictable loss of men from the volunteers, 1902 being the worst year in the history of the volunteer force with a net decrease of almost 20 000 men. In all, Blanch estimates that 14,2 per cent of the male population of the United Kingdom between the age of 18 and 40 was in uniform during the war. Again, to place this in context, during the First World War, some 22,1 per cent of the male population of the United Kingdom passed through the ranks of the British army.[20]

Other historians such as Hugh Cunningham and John MacKenzie have cast doubt on whether it was possible for the working class to be in any sense immunised from the prevalence of imperial propaganda and the creation of a genuine sense of national unity during the war. The working men's clubs, for example, on which Price built much of his argument, in MacKenzie's words, "had adopted the patriotic music hall as their principal attraction, and rifle clubs and service associations had become an important part of their range of 'interest groups'". Contemporary commentators like Hobson could hardly have misinterpreted the everyday evidence of their eyes. Thus, the founder of the Social Democratic Federation, HM Hyndman, commented that poor districts of London displayed far more patriotic bunting and decorations than the West End during the war.

In addition, of course, the war generated new propaganda in terms of music hall songs, commemorative pottery and other souvenirs, cigarette cards, board games, patriotic buttons, plays and picture postcards. Some ten million patriotic buttons had been sold by June 1900 alone: the most popular pictured Baden Powell, of which four million were sold; followed by 1,2 million of Buller; a million of White; and 750 000 of Roberts. War featured significantly in new boys' journals such as **Boys' War News** and **Boys' Realm** while the existing **Chums**, first published in 1892, also became particularly associated with war themes. Of the boys' journals, indeed, only the **Boys' Own Paper** ignored the war, the Religious Tract Society which had founded it in 1879 being influenced by Baptists' anti-war sentiment. Alongside the new journals and the new youth movements, new imperial propaganda agencies also appeared such as the Victoria League and the Imperial South Africa Association.

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20 Blanch, pp. 210-38; Price, **Imperial War**, pp. 178-232, 254-58; Beckett, **Amateur military tradition**, pp. 198-209; **ibid., Riflemen form: A study of the Rifle Volunteer Movement, 1859-1908** (Aldershot, 1982), pp. 103-7, 211-26.

There was, too, the infant cinema, to which the war gave the "first great opportunity to prove its value in presenting 'actuality' material". British Biograph's film of Buller arriving at Cape Town filmed on 31 October 1899, for example, was shown in London's Palace Theatre on 21 November, dramatically increasing the audience. The company itself increased its profits by 52 per cent over the first six months of 1900. There were also, of course, a great many faked films, often shot on Hampstead Heath, and even a faked newsreel of the signing of the peace at Vereeniging, but these are still significant in terms of their propaganda value and their evidence of the demands of the viewing public.

At Madame Tussaud's there were tableaux of such events as Cronje's surrender at Paardeberg, while the entertainment entrepreneur, Imrie Kiralfy, staged "Briton, Boer and Black in South Africa" at Olympia in December 1899 and Joseph Poole's New Myriorama displayed panoramic battle paintings in a show entitled "Greater Britain - Savage South Africa". Also under the title of "Savage South Africa", another show, created by Frank Fillis and promoted by Kiralfy, which included ten Boer families, toured northern England in 1900. Manchester's Free Trade Hall enjoyed a photographic exhibition billed as "The War Boerograph" and the siege of Ladysmith and the battle of Paardeberg featured in George Jennison's "pyrodramas" at Manchester's Belle Vue Gardens in 1900 and 1902 respectively, with the siege of Mafeking featuring in 1908. The annual Royal Tournament began the celebrated field gun competition, which endured until becoming a victim of New Labour's disdain for tradition this very centenary year.[21]

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21 Hugh Cunningham, "The language of patriotism, 1750-1914" in **History Workshop Journal** 12 (1981), pp. 8-33; **ibid.**, "The language of patriotism" in Raphael Samuel (ed.), **Patriotism** (London, 1989), pp. 57-89; Dave Russell, "We carved our way to glory: The British soldier in Music Hall song and sketch, circa 1880-1914" in John Mackenzie (ed.), **Popular Imperialism and the military, 1850-1950** (Manchester, 1992), pp. 50-79; David Mayer, "The world on fire: Pyrodramas at Belle Vue Gardens, Manchester, circa 1859-1950" in **ibid.**, pp. 179-97; John MacKenzie, **Propaganda and Empire: The manipulation of British public opinion, 1880-1960** (Manchester, 1984), pp. 6, 19, 22, 24, 27-8, 49, 63, 70, 204-5; Peter Harrington, **British artists and war: The face of battle in paintings and prints, 1700-1914** (London, 1993), pp. 275-99; Spiers, pp. 180-203; Penny Summerfield, "Patriotism and Empire: Music-Hall entertainment, 1870-1914" in John MacKenzie (ed.), **Imperialism and popular culture** (Manchester, 1986), pp. 17-48; Ben Sheppard, "Showbiz Imperialism: The case of Peter Lobengula" in **ibid.**, pp. 94-112; Stephen Bottomore, "The Biograph in Battle" in Karel Dibbets and Bert Hogenkamp (eds), **Film and the First World War** (Amsterdam, 1995), pp. 28-35; Elizabeth Strebel, "Imperialist iconography of Anglo-Boer War film footage" in John Fell, (ed.), **Film before Griffith** (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1983), pp. 264-71; Richard Brown, "Introduction" in W Dickson, **The biograph in battle: Its story in the South African War related with personal experiences**, 2nd edn (Trowbridge, 1995), pp. i-viii; Rachel Low and Roger Manvell, **The history of the British film, 1896-1906**, 2nd edn (London, 1997), pp. 65-9.

As Malvern Van Wyk Smith has put it, the "cadences of the music hall" echoed through the empire, Kipling's **Absent Minded Beggar** alone earning £340 000 from music hall recitals. War charities themselves are significant with the numerous funds for the equipping of local military units, but also offering more general assistance for veterans. The existing Soldiers and Sailors Families Association, founded in 1883, raised £1 million for the relief of dependants of men serving in South Africa, while over 2 000 disabled veterans were assisted by the Soldiers and Sailors Help Society, founded in 1899 by Princess Christian, whose son was a noted victim of wartime disease. The celebrated Absent Minded Beggars Fund begun by the **Daily Mail** in October 1899 raised at least £250 000, funding a hospital at Alton in Hampshire. The **Daily Telegraph** had its own fund, while others included the Lord Mayor's Fund, to which many regional newspapers subscribed their own collections. Perhaps the best known gift to wartime servicemen was the Queen's Chocolate Box.

To give some examples of efforts at local level, Pembrokeshire had raised £1 258 for its Pembrokeshire Imperial Yeomanry Fund by 21 February 1900. Buckinghamshire had raised £3 047.3s.0d for its IY contingent by 4 January though this is less impressive when seen in the context of £3 000 of that being donated by the Rothschild family and Waldorf Astor. There were, however, other funds such as the Darktown Charity Organisation at Wolverton, the **Buckingham Express** Relief Fund for North Bucks reservists families and the contribution of 152 villagers at Whitchurch of £11.0s.3d to the Transvaal War Fund.[22]

The role of the press, to which reference has already been made, in creating and sustaining war enthusiasm, of course, was considerable. In some respects, the public had been prepared for war by the careful manipulation of the press by Milner, a former journalist on the very title, the **Pall Mall Gazette**, which had pioneered in Britain many of the techniques of the American tabloid-style new journalism. Chamberlain was also well aware of the significance of cultivating public opinion, foreign and imperial policy having been an issue of abiding public interest since at least the late 1870s. A total of 140 correspondents representing 47 different newspapers and periodicals from Britain and the Empire were theoretically entitled to the Queen's South Africa Medal. Of these, 22 represented Reuters; thirteen, the **Morning Post**; eleven, **The Times**; and ten, the **Daily News**. Edgar Wallace of the

22 Malvern Van Wyk Smith, **Drummer Hodge: The poetry of the Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902** (Oxford, 1978), pp. 77, 80; Beckett, **Call to Arms**, p. 61; DG Glover, "30th (Pembrokeshire) Company, Imperial Yeomanry, 1900: From recruitment to embarkation" in **Bulletin of Military Historical Society** 50 (1999), pp. 4-19; Adrian Gregory, **The silence of memory: Armistice Day, 1919-46** (Oxford, 1994), pp. 94-5.

Daily Mail did not receive the medal after his critical reports on the conduct of the war. At one point, **The Times** had 20 correspondents in South Africa.

Three entirely new illustrated weekly periodicals appeared in January 1900 - the first to be launched since 1842 - including **The Sphere**. A whole series of popular illustrated histories began to appear during the war itself such as HW Wilson's **With the flag to Pretoria**, originally a weekly part-work from Harmsworth commencing in March 1900. Others included **Khaki in South Africa, The Transvaal War album, Cassell's history of the Boer War** and Louis Creswicke's **South Africa and the Transvaal War**. The celebrated American naval historian concluded his **The story of the war in South Africa** in July 1900 while the analysis of an equally distinguished military commentator, Spenser Wilkinson's **Lessons of the War**, appeared even earlier in March 1900. In 1900, indeed, the **United Service Magazine** had already reviewed 27 books on the war and a further 71 before the war's end. That splendidly illustrated survey of war art by Ryno Greenwall lists over 1 100 artists, sculptors, medallists and engravers who produced work related to the war world-wide. Over 60 of them exhibited at the Royal Academy alone and there were almost continuous exhibitions of work in galleries run by the illustrated press.[23]

Anti-war demonstrations were less likely to be broken up in 1901 and 1902, but this fate still befell Lloyd George's meeting in Birmingham in December 1901. Moreover, the tide in favour of Unionist candidates was still evident in municipal elections throughout the war, the swing to the Unionists essentially being an urban phenomenon of the unskilled and semi-skilled. The anti-war movement, by contrast, had little coherence, with only the Baptists really showing a united front although it has been argued that Methodism turned against imperialism as a result of the war. Most leading clerics supported the war, as did most leading intellectuals in the universities. Most feminists did oppose the war, but, again, in a precursor of the Great War, many British women took on a humanitarian role in nursing or in the concentration camps. The pro-Boers were effectively marginalised during the war

23 Andrew Porter, "Sir Alfred Milner and the press, 1897-9" in **Historical Journal** 16 (1973), pp. 323-39; **ibid., Origins of South African War**, pp. 17-19, 27-8; HCG Matthew, "Rhetoric and politics in Britain, 1860-1950" in PJ Waller (ed.), **Politics and social change in modern Britain** (Brighton, 1987), pp. 34-58; Roger Stearn, "GW Stevens and the message of Empire" in **Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History** 17 (1989), pp. 210-31; **ibid.**, "War correspondents and colonial war, circa 1870-1914" in Mackenzie, **Popular Imperialism and Military**, pp. 139-61; Peter Harrington, "War and the pictorial press: The London Illustrated Weeklies in 1900", Conference paper presented to "The Boer War: Image, experience and direction", Leeds, October 1999; Ian Beckett, "The Historiography of small wars: Early historians and the South African War" in **Small wars and insurgencies** 2 (1991), pp. 276-98; Ryno Greenwall, **Artists and illustrators of the Anglo-Boer War** (Vlaeberg, 1992), pp. 102-248.

and there seems no reason to doubt, as **The Times** proclaimed in September 1900, that the war "more than any other in modern times, was and is a popular war".[24]

III

An assumption that the war was largely a popular one is reinforced in many respects by the socio-psychological impact. Clearly, this was not a war which altered the status within British society of the labouring classes, or of women. It had been anticipated that at least 15 000 officers and men could be induced to stay in South Africa after the war in the constabulary, civil service and railways, and that a further 140 000 men would be needed as settlers or mine workers. In the event, fewer than 2 000 men could be persuaded either to stay or to move to South Africa since capital was not made available, and the settlement scheme was bedevilled by slow administration, and unforeseen drought and cattle fever.

Nor did the war have the same resonance for British nationalism and identity as it did for Australian, Canadian and even Afrikaner identity. It did, however, have an assuredly cultural impact, although in what might be termed traditional terms rather than in any sense being modernist. Mention has already been made of the effect of the war upon popular song and art. Another reminder in what might be loosely termed popular culture, as Bill Nasson has reminded us, is that the fans of Liverpool Football Club stand in the "Kop", though it is doubtful if any now understand the significance of the name. There was also a considerable amount of war poetry generated by the war reflecting the development of literacy in Britain since the 1870 Education Act. Malvern van Wyk Smith argues that the literary output of the South African War was at least an indirect influence on that during the First World War, suggesting, for example, that Wilfred Owen may have read TWH Crosland's **Slain**. Similarly, Rupert Brooke's **The Soldier** bears some comparison with Thomas Hardy's **Drummer Hodge**, albeit with a "patriotic slant".[25]

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24 Blanch, pp. 210-38; Bernard Porter, "The pro-Boers in Britain" in Warwick, pp. 239-57; SB Spies, "Women and the War" in **Ibid.**, pp. 177-82; Price, pp. 12-45; Stephen Koss (ed.), **The pro-Boers: The anatomy of an antiwar movement** (Chicago, 1973), pp. xxxiv-xxxvi; **Ibid.**, "Wesleyanism and Empire" in **Historical Journal** 18 (1975), pp. 101-18; Pakenham, p. 464.

25 SE Katzenellenbogen, "Reconstruction in the Transvaal" in Warwick, pp. 341-7; JO Springhall, "Up guards and at them!" in MacKenzie, pp. 49-72; Harrington, pp. 275-99; Malvern van Wyk Smith, "The Poetry of the War" in **Ibid.**, pp. 292-314; **Ibid.**, **Drummer Hodge**, pp. 112-4, 308-9; Nasson, p. xi; Kent Fedorowich, **Unfit for heroes: Reconstruction and soldier settlement in the Empire between the wars** (Manchester, 1995), pp. 14-20; Wilfrid Mellers and Rupert Hildyard, "The Edwardian age and the inter-war years" in Boris Ford (ed.), **Early Twentieth Century Britain: The Cambridge cultural history**, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1992), p. 12.

Moreover, the war did generate substantial administrative reform so far as the army was concerned, though this should also be seen in the context of wider security fears, and it had a profound psychological impact in the growing concern with the apparent deterioration of the imperial race. One manifestation was the article by the journalist, Arnold White, in **The Weekly Sun**, pointing out that three out of every five men who came forward to enlist in Manchester between October 1899 and July 1900 had been rejected as unfit for military service. White followed this with a pamphlet, **Efficiency and reform**, giving actual figures for Manchester of 8 000 out of 11 000 men rejected. The theme was also taken up by Major-General Sir Frederick Maurice in **Contemporary Review** in January 1902 under the pseudonym, "Miles". Maurice's concern had been prompted originally by his chairing of a lecture at the Royal United Service Institution in October 1899 by Lt.-Col. CM Douglas, brigade surgeon in the Northern District. Maurice and the rest of the audience had been outraged at that time by Douglas's assertion that the "army of the past had many blackguards in it no doubt but it had fewer degenerates". The experience of the war changed his mind, a second article appearing under his own name in January 1903.

As is well known, the concern prompted the establishment of the Royal Commission on Physical Training in Scotland in 1902 and, especially, the Inter-departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration in September 1903. The evidence presented to the former included the claim by Dr Thomas Savill of the British College of Physical Education that the war had been "lost" because Boer snipers had better eyesight than British regulars. The report of the Inter-departmental Committee in July 1904 was hardly comforting, despite its declaration that the physique of army recruits was not necessarily an accurate representation of the nation as a whole. Its recommendations amounted to a "comprehensive set of proposals for the prevention of child and adult ill health", with a range of ideas for school medical inspection, school meals, better distribution of milk, child care instruction for mothers and so on.

Faced with the overall cost of the war, the Unionist government did not respond and also suspended any consideration of old-age pensions, but the Liberal government did take up some of the recommendations after 1906. Indeed, it is generally accepted that the provision of school meals in 1906 and school medical inspection in 1907 was a direct result of the war. The war also gave added stimulus to social investigation of the condition of the working class, as evinced by Charles Booth's study of London's poor, published in 1902, and Seebhom Rowntree's study of York in 1901 and, similarly, gave new impetus to existing attempts to improve the welfare of mothers and children, the 1902 Midwives Act being a particular

example. Generally, therefore, it is argued that the war did see the tentative beginning of the welfare state.

A new interest in eugenics and national efficiency was at the back of such new manifestations of concern as the National Service League, the National Social Purity Crusade, the Aliens Act of 1905 and, of course, the Boy Scouts in 1907. British soldiers were prominent in the debate, the experience of the war having led to a re-assertion among them of rural values and the need to obtain better and healthier recruits from urban areas. The Social Darwinist military writer, Col. FN Maude, believed that a healthier nation would be better prepared in terms of morale to bear heavier casualties in future wars, remarking that, in 1899, the country "did not know that bloodshed was a usual consequence of the armed collision of combatants. Hence, the outbreak of hysteria with which they received the news of our casualties."[26]

The extent of participation by volunteers and the involvement of the British public in the war, albeit at a distance, meant that it also had an impact on what might be termed the popular memory, signposting the effect of the First World War. Prior to the South African War, it was unusual in Britain to commemorate individual private soldiers. It was the sense of national involvement in the South African War which changed this. In fact, over 900 Boer War memorials were erected in Britain, Sir James Gildea producing a record of many of them in 1911. As in the aftermath of the Great War, leading sculptors were involved such as Sir William Hamo Thorneycroft, who designed the memorials at Durban and Manchester; Sir George Frampton, who contributed those at Radley School and Bury; and Sir William Goscombe John who designed that to the King's Regiment in

26 Ian Beckett, "The Nation in Arms, 1914-18" in Ian Beckett and Keith Simpson (eds), **A nation in arms: A social study of the British army in the First World War** (Manchester 1985), pp. 3-6; CM Douglas, "The recruit from a depot medical officer's point of view" in **Royal United Service Institution Journal** 44 (1900), pp. 1-18; Miles, "Where to get Men?" in **Contemporary Review** 81 (1902), pp. 78-86; Sir Frederick Maurice, "National health: A soldier's study" in **ibid.**, 83 (1903), pp. 41-56; Pat Thane, **The foundations of the welfare state** (London, 1982), pp. 57-62, 68-9; BB Gilbert, **The evolution of national insurance in Great Britain: The origins of the welfare state** (London, 1982), pp. 59-63, 91-6, 160; RM Titmuss, **Essays on the welfare state** 3rd edn (London, 1976), pp. 80-1; MacKenzie, **Propaganda and empire**, p. 229; Jay Winter, **The Great War and the British people** (London, 1988), p. 12; Deborah Dwork, **War is good for babies and other young children: A history of the Infant and Child Welfare Movement in England, 1898-1918** (Tavistock, 1986), pp. 11-17, 167-8; John Gooch, "Attitudes to war in late Victorian and Edwardian England" in John Gooch, **The prospect of war: Studies in British defence policy, 1847-1942** (London, 1981), pp. 35-51; FN Maude, **Notes on the evolution of infantry tactics** (London, 1905), p. 134; Anne Summers, "Militarism in Britain before the Great War" in **History Workshop Journal** 2 (1976), pp. 104-23.

Liverpool. Many were quite striking, such as the obelisk on Plymouth Hoe and that on the highest point of the Chilterns at Coombe Hill in Buckinghamshire.

The memory of the war was preserved in other ways. In Leicester, for example, Ladysmith Day (28 February) was used to make church collections for a memorial in 1903, while Liverpool had an annual ceremony on that day from 1907 onwards when Goscombe John's memorial was specially decorated. In London, the Union Jack Club opened its doors as a memorial in the same year of 1907. A curious reminder on the village green at Latimer in Buckinghamshire is the grave of the horse once ridden by the French mercenary, Colonel George-Henri de Villebois de Mareuil, killed at Boshof in April 1900. The horse, named Villebois, was brought back to England by Lord Chesham, who had commanded the IY in the action. Chesham himself was killed in a riding accident in 1907 but Villebois lived on, being interred on the village green on his own death in February 1911. In another precursor of the future, the Graves Fund was begun with royal patronage in December 1900 to allow the bereaved to visit distant graves, while Milner was trying to discourage tourists from visiting the war zone as early as April 1900.[27]

IV

It is generally accepted that the impact of total war will be greater in states that are defeated, occupied or newly created as a result of war. Moreover, through accidents of location, some states will suffer more than others. Societies are not uniform in their development and the likely effect of war will also vary depending upon the nature of a particular society and the intensity of its war experience. It renders generalisation exceptionally hazardous.[28]

Clearly, the impact of the war was greater for Afrikaners and Africans than for the British although Donald Denoon once characterised the conflict as a "non-war" in terms of the overall African participation. Indeed, like many so-called limited conflicts since 1945, the South African War might be regarded as more "total" for one side than the other. Recently, indeed, Andrew Porter has argued that the war had little long-term impact on Britain since it merely served to heighten the attention increasingly being devoted to a range of wider social, economic and

27 Alex King, **Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The symbolism and politics of remembrance** (Oxford, 1998), pp. 42-4, 90; Alan Borg, **War memorials: From antiquity to the present** (London, 1991), pp. ix, 77, 86-7, 98, 100, 109; Sir James Gildea, **For remembrance and in honour of those who lost their lives in the South African War** (London, 1911); David W Lloyd, **Battlefield tourism: Pilgrimage and the commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada, 1919-39** (Oxford, 1998), pp. 20-3.

28 Richard White, "War and Australian Society" in Michael McKernan and M Browne (eds), **Australia: Two centuries of war and peace** (Canberra, 1988), pp. 391-423.

political issues, the search for the solution of which pushed South African and imperial affairs rapidly off the political agenda. Nonetheless, even for Britain, this conflict was of a far greater magnitude than anything else experienced since 1815. Most recently, Bill Nasson has characterised it as "well up" the "evolutionary scale" towards total war.[29] Certainly, it was a precursor of the greater conflict to come between 1914 and 1918 in many ways, and not just in terms of the level of military violence and the erosion of distinctions between combatants and non-combatants in South Africa itself. Indeed, the South African War was much more than a colonial war writ large and, arguably, in terms of the evolution of Marwickian totality, the most significant conflict since the American Civil War.

29 Donald Denoon, "Participation in the Boer War: People's war, People's non-war, or non-people's war" in BA Ogot (ed.), **War and society in Africa** (London, 1972), pp. 109-22; Andrew Porter, "The South African War (1899-1902) and Imperial Britain: A question of significance?" in Conference paper presented to "Rethinking the South African War", UNISA, August 1998; Nasson, p. 8.