

**Chapter 11**  
**THE BOER WAR**  
**III. Different audiences; different attitudes**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Boer War was the most controversial conflict in the period we are covering, indeed probably in the entire generation preceding World War 1. It divided world opinion more or less on linguistic lines, the Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking world against the rest. Because of these sharp divisions of opinion, the films of the Boer War are especially interesting to study from a reception point of view. While we have instances of audiences reacting passionately to films of earlier wars (most notably to the Spanish-American War), here we have the first example of a war where films elicited equally heated reactions – and sometimes they were truly heated – from either side of this fissure in world opinion.

In this chapter I will examine these audience responses, using evidence gathered from a variety of sources including memoirs and official documents. Through a country-by-country treatment, I will show the varied ways in which the various films of this war were received in different contexts. While in Britain, Boer War film exhibitions were often occasions for deep manifestations of patriotism, by contrast in several other countries where anti-British and pro-Boer feelings were rife, the films were received quite differently. Indeed, in Ireland, Belgium and elsewhere there were extreme audience reactions, sometimes followed by official intervention. Such reactions are significant for media history, as they show a growing concern among Government authorities about the capacity of film to move audiences emotionally, especially in time of war or political controversy.

As in earlier wars of this period, ‘related films’ assumed a particular importance in film exhibitions as a means to represent the Boer War, given that actual battlefield footage was not available. Because the war in South Africa lasted so long – some two and a half years – there were many opportunities to film scenes such as the commanders and troops involved in the conflict (what one might call the ‘home front’ of the war). A number of war ‘celebrities’ – commanders and leaders – were filmed as the ‘stars’ of the moment: the British ones principally being Generals Roberts, Kitchener and Buller, and the Boer equivalents being President Kruger and Generals such as De Wet. I shall cover this celebrity theme in an Appendix, while the troop films I deal with below.

**Other media**

During the Boer War the public saw the war reflected in all their usual newspapers and magazines, as well as in illustrated war periodicals and books.<sup>1</sup> [Fig. 2] The war proved to be a strong stimulus for other visual media

too, including advertising.<sup>2</sup> [Fig. 1] The conflict was represented in the British music hall, with numerous patriotic songs and other references to the war from performers. Several popular panorama shows by Hamilton's and the Poole family depicted such scenes as the Battle of the Modder River and the Victory of General Roberts.<sup>3</sup> There were lantern lectures: for example, Frederic Villiers gave a series of lectures with his war slides entitled, 'Kruger and Khaki'; and in January 1900 a popular lecturer, Mr. E. Esdaile, gave a lecture on the war, describing events up to the very day of the lecture.<sup>4</sup> Many slides about the war were on sale, including complete sets, and life model dramas. [Fig. 4]

For some years afterwards, the Boer War remained a popular reference point in popular culture, including in performance media. Among the more impressive events were large-scale live shows staged in America in 1904 and 1905 to depict the war in action-oriented set-pieces. Appearing at big venues such as the Chicago Coliseum, these shows included horsemen, and, most amazingly, starred some of the real Boer generals who had fought in the war.<sup>5</sup> [Fig. 3]

While most media depictions in Britain concentrated on the heroism of the British side and their positive achievements, some treatments of the war dealt with the Boer side in a none too flattering way, especially the Boer leaders and their Generals. In other countries it was the reverse. These sentiments were sometimes expressed in quite a boisterous fashion, especially in the music halls and on the fairgrounds. Thus the war was depicted and often celebrated in virtually all the visual media. The newest medium, cinema, was to be no exception, for, as a poem of the time put it, 'the khaki-covered camera is the latest thing'.<sup>6</sup>

## **EXHIBITING BOER WAR FILMS IN BRITAIN**

### **Related films: Soldier heroes of the Empire**

Most of the 'related films' of the Boer War are films of British troops and commanders, with few taken from the Boer side. The very obvious reason for this is that the war zone was in distant South Africa, making filming of Boer fighters inherently more difficult; and there were fewer filmmaking resources based in that part of the world, whereas in Britain and a few other countries filmmaking was flourishing.

The Boer War was a major commitment for Britain in terms of resources and troops. The commitment increased as the war continued, and after many regulars were sent out, a call for volunteers followed the news of failure at the front in December 1899 ('black week').<sup>7</sup> The scenes of departure were often filmed, and copies of such films survive in archives in the UK and further afield. However, few historians have paid much attention to this phenomenon, with the exception of Elizabeth Strelbel and Vanessa Toulmin. Strelbel writes:

'One is struck by the proliferation of films of troop movements – embarking at Southampton, disembarking at Capetown, marching out

to the front. To us, a stationary camera fixed on a line of helmeted troops striding single file up a gang plank appears to have little interest at first glance. But for the Victorian public this subject matter held a deep attraction. The succession of the various colonial regiments underscored the solidarity of the Empire. The uniforms, generals, the very physical bearing of the men served as an expression of Imperial confidence. Often the camera was positioned close enough to the troops to achieve true portraits, and the Victorian public flocked to the theatres hoping to catch a glimpse of a friend or loved one who had just left for South Africa.<sup>8</sup>

Vanessa Toulmin has put these observations on a more precise footing, delineating what is in effect an aesthetics of Boer War related films, from which I base much of the structure of what follows.<sup>9</sup> Toulmin identifies a number of 'genres' of these kind of films, including: Troops in exercises and at manoeuvres, tableaux of army life, soldiers departing and returning (and the 'celebrities' – famous leaders and commanders – which I cover in an Appendix).

### **Departures and returns**

Even as long as a month before the war had broken out, troops were being sent out to South Africa, and were filmed departing.<sup>10</sup> When the Guards regiments set off there was massive interest from the public.<sup>11</sup> A film was taken of these men, the Coldstream Guards (and Scots Guards) departing on the troopship *Nubia* on 21 October from Southampton.<sup>12</sup> Several such films survive in the NFTVA, enabling us to assess their qualities and to appreciate how they might have appealed to audiences. Some, such as the *Nubia* departure, just mentioned, were wide shots of the ships taken from afar. *The Roslin Castle Leaving for South Africa* (Warwick) was of this style too, though filmed from above. It was 'most enthusiastically received' by audiences, claims the catalogue.<sup>13</sup>

Other films, however, were filmed from closer and at the level of the troops, so giving audiences a better view of the men. In the NFTVA various such shots of troops marching down streets at the time of the Boer War survive. One example is *Gordon Highlanders Leave for the Boer War* (1899).<sup>14</sup> Biograph's William Dickson always grasped the expressive potential of the medium close-up and though his embarkation films do not survive, reproductions of some of the frames were published in a magazine, showing, for example, the development of a smile on the face of a 'Tommy' as 'an interesting study in expression'.<sup>15</sup> [Fig. 6 and 7] This phrase is interesting in showing that this close up aspect was seen as significant at the time. Perhaps these closer views would have enabled the audience to feel some kinship with the men departing for war.

When soldiers were filmed in the streets marching past camera, the images of the men's faces might appear even closer up than when embarking on ships. A spectator from this time recalled seeing one of these departure films and the close up effect was quite marked. He noted: '...as the soldiers marched

towards you, they became bigger and bigger, until you were forced to look away at some far-away part of the picture'.<sup>16</sup>

There were even more films of soldiers returning than of them departing, and one popular regiment filmed in this way was the Navel Brigade, which, with their artillery hastily adapted from naval guns, had managed to defend the besieged town of Ladysmith from the Boers until General Buller and troops finally reached them. A film by the Hepworth company showed the Brigade returning to England on 24 April 1900, and survives in the NFTVA.<sup>17</sup> Hepworth also filmed these men marching through London on 7 May 1900, with the crowds giving the troops an 'enthusiastic reception', and this was shown the same evening in the capital.<sup>18</sup> Two Warwick films of the London parade survive in the NFTVA: *The Heroes of Ladysmith Marching Through London* (125ft.), and *Review of the HMS Powerful Naval Brigade* (96ft.), both shot from elevated positions.

### **Filming the C.I.V.**

One regiment which became the object of particular interest during the Boer War was the City Imperial Volunteers. This was a regiment made up of over 1500 volunteers from the City of London, including some 200 brokers, jobbers and clerks from the Stock Exchange.<sup>19</sup> The embarkation of the force on 13 January 1900 was filmed by some five separate companies: Hepworth, Paul, Warwick, Acres and Wolff.<sup>20</sup> A couple of versions of this survive in the NFTVA: *Embarkation of C.I.V. for South Africa* has the men marching along the gangway onto the ship, wearing their distinctive hats (the brim on one side pushed up). The Hepworth version also survives and shows the C.I.V. passing quite close to camera.<sup>21</sup>

The C.I.V. were filmed sketchily during their service in South Africa, but were most extensively covered when they came back to England.<sup>22</sup> The regiment returned from service in South Africa in October 1900, and, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of the month marched from Paddington across London to a heroes' welcome at St. Paul's cathedral and the Guildhall.<sup>23</sup> The return was filmed by Biograph, Butcher, Hepworth, Warwick and Williamson, and several versions survive in the NFTVA, of the C.I.V. in Southampton and marching through London. One NFTVA film, *City Imperial Volunteers Return: Leaving Southampton by Train* (Hepworth) shows the decorated train with the letters 'CIV' on the front as it comes past camera, men leaning out of windows.<sup>24</sup>

Both Butcher's and Warwick's cameramen took not just one but several shots of the London march, which, at a time when film stock was expensive, indicates how important this event was seen to be.<sup>25</sup> Warwick filmed at 2 PM and, despite the operators being hampered in getting through crowds with the exposed negatives, the films were shown at the Empire at 9 PM. The next day Warwick dispatched 40 complete copies to exhibitors in the provinces.<sup>26</sup>

### **Mitchell and Kenyon**

Films of troops were not to everyone's taste, and one music hall critic in mid 1900 expressed himself tired of films of soldiers in street processions, adding that it would be nice to have some pictures not referring to war.<sup>27</sup> He was not

to have his wish, and a large number of such films were still to come. One of the major production companies responsible was Mitchell and Kenyon. Many of these procession films were made in 1901 and 1902, at a time when no filming was being done at the front, so such films, along with the staged Boer War films, filled a gap.

The Mitchell and Kenyon film collection includes some twenty films of this kind, featuring ten volunteer regiments, but many more were made which don't survive. In fact, of the 120 towns and cities surveyed for the M&K filmography in the period between 1900 and 1902, every exhibition associated with this company listed a Boer War themed title (many titles being advertised in local newspapers). These war-related films from M&K and other companies, as Toulmin has noted, 'dominate the film programmes in cities and towns throughout the United Kingdom'.<sup>28</sup> For example, in Bradford in July 1902, film of the Bradford Artillery in camp at Morecambe was shown, plus other local scenes, but 'the most popular item of all was the return of the Active Service Volunteers from South Africa, which was given as a grand finale'.<sup>29</sup>

#### **Box:**

##### **M&K's local actualities related to the Boer War**

1st Volunteer Battalion, East Lancashire Regiment - Blackburn Rifle Volunteers (1900)

Royal Scots Regiment at Edinburgh Castle (1901)

Parade of the Bolton Artillery Volunteers (1901)

Manchester's Welcome to the Imperial Yeomanry (1901)

Return of the Brave Manchester Volunteers (1901)

Return of the East Lancashire Regiment at Preston (1902)

On the March with the Bradford Artillery at Bunker Brow Settle (1902)

Regiments Returned from Boer War to Victoria Barracks, Cork (1902)

The Return of the Warwickshire Volunteers (1902)

The Return of the Lancaster Volunteers (1902)

All Saints Church with Parade of the Northamptonshire Regiment (1902)

#### **Miscellaneous Related Films**

At the time of the Boer War, several general military films were used as some kind of representation of the Boer War. For example, a scene from a live show, 'Savage South Africa', showed the 'savages' routed by a combination of fire from maxim guns and follow-up cavalry attacks.<sup>30</sup>

Another example of the popularity of general military films at this time, was 'Our Navy', a series of films about life in the British navy, exhibited by Alfred West's company. This show was especially popular in the west of England. In Exeter, for example, in the first half of 1900, West's was the cinematograph show which attracted the highest audience figures and the most complimentary press reviews. A similar show of general military films, R. W. Paul's 'Army Life', opened in Exeter in February 1901.<sup>31</sup>

As mentioned above, views of the Boers were rarer than of Britain's forces. Among the few available in Britain were two scenes of Boer prisoners being brought to Ahmadnagar Fort, India, by train, filmed by F.B. Stewart.<sup>32</sup> The catalogue notes of the prisoners in these shots that some were 'looking very dilapidated, and having no shoes upon their feet'. This was scarcely neutral footage, as it depicted a defeated foe; the scenes could therefore have functioned as soft propaganda when shown in a pro-British context (though might have evoked sympathy elsewhere). Some background shots of the war zone were also available. Already, at the war's beginning, Warwick had 'some 80 South African negatives', mainly scenic views, mainly taken on two filming trips before the war.<sup>33</sup>

### **Box:**

#### **Working-class enthusiasm for war?**

Richard Price in an influential book published in 1972 argues that the Boer War was mainly supported by the middle class, while the working class was largely apathetic about the conflict, and about imperialism in general.<sup>34</sup> Price would have received some backing for his views at the time, from the socialist commentator, Maddison, who noted of British workers: 'When war was proclaimed it caused none of those sensations which the yellow press tried to work up, and even to-day there is an absence of anything approaching excitement.'<sup>35</sup> But Maddison was clearly biased, and the majority of sources that historians have unearthed since Price suggest that the working class was very supportive of the war.

The social historian John Mackenzie states – in what is effectively a pointed dig at Price: 'The attempt to pin the jingoist expressions of imperialism on specific social classes, in particular the lower middle class, will not do'.<sup>36</sup> Mackenzie finds that even a socialist of the time had to admit that the workers were for war: H.M. Hyndman, founder of the left wing body the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), described in his memoirs the patriotic war fervour among the working classes, with the poorest districts more elaborately hung with patriotic decorations than even the wealthy West End of London.<sup>37</sup> The Independent Labour Party (ILP) were equally disappointed by the behaviour of the working-class. A Woolwich journal wrote about 'rampant' workers in the run-up to war; a labour journal noted a 'war fever' in Keightley. Even Keir Hardie concluded that '...the war is the most popular war ever waged by England', and noted with shock that jingoistic mobs of working men were violently disrupting anti-war meetings.<sup>38</sup>

And not all left wingers were anti-war. Though the ILP opposed the war, the Fabians and SDF were divided. Indeed, the Fabian writer, Robert Blatchford – editor of *The Clarion* and author of *Merrie England* – supported the conflict, becoming quite a jingo, to the surprise of some followers, as he had been anti-imperialist and of course socialist before the war.<sup>39</sup>

#### **War films and war fever**

As I show in the **Box** above, there has been much historical debate about working class support for the Boer War. But whatever the precise class

composition of war supporters, the population as a whole was for it. A contemporary political journalist concluded in early 1900 that most English people were pro-war, whether living in towns, cities or the country.<sup>40</sup> Public demonstrations of this enthusiasm occurred on several occasions. Soon after the outbreak of hostilities when the Guards started for South Africa, large cheering crowds lined their route through London and to Waterloo station: so many people that the troops could scarcely make their way through.<sup>41</sup>

Even more tumultuous scenes were experienced in mid-May after British forces relieved Baden-Powell's besieged garrison in Mafeking. News of the relief reached London on the evening of 18 May, and the city was quickly transformed: cheering crowds appeared on the streets, flags were waving everywhere, people singing 'Rule Britannia' and 'God save the Queen'.<sup>42</sup> These unprecedented scenes of crowd celebration gave birth to a new word in the English language, 'maffick', a verb meaning to 'exult riotously' (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*). And such mafficking was not only in London: it took place widely, even in Scotland and as far afield as Nova Scotia.<sup>43</sup> [Fig. 5]

War fever was also very apparent in places of entertainment, and Vanessa Toulmin finds that the working class population was highly interested.<sup>44</sup> Evidence suggests that only two months into the war patriotic excesses were not unusual in music halls, and one periodical reported the positive effect of the war on attendance at entertainments including the music hall.<sup>45</sup>

Boer War films were increasingly being screened through the Winter of 1899 to 1900, though initially there was sometimes a lack of appropriate material, so showmen often used lantern slide images of Generals and the like to show between films.<sup>46</sup> More war films became available by early 1900 and were shown all over Britain. Perhaps the height of enthusiasm for Boer War films was in the period of greatest British success in the war, between about March and June 1900. There are many examples of this fervour for war films, and I have put a number of the examples together into a chronology in the box below.

There seems to have been very little dissent from this relentless patriotic celebration of the war in moving images. The only example I have seen of any real criticism comes, not with regard to films of British heroes being cheered, but rather to images of Boers being scorned. One visitor to a Charing Cross theatre noted that a film of Boer prisoners was: '...greeted with a tremendous storm of yells, hoots, jeers, hisses etc., from the smug counter-jumpers. The office boys, the yahoos, and the brainless bar-crawlers who form the vast majority of the audience.'

He called this jeering of the humbled enemy despicable.<sup>47</sup> This episode is interesting not only for the irritation of the writer at the audience's cruel scorn for helpless prisoners, but also for the indications he provides about the kind of people who were yelling in this manner. From his description ('smug counter-jumpers', 'office boys') these sound to be more lower middle-class than working-class. Perhaps Price (see above) was partly correct in his analysis to the extent that these young office workers were more extreme in

their jingoist attitudes to the war than the working-class? It seems in any case that more middle-class people were being attracted to film shows by war films. One entertainment journal noted that, '...war pictures have done much towards making the eighteen-carat folks [richer people] acquainted with the music-hall' (and perhaps the rowdy young men were being attracted as well as the eighteen-carat folks).<sup>48</sup>

**Box:**

**Reception of Boer War films in Britain, March to June 1900: a selection of the enthusiasm displayed**

In Birmingham at the beginning of March (just after the relief of Ladysmith) the Curzon Hall was twice filled with audiences, 'patriotic and imperial', singing God save the Queen, 'and throughout cheered every scene and every animated photograph of the generals and of war episodes'.<sup>49</sup> On 7 April a music hall journal reported about film shows:

*'The fact is, there is such a demand for war subjects that those landscapes and seascapes which once rejoiced us are crowded out. We now have portraits of our Generals galore, and it seems that the public cannot have too much of them.'*<sup>50</sup>

In early April an entertainment paper noted the 'bottled-up patriotism' of the audience which was released when war-related films were screened at the Alhambra, as well as a series about military life at Aldershot, 'Soldiers of the Queen'. The reporter stated:

*'To attempt to describe the effect of either on the patriotic feelings of a sympathetic audience were folly; let the reader arrive at a conclusion for himself according to the acuteness of his imagination.'*<sup>51</sup>

In early May a lantern journal reported that the only word which could express the applause at films of Boer War was 'enthusiastic'.<sup>52</sup> A week later a review of the programme at the Cambridge music hall noted that any films about the South African War were now popular with audiences.<sup>53</sup> A French writer, who seems to have been in London during the war recalled the 'nightly outpouring of emotion' at London's halls, with images of war leaders projected in music halls. And when a picture of the Queen appeared on the screen, 'everyone stood up, from the dress circle to the stalls, and all together sang the national anthem'.<sup>54</sup>

The filmmaker, turned laboratory man, G.A. Smith was asked about this time if there was a big demand for South African war films, and replied that:

*'...his hands were so full he hardly knew where to turn. For every film with any connection with the war the demand was enormous. President Kruger getting out of his carriage, scenes in Johannesburg, scenes of embarking and disembarking troops, of manoeuvres of cavalry and infantry, could not be developed fast enough.'*<sup>55</sup>

By May and June the Boer War was adopted into the very names of film exhibitions: A show called 'New khakigraph war pictures' was featured at Heckmondwike, and W. Clark's 'Boerograph' was exhibiting at Wigan fair.<sup>56</sup>



### **Exhibition practice**

Some quite sophisticated exhibition practices emerged for these Boer War films. Sound effects were generated in some shows, with shots fired, etc.<sup>57</sup> The *Showman* suggested in early 1901 that film shows were greatly improved in this way, with sound effects such as ‘the banging of a drum to represent the firing of a big gun, or stamping of feet to represent soldiers marching...’<sup>58</sup> Later in the year there was even a complaint from one critic about ‘the excessive burning of powder’ in creating these sound effects of shots, which ‘renders the atmosphere of the Hall almost unbearable’. Nevertheless the large audience seemed to like it, for ‘frequent applause...greeted the representation of the many stirring scenes’.<sup>59</sup>

Another quite innovative aspect of some Boer War shows in various parts of the country, was their programming of a number of films together to tell a complete history of the war (sometimes matching for length the equivalent programmes during the Spanish-American War). The films were often interspersed with lantern slides, including images of the heroes of the war, Generals etc. The Tee brothers in the south of England were regularly giving extensive shows about the war from early 1900, with mainly actuality films, one or two fakes, and slides including war celebrities. Entitled, ‘Pictorial History of Transvaal War’ (then by May renamed, ‘With the Flag in South Africa’), the show included 60 slides and several films.<sup>60</sup>

At the other end of the country in Scotland, Walker’s show in April was similarly called, ‘The Fight for the Flag in South Africa’, the ads stating, ‘The cinematograms will be interspersed with photographs and other views of heroes and scenes at the front’.<sup>61</sup> [Fig. 8] Meanwhile in Yorkshire the Bamforths also presented a history of the war in ‘biograph’ and lantern images, narrated by a lecturer, and again including images of soldiers and Generals.<sup>62</sup> A number of venues in Britain also offered shorter programmes of films about the war.<sup>63</sup> Boer War films were even introduced into a play, ‘Captain Leigh, V.C.’ at the Fulham Grand Theatre.<sup>64</sup>

### **Declining interest in war films?**

While no-one doubts the buoyancy of Boer War film exhibitions in the first half of 1900, there is some question about when audience interest declined. Richard Brown, in an important article on the effect of the war on cinema, sees the shift happening during the summer of 1900, and suggests that the loss of interest in war films by the public was ‘both rapid and complete’.<sup>65</sup> He cites several forms of evidence for this, such as quotations in the trade press saying as much, price reductions by British film manufacturers in late 1900, and declining numbers of ads for war films in the trade press.<sup>66</sup> While in general I find this evidence convincing, I think the situation might have been a little more patchy, and there are indications that in some cases interest in Boer War films was maintained almost throughout the war (perhaps helped by those price reductions on films).

After the conventional phase of the war ended in June 1900, some reports do suggest a decline. In September a writer in *The Showman* claimed that, ‘The interest in the Boer War has very largely died out, although perhaps even

now, such a show, if well got up, might have a fair run'.<sup>67</sup> By October a fairground reporter mentioned that, '...the general public have had a surfeit of war pictures...', and he mentioned a film about the Alps and a fiction subject as what people really wanted.<sup>68</sup> By November this trend seemed to be confirmed, and a visitor to Hull fair noted, 'war pictures are getting stale', and added that what locals craved were comic films: 'Lord Roberts is still popular, so is Kitchener, but the rustics like fun'.<sup>69</sup>

However, other reports seem to give a different story. In September, a Manchester venue was featuring a selection of films of the war, said to be, 'one of the most popular items in the programme'.<sup>70</sup> Two months later at the Hippodrome in London, Boxer and Boer War films, 'were the great feature, and round after round of applause greeted each subject as it was put on'.<sup>71</sup> Boer images were regularly being mixed with Boxer Uprising footage by this stage, and this second conflict might be one reason for the continuing interest in war films. [Fig. 9]

Screenings of war-related films continued into 1901. A reporter at the Albert Hall, Leeds in February noted that 'the usual war pictures' were screened as part of the film section of the programme.<sup>72</sup> This word 'usual' suggests that these films were thought of as somewhat uninspiring by this stage, yet the following month at the Olympia, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, a journal stated: 'The large audience was fairly thrilled at the vivid and realistic scenes depicted' – referring to films of the China and Boer conflicts.<sup>73</sup> I have found programmes featuring Boer War films well into 1902.<sup>74</sup>

Perhaps one explanation for the continued interest was that soldiers were returning from the front and were curious to see the film versions of where they had been. In some cases they even came to view themselves on screen. The 'Fighting Fifth' Infantry saw themselves portrayed in a film show in Huddersfield, while one of Dickson's Naval Brigade companions from the front was recognised several times on screen.<sup>75</sup> Children were known to call out 'Dada' on seeing films of soldiers on screen, while soldiers themselves, it was said, on spotting their old pals on screen could hardly resist calling out, 'Hello, Bill!'<sup>76</sup> Locally-shot films of returning regiments were also popular, and M&K were making many of these through 1901 and 1902 (see list earlier in this chapter).

This continuing interest in Boer War films is also supported by the case of A.D. Thomas, a successful war film exhibitor. By the end of 1901 Thomas had 14 or 15 film shows running, and had been making large profits.<sup>77</sup> But the popularity of his shows started to decline due, he stated, to the '...falling off of the interest of the public in the war', and he was declared bankrupt in about mid 1902.<sup>78</sup> The interesting question is, when did this 'falling off' of interest occur? Thomas himself put it much later than one might expect. He stated at his bankruptcy hearing that, 'towards the end of 1901 the shows began to fall off owing to the approaching end of the Boer war'.<sup>79</sup> In another report of his troubles, he put the decline even later, stating that the business fell off suddenly in January last (i.e. January 1902).<sup>80</sup>

However, as I suggested at the start of this section, the fact that some exhibitors continued to make a living from war films for a surprisingly long time, does not necessarily mean that such films were in great demand *overall*, merely that they had a kind of niche market. This market was kept going thanks to continuing interest in the war with the return of, and filming of, local regiments and other ex-soldiers, and by screening Boxer Uprising films too.

## EXHIBITING BOER WAR FILMS OUTSIDE BRITAIN

Some strong emotions were felt about this war internationally, with great opposition to Britain's role and massive support for the Boers in some countries. Indeed, what amounted to 'Boer fever' broke out from Russia to Quebec, from Scandinavia to Ireland. Thousands signed pro-Boer petitions: one German petition alone was signed by almost a million people. Thousands joined pro-Boer organizations; statues were erected and streets renamed for the Boers.<sup>81</sup> Volunteers, coming from most western countries went to fight on the Boer side in South Africa.<sup>82</sup> The only support for Britain outside its shores came from the Empire and Anglo-Saxon countries, but even there opinion was not undivided, and the American public was split.<sup>83</sup> Large-scale coverage was given to the war in the press of many nations, and here again the main sentiment was anti-British. Sarcastic, even scurrilous, cartoons appeared in French and other Continental satirical journals, leading to heated diplomatic exchanges with Britain.<sup>84</sup>

### Ireland

At the time of the Boer War Ireland was still part of Great Britain, though already in a ferment about its future relationship with the imperial neighbour. The war polarized Irish politics, with disagreements between nationalists who wanted independence and loyalists who wanted to stay part of Britain.<sup>85</sup> The antagonism spread to the actual battlefield, with some Irishmen volunteering to fight for the Boers, while many others fought in British regiments.<sup>86</sup> This controversy may have been a formative experience for Irish nationalism, argues one scholar, shifting its direction, and effectively being a precursor of the 1916 uprising.<sup>87</sup>

An important aspect of the controversy – and little discussed by historians – was its screen representation. This came in two forms: pro- and anti-British. The latter achieved prominence through the pro-Boer *Irish Independent* newspaper, which projected lantern pictures in the windows of its offices for a while, showing telegrams from the front and images of the rival leaders in the war. News hungry crowds gathered until the police asked the newspaper to end the displays, a rare example of British censorship during the war (apart from censorship at the front in South Africa).<sup>88</sup>

Elsewhere in Ireland, pro-British travelling showmen used slides to back the British side, which stoked the anger of the nationalists. One anecdote was related by a lantern lecturer who toured in Ireland during the war with 'a picture show' about the conflict. He seems to have been British, for the show was certainly presented from that perspective. One of his allegations was that

the Boers had fired artillery at buildings flying the Red Cross flag. To make his point, he showed an image of a military hospital and then the same hospital after supposedly being shelled by the Boers. One night during this part of the show, an infuriated pro-Boer shouted that the showman was a liar. The showman came back with a sharp reply, but the spectator's reaction indicates the depth of anti-British feeling residing in much of the Irish population.<sup>89</sup>

Poole's Myriorama exhibitions seem to have been similarly pro-British in tone, and so encountered pockets of resentment in Ireland. During a myriorama show of 'Hoisting the British flag at Pretoria', an outraged voice from the gallery was heard to say, 'Hoist the blasted thing down again'.<sup>90</sup> The reaction was even stronger when Poole's were performing as an act at a theatre in Limerick in the Autumn of 1901, the behaviour of the anti-British locals in the gallery being described in the *Era*, as 'most reprehensible'. The report recounted the heated incidents which occurred both during Poole's performance, and in ensuing acts:

'Pictures of the war, and descriptions of British victories, have been received with deafening booing, and it need hardly be said that in such circumstances the comfort and enjoyment of the general body of the audience has been greatly interfered with. A climax was reached recently, when some rotten eggs and a mixture of lime and flour were thrown on the stage, the latter missile being directed at the artiste who, in his exhibition of "People we know," was impersonating Lord Roberts. The management has announced that for the remainder of the engagement the gallery will be closed. Well-conducted citizens will now be able to enjoy in comfort an excellent entertainment.'<sup>91</sup>

From this we may infer that it was the poorer (gallery) spectators who were most anti-British: perhaps no surprise. This is not the only example of an outraged reaction which greeted Boer War films if presented from a British perspective. One showman was touring Ireland during the war with a film show (which happened to be part of a circus). He recalled the reaction in the north of Ireland:

'I shall not forget in a hurry our reception in Derry. When I bought one of the first copies of the Queen's visit to Dublin, and portrayed it on the screen, which hung in the centre of the ring, my sheet, which was a new one for the occasion, was riddled with holes in very little time.'<sup>92</sup>

Most of these incidents affected touring showmen who were bringing British films and British attitudes into Ireland. But when the war was presented in locally-run cinematograph shows there seems to have been less of a problem. In August 1900 a group of films about the war was shown in Kilkenny, including a view of the embarkation of troops, and a couple of scenes in South Africa, and – featured most prominently in the advertising – was Warwick's film of President Kruger leaving the Volksraad. However, while this film would have pleased the pro-Boers, the other titles might not have been so welcome, and on other dates in Kilkenny films of Britain and the Queen were also shown.<sup>93</sup> However, I have seen no record of audience incidents on these

occasions – perhaps because the proprietors were based in these communities and were not British itinerant showmen, so were both trusted more by their audiences, and in turn knew their audiences' sympathies.

The most detailed anecdote about audiences and Boer War films in Ireland concerns a certain unnamed showman who had booked a hall for the exhibition of films in a small town during the war. He announced on playbills that the latest war films would be shown, but found that a strong pro-Boer feeling existed among the local inhabitants. The anecdote continues:

'Of course, such pictures as he had were entirely in opposition to the opinions of his patrons, but the wily showman was equal to the occasion. He quickly arranged several faked scenes depicting unfortunate Boer prisoners being maltreated by brutal English soldiers, and other pictures of a similar character, and so realistic were they that a certain Irish newspaper, whose name it would be unfair to divulge, actually printed an article demanding that a Government inquiry should immediately be held to discover and punish the perpetrators of these foul outrages!'<sup>94</sup>

I should state straight away that this is only an anecdote, and I have found no corroboration for it, and have not found the alleged article in the Irish newspaper. But the story is interesting, for if true it would be one of the strongest examples of the production of anti-British film propaganda yet discovered for this war. I suspect though that, even if there were a grain of truth in the story, the mentioned films were unlikely to have been shot by the showman in question, and were more likely to have been existing films of Boer prisoners (perhaps the same ones hooted by the British youths mentioned above).

## **Belgium**

The Boers were of Dutch ancestry, so it is only natural that they should find strong support in the Flemish 'low countries' of Belgium and the Netherlands. Both nations were passionate for the cause, and the public's expression of feelings was especially open in Belgium. The British military attaché to both countries later recalled that the children in Brussels shouted at him, 'Vivent les Boers.'<sup>95</sup>

Anti-British cartoons were appearing at this time, including obscene cartoons of Queen Victoria and then (after Victoria died) of King Edward VII. The letter book of the British embassy in Belgium records a number of complaints about these images, and other anti-British activity which was going on too. An attempt to shoot Edward VII at the Gare du Nord, Brussels, seemed part of the same anti-British atmosphere, especially when the assassin, Sipido, was later acquitted.<sup>96</sup>

As far as cinema was concerned, the most noticeable instance of anti-British feeling was at a music hall in Brussels, which was advertising films ('animated photographs') supposedly taken at the seat of war in South Africa. But these proved to be films of other troops entirely, mis-titled to make a pro-Boer point.

The British journal *Amateur Photographer* relayed a description of the programme at the hall, from someone (referred to as 'our friend') who had witnessed the show:

'Various references to perfidious Albion in the course of the entertainment showed how strong was the sympathy of the audience with the Boers, and excitement reached a high pitch when an animated picture was shown purporting to represent the valiant Boers leaving Pretoria for the front. Everyone in the hall applauded this picture vociferously, with the exception of a few staunch Britishers, of whom our friend was one. Possibly his silence was due as much to amazement as to patriotic scruples, for he immediately recognised the picture as one which had been taken three years ago, not in Pretoria, but in one of the familiar London thoroughfares. It really represented the New Zealand contingent of troops which formed part of the memorable Diamond Jubilee procession. The incident shows how, among ignorant folk, old pictures can be palmed off as new.'<sup>97</sup>

This is remarkable enough as an example of mis-titling – palming off old pictures as new, as the writer puts it – but it is equally remarkable for the official reaction that this show (or another like it) set in train. It seems to have provoked real alarm in British government circles, and an official Foreign Office file about this episode indicates that concern went all the way up to the Prime Minister (the Marquis of Salisbury). The main cause of alarm was that there might have been disrespect to the Queen.

It seems that a colleague had told the British ambassador in Brussels, Sir F. Plunkett, that a film of the Queen's jubilee procession had evoked 'hostile manifestations' in a Brussels music hall (presumably the venue described by the *Amateur Photographer's* man). If true, this would amount to disrespect to the Queen, a serious matter, so it merited an investigation.<sup>98</sup> The ambassador discussed this with the Burgomaster (Bourgmestre) of Brussels, Emile de Mot, and the police were then called upon to investigate the music hall, the Scala, in the lower town of Brussels.<sup>99</sup> Some time later, on 13 Apr 1900, the Burgomaster wrote to Plunkett, enclosing a police report which he had presumably commissioned, from the '3me Division de Police'.<sup>100</sup> The report is given in full in the **Box** below, and in Fig. 12, but I summarise here.

The investigation had found that two films about the Boers had been shown in the Scala until a couple of weeks earlier (31 March): 'Departure of a Boer Commando from Pretoria' and 'Boer Artillery at the Frontier'. But, and this was the main reassurance for the British officials, according to information received by the investigating police, no film of Queen Victoria's jubilee procession had been projected that season.<sup>101</sup>

So it seemed that, as far as disrespect to the Queen was concerned, it was all a fuss about nothing. As a result, Plunkett wrote on the 14<sup>th</sup> to the Marquis of Salisbury to say that while there had been some concern that a 'cinematograph representation of the Queen's Jubilee procession' had evoked

hostile manifestations, an investigation tended to prove that 'no disrespect had been shown'.<sup>102</sup> (Transcribed as 2<sup>nd</sup> **Box** below).

I would suggest, however, that, because the actual projections of the films in question had ceased well before the investigation, this police report did not necessarily get at the truth of what had really happened. To judge from the *Amateur Photographer's* eye witness report quoted above, a part of the jubilee procession had indeed been shown (albeit not a part with the Queen in) and this was represented to be one of the two Boer titles mentioned in the police report. The troops therefore in this film of the jubilee procession, who were presumably British or colonial, were being presented as Boers – and wildly cheered by Belgians! A bizarre situation indeed, but perhaps not something which would have concerned the British officials. The report had also noted that anti-British reaction was currently being provoked by two other items: a film of Chamberlain (the British Colonial Secretary) and an actor's impersonation of him. But seemingly, this too did not concern the British authorities. It was the Queen alone who required protection.

**Box:**

**Police report. Brussels, 13 April 1900**

3<sup>me</sup> Division de Police

Le cinématographe de la Scala n'a pas fonctionné depuis le 31 mars dernier, jour où la première d'une piécette a été donnée au dit théâtre.

Les projections dont il est question ne comprenaient cette saison, en tant que vues animées se rapportant à la question transvaalienne qu'un "départ d'un commando boer de Pretoria" et une "artillerie boer à la frontière"; ses vues représentaient uniquement des mouvements de troupes; elles ont été données sans incident d'après mes renseignements et ne comportent rien d'anormal.

Quant au cortège, il s'agit de vues du passage de S M la Reine Victoria et de son escorte à Londres, lors du Jubilé; cette dernière projection n'étant plus d'actualité n'a pas été produite cette saison, d'après les renseignements recueillis.

Toutefois le dit cinématographe dont le fonctionnement reprendra le 16 et a donné cette année le portrait de M. Chamberlain et l'apparition de ce portrait soulevait parfois des sifflets dans le public.

Depuis un [sic] quinzaine de jours il y a eu outre à la Scala un artiste qui se grime de manière à imiter des personnages les plus en vue. Il se fait entre autres les têtes de MM Kruger et Chamberlain; le public applaudit la première et siffle le second.

Il n'a pas été et il n'est pas donné à la Scala, que nous ayons relevé, d'exhibition irrévérencieuse envers la famille royale anglaise et le public ne s'y est pas livré jusqu'à présent d'après mes renseignements à d'autres manifestations que celles rapportées plus haut.

Bruxelles le 13.4.1.

**Rough translation:**

The cinematograph at the Scala hasn't been working since 31 March, as a play has been on since then. The films in question were on the Transvaal issue and were 'Departure of a Boer Commando from Pretoria' and 'Boer Artillery at the Frontier'.

These views only depicted the movement of troops, and were shown without incident according to my information and there was nothing untoward. As for the procession, that was a film of Queen Victoria and her escort in London during the jubilee; and no longer being current, this was not shown this season, according to information received. When the film projections re-started on the 16<sup>th</sup>, a portrait of Chamberlain was shown and sometimes the appearance of this portrait brought forth whistling from the public. For a fortnight an artist who imitates current personalities has appeared at the Scala. He does among others the heads of Kruger and Chamberlain: the audience applauds the first and whistles the second. There haven't been and there are not now that we can determine exhibitions at the Scala irreverent to the British royal family, and according to my information there haven't been demonstrations by the public other than those mentioned above.

### **Box:**

#### **Letter**

Letter from the British ambassador in Brussels, Sir F. Plunkett, to the Marquis of Salisbury, British Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister, 14 April 1900.

My Lord,

A colleague having told me that a cinematograph representation of the Queen's Jubilee procession had evoked hostile manifestations at a music hall in the lower town, I spoke about this to the Burgomaster.

I have this morning received from him the letter, copy of which is enclosed, and which tends to prove that no disrespect had been shown to Her Majesty The Queen.

I have the honour to be, with the highest respect, My Lord, Your Lordship's most obedient, humble servant,

[signed] F. Plunkett

### **The Netherlands**

The population of the Netherlands had similar attitudes as obtained in Belgium about the Boer issue, though I have found no evidence of British complaints about Dutch music hall audiences. It seems that the people were in general a little more measured in their responses than their neighbours, and a British official made the comparison: 'The Dutch were not so vocal in their feeling, but it was very deep and strong'.<sup>103</sup> Or in the words of film historian Geoffrey Donaldson: '...during the Boer War Holland was definitely pro-Boer ... but perhaps without being violently anti-British'.<sup>104</sup> If the Dutch were a little less extreme in their reaction to the war than the Belgians, no nation was more supportive of the Boers in their struggle for independence, this being one of the very rare moments of nationalistic fervour in Dutch history.

Audiences for the performing arts in Holland were firmly anti-British at this stage, and these were uncomfortable times for British music hall artistes.<sup>105</sup>

This support for the Boers appeared in cinematic form very early in the war and in an interesting manner, for it came in the form of films or other images allegedly depicting the Boers in South Africa. Several so-called 'Transvaal' films were advertised in a newspaper, *Algemeen Handelsblad*, between



October and November 1899, for shows at the 'Circus Arena' (Amsterdam?). The proceeds would go to benefit 'the Red Cross, for the wounded in the Transvaal'.<sup>106</sup> The following Boer War titles were listed for the various dates (my translations):

1. Transvaal Boers on their way to the border
2. Attack on a commando of Transvaal Boers who have formed a square
3. Transvaal Boers battle with the Matabele
4. Dutch Volunteer Corps (Dr. Coster's commando)
5. Departure of Transvaal Boers from Pretoria
6. Oath to (of?) President Kruger
7. Views from the Transvaal<sup>107</sup>

I doubt that any of these were actually films of the Boers in South Africa, because the first film was advertised from 17 October, and as this was less than a week after the beginning of the war, it is not possible that it could have been filmed in the interior of South Africa and shipped back to Europe in this time. I suspect rather that the seven titles were a mixture of re-titled films of other events, plus lantern slides of the Boers. Some of the titles bear similarities to known films, notably from Warwick's series, *Savage South Africa*, filmed in about August. From that series, title (2) could be *Savage Attack and Repulse*, which shows a military square formed to repel African warriors, while title (3) could be *Lobengula's Army*, which depicted the Matabele and other Africans.<sup>108</sup> Title (5) is the same one reported above as having been shown in the Brussels music hall, and as we have seen, this might have been a re-labelled shot of troops marching through London during the jubilee. The other titles could well have been lantern slides, notably nos. 4, 6 and 7. Even though the heading 'Kinematograph' appears in the ad, so long as a few of the titles were films, I guess the audience wouldn't have been disappointed if others were mere slides. (And advertised in the programme too were some non-Boer War films, including a film about the Dreyfus affair, by Méliès).

Another such film allegedly of Boers was advertised a few days before the outbreak of war in the southern Dutch city of Nijmegen. A newspaper description noted that it depicted Boers on their 'spirited horses', and in this way 'demonstrated the great boldness of the opponents who will be matched against the United Kingdom'.<sup>109</sup> I suspect that this again could have been the film reported above as having been shown in the Brussels music hall, perhaps being the re-titled shot of troops marching through London.

From the final months of 1899 onward, films actually shot in South Africa (though scarcely any of the Boers) became available, and proved very popular on screen in Holland, helping to satisfy audiences' interest in the war. Karel Dibbets has made a special study of this subject, and has found that many films of this kind were shown in numerous towns. The Boer War was the main event for travelling exhibitors (only matched in popularity by films of the crowning of Queen Wilhelmina and the Dreyfus affaire). Dibbets writes:

'In 1900, jeering audiences saw films of the defeat of a Highland regiment near Tugela, they applauded the victory over the English army at Spion Kop, the attack on an English armoured train, the blowing up of a railway bridge in Natal, the battle at the Modder River, the siege of Ladysmith, the bombardment of Mafeking, the death of General Symons, and so on.'<sup>110</sup>

Several of these sound like Warwick titles, and presumably some of the others (for example the Symons title) were lantern slides. Later on in the war, in early 1902, Dibbets notes that 'pictures of a raid on Bloemfontein' were popular in Utrecht, though again one assumes that this was either a lantern slide or re-titled film of something else. By this time too, Paul Kruger had become what Dibbets calls 'the first hero of the white screen in Holland', through the several films of him by then available, especially on his travels in Europe, which I cover in an Appendix on Boer War 'celebrities'.

### **France**

With the possible exception of Belgium, anti-British feeling during the Boer War reached its height in France. This was partly due to traditional animosity to the rival across the Channel, made more biting through the events in Fachoda in 1898 (where British forces in Sudan had reasserted British hegemony in that part of Africa). All kinds of pro-Boer souvenirs were on sale in France – music sheets of 'La Marche des Boers', etc [Fig. 10] – and there were numerous satirical cartoons: some being so offensive (to Queen Victoria and then Edward VII) that the British ambassador was recalled temporarily.<sup>111</sup> [Fig. 11]

Also, British people were apparently picked on, for according to the outraged Paris correspondent of one British paper early in 1900, English residents in Paris had been 'chaffed and jibed at since the war broke out'.<sup>112</sup> Parisians wore Boer hats to celebrate Britain's difficulties.<sup>113</sup> The French media gloried in Boer victories, and one British newspaper was especially resentful of this, and suggested that half a dozen Englishmen with horsewhips go over to Paris and punish the media malefactors.<sup>114</sup>

The anti-British fervour was especially intense in the music halls, and from quite early in the war it became rather unpleasant for both British performers and members of the audience. 'At places of entertainment in Paris', said a resident of twenty-six years' standing in the city, 'Englishmen are hooted, and English performers are hissed by the scum of the boulevards. I have never experienced such treatment before'.<sup>115</sup> This contempt for things British extended to representations in films, for the British uniform was 'hissed and howled at when ... reproduced on the films of the cinematograph'.<sup>116</sup>

A climax of anti-British feeling was reached at the Olympia music hall in Paris as war films were projected, for, as one reporter noted, '...when the English soldiers appear the whistling and hissing by the audience sounds like escaping steam from a large engine', while when images of Boers were shown, these French spectators '... forget themselves enough to applaud and yell with delight'. This reporter added as a kind of warning, 'If you are foolish

enough to applaud English soldiers it would be made so uncomfortable for you that you would gladly leave the theatre'.<sup>117</sup> The films being shown, though, were not genuine ones from South Africa, according to this writer, and were of American soldiers ('Rough Riders') from the Spanish-American War, presumably fakes. These films, he noted, '...are used and passed off as Boers, and their appearance is a signal for cheers'.

The French regions too were gripped by the pro-Boer ferment. In Perpignan in 1901 Boer War films were very popular, the image of Kitchener being whistled, that of Kruger cheered.<sup>118</sup> Along the coast in Marseille, the pro-Boer passion was such that one of the first cinemas to open in the city was called 'le cinema des Boërs', which, it is claimed, showed almost entirely films about the Transvaal war, with a lecturer dressed as a Boer fighter.<sup>119</sup>

### Germany

Germany was as strongly pro-Boer as other Continental countries, though as I shall explain below, official controls kept something of a cap on more extreme manifestations of anti-British feeling. Certainly British defeats were celebrated in Germany: for example, when Lord Methuen was captured by the Boers in 1902.<sup>120</sup> Several pro-Boer live events about the war took place.<sup>121</sup> As with France, part of the reason Germany gloried in any British reverse was envy, for at that time (though not for much longer) Britain was still the world's leading power.<sup>122</sup> These feelings were expressed in the media, and nowhere more clearly and vituperatively than in illustrated journals, such as *Kladderadatsch* and *Simplicissimus*. For both these journals, even before the war, the major international villain was Britain, and this editorial line peaked during the Boer War, the conflict being portrayed as a struggle of power-mad imperialists versus simple peasants. *Kladderadatsch* in particular idealized 'the little Boer nation'.<sup>123</sup>

From the start of the war exhibitors were keen to obtain films about the events. Only a few days after hostilities began, a Berlin film man, Adolf Lubszynski, was making enquiries that he urgently wanted films on the Transvaal war.<sup>124</sup> Further south, in the city of Munich, an even bigger demand for Boer War films was burgeoning. For some reason Munich was particularly pro-Boer, with no fewer than 27 societies formed to support the independence struggle from 1900 to 1902, and several places in the city were named in honour of the Boers.<sup>125</sup> Munich's keen interest in the fight in South Africa was also expressed in film venues. In early December 1899 'living photographs' were shown in the Blumen-Säle in Munich, including two up-to-date new pictures, 'The landing of an English warship in Cape Town' and 'The Boers commence the battle'. It is uncertain what this latter film could be, though perhaps a fake, but it was this second title in particular which galvanized the audience, as one newspaper reported: 'Above all it was these freedom fighters, courageous unto death, who elicited really enthusiastic applause, while at the same time the orchestra brought the vivid Transvaal hymn to the performance'.<sup>126</sup>

Perhaps this emotional reaction set official bells ringing, but whatever the reason, by the following year the police were ready to stifle overtly anti-British

feeling. Copies of a very inflammatory issue of *Simplicissimus* were confiscated by the police in Munich around April 1900, perhaps at the instigation of English visitors to the city.<sup>127</sup> Just before this, in March, the same thing had happened with regard to film shows, in one of the most remarkable episodes of its kind.

Biograph films of the Boer War were being shown at the Deutschen Theater and there were apparently different audience reactions from the balcony and from the stalls.<sup>128</sup> Perhaps the pro-British reaction was coming (as with the cartoons) from British visitors to Munich, while the locals would have supported the Boers. In any case, on 22 March the management of the theatre issued a notice to say that pictures of the Boer War, including shots of commanders, had been banned by the police, arguing that these images were leading to noisy demonstrations and endangering public peace and order.<sup>129</sup> As Martin Loiperdinger has shown in his essay on this episode of censorship, the audience's expressions of disapproval (and approval) were unwanted by the political authorities because the German government professed neutrality in the war. As far as one knows, this was a unique instance of banning, and presumably films about the Boer War continued to be shown in other parts of Germany, the war being, after all, one of the main news events of the day.<sup>130</sup>

### **Russia**

One might not expect that Russia and its people would have taken much notice of the Boer War, being so far from the scene of hostilities and with no interests to speak of in Africa. But perhaps because of the long history of rivalry and military conflict with Britain, Russians became very interested in this war. During the first months, when the Boers were enjoying successes, a pro-Boer craze swept Russia, with church collections for the South African republics and gifts sent; some Russians even travelled to fight with the Boers.<sup>131</sup>

Films and lantern slides of the conflict were shown in Russia, and, though I cannot establish how widely, I have found a number of specific cases. The Polish Krzeminski brothers travelled through Poland and Russia showing films in rented venues, Boer War subjects forming an important part of their programme.<sup>132</sup> Lantern images of the war were showing in St. Petersburg very late in the war, in March 1902.<sup>133</sup> [Fig. 13]

St. Petersburg too was the site of one of the most interesting examples I have found of screenings about the war. It is reminiscent of the Belgian case, in that it involves a British protest about the exhibition of anti-British films. The only information I have about this comes in the form of a letter written to the British ambassador in St. Petersburg, Sir Charles Scott, in late 1901 (which I located in Scott's papers).<sup>134</sup> The letter was from 'a lady who has been resident in Russia for some years', as the covering text states, though it doesn't give her name. I guess that she was probably British. The letter reads as follows:

'At the present moment, at one of the good theatres of St. Petersburg, a series of living photographs of the war are being exhibited, with plenty of banging and a few living actors to give additional realism to

the scenes. As the combats, massacres of the wounded, tortures inflicted on prisoners, acts of basest cowardice etc, were arranged in a circus for the camera; even knowing that the fullest scope has been given to the diseased imaginations of the rabidest Anglophobes, even then, it is impossible for you faintly to conceive the part the English are represented as playing. The spectacle is doing splendid business, and is regarded as a true picture of what is really taking place in the Transvaal. XXX [indicating a missing signature],<sup>135</sup>

It is difficult to guess what these films were. Perhaps some were re-titled actualities? But the scenes she describes as ‘massacres of the wounded, tortures inflicted on prisoners’ do not correspond to known titles, though they bear some similarity to the alleged films of British brutality in Ireland (see above). Perhaps they were re-titled fakes (though I can’t point to any specific possibilities) or lantern slides? Or, as she states that the films ‘were arranged in a circus for the camera’, maybe these really were filmed specially in such a setting, in Russia or elsewhere. In any case, this surely stands as one of the most extreme examples of Boer War films – either pro- or anti-British – being used as propaganda. It is possible that the British embassy made further enquiries about this, for the allegation that British troops were committing atrocities was a serious one; but only further archival research will establish this.

## USA

Attitudes to the Boer War were ambivalent in the United States, and there were arguments for both sides. These arguments were discussed in editorial columns; and a historical analysis of seven newspapers across America has found that, while initially editors were sympathetic to the Boers’ independence struggle, they later switched sides.<sup>136</sup>

This ambivalence was reflected in coverage on the screen, with items about the war tending to be neutral rather than partisan. One journalist enthused merely about seeing the hostilities at all: ‘we are promised... pictures of actual, gruesome war’.<sup>137</sup> Lantern shows about the war were generally balanced too: the title of one – *South Africa; Scenes from the "Dark Continent" and the British-Boer War* – suggests something more like a travelogue, rather than a report on a controversial war.<sup>138</sup> A report on Biograph films of the Boer War at Keith’s Theater in New York was headed ‘Biograph is the real star’, as if the war-based content of the films was almost unimportant and the medium itself was what mattered.<sup>139</sup> In any case, it seems that Boer War films were shown quite widely in the USA.<sup>140</sup> [Fig. 14]

A rare instance of Boer War films stirring up controversy in the US comes from Lyman Howe’s shows. In January 1900 Howe screened a programme of films in Troy, New York including three new acquisitions related to the Boer War, and these proved especially popular. The audience, it seems, ‘went wild and cheered the Dutch fellows to the echo’, as the local paper put it. But it is not clear what these films could have been. As they showed the Boers winning, it is likely they were fakes, probably the Pathé ones, which were available early in the war. But by later in the year (see next paragraph) Howe

was showing British actualities, mainly depicting British troops, so this cheering for the Boers ('Dutch') is a mystery. Anyway, it is unlikely that Howe would have encouraged such cheering, as he was, in general, pro-British.<sup>141</sup>

By the Autumn, Howe featured a section of ten films about the Boer War (one of six sections in his programme), all probably imported from Warwick. Most of these were of British troops; a couple showed Boer prisoners, including *Boer Prisoners Under Escort* (definitely Warwick). Only one was not an actuality: *A Reproduction of Major Wilson's Last Stand*. The films were sequenced into a clear narrative from troops departing England; this time no particular audience response is recorded.<sup>142</sup>

### Canada

Most Canadians of English extraction supported Britain's cause in South Africa, and the only sustained opposition came from French Canadians.<sup>143</sup> There was certainly great interest in the Boer War in the country from near the beginning of the war, partly because a contingent of about a thousand Canadian troops was being sent to fight. Coverage of the war in film exhibitions began with so-called 'patriotic concerts', held to bolster patriotism and to raise funds for the war effort. In Toronto a series of military patriotic concerts were held at Massey Hall on Saturday evenings from 4 November 1899.<sup>144</sup> For the fifth concert on 2 December several moving pictures were shown, including of the Canadian contingent marching through the streets of Quebec City.<sup>145</sup>

These kind of shows continued the following year, and an exhibition of moving pictures was given at the Drill Hall, Winnipeg entitled, 'Canada's brave sons off to the war' to benefit the Canadian Patriotic Fund: this included shots of parades and the departure of the second Canadian contingent, as well as war scenes in South Africa. [Fig. 15] The programme of films as listed is interesting, formally: the films were exhibited in four tranches, with a dozen views in each, including Boer War related films in each. But – and this is the curious feature – these war films were dotted among the general interest (i.e. non war) films, rather than making up a group and a sustained narrative of the war.<sup>146</sup> This is in marked contrast to the practice which had been developing in other war shows in Britain and the US in which the war films would be bunched together to create a narrative of the war. However, in other respects these pageant shows were quite significant cinematic events, for, in appealing to wealthier citizens, they brought certain respectable and artistic qualities to the early Canadian experience of cinema.<sup>147</sup>

The war was the theme of numerous illustrated lectures in Canada, and as in the UK, the experience of the 'local' troops (the Canadian regiments in this case) was of great interest. In November 1900 a Mr. Hamilton showed a 'series of pictures' (lantern slides or films) depicting the story of the Canadian contingent from the time they left Quebec until they reached Pretoria. A reporter stated admiringly that Hamilton gave a simple, straightforward recounting of facts and incidents, showing 'how much the Canadians had been honoured in the campaign and how well they had merited the honour'.<sup>148</sup>

## **Australasia**

On 28 October 1899 the first contingent of troops marched through the streets of Sydney before departing for the Boer War. The few hundred men were dwarfed by the 200,000 crowd of people who lined the route, despite pouring rain, cheering wildly.<sup>149</sup> I have not established if cameramen filmed this, but some other Australian contingents were filmed, and a few such films survive, notably Lumière shots of soldiers in Brisbane prior to departure.<sup>150</sup>

The cinema in Australia was very advanced in this early period, and film shows were taking place in various locations, presumably including Boer War subjects by the end of 1899 or early the following year. The first actual programme of such films which I have seen consisted of 12 films related to the war, screened by J.C. Williamson (as the 'Anglo-American bio-tableau') in March 1900 in Melbourne. In October, based on his correspondent experience at the front, Banjo Paterson commenced a lecture tour using, for illustration, as many as 50 short films of the war by British producers.<sup>151</sup> About the same time a similar illustrated lecture using Boer War films (and a selection of entertainment films too) was given by E. H. Stevenson of the London Bioscope Co. at the Mechanics' Institute in North Hill, and then in the Town Hall of Hobart, Tasmania.<sup>152</sup>

Several posters survive for shows at the Theatre Royal in Hobart well into 1901, which give a snapshot of how these war films were exhibited to some audiences in Australia, by J.C. Williamson's bio-tableau company and the Biograph company.<sup>153</sup> The general impression one has of the war on screen in Australia is that the shows were often quite extensive, including a large number of films to create a story of the war. The titles of the names of the programmes – 'With Roberts to Pretoria' or 'In South Africa with the troops by Biograph' – are reminiscent of the illustrated books which were being published about the war as hostilities came to an end.

By contrast with Australia I have found little information about screenings in New Zealand, apart from a brief mention of three Boer War films shown in an Opera House in 1900.<sup>154</sup> But I have reason to believe that war films were shown very extensively. This is suggested from one very intriguing snippet in a theatrical periodical in mid 1906, which states that moving picture shows were beginning to boom again in the country, '... in a way reminiscent of the Boer war period'. It then adds the fascinating information that at the time of the war, 'there were thirty-five picture shows running through the colony, and out of that number only two survive'.<sup>155</sup> This information leads to two important (provisional) conclusions: firstly that the Boer War seems to have helped create a truly impressive boom in the cinema in New Zealand; and secondly that this was followed by a slump in some of the period to 1906.

## **Other countries**

It is a mark of how far the cinema had spread globally and of how important was the Boer War as a subject for films that in addition to the major markets which I have mentioned, films of the war also turned up in smaller or economically less prosperous countries. In each of the following cases there is a special factor which makes the screening unique. Switzerland first: in April

1900 two 'new' Boer War films were advertised, namely 'The Battle at Spion-Kop' and 'General Cronje surrenders his sword to Lord Roberts'.<sup>156</sup> The latter was probably the Pathé subject portraying the surrender of an officer (mentioned in my chapter 10), and is an intriguing choice of implicitly pro-British film for this neutral country. A screening in Rijeka, Croatia offers another interesting feature, for it represents the most violent reaction to Boer War films that I have yet found. The brief anecdote simply states that after a showing of these films, fights broke out between British sailors and Croats.<sup>157</sup>

Further afield, a showman in Singapore in 1901 was giving bioscope shows and found that a film about the Boer War, showing Lord Roberts' triumphant entry into Pretoria, proved a wonderful draw: 'People who had merely heard or read some vague reports about the war were thrilled beyond description when they saw the famous figures of the Boer War in action'.<sup>158</sup> As this suggests, films about the war were seen quite late in some territories: in Argentina it was as late as April 1902 (no further details); while in Italy the war was the subject for screen-related satire early in 1903, when a cartoon depicted a lantern slide in which Joseph Chamberlain was being kicked by a Boer.<sup>159</sup>

## **CONCLUSION: The power of film**

In this chapter I have shown that screenings of Boer War films were often marked by strident expressions of audience emotion and opinion. And this was very diverse opinion, for as I stated at the start of the chapter, the Boer War was a hugely controversial war internationally. Clearly, there was a strong contrast in how Boer War films were received in Britain and its Empire and how they were seen in most of the rest of the world. The contrast was quite simply between anti-Boers and pro-Boers, the two sides being as much divided and opposed as were the rival armies on the veldt in South Africa.

Yet in terms of their roused emotions there were great similarities between these two film publics. Audiences for Boer War films throughout the world had a strong emotional reaction as they were shown moving images associated with this controversial event and news story. The screen image in a darkened hall seemed to have the power to stir and reinforce the passions as no other medium could. On the British and Empire side this emotional force was increased through ambitious programming. Audiences saw a panoply of films of troops parading or departing for war, perhaps together with films from the front and fakes too; such programmes with rousing titles such as 'The Fight for the Flag in South Africa' were sometimes accompanied by emotion-raising music and sound effects. The reactions of audiences to these films, as my examples above indicate, were often passionate: as strong as those of American audiences during the Spanish-American War.

Meanwhile, in the pro-Boer parts of the world, the reaction was at times just as heated if not more so. Audiences in Ireland, France and Belgium, Holland and Germany, in Russia and Croatia – sometimes even in America – shouted for the Boers (even if the screen Boers weren't genuine), and booed the



British troops and their leaders. The emotion, in other words, was equal and opposite to that in Britain.

However, there was one fundamental difference between the two situations. In most of the British Empire the authorities were quite content when spectators cheered their troops and booed the enemy. By contrast, in Continental countries which were not at war with Britain, excessive passion for the Boers might not be entirely welcomed by the authorities. Most of these countries, after all, were ostensibly neutral in the war, and tolerance for public insult to British prestige might be seen as a provocation to the then leading power in the world. Certainly, in two countries, a perceived contempt for Britain by film audiences was taken seriously by the authorities: in Germany the offending films were banned in one city when they led to partisan reaction; and in Belgium the police were called in to investigate British complaints of filmic insults to the Queen.

On the other hand, in the cases of Russia and France, political relations with Britain were already at a low ebb, and so, when in Russia faked films were shown of British forces committing atrocities, or in France audiences hissed the British army on screen, these things did not apparently bother the host governments. Ireland was a special case: with a population divided in its loyalties, anti-British films might have helped to air or spread nationalist opinion, and the local (British) authorities did suppress the films on at least one occasion.

After this experience with Boer War films, a lesson for all governments was there to be learned: that film could be a powerful medium to stir up and reinforce emotions, whether nationalist, imperialist or otherwise. And patriotic emotions could be politically useful: in British music halls the public feelings roused by films and live acts about the Boer War probably helped reinforce support for the war. Equally, though, emotions could be dangerous if roused too powerfully or in the wrong context – as the German authorities, mentioned above, had decided. These examples suggest that some governments had taken some account of their publics' strong reaction to Boer War films, though it is not clear how much real notice was taken. But in the years up to the First World War, the proliferation of the moving image and evidence of its evident hold on audiences, brought back the idea, first suggested during the Boer War, that films could rouse strong political emotions. Governments by this stage had started to take note.

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> These included (of the ones I have seen in whole or part): *War Bits* (1899), *Under the Union Jack* (1899-1900), *The Spear* (1900), *Illustrated War Special* (1899-1900), *Black and White Budget* (1899-1900), *The King* (1900), all of which were published in London, plus, *Battle Smoke* (1900), published in Sydney. By May of 1900, four books had already appeared about the conflict. (According to *The Spear* 2 May 1900, p.690).

<sup>2</sup> For the first time, apparently for any war, advertisers appropriated images of both famous and ordinary soldiers fighting in South Africa to promote and sell products, with Lord Roberts for example being used by Ogden's to sell their particular brand of cigarettes. Glenn R. Wilkinson, "To the Front": British Newspaper advertising and the Boer War, in John Gooch, ed., *The Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p. 203-12. Children's toys also depicted the conflict. See Simon Popple, 'But the khaki-covered camera is the latest thing'. The Boer War Cinema and Visual Culture in Britain', Paper from the Dec 2000 Stockholm conference, 'Moving Images: Technologies, transitions, historiographies'.

<sup>3</sup> Information from Vanessa Toulmin. A diorama of the Boer War, 'Deeds that won the Empire', by Hamilton Excursions appeared in Burnley, and the *Era* called it 'very interesting and enjoyable'. *Era* 20 Oct 1900, p.22. Pooles' 'new war myriorama' was entitled 'Boer v. Briton', and appeared in Belfast for two weeks. *Showman* 5 Jan 1901, p.3.

<sup>4</sup> 'War news by magic lantern', *Times* 25 dec 1899, p.2. Courtesy Frank Kessler.

<sup>5</sup> Cronje, for example, was to be seen at the St Louis fair re-enacting the events at Paardeberg.

<sup>6</sup> Ward Muir, *The Photogram*, July 1900. This poem, about the current craze for war-related images, songs and souvenirs, implies with this line about 'the khaki-covered camera', that films were in a sense the 'acme' of this glorification. Another line in the poem about film states, 'For it's positively quite the up-to-datest thing!'

<sup>7</sup> Peter Warwick and S. B. Spies, *The South African War : The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (Harlow: Longman, 1980), p. 59. 'The week which extended from 10 December to 17 December, 1899, was the blackest one known during our generation, and the most disastrous for British arms during the century', wrote Sir Arthur Conan Doyle afterwards.

<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth Grottle Strebel, 'Imperialist Iconography of Anglo-Boer War Film Footage', in J. L. Fell, ed., *Film before Griffith* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p.267.

<sup>9</sup> Vanessa Toulmin, 'Militarism in the Edwardian Age', chapter 8 of *Electric Edwardians: The Story of the Mitchell & Kenyon Collection*, ed. V. Toulmin (London: BFI, 2006), p.239-279.

<sup>10</sup> One departure of troops was filmed 16 Sep (Saturday) at Southampton. See 'The irrepressible cinematograph', *BJP* 22 Sep 1899, p.596. Incidentally, many still photos of troops departures and of celebrity commanders were taken by the well-known photographer, 'Gregory'.

<sup>11</sup> From a *Daily Mail* report quoted in Peter Warwick and S. B. Spies, *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, p.58.

<sup>12</sup> Then the Rifle Brigade (on the 'German') were filmed departing from Southampton on 28 Oct. All released by Fuerst, it seems. 'War films', *PD* Nov 1899, p.120. Another copy of the departure of the 'Nubia' was recently found. See *Mace Newsletter*, Nov 2005. A French film man later claimed he had filmed troops in Southampton departing for S. Africa. See Raoul Grimoin-Sanson, *Le Film de Ma Vie* (Evreux: Impr. Ch. Hérissé, 1926) approx p.90.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Barnes, 1899 volume. See also *The Magnet* 9 Dec 1899, p.2. It was shown at the Empire, Edinburgh by Gibbons Bio Tableaux.

<sup>14</sup> Held in the NFTVA and also in the Scottish film Archive. Several troop marching shots by Hepworth survive in the NFTVA.

<sup>15</sup> 'Cinematograph and Biograph Pictures', *Today*, supplement, 23 Nov 1899, p.3. Quoted in Strebel. See also Richard Brown and Barry Anthony, *A Victorian Film Enterprise : The History of the British Mutoscope and Biograph Company, 1897-1915* (Trowbridge: Flicks Books, 1999): film no.231 *Embarkation of the "Fighting Fifth"*. Filmed 18 September 1899 at Southampton, and comprising at least three shots showing the embarkation of the 1st Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers for Natal on the steamship 'Gaul'.

<sup>16</sup> David R. Martin, *A Scotsman's Wanderings* (Dumfries: Dinwiddie and Co., 1976), p.7. This film was shown in the Buchanan Memorial Church in (Glasgow?) Scotland on a makeshift screen in front of the pulpit, the first film Martin (then aged about 6) and others had seen. I wonder if the film could be: *The Return of Lord Lovat's Scouts from South Africa*, which is described as: 'This fine body of Highland Gillies, in their national costume, march straight up

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to the camera accompanied by enthusiastic friends.' W. Gibbons, 75 ft. *Era* 17 Nov 1900, p.30. (It is not listed in Barnes.)

<sup>17</sup> As *HMS Powerful Arrives in Portsmouth Harbour Bringing Home the Heroes of Ladysmith* (54ft.)

<sup>18</sup> The film was screened at the Hippodrome, so probably was made for Gibbons who regularly exhibited there. PD May 1900, p.100.

<sup>19</sup> Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). Schneer notes that 1,550 men joined the C.I.V. Being from the metropolis this regiment naturally interested the national press, and film companies, which were mainly based in London. (Indeed, R.W. Paul even had two close relatives in the C.I.V.)

<sup>20</sup> Though possibly the latter two were only distributing others' versions.

<sup>21</sup> The first could be a R.W. Paul film. Paul shot and released a film of: *Embarkation of the City Imperial Volunteers for South Africa*. Listed in Barnes, 1900 volume. The Hepworth version is 27 ft. and the closer aspect allows, as discussed above, greater identification with the men.

<sup>22</sup> There was a film shown of the C.I.V.'s marching on Johannesburg as part of the programme at the Royal Aquarium. *News of the World* 12 Aug 1900.

<sup>23</sup> The press covered this in microscopic detail, with pages devoted to every stage and incident on this metropolitan procession. The *Standard* 30 Oct 1900 had very detailed descriptions of each stage of the C.I.V.'s march through London, and the *Sphere* 3 Nov 1900 had a series of photos of the procession.

<sup>24</sup> The NFTVA's London films include one (unknown producer) with them coming through decorated streets in London, carrying a captured Boer flag.

<sup>25</sup> *Showman* Dec 1900, p.72 notes that Warwick, Butcher and Hepworth each secured four films of the march through London. Butcher took films of this procession from the roof of Gloucester Gate Lodge, Hyde Park and sold the results as 4 separate films, total of over 230 ft. See BJP 9 Nov 1900, p.716.

<sup>26</sup> 'A chat with Charles Urban', *Era* 1 Dec 1900, p.22. Warwick's film could be had in one length of 475 ft.

<sup>27</sup> 'Merry-go-round', *The Entr'acte* 7 July 1900, p.4.

<sup>28</sup> Toulmin op. cit. Toulmin observes that many films featured the yeomanry and the even more popular local volunteers.

<sup>29</sup> *Bradford Daily Argus* 29 Jul 1902. Reference from NFA (National Fairground Archive). Show of M&K films given by the New Century Animated Picture Company at the St George's Hall.

<sup>30</sup> This would seem to be a kind of conflation between Britain's success against the lightly-armed Africans at Omdurman, and the situation now facing Britain in South Africa. The series was filmed from a live show by Frank Fillis. One episode survives as *Savage South Africa: Savage Attack and Repulse* 1899 (Warwick catalogue number 5374). Incidentally, Fillis went back to South Africa with part of his show in 1902. *Showman* 24 Jan 1902, p.309.

<sup>31</sup> West's show arrived at the Victoria Hall in May. Alex Rankin, 'The History of Cinema Exhibition in Exeter 1895 - 1918'. PhD, U. Exeter, 2001, chapter 2. R.W. Paul's series of twenty films on 'Army Life' had been produced in 1900 (during the Boer War).

<sup>32</sup> Catalogue suppl. No.1 to Warwick's April 1901 catalogue: film numbers 6191, 6192. F.B. Stewart was a stills photographer, based in the British garrison town of Poona in western India, who made a series of scenic films for Warwick in addition to these Boer War titles. Fort Ahmadnagar was north-east of Poona.

<sup>33</sup> A Warwick ad in *The Era* 14 Oct 1899, p.28 states that the company had 80 views of the country, obtained on two filming trips before the war. An article adds: 'Already some 80 South African negatives have been received by the Warwick Trading Co., including three new ones last week...' From 'Special Warwick Films', PD, Dec, 1899, p.146.

<sup>34</sup> Price notes, for example, 'Thus, it is evident that the ethos of imperialism which surrounded the Boer War had little impact on the working class.' Or again, 'This does not mean that the young labourer was opposed to the war, it rather means that he did not respond in the conventionally patriotic manner; the young clerk with his middle-class pretensions and status, did.' Richard Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working Class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War, 1899-1902* (London: Routledge, 1972), p.241 etc. Some modern scholars offer Price limited support. M.D. Blanch concludes that the real jingoes were the lower middle class, and that after the mid-1900 victories it was this middle class which

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maintained the fervour for war. However, Blanch is only comparing degrees of enthusiasm, not suggesting that workers failed to celebrate the war at all. See essay by M.D. Blanch, 'British Society and the War' in Warwick and Spies, *The South African War : The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*. p.217, see also p.235. In any case Blanch stresses the high enlistment for the war and that the Conservative vote went up in the 1900 election.

<sup>35</sup> F. Maddison, 'Why British Workmen Condemn the War', *North American Review* 170, April 1900, p.518-519. He added that it was the British defeats in December which led to a quickening interest in the war, but that these disappointments also meant that, '...all traces of jingoism, which feeds on ignorance, have passed away'. Maddison blamed business interests for fomenting the war.

<sup>36</sup> John M. Mackenzie, ed. *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 63 and 66. Elsewhere Mackenzie with equal point writes that despite all evidence to the contrary some historians insist that the working classes were uninterested in the British Empire. John M. Mackenzie, ed. *Popular Imperialism and the Military, 1850-1950* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992). p.108. Part of the reason for this support for the war, some historians believe, was that some politicians, who were determined on war, stoked up public opinion: 'British public opinion, diligently nurtured by Chamberlain and Milner during the preceding months, responded with open enthusiasm to the coming of war.' Warwick and Spies, *The South African War : The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, p.58.

<sup>37</sup> Hyndman wrote, with regret: 'And among those who were most eager for the war and most jubilant at the slightest success were the wage-earners themselves in the very poorest localities'.

<sup>38</sup> Deian Hopkin, 'Socialism and Imperialism: The ILP Press and the Boer War', in *Impacts and Influences : Essays on Media Power in the Twentieth Century*, ed., James Curran, et. al. (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 20-21. The homes of opponents of the war were sometimes attacked by vengeful jingo crowds: Kingsley Martin recalled that their house had its windows broken because his father had spoken out against the war. Cited in J. B. Priestley, *The Edwardians* (London: Heinemann, 1970), p. 43.

<sup>39</sup> Paul Ward, 'Socialist responses to the Boer War', seminar at Inst. Historical Research, 15 Jan 1993.

<sup>40</sup> Edward Porritt, 'British Public Opinion and the Boer War', *The Outlook* 64, 17 Mar 1900, p.623-26. Porritt (1860-1921), was a political historian and journalist.

<sup>41</sup> This was on 22 October. Quoted in Warwick and Spies, *The South African War : The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, p.58. Warwick gives a vivid account from the *Daily Mail*.

<sup>42</sup> *Daily Mail* 19 May report, quoted in *Ibid.*, p.59.

<sup>43</sup> See essay by John M. Mackenzie in Simon James Potter, ed. *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain : Reporting the British Empire, c.1857-1921* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), p.28-9. Mackenzie cites this evidence to refute Price's contention of lack of working-class enthusiasm for the war. Incidentally, the idea of mafficking is sent up in Saki's story, 'Reginald's peace poem'.

<sup>44</sup> In response to Price's conclusions, Toulmin states: 'Working-class indifference to the conflict is certainly not apparent when one examines the impact of the war on popular leisure arenas frequented by the working class, such as the fairground and the music hall.' Vanessa Toulmin, *Electric Edwardians: The Story of the Mitchell & Kenyon Collection* (London: BFI, 2006), p.244.

<sup>45</sup> The satirical weekly, *Punch*, published a send-up of an ad for a variety theatre which had achieved success due to, 'No patriotic songs... No representation of the horrors of the battlefield. No imitation shells. No real gunpowder... You will not have to do the greater part of the singing, after paying for admission, and also contributing to a fund.' This satire suggests that these kind of excesses (patriotic songs, etc) were happening regularly by December. *Punch* 13 Dec 1899, p.286. Re attendance, see *Black and White Budget* 17 Mar 1900, p.5.

This source adds that when there was a British victory the custom increased, and vice versa.

<sup>46</sup> For example, during January 1900 (and again in May) the Rev. Thomas Jarret toured the East Anglia region lecturing on the war, and illustrated his talk with films as well as 'gigantic limelight views' of the leading men, soldiers, battles and places on both sides. Stephen Peart, *The Picture House in East Anglia* (Lavenham: Terrence Dalton, 1980), p.13. The May event was publicised by the town crier.

- <sup>47</sup> Quotation supplied to me by Nick Hiley from a letter in *The Outlook*, July 1900. This film could have been Warwick's *Boer Prisoners Under Escort*, or it is just possible that it was M&K's *Washing Boer Prisoners*, a comic, in which case these youths' reaction would have been more understandable.
- <sup>48</sup> 'Merry-go-round', *The Entr'acte* 18 Aug 1900, p.5. This source notes that young women were attracted to the war films but once there find 'other metal' more attractive. It is not clear what this means: does it mean money? (i.e. suggesting they are prostitutes?)
- <sup>49</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post* 2 March 1900, quoted in M.D. Blanch, 'Nation, Empire and the Birmingham Working Class, 1899-1914' (Ph.D., University of Birmingham, 1975), p. 325. Ads for these films didn't indicate that they were fakes: e.g. programmes for Empire Palace, Mar 1900 and Tivoli, Sep 1901.
- <sup>50</sup> 'Merry-go-round', *The Entr'acte* 7 Apr 1900, p.5. It concluded, 'But we see those grand bits of tumbling ocean no longer'.
- <sup>51</sup> *The Cigarette* 11 Apr 1900, p.10.
- <sup>52</sup> *BJP Lantern Record* 4 May 1900, p.33.
- <sup>53</sup> *The Entr'acte* 12 May 1900, p.7.
- <sup>54</sup> My translation from Gustave Téry, 'L'enthousiasme populaire au cinématographe', *Ciné Journal*, 14 Oct 1911, p.17. Originally in *Le Journal*.
- <sup>55</sup> V.W. Cook, 'The Humours of 'Living Picture' Making', *Chambers Journal*, 30 June 1900, p.488.
- <sup>56</sup> *Khakigraph*: Era 15 May 1900, p.18, col.3. *Boerograph*: Era 2 June 1900, p.19, col.3.
- <sup>57</sup> T.C. Hepworth, 'Music and "effects" in cinematography', *Showman* 6 September 1901, p.574-5. This long article discusses appropriate and inappropriate music and effects for Boer War films, including gunfire.
- <sup>58</sup> *Showman* 5 Jan 1901, p.14. The fact that both these effects mentioned were evidently for war films attests to the continuing importance of war films into 1901 as I argue below.
- <sup>59</sup> 'Pictures at the St James Hall', *Manchester Evening News*, 18 Jun 1901, p.5. Reference from NFA. This was a report of a show at the St. James's Hall by the Edison Animated Photo Company. The critic added that this smoke was unrealistic, as the British forces used smokeless powder.
- <sup>60</sup> A programme for a film show by the Tee brothers at Young Men's Christian Institute 27 Feb 1900 (misprinted 1899), from Tony Fletcher. *Southern Weekly News*, 19 May 1900. Cutting in Tee collection, Brighton PL.
- <sup>61</sup> This poster is for a show in Banff, 5 April 1900, to be accompanied by pipe and drum by the Gordon Highlanders.
- <sup>62</sup> *Holmfirth Express* 17 March 1900. This show at the Drill Hall, Holmfirth told the story from the Jameson raid onwards, and garnered big cheers for images of the leaders in the besieged towns and for General Roberts and the Queen. Courtesy R. Brown.
- <sup>63</sup> For example, in East Anglia in January 1900 a show of war films included views of the embarkation of Sir Redvers Buller and of the troop-ship, Roslin Castle (both of which brought forth rounds of cheering). The scenes also included Colonial troops and cavalry on the march, the digging of trenches, passing of an armoured train, savages attacking a square, Lord Roberts embarking for South Africa and the reviewing of the troops by the Queen. See Stephen Peart, *The Picture House in East Anglia*, p.12. Sometimes actuality and fake views of the war were shown in the same programme, as printed in a handbill for the Literary Institute, Wingate, which also included one Boxer title. Held at the Bill Douglas Centre.
- <sup>64</sup> PN 22 June 1900, p.386. The journal commented on the relative novelty of this film/stage combination.
- <sup>65</sup> Richard Brown, 'War on the Home Front: The Anglo-Boer War and the Growth of Rental in Britain. An Economic Perspective', *Film History*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2004, p.28-36.
- <sup>66</sup> Warwick reduced the price of its films on 3 December. AP 7 Dec 1900, p.457.
- <sup>67</sup> Val Royle, 'To attract the public', *Showman*, Sep 1900, p.17.
- <sup>68</sup> 'The showman world', *Showman* 12 Oct 1901, p.22.
- <sup>69</sup> *Showman* Nov 1900, p.53.
- <sup>70</sup> *Showman* Sep 1900, p.3. This was Harry H. Hamilton Co.'s visiting show.
- <sup>71</sup> *Showman* Nov 1900, np.
- <sup>72</sup> The films were screened in Leeds by Hy. Hibbert's show, including a film of the funeral of Queen Victoria. The verdict of the audience, the report stated enigmatically, 'was one to be proud of'. *The Magnet* 16 Feb 1901, p.4.

- <sup>73</sup> *The Magnet* 9 Mar 1901, p.5. The films were shown by the North American Photo Co. Incidentally, all the music halls in Birmingham advertised the latest pictures of the Boer and China wars. Blanch, 'Nation, Empire and the Birmingham Working Class, 1899-1914', p. 324.
- <sup>74</sup> Even in early 1902 a programme at Prince of Wales hall, Kentish Town in London still had a lot of South African war films. *Showman* 14 Feb 1902, p.356. And in May, at Biddall's bioscope show in Reading, at least one item was featured about the war: 'pictures illustrating Lord Methuen's great fight and capture...' (referring to the capture of this British commander by the Boers two months earlier): it is not clear what kind of film it was, or perhaps it was a lantern slide only? 'Showmen's notes, *MHTR* 9 May 1902, p.301. This item notes that cinematographs were the main attractions at the fairs.
- <sup>75</sup> *Showman* Dec 1900, p.59; Gutsche, p.47.
- <sup>76</sup> *Photographic Chronicle* 1 Aug 1901, p.61.
- <sup>77</sup> '£900 being cleared in three weeks at Newcastle', states 'Showmen's notes', *MHTR* 28 Nov 1902, p.357.
- <sup>78</sup> *BJP* 1 Aug 1902, p.616. Thomas added that his failure was also due to 'the counter attraction of the pantomimes', though it is not clear if he means staged pantomimes or film versions, such as the Méliès scenes. Incidentally, his full name was Arthur Duncan Thomas.
- <sup>79</sup> *BJP* 21 Nov 1902, p.956. He had originally toured with films of the Spanish-American War.
- <sup>80</sup> *The Times* 26 Oct 1902, p.4. The report added that after this decline, '...instead of continuing to make a large profit he sustained a loss'. He had heavy expenses and had to sell some equipment, and by April 1902 crisis hit and his projection machines were being seized all over the country in lieu of payment for rent. He repeated that this decline in his business leading to bankruptcy was 'caused by the public interest in the Boer War and in war pictures generally having ceased'. The state of the fairground market for films may be indicated from the number of film ads in the *Showmen's Yearbook*. Issues for 1900 and 1902 (I have not seen 1901) show a good number of film ads, but the 1903 volume has considerably fewer, suggesting that a decline in the film business perhaps occurred during 1902. Issues of the *Showmen's Yearbook* are held at the NFA.
- <sup>81</sup> David E. Omissi and Andrew S. Thompson, eds., *The Impact of the South African War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p.275: though privately European governments and the US government supported a British victory. There was phenomenal public hostility to Britain during the war, in Germany, France and Russia. See Robert K. Massie, *Dreadnought : Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War* (London: Cape, 1992), p.272, 293, 342. The French and Germans were very anti-British: the Germans thought the Boers were making a heroic struggle; the French wanted to get their own back after Fachoda. See Warwick and Spies, *The South African War : The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, p.311-12. See also Donal Lowry, ed. *The South African War Reappraised Studies in Imperialism (Manchester, England)* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.215-221 re the pro-Boers on the Continent, in USA, etc.
- <sup>82</sup> Kenneth Griffith, *Thank God We Kept the Flag Flying : The Siege and Relief of Ladysmith, 1899-1900* (London: Hutchinson, 1974), p.42 and 54: there were Germans, Irish, Americans, even British volunteers. See also Lowry, ed. *The South African War Reappraised*, p.212-15 on foreign contingents fighting in the Boer War.
- <sup>83</sup> Warwick and Spies, *The South African War : The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, p.320. Public figures (Roosevelt and Mark Twain, for example) ultimately thought that Britain should be supported
- <sup>84</sup> On this anti-British material, see Lowry, ed. *The South African War Reappraised*, p.207-11. On anti-British views in Paris, see *MHTR* 2 May 1902.
- <sup>85</sup> There were disagreements among the various nationalists themselves, and in the dramatic world too. See Ben Levitas, *The Theatre of Nation: Irish Drama and Cultural Nationalism, 1890-1916* (Clarendon, 2002), p.51-5
- <sup>86</sup> Terence Denman, "'The Red Livery of Shame": the Campaign against Army Recruitment in Ireland, 1899-1914', *Irish Historical Studies* 29, 1994-95, p.208-33. After the war the anti-recruitment campaign gathered pace.
- <sup>87</sup> Donal P. McCracken, *Forgotten Protest : Ireland and the Anglo-Boer War* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2003), p.45.
- <sup>88</sup> Donal P. McCracken, *ibid.* See also essays by Lowry in Simon James Potter, ed. *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain : Reporting the British Empire, c.1857-1921*

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(Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004): p.16, 132-3 and 159. Lowry states that Ireland was the only part of the UK where police clamped down on a newspaper due to its pro-Boer stance.

<sup>89</sup> The pro-Boer shouted, 'It's a so-and-so lie' to which the lecturer suavely retorted, 'it was a so-and-so shell'. T.W. Kingston, 'The patter of a raconteur', *KLW* 3 Dec 1908, p.771.

Presumably 'picture show' in this context meant slides only.

<sup>90</sup> From a brochure, *Pooles 1837-1937: 100 Years of Showmanship* (1937), p.8. BFI Special Collections. This also mentions a similar reaction in Ireland to a lantern slide of the Prince of Wales in India, which had to be disguised to make it more acceptable to spectators.

<sup>91</sup> 'Music hall gossip', *Era* 5 Oct 1901, p.20. *The Era* was, of course, a British periodical, so might have been exaggerating somewhat. As we shall see, a similar closure followed such outbursts in a German theatre.

<sup>92</sup> Letter from an old showman, Dr. Thomas Howard, in *Cinematograph Exhibitor's Mail* 29 Apr 1914, p.227. Possibly this same incident is being referred to – a screen shot at in Ireland during the screening of a film of Queen Victoria during the Boer War – in the brochure, *Pooles 1837-1937: 100 Years of Showmanship*, op. cit.

<sup>93</sup> *Kilkenny Journal* 4 Aug 1900. This is one of various newspaper cuttings found by Tony Fletcher in this newspaper. On the 17 Feb a Boer War film show was advertised by a Dublin lecturer, Mr. Mason. The paper later announced shows for 16 and 27 November of war films, and also several films of Queen Victoria's visit to Ireland.

<sup>94</sup> 'The Art of the Showman', *BJP* 14 Oct 1904, p.894. The article opens by citing a writer in the current number of *The Easy Chair* magazine (and quoting his phrase 'the camera cannot lie'), and it is possible that this Boer War anecdote is from the same magazine.

<sup>95</sup> Charles à Court Repington, *Vestigia* (London: Constable and Co. Ltd., 1919), p.244.

<sup>96</sup> PRO, London. FO 123/406: Belgian embassy letter book, Feb to April 1900, including complaints about cartoons and a play. FO 125/13: 1899 to 1901 letters, Belgium.

<sup>97</sup> 'Notes and comments', *AP* 11 May 1900, p.361. This article noted that Anglophobia was as rampant in Belgium at that time as it was in France and some other Continental countries. The article also refers to the illustrator Harry Furniss, who suggested that some of the worst attacks on England by foreign nations during the war were by caricaturists, comparing these scurrilous drawings to explosives aimed at England.

<sup>98</sup> As I have mentioned above, scurrilous cartoons about the monarch had already set alarm bells ringing.

<sup>99</sup> Presumably this was the Théâtre de la Scala (1887-1930), which is now the UGC-De Brouckère.

<sup>100</sup> Official file headed, 'Hostile manifestations in a Brussels music hall', in FO 10/734, #100. And see FO 123/406. It is not certain that the film show referred to in the *AP* article of 11 May is the Scala, but I think it highly likely.

<sup>101</sup> The two titles mentioned are probably mis-described films of some other events (perhaps, as we shall see, one was of the jubilee procession). They may have been shown in October 1899 at 'Circus Arena' (see the following section) as, respectively, no.6 'Vertrek Transv. Boeren uit Pretoria'; and no.1 'De Transvaalsche Boeren op weg naar de grens'.

<sup>102</sup> On the 16<sup>th</sup> Plunkett wrote to thank the Bourgmaster for the report.

<sup>103</sup> Charles à Court Repington, *Vestigia*, p.244.

<sup>104</sup> Letter from film historian Geoffrey Donaldson to the author, 1 Feb 1993. In the same letter Donaldson noted that he had never come across anything indicating that the British ambassador complained that anti-British films were being shown in Holland.

<sup>105</sup> On feeling against English music hall artistes in Holland and Germany, see *MHTR* 3 May 1901 and 7 Mar 1902 respectively.

<sup>106</sup> I have copies of four ads from the *Algemeen Handelsblad*, for 17 Oct, 27 Oct, 1 Nov, 22 Nov. Courtesy of NFM research department.

<sup>107</sup> The original titles are: 1. De Transvaalsche Boeren op weg naar de grens. 2. Aanval op een commando Transvaalsche Boeren, die sich in een carré hebben opgesteld. 3. Gevecht der Transvaalsche Boeren tegen Matabellen [or met de Matabelen]. 4. Nederl Vrijwilligers-Corps. (Commando Dr. Coster). 5. Vertrek Transv. Boeren uit Pretoria. 6. Eedsaflegging Pres. Kruger. 7. Gezichten uit Transvaal. These are the titles listed for each of the dates: 17 Oct: titles #1, 2, 3. 27 Oct: same 3 titles, featured more prominently this time. 1 Nov: title #1. 22 Nov: titles #1, 4, 5, 6, 7. The Boer War was called the 'war in the Transvaal' in Holland at the time.

<sup>108</sup> See title descriptions of *Savage South Africa* in Barnes, 1899 volume, p.265.

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<sup>109</sup> Frank Van der Maden, 'Mobiele Filmexploitatie in Nederland, 1895-1913... de Ontwikkeling Te Nijmegen', Thesis, Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, 1981, p.38: from a newspaper ad, 7 Oct 1899.

<sup>110</sup> Letter to me from Karel Dibbets, 4 Jan 1993. One awaits his publication on this theme with interest.

<sup>111</sup> Nigel Gosling, *Paris, 1900-1914 : The Miraculous Years* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978), p.13.

<sup>112</sup> Reported in BJP 19 Jan 1900, p.43: this quoted 'the Paris correspondent of a contemporary' (i.e. a contemporary periodical).

<sup>113</sup> Nigel Gosling, *Paris 1900-1914*, op. cit., p.13.

<sup>114</sup> It was the *Birmingham Daily Mail* which stated 28 Nov 1899: '...it is a wonder that half a dozen stalwart Englishmen, armed with good horsewhips, do not go over to Paris and administer a severe castigation to the vulgar cowards... what the Parisian lacks in physical stamina, he makes up for in vulgar abuse of his enemy... Like a dog he barks loudest in his own kennel'. The pro-Boer attitude persisted in France even after the end of the war, and during Edward VII's ice-breaking visit in 1903 a few groups were still shouting, 'Vivent les Boers!' Vincent Cronin, *Paris on the Eve 1900-1914* (London: Collins, 1989), p.63.

<sup>115</sup> 'Shot and Shell', *Pearson's Illustrated War News* 9 Dec 1899, p.11.

<sup>116</sup> And, added this report, poor 'Tommy', being just a film image, 'hearing nothing and seeing nothing... could not throw off his belt and jacket and shout, "'Arf a mo'" to his insulters'. BJP 19 Jan 1900, p.43, op. cit.

<sup>117</sup> NY Clipper, 10 March 1900, p.27. Quoted in Musser, *Edison Motion Pictures... Filmography*, p.586.

<sup>118</sup> René Noell, 'Histoire du Spectacle Cinématographique à Perpignan de 1896 à 1944', *Cahiers de la Cinémathèque*, numéro spécial, 1er trimestre 1973, p.22.

<sup>119</sup> 'Historique du cinéma à Marseille' by 'The Old', *L'Officiel de la Fédération cinématographique du Midi de la France* Jan 1914, p.8. This states: 'le bonisseur était costumé en vaillant soldat de Kruger'. Of the cinema's location, it notes: 'Il était installé à côté du Modern actuel, au lieu et place de l'auditorium Pathé-Phono'. This all seems somewhat dubious. If this really was a cinema as such, it would presumably have opened during the cinema building boom beginning c.1906; but if this late could it really have been showing only Boer War films? One example where there was no anti-Britishness was at a circus in Limoges, in the late Summer of 1900, where the audience heard both Boer and British anthems as films were shown to an audience including Britons. See Pierre Berneau and Jeanne Berneau, *Le Spectacle Cinématographique à Limoges, de 1896 à 1945* (Paris: AFRHC, 1992), p.32.

<sup>120</sup> Ulrich Kröll, *Die Internationale Buren-Agitation, 1899-1902* (Münster: Verlag Regensberg, 1973), p.53-55.

<sup>121</sup> There were live shows about the Boer War, and panorama paintings by Karl Gocksch, who advertised these in April 1900 as 'War in Africa, Cronje's Arrest, Lord Robert's Entry in Bloemfontain, as well as all notable battles'. See *Der Komet* no.787, 21 April 1900, p. 27. Near the end of 1900 at the Concerthaus, Hamburg, a group of 18 German ex-volunteers from South Africa, described the war and showed some images – probably lantern slides – with most of the proceeds to go to families in the Transvaal. Ad in *Hamburger Fremden-Blatt* 1 and 4 Dec 1900 (both courtesy Deac Rossell).

<sup>122</sup> Ann Taylor Allen, *Satire and Society in Wilhemine Germany: Kladderadatsch and Simplicissimus, 1890-1914* (U. Press of Kentucky, 1984), p.129-131. Though these two periodicals were in general even more contemptuous of Slavs and Russians than Britons.

<sup>123</sup> Ann Taylor Allen, *Satire and Society in Wilhemine Germany*, p.129-131.

<sup>124</sup> *Der Komet* no.773, 13 Jan 1900: reproduces a letter from Lubszynski of 18 Oct 1899 requesting these war films.

<sup>125</sup> Ulrich Kröll, *Die Internationale Buren-Agitation, 1899-1902*, p.53-55.

<sup>126</sup> *Neues Münchener Tagblatt*, no. 341, 8 Dec 1899. Found by Martin Loiperdinger who kindly sent me the reference. This venue was advertised as the 'Feinstes Variété-Theater Münchens'.

<sup>127</sup> Ann Taylor Allen, *Satire and Society in Wilhemine Germany*, p.129-131.

<sup>128</sup> These incidents are covered in detail in Martin Loiperdinger, 'Biograph-Bilder Vom Burenkrieg – Münchner Polizezensur Hört Aufs Publikum', *KINtop*, no. 14-15, 2006, p.66-75.



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<sup>129</sup> *Der Artist* 1 Apr 1900. *Le Temps* reported that the police in Munich had just announced this ban on Boer war films on a poster in the city, this being due to belief that there would be anti-English demonstrations by the public. *Le Temps* 26 Mar 1900, p.1, col.6. In Germany at that time the authorities had the power to prohibit offending pictures or films. In fact the theatre was also showing some risqué films with semi-nude performers, and the authorities tolerated these, though not the Boer War films.

<sup>130</sup> Films of the Boer War were screened as the genre of 'optical news'. Joseph Garncarz, 'Filmprogramm im Variété: die "Optische Berichterstattung"', in Uli Jung and Martin Loiperdinger, eds., *Geschichte des Dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland. Band 1: Kaisereich, 1895-1918* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2005).

<sup>131</sup> Apollon Davidson and I. Filatova, *The Russians and the Anglo-Boer War* (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1998).

<sup>132</sup> Malgorzata Hendrykowska, 'Film Journeys of the Krzeminski Brothers, 1900-1908', *Film History* 6, no. 2, Summer 1994, p.206-218.

<sup>133</sup> Ad from *Petersburg Gazette* [Петербургская газета], no. 81, 24 or 26 March 1902, p. 1. Courtesy of Yashit Yangirov.

<sup>134</sup> Sir Charles Scott (1838-1934) was the British ambassador in St. Petersburg, 1898-1904.

<sup>135</sup> I have amended the punctuation slightly, but otherwise the text is exactly as it appeared in Sir Charles Scott papers, vol.9, p.78-78b. British Library, Add. MSS. 52302. This file copy is just an extract from the letter, which is undated but is filed between letters of August 1901 and one of 24 January 1902, so is probably from late 1901.

<sup>136</sup> One reason was that Britain had supported the USA in the Spanish-American War, but the main reason for favouring the British was 'social Darwinism': that Britain was, as the *New York Times* put it, 'fighting for the speed and advance of civilisation'. From 'The British advance', *New York Times* 16 Jan 1900. Similarly the *New Orleans Picayune* 6 Nov 1899 wrote that the Boers must perish in face of the 'superior colonizing genius of the English race'. Both quoted in Marvin Olasky, 'Social Darwinism on the Editorial Page: American Newspapers and the Boer War', *Journalism Quarterly* 65, Summer 1988, p.420-24. Among the public there was considerable sympathy for the Boers, a people it was felt who bore some similarities to the Americans themselves, in bravely pioneering a vast land.

<sup>137</sup> Lewis Jacobs, *The Rise of the American Film, a Critical History* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1968), p.13.

<sup>138</sup> James Martin Miller, *South Africa; Scenes from the "Dark Continent" and the British-Boer War* [etc] (Chicago: Stereopticon & film exchange, 1900).

<sup>139</sup> 'Biograph is the real star', *New York Telegraph* 7 Mar 1900.

<sup>140</sup> For example, at the 'Cineograph Theatre' which opened in San Francisco in 1899, the signs on the front stated: 'Scenes from the British Boer War, Transvaal war. Admission 10 c.' See picture on p.124 in Carl Hertz, *A Modern Mystery Merchant: The Trials, Tricks and Travels of Carl Hertz, the Famous American Illusionist* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1924). The picture is of Hertz' brother in law, A.W. Furst's cinema, the Cineograph Theatre. Hertz claims that this was the first in the world for films only. See also Musser, *Emergence*, p.272-3.

<sup>141</sup> Musser and Nelson, *High-Class Moving Pictures*, p.101 (and see p.133 on Howe's pro-British attitude). This source suggests they were probably British films. Some of the Edison fakes showed the Boers winning, but were produced too late to have been shown in January. See Blanch, 'Nation, Empire and the Birmingham Working Class, 1899-1914', op. cit., p.116.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*, p.106, 108. There were also a couple of Boer war films at the start of the programme, as a 'tease' to the main Boer section.

<sup>143</sup> David E. Omissi and Andrew S. Thompson, eds., *The Impact of the South African War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002). p.237. Carman Miller, *Painting the Map Red: Canada and the South African War, 1899-1902* (Montreal: McGill U.P., 1993): this stresses that the response was not monolithic even among 'English' Canadians. See also website re Canadians in the Boer War: <http://www.civilization.ca/cwm/boer>.

<sup>144</sup> Robert W. Gutteridge, *Magic Moments: First 20 Years of Moving Pictures in Toronto (1894-1914)* (Whitby, Ont.: Gutteridge-Pratley Publications, 2000), p.80-81.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*. Also films were shown of their embarkation on the steamer 'Sardinian', the embarkation of one of the famous British regiments at Southampton, and a mountain battery, with mules: a total of 500 feet. Incidentally, for the concert the previous week, on 25 November, cinematograph views had been announced of Britain's forces, land and sea, in review, but they didn't materialise.

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<sup>146</sup> Though at the end is a group of films showing Canadian regiments in Canada before departure. This show of 'moving pictures by the biograph' took place 2 to 7 April 1900 at 3:30 and 8:30 pm daily. A handwritten note on the programme states that it 'took place in Victoria', which might mean that it was also put on in Victoria, B.C. From CIHM/ICMH microfiche series, no. 17542.

<sup>147</sup> The pageants' construction, although similar to certain types of variety performances, produced a new formula for 'artistic' cinema: at least this was the argument of Marta Braun, Charlie Keil and Charles Tepperman in a paper, 'Patriotic Pageants in Toronto' proposed for the Domitor conference at Udine 2000, but not finally delivered.

<sup>148</sup> 'Our Boys in Africa', in *Montreal Daily Star*, 23 novembre 1900. Quoted in Germain Lacasse, 'Le bonimenteur et le cinéma oral : Le cinéma "muet" entre tradition et modernité.' Université de Montréal, PhD, 1996. Chapitre 3 : 'Le montreur de lanterne magique'. This show included images of the troops in mid-ocean.

<sup>149</sup> Noted in W. J. Lines, *Taming the Great South Land* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991).

<sup>150</sup> In the NFSA are shots taken on 28 Oct 1899 of the First Queensland Contingent parading in the streets at Brisbane. Then on 31 Oct they are seen loading horses on their ship.

<sup>151</sup> James Sabine, ed. *A Century of Australian Cinema* (Melbourne, 1995), p.22.

<sup>152</sup> *North Hill Free Press* 16 Oct 1900. A poster for Stevenson's show, 23 & 24 Nov 1900 is in the State Library of Tasmania.

<sup>153</sup> J.C. Williamson's bio-tableau company gave a show 6 Dec 1900, including a segment entitled, 'With Roberts to Pretoria', and was back the next year from 29 Jun 1901 with more 'animated pictures' from the Boer War. The Biograph Company was there from 16 Mar 1901 with a series entitled, 'In South Africa with the troops by Biograph'.

<sup>154</sup> This was in the Royal Wanganui Opera House. See <http://www.royaloperahouse.co.nz>

<sup>155</sup> 'Our New Zealand letter', *The Theatre* (Sydney) 1 June 1906, p.21. The two shows which survived, it noted, were called Montgomery's and Macdermott's.

<sup>156</sup> *Der Komet* no.786, 14 April 1900, p. 23. This was by the Schweizer Phonoscop- und Automaten-Werke A. G., Zürich.

<sup>157</sup> Francè Brenk and Fedja Sturm, *Aperçu de l'Histoire du Cinéma Yougoslave* (Ljubljana: Académie de l'art dramatique, 1961), p.8.

<sup>158</sup> This statement is from A. Esoofally, who became a pioneer film showman in India. Erik Barnouw and S. Krishnaswamy, *Indian Film* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p.8-9.

<sup>159</sup> Vicente Gesualdo, 'Prehistoria del Cine en Buenos Aires', *Lyra* 20, 1962, p.186-88. // *Papagallo*, no.4, 25 Jan 1903: the caption says Chamberlain is getting the laurels of the Transvaal; one can see the lantern projector clearly.