

The home front

The conditions in the concentration camps created an international outcry.

In Britain produced criticism against the war.

The Liberal leader Henry Campbell-Bannerman talked about «methods of barbarism» used in South Africa.

Many of the opponents of the war, the pro-Boers, took a religious and humanitarian tone. The pro-Boers concentrated their attacks on the «jingoistic» Unionist government. They sent Emily Hobhouse to produce a report on the conditions in the camps. She concluded that «the army have no humanity».

However the views of the radicals and the socialist press did not reflect a broader opposition to the war among the working class and in Britain as a whole.

Wyatt recorded that there was «selfishness in the working class areas» but he found that few working class people believed the war was being fought to obtain democratic rights for the immigrants.

The world-wide outrage against the concentration camps was much more pronounced.

At first, Britain refused to accept the claims made about the «barbaric» concentration camps. It claimed that the camps were «voluntary» and refused to give details about the number of people who had died in them.

In 1902 the Boer leader surrendered.

The peace terms the Boers were offered reflected the general view that the war had been a blunder.

All Afrikaaner prisoners who signed an oath of loyalty to the British crown were freed from the concentration camps.

The British agreed to pay the costs of war damage, offered loans for re-building, promised to safeguard the Afrikaaner language and to restore free elections and self-government at the earliest opportunity.

# The consequences of the Boer War

- The damage to the Unionist Government.

The Unionist Government led Britain into the war and was damaged by its consequences.

Milner refused to accept the responsibility for what had gone wrong.

In 1904 he agreed to import Chinese labourers to work in South Africa gold mines. This confirmed that the war was fought for the gold mines.

- The Growth of Anti-Imperialism.

The war led to a definite anti-imperialist group emerging within British politics and society.

Before the war the worst motive attributed to supporters of imperialism was excessive patriotism. After the war imperialism became synonymous of «maverick politicians» and «methods of barbarism».

- The «Revolution» in British Foreign Policy.

Before the Boer War Britain believed itself strong enough to follow an independent foreign policy (splendid isolation). No military alliances were entered into with other major powers.

Soon after the war the policy was abandoned. Britain sought diplomatic agreements anywhere she could find them.

- The Growth of Anglo-German Antagonism.

In 1899 some leading members of the Unionist Government had been in favour of an Anglo-German agreement. But the concentration camps scandal made it impossible.

Anglo-German antagonism intensified between 1902 and 1914.

It was widely believed that the Boer War had revealed the «weakening of the British race».

Imperialists tended to become «scaremongers», forming a range of military and naval pressure groups.

The Conservative press warned of German spies and possible invasions.

- The Defense Review of the Edwardian Era.

The war led to a major review of British defense.

There were government investigations into military planning, military needs, recruitment, army and navy organization, food and ammunition supply.

Army, navy and social reforms followed.

- The end of the *Pax Britannica*.

The war damaged the widely held idea that the British Empire spread peace and prosperity.

The high moral tone Britain had struck in its diplomatic relations rang hollow after the concentration camps.

- The Legacy for South African Politics.

After the war a terrible political situation was allowed to develop in South Africa.

In 1906 it had been restored self-government and free elections. In 1910 the Orange River, the Transvaal, and Cape Colony agreed to form the Union of South Africa.

This Boer dominated Union was able to develop a racist state.

- The move towards Dominion Status.

The other self-governed colonies (Australia, Canada, New Zealand) sought a re-definition of their relationship with Britain in the years following the conflict. They objected to being called «colonies».

In 1907 the term «dominion» was used to describe all the self-government areas of the Empire.

An Imperial Conference was set up to decide future constitutional disputes within the Empire. The «dominions» could now outvote Britain on matters related to their own constitutional relationship with the mother country.