

**THE BOER WAR:  
ARMY, NATION AND EMPIRE**

**HOME FRONT LARGESSE:  
COLONIAL PATRIOTIC FUNDS AND THE BOER WAR  
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**'Pay! Pay! Pay!'**

On page five of the *Brisbane Courier* on 20 December 1899, Rudyard Kipling's new poem, 'The Absent-Minded Beggar', was published. Simultaneously across the Australian colonies, other newspapers printed the poem which was to become a huge hit for Kipling and one of the theme songs of the Boer War. It was set to music by Sir Arthur Sullivan (of Gilbert and Sullivan fame). Despite the fact that the verse was often described as 'admirable in sentiment, but deplorable in poetry', the poem was recited and sung across the British Empire. By all accounts, the poem raised a substantial amount of money for the various patriotic funds.<sup>1</sup> For example, in January 1900 the singing of 'The Absent-Minded Beggar' at a concert in Broken Hill brought in £14.<sup>2</sup>

When you've shouted 'Rule Britannia'—when you've sung 'God Save the Queen'—  
When you've finished killing Kruger with your mouth—  
Will you kindly drop a shilling in my little tambourine  
For a gentleman in khaki ordered South?  
He's an absent-minded beggar, and his weaknesses are great—  
But we and Paul must take him as we find him—  
He is out on active service, wiping something off a slate—  
And he's left a lot o' little things behind him!

Duke's son—cook's son—son of a hundred kings—  
(Fifty thousand horse and foot going to Table Bay!)  
Each of 'em doing his country's work (and who's to look after their things?)  
Pass the hat for your credit's sake, and pay! pay! pay!

There are girls he married secret, asking no permission to,  
For he knew he wouldn't get it if he did  
There is gas and coals and vittles, and the house-rent falling due,  
And it's more than rather likely there's a kid.  
There are girls he walked with casual, they'll be sorry now he's gone,  
For an absent-minded beggar they will find him,  
But it ain't the time for sermons with the winter coming on—  
We must help the girl that Tommy's left behind him!

Cook's son—Duke's son—son of a belted Earl—  
Son of a Lambeth publican—it's all the same to-day!  
Each of 'em doing his country's work (and who's to look after the girl?)  
Pass the hat for your credit's sake, and pay! pay! pay!

There are families by thousands, far too proud to beg or speak—  
And they'll put their sticks and bedding up the spout,  
And they'll live of half o' nothing paid 'em punctual once a week,  
'Cause the man that earned the wage is ordered out.  
He's an absent-minded beggar, but he heard his country call,  
And his regiment didn't need to send to find him:  
He chucked his job and joined it—so the job before us all  
Is to help the home that Tommy's left behind him!

Duke's job—cook's job—gardener, baronet, groom—  
Mews or palace or paper-shop—there's some one gone away!  
Each of 'em doing his country's work (and what have you got to spare?)  
Pass the hat for your credit's sake, and pay! pay! pay!

Let us manage so as later we can look him in the face,  
And tell him—what he'd very much prefer—  
That, while he saved the Empire his employer saved his place,  
And his mates (that's you and me) looked out for her.  
He's an absent-minded beggar, and he may forget it all,  
But we do not want his kiddies to remind him  
That we sent 'em to the workhouse while their daddy hammered Paul,  
So we'll help the homes our Tommy's left behind him!

Cook's home—Duke's home—home of a millionaire.  
(Fifty thousand horse and foot going to Table Bay!)  
Each of 'em doing his country's work (and what have you got to spare?)  
Pass the hat for your credit's sake, and pay! pay! pay!

Five months later, on 21 May 1900, the *Sydney Morning Herald* published a series of articles which heralded the relief of Mafeking with headlines screaming: 'Unparalleled Rejoicings in England—Tumultuous Scenes in London—A Moral and not a Military Triumph—Rejoicings throughout the British Empire'. (Mafeking turned into a series of huge public celebrations across the Australian colonies despite the fact that a few hundred Queenslanders were the only Australians anywhere near the action.) The adjacent column listed the colony's roll of honour with 28 deaths and nearly 100 casualties from a possible 2672 men currently in South Africa.<sup>3</sup> Next to these news items was a column entitled 'The Patriotic Fund' in which the Treasurers of the fund, Messrs J Russell French (Managing Director of the Bank of New South Wales) and TA Dibbs (Managing Director of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney), advised that there was currently £41,766-4-7 in the account. If £100 in 1900 is approximately \$16,000 in 1999, then that figure equates to over \$6,500,000 by today's standards—not a bad effort from a New South Wales population of just over 1,300,000. The news item then went on to list the proceedings of various fundraising efforts including £10 collected from employees of the Koorawatha to Grenfell railway; £3-16-5 from the AMB (Absent-Minded Beggars) Jubilee Singers; the proceeds of a bazaar held by the girls of the Nowra Patriotic League which raised over £28; and the school concert in Grenfell where almost £20 was raised for the patriotic fund.<sup>4</sup>

The Kipling poem, 'Absent-Minded Beggars', for all its verbosity and purple poetry, and the random extract from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, are very useful examples illustrating the major point addressed in this paper. Patriotic funds were very popular with a broad section of the colonial population, and they played a very important role in mobilising the population at large in support of the war effort or more importantly, the soldiers who went to war and their dependents, their wives and children. Additionally, by examining the patriotic fund movement, one can possibly gain further insights into how the home front and general population reacted to the war, and how this British war was perceived by ordinary Australians at the turn of the century.

It is unfortunate that much of the literature on the Boer War, and Australia at war generally, especially that which focuses on repatriation themes, has either totally omitted the role and presence of the patriotic funds or given them cursory note.<sup>5</sup> The result of this neglect has been to largely misunderstand the functions, importance, and influence of patriotic funds during periods of war.<sup>6</sup> Both Boer War historians LM Field and CN Connolly have argued, albeit briefly, that there was little overall public support for the patriotic funds in terms of monies raised during the Boer War. Field continued that 'the very modest support for the Patriotic Funds' revealed a general 'lack of depth in support for the war'.<sup>7</sup> Field, however, appears to contradict himself when he later states that £100,000 had been donated to the Imperial Patriotic Fund by 30 March 1900.<sup>8</sup> (This equates to an impressive \$16 million in today's terms.) As Joan Neal has revealed in her BA Honours thesis on Charters Towers in Queensland during the Boer War, general community support for the patriotic funds in that particular rural district was very strong, especially in the ongoing financial contributions bequeathed to the fund.<sup>9</sup>

Connolly, who focused on New South Wales in his revisionist study of 'the new imperialism' argument of the Boer War, stated that much of the early work by Penny and Haydon is flawed.<sup>10</sup> He argued that they focused predominantly on middle class sources which ignored and/or stifled any general opposition which existed to the war. The essence of Connolly's argument was that the rampant new imperialism was 'primarily a middle class doctrine' espoused by those of English or Scottish descent.<sup>11</sup> He further supported this contention by stating that in regards to New South Wales, newspaper support, which was substantial, was due to the fact that the four Sydney metropolitan dailies were run by conservative, wealthy businessmen; that patriotic rallies and patriotic funds were organised and supported by middle class groups such as the Australasian Natives' Association and local councils; and that giving to the patriotic funds was generally disappointing and not widely supported. As evidence, Connolly cited one figure of donations to the Patriotic Fund and compares it with that subscribed to the Sudan War 15 years earlier.<sup>12</sup>

Barry Bridges discusses the New South Wales Patriotic Fund in his PhD thesis and is particularly critical of its apparent reluctance to actually pay out to needy veterans and their families. By June 1901, only £12,440 had been paid out with almost £40,000 still in hand, with the trustees arguing that the fund was to 'assist' not 'support' clients.<sup>13</sup> This was an ongoing and contentious issue for patriotic funds not only during the Boer War but particularly later in the First World War when the demands on the patriotic funds was arguably greater.<sup>14</sup>

There is little doubt that there was a greater level of general public support for the war in October 1899 than there was by May 1902. In October 1899, the general public response to the patriotic funds was very good but as the war progressed and went into the guerrilla phase, with all the horrors of interning Boer women and children, with the burning and looting of their farms, the patriotic fund movement became quieter. This is demonstrated by the disappearance of articles and news stories on the funds which were significant at the beginning of the war. By the time the Anti-War League was formed in New South Wales in December 1901, there was a substantial mood swing in public opinion and the increasing silence from the patriotic funds is further evidence of this.

But there was plenty of money subscribed to the various patriotic funds; demand was not overwhelming; and other events such as Federation and ongoing tragedies such as the Port Kembla mine disaster of 1902 drew people's attention away from the increasingly distant war in South Africa. It is also important to remember that when the Boer War commenced the Australian colonies were emerging from the grips of one of the worst economic depressions yet experienced and a new century beckoned. There was also a resurrection of organised sport in the late 1890s. The colonists had defeated the English in cricket in 1897/98 and 1899; and rugby union, Australian rules football and even baseball were reaching new heights of popularity. Australians had plenty of organised sport.<sup>15</sup> There were, therefore, many distractions for ordinary folk.

### **Background to the Australian Patriotic Funds of the Boer War**

The modern patriotic fund, inaugurated in times of war for the welfare of soldiers and their dependents, originated in the Crimean War of 1854-56.<sup>16</sup> Although the suffering in the Crimea was no worse than that experienced by soldiers during the Napoleonic Wars, the general public at 'home' was made aware of the intolerable conditions created by war, principally through the newspapers of the period.<sup>17</sup> The Crimean War was one of the first of the 'modern wars' in which the British general public was kept well informed of the bloody battles, and the incompetent leadership and administration of the British Army was exposed. The rising numbers of middle class men entering the army, the emergence of Florence Nightingale as a force for change in the primary care of the sick and wounded, the subsequent formation of the Red Cross, and the continued and increasing critical presence of the press, all contributed to the changing attitudes of the public towards its armed forces, and the potential victims of war—the dependents of soldiers.<sup>18</sup>

During the Crimean War, a fund had been established in New South Wales for the dependents of British soldiers fighting in that war, with the proceeds—over £60,000—sent to Britain. The colonial patriotic fund was modelled on the British funds which often had long, unwieldy names such as the 'Royal Commission for the Patriotic Fund'; the 'Central Association in Aid of the Wives and Families of Soldiers ordered on Foreign Service'; and the 'Association for the Relief of Widows, Orphans, Wives and Families of Seamen and Marines'.<sup>19</sup>

Another patriotic fund was inaugurated during the Sudan War in 1885 with great public acclaim. Within days of the announcement that a contingent was to be sent to the Sudan, the New South Wales Patriotic Fund was established to assist the wives and children of those men embarking with the contingent. Newspapers of the day, as they would later occur during the Boer War and the First World War, became central to the success or otherwise of the fund. Lists of subscribers were published regularly in the newspapers, and images, such as the 'Little Boy from Manly', were created as a symbol for the patriotic funds.<sup>20</sup> The New South Wales Patriotic Fund which raised over £40,000 was oversubscribed. There were so few widows, orphans, other dependents or members of the contingent themselves in need of financial assistance that over 85 per cent of contributors received their money back.

Despite this apparent over-zealousness of the New South Wales public to embrace their patriotic fund during the Sudan War, the concept of public giving and philanthropic largesse towards soldiers and their dependents during times of war became part of the rich mosaic of the voluntary principle of Victorian colonial society. Money was regularly donated to a variety of causes, from Hospital Saturdays (to fund local hospitals); to mining disasters. Funds for catastrophes overseas were also widely subscribed, such as the Indian Famine Fund which occurred during the period of the Boer War in 1900. There were only nascent expectations that the state would provide government pensions and assistance for the sick, poor and disadvantaged. In terms of the concepts of deserving and undeserving used by organisations such as the Charitable Organisation Society (COS), there could be no more deserving members of society than either the soldier or his dependents. It was the duty of all members of society, both rich and poor, to 'pay, pay, pay' for the sacrifices made by soldiers, as was amply demonstrated in Kipling's colourful poetry.

### **Colonial Patriotic Funds**

When Britain declared war on the Boers in October 1899, patriotic funds, with varying titles and of differing sizes, were quickly established across Australia. Each colony had its primary patriotic fund which was supplemented by additional smaller, more individual, funds. The large funds were generally established at local government level, and administered from the town hall or council chambers. Branches were established across the colonies, in suburbs and country towns, run by committees that largely consisted of local council members, leading community businessmen, and particularly at the central level, politicians. These local committees reported to the executive committee of the central fund run out of the town hall, located in the capital of the colony, and generally sent all monies raised to the central fund. Not surprisingly, therefore, these organisations were highly patriarchal. Some women were involved in the organisation of patriotic funds such as Janet Lady Clarke's Victorian Contingent Fund.<sup>21</sup> This fund was established specifically to assist widows and families of Victorian soldiers who might be killed in the war, as opposed to the War Relief Fund which sent monies directly to London.<sup>22</sup> Generally, however, women took a supportive role in organisational and administration matters while carrying out much of the actual fundraising.

The management of the patriotic funds was entirely the responsibility of the executive committee which had full power to dispose of the monies, and to frame or alter bylaws relating to the ways in which the monies were both invested and allocated. The committees also had total control over not only how the monies were allocated but how much was given for different applications. There were no guidelines to follow and no government regulations to adhere to. (Indeed, this situation continued until the Department of Repatriation was formed in 1917.<sup>23</sup>) This, of course, gave enormous power to the committee administering the fund. The executive committee of the New South Wales Patriotic Fund, for example, met fortnightly to

discuss the various applications for relief which were steadily increasing from mid-1900. Although exact details are not given, the general amount of money allocated to claimants was reported regularly in newspapers such as the *Sydney Morning Herald*. For example, at a meeting in September 1900, £655 was granted, with some 30 cases waiting on military and medical reports.<sup>24</sup> The committees of the patriotic funds also allocated money to soldier's dependents if a reasonable need could be demonstrated. The Charters Towers Patriotic Fund decided in February 1900 that in three cases the weekly payment of one pound per week would be made to the wives of local soldiers, with weekly allowances to be allocated to a further two families with dependent children.<sup>25</sup>

It was the interpretation of the question of 'relief' and whether the funds were to assist returned veterans who were unable to find work in the longer term which were to be such contentious issues in the latter stages and aftermath of the war. All Australian soldiers, who spent 12 months at the war, were eligible for Imperial pensions; and most colonies took out death policies of £250. However, the concern for most returning soldiers was unemployment which was also a considerable political problem.<sup>26</sup>

Although it is difficult to gain a complete picture of the number of patriotic funds established during the Boer War, the major colonial funds were as follows.<sup>27</sup> The South African War Patriotic Fund of Queensland is perhaps one of the more well known and better researched patriotic funds from the Boer War. The main reason for this fund being more well-known than the others is largely due to the survival and access of its records which are lodged in the Queensland State Archives.<sup>28</sup> In South Australia and Western Australia, Transvaal Patriotic Funds were formed; and in Victoria, there was the Victorian Contingent Fund, the General War Relief Fund, and the Empire's Patriotic Fund (South African War), run by the Lord Mayor of Melbourne.

A feature of these colonial patriotic funds was the willingness for many to send, if not all, then considerable amounts of their monies directly to British patriotic fund organisations. Most of the monies raised in Tasmania, for example, was sent directly to the Mansion House Fund in London. This was similar to monies raised by the Transvaal Patriotic Fund in South Australia which was also modelled on the London Mansion House Fund. Despite the fact that this fund was established to assist any widows, orphans and dependents of men from the South Australian Contingents, or to help those who were wounded or disabled from war service, it was considered appropriate to send monies to help *all* soldiers of the Queen in South Africa and their dependents, not just the South Australians. Most of the funds raised in South Australia were sent directly to London.<sup>29</sup> The South Australian fund was eventually disbanded in 1917, with a balance of £3283 and with only one known ongoing case. The remaining money was then donated to the State War Council for use in the First World War.<sup>30</sup>

The Victorian Empire's Patriotic Fund (South African War) raised almost £65,000 from its beginnings on 9 January 1900. By 8 November 1918, all monies had been disbursed and the fund was officially disbanded. In 1900, £40,000 had been sent to the Empire Patriotic Commission in London with the proviso that the money be spread equally between the four subdivisions of the fund. These areas were: sick and wounded soldiers; widows and orphans; disabled soldiers and sailors; and wives and children of soldiers and sailors while their husbands were absent.<sup>31</sup> The remainder of the monies raised in Victoria (over £25,000) was allocated as grants to Victorian soldiers and their dependents from 1900 to 1918.<sup>32</sup>

In terms of the smaller patriotic funds established during the Boer War in Australia, the public donated money to the Shilling Fund, also based in London which involved a minimum donation of one shilling for the relief of widows and children of Imperial and Colonial troops. In Western Australia, for example, the Fire Brigade Fund raised money specifically for the 'maimed and wounded' of the Western Australian contingent,<sup>33</sup> and there was also a Goldfields War Fund which had raised £1115 by March 1900.<sup>34</sup> Professional organisations and businesses also formed funds such as the School Teachers' Patriotic Fund, established in February 1900 in New South Wales. Colonial newspapers which were accused, perhaps rightly, of simply 'cashing in' on the patriotic spending spree, established their own funds, such as the *Courier* Patriotic Fund established to assist Queensland troops in South Africa.<sup>35</sup>

At the end of the war, and after all the requirements of veterans and dependents had been met, some communities allocated unexpended monies from the local fund towards the erection of a war memorial or some other commemorative public structure.<sup>36</sup> This was another common feature of local community-based patriotic funds which occurred later after the First and Second World Wars.<sup>37</sup> Boer War memorials took many forms with the most common being obelisks and statues. However, drinking fountains, rotundas and bandstands were also popular. In Charters Towers, for example, a beautiful wrought iron and lace Memorial Kiosk was erected in Lissner Park and opened in late 1910, under a joint arrangement with the local council. The Kiosk was to be open every day from 10 am to 10 pm, selling refreshments and 'boiling water to the public at one penny per gallon'.<sup>38</sup> As was common with most local memorials, it also listed the names of the local volunteers who enlisted to fight in the war.

### **The New South Wales Patriotic Fund**

The New South Wales Patriotic Fund was formed in late October 1899 after a meeting was held in the vestibule of the Sydney Town Hall presided over by Lord Mayor, Sir Matthew Harris. Representatives at the meeting included politicians such as the Premier of New South Wales, WJ Lyne; the Colonial Secretary and Minister for Defence, John See; future Prime Minister Edmund Barton; and leading Sydney businessmen, such as newspaper proprietor Sir James Fairfax; the Chairman of the Sydney Stock Exchange, Mr EL Davis; General Manager of the Bank of New South Wales, Mr J Russell French; General Manager of the Commercial Banking Company, Mr TA Dibbs; and Mr Richard Teece (Australian Mutual Provident Society). An executive committee was formed with the Mayor, Mr J Russel French, Sir James Fairfax, Messrs R Teece, TA Dibbs, JH Storey, EW O'Sullivan, MLA, JS Brunton, and JC Ludowici, and Alderman T Jessep, MLA.<sup>39</sup> Later the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency Earl Beauchamp, was invited to become a patron of the fund, with the Chief Justice, Sir Frederick Darley, Vice-Patron.<sup>40</sup> The prime objects of the patriotic fund were:

- a) To afford relief in cases of distress to widows, children, and aged parents of, or others dependent on members of the military or naval forces of New South Wales, who shall, while on active service, have lost their lives, or shall have been seriously injured in the performance of their duty.
- b) To relieve members of such forces who shall have been wounded or otherwise temporarily or permanently incapacitated in such service.<sup>41</sup>

Three days later an enormous public meeting was held in the Town Hall to inaugurate the New South Wales Patriotic Fund. Accompanied by troops and a bevy of state and local politicians, the general public was treated to a spectacle which included the singing of the national anthem, loyal cheers for the troops and the Queen, and a collection of stirring speeches. The Chief Justice, Sir Frederick Darley, whipped up the crowd by saying that the creation and, more importantly public support, of the patriotic fund was for the 'people's direct representatives', the 'soldiers of the Queen'.

It was, therefore, at once the duty and privilege of the people to contribute to the fund. It was not a question of charity. (Cheers). It was the positive duty of the people to mitigate the sufferings caused by the absence of the people's representatives in the war.<sup>42</sup>

Branches of the New South Wales Patriotic Fund were subsequently established across the colony largely using the extensive network of local government boroughs. Lord Mayors were sent circulars informing them of the aims and functions of the Patriotic Fund and were encouraged to call public meetings and form local committees.<sup>43</sup> These local branches were to raise money through a variety of fundraising opportunities such as concerts, street stalls, and other entertainments with all monies, and sometimes goods in kind, being sent directly to the central committee at the Sydney Town Hall. Across the colony, from Quirindi, to Bowral, Maitland and Lismore, and throughout the suburbs of Sydney, local communities heeded the call to form local branches.

The 'ladies of Sydney' were caught up in patriotic fund fervour arguing for the establishment of a Ladies' Patriotic League to enable all the women of the colony to 'do their part' for those 'soldiers of the Empire' and their loved ones who may suffer in their absence.<sup>44</sup> Branches of the League were established through the network of colonial Lady Mayoresses'. Standard fundraising techniques, such as the idea of a Patriotic Saturday, modelled on the lines of Hospital Saturday which raised funds for local hospitals, were implemented in different suburbs and towns across the colony. The first Patriotic Saturday was held in Sydney on 9 December 1899.<sup>45</sup>

In all, the New South Wales Patriotic Fund raised approximately £52,000 or \$8,320,000 in today's terms. By August 1914, there was a balance of £24,450 in the fund.<sup>46</sup> Although it was still supporting a few widows from the Boer War, the fund was amalgamated, through the National Relief Fund Act of 1914, with the Bulli Colliery Disaster Fund, Public Disaster Relief Fund, the Education Department Relief Fund, and the Dreadnought Fund.<sup>47</sup>

### **The Bushmen's Contingent Fund**

The other major fund operating in New South Wales during the Boer War was the Bushmen's Contingent Fund which was inaugurated in late 1899. This was a very different type of fund to the New South Wales Patriotic Fund. The main aim of the Bushmen's Fund was to raise money to fully pay and equip a Bushmen's Contingent to go off to fight in South Africa. In New South Wales, the committee sought to raise £30,000 and 500 horses. Significant amounts of money were donated in order to purchase relevant materials and goods. Indeed, at the outset, six subscribers donated a total of £ 16,000. These subscribers included leading businessmen and philanthropists of the day—Mr WR Hall: £5000; Mr S McCaughey, MLC: £5000; Mr S Hordern: £3000; Miss Eadith Walker, Yaralla: £1000; John Fairfax and Sons: £1000, and Mr PH Osborne: £1000. But there were also donations in kind which included over £4000 worth of horses, saddles, and other comforts such as blankets and bandages.<sup>48</sup>

In recognition of the imminent creation of the Commonwealth of Australia, it was decided to make the contingent a federal one, with 500 men originating from New South Wales and the remaining 600 from the other states of Australia. On 28 February 1900, the Bushmen's Contingent sailed from Sydney for South Africa. Later, some colonial governments such as Western Australia stepped in and took over the organisation and funding of the contingents when public funding stalled. The New South Wales committee, however, raised the required amount but had to buy almost half the horses.<sup>49</sup> Field regards this as direct evidence that the public generally did not support the war effort wholeheartedly.<sup>50</sup>

However, I believe that Field has missed the point about the functions and purposes of patriotic endeavour during the Boer War. Essentially, there are significant differences between the New South Wales Patriotic Fund and the Bushmen's Fund, and the two funds really should not be considered together. First, the aims of the New South Wales Patriotic Fund were to offer amelioration to the soldiers of the crown and their dependents if required. With minimum state welfare provisions, the prevailing view at the time was that it was the right and duty of ordinary citizens to contribute financially to those less well off. Philanthropic giving to a wide variety of causes was readily understood and commonplace. Secondly, the Bushmen's Fund was essentially to fund a 'private' army to travel and fight in the Boer War. It was generally accepted that the raising of an army was a state responsibility and many would have rather not contributed to what amounted to a citizen's army. This could account for the supposed lack of support for the Bushmen's Contingents in colonies other than New South Wales.

There is clear evidence from the newspapers of the day and other sources that the New South Wales Patriotic Fund, in the first half of the war, was actively supported by a broad cross-section of the colonial population. In a regular column, 'The Patriotic Fund' in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, lists of donations were published daily. These lists represent both large and small donations from across the social spectrum. For example on 12 May 1900, to pick a day at random, monies were received from various Patriotic Fund branches; the Pymble Progress Committee; the children from the Superior Public School, Kiama; the Mortlake Workman's Institute; the Bulli and Woonona Ladies' Committee; a number of mines including the South Bulli Mine and the Woonona Mine; and the Bulli Brick and Tile Works.<sup>51</sup>

The following two examples further illustrate this important point. On 15 January 1900, at Her Majesty's Theatre after a matinee performance of *Little Red Riding Hood*, JC Williamson's company, including all performers, staff and orchestra (totalling 245 people) agreed to donate their weekly salaries between the Patriotic Fund and the Bushmen's Contingent. Over £67 was donated to both funds.<sup>52</sup> Theatres and music halls became very important sites for wartime fundraising, either through the proceeds of particular performances being donated to the cause, or when entertainers sang patriotic songs— especially Kipling's 'Absent-Minded Beggar'—and money was thrown onto the stage or collected by individuals working through the audiences.

Another innovative method of fundraising, which reveals the ad hoc, individualistic nature of much of the fundraising in the Boer War, was established by Sydney newsagent, Mr J Shortel, who devised a scheme called the Newsboys' Penny Patriotic Fund. The idea was that newsboys sold penny coupons (20,000 had been printed) to passing customers. A prize was to be awarded to the twelve news boys who sold the most coupons.

The face of the coupon shows a newsboy asking for a subscription from a gentleman, who by the genial expression of his countenance and the suggestive position of his hand near his pocket, evidently intends to purchase a coupon. At the foot of the coupon is Mr Shortel's signature as secretary for the news boys. On the back of every coupon is the stamp of the New South Wales Patriotic Fund.<sup>53</sup>

The patriotic funds issue also caused controversy amongst labour ranks. Public dissension broke out at the Victorian Trades Hall Council in December 1899 when the president, Mr Charles Harris, brought under notice the Victorian Contingent Fund, initiated by Lady Janet Clarke. This fund was set up specifically to assist widows and families of Victorian soldiers who might be killed in the war, as opposed to the War Relief Fund which sent monies directly to London.<sup>54</sup> Some labour officials felt that despite the deplorable actions of the British Government regarding the war, it was the 'duty of the community to subscribe to the fund being raised to assist the families' of the 'misguided' men who had enlisted. Although 'all workers must regard war as disastrous to their interests, in the present instance humanitarian considerations must outweigh all others', argued another.<sup>55</sup> The motion was subsequently supported by a narrow majority. Although labour newspapers such as *The Worker* clearly revealed their opposition to the 'capitalist' war, as with other newspapers, there was considerable war coverage in the first year, but this shifted to a single column, and then by January 1901, *The Worker* had no regular war column at all.

## Conclusions

From the period of the Boer War, through to Federation and the first decade of the twentieth century, the ideas of a nascent Australian nationalism and its imperial connections to the British Empire grew stronger. As Gavin Souter stated, 'The Empire was a protective shield and a context within which the new Commonwealth could assert itself on more equal terms in the larger world'.<sup>56</sup> The inauguration of Empire Day in 1905, on the late Queen Victoria's birthday, 24 May, for example, heralded our new national day.

Earlier, Douglas Cole argued that in British settler societies, such as Australia, the position of nationalism and patriotism—inherently European terms—was different. British imperialism was the 'significant complication'.<sup>57</sup> Cole suggested that nationalism was a consciousness of being 'ethnically differentiated', and patriotism was a loyalty to a political state and geographical area.<sup>58</sup> The result in Australia was the development of the 'independent Australian-Briton' with a patriotism based on Australia as part of the political entity of the British empire, that is a loyalty to Britain and Empire. As Cole argued:

Soon after 1900, the gap between the imperial-minded and the nationalist Australian narrowed, with no contradiction being seen between nationalism and imperialism. In this strange and rapid metamorphosis, imperial patriotism became an extension of Australian nationalism.<sup>59</sup>

Compared with the 1880s and early 1890s when Australian patriotism could be seen in opposition to British imperialism especially through journals such as the *Bulletin*, these differences had narrowed considerably by the period of the Boer War. This early emerging Australian nationalism with its strong links to imperial patriotism is clearly evident in the patriotic funds movement in colonial Australia during the Boer War.

Patriotic funds was a British term used in Australia to provide public subscriptions for those in need during the various conflicts, and was first used in Australia during the Crimean War. The word 'patriotic' easily embraced imperial and well as Australian patriotism, that is loyalty to both the empire and Australia. The term was used until after the Second World War, especially by the Department of Repatriation, under whose jurisdiction the funds lay.<sup>60</sup> Additionally, patriotic funds are part of the voluntary principle which includes civic duty, community action, care and concern for others through altruism and philanthropy and the concepts of self-help, reciprocity and mutual aid.

Public support for the patriotic funds during the Boer War was a complex reaction which was shaped by events and changed as the war progressed. The motivation for giving and active support, not only to the 'Queen's soldiers' and their families and dependents, involved the general philanthropic desires of altruism and helping those less fortunate—distinct Victorian ideals. Moreover, there was a belief that as Australian-Britons, it was just and fair that the British Empire be supported in this manner, irrespective of the actual political ramifications of the conflict. The fact that this active support waned as the war dragged on probably says more about the war itself than anything else.

In many ways, the Boer War was a trial run for the uncontrollable forces of world war which were to be unleashed a decade later. As a result of the Boer War, armies and their systems were improved, as were the methods of fighting and the development and use of military hardware. The delivery of hospital and first aid services (to counter the appalling losses to disease) were enhanced through the reformation of the army medical services and the reconstitution of the British Red Cross. Yet in 1914, the situation of patriotic funds and the question of the care of dependents of soldiers and repatriation still largely fell to the voluntary sector. It was not until the scale of the social, medical, and psychological problems resulting from the war became so great that the patriotic funds could no longer cope, that the state took the welfare of its citizens (or rather certain citizens in the form of soldiers and their dependents) out of the primary domain of private philanthropy and assumed control.

But that is another story.

## Endnotes

I would like to acknowledge the help of my research assistant, Amanda Andrews, and my colleague, Dr Bruce Mitchell, for reading and commenting on an earlier draft of this paper.

- 1 . So wrote Lord Newton in his autobiography. See Lord Birkenhead, *Rudyard Kipling* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978), 205. Indeed Kipling, who suffered extensively from bad health, wrote the song and deliberately used his name as a selling point to 'do his bit' for the cause and raise as much money as possible for the dependents of the soldiers. Kipling stated that the poem had raised over £250,000: *ibid*.
- 2 . *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 February 1900, 6.
3. *Ibid* , 21 May 1900, 7. The item goes on to list the precise numbers to date. They included 479 men from the 1st Contingent; 876 from the 2nd Contingent; 525 Australian Bushmen; 42 Lancers; and 750 Imperial Bushmen. Casualties were 9 killed in action, 19 died from disease (mainly enteric fever) and other causes; 45 wounded; and 25 captured or missing.
4. *Ibid*.
5. The official histories are examples of this, the exception being Ernest Scott's chapter on the First World War patriotic funds in *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918: Australia during the War* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1936). Other books on homefront studies have also devoted little space to the role and functions of patriotic funds. Examples include M McKernan and M Browne (eds), *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial and Allen & Unwin, 1988); Joy Damousi and Marilyn Lake (eds), *Gender and War* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Stephen Garton, *The Cost of War. Australians Return* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996). Michael McKernan has been almost alone in his studies on aspects of the homefront which included patriotic endeavours in *The Australian People and the Great War* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1980) and *All In! Australia during the Second World War* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1983) republished as *All In! Fighting the War at Home* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1995).
6. There has been little research carried out on patriotic funds in other countries to date. However, this is slowly changing. Simon Fowler is currently undertaking a PhD on charities in Britain during the First World War. See Simon Fowler, 'War Charity Begins at Home', *History Today* 49: 9 (September 1999), 17-23. In his recent book on Canada and the Boer War, Carman Miller has included a chapter on the homefront which addresses patriotic funds.
7. LM Field, *The Forgotten War: Australian Involvement in the South African Conflict of 1899-1902* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1979), 132; and CN Connolly, 'Class, Birthplace, Loyalty: Australian Attitudes to the Boer War', *Historical Studies* XVIII: 71 (October 1978), 210-32.
8. Field, *The Forgotten War*, 177.
9. Joan Neal, 'Charters Towers and the Boer War', unpub BA (Hons) thesis, James Cook University, Townsville, 1980.
10. Connolly, 'Class, Birthplace, Loyalty', 210, BR Penny, 'Australia's Reactions to the Boer War—a Study in Colonial Imperialism', *Journal of British Studies* VII: 1 (November 1967), 97-130, and 'The Australian Debate on the Boer War', *Historical Studies* 14: 56 (April 1971), 526-45; and AP Haydon, 'South Australia's First War', *Historical Studies* 11: 42 (April 1964), 222-33.
11. Connolly, 'Class, Birthplace, Loyalty', 211.
12. *Ibid*, 214.
13. Barry Bridges, 'New South Wales and the Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902', unpub PhD thesis, University of South Africa, 1981, 559.
14. For an analysis of Australian patriotic funds in the First World War, see Melanie Oppenheimer, 'Volunteers in Action: Voluntary Work in Australia, 1939-1945', unpub PhD thesis, Macquarie University, 1997, chapter 2. See also Melanie Oppenheimer, 'Alleviating Distress: The Lord Mayor's Patriotic Fund in New South Wales, 1914-1920', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 81:1 (June 1995), 85-98.
15. For an examination of the role of sport in Australian history, see Richard Cashman and Michael McKernan (eds), *Sport in History* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1979).
16. There is no definitive study on patriotic funds in Australia. The role of patriotic funds to 1914 is, however, outlined in Clem Lloyd and Jacqui Rees, *The Last Shilling: A History of Repatriation in Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994), 5-17. See also Oppenheimer, 'Volunteers in Action'.
17. Due to the end of the newspaper stamp duty in 1855, circulations of newspapers increased dramatically. For example, the circulation of *The Times* during the Crimean War was over 40,000 copies a day, compared with approximately 5000 during the Napoleonic Wars. See Corelli Barnett, *Britain and Her Army, 1509-1970* (London: Allen Lane, 1970), 285.
18. For a history of the Red Cross, see Carolyn Moorehead, *Dunant's Dream: War, Switzerland and the History of the Red Cross* (London: HarperCollins, 1998).
19. 'Crimean War—Loyal Addresses and Contributions to the Patriotic Fund from Australian Colonies', A5954/1 1195/4, Australian Archives (AA), Canberra.
20. Eight year old Ernest Laurence sent a letter to the Acting Premier of New South Wales, William Bede Dalley, which was subsequently published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 7 March 1885, about

pledging money to the Patriotic Fund. The 'Little Boy from Manly' became a cartoon figure in the *Bulletin* from 4 April 1885, and was thereafter immortalised as a symbol of Australia, both before and after Federation. There is some conjecture that the entire episode was contrived by Ernest Laurence's father, solicitor Charles Laurence, who knew Dalley who himself lived near Manly. See KS Inglis, *The Rehearsal: Australians at War in the Sudan, 1885* (Melbourne: Rigby, 1985), 63-71.

21. Janet Lady Clarke (1851 -1909) was a doyenne of colonial Victorian philanthropy and women's politics and founded the powerful conservative women's group, the Australian Women's National League in 1904. See Heather Radi (ed ), *200 Australian Women* (Broadway: Redress Press, 1988), 56-58.

22. *The Age*, 20 December 1899, 7; and 22 December 1889, 5.

23. For a discussion of how patriotic funds administered amelioration during the First World War, see Oppenheimer, 'Volunteers in Action', esp chapter 2, 65-118.

24. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 September 1900, 9.

25. Queensland Patriotic Fund Register of Relief given to men who served in South Africa and Dependants, 26 February 1900, as cited in Neal, 'Charters Towers and the Boer War', 69.

26. Field, *The Forgotten War*, 177.

27. This list has been compiled using archival material, newspaper reports and secondary sources. There is some material concerning the operations of patriotic funds in New South Wales in the Colonial Secretary files at the New South Wales State Archives.

28. Queensland Patriotic Fund, QPF/3, Queensland State Archives.

29. *The Advertiser*, 9 December 1889, 6.

30. South African War Casualties Relief Fund, A2421 T1 G749, AA, Canberra.

31. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 February 1900, 6.

32. In total, £24,319-3-7 was given as relief to soldiers with the balance of £79-19-11 allocated to priming, cheques, etc, and £303 on clerical assistance from February 1900 to June 1904. See extract from *The Argus*, 16 January 1919, in South African War Casualties Relief Fund, A2421 T1 G749, AA, Canberra.

33. *The Western Mail*, 13 January 1900, 18.

34. *Ibid*, 17 March 1900, 19.

35. *The Brisbane Courier*, 21 December 1899, 5. In a letter to the Editor of *The Worker*, the correspondent accused the major daily newspapers of hypocrisy, arguing that their 'patriotism lies in the fact that by the speculation of a few hundred they will receive in return thousands from the fools who abound in our midst by the pennies spent in the purchase of their papers, which leads to the goldmine of adverts in their columns': *The Worker*, 11 November 1899, 5.

36. For the seminal work on war memorials, see Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places; War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne: The Miegunyah Press and Melbourne University Press, 1998), esp chapter 2, 'Soldiers of the Queen', for the Boer War, 39-74.

37. After the First World War the focus was particularly on building formal structures such as stone or marble memorials. After the Second World War, there was a push for more utilitarian structures such as community swimming pools and parks. For a discussion of the winding up of patriotic funds after the Second World War, see Oppenheimer, 'Volunteers in Action', chapter 9, 371-78.

38. Neal, 'Charters Towers and the Boer War', 74-75.

39. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 October 1899, 5.

40. *Ibid*, 7 November 1899, 7.

41. *Ibid*, 9 July 1903, 8.

42. *Ibid*, 3 November 1899, 6.

43. *Ibid*, 8 November 1899, 7.

44. *Ibid*, 16 November 1899, 5.

45. *Ibid*, 29 November 1899, 7.

46. 'South African War Casualties Relief Fund', A2421/T1 G749, AA, Canberra.

47. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 August 1915. The Public Disaster Relief Fund, supplemented by the Miners' Accident Relief Fund, was set up for widows and orphans of the 1902 Mount Kembla disaster, the later Wyalong disaster, and for any future general disasters. The Mount Kembla mining disaster was, in 1902, Australia's worst to date, with 96 men killed. See Stuart Piggin and Henry Lee, *The Mount Kembla Disaster* (Sydney: Oxford University Press, 1992).

48. *The Australian Bushmen s Contingent—Souvenir* (Sydney: Batson & Co. nd, ca, 1900).

49. Field, *The Forgotten War*, 131.

50. *Ibid*, 132.

51. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 May 1900, 10.

52. *Ibid*, 1 February 1900, 8.

53. *Ibid*, 8.

54. *The Age*, 20 December 1899, 7, and 22 December 1889, 5.

55. *Ibid*, 23 December 1899, 7.

56. Gavin Souter, *Lion and Kangaroo: The Initiation of Australia* (Sydney: William Collins, 1976), 112.

57. Douglas Cole, 'The Problem of "Nationalism" and "Imperialism" in British Settlement Colonies', *Journal of British Studies* 10: 2 (May 1971), 171. See also his "'The Crimson Thread of Kinship": Ethnic Ideas in Australia, 1870-1914', *Historical Studies* 14: 56 (April 1971), 511-25.

58. Cole, 'The Problem of "Nationalism" and "Imperialism"', 164-65.

59. Ibid, 163.

60. I discovered a large cache of files during research for my PhD thesis, especially a large series of files lodged as part of the Department of Repatriation (now Department of Veterans' Affairs) which proved to be the administration and policy files of the patriotic funds from the First World War to the early 1950s: A2421/1. AA, Canberra.