



D. CAMMACK. *The Rand at war 1899-1902: The Witwatersrand and the Anglo-Boer War*. James Currey Ltd/University of California Press/University of Natal Press: London/Berkeley and Los Angeles/Pietermaritzburg, 1990. xvi + 222 pp. Illus. Paperback R45,95 (exclusive).

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In the course of the main stream of history one of the most important questions that has to be answered, is to what extent communities, peoples and nations are influenced and changed by, for example,

war. So far most of the research on the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) deals with it from a military point of view. However, it is of the utmost importance that it should also be ascertained to what extent this war was an instrument of cultural and social change.

Over the past four or five decades the social and other conditions during the Anglo-Boer War have been discussed in several local and regional historical studies, whether in theses or published works. A few theses have dealt *in toto* with a specific city's role during the war, namely *Port Elizabeth gedurende die Anglo-Boereoorlog, 1899-1902* (A. Joubert, M.A., University of Port Elizabeth, 1985), *A social history of Pretoria during the first phase of the Anglo-Boer War, October 1899-June 1900* (B.M. Theron, M.A., University of South Africa, 1985), *Pretoria en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog, 11 Oktober 1899-5 Junie 1900* (C. de W. van Vreden, M.A., University of Pretoria, 1955) and *Johannesburg en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog Oktober 1899-Mei 1900* (J.C. Roos, D.Litt., University of the Orange Free State, 1949). In the latter only the period up to the British occupation of the 'golden city' is taken into account, and it is in any case not a profound analysis of the social conditions that prevailed in the city during the first few months of hostilities.

Now, shortly after Johannesburg celebrated its centenary and less than a decade before the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War, a timely and fascinating book on the history of the Witwatersrand during the whole war has been published: Diana Cammack's *The Rand at war*. As has been the case with so many other worthy books on the war, the author is an 'uitlander' — she has been working for the United Nations' World Food Programme among refugees in southern Africa, and her doctorate is from the University of California, Irvine.

Cammack describes the developments and situation on the Witwatersrand on the eve of the war, the polarization in the ranks of the politicized Uitlander community, the preparations for war, and the exodus of nearly 100 000 whites and about the same number of blacks, Asians and so-called coloureds. The vast and lucrative mining industry fell into the hands of the Boers, who had always had a very ambivalent attitude towards this 'Monte Carlo superimposed upon Sodom and Gomorrah' (p. 1).

The Witwatersrand was relatively unaffected by the first seven months of the war, but the successful implementation of Lord Roberts' indirect strategy brought the war to Transvaal, and on 31 May 1900 the British forces occupied Johannesburg. In the 'Johannesburg Republic' (p. 134) the mine magnates swiftly regained their influence, and Cammack examines the nature and extent of the administration set up in the city. It is a pity, however, that she did not consult two theses that deal with the development of the local government, namely *Die ontwikkeling van stedelike bestuur in Johannesburg 1900-1910* (A.J. Potgieter, M.A., Rand Afrikaans University, 1976) and *Die ontwikkeling van die Johannesburgse munisipale bestuur tot omstreeks 1910* (P.J.V.E. Pretorius, M.A., University of South Africa, 1949).

Cammack devotes chapters to the Anglicization of the Rand, the return of the 'exiles', and the preparations for peace. Most of the whites who had left before the war, returned two or three years later. By that time 'a new society was in the making — an expansive, rational and efficient society and one which would influence deeply the development of the whole of southern Africa throughout the twentieth century ... The war, with its destruction of the old order, prepared the way for a new social and political system which would foster the growth of industrial capitalism. It prepared the way for the creation of a very special sort of society: the unique society which characterizes the Republic of South Africa today' (p. 11).

For those interested in the history of the Anglo-Boer War, social history, and local and regional history, Cammack's scholarly work is a must. In her social history of the Witwatersrand community during the years 1899 to 1902, she describes the role played by those 'from above' (people like the Randlords, the British politicians, and the Boer leaders), but equally brings to life those ordinary working people 'from below' (whether Uitlander, Boer or black, miner, seamstress of shop clerk).

The interested reader will welcome the comprehensive source list, which includes a list of the consulted newspapers, official publications and secondary sources, as well as an impressive list of archival sources that were consulted locally and abroad. The sources are quoted in more than 750 footnotes arranged at the end of the different chapters. Two maps, 38 apt photographs and eight other illustrations, as well as a useful index, round off a publication that has not only been scholarly researched, but written in a very readable style which will hopefully give it the wide audience it deserves.

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