

**A WAR WITH MANY NAMES VIEWPOINT AND
HISTORICAL REALITIES WITH REGARD TO "The War"¹
(1899-1902) IN SOUTH AFRICA
Elize van Eeden, Potchefstroom University**

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT²

The widely discussed war that broke out in October 1899 in South Africa, is a war that lasted approximately two years and seven months. The governments of Great Britain and the Boer Republics (the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek and the Republiek van die Oranje-Vrystaat) in South Africa were the centre of the conflict. It was these governments that determined with their eventual actions that a war was the only solution for both of them as well as for the people they represented.

As the years passed after the conclusion of The War in May 1902, a multiple of recollections of this war was published. Perspectives and sentiments with regard to This War had a visibly close connection with writers' political associations and/or personal experiences. As a result, the focus was initially mostly on the so-called own cultural group's role in The War. The fact that such a group would have taken a leading role in the government decisions of the day served as further strengthening of a later self-righteous approach and designation of The War.

As grief, anger and retribution were healed with time, as well as new political views appeared in its place, more viewpoints with regard to The War developed. The re-exploitation of documentation from different political milieus and sentiments necessarily led to a reinterpretation and additional perspectives.

The name of The War was, however, never investigated. It seems as if each and everyone decided for himself it should be named. As the decades of the twentieth century passed, labelling from political-ideological sentiments occurred when preference was given to a specific name for The War. The increasing demand and need for historical correctness since the eighties in South Africa made writers more "cautious" in

their choice of a name of this war. Before this period, there were, however, those that did not care about a name one way or the other and merely used it as an alternative form. It is quite possible that some writers still permit themselves this freedom which in itself is not wrong, if it were also constitutionally acceptable.

This explains why so many writers regard their sentiments regarding a choice of a name for The War as a matter of course, and do not explain it. However, there are still names with which the Heritage Committee appointed by the Government struggled. Questions that should be considered in such discussions are:

- Is there semantically and historically a focussed approach to the concept "war" and guidelines with regard to the naming of wars?
- Which customs with regard to the use of names exist that point to This War? Are there specific viewpoints relevant in the use of each of these various names for The War?
- What are the historical realities that should be considered?

In the discussion to follow, it is envisaged to provide insights that could be seen as a corner-stone to the continuing debate on the name for This War.

2. A SEMANTIC AND HISTORICAL APPROACH TO THE CONCEPT "WAR"

□ Semantic

It seems as if specific criteria that could be valid/were valid for naming places, have been investigated and are readily available. However, when it comes to the name of events, investigations are more vague. It then becomes necessary to analyse the semantic meaning of a word such as "war", in order to determine if there are in fact identifiable criteria that could be coupled with the name of a war. Everyday explanatory dictionaries on the South African market conceptualise/define a war as "a fight with armed force between nations or national groups". The Oxford Dictionary and White's Political Dictionary add to this that a war could be a "strife ... especially between countries..." and

is usually accompanied by armed conflict. Kotzé and Van Wyk further add that the conflict could include social groups.

The most important criteria that apply in the brief explanation of the meaning of "war" as mentioned above, are forms of armed conflict between:

- Nations/countries
- National groups (different groups in one country)
- Communities within one group/country/region/town.

The reason/motives for the outbreak of such a war is not relevant - also not in this discussion. Within the framework of this discussion, the limited direction indicator to the meaning of "war" could well be converted to criteria questions such as:

- Are countries/regions/towns or groups in a country involved?
- To which country/group should a war refer to - the country which first started or both (and more) or the country within whose national frontiers/sphere of influence it takes place?
- What role does John Citizen play who experience the war, in naming it of it?
- What is the role of governments that start wars, in the naming?

Most of these criteria questions can be answered in general outlines when examples of wars from history are proffered. See next section.

□ **Historical**

In the history of mankind war not only refers to armed conflict between nations or national groups, although there are obviously many such examples. Wars between people of the same group/family, because of mutual differences or greed for power, are plentiful. Religious motives, for instance, also often led to the origin of wars. Examples of wars that easily fit in with the mentioned motives, are:

- Punic Wars (264-241 BC and 218-202 BC). The Romans and the Carthaginians (today known as parts of Tunisia and Algeria in Africa) declared war against each

other. A craving for power seems to be a big factor why the Romans decided to take the then prosperous trading centre Carthage of the Carthaginians (known as Punisians among the Romans).

- The War of the Roses (1453-1461), during which war was waged between two tribe lines - Edward III's family, known as the House of York and the House of Lancaster. The House of York had a white rose as family crest and the House of Lancaster a red rose. The House of York won this war.
- The Thirty-years War (1618-1648), in which nearly all European states became involved, which, however, took place mainly on German soil. In this war Protestant and Roman Catholic religious sentiments played a prominent role.
- The Austrian War of Succession (1740-1748), where Prussian and Austria fought for supremacy over Germany on the battlefield.
- The American Civil War (1861) between the citizens of the North and the South of the Union of America. This is regarded as one of the bitterest civil wars in the history of mankind. Different perspectives on slavery and the process of confederation brought about the hostilities.
- Russian-Japanese War (1904-1905) broke out because of Russia's involvement and interest in Manchuria.
- The Korean War (1950-1953) and the Vietnamese War (1965-1973). These wars are known more commonly as local civil wars where overseas countries became involved.

To return in reaction to the criteria questions asked, one could argue, given the available historical information, that:

- Reference to countries/the most important groups involved in particular, receive preference in the naming of a war.
- Where a war tends to involve a larger group, the soil on which such a war takes place, is the focus in naming. Reference to the dates is often only mentioned.

- The country/people/group against whom and/or within whose sphere of power or national boundaries the fighting takes place, is often also prominent in the naming of a war. There could perhaps be negative connotations if a specific group's name were linked to a war (think of the Punic War to which have been referred to earlier). However, it is more the exception than the rule. Readers could perhaps keep in mind when the naming of The War in section 3 is discussed.
- Although a larger group of role-players is often involved in a war, not all are acknowledged in naming it.
- It is also a fact that, if John Citizen were an indication of opinion-formers (Journalists, writers within a multiple of disciplines) of the day shortly after such a war, they definitely play a part in the naming of The War. In a discussion of The War in section 3 the other role-players' naming of The War during The War - and the veterans years afterwards - is also mentioned. A fact that is informative is that there are not necessarily deadlines for naming, as was the case with The War. However, given the naming world-wide, one could wonder whether the role-players and John Citizen - directly involved in the war - should not have the greatest say in the naming thereof.
- Governments involved in wars and that are in fact the focus of wars breaking out in the first place, seem not to play a direct role in the name that is eventually allocated to a war. Their role/influence is rather more indirect, via a specific ideological framework or focussed financial assistance for research/ideas that are according to their political sentiments, etc. One should mention that although this form of influencing not necessarily occurs during a war, it is often prevalent thereafter. It is therefore not strange, though sad, that opinion-formers can in fact be influenced by government sentiments. Of this fact The War was an object lesson.

To therefore briefly answer the first question in the discussion, it could be said that there are some semantic guidelines for the meaning of "war" that could be utilised as criteria within this discussion. Regarding the historical, it is somewhat more difficult, because of the many wars that have taken place. Although a more in-depth study with regard to the

motives for the naming of wars might bring about more insight, historical trends and thoughts as indicated above, could serve as corner-stone for discussions on the naming of wars. Sections 3 and 4 are discussed against this background.

3. DESIGNATION OF THE WAR AND VIEWPOINTS WITH REGARD TO THE USE OF NAMES

The War of 1899 to 1902 on South African soil led to the development of names referring to be:

3.1 The War (*Dié Oorlog*)

It would seem as if this method of use was utilised more generally by journalists during The War of 1899-1899-1902 (compare The Cape Argus, Oct. 1899; Natal Witness, Oct 1899; The Natal Mercury, Dec. 1899)¹. The newspaper The Star (June 1902) only refers to any news of The War as "*War News*". Also the Dutch-Afrikaans newspaper *De Afrikaanse Patriot* (26 Oct. 1899-7 June 1900) refers to The War as "De Oorlog". At times this designation is varied, or used in concurrently with "*De Transvaalse Krisis*". A regional newspaper of Johannesburg such as the Standard & Diggers News (compare 22 Feb. 1900:7) maintains a neutral stance, as other more well-known newspapers in South Africa, by merely using in its regular news column on The War the title "*War Intelligence*" (see newspaper-clipping insert on this page as illustration).



- 3 Liebenberg and Spies (1993:30) mention that the Argus newspapers also controlled the Cape Argus thereby giving a strong viewpoint in favour of imperialism and capitalism. It is further mentioned that newspapers such as The Natal Mercury and The Natal Witness were independent newspapers and therefore held other perspectives. However, it is still informative that, when looking at reporting on The War, not one of the newspapers associated excessively with one or other group involved in The War. This also applies to the naming of The War.

The use of a neutral expression such as The War (*Die Oorlog*) is not strange at all. In the midst of a process of an event, such as the outbreak of a war, the tendency exists to refer

to it in a neutral manner. This especially seems to be the case when it takes place on one's own soil, but is not necessarily always the case. In for instance World War I and II, some of the South African newspapers (compare *Die Natalse Afrikaner*, 1914, 1941-1942; *Sunday Tribune*, 1939-1945; *Daily News*, 1939) also referred to these wars in respectively 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 as "The War". With more penetrating research with regard to other well-known wars, such as mentioned in the previous section, these trends might also be true of them.

Furthermore it is, as far as is known, few South Africans authors/poets gave The War during and shortly after its conclusion a more focussed name than "The War" (*Die Oorlog*). The latter was even entitled *Mijne omzwervingen en beproevingen gedurende den oorlog: herinneringen*. The results of The War on those involved were more touched on by poets of those wars like Jan F.E. Celliers and C. Louis Leipoldt. Celliers' "*Dis al*" and "*Die kampsuster*", and Leipoldt's "*In die konsentrasiekamp*", "*Die ou blikkie*" and "*Aan 'n Seepkissie*", remind readers of the emotional side of The War with its tragic loss of lives. All these poems were written from a white Afrikaner view. There were also English and other language poets who wrote their poems on The War from a white Afrikaner viewpoint. However, the focus seems to be more on the people than on the name of The War.

An Afrikaans - acknowledged folksong that does, however, refer to The War is "Sarie Marais".² The first stanza read like this:

My Sarie Marais is so ver van my hart

Maar'k hoop om haar weer te siebn

Sy het in die wyk van die Mooirivier gewoon [Potchefstroom-distrik]

*Nog voor **die Oorlog** [my accentuation] het begin...*

An English musical treasure is H.D. Rawnsley's "Ballads of the War".

Another interesting fact is that there are in fact writers of articles who referred to The War as "The War" (*Die oorlog*). Another distinction was made in that they also refer to South Africa in the naming of their work. Think about Leo Amery's (1906) seven-

volume editorial work, entitled "The Times History of The War in South Africa, 1899-1902". There is also the eight-volume edited publication of Maurice **et al.** (1906-1910) entitled "History of the War in South Africa". In many regards these names, as well as the addition of the generally used, more neutral "*Dié Oorlog/The War*", should be seen as forerunners in the use of the designation "*Die Suid-Afrikaanse Oorlog/The South African War*" to which a time span was coupled (see later in this discussion).

3.2 The Boer War (Die Boere-oorlog)

The well-known British author Thomas Pakenham also feels at home with the use of the term "The Boer War" as a title for The War (compare Pakenham, 1979). It is also a designation that is used in several research manuscripts and popular publications (compare Moen, 1997:5; Stone, 1985; Goulart, 1982; Ashman, 1972; Auld, 1970; Sweig, 1957; Fergusson, 1937; Campbell, 1908; Danes, 1901). A single work was encountered that entitled even the first war (1877-1881) between "Boer" and "Britisher" as main role-players: "The First Boer War" (Van Jaarsveld, 1983:67).

4. The writer of the folksong "Sarie Marais" is still unknown today. However, it is known that the song was set to music of the American song Elie Rhee. The words war written as a poem during The War (Albertyn, 196:633).

The use of "Boer War" is more English known and in English writing circles as in the Afrikaans form (Laubscher, 1995). Many regard "Boer War" as a term that was used in the Dutch (compare review on Rijkens, 1989:60-62) and British citizens (compare Hobhouse, 1984), and in British government circles (compare Van Schoor, 1998; MacKenzie, 1989:48) during The War (compare Wessels, 1987:1). The name Boer War can also be found in poetry and music. William Plomer's poem "The Boer War" (Brown, 1975:266), is one of the few in which a specific name was given to The War. Compare also Ingram's "Songs of the Transvaal War" (Warwick, 1980:304). How The War was experienced in Plomer's poem is from the perspective of a father of one of the English soldiers (Brown, 1975:266). As in Celliers and Leipoldt's poems on The War there is sorrow over the death of his son on the battlefield for the sake of "king and country".

There is also the musical composition "*Les Broers*" which was among others based on Montoya's epic poems and Jules Mulder's music with regard to facets of The War (Troskie, 1991:127-142). The focus is therefore on the Boers in The War.

An in-depth search would perhaps also uncover other overseas sources that are not necessarily written in English, but which refer to "*The Boer War*" in other languages. Davidson and Filatova mention in one of their articles on the role of the Russians in The War examples of works in Russian with this title. Among these is the Russian soldier, M.A. Zigern-Korn's manuscript *Viona burskaia* [The Boer War] that was already written in 1900. (Davidson/Filatova, 1998:61). Other examples are the work of Pelletier (1988:19-30) and Troskie (1991:11).

M.C.E. van Schoor (May 1988) feels uncomfortable with the term "Boer War":. He says the use of this name creates the impression that, as he states it, "the Boers were responsible for the war". However, at the same time he acknowledges that of the earliest works in Dutch by Boer generals or Afrikaner sympathisers sometimes used the title *Boeren-Oorlog*. Inregardless of this Van Schoor is, however, convinced that the white Afrikaner component who took part in The War, does not find the name "Boer War" agreeable at all. The fact is that not all saw a negative connotation in the name and several authors in Afrikaans, English and other languages still use it as designation and/or apparently as an abbreviation of "Anglo Boer War" (compare Anon., 1998:9; Cruywagen, 1998:7; Fick, 1925:64). The "Punic Wars" to which we referred to earlier, typically fall in this category of designation. It was obviously the Romans who gave these wars against the Carthaginians the name Punic Wars. In certain respects this could also be seen as one-sided and negative with regard to the Carthaginians. Because of the time-spatial remoteness thereof, it probably does not arouse resentment. It would have been interesting to learn what the Algerians would say about this name for the war today. The use of "Boer War" as designation still seems to be particularly popular today - when looking at a survey made of articles published in the eighties and nineties. (see conclusion.)

3.3 "The English War" (Die Engelse Oorlog)

According to Smith (1996:6) this designation is mainly used by the Afrikaners of today next to the name *Tweede Vryheidsoorlog* (Second War of Independence). It is unsure to whom he refers as belonging to this category. It is still possible that a few people had referred during The War to it as The English War (compare Rocher: 1903), although Van Schoor (1998) is of the opinion that this form of designation to The War only became the order in the thirties. Lively cultural activities such as the Great Trek Centenary Celebration (*Groot Trek Eeufeesvieringe* and the establishment in the *Ossewa Brandwag* of that time (compare Davenport, 1991: 290-295,299-306) serve as explanation for this seeming trend with regard to designation. According to Van Schoor "to knowingly place the blame on British Imperialism for what they did to the Republics". However, the referral to This War as the English War is scarcely to be found in even focussed historical works by South Africans on this period in South Africa.

3.4 "The Second War for Freedom" *(Die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog)

As in the case of the "English War", this designation was only used from the twenties (compare Scholtz, 1939; Strydom, 1937). State historian and an expert on The War, J.H. Breytenbach, could in all respects be regarded as the most well-known author with regard to the use of the name *Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*. What he published as a series, was funded by the Government of the day (Breytenbach, 1978;ix-x). In other Afrikaans research publications the name *Tweede Vryheidsoorlog* is also used as designation (compare Broos, 1943). It is interesting to know that most of these publications referring to This War as *Die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, mostly date from the forties, fifties, sixties and seventies (compare Esterhuizen, 1952; Straus, 1965).

By 1987 a few research publications still appeared that referred to *Die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog* in its title (compare Wessels, 1987:26-31). The emotionally meaningfulness of this term already had its little group of opposers in the thirties (Van Schoor, 1998). In the most recent debate on how The War should be commemorated, sentiments were once again nurtured. Several opinions on this debate that have appeared in newspapers, associate with the designation *Tweede Vryheidsoorlog* (compare Du Toit, 1997:17; Wiese, 1997:27; Anon.,1998:13; Huggett, 1998:7). A few newspapers still

seem to be inclined to give preference to this form of designation (compare reports in *Die Afrikaner and Die Patriot*).

3.5 The Three Years War (Die Driejarige Oorlog)

In "*Stemme uit die Vrouekampe*", the recollections of women were recorded. With exception, all refer to The War as the "Three Years War" (Fick, 1925:85,94), while a few refer to it as the "Boer War" and as "The Last War" (Fick, 1925:58; 64). It should therefore be accepted that for some people, who for example spent months in the concentration camps, it was a war - The War that lasted *three years*. It is illuminative that not one of the persons Fick's (1925) publication particularly coupled The War with "Boer" or "Britisher". When one takes into account that Fick's publication only appeared in 1925, and former concentration inmates only recorded their recollection two decades later, it makes the reference to The War as The Three Years War all the more significant.

The probable therefore seems to be that those involved/role-players amidst The War were aware of the fact that a multiple group of people/countries was involved. Political - ideological emotions a decade later collaborated towards new references to The War. Among these count the "Second War for Freedom" (*Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*) and possibly the English War (as mentioned previously). Van Schoor (1998) regard the "Three Years War" designation, however, as historically unchallengeable and less exclusive or emotionally charged than the *Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*. The reference to The War as "The Three Years War" in essence also follows the same approach as was followed in Europe with the designation "The Thirty Years War". This War also had more role-players (and interests), even though the battle was fought on German soil.

The use of this form of designation lost some support after the first three decades of the twentieth century - probably because of the exposure to new designations with a sharper ideological flavour.

3.6 The Anglo-Boer War (Die Anglo-Boereoorlog)

Some authors regard the "second" Anglo-Boer War" as a continuation or sequence of the "first" Anglo-Boer War (1877-1881). This designation refers to the Boer [*Afrikaner*] and the Britisher [*British Government*] (compare Smith, 1996:6).

Davenport, (1991:179-180, 191-200). It seems that several Afrikaans and English historians, like Davenport, preferred this designation (compare also Pretorius, 1991:13-25; Bridges, 1982; Kennis, 1982:392-393; Macnab, 1981; Maphalala, 1979; Siwundhla, 1977; Botha, 1967). According to Van Schoor (1998) this designation is regarded as being historically so strong at the South African Archive Service, the War Museum of the Boer Republics and the South African Academy, that the name does not even warrant defence.

That this designation is popular among academics is not to be doubted. In a survey of articles/books with this designation during the eighties and nineties, it seems that this designation surpasses other designations by far. It should, however, be said that "standing historically strong", according to Van Schoor, is only academically true with regard to the seventies (compare Wessels, 1988:26-31). Whether the viewpoint of institutions on name designation - that are mostly offshoots of the Government of the day's need - as in the case of The War- is relevant, could be strongly debated.

Apart from the follow-up of the reference with the First Anglo-Boer War (compare Wulfsohn, 1989:39), some academics (nationally and internationally) as well as John Citizen, currently regard this terminology also as the most neutral of all, because the parties that are mentioned, are those that were mainly involved in the declaration of war (compare Hattingh, 1998:8; Verner, 1998; Anon., 1998:2; Nieuwoudt, 1998:6; Versfeld, 1998:12; Scholtz, 1998:19; Farquharson, 1997:25; De Kersauson, 1993:121 and The War itself. Michael Barthrop (1988) uses the name Anglo-Boer War in the title of his book like this: "The Anglo-Boer Wars, 1815-1902". He discusses six clashes, among others the Slagtersnek Rebellion, skirmishes during 1838-1848 and in 1880-81.

As was the case with the designation *Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, it seems to be that Second Anglo-Boer War as use of a name was not a general reference to This War during the war itself. General De Wet's "*De Strijd tussen Boer en Brit*" (1903) as reference to The

War is probably one of the nearest and earliest designations indicating the later Anglo-Boer War as designation for The War. Hopkins (1900) also refers in his work on The War to it as “South Africa and the Boer-British War”. In many regards this designation follows the same path after the war as many other wars that took place in the world. In for instance the already mentioned Russian-Japanese War the same approach to naming it was followed, namely that the two most important governments/conflicting groups were named.

3.7 The South African War (*Die Suid-Afrikaanse Oorlog*)

This title as a reference to The War, could probably regarded as the oldest addition to the already existing focussed designation. The reason for this that writers of daily newspapers, as mentioned earlier, during The War referred to it as a war taking place in South Africa, and that involved South Africans. Other writers in the first decades of The War also identified with this name (compare Boltman, 1943). The title of the Dutchman Penning’s (1901) publication on The War, entitled *De oorlog in Zuid-Afrika: de strijd tussen Engeland en de verbonden Boeren-Republieken Transvaal en Oranje-Vrijstaat, in zijn verloop geschetst*, I-III, focusses the reader also on the ‘War in South Africa’. Within journalist circles the Natal Witness (7 Oct. 1899:10) in the same month that The War broke out, in a column entitled “If war comes”, mentioned The South African War. In fact, it was the first written traces picked up with regard to this form of naming for The War. Ironically enough the Natal Witness (14 Oct. 1899:4), opted for the more neutral “The War” when the war started. There has been references to Leo Amery’s work via the newspaper The Times’ reporting as a typical example where The War obtained a name, namely that it took place in South Africa, and involved all people within its borders (compare also Warwick, 1983:4). This naming could therefore hardly be regarded as the “most recent whim among English-speaking historians” (according to Van Schoor, 1998), because “The South African War”, seen semantically, has left deep traces and could obviously not be regarded as the newest name added to those for The War.

The intervention of ideological sentiments, as has been pointed out in other designations, has for decades figured so strongly, that this given name was dwarfed and has since the eighties been newly “discovered” as a so-called “modern” trend.

Several “modern” (according to Pretorius, 1991:15) writers from several languages groups, identify with the title “The South African War: or “The War of South Africa” (compare Davidson/Filatova, 1998:47; Porter, 1980:1; Smith, 1996:1; Cuthbertson, 1986; Mohlamme, 1985; Warwick, 1983; Flynn, 1970). Davidson and Filatova (1998:47) mention in their writing a few examples works in other languages with this designation to The War. Compare for example A. von Muller’s as well as M. von Faller’s works, both entitled *Der Krieg in Süd-Afrika*. However, it is to be doubted whether all would have held the same motivation of why the designation “South African War” was their choice. For some the variety of role-players (race-coupled) might have been more important than the fact that South Africa as a country was in the barrage (compare Anon., 1997:3) and/or whether The War was fought on South African soil.

According to Pretorius (1990:15) the name “The South African War” has to do with the fact that a broadening has taken place in the last two to three decades with regard to the research material that has been made available. The fact that social aspects, according to him, started to get more attention, led to the fact that a totalitarian idea of The War started to develop – resulting in the name “The South African War”. Smith (1996:6) agrees with this, but, as he states it, links it directly to the racial exclusion because of the “seen from above” approach that was followed in the past. He further states that:

“Recent work has demonstrated what a gross simplification it is to view this war as a struggle between two monolithic populations: Boer versus British. Neither the Boer nor the British at the time were monolithic; and this was no clear-cut ‘war between the races’ much as nationalistic interpreters then and since have sought to claim as such...”

What could also be illuminating, was that the same Smith (1984), to whom we referred as example, some years before his 1996 publication wrote an article for *History Today*, entitled “Reading History: the Boer War”. Whether he has since felt that South Africans

should regard this as the “South African War” and the British citizen should regard it as “The Boer War”, is uncertain. It may also be that he merely used it as alternative term or that he came to other “insights” during the nineties.

There are, however, also experts from other language groups who identified with the “South African War” title for The War (compare Liebenberg & Spies, 1993:3-20). On his part Bill Nasson refers to The War as “South Africa’s Great War, 1899-1902” (Nasson, 1995). The name South African *War/Suid-Afrikaanse Oorlog/South African War* only became really popular in the nineties.³

5 Pronunciation based on a survey of articles/books published, and the work of A. Wessels (1987)

3.8 Other designations for The War

Other names for The War, some of which were closely coupled with the already existing names, are The Transvaal War; The Great Boer War; The Gentleman’s War and The Anglo-Boer (Coloured) War (Anon, 1988:8-9). These probably do not include all the names that existed colloquially for The War. As far as is known, there were some that referred to The War of the Republics.⁴

An interesting combination as title is Warwick’s (1980) tautological reference to The War as “The South African War: The Anglo Boer War 1899-1902”. He was obviously, because of the controversy with regard to the name referring to The War, uncertain whom he would offend in the use of one or the other. In his publication of 1983, entitled “Black People and the South African War, 1899-1902”, his most important choice of names is more direct. The more circumspect approach also applies to the vague “Anglo-Boer (Coloured) War” attempt that seems to be a more politically-ideologically inspired form of designation.

6 It seems as if this reference was more often used by the Natal and Cape Colonists.

4. Realities that should be considered

4.1 Wars always involve several role-players

When a war takes place, there are always several role-players that are primarily involved. Others fulfil a secondary and even tertiary position.

From the representation (on next page) it is clear that several role-players could claim that they had been a part of The War. In fact, with a reference here and there, a reference to any war's role-players could readily fit into this illustrative framework. It is historically necessary to be able to illuminate events such as those of The War from different role-players' experience [multicultural]. Together this creates a variation of images that is needed to obtain clarity with regard to this historical event.

4.2 Wars do not acknowledge all peoples/countries

Where the designation of an event is at stake, one need not necessarily always refer to all role-players, but a more general approach (as is evident from the semantic meaning and historical examples) should be followed. In any reference to an historical event, it should, as has been indicated in the first, primarily reference to the most important, most describing aspect relevant. This applies to the governments/groups involved or the

country's boundaries where such a war takes place or a general acknowledgement of the variety of role-players' share.

Role-players and The War in South Africa, 1899-1902

4.3 Wars always involve several role-players

When a war takes place, there are always several role-players that are primarily involved. Others fulfil a secondary and even tertiary position.

4.4 Governments' ideological sentiments are often detrimental in the naming of wars

Smith (1996:X) says "investigation into the origins of wars leads, sooner rather than later, to the studies of élites and decision makers. Situations of conflict may exist between people, but wars are declared by governments..." The same argument could apply where one refers to a war such as that between the Republics and Great Britain. However, it is known that voluntaries came from far and wide to assist the "Boere" (Republics) and Great Britain in all sorts of ways during The War. Among others there were the Dutchmen (De Jong, 1991:65-75), the Scandinavians (De Jong, 1991:74-76; Beuthun, 1997:7), the Jews (Saks, 1996:35-40), the Russians (Davidson, 1990; Davidson and Filatova, 1995; Davidson, 1997) the French (Pelletier, 1988:52-63), the Indians (Ramamurthi, 1997:11), the Australians (Anon., 1998:2), the Americans (Fourie, 1998:5), etc. It would seem strange, if each of these countries obtained a small place in the title reference to The War. Perhaps it would not be far-fetched to speak a "mini world war of 1899-1902"!

It is a fact, however, that a variety of role-players were involved and that several role-players from different ideological sentiments over decades have had a share in one or other name for The War. On the other hand, it is necessary that one sentiment should not be given preference, that all sentiments, as during The War, should actually share in the naming and should be able to identify with it.

4.5 The earliest references made to wars should not be ignored

The reference of the role-players within the given time and space to such an historical event should also be strongly considered by those who stand in the row later. It might be quite interesting to do some research on the writings of people of colour, living at the time of The War, and collect their approach and naming of The War.

In effect this means that one should move back to that naming of the war with which John Citizen (this includes all citizens) identified during The War. Naturally opinion-formers played a significant role in people's view of the war. Examined closely, there was a great degree of consensus over the type of reporting. It did not include designations such as "Boer war", "English War" and "Anglo-Boer War" (*Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*). There are indeed forms of variations of names implying "Boer-British" (and not Anglo-Boer), and especially "The War" and "The War in South Africa". One should add that names with which veterans and descendants identified The War by, could and should not be ignored in historiography (e.g. The Three Years War). However, to cling to one-sided names in historiography/and even in the commemoration thereof, could lead to a product or event where the historical facts are once again subjected to distortion to satisfy personal sentiments.

5. CONCLUSION

The most important questions that South Africans wrestle with in the naming of The War, are who determines the criteria for naming and which criteria apply in naming? From the sources consulted, it seems that there is often a link with opinion-formers, heads of governments and leading authors. Determining for their sentiments, is each one's cultural association in its widest sense. Naming an event seems to be established during or shortly after termination of an event. Whether descendants keep to these names, are debatable. All the role-players are not necessarily taken into account and specific role-players that were for instance mainly responsible for the outbreak of the war, or were prominent participants, are not necessarily given preference when naming is done. Countries/communities also differ with regard to the way in which names are given - for instance of a war.

If the database Kovsi-war⁵ (UOVS) could at least serve as a guideline for publications that have already appeared specifically under names of The War, the statistics in this regard look as follows:

The South African War:	197
<i>De Zuid-Afrikaansche Oorlog:</i>	36
The War in South Africa:	1
Anglo Boereoorlog/Anglo Boer War	107
Boereoorlog/Boer War:	8
[in the eighties – nineties was observed more by the author War between Britisher and Boer	2
Driejarige oorlog:	2
Three Years War	3
Engelse oorlog:	4
English War:	2

5 Kovsi-War is a database on which sources, containing specifically references with regard to The War, and that are available on the Internet. It is not regarded as a complete collection of sources with regard to The War at all. This database currently has 6 000 references.

If the mentioned criteria in section 1 were taken as broad standard for naming The War, it seems likely therefore that “The War in South Africa, 1899-1902 or, said semantically in a different way. “The War in South Africa, 1899-1902 can be regarded as the oldest method of use by authors/journalists on paper. Shortly hereafter, the name “The War/Struggle between Boer and Britisher, 1899-1902 or “the Anglo-Boer Struggle/War, 1899-1902 would follow. If some primary role-players, John Citizen’s view, as “strugglers” in the midst of The War were taken into account, “The Three Years War” could be another possibility. If authors (and even combatants) of all over the world were taken into account, the “Boer War” (*Boereoorlog*) is another valid choice. It is a name that has grown with the war, and which is currently still fairly commonly used. Critics of

this name could argue that more authors from outside South Africa prefer this name and that it is therefore one-sided and unacceptable. Given the mentioned criteria, other names could hardly be valid. Most of them were only established thirty years after The War.

To choose one name from the four mentioned choices could be subjected to further debate. For the sake of history, I would suffice with the oldest name in use. That it obviously includes all groups is merely a “bonus”, seen from a late nineteenth century multiperspective viewpoint on the South African society.

¹ For the sake of a multiperspective discussion on the designation of The War that occurred from 1899-1902 on South African soil, the author will throughout refer to the war as The War. This is merely to avoid confusion and personal sentiments, as far as possible.

² I would like to thank all the friendly academics on the h-safrica and H-Africa Network who responded to my request to participate in the discussion on the name of the 1899-1902 War. Your ideas and assistance were invaluable. A heartfelt word of thank you to the staff of the Ferdinand Postma Library of the PU for CHE, as well as the State Library in Pretoria, for many hours of assistance with the search for sources that were used in this article. This I sincerely appreciate.