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PARTICIPATION OF AMERICAN MILITARY VOLUNTEERS IN THE ANGLO-BOER WARS OF 1899-1902

Anglo-Boer War of 1899 – 1902 was the British invasive war against the Burundian republics of Orange and Transvaal, one of the first wars of the era of imperialism. In this war, Great Britain sought to expand and unify its colonial possessions in Africa, to capture the fields of diamonds and gold [1, p. 130].

The "civilized" war had its charm for certain people who saw the battle as a kind of invigorating blood adventure. And in the Boer army there were many foreigners who took up arms for the sake of actual war, but, nevertheless, most of the volunteers joined the Boers, sincerely wishing to help the cause of the republics [3, c. 220]. Soon after the outbreak of the war, in America an entire movement emerged to assist the Boers and send the Doberians to South Africa. The states of Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota were particularly active. The movement faced rigorous opposition of D.Paunsefot, the British ambassador in Washington, and the American government [2, c. 171]. The Anti-British sentiment was also widespread among Americans of Irish and German descent. In connection with the war, mass protests against the Anglophile policy of the republican government were held in the USA [2, p. 172]. Promoting the seizure of the Boer republics by Britain, the American imperialists profited from the war. During the war years, the export of goods from the United States to England and its

South African colonies increased significantly. The American government ignored repeated protests of the Boers on this matter. While the US upheld the neutrality of the Aligned Movement of the English aggression in South Africa, the United States forced England to make very important concessions to them [2, c. 175].

None of the foreigners who served in the Boer army received cash compensation. They were supplied with horses, food and equipment at the expense of the government at the rate of 35 pounds per volunteer. Before getting permission to join the commando and issuing equipment, the volunteer was obliged to take an oath of loyalty to the Republic [3, c. 222]. Most Americans spent the first months of the war in the Boer commandos, and did not attempt to create their own detachment. Twenty people joined the Irish brigade, organized by Colonel Blake. Blake and his people took part in almost all showdowns in Natal [3, c. 228]. During the Natal campaign, John Hassel organized a squad of American Scouts. After spending five years in exploratory and hunting expeditions in various parts of South Africa, Hassel had an excellent knowledge of the country, which distinguished him from other commanders of the foreign legion. John Shea was the Lieutenant of Scouts, having gained military experience back in the Spanish-American War. Shea tried to introduce an American army system in the Boer army, but his attempt failed miserably. The American Scouts were joined by about half a dozen American correspondents who put down their pen to take up their rifles, including George Parson of Collier's Weekly. Among the Americans who fought in the Boer commando, was Otto von Lossber, born in Germany and trained in the German army. Already a citizen of America, he participated in the Puerto Rican campaign. Arriving in the Transvaal in March 1900, a month later he was already in control of the artillery that crushed Colonel Broadwood near Sannas Post [3, c. 229]. Dozens of foreign officers arrived in the country in order to obtain command posts in order to gain fame and experience, but none of these burghers met the needs of the campaign. The Boers considered their system of warfare to be the most suitable for these conditions and only laughed at the proposals of foreign officers to teach them

something. Every European officer was kindly received in Pretoria and camps, but he was offered to enroll as an ordinary burgher. Before the war, the Boers had a small number of foreigners, but they did not play a special role. Several European officers, on behalf of the governments of the republics, trained young Boers in artillery, and this activity was really valuable, but repeated statements by the British press that each commando was headed by a foreign officer were completely untrue [3, p. 220].

So, despite the resistance of the authorities, American volunteers, supporters of the Boers still showed a desire to fight for the interests of the like-minded people.

References

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