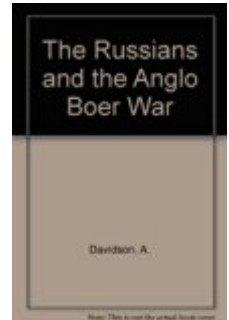


Apollon Davidson, Irina Filatova. *The Russians and the Anglo Boer War*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1998. 287 pp. \$35.00, paper, ISBN 978-0-7981-3804-8.



Reviewed by Bertil Haggman

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This important addition to the literature on the foreign volunteers in the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902 is the first book on Russians fighting for the Boers to be published after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. This means that the authors have had access to new archival material in Russia.

There were in all around 2,700 foreign volunteers on the Boer side (in round figures 650 Dutch, 550 Germans, 400 French, 300 Americans, 225 Russians, 200 Italians, 200 Irish and 150 Scandinavians).

There is no complete roster on the Russians (who were not all from Russia). Only about 50 of them are known by name. One Russian volunteer only, Lt. Augustus, wrote detailed memoirs. The Boer republics registered volunteers only during the first two months of the war. All "Russian" volunteers were, as mentioned, not ethnic Russians. Some came from the Baltic states, from Latvia and Lithuania. Some were East Europeans (a couple of Bulgarians).

There was one Russian Boer General, Lt. Col. Yevgeny Yakovlevich Maximov. He was elected

"veggeneraal" (combat general) and was partly Swedish (his mother came from Sweden, his father a Russian naval officer) with ties to Livonia (not Livland, which is the Swedish word, used in the text. In honesty, however, it must be noted that in the index also Livonia is mentioned). Livonia was a Swedish province (Riga was capital) from 1620 to 1721 (Peace of Nystad). Unfortunately the authors do not supply any genealogical information, so further research into the background of Maximov is not possible based on information in the book.

In 1875 Maximov retired from the Russian Army as Captain. Later he went to Serbia to fight the Turks. In 1880 he was sent to Central Asia representing the Russian Red Cross. One year later he joined the Gendarmerie. After leaving this corps in 1884 his life is shrouded in mystery. After fighting in South Africa he was allowed to rejoin the Russian Army (with some reluctance from the army, having fought a duel). He fell leading a battalion of the 36th Oryol Infantry Regiment in the Far East. He is probably buried somewhere near

Mukden, Manchuria, but the exact location is unknown.

President Paul Kruger once in a letter of appreciation expressed his gratitude to Veggeneraal Maximov: "Your services to my Fatherland were of extraordinary importance."

Both authors are Russians and Professors in South Africa. The great number of unknown Russian volunteers indeed invites further research. Maybe in the future new material will come to light. Meanwhile this book will do just fine.

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