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**“WHAT BELONGS TO SOLDIERS, PASSES BY THEM”:
ATTEMPTS TO OVERCOME CORRUPTION IN THE RUSSIAN ARMY
IN THE EARLY 19th CENTURY**

Abstract. The Purpose of the Research. *The paper presents a thorough study of Russian military presence in Right-Bank Ukraine as a powerful means of political support of the autocracy in the 19th century which resulted in negative social and economic transformations. The study of legal acts and archive sources of the period suggests the understanding of Russian Emperor Alexander the First’s role concerning optimization of the system of regular troops supply introduced by Ekaterina the Empress*

and struggle against the officials' malversation throughout the tsar's overall reformative activity in the first decade of the century. **The Research Methodology.** The scope of relevant general scientific and specific methods was applied to complete the issued objectives. Under the overall perspective of dialectal approach, biography analysis, historical and genetic method served the tools of the research. Structural and systemic approach towards data interpretation provided unbiased treatment of documented facts and their adequate incorporation into the text of the paper: **The Scientific Novelty.** The paper ponders on the economic relationship between the Russian military and society. It has been the first practice to analyze the top imperial authorities' efforts initiated by the Emperor Alexander the First to put things in order in the system of supply to the regular troops stationed in Right-Bank Ukraine and provide them with the necessities. The study proves that the process in question went hand in hand with corruption combats and malversation among officers and quartermasters. The authors ground their argument on archival documents and prove that such authoritative actions resulted in minimal success and temporary improvement of the military and civil local bureaucratic system which failed to thoroughly influence the situation. The total autocratic control over the gross, high-powered, military and bureaucratic mechanism turned it into a functional tool meant to be applied in the Russian Empire's politics on the annexed territories. **The Conclusion.** The obtained data and their analysis verify the assumption that the Romanovs' aggressive policy of the early 19th century gave rise to the potentially dangerous phenomena in the state structure which ruined its basic constituents like army and civil administration. The Russian state colonial policy meant to enrich the autocracy transformed into the robbery of the annexed territories by the Russian officials. The lack of effective state control and anachronistic serfdom constituted a heavy obstacle towards reforms of any kind.

Key words: Right-Bank Ukraine, Russian Army, military, civil, provision.

“ТЕ, ЩО НАЛЕЖИТЬ СОЛДАТАМ, НЕ ПОТРАПЛЯЄ ДО НИХ”: СПРОБИ ПРИБОРКАННЯ КОРУПЦІЇ У РОСІЙСЬКІЙ АРМІЇ НА ПОЧАТКУ XIX ст.

Анотація. Мета статті – комплексне вивчення факту російської військової присутності як політичної опори самодержавства у Правобережній Україні впродовж XIX ст., унаслідок чого край зазнав негативних соціально-економічних перетворень. Вивчення і аналіз законодавчих актів і архівних періоджерел уможливило окреслити досліджувану проблематику та бачення російського самодержавства щодо питань модернізації катериненської системи забезпечення регулярних військ і боротьби зі зловживаннями інтендантства. **Методологія дослідження.** Корпус релевантних засальонаукових і спеціальних історичних методів та методик залучений до виконання завдань дослідження. Метод діалектичного вивчення історичного процесу, біографічний та історико-генетичний методи уможливили розгляд визначеної проблематики в динаміці, розвитку і суперечностях. Структурно-системний метод дав змогу виділити об'єкт дослідження та вивчити його в межах раціонального пізнання, уникаючи тенденційності інтерпретації емпіричного матеріалу. **Наукова новизна.** Стаття спрямована на розкриття стосунків між російським мілітарним чинником і місцевою спільнотою в економічній площині. Уперше проаналізовано спроби найвищого імперського керівництва з ініціативи імператора Олександра I впорядкувати систему забезпечення регулярних військ, розташованих на Правобережній Україні, та постачання їм найнеобхіднішого. Доведено, що цей процес відбувався паралельно із намаганням покласти край корупції та зловживанням з боку офіцерів і квартирмейстерів. Такі висновки ґрунтуються на архівних документах, аналіз яких засвідчує, що усі намагання самодержавства мали мінімальний успіх і тимчасове поліпшення у роботі військового й цивільного чиновництва, що загалом суттєво не вплинуло на ситуацію. Аналізовані явища засвідчили тотальний імперський контроль над розгалуженим і громіздким військово-бюрократичним механізмом, який виступав дієвим інструментом впливу й впровадження російської імперської політики на анексованих територіях. **Висновки.** Отримані результати та їхній аналіз підтверджують припущення, що агресивна політика Романових початку XIX ст. дала поштовх вплив на такі її базові компоненти, як армія та цивільна адміністрація. Російська державна охв потенційно небезпечному явищу у державній структурі, що мало руйнівний колоніальна політика спрямовувалася на збагачення самодержавства, а тому результатом усіх реформ було пограбування анексованих територій російськими чиновниками. Брак ефективного державного контролю і анахронізм кріпацтва становили основну перешкоду на шляху будь-яких реформ.

Ключові слова: Правобережна Україна, російська армія, військо, цивільні, забезпечення.

The Problem Statement. The whole history of the Russian Imperial Army, except for short periods of reforms and preparations for campaigns, presents a lengthy story of military conflicts and provocations, conquests and invasions, with the overall purpose of expanding the Empire, followed by enforcing imperial rule and laws on the annexed territories. The state colonial policy defined the army objectives and functions whereas positioning and settling of the armed forces in the newly-acquired provinces faced the challenges the top authorities could hardly foresee. The Emperor's Army had always had difficulties in either establishing the right governing or providing the military with the required supply. The problem deepened as both civil and military officials could hardly overcome the national impact determining the relations between the oppressed nations and their oppressors. Besides, the army was multinational, too. The commanders had to "strengthen the national cohesion of a continually expanding heterogeneous Empire" (Cadiot, 2009).

The Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. The existing literature analysing the Russian Army of the beginning of the 19th century focuses mainly on its structure (units, commanders, hierarchy), composition (peasants, rural dwellers), strategies and military doctrines, officers training, governing reforms etc. (see, for instance, Keep, 1985; Pintner, 1987; Hartley, 1999; Summerfield, 2005). But the living standards, specifics of dwelling and housing, issues with food and clothing allocation, options of rest and vacation still lack scholars' attention. Hence, the scope of the present research goes beyond the narrowed insight into the military component of the army but seeks to shed light on the non-military things of everyday importance.

The Russian Empire had always justified its aggressive foreign policies and indecent relations with its closest neighbours by "geopolitical competition with the West and fears of Western encirclement" (Lellon, 2020). Besides, such invasive foreign policy was (and still is) used to cement the monarch's domestic power (ibid.). In the light of this situation, an everyday life of the military on the controlled or annexed territories was of equal importance with the wartime readiness strength.

The "business of war" (Torres-Sánchez et al., 2018) developed alongside with the military campaigns. The current army needs resulted in the formation of new relations between the state, the military, and the entrepreneurs. For the Russian Imperial Army, the complications arose from the fact that in its provision it depended on the traders and their military counterparts running their business on the annexed territories. The national, social, cultural, and religious factors influenced the officers' and soldiers' well-being (very often it was not "well"). The territories conquered by the tsarist Russia differed in all the aforementioned ways but the problems they faced remained the same: in every sphere where civil and the military bureaucracy collaborated, corruption was in a full swing. Ukraine was not an exception.

The problematic mechanism of necessities supply to the Emperor's army on the annexed territory of Right-Bank Ukraine has been known to be accurately mirrored in the archival documents and literature. Empirical data and a new focus of interest considering the phenomenon in question constituted the key objective of the present paper. Illegal and ambiguous aspects of the army provision had a negative impact on almost all the social strata and economic conditions of the territory. This thorough revision of the available documents and analysis of relevant historical facts sheds light on one of the least investigated aspects of the Russian military history, and, moreover, on an everyday life outside of the military sphere.

There is no surprise in the fact that the phenomenon of corruption so characteristic of the Russian state system (Schulze, Sjahrir, and Zakharov (Schulze et al, 2016, p. 138) use a clear

classification of the degree of corruption in Russia – “Corruption is rampant”) penetrated the Imperial Army, like any other structure where bureaucracy plays first fiddle and wants to be paid for it. It is most often practiced when the military has to deal with civilians. Here, the principle of “low risk, high profit” arises from the nature of cooperation: unarmed civilians could not resist armed forces whom the tsar himself allowed to appropriate everything so that their needs should be satisfied, especially on the annexed territories. But it did not mean that the lowest military rank – soldiers – enjoyed abundance of food, forage, ammunition, and other provisions. This horn of plenty usually passed by them. Officers, quartermasters, sometimes hand in hand with local authorities used to falsify the true scopes of bargains, prices, thus acquiring lucre additionally to their quite decent salary.

History repeats itself, and the situation, though quite common and by no means surprising, still reveals the state of things in the present-day Russian Army (Mathers, 1995). The problem of military corruption in the former empire has not abandoned the agenda of scholarly research yet.

Methodology of any historic research requires the selection of reliable sources with adequate analysis. According to Colapietro (Colapietro, 2016), it is a process of interpreting the past based on evidence available in the present where some abstract definitions get their pragmatic clarifications. This combination of awareness and consciousness enables a historian to balance between the significance of the research itself and the personal view and conclusions arising from the broad context and individual background. Thus, a philosophy of history is viewed as a philosophy of contexts (Esposito, 1984, p. 6). This generalized approach determines the vision of our reception and rendering of the problem in question. Within this frame, sources may be differentiated into two groups: *primary* (original documents or their copies, archives resources, statistical data derived from documents and other reliable sources) and *secondary* (theoretical works reasoning on historic documents, analytical publications speculating on the data and the results, etc.). Like most researchers of Russian history, we consider “Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii” (PSZ) [Complete Collection of the Laws of the Russian Empire] a key primary source and rely on it in most cases of research. The scope of secondary sources varies in chronological ranges, objects of description but covers the similar sphere of concepts. Here, we find it relevant for the historical research to follow the *dialectal approach* the application of which enables the researcher to follow the issue in its origin, development, contradictions, complications, and current reception. Such multiple instrumentation allows various angles from which the topic is viewed. Taking into consideration the aspects of the subject (state military investment, entrepreneurs’ business, provincial management, local economies, national mentality, etc.), the valid survey is meant to be grounded on qualitative, quantitative, and reliable data. Following these guidelines, the present study tends to give a scientific and systematic analysis of the Emperor’s Army and the Russian military and their influence on the social life in Right-Bank Ukraine, the problems of this army provision and corruption and a key destructive factor in warfare.

Apart from scrutinizing the details of entrepreneurship as a phenomenon and its collaboration with the managerial classes, on the one hand, and specifics of Russian bureaucracy with its total corruption, mishandling and lack of professionalism, the research is bound to compare the existing examples of such enterprise relying on the European and world practices described in the leading publications in the field. According to Parrott (Parrott, 2012), such studies take the state out of the centre of the picture and place the nation and its role in the state there instead. The collapse of multinational states (what the world has

been observing recently) has grown from the deep-rooted problems one of which constitutes the objective of the present research.

The Purpose of the Research. The paper aims at representing the objective, unbiased view of the problems in providing the Russian Imperial Army with the necessities on the annexed territory of Right-Bank Ukraine; considering the relevant available documents and theoretical sources in reflecting the multifaceted influence of the analyzed processes on the social and economic life of the invaded region.

The Results of the Research. The situation in the Russian Imperial Army during the described period was by no means novel and striking. The history of Russia of the early 19th century differed little from those of most European (and not limited to) countries. The military campaigns served the tool of state expansion, influenced economic development and social intercourse. The scale of warfare grew steadily (Parrot, 2012) resulting in penetration of the army into all spheres of state economy. Thus, as soon as tsarist Russia totally annexed Right-Bank Ukraine and the Russian administration settled down in the conquered provinces, a new system of trade and marketing relations between local manufacturers and entrepreneurs, on the one hand, and quartermaster institutions, on the other, originated and began to develop gradually. It acted as a mechanism whose main functions consisted in purchasing and providing the Russian military with the necessities. The legally affirmed concept of “regular troops provision” served the driving force of such contacts to grow and thrive. It consisted in the duty charged upon the local governing authorities to provide the military with proper accommodation, food-stuffs and forage, fuel and lighting.

The relations between the army and the civilians, especially on the annexed or invaded territories, are traditionally both political and military, humanitarian. At the beginning of the 19th century, the key roles of such relations in Right-Bank Ukraine were performed by regular regiments of the Russian Army, their local troops and units as consumers, whereas merchants, landowners and state peasants were providers. The officials from purveyance and commissariat institutions, sometimes local public officials coped with intermediary function. (In present-day terminology, this is termed “civil and military cooperation” and “civil affairs” and is widely used by NATO and the armed forces of many countries. According to Rana (Rana, 2004, p. 574), such relations are meant to facilitate unity of effort between military forces and the relevant civilian entities.

Beginning in 1796, the Russians tried hard to form a system of regular provision for their troops on the newly occupied territories but it failed to be as easy as they had expected. The Polish landlords’ overt hostility and their unwillingness to cooperate with the invaders brought over the obstacles in purchasing food-stuffs and material resources. Besides, the Russian provincial and governor’s councils sought to establish the market prices for food-stuffs and forage through district courts, administrative-police officials and inform the Purveyance department about it, thus, trying to influence price formation.

Considering the almost constant invasions the Russian Empire sustained in the 18th cent., the battalions’ and regiments’ commanders practiced some financial independence in supplying their units with the necessities. Such lack of control caused the growth of the regiments’ expenditures, for example, amendments for unreal food-stuffs purchase for the soldiers, selling of the unaccounted remnants of powder and lead, payroll processing and food provision for the dead or killed (PSZ, 1830 (Vol. XXIII. Law № 17049), pp. 338–339). Military officials’ corrupt behaviour might result in misappropriation of funds in exchange of kickbacks (Schulze et al., 2016, p. 146) or, in contract with public officials, they provided

a noncompetitive market environment for merchants and landlords participating in tenders and auctions.

In an attempt to put an end to it, Ekaterina the Empress issued some laws in November, 1794, in which the commanders' responsibility and accountability were enhanced. The reports about the purchase of wheat, hay and oats, as well as sending the special semiannual record to the general-purveyance-master with indication of purchase rates and the money amounts spent were meant to eliminate thefts (PSZ, 1830 (Vol. XXIII. Law № 17266), p. 589). But such actions could not eliminate corruption or its determinants in a separate sphere as this deep-rooted phenomenon overflowed the whole system of administration.

The Russian troops could hardly arrange their positions on the annexed territories when the commanders and quartermasters initiated the wholesale traditional misuse, that is purposeful rise of the forestalling prices for food-stuffs and forage (PSZ, 1830 (Vol. XXIV. Law № 17350), pp. 725–726). The legislation itself set the colonels to illegal actions. For instance, the decree from the Military Board of January, 1800, which allowed the regiments' commanders to contract upon the food-stuffs prices on their own and just inform the purveyance commissioners where to purchase (PSZ, 1830 (Vol. XXVI. Law № 19261), p. 22). Such situation satisfied practically everyone but for the state. All those involved received their own profit while the state suffered from the annual rise of expenditures.

During the described period, the officials from Purveyance department supplied the necessary food-stuffs for the Russian Army through storage of provisions in the so-called “purveyance stocks” by means of target purchase from the local landowners and state peasants (SVP, 1879, p. 2). Such first stocks began to appear in Right Bank Ukraine in February, 1800, and used to locate in state or landowner's estates because there was lack of well-built and well-equipped state buildings (State Archives of Rivne Region – SARR, f. 370, d. 1, c. 1, p. 77). The regiments were able to replenish the current needs for cash from special funds controlled by the commanders. In order to avoid the military officials' financial misuse, unjustified high purchase prices frequently resulting from the contract with police administration, district officials and landowners, the Senate endowed province governing bodies with the function to inform the commanders about the prices every six months. The latter, in their turn, were to send special records about purchase expenditures to the Accounting Expedition of the Military Board (Russian State Military-Historical Archives – RSMHA, f. 43, d. 1, c. 147, pp. 1–3).

Though, this well-designed system failed to be effective. The reported data concerning the prices of wheat and forage for the army handed over by the province and district authorities to the Purveyance department did not coincide with those mentioned in the reports of regiments commanders. In Saint Petersburg, the prices were concluded to be artificially raised; stealing of state finance by local authorities disguised by proper troops provision became obvious (Nikolaichuk, 2017). Alexander the First made an attempt to put an end to this embezzlement. “I could hardly cope with my indignation to know about the misuse on the part of Purveyance Commissioners and regiments' Chefs in purchasing at the prices so high and burdensome for the exchequer, [...] which are untruthful representation of certified prices [...] and proved the suspicion of the Civil Authorities complicity, and that Provincial Officials and Courts afforded to profiteer and appoint the price, thus, violating their posts and oaths” (PSZ, 1830 (Vol. XXVII. Law № 20120), p. 25).

It is worth mentioning that the tsar used to threaten only civil provincial and district authorities with prosecution whereas the military avoided suspicion. It suggests an idea that he did not receive objective information from his surroundings and the officials. In fact, the

higher military command had been robbing the army suffering from weak central control. A well-provided high readiness army was rather imaginary than real. Earl A. Vorontsov wrote to Alexander the First in 1801, “It is impossible to think about the continuous perfection and proper conduction of military affairs in the state as far as the state should not be overburdened and both people and money should not be depleted. Striking misuse and embezzlement in the military aspect have been deeply rooted in the institutions [...], and what belongs to the soldiers of the Guard and the Army passes by them” (Ratch, 1864). Thus, the fact that “the military drifted away from civil control” (Lennon, 2020) did not make the army stronger and effective.

Meanwhile, the key objectives of the governing bodies were clearly defined both by the state legislation and current orders of the army commanders, newly appointed governors and quartermaster officials of higher ranks. The tsar made the commanders observe the strict execution of the before issued principal rules and decrees. Firstly, it was control over the proper amount of all kinds of provision in the main stocks and robbery avoidance; secondly, there should be timely necessities delivery to the troops; thirdly, honest financial agreement with the providers; fourthly, flexible policies concerning providers in case of poor crop and other casualties (RSMHA, f. 44, d. 193, c. 143, pp. 13–14).

The arranged economic system was bound to work well as there was nothing complicated in it. Nevertheless, poor interaction between different institutions resulted in mess and misuse. For example, the intensive displacement of the troops in 1795–1799 caused misunderstanding where to deliver provision and where the required regiments stayed (PSZ, 1830 (Vol. XXIV. Law № 17835), pp. 492–493). In view of this, corruption served an accurate reflection of the Russian society and politics of the time (Lennon, 2020).

Alexander the First knew both what amount of budget money is spent on maintenance and provision of the troops and the approximate sums of despoliation. Thus, he decided to put an end to the outdated system of purchase (Metternykh, 1880). Auctions and open bidding were meant to perform the key role in this mechanism. The decree on the rules concerning pricing goods provision was issued in October of 1802 (PSZ, 1830 (Vol. XXVII. Supplement № 20484a), pp. 12–13). All the process components were to be observed by civil governors whereas the Purveyance Commissions conducted the overall control (Skrypnyk, 2015). It demonstrated a definitely new stage of development of commodity-money relations between the society and the military forces as one of the powerful state institutions.

The tsar intended to strengthen control as he suspected misuse and price raise by the officials from the province boards and Treasury houses in the three Right-Bank provinces, thus he ordered to check the ways the purchase for the troops was going through. It might seem strange but no infractions were found. Hence, Kyiv Province Board sent “Report” to Kyiv military governor where it proved that all the operations were legal. The commander of Sever Dragoon Regiment Major General Esipov wrote, “[...] the prices are reasonable, hay and forage are of good quality [...]”, the Commission of Kyiv purveyance storehouse stated the condition of storage stocks and the quantity of purveyance in them meet all the requirements (Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Kyiv – CSHAUK, f. 533, d. 1, c. 113, pp. 1–1v, 8, 14). The situation was the same in the provinces. The corporate contradictions and intrigues were obvious, whereas the purposeful escalation of the process failed to reach the goal. It was far from the much-desired “issue from improving synergy between military and civilian efforts in multinational interventions” (Rana, 2004, p. 586) originally planned by the Imperial authorities to maintain and strengthen their positions in the newly-acquired provinces.

In spite of definite achievements, the provision storage company of 1803 demonstrated that the well-designed system in the majority of the western imperial provinces like the Baltic, Belorussian, and Right-Bank Ukrainian was paralyzed. The problem resulted from the local gentry who sabotaged or ignored participation in auctions or deliberately raised prices for food-stuffs (Reshetchenko, 2015). At that time, the authorities had to appeal to the purveyors' and entrepreneurs' services and hold special tenders in the provincial Treasury Houses, limiting the price choice in the way that caused gradual increase of state expenditure (PSZ, 1830 (Vol. XXVIII. Law № 21188), pp. 173–174). For the military, it did not matter much where to buy, the only thing they cared for was a reasonable price. That's why, the regiments' inspectors and commanders expected to deal with favourable prices and delivery terms and used to send their purveyance masters and officials to participate in the tenders announced by the provincial authorities (CSHAUK, f. 533, d. 1, c. 521, pp. 3–8).

The monarch clearly saw that all the efforts directed at the management and modernization of purveyance and storage system on the territories might prove fruitless without a logistics component. Among numerous definitions of logistics, the one offered by Paparone and Topic (Paparone & Topic, 2014) quoting Admiral Henry Eccles seems to be the most capacious and objectivized: it is the bridge between military operations and a nation's economy. In its ideal realization, it covers planning, organizing, maintaining goods and equipment, storage and delivery, testing and documenting, transportation and coordination. In the described situation, vast amounts of food and material resources had to be quickly and timely transported from one place to the other. The only way out of the situation was a large-scale mobilization of the rolling stock alongside with its owners (Skrypnyk, 2014). By that time, Kyiv had become an important basic point for storage of fireproof stocks and cannons requisite for the troops along the western borders (PSZ 1830 (Vol. XXIX. Law № 22417), pp. 965–967). The present-day interpretation allows to differentiate between two types of logistics involved here (Pawelczyk, 2018, p. 87): *in-service logistics* dealing with receiving, procuring, storing, distributing, and providing materials as well as ensuring the weapons system, and *consumer logistics* relating to functions of supply and support of armed forces like collection of the products, storage, transport, maintenance, operation and even disposal of the material.

The Emperor himself was concerned about the army's well-being, as far as the Imperial authority and power on the vast invaded territories depended on the logistics and provision of military goods. Thus, a number of decrees and laws were issued to meet the demands of the armed forces, to manage effective logistics and to regulate military and civil relations.

The tsar initiated new rules which did not only stimulate one of the most significant categories participating in the tenders and auctions but changed the aspect of trade and commercial relations between the military and local merchants into effective. Hence, the contracts for small arms transportation from Kyiv Arsenal to regiments and other units all around the province territory soon became rather profitable. Gradually, a peculiar market of specific military services regularly used by the Russian military till the end of Napoleonic wars was formed.

The Conclusion. The research background and the analyzed facts make it possible to conclude that Emperor Alexander failed to completely alter or significantly update the existing way of purchases and supply of the troops in Right-Bank Ukraine within a short period of time. Nevertheless, he succeeded in improving it by making it governed centrally and by severely strengthening the discipline among the commanders and officials. The situation became better due to the implementation of drastic decrees and resolutions whereas their

application was scrupulously observed in the provinces. It resulted in positive influence on the combat capability of the regular troops and their moral characteristics. Alongside with it, a logistics system of military transportation was actually formed from scratch. Here, peasants were actively forced to participate and the local merchants were attracted by profitable contracts. The only problem seeking solution was the tense relations with local Polish gentry unwilling to collaborate with the new authorities. It is worth emphasizing that this very social stratum of Right-Bank Ukraine owned almost all land resources and could influence price formation. Such conditions made the authorities search compromises and agreement with them, often failing to benefit the state interests but gaining a situational positive result of providing the stocks with corn, purchasing fodder, firewood, and ammunition.

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