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HONORS AND REWARDS GRANTED TO THE BESSARABIAN NOBLEMEN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE XIX-TH – EARLY XX-TH CENTURY FOR THEIR CHARITY ACTIVITY

- Abstract -

The article shows that, during the period comprised between the middle of the XIX-th century – the beginning of the XX-th, the state actively supported the charity initiative and encouraged active philanthropists in every way. The government offered to the Bessarabian aristocrats involved in charitable causes: gratitude, ranks, medals, orders. The state awards had a strong motivational effect and stimulated further charity activities.

Keywords: nobility; charity; Bessarabia; Eastern War; Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878; Russo-Japanese War.

Introduction

The 60-70's reforms of the XIX century caused profound changes in the society of the Russian Empire that significantly expanded the social base for charity development on Ukrainian lands and affected the scale, forms and directions of charitable activity. In modern times, the state could not cope with the social problems of society. The main forms of the charity were public organizations and individuals.

The Problem Statement

Charity became the norm for a considerable number of subjects of the empire, including representatives of the nobility. The aristocrats were the social stratum that provided the material preconditions for the growth of the charitable activity. It has become a family tradition, passed down from generation to generation. This was

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also motivated by purely pragmatic approaches: individual donations, charitable organizations memberships were the means of achieving official and public recognition, enhancing the authority of one's own name and public image of the family¹.

In turn, the state highly appreciated the efforts of philanthropists as a source of additional funding. The nobles received titles, ranks, posts, and were awarded medals and orders for their donations. This gave incentive to charity activities, which increased respectability and allowed to change social status. In addition, the sense of duty, self-worth, religiosity, hospitality and nobility remained the characteristic features of the average aristocrat.

Research Analyses

The issue of rewarding Bessarabian nobles for charitable assistance during the military conflicts of the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have not been the subject of a separate scientific study. Historians O. Sakovich, V. Nadykta² considered the general questions about the awards during the Eastern War. The history of creation, the statutes and the order of handing Russian medals of Peter the Great until 1917 were the objects of study of O. Kuznetsov, M. Chepurnov³. Some aspects of charitable assistance from the nobles in the times of war were analyzed by L. Tsyganenko⁴. The purpose of this article is to highlight the peculiarities of the awarding process of the Bessarabian nobility representatives for charity work during the military conflicts of the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Statement of the basic material

In the middle of the nineteenth – early twentieth centuries, there was a time of three large-scale armed conflicts involving the Russian Empire – the Eastern War of 1853-1856, the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-

¹ Donik, O. (2005). Blagodiynist v Ukrayini (XIX – pochatok XX st.). [Charity in Ukraine (XIX – beginning of XX century)]. *Ukrainian Historical Journal*. (4). P. 159-177.

² Sakovich, A. & Nadikta, V. “V vozdayanie otmennoy hrabrosti...” (nagradnyie i pamyatnyie krestyi i medali Kryimskoy voynyi 1853-1856 godov). [“In rewarding excellent courage ...” (prize and commemorative crosses and medals of the Crimean War of 1853-1856)]. *Military Crimea*, URL: <http://military.sevstudio.com/nagrady-medali-kw/>, date of accessing: 02/22/2020.

³ Kuznetsov, A & Chepurnov, N. (1992). *Nagradnaya medal*. [Award Medal]. Moscow: Patriot. Vol. 1 (1701-1917). 416 p.

⁴ Tsyganenko, L. (2010). *Dvoryanstvo Pivdnyia Ukrayini (druga polovina XIX st. – 1917 r.)*. [Nobility of the South of Ukraine (second half of the 19th century – 1917)]. Monograph. Izmail: SMIL. 384 p.

1905. As a consequence, an important social problem of assisting the warriors and their families arose. Representatives of almost all segments of the country population expressed their desire to help the soldiers and their families. Nobility was marked by particularly generous donations. The aristocrats of Bessarabia did not stand aside from this process. The assistance provided by the nobility representatives was invaluable considering the lives they saved.

The activities of the Bessarabian nobles in assisting the army during the military conflicts of the nineteenth – early twentieth centuries did not go unnoticed. On the basis of archival and newspaper materials, the author systematized and offered the following graduation of the honors and awards received by representatives of the Bessarabian nobility for charity:

- ✓ Acknowledgments (the collective and individual).
- ✓ New (higher) ranks.
- ✓ Medals:
 - “In memory of the last war of 1853-1856”;
 - “In memory of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878”;
 - “In memory of the Russo-Japanese War”.
- ✓ Orders:
 - St. Stanislaus II and III degrees;
 - St. Anne I, II, III and IV degrees.

The aristocrats received collective and individual acknowledgements from government officials and the royal family for active charity work during the XIX – early XX centuries.

During the Eastern campaign, the emperor repeatedly expressed his collective gratitude to the nobles for their military assistance during the war. Thus, on October 28, 1854, Alexander II honored the nobility of Katerynoslav and Kherson provinces and Bessarabia. On August 3, 1853, the emperor honored the Bessarabian nobles for supplying the army with horses, and in August 1855, Nicholas I honored the nobility of the southern provinces for their duty of care for horses in wartime⁵.

Among the archival files of the State Archives of Odessa Region, there was found a document of gratitude received by the inhabitants of Beltsy for the help of servicemen who moved through the city in 1853. In the summer of 1854, the Chisinau aristocrats received gratitude from the emperor for 341 rubles collected for

⁵ The National Archives of the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter referred to as NARM), f. 88, inv. 2, c. 1385, P. 85.

soldiers and wounded in crossing troops across the Danube⁶. The National Archives of the Republic of Moldova materials recorded a letter of gratitude from the emperor to the nobles of Izmail for their valuable assistance to the navy personnel⁷.

After the war ended, on October 17, 1856, the emperor honored all the states of the Katerynoslav, Kherson, Tavriya provinces and Bessarabia for their charitable activities. In addition, the nobles of Bessarabia were honored with a “Special Certificate” with words of gratitude, which was deposited in the Chisinau Cathedral. On October 27, 1856, all the nobles of the city were invited to the solemn event dedicated to the letter transfer to the church.

Individual gratitudes were given to the most active county leaders of the Bessarabian nobility. Thus, aristocrats P. Bilan, O. Kalmutsky, P. Ossovsky, E. Tverdohlebov were awarded with personal gratitude from the emperor for their charitable activities and “... excellent performance of duties in the war hours”⁸.

In the autumn of 1855, personal gratitude was received by the nobles Anastasia and Catherine Rizo for 407 rubles collected at a charity concert, which were donated to the needs of wounded soldiers. In October 1854, personal gratitude was conveyed to the nobles F. Chushli, P. Ilashko, A. Keremedjoglo for treating the troops passing through the South Ukrainian lands⁹.

Thus, during the Eastern War, the most common form of gratitude received by Bessarabian aristocrats was collective.

During the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, representatives of the Bessarabian province nobility received collective and individual thanks. At the end of November 1877, the inspector of the Kiev and Odessa military district hospitals, General A. Kushelev honored the Bessarabian aristocrats for the sanitary provision of the Chisinau hospital. F. Urusov, M. Okulich, G. Navrotsky, M. Kuznetsova, O. Ereemeev received a personal gratitude “... for their hospitality during the visit of the asylum seeker M. Zhedrinsky”¹⁰ from Princess Elizabeth. E. Shumanskaya, I. Chubarov, K. Markovskaya were noted for the material donations to the Chisinau Infirmary¹¹.

In general, during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, gratitude (individual and collective) was not widely used.

⁶ The State Archives of Odessa Region (hereinafter referred to as SAOR), f. 1, inv. 215, c. 9, P. 50.

⁷ NARM, f. 2, part. 4, inv. 1, c. 6366, P. 3.

⁸ NARM, f. 88, inv. 1, c. 1471, P. 9.

⁹ *Bessarabian regional statements*. (1854). No. 14, October 16.

¹⁰ *Bessarabian provincial statements*. (1877). No. 47, May 21.

¹¹ *Bessarabian provincial statements*. (1877). No. 86, November 14.

During the Russo-Japanese War, the state traditionally continued to express its collective gratitudes to the nobles. Thus, Empress Maria Fedorovna, patron of the Russian Red Cross Society, expressed her gratitude "... for such energetic and successful activity of the Bessarabian nobility"¹² after hearing of the great donations of wine and tobacco from the aristocrats of Bessarabia.

In the Spring of 1904, Nicholas II expressed his gratitude to the Bessarabia nobility for their generous donations to the charity. Acknowledgment was given that summer to the philanthropic nobles who were involved in providing the Bessarabian sanitary unit. In October 1904, the Ladies' Committee of the Bessarabets Charitable Organization received gratitudes from Empress Alexandra Fedorovna for sending 63 boxes of warm clothes to the soldiers. On May 28, 1905, the nobility of the Russian Empire, the Bessarabian aristocrats in particular, were given collective gratitudes for their high level of organization of noble trains from the commander-in-chief of the naval forces General M. Linevich. In summer of the same year, the Chisinau nobility assembly received gratitude for the donated funds to the needs of the active army from the chief of sanitary service¹³.

In January 1905, the population of Bessarabia province was honored for material assistance to the Volyn Regiment by Colonel G. Mileant. Later, the Red Cross Society Executive Committee honored the aristocrats of Bessarabia Province for their active participation in the charity during the military conflict.

Individual acknowledgements were given to the nobles: S. Panteleyev for providing tobacco for the military; O. Buznya, O. Kishinskaya, I. Chopakoglo for underwear sets for sick soldiers. Empress Maria Fedorovna personally noted the following: L. Belikovich (for her active charity work at the Ackerman Women's Committee and sending the 6th transport from Bessarabia to the Far East with linen, dressing materials, wine and warm clothes); the Khotyn noble leader P. Krupensky (for charitable parcels with underwear and warm clothes for servicemen); O. Stuart (for the help of the Volyn Regiment)¹⁴.

Thus, during the Russo-Japanese War, the practice of giving rewards became more widespread. In contrast to the Eastern War, the Bessarabian nobles were more likely to get individual gratitude.

During the military conflict of 1853-1856, the aristocrats of the South Ukrainian lands were given ranks for charitable activities. Bessarabian leader of the nobility E. Balsh received the rank of state advisor "... for assisting the government

¹² NARM, f. 88, inv. 2, c. 104, P. 27.

¹³ *Bessarabian provincial statements*. (1905). No. 63, July 4.

¹⁴ NARM, f. 88, inv. 2, c. 104, P. 30, 35, 48.

in moving troops and providing families of lower ranks”¹⁵. After the Russo-Japanese War, the Bessarabian Vice Governor I. Block and the head of the Provincial Governor A. Stuart were transferred from statical to actual advisers for their active charitable activities.



The next kind of awards were the commemorative medals awarded to the aristocrats of the region for their charitable assistance to the active army during each military conflict. After the end of the Eastern War and the signing of the Paris Peace Treaty (1856), the tsarist government established the medal “In memory of the last war of 1853-1856” and a cross as an analogy to those issued to the participants in the war of 1812 “... to those who by service or title have acquired this right to receive it in the period from June 14, 1853 to March 31, 1856”¹⁶. In a September 11,

¹⁵ SAOR, f. 1, inv. 193, c. 24, P. 303.

¹⁶ Volkanova, N. (2016). Protsey nagorodzhennya bessarabskikh dvoryan medallyu “V pamyat minuvshyey voynyi 1853-1856 godov”. [The process of awarding Bessarabian nobles with the medal “In memory of the last war of 1853-1856”]. *Current Trends in History, Sociology,*

1856 manifesto, Alexander II identified a list of persons to whom, depending on the degree of participation in the war, these medals were to be awarded “on the ribbons of the orders of the Great Martyr and Saint Patriarch George, the Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called, the Holy Prince Apostle Vladimir and Saint Anne”. At the same time, the “Rules for the distribution of a bronze medal and a bronze pectoral cross in memory of the last war of 1853-1856” were approved¹⁷.

The medal on the St. Andrew ribbon was given to servicemen of the cavalry, naval and other agencies, who were directly involved in the war or were in the territory that had the border status. In addition to the military, it could be obtained by a militia representative who participated in war or was in military territory. The military and civilian ranks of all departments, as well as the ranks of the militia and the Little Cavalry Cavalry Regiment № 4, who marched from the places of formation were awarded with the medal on the Vladimir ribbon. This medal was also given to nobles for the most generous donations during the war. The note to the rules made it clear that medals of light bronze were awarded to all ranks of the military and naval departments, and of the dark bronze were given to ranks of the civilian department.

The analysis of archive documents suggests that Bessarabian nobility were more likely to receive medals made of dark bronze on Andrew or Vladimir tapes.

At the end of 1856, the tsarist government decided to award the Bessarabian aristocrats with the medal “In memory of the last war of 1853-1856”. According to the rules, on December 14, 1856, the lists of Bessarabian nobles, who were to be awarded with a medal on the ribbon of Andrew, were approved and sent for consideration. Initially, it was planned to reward those members of the nobility who had been in active service in Bessarabia during the Eastern War, had an officer rank, and reached the age of 16. Later it was decided to give such medals to persons of noble descent without officer rank, since the whole territory of Bessarabia was in a state of war during that time, thus two lists were compiled: officers and nobles without ranks.

An unfinished list of 33 medal nominations was found among the SAOR archival files, which included representatives of different ranks: regional leader of

Political Science and Philosophy: Materials of the International Scientific and Practical Conference (Lviv, September 23-24, 2016). Lviv: NGO “Lviv Foundation of Social Sciences”. P. 39.

¹⁷ *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiyskoy imperii*. [The complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire]. (1856). The Second Meeting. No. 30877: On the All-Merciful Grant of Mercy and Relief to the People on the Occasion of the Coronation of His Imperial Majesty, August 26. T. 31. St. Petersburg: Type. 2nd Degree Own. EIV Offices. P. 789-813.

the nobility (E. Balsh), leader of the nobility in Akerman (E. Tvardohlebov), outgoing adviser (A. Katakazi), Title Counselors (I. Christie, O. Staty, O. Rodidyan, O. Shlyarevsky), Provincial Secretary (V. Potichinsky), College Secretary (I. Skrivano), College Registrar (E. Serbinov), College Asseseurs (O. Brokozovsky, S. Donych, D. Rousseau, E. Balas), a nobleman without a rank (E. Leonard) and others¹⁸.

NARM archival materials supplemented information on the awarding of Bessarabian aristocrats. Thus, in early autumn of 1857, the medal “In memory of the last war of 1853-1856” in dark bronze on Vladimir ribbon was received by 424 aristocrats of the Bessarabia region¹⁹.

The rewards of the Bessarabian nobles continued. Thus, in March 1859 the hereditary Sorok district nobleman of the Baksan village V. Granevsky was presented with the medal “In memory of the last war of 1853-1856”.

At the end of the victorious military conflict for the Russian Empire of 1877-1878, it was decided to create a model for a new medal “In memory of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878”. The award was established on April 29, 1878 by order of Emperor Alexander II to reward persons who participated in the fighting of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878.



¹⁸ SAOR, f. 1, inv. 194, c. 244, P. 24, 28-29, 33-34, 38, 40-45.

¹⁹ NARM, f. 88, inv. 1, c. 1474, P. 53.

The medal was presented in three variants – silver, light and dark bronze. The silver medal was awarded to soldiers who defended the Shipkin Pass or Bayazet during the blockade. Warriors who were involved in at least one of the battles were presented with the light bronze award. The dark bronze medal was given to persons of all classes who participated in the military assistance during the hostilities.

The medal “In memory of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878” from dark bronze was given to the mayor of Chisinau K. Schmidt in 1878. During the military conflict of that period he directly assisted the active army: he organized the care of sick and wounded soldiers in hospitals and military-sanitary trains passing through Chisinau; coordinated the reception of troops. Later, in 1881, a shelter for crippled and sick soldiers was built at the site where the manifesto for the declaration of war with Turkey was read out. The mayor of Chisinau persuaded landlord K. Ryshkan, owner of the race field, to donate the field for building a refuge. In addition, K. Schmidt personally supervised all stages of construction of the boarding house²⁰.

The government promptly responded to the active charity work of the population during the Russo-Japanese War, in particular of the nobility representatives. Already in March 4, 1906, in the Russian Empire, by order of Emperor Nicholas II, a medal “In memory of the Russo-Japanese War” was developed, which was made of silver, light and dark bronze.

The combatants in the Far East who worked in hospitals, trains, dressing points, or assisted the population in evacuations during the war were eligible for the medal. The award in light bronze was given to all soldiers, sailors, regardless of rank and position, volunteers who had at least once fought a battle with the enemy on land or at sea. Dark bronze honors were awarded to military personnel who did not participate directly in the fighting but were in the service of the active army.

The light bronze medal “In Memory of the Russo-Japanese War” was awarded to M. Zobotkin, a Bessarabia Province hereditary nobleman, who participated in the Russo-Japanese conflict. The aristocrat came from the Tver province hereditary nobles, he owned 660 acres of land in the Ackerman district of Bessarabia province. The nobleman was a participant in the war with China (1900-1901) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). M. Zobotkin was honored with many awards: St. Stanislaus II degree, St. Anna II and III degree, St. Vladimir

²⁰ Garusova, O. (2014). *Karl Shmidt – gorodskoy golova Kishineva*. [Karl Schmidt – Mayor of Chisinau]. Chisinau: Cartier. P. 101-103.

IV degree, had a medal for fighting in the Far East, light bronze medal in memory of Russian-Japanese the war²¹.

Thus, the Bessarabian aristocrats have been honored with many awards for their charitable assistance to the active army, servicemen and the affected population during the military conflicts of the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, the most popular form of gratitude was the commemorative medals “In memory of the last war of 1853-1856”; “In memory of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878”; “In memory of the Russo-Japanese War”.

Nobles were awarded with orders for active assistance during the wars of the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The lowest in the awards hierarchy was the Order of St. Stanislaus, which was the most common award. Such award, among others, was given to the collegiate assessor of the Bessarabian Regional Board V. Shchusev, who during the Russo-Turkish War of 1853-1856 helped in the displacement of 1 300 seriously ill and wounded soldiers from abroad in Bolgrad²².

Already after the war, in 1861, Lieutenant V. Kalmutsky, the Soroca-Yassky leader of the nobility, was awarded the Order of St. Stanislaus of the Third Degree “... for his assistance to the troops during the last war”²³. As a person, awarded the Order of St. Stanislaus II degree, he had to pay 30 rubles, and later received a pension of 115 rubles. For the active assistance of the army during the Eastern War, the Order was awarded to S. Lambrovich, D. Ziloti and others.

During the military conflicts of the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the authorities actively awarded the Order of St. Anne to encourage the country's most generous benefactors. The nobles of the region were also awarded 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th degrees for their donations to the army. Participants in the military action of 1877-1878 were representatives of the Bessarabian nobility, who personally participated in the military conflicts. Among them there was the Sorok district leader of the nobility M. Pleshkov, who came from the nobles of the Voronezh province. For his courage, shown during the capture of Tirnovo in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878, he was awarded the Order of St. Anne of IV degree and the light bronze medal “For the campaign of 1877-1878”²⁴.

The Order of St. Anne of the Third Degree for merits in the wartime of 1853-1856 was awarded to the county leaders of the nobility – V. Kalmutsky (Soroko-

²¹ “The Izmail Archives” Municipal Institution (hereinafter referred to as IAMI), f. 47, inv. 1, c. 51, P. 3-24.

²² SAOR, f. 1, inv. 215, c. 10, P. 47-49.

²³ NARM, f. 88, inv. 1, c. 1418, P. 63-64.

²⁴ IAMI, f. 2, inv. 1, c. 19, P. 137-138.

Yassky County), D. Ziloti (Chisinau-Orhei County), aristocrats – M. Skordel Casimir, D. Rousseau.

During the war of 1853-1856, E. Balsh was the regional leader of the nobility. He did not only organize and coordinate all the charitable activities of the nobles of the region, but also personally donated money and horses to the needs of the army. For his generous donations, on March 4, 1855, he was awarded the Order of St. Anne of the Second Degree, "For the assistance of the army in times of war"²⁵. The same distinction in 1856 was awarded to the county leaders of the nobility: Ackerman E. Tverdohlebov, Kahul V. Ossovsky, Bender I. Bilan and nobleman M. Kutskevich-Kishkin.

After the end of the war in 1904-1905, the highest (I) degree of the Order of St. Anne was awarded the Chisinau district leader of the nobility F. Semigradov. Awarding was thus one of the least common forms of recognition. More often, this award was given to aristocrats during the Eastern War.



²⁵ NARM, f. 88, inv. 1, c. 1472, P. 2.

Analyzing the award process, we found a pattern: the greatest number of awards aristocrats received after the losing wars. The Crimean company became one of the most generous awards in the country's population for the empire. We believe that this is how the government tried to encourage philanthropists, encourage them to take on new charitable causes and reduce the negative "taste" of defeat.

It should be noted that the nobles themselves were not ashamed to remind of their charitable deeds and services to the state. Yes, after the end of the Eastern War, A. Rousseau applied for his award with the Order of St. Stanislaus IV degree – "... for my sacrifice for the troops in the course of the last domestic war"²⁶. In June 1861, his request was granted and he received the coveted award.

A similar situation occurred with the commemorative medal "In memory of the last war of 1853-1856". Thus, a nobleman from Yassi A. Lagafet sent a request for a medal, which he received on the Vladimir ribbon at the end of 1856. Because of a reminder, "... Moldavian boyar of Chisinau I. Fuchs and nobleman A. Bashot" were awarded²⁷.

Retired collegiate assessor M. Augustovsky mentioned the personal contribution to the war in 1855 in the amount of 94 rubles 26 kopecks in a letter to the governor and asked for a medal for his deed. In response, a letter was sent stating that Augustus' surname was not included in the genealogy book of the Bessarabian nobility, and therefore he was not entitled to a medal. In early 1857, M. Augustovsky, provided documents of aristocratic origin and received the desired award.

Conclusions

Thus, the merits of the nobility in the years of military conflicts of the mid-nineteenth – early twentieth centuries were not forgotten after their completion. Based on the analysis of archival and newspaper materials, we have identified four types of awards received by Bessarabian aristocrats for their charitable activities. The most common were collective and individual gratitude; medals "In memory of the last war of 1853-1856", "In memory of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878", "In memory of the Russo-Japanese war"; Orders of St. Stanislaus and St. Anne. The state awards had a strong motivational effect and stimulated further charity activity.

²⁶ NARM, f. 88, inv. 1, c. 1418, P. 48.

²⁷ SAOR, f. 1, inv. 194, c. 244, P. 67, 128, 142.

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Infantry Divisions on the collection of horses for the army in all counties of the Bessarabian region.]. 152 p.

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