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## Phenomenon of Church-Religious and Secular Charity in the Urals in 1914–1918: The Ethno-Confessional Aspect

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**Abstract:** Within their article, the authors consider the influence of church-religious and secular charity in the ethno-confessional environment of the Urals under the ongoing conditions of the First World War. Through their research, they have shown that there was clear interaction between the government and society in this regard, and that cooperation by representatives of ethno-confessional groups of the Urals were instrumental in helping the front, the needy, and the victims of the war. The institutional forms and social practices characterizing church-religious and secular charity in the Urals are considered from the perspective of the actor themselves, revealing the role of both collective and individual participants. The contribution of ethno-confessional public organizations of the Urals to the development of charity is also clearly shown; its main directions are characterized. The role of the Orthodox Church structures and congregations, Muslim and other ethno-confessional communities, women's associations, and individuals in wartime charitable activities is further considered as well. While the specificity of church-religious charity in the ethno-confessional environment is revealed, this charity included: material assistance, moral support to those in need, as well as measures aimed at solving social issues and maintaining stability in society. The authors, through their research, they have shown that through conditions of war, that the functions of previously existing charitable organizations expanded and that new ethno-confessional structures of charitable character appeared which responded to the challenges of the emergency period. The authors conclude that the ethno-confessional charitable organizations regularly interacted with local governments, public and state institutions, interactions which increased the effectiveness of their activities in the region during the period of the war.

**Keywords:** World War I, Russia, the Urals, charity, Russian Orthodox Church, Muslims, ethno-confessional environment

**Authors' contributions:** All authors contributed equally to the research and writing of the article, reviewed the final text and bear equal responsibility.

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## Феномен церковно-религиозной и светской благотворительности на Урале в 1914–1918 гг.: этноконфессиональный аспект

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**Аннотация:** Рассматривается церковно-религиозная и светская благотворительность в этноконфессиональной среде Урала в условиях Первой мировой войны. Показано, что значимым проявлением взаимодействия власти и общества в этот период была высокая активность и сотрудничество представителей разных этноконфессиональных групп в деле помощи фронту, нуждающимся, жертвам войны. Институциональные формы и социальные практики, характеризующие церковно-религиозную и светскую благотворительность на Урале, рассмотрены с позиции акторного подхода, выявляющего роль ее коллективных и индивидуальных участников. Показан вклад этноконфессиональных общественных организаций Урала в развитие благотворительности, охарактеризованы ее основные направления. Определена роль православных церковных структур и паствы, мусульманских общин, других этноконфессиональных сообществ, женских объединений, отдельных личностей в благотворительной деятельности военного времени. Выявлена специфика церковно-религиозной благотворительности в этноконфессиональной среде, которая включала материальную помощь и моральную поддержку нуждающимся, меры, направленные на решение социальных вопросов и поддержание стабильности в обществе. Показано, что в условиях войны происходило расширение функций существовавших ранее благотворительных организаций, появлялись новые этноконфессиональные структуры благотворительной направленности, отвечавшие на вызовы чрезвычайного времени. Авторы приходят к выводу, что этноконфессиональные благотворительные организации взаимодействовали с органами местного самоуправления, с общественными и государственными институтами, что усиливало эффективность их деятельности в регионе в военный период.

**Ключевые слова:** Первая мировая война, Россия, Урал, благотворительность, Русская православная церковь, мусульмане, этноконфессиональная среда

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## Introduction

*Relevance.* During the First World War in Russia, there became most noticeably apparent the importance of cooperation between the authorities and society in solving war-time problems. One of its aspects in the conditions of the multinational and multi-confessional country was the participation of peoples of different nationalities in the military efforts of the state.

*Elaboration of the problem.* Multifaceted manifestations of the wartime experience of the country's peoples during the First World War have become a topical issue in modern historiography. It is developed from different angles in the works devoted to the history of national and ethno-confessional communities, regions of Russia, state national policy, military action on the Eastern Front, everyday life and anthropology of war, and charity<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> А.И. Бакхтурина, *Okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii: gosudarstvennoe upravlenie i natsional'naiia politika v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny (1914–1917 gg.)* [The Outskirts of the Russian Empire: Public Administration and National Policy during the First World War (1914–1917)] (Moscow: ROSSPEN Publ., 2004);

Despite a considerable number of works devoted to the problems of interaction between the authorities and Russian society during the First World War, the contribution of peoples of different ethnic groups and confessions to solving wartime problems has not been sufficiently studied. The problem of its reconstruction can be solved on the basis of conducting and summarizing the results of special thematic and regional studies.

The participation in charitable activities became the main manifestation of the involvement of the civilian population in the country's military efforts. Russian charity during the First World War considered in the ethno-confessional aspect allows us to more deeply comprehend the historical experience of cooperation of the peoples of Russia in the context of war.

In the extreme conditions of wartime, the range of social categories of those in need and their numbers increased drastically, new charitable organizations of both universal and specialized nature emerged<sup>2</sup>. The studies based on all-Russian and regional materials contain data on the participation of representatives of different peoples and confessions of the country in charity<sup>3</sup>. With regard to the Urals, it should be noted that there are no generalizing works showing the situation with charity in the vast multinational region including four provinces (Perm, Ufa, Orenburg, Vyatka). The problem of charity of non-Russian peoples of the Urals also requires further study; although there are some works devoted to Muslim charity<sup>4</sup>, mainly fragmentarily. Important subjects of the historiography of the theme are

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M.S. Arsanukaeva, "Natsional'nye formirovaniia narodov Kavkaza v Pervoi mirovoi voine (1914–1918 gody) [National formations of the peoples of the Caucasus in the First World War (1914–1918)]," *Iuridicheskaya nauka*, no. 2 (2014): 5–11; *Tatarskii narod i narody Povolzh'ia v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny: sbornik materialov Vserossiiskoi nauchnoi konferentsii s mezhdunarodnym uchastiyem, priurochennoi k 100-letiiu nachala voiny (g. Kazan', 10-11 oktiabria 2014 g.)* [The Tatar people and the peoples of the Volga region during the First World War: collection of materials from the All-Russian scientific conference with international participation, dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the war (Kazan, October 10-11, 2014)]. (Kazan: Marjani Institute of History of Tatarstan Academy of Sciences Publ., 2014); L.R. Gabdrarifkova, "Pervaia mirovaia voina glazami tatarskikh soldat [The First World War through the eyes of Tatar soldiers]," *Istoricheskaya etnologiya* 1, no. 2 (2016): 328–348; N.V. Surzhikova. "Rossiiskoe obshchestvo vs rossiiskoe bezhenstvo – 1914–1922 gg. [Russian Society vs Russian Refugees – 1914–1922]," *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya*, no. 9 (2017): 88–98.

<sup>2</sup> A.N. Gritsaeva, "Ispytaniia otechestvennoi blagotvoritel'nosti v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny (1914–1917) [The trials of domestic charity during the First World War (1914–1917)]," *Prepodavatel'*, no. 2 (2008): 119–120.

<sup>3</sup> E.Yu. Semenova, *Blagotvoritel'nye uchrezhdeniia Samarskoi i Simbirskoi gubernii v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny (1914 – nachalo 1918 gg.)* [Charitable institutions of the Samara and Simbirsk provinces during the First World War (1914 – early 1918)] (Samara: Samarskii gos. ped. universitet Publ., 2000); N.P. Zimina, "Episkop Ufimskii i deiatel'nost' Vostochno-russkogo kul'turno-prosvetitel'skogo obshchestva v g. Ufe (1916–1919 gg.) [Bishop of Ufa and the activities of the Eastern Russian Cultural and Educational Society in Ufa (1916–1919)]," in *Svoboda sovesti v Rossii: istoricheskii i sovremennyi aspekty* [Freedom of conscience in Russia: historical and modern aspects], 211–227 (Moscow: [N.s.], 2005); E.Yu. Kazakova-Apkarimova, *Formirovanie grazhdanskogo obshchestva: gorodskie soslovnye korporatsii i obshchestvennye organizatsii na Srednem Urale (vtoraia polovina XIX – nachalo XX v.)* [Formation of a civil society: urban estate corporations and public organizations in the Middle Urals (the second half of the XIX – early XX century) (Yekaterinburg: UrO RAN Publ., 2008); M.S. Sudovikov, "Blagotvoritel'nye initsiativy kupechestva Viatskoi gubernii v period voyn XIX – nachala XX veka [Charitable initiatives of merchants of Vyatka province during the wars of the XIX – early XX century]," *Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal*, no. 12 (2010): 62–65; V.P. Ovseiko, "Blagotvoritel'naia deiatel'nost' Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi v Orenburgskoi eparkhii v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny [Charitable activities of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Orenburg Diocese during the First World War]," *Vestnik OGU*, no. 5 (2012): 102–108; N.N. Kaidysheva, "Blagotvoritel'naia deiatel'nost' v Permskoi gubernii v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny (1914 – fevral' 1917 gg.) [Charitable activities in the Perm province during the First World War (1914 – February 1917)]," PhD thesis, Ural Federal University, 2016; T.G. Leontieva, "Church charity during the First World War," *Rossiiskaya istoriya*, no. 4 (2023): 153–164, <https://doi.org/10.31857/S2949124X23040119>

<sup>4</sup> D.N. Denisov, "Osnovnye napravleniia i formy deiatel'nosti musul'manskikh blagotvoritel'nykh organizatsii v Orenburgskoi gubernii (1898–1918 gg.) [The main directions and forms of activity of Muslim charitable organizations in the Orenburg province (1898–1918)]," *Forumy rossiiskikh musul'man*, no. 3 (2008):

the motives and diversity of personal strategies for the implementation of charitable activities (from patriotism to the greed for profit), with the predominant influence of its religious and altruistic spiritual foundations, which also determines the relevance of addressing the ethno-confessional aspect of the topic<sup>5</sup>.

The prerequisite for studying the regional characteristics of charity in the Urals is the reconstruction of the ethno-confessional structure of its population conducted in a number of studies<sup>6</sup>.

*The purpose of the study* is to show the features of the behavioral strategies of the main actors of regional charity, the specifics of its implementation in the mixed ethno-confessional environment of the Urals, the nature of the charitable activities of local Orthodox and other ethno-confessional regional communities.

*Research methods.* Making no pretense to the comprehensive development of the problem of charity of the Urals peoples in the context of the First World War, the article proposes to use an actor approach to its consideration. In critical periods, in extreme military conditions, a person becomes an actor and demiurge of history. The actor approach involves considering both individual and collective participants in the historical process in the context of the transformation of organizational and institutional structures, and studying the behavior of individual social groups<sup>7</sup>.

### Charity of the Russian Orthodox Church

Among the actors of charity during the First World War, there should be noted the Russian Orthodox Church which determined the spiritual foundations and organizational forms of this type of activity. In accordance with the order of the Holy Synod, diocesan bishops were instructed to create special boards of trustees in all parishes from elected parishioners with the participation of the clergy and church wardens to provide assistance to the families of those conscripted into the army. Monasteries, communities, and all spiritual institutions were asked to provide and prepare all available premises for hospitals for wounded and sick soldiers, and to procure “hospital inventory items.” The clergy of the Ural dioceses (Vyatka, Perm, Yekaterinburg, Orenburg, Ufa) accepted with enthusiasm the patriotic initiatives of the Holy Synod<sup>8</sup>. In order to unite and coordinate the activities of church-parish guardianships and provide material assistance to the poorest of them, there were created diocesan boards of trustees<sup>9</sup>.

The parish boards of trustees became the most important organizational units of charity of the Orthodox clergy and parishioners, uniting and accumulating the initiative of the local urban and rural population. By the end of 1915, boards of trustees were created in all 438 parishes of the Perm diocese and 445 parishes of the Yekaterinburg diocese (there were

66–69; L.A. Yamaeva, “Musul'manskie blagotvoritel'nye obshchestva nachala XX veka [Muslim charitable societies of the early XX century],” *Vatandash*, no. 7 (2013): 182–190.

<sup>5</sup> A.N. Gritsaeva, “Ispytaniia otechestvennoi blagotvoritel'nosti,” 120–122.

<sup>6</sup> E.M. Glavatskaia, “Evolutsiia religioznogo landshafta Urala v kontse XIX–XX v.: istoriko-kul'turnyi atlas [The Evolution of Ural Religious Landscape in Late XIX–XX Centuries: Historic and Cultural Atlas],” *Izvestiia Ural'skogo federal'nogo universiteta. Ser. 2, Gumanitarnye nauki*, no. 4 (2013): 305–309; A.A. Safironov, “Osobennosti natsional'nogo sostava naseleniia Urala v kontse XIX v.: po materialam pervoi Vseobshchei perepisi naseleniia Rossiiskoi imperii 1897 g. [Features of the national composition of the population of the Urals at the end of the XIX century: based on the materials of the first General Population Census of the Russian Empire in 1897],” *Nauchnyi Vestnik Kryma*, no. 3 (2019): 1–10.

<sup>7</sup> I.V. Poberezhnikov, ed. *Aktory rossiiskoi imperskoi modernizatsii (XVIII – nachalo XX v.): regional'noe izmerenie* [Actors of the Russian Imperial modernization (XVIII – early XX century): a regional dimension] (Yekaterinburg: Bank kul'turnoi informatsii Publ., 2016).

<sup>8</sup> M.G. Nechaev, “Tserkov' na Urale v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny [The Church in the Urals during the First World War],” *Problemy istorii, filologii, kul'tury*, no. 2 (2011): 175–176.

<sup>9</sup> *Ekaterinburgskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 25 (1914): 732; *Permskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 25 (1914): 468.

471 parishes in total). The boards of trustees were engaged not only in allocating additional financial support to the families of those conscripted into the army, but also in helping with the harvest, collecting and making linen and warm clothing for soldiers in the active army, and helping refugees and orphans<sup>10</sup>.

The diocesan leadership and the Orthodox clergy played a significant role in the work of secular charitable organizations. Thus, Bishop Seraphim of Yekaterinburg played an important role in the activities of the Yekaterinburg department of the All-Russian Society for the Care of Refugees and in resolving its “current affairs.” The department opened a parochial school for refugee children and prepared linen. As winter approached, the problem of warm footwear for refugees became acute, and the bishop was personally engaged in its resolving<sup>11</sup>.

The Yekaterinburg public assembly, which did not stay away from charity, provided its premises for the new hospital. Its consecration by Bishop Seraphim took place on September 8, 1916. At the end of the service, the bishop gave a speech emphasizing the changes in everyday life in the rear under wartime conditions:

Where there was a club, where there were guests, there are now representatives of the All-Russian Union of Cities, there are doctors and patients. Where there were footmen and servants at the service of visitors, there are now nurses at the service of wounded and sick soldiers. <...> The founders should not regret providing the premises. For this holy cause, the regulars of the entertainment will be forgiven many sins<sup>12</sup>.

Receiving funds from the state treasury for helping refugees, organizing the collection of voluntary donations, the self-governing zemstvo and city public bodies actively involved in this work “persons useful for the cause,” including them in local committees. In most cases, rural priests and some deacons were elected as representatives of the volost committees. According to the members of the Kamyshlov zemstvo council,

only thanks to the selfless work of the rural clergy was it possible to more or less decently settle the refugees and provide them with food<sup>13</sup>.

The effectiveness of the charitable work of the parishes depended on the initiative and enterprise of the priests. A personal example was of great importance, as evidenced, in particular, by a letter to the editorial office of the newspaper “Ekaterinburgskie Eparkhialnye Vedomosti” signed by parishioners of the Deryabinsk church N.G. Vurlev and E.E. Deryabin. The letter stated:

Reading the diocesan reports for 1915, we, among other things, read that the bishop notes the activities of priests working for the needs of the war. We, as parishioners of the Deryabinsk church, know that our priest Vasily Startsev, from the very beginning of military actions and to this day, has been working for the needs of the war... We consider it necessary to mention that Startsev already has four “thanks” from the warehouse of Her Imperial Majesty Empress Alexandra Feodorovna for sending donated items and money for the needs of the war<sup>14</sup>.

The letter ended as follows: “If you find it possible, we ask that you appreciate Startsev’s activities.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> N.N. Kaidysheva, “Blagotvoritel'naia deiatel'nost',” 17.

<sup>11</sup> “Popechenie o bezhentsakh [Care of refugees], *Ekaterinburgskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 39 (1916): 324–325.

<sup>12</sup> “Osveshchenie lazareta [Consecration of the infirmary],” *Ibid.*, 326–327.

<sup>13</sup> “Kamyshlovskoe zemstvo o rabote dukhovenstva po prizreniiu bezhentsev Kamyshlov [Zemstvo on the work of the clergy in caring for refugees],” *Ekaterinburgskie Eparkhialnye Vedomosti*, no. 19 (1916): 145.

<sup>14</sup> N.G. Vrulev, and E.E. Deriabin, “Pis'mo v redaktsiiu [Letter to the editor],” *Ekaterinburgskie Eparkhialnye Vedomosti*, no. 28 (1916): 232.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* N.G. Vrulev, and E.E. Deriabin, “Pis'mo v redaktsiiu [Letter to the editor],” *Ekaterinburgskie Eparkhialnye Vedomosti*, no. 28 (1916): 232.

The priests not only headed and directed the work of parish boards of trustees, but also supported patriotic feelings among the people and explained Christian views on the war. In the Ural diocesan periodicals in the “Chronicle” section, one can find a lot of evidence of such activities. Thus, on July 24, 1916, the Nizhny Tagil Vkhodo-Ierusalimsky Parish board of trustees

solemnly sent to the front lines of the Austro-German front the Holy Icon of the Mother of God “Burning Bush” bought with the donations from the pious residents of Nizhny Tagil<sup>16</sup>.

On that day there was a religious procession:

At one o'clock in the afternoon, after a short prayer service with a sermon by the priest on the Christian view of war and the power of prayer in the fight against enemies, a religious procession set out from the cathedral church to deliver the holy icon to the Tagil railway station. <...> During the farewell kissing of the Holy Icon of the Mother of God, patriotic leaflets were distributed to people<sup>17</sup>.

According to the eyewitnesses, several hundred of these patriotic leaflets were made, but there were not enough for everyone who gathered<sup>18</sup>.

The parish boards of trustees took care of the families of soldiers conscripted into the army. Thus, during the two years of the war, the Verkhne-Tagil board of trustees

raised and gave the families of reservists and conscripts cash benefits in the amount of 5,086 rubles 25 kopecks<sup>19</sup>.

In 1915, the Verkhne-Tagil board of trustees began to support a children's shelter on which it spent 514 rubles, and the following year, “the daytime care of children had to be expanded” (there were from 45 to 100 children in the shelter daily), which required an increase in funds for its maintenance (up to a thousand rubles)<sup>20</sup>. The charitable activities of the Verkhne-Tagil board of trustees were not limited to the parish. The board sent its own donations, mainly in kind, for the needs of the soldiers, receiving gratitude for its activities from various organizations: the Warehouse Committees of Her Majesty, the Board of the Slavic Charitable Society, and the Field Mobile Hospital<sup>21</sup>.

The surge in charity in the Urals (and in Russia as a whole) occurred on the eve of Orthodox holidays. Thus, in Yekaterinburg, the board of trustees at the Alexander Nevsky (Luzinsky) Church from the very beginning of the war sent Christmas and Easter gifts to soldiers “to one front or another.” A contemporary noted as follows:

to be fair, the population of Melkovka, this outskirts of the town, despite their material insecurity and the ever-increasing cost of living, is very willing to donate to this holy cause<sup>22</sup>.

In 1916, the board of trustees of the Alexander Nevsky (Luzinsky) Church sent with Ardashev, the authorized representative of the Yekaterinburg Ladies' Circle to the day of Easter

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<sup>16</sup> N.-Tagil, “24 iuliia s.g. [July 24<sup>th</sup> of this year],” *Ekaterinburgskie Eparkhialnye Vedomosti*, no. 47 (1916): 417.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 418.

<sup>19</sup> “Deiatel'nost' Verkhne-Tagil'skogo popechitel'nogo soveta [Activities of the Verkhne-Tagil Board of Trustees],” *Ekaterinburgskie Eparkhialnye Vedomosti*, no. 34 (1916): 283.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 283–284.

<sup>22</sup> *Ekaterinburgskie Eparkhialnye Vedomosti*, no. 22 (1916): 201–202.

Easter gifts to our valiant soldiers on the southern front, in the quantity of 202 parcels with food and other supplies<sup>23</sup>.

Thus, the social situation caused by the hardships of wartime became a factor in expanding the scale of charity of the Russian Orthodox Church, the increase in the activities of the existing Orthodox societies in this direction and the emergence of new ones. Charitable work was carried out by church-parish boards of trustees, monasteries, Orthodox brotherhoods and other Orthodox organizations.

Implementing the orders of the Synod, the churches and monasteries were in many ways conductors of the accumulated will of the Church and the state. At the same time, members of the clergy also acted on their own initiative, driven by a sense of patriotism, compassion and civic responsibility. Their initiative and active civic position were an example for representatives of other strata of Russian society. An important aspect of the activities of Orthodox institutions was that they compensated for the lack of branches of other public organizations in rural areas and involved not only the middle, but also broader strata of the urban and rural population in charity.

### **Charitable public organizations in mixed ethno-confessional environment**

According to the General census of population of 1897, out of the total population of 9,821,920 people in the four Ural provinces, Russians made up more than 71% of all residents (over 7 million people). The second largest group was the Bashkirs (over 1.25 million people, or almost 13%). The Tatar and Udmurt groups had almost equal numbers of residents – over 400 thousand (over 4% of the total population of the Urals). Three national groups – Bashkirs, Tatars and Udmurts – made up 21.5% of the region's residents. In all four Ural provinces, the most numerous peoples were Russians, Bashkirs and Tatars; small peoples were often settled on the territory of only one or two provinces<sup>24</sup>.

Traditionally, the object of assistance of ethno-confessional charitable organizations was the poorest strata of the population, however, during the war years new social categories were added to them: front-line soldiers, members of their families, refugees, prisoners of war, orphans. During the war years, the existing ethno-confessional charitable societies continued to operate and new ones emerged. This was due to the expansion of the range of those in need, the mass influx of refugees into the Ural provinces. Care for Jewish refugees, representatives of the peoples of the Catholic and Muslim faiths became the most important area of activity of the ethno-confessional charitable organizations. In 1915, there was created the Orenburg Committee for Assistance to Muslim Refugees from Poland and Lithuania<sup>25</sup>. In Kungur, the local Jewish society provided assistance to Jewish refugees. In 1915, 206 Jews (44 families and 5 singles) arrived in the town from the Vilnius, Kovno and Courland provinces. Some of them lived in cheap apartments, some in dormitories outside the town. The refugees were assisted in finding employment and providing food, supplying them with “clothes and footwear.” The Jewish community of Kungur actively interacted with the Jewish committee of Perm in resolving these issues. A school was set up for the children of the refugees, which 30 boys attended, and the girls were partially placed in primary town schools. The Kungur Jewish charitable organization participated in maintaining the school<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> L.Z. “Iz deiatel'nosti popechitel'skikh sovetov [Activities of the boards of trustees],” *Ekaterinburgskie Eparkhialnye Vedomosti*, no. 22 (1916): 178–180.

<sup>24</sup> A.A. Safronov, “Osobennosti natsional'nogo sostava,” 4, 8–10.

<sup>25</sup> *Islam na Urale. Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* [Islam in the Urals. Encyclopedic Dictionary] (Moscow: Medina Publ., 2009), 242.

<sup>26</sup> “Kungur. Bezhtensy – yevrei [Kungur. Jewish refugees],” *Permskaia zhizn'*, December 31, 1915.

With the beginning of the war, there intensified the charity activities of the Roman Catholic parishes aimed at providing material and spiritual assistance to Catholics in need. After the outbreak of hostilities, the Society for the Aid to Poor Parishioners of the Yekaterinburg Roman Catholic Church was more active in collecting donations than in 1911–1913. At the same time, the Society interacted with charitable Catholic organizations at the uyezd and provincial levels, the Petrograd Committee, and it provided whatever assistance it could to the population of Poland<sup>27</sup>.

During the war, there were about two dozen Muslim charitable organizations operating in the Urals, which contributed to some extent to solving social issues. There were created special Muslim bureaus to coordinate Muslim public charity: first, the Orenburg Muslim bureau emerged, then the Orsk and Troitsk bureaus. The Muslim societies created before the war adjusted their activities in accordance with the tasks of wartime. Thus, the Orenburg Muslim society gave its own building for a 30-bed hospital, which opened in September 1914. Its maintenance required at least 8 thousand rubles annually. In February 1915, the Muslim society of Seitovsky Posad opened a 10-bed hospital, but due to the difficulties with transporting sick and wounded soldiers, they located the hospital in Orenburg, renting premises for this purpose<sup>28</sup>.

The Muslim societies made financial donations for the needs of the war. Thus, in 1914 the Yekaterinburg Muslim Charitable Society gave 300 rubles to the local trustee committee for the care of the families of reservists and militia men<sup>29</sup>. The society supported Muslim students whose fathers were conscripted into the army. In July 1915, on the basis of the Yekaterinburg Muslim Charitable Society, a department of the Petrograd Provisional Muslim Committee for assistance to soldiers and their families was created under the chairmanship of akhun G.Sh. Rakhmankulov<sup>30</sup>. It was the personal factor that played an important role in the Muslim charity, as well as representatives of other faiths<sup>31</sup>.

It should be noted that representatives of the Muslim community of the Urals actively participated in all-Russian congresses dealing with the issues of charity during the war. Thus, in December 1914, I. Akhtyamov, the deputy of the IV State Duma from the Ufa province became the chairman of the presidium of the congress of representatives of Muslim charitable societies which was held in Petrograd. The Ural residents made donations for the needs of the Provisional Committee of Muslim public organizations for providing assistance to wounded soldiers, which was created following the results of the congress<sup>32</sup>.

The ethno-confessional societies, secular charitable organizations cooperated with the local government bodies, zemstvo and town unions, which in the Urals not only institutionally and financially supported regional charity, but also came up with a number of initiatives in this sphere. Thus, the Ufa City Duma, simultaneously with the capital's Dumas, spoke out in favor of convening a citywide congress on the issue of organizing assistance to the soldiers who suffered in the war<sup>33</sup>. The congress of the city mayors held on

<sup>27</sup> K.M. Gavrilenko, *Doklad o reorganizatsii dela prizreniia bednykh v g. Ekaterinburge*, 49.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 254–255.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>30</sup> D.Z. Khairtdinov, ed. *Islam na Urale. Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* [Islam in the Urals. An encyclopedic dictionary] (Moscow: Medina Publ., 2009), 111.

<sup>31</sup> A. Starostin, "Akhun Girfan Rakhmankulov – zhizn' vo imya islama [Akhun Girfan Rakhmankulov – life in the name of Islam]," *Regional'noe dukhovnoe upravlenie musul'man Sverdlovskoi oblasti*, accessed December 16, 2023, <https://rdums.ru/stati/10041905/>

<sup>32</sup> L.A. Yamaeva, "Musul'manskie blagotvoritel'nye obshchestva nachala XX veka [Muslim charitable societies of the early XX century]," *Vatandash*, no. 7 (2013): 188, 182–190.

<sup>33</sup> *Otchet Ufimskogo komiteta Vserossiiskogo soiuzha gorodov s nachala voiny po 1 noiabria 1915 g.* [Report of the Ufa Committee of the All-Russian Union of Cities from the beginning of the war to November 1, 1915] (Ufa: Elektronnaia tipolitografiia F.G. Solov'eva Publ., 1916), 3.



August 8, 1914 in Moscow came to the idea of creating the All-Russian Union of Cities for assistance to sick and wounded soldiers. At the same time, it was decided to hold elections of local committees of the All-Russian Union of Cities by city dumas<sup>34</sup>. The Zemstvo and City Unions, while engaged in charity, were not limited to it, as they had much greater powers and opportunities to help those in need than purely charitable societies limited in their actions by the charter<sup>35</sup>. In effect, the public organizations of different types complemented each other, often combining efforts in charity. Thus, under the local committees of the All-Russian Union of Cities there were created auxiliary structures to provide assistance to the victims of the war, in the work of which various charitable organizations and the population participated. Under the Ufa Committee of the All-Russian Union of Cities, there was a workshop for the procurement of hospital linen, a Trusteeship for the service and satisfaction of the spiritual needs of the soldiers evacuated to Ufa. The contemporaries noted the enthusiasm of N.N. Khasabova, the chairperson of this trusteeship, and after her departure, Z.A. Bekhtereva. In addition, under the committee, there was the Department for the procurement of warm clothes for the army under the leadership of E.G. Kilyushko, which was also engaged in the production of gas masks, the need for which was especially great from the spring of 1915<sup>36</sup>. Thanks to the activities of the Department, warm clothes and gifts were sent to the 190th Ochakovsky and 330th Zlatoustovsky regiments to the Ufa residents who had gone to war. During the period from the beginning of the war to November 1, 1915, there were sent 17 boxes of things, 1,500 tobacco pouches and gifts, and other items. The Department managed to procure 1,066 old-style gas masks and 1,300 new-style gas masks and send them to the Main Committee.

The contemporaries particularly noted the dedication of Department head E.G. Kilyushko and her comrades. The Ufa Convent also helped with making gas masks<sup>37</sup>. Along with private donations, the Department received funds from public organizations of the city. The most significant of these was the donation of the Ufa Public Assembly of “interest-bearing securities amounting to 10,000 rubles.”<sup>38</sup>

As we can see, women were active participants in charity during the war. A whole network of women's committees and circles was created in various secular and church-religious organizations in provincial, uyezd centers, small towns and large villages. As early as 1914, in the Urals there were created Muslim women's committees to provide assistance to wounded soldiers.

An important role in public support for women's charity was played by the domestic traditions of mercy, patronage and management of charitable organizations by women members of the imperial family, and the active participation of governors' wives and local government heads' wives in creating public associations<sup>39</sup>.

The funds of women's circles were raised from cash donations and contributions of their members; they came from performances, lotteries, and other charitable events. Thus,

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<sup>34</sup> K.E. Bazhenova, and O.S. Porshneva. *Evolutsiia deiatel'nosti organizatsii Vserossiiskogo zemskogo soiuzu i Vserossiiskogo soiuzu gorodov na Srednem Urale v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny (1914 – fevral' 1917)* [The evolution of the activities of the organizations of the All-Russian Zemstvo Union and the All-Russian Union of Cities in the Middle Urals during the First World War (1914 – February 1917)] (Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publ., 2011).

<sup>35</sup> A.N. Gritsaeva, “Isipyaniia otechestvennoi blagotvoritel'nosti v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny (1914–1917) [The trials of domestic charity during the First World War (1914–1917)],” *Prepodavatel'*, no. 2 (2008): 119.

<sup>36</sup> *Otchet Ufimskogo komiteta Vserossiiskogo soiuzu gorodov*, 3–5.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 48–52.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>39</sup> *Permskie gubernskie vedomosti*, no. 277 (1915): 4; *Permskaia zemskaiia nedelia*, no. 8 (1915): 20.

from October 5, 1914 to April 25, 1916 the Yekaterinburg Ladies' Circle raised 26,443 rubles 73 kopecks for charitable needs<sup>40</sup>.

The Ladies' Charity Committee created in Vyatka on September 6, 1915, under the chairmanship of M.E. Izraileva, the wife of the cathedral archpriest carried out multifaceted work. The committee consisted mainly of the wives of the clergy and teachers of theological schools, the teaching staff of the diocesan school, treasurers of the convent, and socialites (184 members in total)<sup>41</sup>. According to the data as of May 21, 1916, the committee raised for charitable needs 7,224 rubles 67 kopecks<sup>42</sup>. These funds were used to purchase materials and organize work on sewing clothes, to purchase food and other necessary items, and to send them to soldiers, prisoners of war, and refugees<sup>43</sup>.

Charity developed within the framework of secular public associations created on the initiative of women. A striking example of this kind was the activity of the ladies' pedagogical circle under the administration of the Orenburg educational district, which was created on October 22, 1914 on the initiative of M.P. Tikhomirova, the wife of the former trustee of the educational district. The association set itself the task of providing assistance to the active army, sick and wounded soldiers, and prisoners of war. The circle set up a workshop where teachers, students, and other volunteers worked free of charge, making linen and warm clothes which were sent to the active army<sup>44</sup>.

### Conclusion

Speaking about the history of Russian charity during the war years and the manifestations of its regional specificity, it is necessary to emphasize the historical significance of numerous ethno-confessional public organizations in the Urals. At the same time, charity was understood by their members very broadly, assuming not only material, but also multifaceted spiritual assistance to those in need. This allows interpreting charity as a complex socio-cultural phenomenon, suggesting the functioning of systems of norms of behavior and social practices based on the values of mercy, patriotism and cooperation, aimed at solving social issues of the war time and maintaining stability in society.

During the war, the functions of the previously existing charitable public organizations expanded; there emerged new ones which were created on the ethno-confessional basis, compensating for the shortcomings in the activities of state institutions of social care and supplementing their capabilities.

The charity of the ethno-confessional communities of the Urals carried out under the guidance of their spiritual leaders was expressed in a number of areas of activity. The main ones included guardianship of refugees, families of men conscripted into the army, assistance to sick and wounded soldiers, active army soldiers, prisoners of war, children of needy families or orphans. At the same time, charity was expressed both in voluntary unpaid labor and in monetary and property donations.

<sup>40</sup> *Ocherk o deiatel'nosti Ekaterinburgskogo Damskogo Kruzhka po sboru pozhertvovaniy na peredovye pozitsii, za vremia s 5 oktiabria 1914 g. po 25 apreliia 1916 g.* [Essay on the activities of the Yekaterinburg Ladies' Circle to collect donations for the front lines, from October 5, 1914 to April 25, 1916] (Yekaterinburg: [N.s.], 1916), 5.

<sup>41</sup> M. Izraileva, "Kratkii otchet o deiatel'nosti Damskogo blagotvoritel'nogo komiteta pri Bratstve Sviatitelia Chudotvortsia Nikolaia s 6 sentiabria 1915 g. po 1-e oktiabria 1916 g." [Brief report on the activities of the Ladies' Charity Committee of the Brotherhood of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker from September 6, 1915 to October 1, 1916], *Viatskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 46-47 (1916): 955.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 957.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 956–958.

<sup>44</sup> *Otchet o deiatel'nosti damskogo pedagogicheskogo kruzhka pri upravlenii Orenburgskogo uchebnogo okruga za vremia s 1 oktiabria 1915 g. po 1 oktiabria 1916 g.* [Report on the activities of the ladies' pedagogical circle under the administration of the Orenburg educational district for the period from October 1, 1915 to October 1, 1916] (Ufa: Trud Publ., 1917), 3–6.

The specific composition of the region's population determined the dominance of Orthodox and Muslim charitable organizations among those of ethno-confessional nature; however, the numerically increased Jewish and Catholic charitable societies also actively helped their co-religionists. The local ethno-confessional organizations coordinated their activities and cooperated with both church-religious institutions of various levels and with public and state institutions.

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