

CHARITY OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH DURING THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR (1877-1878)

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Abstract:

The article is devoted to the study of the charitable activities of the Russian Orthodox Church during the Russian-Turkish war (1877-1878). During the war years, the Church always took an active part in protecting the state from enemies. Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878 is one of the most significant examples of such interaction. It should be noted that this military campaign was of particular importance for the Russian Orthodox Church, since its goal was to liberate the Orthodox peoples of the Balkan Peninsula from the power of the Ottoman Empire. For many years, Russian clergymen maintained contact with the Balkan clergy, providing them all possible assistance. During the Russo-Turkish war the Church's charitable activities have reached unprecedented proportions.

Such activities began before the outbreak of war. The church hierarchs contributed to the creation of sisters of mercy organizations capable of working in military conditions. During the military campaign period, the Russian clergy launched active efforts to organize assistance to the active army and wounded soldiers. During the sermons, the priests urged the congregation to actively donate money and things. Representatives of the Church themselves also made a significant contribution for this purpose. A special role was played by the provincial, primarily the rural clergy, since the bulk of the population of the empire at that time were peasants.

In our opinion, the Russian Orthodox Church made a very significant contribution to the organization and implementation of charitable activities during the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878. This greatly helped the soldiers, and also assisted the families of those killed in the war.

Keywords: Russian Orthodox Church, clergy, Russo-Turkish War, charity, army.

I. INTRODUCTION

The XIX century is one of the most important periods in the history of the development of relations between the Church, state, and military force in the Russian Empire. The alliance of the Russian army and the Church was severely tested during major military campaigns. Such interaction was carried out not only at the national, but also at the regional level.

The article studies the Russian Orthodox Church charitable activity during one of the most significant military campaigns in the XIX century Russian history. In wartime, the Church has always been actively involved in helping those in need. Charity during the Russo-Turkish war (1877-1878) reached extraordinary proportions. Donations were received from ordinary people, monasteries and the highest Church hierarchy.

II. METHODOLOGY

The article is based on a systematic approach. Its usage in considering the problem allowed the author to research the interrelation of general trends in the relations between the Church and the army in the sphere of charity.

Also the principles of historicism and complexity have been used. Based on the principle of historicism, the author comprehensively evaluated the facts and documents of the past taking into account the specific features of the studied period. Following the principle of complexity, it was possible to obtain scientific knowledge about the general trends in the development of the Church charitable activity on the basis of a variety of identified sources and scientific works.

III. DISCUSSION

Such an important aspect of the activity of the Orthodox Church, especially significant during the period of hostilities, as charity, began to be studied in the XIX century. This issue was researched, in particular, by Russian religious philosophers. N.A. Berdyaev believed that the basis of true Orthodox spirituality should be based not only on the desire for personal salvation, but also on participation in social transformations, since, according to the philosopher, social life depends entirely on the spiritual qualities of people.

Among the representatives of the secular pre-revolutionary historiography, was V.O. Klyuchevsky. In his opinion, charity in Russia was not so much a means of improving public beautification as a necessary condition for improving moral health.

Modern researchers also pay attention to some issues related to the charitable activities of clergy. The article of V.M. Moskvina is devoted to the study of the role of the clergy in cultural and educational work among military personnel. In the paper of B.A. Ershov, "Sisters of Charity Communities and the Orthodox Church of the Russian Province of the XIXth Century," the role of the Church in creating and organizing the activities of provincial sisters of charity communities that participated in military campaigns is studied. The article written by S.V. Arkhipov examines the charitable activities of the Church during the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878, regarding the organization of assistance to the Slavic peoples of the Balkan Peninsula and the wounded Russian soldiers.

However, issues related to the charity of the Russian Orthodox Church during the Russian-Turkish war have not been studied in sufficient detail.

IV. RESULTS

The charitable activities of the Church started on the eve of the military campaign. The Synod (the highest governing body of the Russian Orthodox Church between 1721 and 1918) issued a decree of November 24, 1876, required all female monasteries and communities to form "compassionate sisters" groups consisting of nuns and novices for working in military hospitals. The same monasteries were ordered to engage in the manufacture of lint, bandages, dressings, and all that was required for the wounds treatment. According to the decree of March 3, 1877, men's monasteries were also involved in the formation of "compassionate brothers" groups of monks and novices who were able to do the same work. And immediately after the declaration of war, the Holy Synod published the required number of copies of the war declaring manifest and sent them to the dioceses with the instruction to read the manifest in cathedrals, churches and monasteries. The members of the Holy Synod, the clergy and the laity called for donations for the army needs. Since the autumn of 1877, taking into account the upcoming cold weather conditions, the

ongoing military operations and a substantial increase in the costs of war, the Synod urged monasteries and hermitages along the railways to provide all available and reserve room for arranging hospitals for convalescent or sick soldiers, having made all the necessary materials for them.

Collecting donations for military purposes was a sphere of activity of two organizations: The Slavic Benevolent Society, also known as the Slavic Committee, and the Society for the care of sick and wounded soldiers, which was renamed the Red Cross Society soon after the war. Slavic Benevolent Society was founded in Moscow in 1858, then opened two branches - in St. Petersburg and Kiev. The Society for care the sick and wounded soldiers, founded in 1867, had its own warehouses to store humanitarian aid in the large cities of the Russian Empire.

Like during the Crimean War, women's organizations played a large role in charitable activities.

All communities of this type can be divided into 3 groups: 1) communities realizing a wide charity activities, including the poor and orphans support; 2) communities, whose main activity was to help sick and wounded soldiers (these communities closely co-operated with the Ladies' Committee caring wounded and sick soldiers); 3) communities that existed at the convents and under the jurisdiction of the Holy Synod (these communities were often involved in extensive charity work and worked on monastic principles).

Along with the belonging to a particular community sisters of charity, for whom the care of the sick and wounded was a professional affair, there were Red Cross sisters who were trained for the case of hostilities. In fact, the Red Cross nurses were the women ready to abandon their everyday life during the war in order to serve the sick and wounded. There were lots of such not only in the capital, but in provincial cities too.

Legal and administrative provisions of the Sisters of Charity during the war were regulated by published in 1875 "Rules for the Sisters of the Red Cross," and the rules drawn up for those wishing to join the Red Cross sisters only during the war. Accordingly, the status of permanently working in communities sisters and those who would like to perform the duties temporarily (popularly called "volunteers" or "civilians") had been delineated.

Participation in the Orthodox religion for the sisters of the Red Cross, according to the specified rules, was optional. Women of other faiths could join their ranks. Age limits ranged from 20 to 45 years. In contrast to the period of the Crimean War, when many of the Holy Cross community sisters, after the expiration of the one-year period for which they made a vow, were returning home, these women now had to serve indefinitely until the end of the war. Freelance sisters recruited in excess of the state, initially in the communities, were placed on full allowance of the Red Cross. As for administrative functions, they were only allowed to exercise control over hospital workers, and their professional activities were limited to the preparation of the simplest drugs and materials.

The start of training for women who volunteered to join nursing communities was laid out by the so-called Medical Community, which consisted of professional physicians who conducted theoretical and practical classes for all comers. They sent the corresponding proposal to the Headquarters of the Red Cross Society. The first course took place from February to May 1877. The number of students was about 500 people, but only 171 of them received certificates according to the results of final tests. The majority of the attendees of the courses were Orthodox, but there were also Catholic, Lutheran and Jewish women among the students.

Later, at the initiative of local women's committees, similar courses, most often six months, began to operate in other cities: Tambov, Kursk, Poltava, Chernigov, Saratov, Kostroma, etc. Theoretical studies in these short-term "schools" included elementary material on pharmacology, compounding, anatomy, physiology, hygiene and surgery; women were taught to bandage, assist with operations, read and understand recipes, they were told about hospital procedures.

Naturally, those who had undergone such short-term training did not have a high level of qualification.

Long before the main stream of civilian sisters, the troops of the "oldest" communities that had already been tested and proved to be effective went to Bulgaria. In June-July 1877, seven groups left for Romania and the Caucasus, less than 20 people each. 32 cross sisters led by Shchekhovskaya and Nadezhdina operated at the main crossing of the Russian units across the Danube near Zimnitsa, where they were later replaced by sisters of the community of St. George.

27 sisters of the St. George community headed by E.P. Kartseva before the crossing of the Russian troops served at stages in Romania, and then were sent to Bulgaria: Tarnovo, Gorni Studen, Gabrovo and Bogota. They were among the few who were allowed to take advanced positions near besieged Plevna, where the famous surgeon N.V. Sklifosovsky, whose attitude towards the presence of women on the front line was negative. Moreover, such permission could only be obtained from the main representatives of the Red Cross Society. Sklifosovsky believed that individuals and detachments of private societies should not appear at all near the battlefield, since this entailed a violation of subordination and military discipline.

The sisters headed by Kartseva, who followed the rapidly advancing Russian detachments, overcame the Shipka Pass and, passing through almost the entire territory of Bulgaria, worked in Adrianople and Philippopolis, in close proximity to Turkey.

120 sisters of the community called "Quench my sorrows" under the leadership of Princess N. B. Shakhovskaya served on the territory of Romania, through which Russian troops passed, heading to Bulgaria, where the main battles of the new war unfolded. In particular, they worked near Galats and Brailov, where the crossing of part of the Russian divisions across the Danube took place, as well as in Bulgareni, already in Bulgaria, near Plevna.

90 representatives of the "Blagoveshchenskaya" community headed by Sabinina were transferred from Crimea to the stages of patients' transportation in Romania: from Yassy to Fratesti, between which the railway were laid. These sisters worked mainly on the Red Cross sanitary trains. In July 1877 the group of sisters headed by E.M. Bakunina directed to the Caucasian theater of military operations, to the Armenian city of Dilijan.

Since June 1877, sisters of the Holy Trinity Community (20 people) had been working in Yassy under the leadership of E.A. Kublitskaya. Baroness Y.P. Vrevskaya, a friend and correspondent of the writer I.S. Turgenev, was in this group.

By the end of 1877, the authorities considered the number of sisters in military hospitals sufficient and the flow of small groups of community sisters and female volunteers was suspended. However, at the beginning of 1878, a massive outbreak of typhus began in the army, which also affected a large part of the medical staff. In this regard, in February, the second stream of newly trained sisters was organized at the site of the battles. Moreover, about 50 women, who returned to Russia because of their poor health, again went to Bulgaria and the Caucasus, trying to go there with enviable persistence. According to rough estimates, about 1,300 women participated in this war as medical and sanitary personnel. Of these, more than forty died, and almost all suffered one or another form of typhoid fever.

As has already been noted, in all sections of Russian society, ideas connected with sympathy for the Slavic peoples of the Balkans and for rendering all possible assistance to them were very popular. Even before the outbreak of hostilities, various charitable organizations, including church organizations, collected and sent humanitarian supplies there. Since the beginning of the declaration of war, the help of the Russians had increased tenfold.

Diocesan priests actively promoted such undertakings and set their own example. Donations of some of them were very significant. For example, the Archangel'sk Archbishop Makarii donated 2.0 thousand rubles; Archbishop of Lithuania Macarius, Metropolitan of Moscow Innokenty and Bishop of the Caucasus Herman contributed 1.0 thousand rubles each, the Right Reverend Pavel of Kishinev - 875 rubles; Archbishop of Astrakhan Chrysanth, Archbishop of Kharkov Savva and Archbishop of Vyatka Apollos - 500 rub. The total sum which dioceses themselves donated to the army was about 600 thousand rubles, including: Moscow (104.784 thousand rubles), St. Petersburg (up to 56.0 thousand rubles), Kiev (30.907 thousand rubles), Vyatka (21.602 thousand rubles), Vologda (19.586 thousand rubles), Vladimir (19,127 thousand rubles), Ekaterinoslav (17.818 thousand rubles), Poltava (17.735 thousand rubles), Caucasus (16,701 thousand rubles.), Yaroslavl (15,398 thousand rubles.).

In addition to cash things were donated in large quantities everywhere. The total value exceeded 300.0 thousand rubles throughout Russia. For example, residents of the Vyatka province transferred clothes, shoes, household utensils. Bishop Apollos, Bishop of Vyatka and Sloboda, donated a gold pocket watch to the General Directorate of the Society for the Care of Wounded and Sick Soldiers, asking to use them for their intended purpose. On the initiative of the Local Government in 1877, 58,467 sets of top and bottom

clothes, shoes, bed linen, etc. were manufactured and sent to Moscow and Chisinau. The donations were so significant that from 6 to 12 women worked daily in the Vyatka warehouse engaged in sorting things. Under the supervision of the managers of the warehouse AM. Mender and A.F. Subina cut canvases, of which were sewn shirts, aprons, sheets, pillowcases etc. Sewing itself was issued to the peasant families for a fixed fee, which supported poor women, mostly soldiers' wives. There were a lot of things needed in hospital life. Vyatka warehouse sent to the front 900 sets of hospital linen.

In the first place among the donors were Vyatka priests. Priest Andrei Zagarsky, senior priest of the Lebyazhsky church in Urzhumsky district, gave two canvases, one tablecloth, two women's shirts, nine skeins of thread, and so on. Other priests also made their own contribution: Archpriest Farmakovsky, priest Nikolai Olyunin, priest Aristarkh Avvakumov. Residents of the village of Bogorodsky in Vyatka County sent 41 yards of canvas.

The clergy and laity of the Voronezh province also took an active part in helping the Slavic peoples of the Balkans on the eve of the war and in supporting the army during the war.

Voronezh poet Ivan Savich Nikitin in the period of the Crimean War in his publications expressed hope for the liberation of the enslaved Slavs. A native of the village of Korshevo, Bobrovsky district, Alexei Suvorin made a great contribution to the timely familiarization of the people of Russia with the events on the fronts of the Russo-Turkish war, being the editor of the newspaper "Novoe Vremya". In its views, Voronezh publicist and historian Mikhail Fyodorovich De-Pule was close to the Slavophiles. And the governor himself - Prince Mikhail Obolensky - was a relative of the active member of the Slavic committees Yuri Samarin.

However, on the pages of the provincial newspapers, their names stand next to the names of priests, officers and peasants undeservedly forgotten in our day, animated by patriotic feelings.

Voronezh province was not among the most well-to-do and well-maintained, but all of its inhabitants, even the poorest peasantry, united to gather for the needs of the Slavs and the Russian army, which were heroically fighting in the Balkans.

Many citizens of Voronezh sacrificed their lives for the sake of the freedom of fraternal peoples.

In 1875, an uprising of the Serbian population began in Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Nevesin gun), to suppress which the Turkish government used the most brutal methods. In the Serbian principality and border areas of Austria-Hungary and Montenegro, a stream of refugees rushed. The Serbs who were driven out of their homes often had neither food nor warm clothes. Slavic Committees in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev and Odessa immediately began to raise funds to assist them.

Already in 1875, a representative of the Voronezh Noble Assembly sent a letter with a money transfer to the chairman of the Moscow Slavic Committee, Ivan Sergeyevich Aksakov: "I have the honor to send you 39 rubles collected by subscription in the Voronezh Noble Assembly in favor of the affected families of Herzegovina and Bosnia."

In total, according to Boris Firsov, in 1876–1877 members of the Voronezh Noble Assembly donated 1,000 rubles to the Slavs of the Balkan Peninsula and for the construction and maintenance of a hospital for wounded and sick soldiers in Voronezh.

In 1876, Russian society was shocked by the cruelties shown during the suppression of the uprising in Bulgaria. Voronezh province did not stand aside.

In the seventeenth issue of the newspaper "Voronezh Diocesan Gazette", published on September 1, 1876, a letter of July 24 was published, which was forwarded from the Voronezh Spiritual Consistory. The letter recommended everyone to acquire the newly published collection "Slavic thoughts and voices", with poems by Pushkin, Lermontov, Zhukovsky, Pleshcheyev, Khomyakov, as well as Bulgarian, Serbian and Montenegrin, Galician, Polish, Slovenian, Croatian poets.

The authors of the letter, in particular, wrote: "Our sympathies for the Slavs are understandable, because we are Slavs ourselves. The point is that we are strong and free. They are politically fragmented and dependent on other nations. In order to strengthen these sympathies even more, so that the instinctive love of a Russian person for his Slavic brothers can be converted into conscious, rational love — for this you need knowledge; it is necessary that the Russian people - all in general, and not only the highest educated layers of it - become familiar with the rest of the Slavic world, with their thoughts and feelings, sorrows and dreams, and in general with the whole structure of its diverse life."

In the same issue of the newspaper, a document characteristic of that period was published. This is a letter from Novy Kalitva, by a priest of the settlement of Vasily Apollosov, dated November 26, 1876. It states: "In our diocese, every priest directly from himself sent and sends ... donations either to Charity Committees existing in the capitals, or through various newspaper editorial offices ...".

According to the estimate attached to the letter, from the settlement of Novaya Kalitva on June 12, 1876, 30 rubles were sent to the St. Petersburg Slavic Committee, on September 18 to the Moscow Committee 25 rubles, on October 21 to the Moscow Committee 10 rubles, to November 12 to the Moscow Committee 50 rubles.

These sums "make up for the most part labor pennies donated by peasants of commoners"

Priest Vasily reports that 14 people have pledged to continue to make money for the needs of the Slavs: this is, in particular, assistant parish clerk Andrei Dmitrichenko, state peasant Efimiy Yakovenko, village elder Nikolai Krasnoyarsky.

These donations were not the only ones: on September 20, 1876, peasants of the Voronezh province donated money and 50 yards of canvas to families affected in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Bulgaria.

April 15, 1877 in Voronezh Troitsko-Smolensk Cathedral in the presence of the governor MA. Obolensky a manifest on declaring war on Turkey was read.

By the end of April, the city council decided to allocate 20 thousand rubles for the needs of the army and to take over the maintenance of 50 beds in a local military hospital. In response to the Governor's report on this donation, he received a telegram of thanks from Empress Maria Alexandrovna. The amount of donations to the needs of the army by January 1, 1878 reached 145,224 rubles.

The following "Statement to the Editor" appeared on the pages of the Diocesan newspaper:

"In 1877, May 5, we, the undersigned, Bogucharsky district of the settlement of the New Assumption Church, sacredly and clergymen, after reading in the church of the Imperial Manifesto about the entry of Russian troops into the Turkish possessions and after serving the Lord God the prayer for giving our Orthodox Christian victory to the Orthodox over the enemies, expressed their zealous desire during the whole continuation of the war to sacrifice to the sick — wounded soldiers of 2% from the ruble of all our monetary incomes coming into the general circle, and in what we subscribe.

Sloboda Novobelo Assumption Church priest Yevgeny Prokopiev, assistant abbot priest Gregory Manuilov. Deacon Moki Chuev. Deacon Vasily Rajewski. Psalms: Peter Krasnobashtov, Dimitri Stefanov, Ivan Popov.

On May 29, 1877 a hospital of the Red Cross Society was opened in Voronezh, designed for 350 wounded, which operated for almost a year. On July 27, 1877, the vicar Bishop of Ostrogozhsk, Benjamin, consecrated in the provincial city the temporary church of the Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon at the hospital for wounded soldiers.

In the summer of 1877, Metropolitan Michael of Serbia was staying on the territory of the Voronezh diocese. On July 7, he arrived at the Zadonsky Bogoroditsky Monastery, where on July 8 he served the Divine Liturgy, and in the evening of the same day he left for Moscow. He was presented with the icon of St. Tikhon.

On June 6, the provincial leader of the nobility P.F. Panyutin informed the acting Governor I.A. Zvegintsov that on June 5 an extraordinary provincial nobility meeting took place, at which it was decided to donate 20 thousand rubles for families of officers and lower ranks participating in the military campaign. Then a printed sheet was published "for general information" - an announcement to the residents of the province. It was reported: "Mr. Voronezh provincial leader of the Nobility has the honor to make it universally known that the Voronezh extraordinary provincial nobility meeting, according to his decision, on June 5, 1877, approved by Mr. Minister of Internal Affairs, donated twenty thousand rubles for the issuance of cash benefits, in 1st, for families of gentlemen officers and lower ranks of the natives of the Voronezh province, who are in a helpless position, due to the lack of the sole breadwinners called up for service, be able to work their representatives, and at 2nd, families of the officers and lower ranks of Voronezh province natives who have undergone extremes of wounds due to injuries or death in war members of those families. The basis for the families of such gentlemen officers and lower ranks of monthly and one-time allowances should be the certificates of the Voronezh provincial leader or county leaders of the nobility of those districts of the

Voronezh province where the families needing allowance both the marital status and the inadequate status requesting allowance. On the basis of these certificates, the issuance of benefits is made in the Voronezh provincial district council, or through the district councils, who apply for allowance at the place of residence.”

The diocesan newspaper published lists of the died and missing residents of the Voronezh province in the Russo-Turkish war.

The Kostroma Diocese, whose borders coincided with the borders of the Kostroma province, also provided significant support during the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878. Russian army and southern Slavs.

In Kostroma diocese groups of compassionate brothers and sisters were formed. The main work in this area was carried out in the Kostroma Epiphany Anastasiinsky monastery, where a detachment of 66 compassionate sisters was created and material was collected for hospitals from most diocesan monasteries. As a result, the Makariyev-Unzhensky monastery transferred to the Red Cross Society 320 arshins of canvas and 15 skeins of thread for 30 rubles, the Avraamievo-Gorodetsky 775 arshins of canvas for 70 rubles, the Forerunner Zheleznoborovsky donated 6 pounds of canvas, more than 10,000 arshins, for 100 R. The Kostroma Ladies Committee of the Society for the Care of Wounded and Wounded Soldiers acted in the Epiphany Monastery itself. By January 1, 1878, 800 poods of linen, clothes and other accessories were manufactured and sent to operating army units through central warehouses.

Galichsky Trinity Belbzhsky maidens, Nikolaevsky Starotorzhsky maidens, the Virgin-Fedorovsky monasteries, as well as the Virgin-Fedorovskaya and Kineshma-Voznesenskaya women's communities also took an active part.

By the lace collection was collected 833 p. 66 kopecks in the monastery, and 5489.44 rubles. in parish and cathedral churches.

A hospital for sick and wounded soldiers was also created in the Epiphany Monastery: in the subordinate Holy Cross Monastery under its jurisdiction, 2 rooms with 60 beds were allocated for these needs, 1 building with 15 beds, the house adjacent to the monastery - under the Ladies workshop Committee, outbuilding of the building - under the warehouse of donations things. The monastery, at its own expense, repaired buildings: renovation of exterior wall cladding and painting, provision of water from the city reservoir, upholstery of the warehouse's internal walls and installation of stoves in it, at a cost of about 2,000 rubles. The Ipatiev Monastery provided a reserve building located outside the monastery, with the possibility of accommodating up to 10 beds, with the availability of a kitchen, and also provided an unlimited and completely free supply of all the necessary food for cooking. Makariyev-Unzhensky, Bogoroditsa-Igriksky, Gorodetsky Avraamiev, Nikolo-Babaevsky and Predtechensky Zheleznoborovsky monasteries, as well as the Krivozerskaya desert, expressed their willingness to rebuild adjacent monasteries, monastic hotels and some outbuildings that could be converted for a short time and sick.

During the years of the Russo-Turkish war 1877-1878 in the cities and villages of the Tambov province guardships were established to assist families called up for war. A significant role in their activities was played by the parish clergy. According to the testimony of the report on the state of the Tambov diocese for 1877, the Bishop of Tambov and Shatsk Palladium “Despite the unequal security, all monasteries, both male and female, responded readily to the appeals of various people of charitable societies to donate to the Slavs of the Balkan Peninsula and in favor of our Russian Orthodox soldiers who have shed their blood for the holy work of freeing their brothers by faith and blood from the Muslim yoke. They were donated by ... female monasteries: Sukhota's 124 rubles in money and 6 pounds of things.” The donation of the monastery was significant at that time and was not inferior in size to the aid of the larger monasteries. Further in the report it was noted that “the last war caused the desire of many brothers and sisters to work hard to help the wounded and sick of our soldiers. During the past year, they expressed a desire to enter the orderlies and sisters of mercy: 2 hieromonks, 2 monks, 1 deacon, 2 novices, 2 nuns and 23 novices. According to the actual need of the Red Cross, 12 novices of the Tambov Sukhota monastery were sent to the sisters of mercy.”

V. CONCLUSION

Thus, the Russian Orthodox Church rendered significant assistance in the provision of materials for the army and in helping the wounded during the years of the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878. Church organizations not only organized charitable activities on their own, but also called on all representatives of Russian society to do the same. It can be argued that the clergy were among the main instigators and organizers of various actions aimed at supporting the Russian army and the liberated Slavic peoples.

Significant was the role of the Church in the activities of the new for Russia charitable organization - the Red Cross Society. It began in the years of the Crimean War, when, with the blessing of the Church, the sisters of mercy for the first time in large numbers began to serve the wounded and sick during military operations. On the eve and in the years of the Russo-Turkish war in 1877-1878. This organization received its legal and administrative clearance. The Russian Red Cross Society was not exclusively Orthodox, nevertheless the overwhelming majority of professional sisters of mercy who served in it and volunteers professed Orthodoxy.

The Russian provincial clergy made a major contribution to the organization of charitable assistance to the military and civilian population during this war. The sufferings of the Slavic peoples of the Balkans and the difficult conditions in which the Russian army found itself during the foreign campaign were constantly in the center of attention of the clergy of the Russian provinces. These problems were widely reported on the pages of the local church press. Provincial clergymen actively participated in the propaganda of the war of liberation, made significant donations themselves and called for their parishioners to do the same.

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