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## **REMEMBRANCE OF THE RUSSIAN MEDICAL MISSIONS IN THE CITY OF NIŠ AS THE PROVISIONAL CAPITAL OF SERBIA (1914– 1915)<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

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*This article examines the participation and activities of the Russian medical missions during World War I in the Niš area, as the most important political and diplomatic center of the Kingdom of Serbia, the headquarters of the Serbian government, foreign diplomatic representatives and the political elite of the country. The operation of the Russian medical missions left an indelible mark in the entire participation of the Kingdom of Serbia in World War I, as well as in the later period, particularly in terms of nurturing the traditional Serbian-Russian friendship.*

**Keywords:** *Russia, Serbia, medical missions, epidemic typhus, Red Cross, Niš*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Russian Empire gave diplomatic support to the Kingdom of Serbia against the aggressive attacks of the Austro-Hungarian and German diplomacy after the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian heir presumptive Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo in 1914. This support was provided at the beginning of the July Crisis in 1914 as well. The official position of the Russian state was that Serbian sovereignty was to be defended with the armed forces if necessary in case of the military response of the Central Powers or any attempt to disrupt the relations in the Balkans. In the Russian press, Ferdinand's death was put in the context of the righteous vengeance that stemmed from the long-standing oppression of the Slavic peoples in the Balkans (Поповић 1977, 46–48).

A month after the Sarajevo assassination, following the diplomatic attempt of the Serbian government to comply with the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum that was issued on 23 July, the Austro-Hungarian government declared war on Serbia via open telegram on 28 July. This news immediately caught public attention and the attention of the local and foreign press (Радојевић, Димић 2014, 78; Казимировић 1999, 277).

Nicholas II, the Russian emperor, sent an encouraging telegram to the Serbian government the day before, as he announced that Russian help would be provided in case of any sign of the Austro-Hungarian action in the emerging conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, the conflict that would eventually precede the outbreak of World War I (Радојевић, Димић 2014, 95–96; Stanković 1984, 43–44).

As a means of preparation in case of war, the Serbian government first asked Russia and France, the members of The Entente, for a loan in the amount of 90 million dinars. Afterwards, in August, following the declaration of war, Serbia asked Russia for a loan in order to acquire military apparel, footwear and material. A certain quantity of textile was ordered, while 200,000 articles of military apparel were shipped right before the start of the military operations (НБС, дневник Тадије Костића, I, 15. јули 1914. г; Шевцова 2010, 21; Денда 2014, 5).

After Russia declared war on Austria-Hungary and then Germany at the beginning of August, the plan of attack of the Central Powers on Serbia had to be changed. The initial plan to bomb the border towns by the Sava River was dropped in favor of a direct ground attack that was supposed to commence in the first week of August. Consequently, a part of the Austro-Hungarian army was dispatched to the Russian front in

Galicia, whereas two other parts of the army formed the Balkan Army. The latter was split in two parts, as the first one was tasked with attacking Serbian defense systems towards the city of Valjevo, while the second one was supposed to operate from the city of Užice to Montenegro (Јовановић 1929, 63). According to the military operation plan created by Field Marshal Radomir Putnik, the Chief of the General Staff of the Serbian army, the Serbian and the Montenegrin armies were supposed to jointly draw as many enemy forces as possible, so the enemy would be weakened in terms of combating Russia (Велики рат Србије, I, 31).

The superior Austro-Hungarian army swiftly operated in the direction from the Drina River towards the city of Valjevo, while the Serbian army started regrouping as it realized somewhat belatedly that the main hub of the enemy strike would be to the north-west. The only way to successfully defend themselves against the surprising Austro-Hungarian push was to stop the advancing forces on the Cer Mountain at all costs. Shortly before the start of the first big battle in World War I, 144,000 guns arrived from Russia. These were promptly distributed to the units of the Serbian Second Army (НБС, дневник Тадије Костића I, 27. јули 1914. г; Денда 2014, 5).

A gruelling battle ensued on the Cer Mountain and the valley of the Jadar River between 16 and 20 August, with huge losses on both sides. This is where the first great triumph of the Entente was won (Станисављевић 1928, 5). Afterwards, a new and much more prepared Austro-Hungarian offensive followed, which lasted all the way to early December 1914 with few minor interruptions. After the Serbian army emerged victorious in the taxing Battle of Kolubara and after the enemy was driven away from Belgrade, any notion of the Central Powers that Serbia could be defeated, removed from the Entente, thus pressuring the Russian army even further, vanished (Богдановић 2014, 8–14). The Serbian government defined its war aim in the midst of the deathliest battle, which encompassed liberation and unification of the Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian nations into a single state (Јанковић 1969, 83–97).

The Russian emperor and the commander in chief of the Russian army were among the first ones to formally congratulate Serbia on its first great victory in August and after the battle that drove away Austro-Hungarian forces from Serbia was won, which repelled their attacks for the time being. On the other hand, Russian military victories in Galicia and in other battles were celebrated throughout Serbian settlements and battlegrounds (НБС, дневник Тадије Костића, II, 3, 17. децембар 1914. г; Животић 2017, 135, 259).

## THE WOUNDED SERBS, EPIDEMIC TYPHUS PATIENTS AND RUSSIAN MEDICAL MISSIONS

The price of the greatest victories in the history of Serbian warfare was paid by 163,661 commissioned and non-commissioned officers, corporals and privates, who were put out of action. There were 96,000 wounded people in the Serbian army (some of them permanently incapacitated) who had to be taken care of in the existing civilian, military and field hospitals (Димитријевић, Шаренац, Манојловић, Бојковић, Мраовић 2014, 173). Their number was altogether dissatisfactory, which was also true in terms of medical and hospital staff, whose number was decimated to begin with due to the Balkan Wars with Turkey and Bulgaria (Игњатовић 2008, 49–50).

After the Austro-Hungarian army was defeated in 1914, 50,000 soldiers and senior officers were temporarily held captive by the Serbian forces. A great number of the prisoners were located in Niš — the Serbian provisional capital and the most important political and diplomatic center of the Kingdom of Serbia. This was also the place where the Serbian government, foreign diplomatic representatives and the political elite were stationed since the end of July (Antić 2021, 19; Перишић, Марковић 2015, 6). By the end of 1914, 4,000 wounded and 1,538 patients suffering from contagious illnesses were treated in the existing hospitals in Niš (Животић 2017, 796). There were wounded people among the Austro-Hungarian prisoners, but also those who contracted epidemic typhus, a disease that existed in certain parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire even before the war. This led to a big epidemic on the territory of Serbia, which caused a massive number of soldiers, civilians, physicians and enemy prisoners to get sick and die. The estimates range from 60,000 to 150,000 casualties (Игњатовић 2008, 51).

The Serbian Red Cross was aware of the possible repercussions, so it reached out to neutral and friendly countries at the beginning of the war, as well as their relief committees in order to get medical supplies and personnel. Apart from the Red Cross Society of Greece, the United Kingdom and Japan, the Russian Red Cross also responded and sent 11 medical missions throughout the war, which included 850 beds, 28 doctors, 11 intendants, two pharmacists, 86 nurses and 160 medical workers. The overall costs of these medical missions amounted to 728,307 rubles (Друштво Црвеног крста Југославије: Споменица 1876–1936, 1936, 101–102; Тимофејев, Кремић 2014, 278–279).

The Russian committee initially turned to the Russian Red Cross Society, thereby asking for a medical mission to be established for the purpose of helping Serbia. These missions had been common during wars and they focused on helping the wounded. Princess Trubetska, the wife of the newly appointed Russian representative at the Serbian court, took an active part in this endeavor. Her husband had already organized fund-raising activities for Serbia and Montenegro in Russia and later on founded "The Relief Committee of the Russian Mission in Serbia for Serbs and Montenegrins" (Тимофејев, Кремић 2014, 279). Princess Trubetska founded "Moscow Iviron Community of Nurses", which arrived in Serbia no sooner than January 1915 (Шевцова 2010, 102).

In September 1914, the first two Russian missions came to Serbia: the Slavic Society from Odessa (a medical unit) and an 11-member mission led by Alexandra Pavlovna Hartvig, the widow of a deceased Russian envoy in Belgrade and a great friend to the Serbian nation (ДАС, Ф XVIII, 25 – I, дос. IV).

Other four missions made up of doctors and medical staff arrived in October. The first one consisted of seven members who were paid from 50 to 100 rubles (135-270 dinars), whereas dentists' salaries were 75 rubles or 160 dinars and 50 paras. There were three members in the second mission, which was tasked by the Russian headquarters with getting in touch with Austrian Slavs in Serbia and Bulgaria and the convocation of the Slavic congress in Petrograd and Sofia (ДАС, МИД, ПО 1914, Ф XV, 12, дос. VI).

The mission from the Moscow Alexandrian Community or "Committee of Christian Relief" was the most numerous medical unit. The head doctor was Alexei Ozoling and his team was stationed in the Niš civil engineering barracks upon arrival. Due to the lack of a sewage and water system, the building was not operational. By collaborating with the Serbian government, the Russian mission got the facility up and running in a short period of time, so the first patients were admitted as soon as 20 October. The infirmary was opened soon afterwards. At first, the hospital took in only the severely wounded, whereas the others were transported to the hospital of the Serbian Red Cross (Шевцова 2010, 102).

The last Russian mission in 1914 consisted of 18 monks from Mount Athos. Apart from the fact that the monastery brotherhood felt compassion for the Serbian people, it was also working on organizing the Russian orthodox church, while some monks treated wounded Serbs during the Balkan Wars (Шевцова 2010, 186).

## RUSSIAN MISSIONS IN NIŠ IN 1915

Volunteer nurses, members of the Circle of Serbian Sisters, alongside Russian, French and Danish nurses in Niš, helped immensely and took care of patients in the midst of epidemic typhus epidemic in Morava Military Hospital in Niš, as well as in County Hospital and other reserve hospitals (Поповић Филиповић 2011, 173, 174, 179; Политика 12.02. 1915, 2).

The citizens of Niš were also exceedingly grateful for Russian help, Russian doctors, kind nurses and technicians. Russian realists' plays, as well as French classics and English renaissance dramas were a part of the standard repertoire at the city theater. Simultaneously, benedictions were uttered in churches in honor of the Russian emperor and the victories of the Russian army (Поповић Филиповић 2011, 173).

Foreign medical missions that were located in Serbia got their own work areas while the epidemic typhus epidemic lasted. The Russian medical mission was in charge of the city of Niš; a city that spread to 60 kilometers in diameter including its immediate area (Тимофејев, Кремић 2014, 281). At the beginning, the jurisdiction was assigned to the Russian Imperial Mission Committee, i.e. the Russian medical mission, which was also responsible for establishing the 10<sup>th</sup> Reserve Military Hospital or "the Moscow Hospital" in the building of the Serbian Royal High School in Niš. As the construction works drew to an end, new rooms were opened and new patients were admitted. Sergey Sirotkin, a surgeon, was appointed the administrator of the newly created Russian hospital. The hospital personnel consisted of young nurses who came from famous and respectable Moscow families or attended girls' schools in Russia (Ђуковић 2006, 162; Шевцова 2010, 103, 147–149; Петровић 1996, 152). The outpatient physical examinations were conducted among soldiers and civilians, while women had access to ambulatory care, including surgeries (Шевцова 2010, 149).

An equipped operating room was set up at the hospital and all the rooms had electric lighting. There was a dressing station on each floor as well, and wound dressing was performed on a daily basis. The hospital had a well-equipped laundry, a kitchen, a Russian banya, disinsection rooms, depots for things and food, as well as an infirmary, an X-ray room and a dental operator (Шевцова 2010, 149).

The Russian Red Cross Society appointed Segei Sofoterov, an associate professor, as the chief of the medical organization in Niš. Sofoterov

was also a consultant in every Russian mission in the Kingdom of Serbia. After his arrival in Serbia, when he brought two carloads of medical supplies, he became the administrator of a Serbian hospital that was named *The Russian Pavilion*. Afterwards, he collaborated with the Serbian High Command, ultimately ending up in Niš, where he started working in the 1<sup>st</sup> Reserve Military Hospital. He was awarded high office of the delegate of the Russian Red Cross in Serbia (Тимофејев, Кремић 2014, 279, 284).

In early February, Dr. Sergei Sofoterov came up with a detailed plan for improvement of the difficult sanitary and health situation in the city, while he was simultaneously a member of the International Committee for Contagion Suppression and the International Sanitary Mission, whose president was Alexander, the heir presumptive to the Serbian throne (Шевцова 2010, 103, Правда 09.02.1915, 2, 11.02.1915, 2). Previously, the government made a decision to found the City Council for Monitoring the Epidemic Typhus Situation and to convert schools to reserve military hospitals, as well as to relocate refugees from schools to the Monastery of Saint Roman near Ražanj Municipality (Гласник 29. 05. 1915, 2).

The government also concurred with Sofoterov's plan and founded the City Council, that consisted of the representatives of military and civilian authority. The council had broad powers. According to the Russian idea, the city was split in zones, headed by a Serbian doctor who had an assistant that did outpatient examinations and sanitary checks (Шевцова 2010, 103). As the doctor was given a proxy, he had a disinfecting section at his disposal, and there was a pharmacy and an infirmary in every zone (ДАС, МИД, ПО, 1915, Ф XXI, 21 – I, дос. III; Шевцова 2010, 104).

The first meeting of local and foreign doctors was held in the municipal court on 16 February 1915. The occurrence and the course of the typhus epidemic were analyzed in addition to the efficiency of the steps taken to suppress it (Ђуковић 2006, 36; Српске новине 03.02.1915, 2). With doctors' consent, three big stoves for clothes disinfection were built. At first, 4,000 suits were disinfected, but the number hiked to 80,000 a day (Правда 16. 02. 1915, 2; Правда 20. 02 1915; 2; Правда 25. 02. 1915, 2).

Over the course of 1915, other two Russian medical missions came to Serbia. The first one to arrive and help the Russian Mission Committee was an epidemiological team that consisted of four medical technicians and several nurses. The team also brought two disinfection

technicians. The mission was composed of Serbs living in Russia (the prisoners of the Austro-Hungarian army) and Russians. Among Serbian physicians, there were Todor Živanović, Đorđe Milić and Hristofor Grabovački (Тимофејев, Кремић, 2014, 282).

Due to its diversity, the mission was named “The Russian-Serbian City Medical Relief” and it was stationed in the elementary school facility near the Holy Trinity Cathedral, where it started providing medical assistance immediately. The doctors worked in the municipal infirmary all day long and even went on house calls if necessary. Apart from free medical assistance, destitute citizens and refugees received medication that was free of charge. The physicians also performed tasks usually associated with sanitation officers: checking public and private establishments, grocery stores, public markets, testing water in public and private drinking fountains and wells, apartment disinfection and so on (Шевцова 2010, 105).

The second and the last Russian medical mission, led by Dr. Nikolai Sergejevich Spassky, arrived in Niš on 13 May and remained until 7 June 1915. It was a proper little hospital that was also known as Alexandrian (or Alexander) community in the documents that belonged to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Dr Spassky’s mission was also known as “Petrograd Mission”, “Moscow Mission” or even “Tereschenko Mission” or “Spassky’s Mission”. In Duke Trubetski’s memoirs, it was called Moscow Alexander Community of the Red Cross (Шевцова 2010, 158).

This Russian mission arrived in the period when the typhus epidemic started waning (Шевцова 2010, 158). The Niš Municipality was reporting that the epidemiological situation at the time was very good and that there were no new patients. The State Committee for Contagion Suppression received a report at the end of June, which stated that there were only 700 patients in all hospitals in Serbia, 17 of whom had died (Правда 19. 05. 1915, 2; Правда 19. 06. 1915, 2).

By the time Dr Spassky’s mission came to the County Hospital, there was already a section of French immunologists working on immunization of soldiers, citizens and refugees. On the other hand, the reception area was gradually set up, as well as a barbershop, bathrooms, laundries and disinfectants. Patients had their hair cut, they were able to take a bath and change. Disinfection was taken care of and the patients were moved to clean rooms. When lice were destroyed, regular diet was secured and a permanent hospital regime was established. The changed conditions finally destroyed lice and suppressed epidemic typhus (Ђуковић 2006, 115, Српске новине 07.05.1915, 2).



The arrival of Dr Spassky's mission marked the beginning of the formation of the 11<sup>th</sup> Reserve Military Hospital in Niška Banja, which was operational in late May. Sanitary conditions in this spa were not ideal. It was not clean, there were old and neglected bathrooms as well as disorderly public buildings (Правда 31.05.1915, 2).

The Russian sanitary mission chose one of the support facilities of the spa to serve as a hospital, and then got in touch with the isolation ward, which was located in the same area. Shortly thereafter, a thorough clean-up of the entire spa was underway. The Niš Municipality provided a certain number of workers as well as 25 prisoners of war for the purpose of straightening up the entire spa. Dr. Spassky was appointed the administrator of the Russian Hospital, and he worked with two younger doctors, as well as a caretaker, a supplier, 28 nurses, 25 technicians and 7 hired assistants (Шевцова 2010, 158).

At first, only 50 beds were usable. Over the course of the first week, new arrivals were few and far between. However, everyone had in mind that a possible resurgence of war activities could increase the number of the wounded. Thus, in the period from late May to mid-July 1915, 31 patients were admitted, mostly cases of dysentery (Шевцова 2010, 159).

The aforementioned Russian mission that set up the last reserve military hospital did not operate on a permanent basis. For one reason or another, a doctor and a nurse left the mission. At Dr. Spassky's request, the mobilization unit of the Russian Red Cross invited Dr. Alexander Ryazanov to Moscow. Ryazanov was a part-time assistant at the internal medicine clinic of the medical faculty at the Tomsk State University. Spassky recommended him as an experienced internist, whose services were necessary at his hospital. At the same time, yet another ten nurses were ready to depart, however, the need to increase the medical mission staff dwindled due to the improved epidemiological situation (Шевцова 2010, 159).

The cooperation of the Russian medical missions and the Niš authorities was compact and purposeful. Close cooperation was achieved with the Niš Municipality, which enabled issuing pivotal medical measures that prevented the spread of the infection. The families of the deceased were not allowed to sell used clothes. The importance of cleaning and straightening up the streets, the markets, the taverns and the septic tanks was also emphasized. The patients who had epidemic typhus or relapsing fever were given guidelines. Refugees from Belgrade who complained about squalor and deteriorating medical conditions (which

were difficult to begin with) were also taken care of. Holes for garbage disposal were dug, while the police got strict orders to severely punish the offenders. The thoroughfares with greater circulation were washed twice every day with electric water blasters, that were always supplied with the sufficient amount of water (Правда 22.02.1915, 2; 07.05.1915, 2; Гласник 01.06.1915, 2; 07.06.1915, 2).

After consulting Russian and other foreign doctors, the State Committee for Contagion Suppression issued the proclamations “Typhoid Fever - Guidelines for People” and “Means of Suppressing Contagion (Disinfection)”. This raised awareness of the seriousness of the disease and of the measures to prevent it from spreading (Српске новине 16.03.1915, 1; 17.03.1915, 1; 28.03.1915, 1).

Alongside combating the contagious diseases, the Russian Committee paid attention to immunization of the population in order to tackle the diseases more easily. The Russian empress sent 50,000 rubles, with the purpose of organizing a support system that would give the poorest citizens and the refugees access to more food. Out of the total sum, 50,000 dinars (17,500 rubles) were allocated to the Serbian Red Cross, while the remaining funds were utilized to feed the citizens of Niš (Шевцова 2010, 106).

The city authorities actively participated in this task as well by making lists of those in dire need. Special food stamps were issued. Soup kitchens were opened in the four city zones, where 283,000 meals were served during the period. For convalescents who only needed rest and more food, patronage care with 15 beds was organized in a monastery near Niš. According to Trubetski's data, the cost throughout six months amounted to 5,500 rubles (Шевцова 2010, 106). The Russian doctors visited 125 nearby villages as well, brought medicine and provided necessary medical care. This method, especially in terms of free meals, was accepted by Americans and British (Тимофејев, Кремић 2014, 283).

The Russian committee particularly focused on refugee children. At the initiative of bishop Dositej, and with the active participation of Princess Trubetski, the committee opened the children's home in the facilities next to the Church of St. Nicholas on 25 March. Nearly 150 children got tea, warm food and milk every day as daily meals, while the weaker ones were served cocoa as well. The poorest were given underwear and clothes. Orphans were taken care of too, especially those who were left without any parent. Those children were accommodated in a small house and they were supervised by two Serbian teachers. Bishop Dositej thought that their education should be instilled with Russian

spirit. For that purpose, a nurse from the Alexandrian hospital was hired. Under her supervision, the children developed an interest in the Russian language, they sang Russian songs well, and some of them were even able to converse in Russian (Шевцова 2010, 107).

## DISBANDING RUSSIAN HOSPITALS

As the epidemic was slowly waning, the Russian hospitals started disbanding as well, while the situation on the battlefields was still grave. The Russian army suffered great defeats in August and lost Warsaw, Landsberg, Przemyśl, Konin and other important strongholds. All the while, the Central Powers prepared a new joint offensive on Serbia (Павловић 1968, 28–29). The Serbian authorities allowed most foreign medical missions, including the Russian ones, to leave Niš in late October of 1915 due to the difficult situation on the fronts (Antić 2021, 25, 27).

The staff of the infectious disease ward of the Moscow Hospital was discharged or transferred to other medical facilities, while the buildings, barracks and equipment were left on standby in case of a new epidemic. It was only the infirmary that was left running until September when hospital admission was discontinued (Шевцова 2010, 152).

Sergey Sirotn, the head physician of the Moscow Hospital, asked to be transferred back to Russia. As a result, Spiro Sergentich, a surgeon who came from Montenegro, was appointed the new head physician (Шевцова 2010, 152).

The hospital of the Alexandrian community departed on 22 April 1915 in 14 freight cars and three passenger cars. The governments of Romania and Bulgaria granted free passage across their territories. There were only 8 doctors and 27 nurses from the mission who felt like they could not leave their patients behind, so they decided to keep working until the arrival of enemy forces, which were approaching Niš swiftly. In order to keep the Russian representative offices up and running, the consul and the assistant of the military attaché stayed in the city and their objective was to organize evacuation of those offices in case of absolute necessity (Antić 2021, 27).

After the Bulgarian army reached Niš, the Russian Red Cross asked around for their doctors who decided to remain in the city. The Dutch charge d'affaires informed Russians that the medical staff was safe and sound. The remaining part of Dr. Spassky's mission was detained in the city and then sent to Kyustendil in order to help patients who contracted infectious diseases (Антић 2020, 58).

## CONCLUSION

After World War I started, the Russian Committee for Serbian Relief responded to the request of the Serbian Red Cross and collaborated with the Russian Red Cross to organize aiding the war-torn country. Russian help consisted of organizing 11 medical missions, which were supposed to assist the wounded. However, as time went by, their primary mission became suppressing epidemic typhus and other infectious diseases. The unforeseen epidemic claimed lives of numerous soldiers, civilians and enemy war prisoners. According to the internal international division of medical jurisdiction in Serbia, the Russian medical missions were sent to Niš, which was the provisional capital of the Kingdom of Serbia at the time. It was also the most populous city as a result of refugee influx from various areas. In the period spanning from September 1914 to May 1915, nine Russian medical missions were sent in total. In Niš, they established the 10th and the 11th Reserve Military Hospital, suppressed epidemic typhus, took care of the patients and the wounded, as well as collaborated with the Serbian government and the Niš Municipality. Besides the empress, other renowned Russian ladies played a major role in supporting the Serbian population, such as the widow of Nikolai Hartvig, a Russian emissary at the Serbian court and Princess Trubetski, the wife of a high-ranking Russian diplomatic representative in Serbia in 1915.

As the epidemic was suppressed, the Russian hospitals were gradually disbanded, but some of them stayed alert in case of a new epidemic. A joint offensive of Germany, Bulgaria and Austro-Hungaria, which was drawing near, actually occurred in October, which led to a complete evacuation at the end of the month. Prior to that, the Alexandrian Community Hospital was transferred to Sofia and ultimately Romania. Nurses in Niška Banja did not want to leave the patients and the wounded, so they opted to wait for the army occupation. During 1916, the Bulgarian authorities sent them to Kyustendil in order to treat patients who contracted infectious diseases.

The remembrance culture of the role and importance of the Russian medical missions during the Balkan Wars and particularly World War I existed in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia. It is still nurtured. Numerous newspaper and scientific articles created by domestic and foreign researchers, feature films and documentaries, war memorials and the ceremonies marking the anniversary of

the arrival of foreign medical missions in Serbia are the proof that the Serbian people do not forget humanity and friendship of the Russian Empire, its doctors and benefactors.

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## **ПАМЯТЬ О РОССИЙСКИХ МЕДИЦИНСКИХ МИССИЯХ В ГОРОДЕ НИШЕ КАК ВРЕМЕННОЙ СТОЛИЦЕ СЕРБИИ (1914–1915 гг.)**

### **Аннотация**

*В данной статье рассматривается участие и деятельность русских медицинских миссий в годы Первой мировой войны в районе Ниша, как важнейшего политико-дипломатического центра Королевства Сербия, штаб-квартиры сербского правительства, иностранных дипломатических представителей и политической элиты Сербии. Деятельность российских медицинских миссий оставила неизгладимый след во всем участии Королевства Сербия в Первой мировой войне, как и в последующий период, особенно в плане воспитания традиционной сербско-российской дружбы.*

**Ключевые слова:** *Россия, Сербия, медицинские миссии, эпидемический тиф, Красный Крест, Ниш.*