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Jewish Communities Of China

## Jewish Communities Of China

Communities

IGUD YOTZEI SIN - Association of Former Residents of China in Israel

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### Chronology

The events that affected the lives of the Jewish Community are listed in chronological order. Click on any period to view its content.

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#### 1914-1931

**Dec 12, 2002**

1914 marks the beginning of World War I and the influx of refugees, some of whom settle in Station Manchuria on the **China** Eastern Railroad (CER). The Jewish population of Manchuria reaches 150 families towards 1915. The Great War as it was termed leaves little impact on the community.

Pogroms in Russia serve as an impetus for Jews to move to Harbin. For example in February 1914 Dr. A. Kaufman receives a telegram from the Committee of Assistance to Pogrom Victims from the Volga city of Samara with a plea for assistance. The plight of the Jewish community there is degenerating daily. The local branch of the Far East Jewish Relief Committee (ДЕКОПИО) organizes a shipment of 4 wagon loads of food and clothes to assist those suffering from the effects of the pogroms and the great hunger in Russia between [??]

A spurt of communal activity commences in 1920 with the establishment of an old age home (Moshav Zkenim), Talmud Tora (Primary School – Secular in spite of its name) a Communal Kitchen (Дешевая Столовая – Cheap Kitchen) and Mishmeret Holim (Sick Fund), whose aim is to treat the many refugees reaching Harbin during that period.

Were it not for the existence of a vibrant press, many of the details and facts in this chronology would have been lost. On October 1st 1920 the first six editions of Siberia Palestine weekly are published in Russian in Shanghai. The first editor is **Alexander (Ezer)** Yevzarov. On March 3rd 1920 the publication moves to Harbin. Dr. A Kaufman becomes the editor from the 21st edition, which is published on 4 March 192[?] The name of the weekly is changed to "The Jewish Life" from the 200th edition. An English supplement is added to coincide with the establishment of the Jewish National Council in the Far East

To further the activities of the Zionist movement the Maccabi Jewish youth movement is established in 1921.

In 1929 the Jewish Peoples Bank is established, but only after the economic crisis has touched most Jewish businesses and the need for inexpensive credit becomes clear. The founders, Mr. A.M Pataka, D.N. Ganansky, Dr. A Kaufman, M Y. Elkin, M.I Trotsky, Dr. S.M.Vechter, G. B. Drisin, M.I Schister, and Y. Beiner, initiate this move in 1919 and set up the Bank in February. The bank opens its doors for business on June 3rd 1923. Its prime customers are Jewish businesses in need of cheap credit, but it also caters to the needs of the wider business community. The bank ceases operation in 1950.

Another important event takes place in 1922: the establishment of the Harbin Jewish Women's Association linked to WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organization). The first meeting of WIZO is held in April 1922, when a group of nationalistic Jewish women gather to work in aid of the Women's Gold Fund, then gathering funds worldwide for the restoration of Palestine through the Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemet).

From 1921 to 1925 several groups of youths from Hashomer Hatsair movement emigrate to Palestine.

The Zionist youth organization publication Hehaver (Гехавер) ceases activity and all 1500 books and brochures are transferred to the library Zionist Organization. In 1925, after the abrogation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in the Soviet Union, another wave of Jewish emigration follows. Some of those arriving in Harbin are issued exit visas (which require payment of a large sum of money in foreign currency to the Soviet government) while others cross the Soviet borders illegally. This year also marks the end of the Maccabi movement which was active from 1921.

In 1926 A delegation from Harbin visits Tianjin and Shanghai to solicit funds for the Keren Hayesod Jewish National Fund. A total of 6,000 dollars is collected - a large sum in those days.

Hashomer Hatzair (Young Watchman's group) is formed in the spring of 1927 by about a dozen youngsters, mostly in their teens. This group is motivated by Zionist ideals. Two years later, in 1929, the Zionist youth movement "Betar" is founded. It is interesting to note that a large group of youths from Hashomer Hatzair transfer to Betar. It could be argued that they, in fact are the founding members.