

# Polish physicians in Harbin (the first half of the 20th century)

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## Abstract

The analysis of the activities of Polish physicians in Harbin in the first half of the 20th century was carried out. The study is based on a wide range of Russian and Polish sources and literature. The first Polish physicians came to Manchuria after the beginning of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) construction in 1897. They were both full-time railway doctors, were sent from the European part of Russia to fight the epidemics and then were mobilized to the Russo-Japanese war. In the conditions of national and religious tolerance created in the zone of the CER, the Polish colony of Harbin created a secular cultural and educational organization called “Gospoda Polska” in 1907. Polish doctors played a leading role in the medical-sanitary service of the CER in the prerevolutionary period. They held its key positions: F.A. Jasiński was the chief doctor, and T.I. Nowkuński was the senior doctor of the Central Hospital of the CER. After the revival of an independent Polish state in 1918, a branch of the Polish Red Cross was established in Harbin to provide medical assistance to refugees who became Polish citizens. Doctor T.I. Nowkuński became its chairman. The Polish Red Cross in Harbin organized a free outpatient clinic and a bacteriological laboratory. In 1921–1925, a significant number of the Poles left Harbin for Poland, among whom there were many doctors. Despite the creation of a strong Polish national community (with their schools, churches, etc.), Polish doctors in Manchuria did not separate themselves from other doctors from the Russian Empire. Polish doctors did not create their own medical society in Harbin. They actually headed the leading medical society of Harbin, the Medical Society of the CER Central Hospital. There were no exclusively Polish medical facilities in Harbin in the 1920s; therefore, Polish doctors engaged in medical practice in Manchuria together with their Russian colleagues. After the establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932, the flow of Poles from China intensified. Most of the Polish citizens left Harbin after the proclamation of the People’s Republic of China in 1949.

## Keywords

history of medicine, Polish community, Manchuria, doctors, Red Cross, Gospoda Polska, Chinese Eastern Railway

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## Introduction

After the beginning of the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER), many Poles came to Harbin and other places in Manchuria. There, in northeastern China, they organized national compact colonies.

The Polish diaspora in Harbin was well described in previous Polish and Russian studies (Melikhov 2003, Melikhov 1991, Azja Wschodnia w Polsce... 2014, Mio-

duszewski 1936, Ludy dalekie a bliskie... 1989, Polskie ślady na Dalekim Wschodzie... 2008, Winiarz 2001, Pet-rasyak 2014, Borysiewicz 2016).

One could find Polish physicians names in Harbin and mentions in the Polish Red Cross in Harbin (Cabanowski 1993; Symonolewicz 2014, p. 15–18; Lech 2002, p. 142–148; Skóra 2008, p. 78, 87, 93). Nevertheless, activities of Polish physicians in Manchuria were out of the scope of these studies. The aim of this article is to fill this

gap and to study the activities of Polish doctors in Harbin in the early 20th century in the context of the history of the Russian diaspora in Manchuria.

## The first Polish doctors in Manchuria: the construction of the CER (1897-1903)

The colonial efforts of the Russians in Manchuria<sup>1</sup> included the construction and operation of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER). The construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) began in 1897.

Because of the large extent of construction (2400 miles) and a large number of workers, there was the need for a significant number of medical personnel. This staff need temporarily increased during plague and cholera epidemics. During the seven years of construction of the CER, the permanent medical personnel consisted of 54 doctors. In the construction of the CER, adverse climatic conditions of Northern Manchuria, poor sanitation, and poor working conditions led to a large turnover among medical staff. (Ratmanov 2008a). Among the first physicians of the CER, there were several Polish individuals, Wacław Łazowski, Józef Czaki, Feliks Jasioński, and Wincenty Świącicki.<sup>2</sup>

The plague epidemic in 1899 in South Manchuria in the Chinese city Yingkou was the first epidemic in the construction of the CER. Due to the spread of the epidemic in Yingkou, the CER administration invited several physicians from Saint Petersburg to fight the epidemic. At the end of August 1899, doctors Leon Padlevski<sup>3</sup> and Wincenty Bogucki arrived at the Russian railway station in Yingkou. Here, they organized a pesthouse in a temporary adobe room. Drs. L. Padlevski and W. Bogucki returned to Russia at the end of October 1899 (Poletika 1904a, p.

7, 13). For L. Padlevski, it was the only visit to China, but W. Bogucki once again visited Manchuria during the epidemic of the pneumonic plague in 1910–1911.

Another detachment of 8 doctors (consultant of the detachment Dr. Feliks Jasioński<sup>4</sup>) arrived from Saint Petersburg to replace them in October 1899. The Yingkou plague subsided by the end of October 1899. Nevertheless, the international sanitary commission in the city continued to operate. Dr. Feliks Jasioński became a member of the International Sanitary Commission in Yingkou (Ratmanov 2009). In 1903, Dr. F. Jasioński returned to Manchuria as a chief physician of the CER.

In 1900, the growing wave of violent antiforeign incidents known generally as the Boxer Rebellion began in China. During the Boxer siege, the Russians in Harbin retreated to the right bank of the Sungari. On the battlefield, preliminary dressing and evacuation of patients were performed by a Polish physician of the Railway Guard of the CER, Józef Czaki<sup>5</sup> (Poletika 1904b, p. 17).

According to the Polish scholar Małgorzata Pietrasiak, the number of Poles working on the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway reached seven thousand (Petrasyak 2014, p. 105).<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that the founder of the Russian Harbin was the Polish engineer Adam Szydłowski. Polish doctors, as well as other colleagues from the Russian Empire, agreed to work in distant Manchuria because of the high salaries and free housing represented by the CER. It is also necessary to consider the difficulties

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this article, I have used the term “Manchuria” to denote the region of northeast China comprising the Republican provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Fengtian. In the People’s Republic of China, this region is now referred to as Dongbei, the “Northeast,” to avoid using the more “colonially loaded” term Manchuria.

<sup>2</sup> Świącicki Wincenty (1868–1938). He was a descendant of Smolensk szlachta, Russified Polish nobles, but who had not lost their Polish roots. He graduated from the medical faculty of Moscow University and since 1898 worked at the Chinese Eastern Railway. He was a first physician of Central Railway hospital in Harbin. Dr. Świącicki worked and taught at the Military Medical Academy in Leningrad since 1905. Beginning in 1922, he served in the communal hospital No. 13; from 1925, he lived in the Kabozha station of the Kirov railroad. He then was the family doctor to Maxim Gorky in Saint Petersburg. Dr. Świącicki was arrested in 1937; he was shot in 1938 (Kniha pamyati).

<sup>3</sup> Padlevski Leon Julian Józef (1870–1943) He was a Russian and Polish microbiologist. In 1922 he immigrated to Poland and worked as a head of microbiology department in Poznań University (Dzieczkowski 1979).

<sup>4</sup> Jasioński Feliks (1854–?). In 1879, after the graduation of the veterinary department of Medical-Surgical Academy in Saint-Petersburg he joined the Chernigov district council as a veterinarian. He entered the 3rd year of the Medical Faculty of Kharkov University in 1883 and graduated in 1885. Then, he served as an intern in the clinic of Professor Sitsianko in Kharkov, as a doctor of the Druzhevskiy sugar factory, and in the Customs Department. In 1893, he received a degree of Doctor of Medicine from the Military Medical Academy in Saint Petersburg. From 1896–1902, he was a railway physician at Chita station (Transbaikalia area). In 1903–1921, he was a chief of the Medical Service of the Chinese Eastern Railway. He was awarded twice with the medals of the Chinese Government for his work during the epidemics in 1910–1911 and 1920–1921 (Kitaiskie Ordena – Bortsam s Chumoi [Chinese Medals – to Fighters with the Plague]. *Novosti Zhizni*. No. 59. March 17, 1923. P. 3) (Yasenskiy 1893, p. 30; Velikaya Manchzhurskaya imperiya... 1942, p. 273).

<sup>5</sup> Czaki Józef (1857–1947) He got a medical education in 1884, then for 10 years he served as physician in Podolia Governorate, from 1895 in Dobrovolny Flot (“Voluntary Fleet”) in Vladivostok. Then he entered Railway Guard of the CER and began to work in Harbin. In 1902 he became a district railway physician of CER. In 1909–1914. He was an emigrant in the United States, since 1914 in emigration in Brazil in Paraná (Feliksiak 1987, p. 109; Nowak 2014, p. 60).

<sup>6</sup> Małgorzata Pietrasiak in her work mistakenly calls F. Jasioński and A. Wasilewski builders of the first hospitals in Manchuria.

for the Poles with career growth in the cities of the western part of the Russian Empire that to the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (Rzeczpospolita) in the 18th century.

## Polish doctors on the CER in the prerevolutionary period (1903–1917): life in the “happy Croatia”

In the spring of 1903, the work on the construction of the CER was coming to an end. Before the commissioning of the CER, the Board of Governors of the CER Society formed a list of the heads of the services. The senior doctor of the construction department of the CER Dr. Mikhail Poletika<sup>7</sup>, who also previously had agreed to continue his service in Manchuria, decided to resign.

The consultant for the medicine and sanitary part of the Board of Governors of the CER Society, Dr. Boris Shapirov, proposed Dr. Feliks Jasioński for the post of chief doctor of the CER. The latter had experience in fighting the plague in India, Turkestan and Manchuria. In the scientific world, F. Jasioński was known for his work on bacteriology. Therefore, according to the nature of his activities, Dr. F. Jasioński turned out to be “the most suitable candidate for holding the mentioned post”.<sup>8</sup> Another factor that contributed to the appointment of Dr. F. Jasioński was that he served in Turkestan along with Colonel Dmitrii L. Horwat, who became the head of the CER Administration in 1903.

At the meeting of the Board of Governors of the CER Society, it was decided to appoint Dr. F. Jasioński the chief doctor beginning on July 1, 1903.<sup>9</sup> Thus, for 18 years, the Polish doctor became the main person in the medical world of Harbin. In the prerevolutionary period, the chief doctor of the CER also had the rights of a medical inspector by supervising the activities of all medical institutions, private doctors and pharmacies in the zone of the CER.

Doctor F. Jasioński was a close friend of the head of the CER Administration, D.L. Horwat (Kradin 2001, p. 45). This closeness to the highest leadership repeatedly rescued Dr. F. Jasioński. For example, in

May 1906, after the end of the Russo-Japanese War, the former chief of the army rear, Lieutenant-General N.I. Ivanov, made an order to the chief doctor of the CER, Dr. F. Jasioński, “to abandon Manchuria without the right of entry until the order”.<sup>10</sup> The head of the CER Administration decided that F. Jasioński was politically sound, and the order was canceled as a result.

It should be noted that a large number of doctors from the Russian Empire were involved in the medical care of the wounded in the Russo-Japanese War. In total, up to 3,300 doctors of the Ministry of Military worked in the Far East and in the Siberian region, and 2,300 of them were recruited from the reserve. In the facilities of the Red Cross, there were only 360 doctors and 1,500 thousand sisters of mercy (Pavlov 1907, p. 370–371). Among the doctors recruited from the reserve, there were many doctors from Poland. The mass mobilization of doctors in Poland led to a shortage of doctors in this territory.

During the Russo-Japanese War, Harbin was the “main rear hospital” of the Russian army. There were 6 hospitals and approximately 20 hospitals and infirmaries, including the Warsaw–Łódź Infirmary of the Red Cross in Old Harbin (senior doctor Kazimierz Orzeł) (Pavlov 1907, p. 29, 115).<sup>11</sup>

Planned and built by Russian railway engineers, Harbin, the city on the Manchurian plain, grew quickly, changing from a small fishing village into a modern city in less than a generation. Russians administered Harbin until the 1917 October Revolution, when Chinese troops occupied the city and began to implement Chinese rule (Carter 2002, p. 3).

In 1913, Harbin had a total of 70 thousand subjects of the Russian or Chinese Empire, comprising fifty-three nationalities. Groups with more than one hundred residents included Russians, Chinese, Jews, Poles, Japanese, and Germans. This multinational community spoke forty-five languages; Russian and Chinese were dominant, followed by Polish and Yiddish. Among them, Russian and Chinese predominated, followed by Poles and Jews (Bakich 2000, p. 53). It is necessary to note that most of the Poles were dependent on either the CER or the army for their livelihood.

In undertaking competitive colonization against the Chinese in Manchuria, according to American scholar David Wolff, the tsarist government showed a flexibility and creativity not usually associated with the Russian Empire. By abandoning the stric-

<sup>7</sup> Mikhail Poletika (1854–1905). Great-grandson of the famous prof. I.A. Poletika, who lived in the 18th century. He came from the Polish clan, according to the family tradition his ancestor lived in the Kremenetskii Povet in his szlachta estate (now – Ukraine) (Vasilyev 2005, p. 31–35).

<sup>8</sup> Russian State Historical Archive (hereinafter – RGIA). F.323, op.1, d.512, l.2a. Recommendation of B.M. Shapirov on F. Jasioński to the post of chief doctor of the CER.

<sup>9</sup> RGIA. F.323, op.1, d.512, l.4. A copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors of the CER Society of 31.03.1903 №2875.

<sup>10</sup> RGIA. F.323, op.1, d.512, l.33. 29.05.1906. Telegram from the Board of Governors of the CER Society to the Ministry of Finance of 29.05.1906.

<sup>11</sup> During the Russo-Japanese War, Polish hospitals and infirmaries of the Red Cross were organized throughout the Far East in Vladivostok, Nikolsk-Ussuriisk, Chita, and other cities.

tures that hampered the development of civil society in Russia proper, the Finance Ministry succeeded in attracting some of Russia's oppressed minorities to Harbin. The best illustration of this policy was the Jewish community, which numbered more than 5,000 in 1913. Polish residents were also numerous and active. As the conditions for Jews and Poles in the western part of the Empire went from bad to worse, emigrants made the long trek eastward to form two of Harbin's most stable and influential communities. Along with a liberal nationality policy came a loosening of political and cultural control. In short, David Wolff considered that Harbin became the "freest city in the Russian Empire", precisely because it was not geographically within the Empire's official borders (Wolff 1999, p. 10, 78).

The central role in the social life of the Polish colony in Harbin was played by the secular cultural/educational organization *Gospoda Polska*, established in 1907. However, Catholicism is an important element of Polish identity, and social life organized around it always has enjoyed respect and all-round support among the Poles. The first Polish social organizations in Harbin thus were formed on religious grounds. They included the Committee of the First Polish Catholic Church (1901) and the Roman Catholic Charity Association (1903) (Chernolutskaia 2000, p. 85).

In the mid-1910s, there were 36 physicians in the CER including only 6 Poles. Nevertheless, the Polish doctors played a leading role in the medical service of the CER by occupying key positions. Dr. F. Jasieński was a chief of the service, Dr. T. Nowkuński was head of the CER Central Hospital, Dr. W. Łazowski<sup>12</sup> was the city sanitary physician of Harbin, and Dr. M. Kozubowski was a leading physician of the CER Central Hospital (Winiarz 2008, p. 31; *Spravochnaya knizhka... 1915; Spravochnaya knizhka... 1916*).

It is difficult to ignore the positive role in the development of the Polish colony played by the head of the CER Administration, General D.L. Horwat. In contrast to the general trend in the anti-Polish Rus-

sian administration, Horwat was not afraid to show support and sympathy to Poles. He contributed to a good atmosphere and proper coexistence between the Poles and Russians (Cabanowski 1993, p. 23). In addition to doctors in the service of the CER, the migration of Polish physicians to Harbin before 1917 can also include Władysław Wyrzykowski<sup>13</sup> and Józef Grabowski<sup>14</sup>.

The epidemic of pneumonic plague that occurred in 1910–1911 in the plains of the Mongolia and Transbaikalia area began in October 1910 at Manzhouli, a station of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER), and then drifted along the railroad and afterward spread all over Manchuria and Northern China. The outbreak featured high mortality (up to 100%); almost everyone, who was infected, died. The number of victims totaled from 60 to 100 thousand, according to different estimates (Martinevskiy and Mollyare 1971, Summers 2012, Wu Lien-teh 1926).

In November 1910, the Board of Governors of the CER Society invited experts Prof. D.K. Zbolotnyi, Dr. S.N. Predtechensky, and epidemic physician of Polish origin Dr. Wincenty Bogucki<sup>15</sup> to the fight against the pneumonic plague. In 1910–1911, as a medical superintendent of the Russian Anti-plague Bureau of Harbin, the last one took an active part in organizing and conducting anti-epidemic measures. Dr. W. Bogucki demonstrated extraordinary organizational skills and dedication to this matter (Vasilyev and Vasilyev 1990, p. 74). He organized the meeting of doctors in Harbin and held public lectures on plague prevention.

Dr. W. Bogucki participated in the International Plague Conference held in Mukden (now Shenyang) in April 1911, where he delivered a report on the ep-

<sup>12</sup> Wacław Łazowski (1862–1919) graduated from Moscow University in 1887. In 1890–1899, he then had a private medical practice in the Minsk territory, the Vilno territory, and in Odessa. In 1899, he was invited to the medical service of construction of the CER. Dr. Łazowski had been working in Harbin since 1900 as a physician of the railway hospital in the quarter of Harbin Pristan and in 1902–1904 as physician of the CER hospital in Harbin. He served as city sanitary physician of Harbin from 1904 and until his death. In 1910–1911, he participated in the fight against pneumonic plague. Dr. Łazowski was one of the founders of the society "Gospoda Polska" and a founder of one of the three Polish schools in Harbin (Melikhov 2003, p. 151; Cabanowski 1993, p. 27–29; Chuvakov 2004a, p. 33; Szarejko 1991, p. 339–340).

<sup>13</sup> Władysław Wyrzykowski (1878–1942). He graduated from the medical faculty of the University of Yuriev (now – the University of Tartu) in 1903. Since 1904 he had been working in the CER as a district railway physician and city sanitary physician. In 1910–1911 he participated in the fight against pneumonic plague. (*Spravochnaya knizhka... 1916*, p. 190). In 1919 he returned to his homeland in Poland, where he continued his medical practice (Jasek 2010, p. 40).

<sup>14</sup> Józef Grabowski (1861–?). He got a medical education in 1886. In 1891–1894, he worked in Bauska balneological resort (now – Latvia), then until 1908, he was a physician of University clinic of internal diseases in Warsaw. In 1909 he moved to the Far East. In 1909–1910 he had a private medical practice in Harbin, and then he serves as a physician in postal and telegraph office of Harbin and in the Hospital of Harbin Red Cross Community. In 1910–1911 he participated in the fight against pneumonic plague.

<sup>15</sup> Wincenty Bogucki (1876–1929). Sanitary doctor and public figure, until 1917 worked in Saratov, Odessa, Arkhangelsk, after the February Revolution in Russia served as an assistant of the Minister of Internal Affairs, then he was the city head in Odessa in the period from 1917 to 1918. In 1920 he left for Poland, where he held the posts of Minister of Health and Vice-Mayor of Warsaw (Mioduszeński 1936; Vasilyev and Vasilyev 1990; Kijas, p. 26–27).

epidemiology of plague in Harbin (Bogucki 1912). In cooperation with Chinese doctor Dr. Wu Liande, Dr. W. Bogucki organized a photo exhibition that reflected the course of the plague in Manchuria and the work of the medical staff (Martinevskiy and Mollare 1971, p. 143). He was awarded with Russian and Chinese medals for these contributions (Melikhov 1991, p. 228).

His observations and experience in combating the plague were summarized in a book that still has scientific value (Bogutskiy 1911a, Bogutskiy 1911b). Despite the vigorous activity of Dr. W. Bogucki in Harbin, we did not find information about his contacts with the Polish community of the city.

At the same International Plague Conference in Mukden, Dr. Feliks Jasiński presented a report, "Data relating to the origin of infection of towns and villages" (Jasenski, 1912). This paper was dedicated to the progress of plague in Manchuria from 1897 to 1910, beginning with a limited outbreak of the bubonic type in 1899 in Yingkow, which claimed 1370 deaths. During the epidemic of 1910–1911, Dr. F. Jasiński was among the leaders of the Russian antiplague organization at the CER (Wu Lien-teh 1959). Afterward, in 1912, Dr. F. Jasiński edited a fundamental report on the pneumonic plague epidemic from 1910–1911 in the Far East, where antiplague measures by the CER administration were emphasized (Khmara-Borshchevskiy 1912).

During the First World War, the Polish colony in Manchuria increased noticeably. Thousands of Poles and Polish prisoners of war were expelled from their native places from 1915–1916 on the basis of martial law, found themselves in the Far East, including Manchuria, and were recruited into German and Austrian troops, fighting on the side of the Germans and Austrians. According to the Chinese researcher Wu Yanqiu, there were up to 50 thousand Poles in the refugee wave that stretched across Siberia and the Far East.

## The activities of Polish doctors in Manchuria during the Civil War in Russia (1918–1921)

In the summer of 1919 in northern China, and later in southern Manchuria, a significant spread of cholera was noted. At the end of July 1919, cases of cholera were registered in Harbin. In the zone of the CER, the fight against cholera was organized entirely by the CER administration (Ratmanov 2008b). In Harbin, the fight against cholera was exerted by the municipality.<sup>16</sup> The chairman of the Harbin municipal medical-sani-

tary committee, Dr. Marian Kozubowski, led the fight against the cholera epidemic.<sup>17</sup>

The cholera epidemic in Harbin lasted for two months, August and September 1919. Most cholera patients in Harbin received treatment in the Central Hospital of the CER, headed by Dr. Tadeus Nowkuński<sup>18</sup>. Another Polish physician, Dr. Stefan Ulrich<sup>19</sup>, was appointed the head of the cholera department of CER Central hospital. This experience was summarized and presented in the meeting of the Medical Society of the CER Central Hospital and published in proceedings (Novkunskiy 1920, Ulrich 1920).

The Polish physicians in Harbin played an important role in the public life of the city. For example, the feldsher and midwifery school was organized in the CER Central Hospital at the end of 1918. Dr. T. Nowkuński became its first director<sup>20</sup>. For 9 years, another Polish physician, M. Kozubowski, served in the Harbin municipality, where he was a chairman of the medical and sanitary committee from the late 1910s to the early 1920s (Petrov 1922).

<sup>17</sup> Kozubowski Marian (1870–1926). He graduated from the medical faculty of the Saint Vladimir Imperial University of Kyiv in 1897. He then worked in Mogilev Province, Saint-Petersburg and Khabarovsk. In June 1907, he became a physician of the CER. In 1907, he worked in the Zamuursky hospital of Frontier Guard. Dr. M. Kozubowski worked as head of the surgical department of the CER Central hospital from 1908–1922. He went home to Poland in 1922. He opened his own clinic near Warsaw (Petrov 1922; Chuvakov 2004b, p. 373).

<sup>18</sup> Tadeus Nowkuński (1861–1931). He graduated from the Medical faculty of the Saint Vladimir Imperial University of Kyiv in 1891. Then, in 1893–1902, he served as zemstvo doctor in Voronezh province. In 1902, he was invited to Harbin as a sanitary-epidemic doctor to fight against the cholera epidemic (Poletika 1904a, p. 24; Poletika 1904c, p. 26–27). Shortly thereafter, in March 1903, he again was invited to the CER as a regular doctor. In 1904, he became a physician of the ophthalmic department and department for the chronically ill and convalescents of the CER Central Hospital. In 1907–1921, he was the head (chief doctor) of the CER Central Hospital (Spravochnaya knizhka... 1904, p. 96). He moved to Poland as a retiree of the CER in 1921 (Cabanowski 1993, p. 29–30; Szarejko 1991, p. 397; Chuvakov 2004c, p. 159).

<sup>19</sup> Stefan Ulrich (?–1926). Polish physician in Harbin in 1910–1920s. As a physician in 1910–1911 he participated in the fight against pneumonic plague. In August–October 1911, he was sent to Transbaikalian region and Mongolia to observe the marmots hunting. In 1920 he was a physician of free of charge outpatient clinic of the Polish Red Cross in Harbin. At the same time, he was an employee of the commercial service of the CER Administration. He died in 1926 in Harbin (Stefan Frantsevich Ulrich. Zaria. No. 330. December 11, 1926. P.2) (Ulrich 1912; Chuvakov 2004d, p. 534).

<sup>20</sup> Ob Otkrytii v Kharbine Feldsherskoi Shkoly [On the Opening of Feldsher School in Harbin]. Vestnik Manchzhurii. No. 140. July 17, 1918. P.1; Kharbinskaia Feldshersko-Akusherskaia Shkola [Harbin Feldsher and Midwifery School]. Vestnik Manchzhurii. No. 178. September 15, 1918. P. 3.

<sup>16</sup> K epidemii kholery v Kharbine [To the cholera epidemic in Harbin]. Novosti zhizni. No. 186. September 3, 1919. P. 2–3.

A number of important city sanitary and medical regulations were developed under his leadership.<sup>21</sup> Dr. M. Kozubowski was the author of regulations of the municipal control of pharmacies, medical facilities and registration of doctors. The main purpose of this document was to prevent mistreatment in hospitals and by “self-appointed” physicians.<sup>22</sup>

In multinational Harbin, populated by representatives of dozens of different nationalities, relations between Poles and Russian began to deteriorate after the revival of an independent Polish state and the Polish–Soviet War in 1919–1920. This war led to the establishment of the Polish Red Cross in Poland and its representatives in Soviet Russia.

At the beginning of 1920, the organization of the Polish Red Cross was established in Harbin. It was related to the evacuation from Siberia to Poland through Manchuria of the Polish army and refugees who became Polish citizens. There were also many ethnic Polish among the employees of the CER. For example, Dr. T. Nowkuński became a chairman of the Polish Red Cross in Harbin. The organization’s co-founder was Dr. Aleksander Wasilewski<sup>23</sup>, who arrived in Harbin from Chita in April 1920. Its other members were Bronisław Dobrowolski, Stefan Offenbach, Gustaw Emeryk, Jan Kalinowski, Konstanty Symonolewicz, Helena Dulcka, Władysław Ostrowski, and Tadeusz Łazowski (Lech 2002, p. 296).

The Polish Red Cross in Harbin was situated in the former barracks of the Russian army. There was a free-of-charge outpatient clinic of the Polish Red Cross in Harbin. Dr. S. Ulrich was a physician of this clinic.<sup>24</sup> The Polish Red Cross organized a Pasteur (anti-rabies) station in Harbin under the initiative of Polish microbiologist Dr. A. Wasilewski.<sup>25</sup> This station offered rabies vaccinations for free. Dr. A. Wasilewski participated in the work of Medical society of the CER Central Hospital in Harbin. There, he presented scientific reports on vaccination, plague prevention,

Kashin-Beck disease, and the Polish Red Cross’s activities (Lech 2002, p. 142–148).<sup>26</sup>

In June 1920, the General Consul of the Polish Republic in Siberia ordered the Polish Red Cross in Harbin to inoculate all Polish soldiers and civilians returning to Poland against plague and cholera.<sup>27</sup> Such vaccinations were required by sanitary authorities of sea ports. The bacteriologic laboratory of the Polish Red Cross in Harbin also sold vaccines to Chinese, Japanese, and French medical facilities in China, as well as to CER (Lech 2002, p. 142–148).

It should be noted that the attitude of the Harbin society toward the Polish Red Cross was largely determined by the political position of the observers. If the anti-Bolshevik pro-Semenov newspaper “Svet” propagandized services on its pages, then the pro-Soviet trade union newspaper “Vpered”, on the contrary, sharply criticized them for unreasonable, in its opinion, support from the administration of the CER.<sup>28</sup>

Beginning in 1903 (when regular railway traffic opened in CER), Dr. F. Jasiński worked as the chief doctor of the CER for 18 years, and Dr. Tadeusz Nowkuński was head physician of the CER Central Hospital for 14 years (1907–1921). This constancy of management of the medical services of the CER provided continuity and consistency in the organization of medical services and sanitation for the CER. The tenure of leadership in the medical service of the CER did have a downside: the effectiveness of its work in the late 1910s decreased markedly. As a result, the situation in the service slowly deteriorated.

The shortcomings in the work of the medical-sanitary service of the CER did not affect the material situation of its leaders. The CER medical-sanitary department staff doctors were at the top of the Russian medical hierarchy in the CER zone. They received high salaries and free lodging.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Vozvrashchenie Kozubovskogo* [Return of Kozubowski]. *Zaria*. No. 176 (morning). July 12, 1921. P. 3; *Vrachebno-Santarnyi Skandal* [Medical-Sanitary Scandal]. *Zaria*. No. 153 (evening). July 16, 1921. P. 3.

<sup>22</sup> *Kontrol nad aptekami i vrachami* [Control of pharmacies and doctors]. *Zaria*. No. 270 (evening). December 6, 1921. P. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Wasilewski Aleksander (1878–1924). He graduated from Moscow University in 1911. In 1913, he was a junior doctor of the 150 Infantry Regiment in the Grodno region. In 1914, he became a deputy head of the bacteriological laboratory in Chita. He was a head of this laboratory from 1917 to 1920. He arrived in Harbin in 1920, where he worked in the Pasteur (anti-rabies) station of the Polish Red Cross. He left Harbin in April 1921. For the last few years, he worked in the Warsaw municipal institute of hygiene (Lech 2002, p. 142–148).

<sup>24</sup> *V Polskom Krasnom Krete* [In the Polish Red Cross]. *Svet*. No. 335. June 11, 1920. P. 3.

<sup>25</sup> *Pasterovskaya Stantsiya i ... Natsionalizm* [Pasteur Station and ... Nationalism]. *Svet*. No. 318. May 19, 1920. P. 4.

<sup>26</sup> *Zasedanie vrachei* [Meeting of physicians]. *Svet*. No.355. July 4, 1920. P. 3; *Sredi vrachei* [Among doctors]. *Russkii golos*. No. 168. January 30, 1921. P. 3; *V Obshchestve Vrachei* [In the Medical Society]. *Russkii golos*. No.180. February 13, 1921. P. 3; *V Obshchestve Vrachei* [In the Medical Society]. *Russkii Golos*. No.190. February 26, 1921. P. 3; *Sredi vrachei* [Among doctors]. *Russkii golos*. No.200. March 11, 1921. P. 3.

<sup>27</sup> The so-called 5th Division of Polish Riflemen (Siberian Division) participated in the Civil War and was defeated by Bolsheviks near Kliukvennaia station in January 1920. Part of the division of about 1,400 Poles who were not captured broke into Harbin, where they evacuated to Poland and participated as a Siberian brigade in battles with the Bolsheviks near Warsaw in 1920.

<sup>28</sup> *Polskii Krasnyi Krest* [The Polish Red Cross]. *Vpered*. No.111. July 11, 1920. P. 5.

<sup>29</sup> According to the recollections of Jerzy Nowkuński (grandson of Dr. Tadeusz Nowkuński), his grandfather had a large mansion in the center of Harbin. He actually had two big houses, separated by a garden. The front house comprised 16–18 rooms. Another house with 4 rooms was in the depths of the inner garden, where Dr. T. Nowkuński lived with his wife (Cabanowski 1993, p. 130).

The chief physician of the CER, Dr. F. Jasiński, who was already 66 years old in 1920, loved peace and demanded external symbols of respect from his subordinates. “He indulgently looked at their sins in a medical kingdom” wrote Dr. R. Budberg in his memoir” (Budberg 1925, p. 57). The Bolshevik press in Harbin wrote that the chief accountant, a former feldsher Gavrilentov, began to manage the medical-sanitary service of the CER. Dr. F. Jasiński always satisfied his requests.<sup>30</sup> Bolsheviks also blamed the head of the CER Central Hospital, Dr. T. Nowkuński, for why he actively engaged in affairs of the Polish Red Cross at the expense of the primary work.<sup>31</sup>

After the end of the plague epidemic in Manchuria in spring 1921, the management of the medical-sanitary service of the CER changed. At this time, the epidemic of denunciations and complaints covered the CER. The CER Central Hospital administration was accused of bad organization of its work and of poor quality treatment of patients.

An audit of the CER Central Hospital’s activities was implemented in May 1921.<sup>32</sup> The audit revealed that there were all types of outbuildings created by employees at their own expense (summer kitchens, pantry, chicken coops, cowsheds, etc.) on the hospital’s office premises, as well as at the employees’ houses.<sup>33</sup> The situation was aggravated by the chronic pleurisy of Dr. T. Nowkuński. He had suffered this illness since 1915 and therefore was often absent from the service.<sup>34</sup>

Dr. T. Nowkuński was discharged from the CER as a result.<sup>35</sup> The chief physician of the CER, Dr. F. Jasiński, then petitioned for dismissal from service. He did not agree with these actions of the CER administration.<sup>36</sup>

In 1921, a significant number of Poles returned from Harbin to Poland (Winiarz 2008, p. 39). In this wave, there were many doctors, for example, the leading doctors of the CER, T. Nowkuński and M. Kozubowski. By this time, they had already reached the point of retirement; thus, their departure from the CER was relatively painless.

## Polish doctors in Harbin after 1922

The Russian diaspora in China was a community of diverse cultures and ethnicities united by their origin in the Russian empire. After the fall of the Russian Empire and end of the Civil War in Russia, these diasporas remained closely related.

In 1920, by the order of the president of the Republic of China, Russian extraterritoriality was revoked, and Russians in Manchuria came under the protection of the Chinese state (Chiasson 2010, p. 48). During the subsequent period of political turmoil in Russia and China, the medical regulatory measures in Manchuria almost disappeared. The Chinese authorities in Harbin were unable to immediately restore these measures.

Meanwhile, both Chinese officials and the Russian diaspora in Manchuria realized the necessity of implementing regulatory measures over medical practice. The most devastating concept in those hard times was a growing number of “self-appointed” physicians.

In Harbin, among “self-appointed” physicians, there was a Polish individual. On June 16, 1922, Dr. Franz Per committed suicide in his office with a revolver. He lived in Harbin for several years and was a director of the maternity hospital, which had the gynecological department. He owed a large sum of money, all his belongings were seized, and a sale at public auction was planned shortly before his death.<sup>37</sup>

It is necessary to mention the legal status of foreign doctors in Harbin. The registration regulations for doctors in Harbin were liberal; a certificate issued by one of the Harbin medical societies was sufficient. Most regulations emerged between 1920 and 1924; conflicts between patients and doctors were resolved in a pretrial fashion. In the 1920s, Russian doctors appeared in Chinese courts quite regularly. They were often invited to the Chinese court as experts. The prosecution of Russian doctors in Harbin began in 1925. The Polish doctor was involved in the first case.

In September 1925, the Chinese police in Harbin began an investigation of Dr. E. Portner’s actions. During an abortion procedure of a Russian woman, Sinchikhina, there was perforation of the uterus and 9 loops of the small intestine. Dr. E. Portner<sup>38</sup> was

<sup>30</sup> Vokrug Vrachebnogo Dela [Around Medical Affairs]. Vpered. No. 347. May 10, 1921. P. 5.

<sup>31</sup> Polskii Krasnyi Krest [The Polish Red Cross]. Vpered. No.111. July 11, 1920. P. 5.

<sup>32</sup> Reviziia Tsentralnoi Bolnitsy [The Audit of the Central Hospital]. Russkii Golos. No. 243. May 8, 1921. P. 5; Peremeny vo Vrachebnom Otdel [Changes in the Medical Department]. Russkii Golos. No. 255. May 22, 1921. P. 5.

<sup>33</sup> RGIA. F.323, op. 9, d.3759, l.128. Comments of the assistant of the manager of the CER when examining patients April 18, 1921.

<sup>34</sup> RGIA. F.323, op. 9, d.3759, l.122. Memorandum from T. Nowkuński to F. Jasiński of 14.04.1920.

<sup>35</sup> Naznachenie [Appointment]. Zaria. No.100. May 12, 1921. P. 3.

<sup>36</sup> Na Linii [On the Line]. Zaria. No.106, May 19, 1921. P. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Samoubiistvo Doktora F.F. Pera [Suicide Dr. F.F. Per]. Novosti Zhizni. No.133. June 17, 1922. P.3. A Russian doctor in Harbin, A.V. Sivre, claimed that Franz Per was a “self-appointed” physician who shot himself because of the threat of exposure (Sivre A.V. Vrachebnaya Zhizn v Khabarine [Medical Life in Harbin]. Zaria. No.190. July 16, 1933. P. 7–10).

<sup>38</sup> Emmanuel Portner (1889–?) A native of Warsaw, Polish-Jewish descent. He graduated from the Medical faculty of the Tomsk University in 1913. In 1916 he worked in Blagoveshchensk (the Russian Far East). In 1923, he arrived in Manchuria. He was a therapist and gynecologist in Harbin in 1920–1940s. In 1930–1940s he worked in Harbin in the Jewish hospital, in the Dr. N.P. Golubev hospital and had a private medical practice. He was a member of the Russian Medical Society in Harbin (State Archive of Khabarovsk Territory (GAKhK). F.R-830. Op.3. D.38657. L. 3).

charged with the negligent performance of professional duties, but the doctor did not plead guilty. This case was the first time that a foreign doctor was accused in the Harbin Chinese court. The most authoritative Harbin doctors were invited as experts in this trial. They confirmed that the abortion was performed for medical reasons.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, a Chinese court found the doctor guilty of negligent performance of professional duties and sentenced E. Portner to a fine of 200 Chinese dollars.<sup>40</sup>

In Harbin, in 1920–1940, there were other physicians of Polish origin or who received Polish citizenship: Andrzej Kestranek, Emil Nelski, Kiriłł Nowakowski, Konstantin Zawadzki, and Kazimierz Wierzbicki.

Polish doctors did not create their own medical society in Harbin during this time. Therefore, the Polish doctors engaged in medical practice in Manchuria together with their Russian counterparts. They also participated in the life of the Polish community of Harbin. For example, K. Zawadzki was a school doctor at the Polish grammar school named in honor of Henryk Sienkiewicz.

Since 1924, in accordance with the Soviet-Chinese agreement, only residents of China and the USSR could work for the CER. A wave of repatriation to Poland then began. After the establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo, many Poles left Manchuria in the early 1930s. In Manchuria, there were 5 thousand Poles, and in 1935, there were slightly more than a thousand, according to the Małgorzata Pietrasiak (Petraszyak 2014, p. 108). The last of the Polish citizens left Harbin after the proclamation of the People's Republic of China.

## Conclusion

For the most part, the historiography of Harbin still falls into the categories of Russian, Jewish, Chinese, and Japanese narratives. Comparative, transnational, or transcultural approaches are only now being established in Harbin research, albeit gradually and cautiously. Even though research on individual national and ethnic communities is already underway, there re-

main many unanswered questions about the interaction of local and global developments and about transcultural processes in the global city of Harbin (Grüner and Prodöhl 2011, p. 19).

In the historiography of the Polish diaspora in China, it is traditionally noted that the Poles were primarily attracted to economic motives (Borysiewicz 2016, p. 114). However, for the Polish history, these migration processes can also be considered in the context of “szlachta dismantling”, the process of confiscation the gentry estate in the territories of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (Rzeczpospolita), which was a part of the Russian Empire at the end of the XVIII century, and the depolonization of the Western provinces of the empire. Thus, the movement of the Poles to the east began long before the construction of the CER, and Polish colonies in the 19th century existed in Saint Petersburg, Moscow, Saratov, Samara, Rybinsk and other Russian cities. The Harbin-based Polish diaspora turned out to be the most distant and one of the last in terms of education.

Two main approaches can be distinguished in the historiography of the Polish diaspora in China: Russian and Polish. Russian researchers consider the activity of the Poles in Manchuria before 1917 in the context of Russian imperialism in the Far East and as an integral part of it. An illustration of this approach is the fact that Polish doctors, oppressed in the Western part of the Russian Empire, sometimes disregarded the Chinese and led a colonial way of life. The Poles were in a privileged position even among the employees of the CER.

This same imperial approach recognizes the creation by the Poles of Harbin's strong national community (with its schools, churches, etc.) but does not separate the Polish doctors in Manchuria from other Russian doctors. This is justified by the fact that they all graduated from the medical faculties of the universities of the Russian Empire; thus, they had common teachers and belonged to the Russian medical tradition. The Polish doctors did not create their own medical society; moreover, they actually headed the leading Russian medical society of Harbin – the Medical Society of the Central Hospital of the CER. Unlike the Jewish community of Harbin, another influential diaspora, the Poles did not organize their hospitals in the Chinese territory (Romanova 1999).

The Polish approach to the history of the Polish diaspora in Manchuria underlines its relative isolation from the rest of citizens of the Russian Empire. For Polish historiography, the period from the partitions of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth in 18th century until 1918 is presented as a temporary episode of the loss of Poland's sovereignty; it is considered an example of the lack of assimilation is given the same national communities, schools, Catholic churches, etc.

<sup>39</sup> Protseśs Doktora Portnera [Dr. Portner Process]. Zaria. No.211. September 17, 1925. P. 3; Delo Doktora Portnera [The Case of Dr. Portner]. Novosti Zhizni. No. 206. September 17, 1925. P. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Prigovor Doktoru Portneru [Sentence to Dr. Portner]. Novosti Zhizni, No. 246. November 5, 1925. P. 4; Prigovor Doktoru Portneru [Sentence to Dr. Portner]. Zaria. No. 258. November 5, 1925. P. 3. In June 1926, E. Portner was sentenced to 6 months in prison for another illegal abortion case, with a substitution of a fine (Delo Doktora Portnera [The Case of Dr. Portner]. Zaria. No.140. May 28, 1926. P. 3; Prigovor Doktoru Portneru [Sentence to Dr. Portner]. Zaria. No.146. June 3, 1926. P. 3; Khronika [Chronicle]. Novosti Zhizni No. 121. June 3, 1926. P.4).



At the same time, due to the richness and diversity of factual material, abounding with examples suitable for both approaches, Russian and Polish researchers continue to work actively and fruitfully within the usual framework.

Only after the beginning of the Soviet-Polish war in 1919, the tension between the Russians and the Poles appeared in the zone of the CER only after the beginning of the Soviet-Polish war in 1919. After the end of the war in 1921 and the mass departure of the Poles to their homeland, this tension decreased but did not disappear. On the one hand, the Russian language was excluded from the program of Polish schools in Harbin, but on the other hand, up to half of the Poles of the local colony were in mixed marriages with Russian spouses, which prevented radical nationalism.

As a result, in the 1950s, all foreign communities left Harbin. The city became exclusively Chinese, and the Polish diaspora, similar to the rest, disappeared. No one considered the option of staying in Harbin. One had to learn Chinese and assimilate, but fear of assimilation has always been a powerful component of Harbin Russian identity. Each nationality (Russians, Poles, Jews, Georgians, etc.) in Harbin strove to retain its language and culture (Bakich 2000, p. 66).

The absence of Chinese sources imposes restrictions on the findings of the study. These restrictions leave out the publication of the relationship between Polish and Chinese doctors in Harbin. We hope that subsequent research will fill this gap in the history of Polish doctors in China.

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