

# The Tragedy of the Russian Women Refugees in the Far East

“ . . . Many of the Russians residing in Manchuria have become exiles and have lost their normal source of income, while many of their compatriots have poured into China from Russian Siberia as refugees. Both impoverished residents and refugees very frequently being entirely destitute, it has been the fate of many of the young women amongst them to sink into prostitution. These unfortunate victims fall into two different categories. One is composed of women refugees who in their flight were stranded, without means of subsistence, in remote parts of Manchuria, where in exchange for the expense of their maintenance they were made use of as prostitutes by local Chinese. The other consists of destitute Russian women of the Railway Zone of North Manchuria, both refugees and impoverished residents in that part of the country who to-day form the source of supply of almost the entire occidental prostitution in the great international commercial centres of China.”

“ The demand for Russian women as prostitutes . . . in the large commercial centres of China proper is a strong incentive to traffickers to arrange for the transfer of such girls to Peiping, Tientsin, Chefoo, Tsingtao, Shanghai and Hankow . . . by persuasion and deceit. . . .

“ She is helpless to protest, she is in a strange place, she can make no proposal for the repayment of the money advanced. . . . Moreover, she has left to the agent all the arrangements regarding her papers of identity and her permit to travel, without which no Russian can move about in China, and these documents are in his possession. She is entirely ignorant concerning the measures she can take to oppose the demands of the traffickers.”

pp. 29, 36-37, League of Nations Report on Traffic  
in Women and Children in the East, 1933.

“ It appears from the new material received that the situation has grown even more serious since the Commission of Enquiry into Traffic in Women and Children in the East made its investigations on the spot in 1930/31. . . . As one report puts it ‘ the plight of Russian women and girls here (Shanghai) is truly heartrending,’ and not less than 22½ per cent. of all the Russian women between the ages of 16 and 44 are said to be engaged in professional or casual prostitution. . . . the question has assumed the dimensions of a social mass problem. Here it is fast outgrowing the scope of private and semi-organised charity and calls for a collective effort.”

League of Nations Report C.T.F.E. 656, April 25th,  
1935.

“ As far as women already practising prostitution are concerned, they would, if liberated from their souteneurs, thankfully accept work which would enable them to live an honest life.”

“ It is said that there are among the prostitutes many children of 8 years and under.”

League of Nations Report C.T.F.E. 656, Addendum,  
May 1st, 1935.

**HELP IS URGENTLY NEEDED**



DRAFT RESOLUTION: "RUSSIAN WOMEN" MEETING.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19th

"This meeting, representing societies dealing with social and moral welfare work,

"Approves the decision of the League of Nations Traffic in Women Committee to recommend the appointment of a competent woman agent in the Far East for the purpose of encouraging and coordinating efforts to improve the position of women of Russian origin who are engaged, or likely to become engaged, in prostitution.

"Notes that the League is unable to provide financial assistance for this work and has appealed to the voluntary organizations and public authorities to raise the funds necessary for this purpose.

"This meeting, therefore, collectively and individually pledges itself to endeavour to raise part of the money required by private and public appeals, and further authorises the signatory societies to appoint, from their number or otherwise, an Appeal Committee for this purpose."