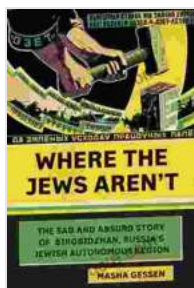


# The Sad and Absurd Story of Birobidzhan: Russia's Jewish Autonomous Region

The story of Birobidzhan, the Jewish Autonomous Region in Russia, is a fascinating and complex one. It is a story of hope, disappointment, and resilience.



## Where the Jews Aren't: The Sad and Absurd Story of Birobidzhan, Russia's Jewish Autonomous Region

(Jewish Encounters Series) by Masha Gessen

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 3842 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
X-Ray	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 193 pages



Birobidzhan was founded in 1928 by the Soviet government as a homeland for the Jews of the Soviet Union. The Soviet government hoped that Birobidzhan would become a thriving Jewish center, where Jews could live and work in peace and freedom. However, this dream never fully materialized.

There were a number of factors that contributed to the failure of Birobidzhan. One factor was the Soviet government's own policies. The

Soviet government did not provide Birobidzhan with the resources it needed to succeed. The region was underdeveloped and lacked basic infrastructure. In addition, the Soviet government's anti-Semitism made it difficult for Jews to feel at home in Birobidzhan.

Another factor that contributed to the failure of Birobidzhan was the lack of interest from Jews. Many Jews were not interested in moving to Birobidzhan. They were already settled in other parts of the Soviet Union and did not want to start over in a new place. In addition, many Jews were skeptical of the Soviet government's motives. They did not believe that the Soviet government was truly committed to creating a Jewish homeland.

Despite the challenges, Birobidzhan did manage to survive. A small Jewish community remains in the region today. The community is struggling to maintain its Jewish identity, but it is determined to keep Birobidzhan alive.

The story of Birobidzhan is a reminder of the complex history of the Jews in Russia. It is a story of hope, disappointment, and resilience. It is a story that should be told and remembered.

## **The Founding of Birobidzhan**

The idea of creating a Jewish homeland in Russia was first proposed in the early 1900s. A number of Jewish organizations supported the idea, and in 1928 the Soviet government agreed to create the Jewish Autonomous Region. The region was located in the Far East of Russia, near the border with China.

The Soviet government hoped that Birobidzhan would become a thriving Jewish center. The government provided the region with some resources,

and it encouraged Jews to move there. However, the region was underdeveloped and lacked basic infrastructure. In addition, the Soviet government's anti-Semitism made it difficult for Jews to feel at home in Birobidzhan.

## **The Failure of Birobidzhan**

Despite the challenges, Birobidzhan did manage to survive. A small Jewish community remains in the region today. The community is struggling to maintain its Jewish identity, but it is determined to keep Birobidzhan alive.

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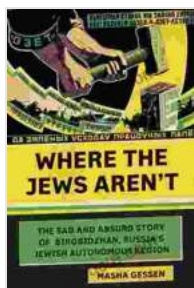
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## **The Legacy of Birobidzhan**

The story of Birobidzhan is a reminder of the complex history of the Jews in Russia. It is a story of hope, disappointment, and resilience. It is a story that should be told and remembered.

Birobidzhan is a unique place. It is the only Jewish autonomous region in the world. The region is home to a small but vibrant Jewish community. The community is struggling to maintain its Jewish identity, but it is determined to keep Birobidzhan alive.

The legacy of Birobidzhan is a mixed one. The region has not become the thriving Jewish center that the Soviet government hoped it would become. However, Birobidzhan has survived, and it remains a symbol of Jewish resilience.



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