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**IMPORTANCE OF PAN-ASIANISM IN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF THE
RUSSIAN COSSACKS IN THE NORTH-EASTERN CHINA (1932–1945)**

-Abstract-

The article examines the causes of the Pan-Asianism spread among the Russian Cossacks resident to the North-Eastern provinces of China. The presence of that ideology revealed an intention of the Japanese military leadership to extend their military expansion into the inner provinces of China. Also, the idea of "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" envisaged occupation of the Northern Sakhalin and all of the Kurils, the Eastern Siberia, Inner and Outer Mongolia, as well as expansion into Tibet, Dutch India, and the Hawaii. The beginning of the "New Order" in Asia was marked by the militarists' intervention into Korea and creating of the puppet state Manchukuo. The Japanese continental politics masterminds actively backed the idea of forging the East Asian Federation embracing five nations: the Japanese, the Manchurian, the Chinese, the Mongols, and the Koreans. The essay provides valuable information on placing of Russian residents of the Chinese Eastern Railway's (the CER) Adjacency Zone on the same footing as the Manchurian population, and recruitment of the most active and the prominent Russian and Cossack emigrants to benefit Manchukuo state-building. Some of the expatriate Community and the Russian Cossacks leaders believed that a buffer state could be built with a help from the Japanese. They persuaded the expatriate Cossacks to join up with the Japanese Military Mission in a battlefield alliance aimed to oppose the USSR, and overthrow the Communist power in the Cossack lands. In the Russian expatriate community, many of the political discussion participants objected to further development of the Japanese aggression and took allying of the Far Eastern Cossack factions with Japan negative. This is why the implementation of Pan-Asianism state doctrine among the Cossacks of the North-Eastern China and adjacent territories was coming with worsening of oppression severity in the Japanese occupation powers' dictatorship.

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Introduction

When the foundations of the civil society are being laid down, the scientific significance of studying the value of the Pan-Asianism ideology in the political life of the Russian Cossacks in the Northeast China takes a hold. There are special studies of this problem, which reflected the political debate among the expatriate Cossacks. The scientific research reflects the theoretical views of the Siberian Regionalists, the Cossack leaders and supporters of Roerich's project *Kansas*, resulting in an idea that a temporary alliance with the ideamongers of Pan-Asianism would be fine to overthrow the Soviet regime and for renewal of Russia.

The life experience of the Humanity confirms the feasibility of studying and understanding the historical processes of the past in order to extract lessons for the future from them. It is important to understand the reasons for why many Cossack emigrants have not accepted the ideas of Pan-Asianism, and why the ideological concepts of the Siberian Regionalists together with the political views of N.K. Roerich's followers have collapsed. Therefore, the relevance of studying of the scrutinized problems fed the author's volition to show that Pan-Asianism was the ideological justification of the aggressive policy of the Japanese militarists.

After the accomplishment of the Russian Socialist Revolution and the subsequent Civil War, the Northeastern provinces of China have become a focal point of the World's history. There, Russian Cossack and non-Cossack Diasporas have formed, which participated directly in the construction of the puppet state of Manchukuo. Pan-Asianism was a foundation of this state. While following its goals implementation, as some leaders of the Cossack emigration admitted, it was possible to construct a separate Cossack state under the slogan "Building a new Asia". Those leaders included Ataman G.M. Semyonov who advocated the creation of a buffer state by making a temporary alliance with the Japanese to fight against the Soviet Power and Bolshevism. He and his supporters had hoped to destroy Bolshevik Russia with the help of cannons from abroad, turn its statehood into ruins, and then recreate it in such a miniature way like that of Manchukuo.

In many villages bound to the CER's Adjacency Zone, there were many supporters of the ideological positions of the Siberian Regionalists among the Cossacks of the Siberian Cossack Army. The Regionalist ideologists proclaimed the establishment of the Autonomous Government of Siberia as a part of the new

Russia. Most of them advocated a federation and parliamentary form of government. A lesser number of the Regionalist Cossacks recognized a unitary state structure and the monarchy restoration after the fall of the Soviet regime. And only a tiny minority of the Regionalist movement supporters backed the military dictatorship following the example of the Fascist states of Europe.

Russian Academician N.K. Roerich had taken a special interest in the ideology of "Building a new Asia". While studying cultural sites in the Central Asia, the scientist dreamed of creating an independent state named "The Sacred Union of the East" in Gobi Desert.

A considerable number of the Russian emigrants and Cossack retained their passion of national pride and patriotism and expressed their negative attitude towards Pan-Asianism. Among them were General A.I. Denikin, N.L. Gondatti and others who believed that every Russian should have come to the defense of the USSR and their native Cossack regions if he had been a true patriot of his Homeland. It should be noted that despite the various fate of the Cossack emigrants, their historical mission has not disappeared completely from the World stage. The Cossack emigrants were cut off from the ancestral Homeland of Russia, but even outside its borders, they remained a part of the Russian people.

The content and conclusions of the work can be used in the course of the history of the Russian Cossacks, in the patriotic education courses at educational institutions, including schools and military schools. This paper fills a gap in the historical picturing of the Cossacks as a bulwark of patriotism and defense of the country against external threats.

Materials and methods

Studying the topic of the research, the author used the comparative historical analysis which compared the Pan-Asianism ideology with the ideological views of the Cossacks, the Regionalists, and foreign public figures. This analysis allowed him to study the problem of preserving the national identity of the Russian refugees in conjunction with the historical situation of the studied period.

The principle of pluralism is considerably important for the sake of revealing the essence of Pan-Asianism, of ideological positions of the Cossack Regionalists, and of the supporters of Nikolai Roerich's "The Sacred Union of the East". From this perspective, we study the causes of why Pan-Asianic ideas have spread among the emigrant Cossacks, and why they were rejected by the majority of non-Cossack and Cossack emigration.

The systemic method allowed the author to find the primary and secondary elements of the cause-and-effect chains, to explore in better detail the problem as a

whole, and its most important components. The same method was used to digest the bibliographic data on the scientific literature.

In this study, the author used the method of logical historical research. He contributed to the coverage of the historical process through disclosure of internal relationships, changes in the foreign countries at different time stages. Its usage has allowed to single out the main facts and events, as well as the main stages of the origin and spreading of Pan-Asianism among the Russian refugees. In addition, this method allowed the author to avoid a purely empirical descriptive narration.

Literature Review

The book *History of war in the Pacific* is scientifically valuable for assessment of the governance reform at the territory of the puppet state of Manchukuo. The author has collected a material which testified that the Pan-Asianism ideology has rigorously regularized the life of the Russian refugees abroad. All the socio-political organizations of the emigrants were under the control of the Japanese Military Mission.

Some valuable information about the history of the state of Manchukuo is available on the pages of *The East and Us (Vostoki My)* journal. The author analyzed the memorandum of Prime Minister Tanaka of the Japanese government, that reflects the aggressive policy of the Japanese militarists. The material revealed the attitude of the emigrant community towards the Japanese occupation of China's Northeastern provinces.

Issues of *Proceedings of the Oriental Institute of Far Eastern State University* editorial board pose a scientific interest. While analyzing them, the author came to the conclusion that calls for the unification of the nations under the slogan of Pan-Asianism have sounded under the colonial dependence of most Asian countries from the states of Europe.

Equally important is the use of materials from the collection of scientific works *The Japanese Historiography of the Russian-Japanese and the Soviet-Japanese relations in the 19th and 20th centuries* on the part of the author. This collection includes the studies done by foreign as well as domestic scientists and political figures from Japan. In their works, they revealed an ideological justification for the aggressive policy of the Japanese imperialists in order to create the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere". Nevertheless, some members of the Japanese government looked for ways to resolve the conflict on the principles of cooperation and collaboration.

In this study, the scientific value had the magazines *The Sentry (Tchasovoy)* and *The Boundary (Rubezh)*, who expressed allegiant sentiments among the Cossack emigrants regarding the implementation of the "New Order" policy by the Japanese

militarists. This fact is explained by the desire of the Cossack heads to strive for the liberation of their abandoned homelands from the power of the Bolsheviks.

Besides, some important information related to protection of cultural treasures during armed conflicts in Asia, and to the building of an independent state under the name of “The Sacred Union of the East”, was printed in Russian *Questions of History (Voprosy Istorii)* academic journal. The author analyzed how the Cossack emigrants in Northeastern China viewed upon the project *Kansas* by N.K. Roerich, which was about the unification of the nations of Mongolia, China, Altai, Tuva, and Kalmykia. The author also revealed the reaction of the Japanese militarists and their ideologists with regard to that project.

Thanks to the publications of *The Amur Pravda (Amurskaya Pravda)* newspaper, the author has discovered facts about the cooperation of the Cossack emigration leaders with the officership of the 2nd Intelligence Division of the Kwantung Army's headquarters. The information about support expressed by the Board of Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Military Union under the leadership of General M.K. Diterikhs for the concept of Asian “New Order” under the auspices of Japan, is also interesting.

The most informative in terms of the disclosure of the essence of the Pan-Asianism concept were Harbin newspapers *Our Way (Nash Put')*, *The Russian Word (Russkoye Slovo)*, *The Dawn (Zarya)*, *Harbin Time (Harbinskoye Vremya)* and others. The articles printed in them reflected the ideological disputes between the Cossack leaders on the cooperation of *Kyōwakai* Association with the Japanese Military Mission. It's interesting from a scientific standpoint to study the information on the participation of the Russian Cossack detachments in Manchukuo Army, as well as on the *Kyōwakai* volunteer brigades.

The author analyzed the newspapers *The Latest News (Posledniye Novosti)*, *Free Siberia (Vol'naya Sibir')* and others, which contained material about the so-called “Siberian Plan” of the Regionalists in exile. It's especially impressive to read about the emigrant Cossacks' position on the plans of the Cossack Movement's Solution drafted by the ideology leaders of the Regionalists.

Because of the lack of interest towards the problem from the foreign colleagues, no English language sources have been used.

The study subject is perspective due to high studying demand for it in the Russian science, because of ongoing Russian national identity formation and development, and because it's a time to rally people to the patriotic platform in the face of threats of different origins.

Results

The goal of this work is doing an analysis of Pan-Asianism and its significance in the political life of the Russian Cossacks in Northeastern China (1932–1945).

Objectives: Studying of the socio-political situation in the specified time period; identification and mapping of points of the Cossack public opinion about Pan-Asianism; analysis of the reaction and the realization of the social thought of the Cossacks.

The novelty and significance of the study lie in the fact that the presented information highlights the direct participation of the Cossack community in the construction of the puppet state under the auspices of militarist Japan. The facts on the presence of partisans of the Siberian Regionalists' ideas, as well as of supporters of state-building of the "Sacred Union of the East", among the Cossacks in exile were revealed.

Establishment of the occupation regime in Northern China marked a new period in the implementation of Pan-Asianism by Japan's militarist circles. That ideology was welcomed by some members of the Russian emigration. Among them were leaders of the emigrant Russian Cossacks in the Northeast China. They allowed for a variety of options to build a buffer state with the help of the Japanese, who pursued the idea of "Building a new Asia."

The initial basis for the ideological justification of the Japanese military expansion in Chinese inner provinces and other East Asian countries was Pan-Asianism theory. It was designed by the ideologists of the continental policy of the Japanese government, which argued for a "common destiny" of Japan with many developing Asian countries. The development of this idea led eventually to the emergence of a "New Order" concept that contained the basic provisions of the Pan-Asianism ideology in the early 1930s. Justifying the continental direction of expansion, its supporters argued that the center for development of all the Asian nations should be Japan. According to their statement, it is necessary to pay attention to the establishment of the East Asian Federation (EAF), represented at the first stage by Japan, Manchukuo and China¹.

This period was special in all spheres of life of the Cossack residents to the North-Eastern provinces of China. During the fall of 1934, in the course of state management reform in Japan, the Bureau of Manchuria was coined, chaired by the Minister of War Hayashi. He has been endowed the powers that previously belonged to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Colonies. With the abolition of the post of the Chief of Kwantung area, his functions were transferred to the

¹ *Amurskaya Pravda*, 21 May 1932, p.1.

regional governor, who acted under the control of the Japanese Ambassador. In addition, the Ambassador was the General Officer commanding the Kwantung Army. The puppet state's defense was provided by the Japanese Army, while maintenance of the public order was carried out by the national armed forces. Management reforms in Manchukuo, as the Cossack leaders believed, were the recognition of the expansion of the Japanese influence in Northern China. This was evidenced by the fact that 36% of all employees of the central government agencies and 29% of employees of the provincial governments were of the Japanese nationality. Establishing control over the activities of the anti-Japanese political organizations and their ban testified to the establishment of the military dictatorship of the Japanese militarists. They paid attention to the ideological justification of their policy among the immigrant population of the Far East. The Pan-Asianism ideological concept has strictly regulated the life of the Russian refugees abroad. All the socio-political organizations, publications, youth associations of emigrants were under the supervision of the Japanese Military Mission (JMM). This fully concerned the representatives of the Russian emigration².

The next stage in the development of Pan-Asianism in the second half of the 1930s was propagandizing of the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" under the auspices of Japan. It was to include the territory of the Northern part of Sakhalin and the Kuril chain of islands, Eastern Siberia, Manchukuo, Inner and Outer Mongolia. With the further expansion, it was expected that China, Tibet, Dutch India and Hawaii should enter the EAF too. As the Japanese military operations in the interior provinces of China have dragged on, some members of the Japanese government looked for ways to resolve the conflict on the principles of cooperation and collaboration. They recognized the impossibility to subjugate China by military means, and have regarded the solution in creating the East Asian Federation as the only acceptable way out for Tokyo³.

In November of 1937, the official circles of Japan declared the conclusion of the treaty with Manchukuo. According to the reached conditions, of all the administrative rights have been transferred to the authorities of the puppet state. The Japanese diplomacy promoted the treaty as a document that restored the sovereignty of the new Asian state. As diplomats argued, a "surrender" of Japan from extraterritoriality should soften the anti-Japanese sentiment among the Chinese national bourgeoisie. An important task, in their opinion, was the use of resources of

² Archbishop Nestor, *The Far East Essays*, Belgrade, p.60.

³ Verisotskaya E.V., "The Ideological Justification of the Aggressive Policy of the Japanese Imperialists in the Works of Bourgeois Scholars and Politicians of Japan (the 1930s – 1940s)", *The Japanese Historiography of the Russian-Japanese and the Soviet-Japanese Relations in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Vladivostok, 1987, p. 52.

the Northern China for military production. The economic policy of the occupation authorities was carried out under the slogan of “The Japanese-Manchurian Economic Bloc”. After the occupation of China's inland provinces, the Japanese government established the war-time regulations. In the spring of 1938 Japan moved on a wartime footing, and an important part in this played a law titled *On the Total Mobilization of the Nation*. It allowed the Japanese government to send 2/3 of all their budget revenues for the military needs of the Kwantung Army. Laws *On Restriction of Newspaper Articles* and *On Emergency Measures for Supervision over the Press, Meetings, and Organizations* were soon published. In the spring of 1941, with the assistance of the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs, a special media control body became operational: the Japanese Newspaper League (JNL). The JNL was transformed into a Japanese Newspaper Company (JNC) in the winter of 1942. After its dissolution in the winter of 1945, control functions were transferred directly into the jurisdiction of the Information Administration.

The Japanese occupation of Northern provinces of China and establishment of the puppet state received different grades of acceptance from the Russian refugees in the foreign Far East. The aggressive policy of the Japanese was welcomed by the Generals M.K. Diterikhs, D.L. Khorvat, and Ataman G.M. Semyonov. After having a conversation with the Head of the 2nd Intelligence Division of the Kwantung Army Colonel Ishimura, Ataman Semyonov stepped up his activities for the militant groups rallying. With the support of the Japanese, the anti-Soviet activity of the White Cossack troops along the western line of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) have intensified. The Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Military Union (RMU), led by M.K. Diterikhs supported the concept of the “New Order”. In the proclamation of the RMU Board for the Russian refugees of the Westwards emigration, the need to continue the fight against the Soviet state have been highlighted. Some time later, in Germany, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, a collection of donations and equipping of volunteers to fight in the Far East have begun⁴.

After the sale of the CER, the occupation authorities called on the leaders of the Far Eastern Military Union to hold the idea of a campaign to recognize the “Construction of the New Asia”. Because of the Union's propaganda, most of the Cossack emigrant media expressed the allegiant mood. As the leaders of the Russian Cossacks have alleged, the “New Order” policy implementation by Japan would contribute to the liberation of their native lands from the Soviet regime. At the direction of *The Sentry* magazine's editorial office, their reporters from the Far East sent materials on the life of the Cossack emigration after the creation of the state of Manchukuo. According to their opinion, the emigrant community and the press felt

⁴ *Vol'naya Sibir'*, no. 1, 1927, Prague, p. 1.

sympathy for the Pan-Asianism ideology. *The Boundary* magazine, very popular among the Far Eastern Cossacks, have also taken part in this activity⁵.

The “New Order” establishment policy in East Asia has found a support among some members of the Orthodox Church Abroad. After creation of Manchukuo, Archbishop Nestor praised Pan-Asianism for equating the Russian emigrants in their rights to the Manchu nationals. The minister of the church at the time of prayer in front of the Cossacks repeatedly pointed out the possibility of national liberation with the help of Japan. As stated by the pastor, “There is no Russian, nor abroad, neither even within our own country, who would not be aware of how important for Russia, and for all of our national cause, it would be, if the Soviet Russia had clashed in an armed conflict with any sufficiently strong opponent.”⁶.

Similar thoughts were voiced by supporters of the All-Russian Fascist Party (RFP) under the leadership of K.V. Rodzaevsky. However, among the leaders of the Russian emigration were many people who did not recognize the concept of Pan-Asianism. They understood that the proclamation of the new regime would bring enormous suffering to all the nations of East Asia. In the winter of 1932, P.N. Milyukov made a speech in Paris on topic: “Far Eastern Conflict and Russia”. While describing the Japanese conquest plans, he considered recognition of the “New Order” a betrayal of the national interests. “We cannot under present conditions do fight for our land ourselves. However, crossing to the other sides of the barricades would be criminal for us.”⁷.

The anti-Japanese position of P.N. Milyukov was supported in the emigrant press by A.I. Denikin, A.M. Kulisher, A.I. Gondatti, and V.L. Bogdanovic. They met an opposition by not only the right wing but the left wing of the Russian emigration as well. In the spring of 1932, the former President of the Provisional Government, A.F. Kerensky argued that Stalin's government “would not be able to” protect the fundamental interests of the Soviet state. According to him, the fate of the Russian population in the Far East depended on the Japanese international plans. To overthrow the Bolsheviks, Kerensky urged the emigrant Cossacks to ally with the Japanese against the USSR. But many of the participants spoke against the Japanese aggression and participation of the Russian Cossack units in it. They were supported by prominent figures in the emigrant community of Northeast China⁸.

In the spring of 1934, the former diplomat E.V. Sablin, who was a public figure of the Russian emigration, noted that Japan is unlikely to cause any damage to

⁵ *Vol'naya Sibir'*, no. 9, 1930, Prague, p.61.

⁶ *Vostoki My.*, 1941, p.7.

⁷ *Dni.*, March 20, 1932, Berlin, p.1.

⁸ *Zarya*, June 4, 1934, Harbin, p.1.

the former Russian Empire's territory while flying the flag of Pan-Asianism. Despite the expulsion of the Russian influence from Northern China and Eastern Mongolia provinces, the Japanese had to do every effort to establish their domination over the Adjacency Zone of the CER, the Kuril Islands and the Southern Sakhalin⁹.

As history has shown, the former Tzar's diplomat was right. Having experienced the true nature of the pro-Japanese regime, a significant portion of the Russian refugees, including representatives of the Russian Cossacks, did not share the views of Ataman G.M. Semyonov, Archbishop Nestor, and A.F. Kerensky. Thus the occupation authorities had to pursue a tough policy toward the immigrants. It has become apparent in progress of the building of Manchukuo and introduction of wartime administration. With capturing of the Northern provinces of China, the territorial possessions, which in size were not inferior to the territories of France, Poland and the Caucasus put together, have fallen under the rule of the Japanese militarists. Prior to the declaration of Japanese Pan-Asianism, a state ideology of "constructing of a New Asia", all the Cossack villagers were living their traditional way of life everyday, as the Three Rivers Cossacks claimed. For most of them, it seemed that they were out of the political events that testified to the impending changes in the foreign Far East.

When the Soviet government sold their rights on the CER, it accounted for the strengthening of Japan's position. Mass immigration of the emigrant Cossacks into the interior of China was seen by the ideamongers of the new regime as a passive resistance to the aggressive policy of the Japanese. A pro-Japanese newspaper *Harbin Time* have appeared with a cause of supporting the occupation authorities. In addition to having an anti-Chinese sentiment, its articles were directed against the emigration figures, who rejected the idea of establishing the East Asian Federation.

For the sake of the main Pan-Asianism idea, all the political and social life of the Russian emigrants in the puppet state was put under the strict control of the Manchukuo Concordia Association (*Xié Hé Huì* in Chinese, *Kyōwakai* in Japanese). In the order issued by K. Ueda, the Commanding General of the Kwantung Army called *Xié Hé Huì*, the ideological organization of the pro-Japanese state. Taking into account that the emigrants held different attitudes towards Japan, the occupation authorities allowed only sympathizers to join the Army or the state institutions of Manchukuo. They occupied the lower strata of the administrative staff. Towards the insufficiently faithful the Russian emigrants, systematic measures have been taken. Using various pretexts, the Japanese Military Mission evicted outside of North

⁹ Pospelov B.V., *History of the Pacific War*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1957, v. 1. p.310.

China and eastern Mongolia some successful Russian merchants, who were less independent people from the Cossack environment¹⁰.

In the implementation of the concept of “Building a new Asia”, a prominent place was occupied by the problem of solving the national question. The Pan-Asianism supporters sought to cover the social basis of the new state of the Asian nations more completely. When the new regime was just making its first steps in the Northern provinces of China, the five major ethnic groups: the Japanese, the Mongols, the Chinese, the Manchus and the Koreans have been considered the founding construction material for Manchukuo. The main value of their spiritual development was Buddhism, widely spread among the population of Eastern Siberia. Using the Buddhist teaching, the Japanese militarists sought to attach by military expansion the Trans-Baikal territory, and the Soviet Primorye to the puppet state. As the ideologists of Pan-Asianism alleged, after this problem were to be solved, the next brewing problem would be building up the relations with the local population of the would-be occupied territories. In addition, in many parts of the foreign Far East, members of the multinational Russian emigration have settled. The leaders of the Russian and Siberian Cossacks Regionalists developed plans to establish a buffer state under the auspices of the Japanese militarists.

The defeat in the Civil War and the strengthening of the Soviet state temporarily muted the debate about the autonomy of the Siberian region within the Russian emigration. By the beginning of 1923, this topic has been further developed thanks to a group called the “Society of the Siberians” which has gathered in Prague. Their central body was *Free Siberia* magazine, published by the former chairman of the Siberian Regional Duma I.A. Yakushev. Outside Russia, the most active in the rank of a “Government in Exile” was the Council of Authorized Organizations of Autonomous Siberia (CAOAS) headed by Chairman A.V. Sazonov on the territory of Northeastern China¹¹.

Soon, following the initiative of A.V. Sazonov, the “government” was transformed into the Board of Commissioners, whose top group was called the Overseas Executive Committee. Their main objectives were promoting and implementation of the Japanese intervention in the territory of Siberia. After the death of A.V. Sazonov, disagreements regarding the construction of a new Asia under the slogan of Pan-Asianism have sparked up. Having recognized its nature, the majority of the Council of Authorized Organizations of Autonomous Siberia moved to Shanghai, led by V.I. Moravsky. The remaining Autonomists, led by M.P.

¹⁰ Kato R., *Manchu-Di-Kuo and Xié-Hé-Huì*, Harbin, p. 1.

¹¹ Kuznetsov V.S., “Sino-Tibetan Relations in the First Half of 20th Century”, *Questions of History*, no. 3, 1999, p.127.

Golovachyov, created a Council of Authorized Siberian Organizations (CASO) in Harbin.

The foreign Far East Regionalists sought out of the Japanese Command to give them the golden reserve of Russian Empire for the sake of overthrowing the Bolshevik power in Siberia. A large part of it was taken from Omsk during the Civil War to the territories of China, Mongolia, and Japan. In the fall of 1922, many emigrant Cossacks learned about the lawsuits regarding the claim pursued by Ataman G.M. Semyonov. The claim concerned the recovery of the so-called "Podtyagin's Million" in the favor of the Siberians. After three meetings held, the Japanese court did not recognize the demands of Semyonov eligible. They were classified as his private agreement with the Regionalists. Subsequently, they continued to battle over the "Petrovsky and Kalmykovsky gold values", which had been transferred to a secret society *Kokuryūkai* (*The Black Dragon*).

Activities of the Siberian Regionalists in the foreign Far East concerned the leadership of the Soviet state. Following a protest by the Consul General in the French Settlement of Shanghai in 1926, a new lawsuit process was held. It was caused by the illegal publication and sale of postage stamps with the image of the emblem of the Siberian Cossacks between the emigrants of the foreign Far East. A few copies of them were brought to the territory of Soviet Siberia. The main reason to sell the stamps was the need for a financial support of the anti-Soviet activities of the Siberian organizations abroad. These stamps had an inscription, which testified to the Siberian region's autonomy. As the defendants argued, the independent development of Siberia did not contradict to the main idea of Pan-Asianism: the creation of the East Asian Federation under the leadership of Japan.

On the eve of the Sino-Soviet conflict in 1929, *Free Siberia* magazine has begun publishing the polemics regarding the state system of Russia and a place of Siberia in it after the would-be overthrowing of the Communist government. The editors have published a draft of a federal structure for the future Russia and Siberia. It has become apparent that the Regionalists held rather different views on the questions concerning the division of powers between the federal and local authorities. Especially hot was the controversy around the prerogatives of the legislative, executive and judicial powers. I. Okulich, a prominent figure of the Yenisei Cossack Army, offered to take US Federal system as a basis for an autonomic system of Russia. According to his arguments, the legislative functions of Siberia should have belonged to the regional parliament. The executive power was to be exercised by a President elected nationwide, and accountable to the Council of Ministers. He called upon combining the best of the presidential form of government with the traditions of Russian Zemstvo system.

In contrast, the draft proposed by I. Yakushev and I. Serebrennikov was a model of a parliamentary republic headed by the Siberian Regional Council and the Cabinet of Ministers responsible for it. As they argued, Siberia should have been self-controllable and have a single representative body. At the same time, they did not deny an opportunity to create self-sustaining, self-governing federative units on the geographical or ethnic basis, situated in its territory. It was a common position for the authors of these projects, to clearly demarcate the powers of the central and local authorities. The federal center had to acquire the most important spheres of the governmental power: the country's defense, the foreign policy and the financial system. Moreover, the coordination of the relationship between the individual autonomies should be carried out by the central authorities. Within the parliamentary republic, Siberia, as an autonomous unit, would be entitled to "have a full legislative, executive and judicial power". To develop this project, the Provisions of the regional fractioning of Siberia, enacted at the Extraordinary Siberian Congress on December 6, 1917, were used. According to the document, the proposed layouts of the local governments were more like a scheme of an autonomous state body. According to I. Yakushev, the local parliament should have a whole range of issues in its competence: the budget, education, healthcare, communications, transportation and tax duties.

The editorial board of the journal insisted on giving Siberia an economic and cultural autonomy within the united Russian state on the principles of federalism. Some leaders of the Cossacks, who went abroad westwards, argued that the federation allowed for a decentralized management system. It would revive the traditional experience of the self-controlled Cossack regions of the former Russian Empire, said them. The journal's editorial board proclaimed a political credo of the Siberians and called upon considering of both general and specific questions about the future development of the Russian people within the outlook of the Regionalists. Many of the Cossacks of the Siberian Cossack Army participated in discussing this issue. I. Shendrikov, a prominent representative of the Semirechensk Cossacks, and a Chairman of the "Cossack Union in Shanghai", noted that the supporters of Regionalism wished to establish a Siberian state independent from the Soviet Union. Afterwards, their leaders justified a close relationship between the ideas of Regionalism with the geopolitical problems of Russia. As they argued, Russia's economic interests and the population flourishing focus would inevitably be moving eastwards. The natural resource wealth of the Siberian region would help to create a barrier to the economic influence of the United States, Japan, and China. In addition, the future Russia would have to solve the problem of populating Siberia and developing of its productive forces. According to the Regionalists, the management issues of the Siberian regions were to be solved "on the basis of autonomy".

In the summer of 1930 in Beijing during the Far East Meeting, the future state structure of Russia was discussed. In the course of that discussion, representatives of more than 200 Russian emigrant organizations of China and Japan have made their proposals. Among them were the delegates of the Cossack unions and associations of the foreign Far East. Many speakers suggested considering the Far East Meeting to be a Russian Regional National anti-Communist Center (RRNaCC). The majority of votes supported the idea of endowing the RRNaCC a right to express the interests of the population of Siberia and the Far East. The meeting concluded with the passing of the resolution *On the State System of Russia and its Regions*. The document contained the thesis of “the indivisibility of Russia in its revival”. In addition, it permitted the right of autonomy for the major regions of the future Russia. One such region, according to the delegates, would be the multinational Siberia¹².

In the winter of 1933, the Regionalists developed a so-called “Siberian Plan”, which provided for the temporary separation of Siberia from Russia. According to some of them, it stemmed from the need to use its territory in the anti-Soviet struggle. The newspaper *The Latest News* published the speech of M.P. Golovatchyov given at the Harbin Siberian Society. The main idea of the speaker came to the fact that “in the fight against the Bolshevism, the saving tool is the separation of Siberia from Russia”. His position on the ideology of Pan-Asianism made a powerful impression on those Cossack emigrants who attended. According to Golovatchyov, the Siberian question “was a part of the Asian problem”. Most members of the society members condemned the Council of Authorized Organizations of Autonomous Siberia for their tactics of rapprochement with the leadership of *Kokuryūkai* society¹³.

In early 1936, the Overseas Executive Committee decided to suspend the activities of both the CAOAS and the CASO organizations, on the ground they were preparing an armed uprising in Siberia. According to the leaders of Regionalism, strengthening of defense capability of the Soviet Union meant the collapse of the “Siberian Plan”, and other Regionalist projects. The appearance of the puppet state of Manchukuo testified a loss of the main base of the Siberian movement. In addition, strengthening of Pan-Asianism supporters' positions, and the lack of funds led the Councils of Authorized Organizations of Harbin and Shanghai to the political collapse. In general, as the editors of *The Free Siberia* suggested, most of the

¹² *Nash Put'*, November 19, 1934, Harbin, p.1.

¹³ “Correspondence of Russian Diplomats in Exile, 1930-1940. Compiled from the Archives of the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation”, *Modern and Contemporary History*, no. 6, 1997, p.92.

foreign Far Eastern Regionalists did not imagine the existence of Siberia, even temporarily, in the form of an independent state.

Some specific interest in the ideology of "Building a New Asia" took the supporters of the Manchurian expedition of Academician N. Roerich. The expedition was a logical continuation of Roerich's travels to Tibet, which became known as the Western Buddhist Mission to Lhasa. The main purpose of the trip was to study the cultural sites on the territory of Central Asia. It was one of the first stages in the implementation of the *Kansas* project which should have ended in coining an independent state named "The Sacred Union of the East" (SUoE) in Gobi Desert. The keynote of this plan was the idea of uniting the nations of Mongolia, China, Altai, Tuva, and Kalmykia. Roerich displayed himself as a prominent politician when conceiving a document called "Pact of Peace", for the protection of items of cultural value during armed conflicts. On April 15, 1935, the Pact was approved by the countries of the Americas. On the instructions by President Roosevelt, G.E. Wallace signed it on behalf of the United States. According to Roerich's statement, the Russian emigration faced the fact of the *Kansas* project's successful carrying out¹⁴.

During the implementation of Roerich's project, it was planned to create irrigation systems in The Gobi, and strengthen the border with China. After that, independence of Inner Mongolia and Tibet should have been proclaimed, followed by preparations to defend it from the Chinese claims by force of arms. Reaching the objectives was stumbling upon the problem of settling the territory of the would-be state. According to N.K. Roerich, no less than 10 million of agricultural workers would be required to cultivate the land and to crop grain. The national composition of the population was assumed to be shaped by the religious principle. The administrative center was to be located in the capital of Zvenigorod and conducted by a Buddhist spiritual leader. To go live, the project required funding amounting up to 2 million US dollars in the form of a five-year loan. A major financier and President of the Roerich Museum L.L. Horsch promised to provide the core capital. Roerich hoped to achieve repayment of the debt through the expansion of economic activity: mining, animal breeding, cultivation of medicinal herbs and fodder. The guarantee under the loan was supposed to be the income-making from the salt lakes and customs duties¹⁵.

By the beginning of the Manchurian expedition, some of the Russian emigrants have witnessed the political events that took place in the Central Asian region. After the founding of the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR), a process of unification of Mongolian tribes in the territory of Suiyuan province began under the

¹⁴ *Poslednie Novosti*, March 1, 1932, Paris, p.1.

¹⁵ *Poslednie Novosti*, November 18, 1933, Paris, p. 1.

leadership of Prince Teh Wang (Demchugdongrub). Following the publication of the memorandum of General Tanaka, the Japanese continued to implement the first phase of construction of the New Asia under the banner of Pan-Asianism. As some leaders of the Cossack emigration believed, the desire of the “New Order” ideologists to strengthen the Japanese influence in Suiyuan could have spurred a conflict between Japan and the Soviet Union, or between China and Mongolia. Roerich began to consider the role of Japan in the implementation of his *Kansas* project, being impressed by those events. According to the arguments of Roerich, “the ideology of construction of the Oriental Federation” called for developing a clear position on Japanese diplomacy. This provoked a strong opposition from the US Presidential administration¹⁶.

In the spring of 1934, N.K. Roerich met in Paris with a number of Russian generals during a stop on his way to the Far East. Some of them were supporters of the so-called “Establisher” movement, who called for the defense of Russian homeland by all means, even outside of Russia. Soon after receiving their invitation, Roerich attended a meeting, where he left a good impression to everyone present. There were also Ataman A.P. Bogayevsky, Generals Count Grabbe, and Akulinin, who thanked him for visiting the Cossack museum. Close contact has been established between the scientist Academician and General N.N. Golovin. This general was famous for his knowledge of strategy and tactics of warfare. For the sake of bringing him to the implementation of his *Kansas* plan (the “Sacred Union of the East”), N.K. Roerich tried to organize a series of lectures for him. On the eve of his departure from the capital of France, Roerich held a private audience with the Japanese Ambassador Suzuki. It ended in a mutual consent regarding the transfer of information about the Manchurian expedition to the board of the French department of N.K. Roerich's New York Museum.

The arrival of N.K. Roerich in Harbin was greeted positively by many Cossacks in exile. The famous compatriot was a welcome guest in all their public events. He spoke to the supporters of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), Russian students of the Faculty of Law, and of the Institute of St. Vladimir. His speech on the importance of the Cossack youth military training for the future of Russia made a particular impression on the pupils of the “Russian House” Samaritan home. Political activity of N.K. Roerich attracted the attention of the Russian Far Eastern military circles abroad. He managed to enlist the support of the head of the local branch of the Russian Military Union General G.A. Verzhbitsky. After some time, he has established communication with the board of the Eastern Cossack Union, that represented the majority of the Cossacks of the

¹⁶ *Russkoe Slovo*, November 8, 1934, Harbin, p.1.

Siberian Cossack Army. Using the help of the Eastern Cossack Union, Roerich wanted to realize the idea of the cooperative movement establishment in the foreign Far East. According to the scientist, the cooperative societies should be a base for different economical sectors in the future *Kansas* state.

Having secured the financial support of the head of the US Department of Agriculture G.E. Wallace, the senior Roerich offered to draft an organization plan of the agricultural cooperatives to his brother Vladimir Konstantinovich Roerich. With the defeat of Baron Ungern's Army, the younger Roerich got employed in the Land Department of the Chinese Eastern Railway. Through his efforts, an experimental field along the West line of the CER and a butter-cheese factory in Harbin have been founded. The main reasons for the choice of the expedition to the territory of Barga were the fertile lands of the Three Rivers, the best pastures for cattle and the mineral resources of the Greater Khingan. After receiving a permission from the local authorities, in the summer of 1934, the first expedition was organized. Most of the participants were from the Cossack villages of the CER's Adjacency Zone. After some time, the cooperatives *Alatyr*, *Belukha*, *Ur* and *The New Syndicate* have begun their business in the Three Rivers region.

In pursuit of the aim of attracting the Russian Cossacks to build the Sacred Union of the East, in the autumn of 1934, Roerich published a book titled *The Sacred Watch*. It was devoted to the role of the Siberian Cossacks in the spreading of the cooperative movement in Siberia, the history of the flag of Yermak Timofeevich, and the mountain Belukha of the Altai ridge. As the author noted, the summit was a "Snow-white Witness of the Past and the Pledger of the Future". After he funded the publishing of the anniversary collective edition *The Siberian Cossack Army*, the prestige of N.K. Roerich has increased significantly. Afterwards, the Chairman of the Siberian Army Representative office in Harbin Colonel Berezovsky expressed appreciation for his generous act in a letter to him. Not accidentally, the topic of the Cossacks has become favorite in the speeches held by the scientist in front of the Russian emigrants. According to Roerich, the Cossacks were able to preserve the best of the great Asian heritage. Such a comparative approach, according to some leaders of the Russian emigration, gave him the opportunity to gain the sympathy of the majority of the Cossacks abroad¹⁷.

Thanks to the donation that N.K. Roerich made out of his personal funds, the Russian Military Union's management has acquired the newspaper *The Russian Word*. As the leaders of the Russian emigration alleged, they purchased their own mass medium they could use to form the public opinion in the emigrant environment in Northeast China. In addition, the senior Roerich was elected an honorary member

¹⁷ *Harbinskoe Vremya*, April 14, 1935, p.1.

of the editorial office. Buying the newspaper was a major political act of the scientist. According to the leaders of the Cossack emigration, with its acquisition N.K. Roerich hoped to bring the whole Military Union under his influence. The first issue of the printed edition was published on November 8, 1934, on the Day of the Intransigence of the Russian emigration. The editorial staff noted that a general meeting of the emigrants was held the Russian Club Hall by the initiative of the Russian Military Union, the Working Peasants' Party, and the Union of Young Russians. It was attended by personalities from the various emigrant associations, such as the Military Monarchy Alliance, the Legitimists Union, the Eastern Cossack Union, the Harbin Committee for Aid to Russian Refugees, and the Union of the New Generation. The initiator of the movement for the implementation of the "Peace Pact", who believed that the act of unification was already a done deal, have been the ideology leader and the primary spokesperson at the meeting¹⁸.

Some representatives of the Russian emigration in the Far East regarded the mourning meeting as an attempt to create an anti-Fascist bloc. With the assistance of the Japanese Intelligence, the Fascist organization of K.V. Rodzaevsky has printed letters, which allegedly exposed plans to include the Siberian region into the Sacred Alliance of the East. In addition, the political activity of N.K. Roerich among the Cossack emigration caused a negative attitude of the supporters of Pan-Asianism. According to them, the promotion of the idea of the *Kansas* plan was becoming an obstacle for Japan's intentions to put the nations of East Asia under their influence¹⁹.

Under the pressure of the occupation authorities, some editors of newspapers published articles directed against the part of the Russian emigration, which welcomed and valued the importance of Roerich's cooperative movement. As some Cossack leaders assured, the experience of agricultural cooperation would ensure the economic development of foreign villages. N.K. Roerich was accused that he was a representative of the Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis fraternity (AMORC). Soon the persecution of both the supporters of the "Peace Pact" movement and the local offices of the publishing house *Alatas* began. Editors of the pro-Japanese media regularly published analytical reports on the activities of Roerich and his expedition to the North of China. On the eve of sending a new expedition to The Gobi Desert, their attacks reached a climax. An important result of it was throwing an information that the expedition was tasked with collecting some information of a military value. Many members of the Fascist party argued that the Americans could

¹⁸ *Harbinskoe Vremya*, November 19, 1934, p.1.

¹⁹ *Tchasovoy*, no.116, 1934, Paris, p.14.

have used the gathered intelligence data for the “construction of an independent state in Siberia”²⁰.

According to the assumption of K.V. Rodzaevsky, Academician Roerich could have headed the “government” of the Sacred Union of the East, having been supported by the American money. This hypothesis held a certain truthfulness, as representatives of the Cossack emigration testified. In the autumn of 1934, the Russian scientist sent to the U.S. Department of Agriculture an essay on the results of the expedition's activity in Mongolia. He openly laid out a plan to build a new Asian state for the first time. Because of this confession, the ideology-mongers of Pan-Asianism have found a ground to publish a number of articles full of criticism. The authors accused N.K. Roerich for his relationship with the Far Eastern Masons. The hostile tone of the foreign Far Eastern emigrant publications was picked up by some American newspapers. Their editorial noted the “intent” of Roerich's armed detachment to rally Semyonov's Cossacks and the Mongol tribes for the strengthening of the *Kansas* project. In the summer of 1935, the United States Department of Agriculture ordered Roerich expedition to relocate into the province of Suiyuan. The Japanese aggression in China's interior provinces has led to the curtailment of the Manchurian expedition. His project was left unfinished.

To sum it up, the value of the Pan-Asianism ideology in the political life of the Russian Cossacks in Northeast China of this period totaled to that it was a prerequisite for the crash of the theoretical doctrines for the Cossack problem solving, they had created before, and also highlighted the value of creating a civil society.

²⁰ Youzefovitch Leonid, *Autocrat of the Desert (The Phenomenon of the Fate of Baron R.F. Ungern-Sternberg)*, Ellis Lak, Moscow, 1993, p.5.