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RUSSIAN EMIGRATION TO MANCHUKUO AND ITS
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN 1932-1942

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Abstract

The article reveals the state and the development of various emigrant economic organizations in Manchukuo, explains the reasons of their establishment and the course of their action. On this basis, the research considers not only the objectives of certain economic structures, but also the ground for their initiation. The reasons why the former subjects of Russia were in Manchuria varied. However, when people were in such a difficult situation, they tried not only to survive, but also to preserve their traditions, their culture. The periods of emigration, tentatively divided into two waves, were essentially different. This dissimilarity comes from the reasons of migration processes, but both were equal in the typical of Russian migrants mutual help and unity. The work of different societies and associations obviously draw the attention of the authorities that intended to control them. And above all others, the authorities of Japan, that was responsible for the establishment of the puppet state, displayed their domination. They exercised the authority not only by means of the concealed management of economic activity, but also with the help of establishment of sports and paramilitary organizations for the youth. The impact on young people was the means of control for them, as it was easier to influence unsophisticated youth inculcating the values that were above their understanding.

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1. Introduction

At present, the research on the history of mutual relations between Russia and China have raised to a new level. Many documents previously not available to the researchers have appeared in the scientific circulation. This have resulted in a new approach to the seemingly long-studied issues which sometimes obtain quite unusual vision. This situation needs the involvement of team research, as a single historian will not be able to smooth contradictions in the evaluation of the events. Moreover, the interchange of the documents gives an opportunity to conduct the study developing a common approach to reveal not only the course of the studied events, but also to the reasons of their occurrence.

2. Problem Statement

The article gives an insight of economic problems arisen in the process of formation of Russian entrepreneurship in Manchukuo which have escaped the attention of the researchers. It considers different directions of Russian capital application and looks at the interrelation of the state and those who conducted entrepreneurial activity.

The questions of formation and legalization of economic activity of Russian emigrants are in the focus of the research.

The approach takes into account the identity of the emigrant Russian population in the territory of Manchuria, so in the study, it as an independent, original component.

3. Research Questions

The formation of the state of Manchukuo dates back to 1932. For the 10 years of its existence, by the time of its fall, it turned into an Empire of Manchukuo, celebrating the 10th anniversary in the period of the Second World War.

By 1940, the economic policy of this state led to the situation when 17,908 families (48,044 people in total) of the Japanese, who had the collective form of labour organization, were forced to move to this territory; the number of migrants having independent households comprised 3,836 families (10,193 people in total); the members of voluntary youth groups amounted to 37,205 people; the number of the members of the labour service units was 21,794 people (Great Manchu Empire, 1942). In addition to the Japanese, about 23,206 Korean families were resettled on the territory of Manchukuo, with a total population of about 96,515 people.

What success in the field of education had the state achieved by 1942 that was the time of its fall? The records are as follows: The total length of railways increased to 11,000 km, whereas in 1930 it was only 6,000 km. The number of schools increased to 24,000 with the number of students in them to reach 2,020,813, while in 1930 there were 9,000 schools in which 500,000 pupils studied, and the number of universities in 1940 was 18. They admitted 4,960 students (one of the leading universities was established in 1938 in memory of the spirit of the foundation of the state). In addition, by 1940, the population amounted to 43,202,880 people, compared to 30 million people In 1932 (Great Manchu Empire, 1942).

The administrative-territorial division of the Manchukuo by 1942 represented the following picture: province, uyezd (the analogue of a district) (in Mongolian territory – Mongolsie uyezdy (districts)) and settlements in villages and towns (Great Manchu Empire, 1942).

At the head of the provinces was the governor, who was directly subordinate to the Prime Minister. The chief of the district managed the territory by means of the special organ called District Administration monitoring all economic and administrative affairs. Settlement and Rural administrations were the primary administrative bodies (Great Manchu Empire, 1942). Among the foundations of Manchukuo, there was the principle of no distinction between the peoples living in its territory. Not only the indigenous peoples, including the Han, Manchu, Mongolian, but also the representatives of other nations had the right to reside on an equal basis with the aboriginal people (Great Manchu Empire, 1942).

The Russian community, formed in Manchuria by 1942, represented the unity of two historical strata. The fundamental part of this community was the Russians who had been in Manchuria before the Revolution of 1917.

Many of them on various (political, economic or other) grounds already could not, and, probably, did not want to return to Russia. Another part of the Russian community appeared here both during and after the end of the civil war in Russia. These, at first sight, diverse representatives of the Russian emigration, which number was rather small in relation to local native inhabitants, made a very valuable contribution, both to economic and intellectual sphere. The common characteristics of them were their knowledge and experience. Moreover they had a unifying desire not only to leave the native country, but to work for their own well-being. It should be noted here that a certain part of these people possessed the capital, which they could and wanted to invest in the economy of Manchukuo.

One of the main causes of the Russians settled habitat in Manchuria was, of course, the Chinese Eastern Railway, for the construction of which the right-of-way with a number of settlements was allocated. Of course, these settlements were built exclusively for the employees of the road and the guards. However, in addition to this contingent, at first slowly, and then increasingly began to appear various contractors, craftsmen, representatives of free professions and of course, businessmen. The work of these people resulted in the appearance of the first separate buildings, and then the streets. Some of them then turned into cities. Harbin became one of these settlements. However, any settlement did not occur only as a result of the construction of housing. It also needed an infrastructure including various medical facilities, educational institutions, and fire safety agencies.

Nevertheless, the authorities of the Manchukuo did not always meet the Russians with open arms. Sometimes they were suspicious, and the Russians often became the subject of undeserved insult. Moral suppression, hopelessness of existence, low economic situation made the members of the community think about the establishment of some centre, union or society which could protect the Russian inhabitants of Manchuria.

But there were serious difficulties in this issue. First, the newly established Soviet authorities were reluctant to somehow support their compatriots, who they considered to be the traitors. Then, the authorities of Manchukuo saw in these people a hidden threat as they had a strong spirit, good education and a strong desire to settle into their new life at a new place. They wanted not only to arrange their surroundings, but also to preserve their historical roots, and this could cause serious problems to the authorities of Manchukuo and, of course, of Japan (Slavinsky, 1988; Avarin, 1934).

To solve such issues the Russian emigration began to establish the local organizations of different orientation. Was it good and correct? Of course, it was. But together with the advantages of such work,

there were some negative outcomes. One of them was that the emigration lost its unity and began to form various groups on the grounds of economic, political, household preferences, which certainly did not lead to consolidation of forces.

The reaction of Manchukuo authorities seemed absolutely right in that situation. They began to monitor all the issues of various association. The Decree of 1934 established the organization called "The Bureau for the affairs of Russian emigrants in the Manchurian Empire". In order to maintain the complete control over the Russian organizations, the Bureau was entrusted the following duties: to strengthen the financial basis of the Russian emigrants; to interact with the authorities on all issues; to assist the authorities on the issues of emigration; to assist the authorities in all problems of emigrants. This part of the decree shows that its main purpose was the total control of all the solution and of all the issues, concerning not only the economic sphere, but all other activities as well (Great Manchu Empire, 1942; Grimm, 1927).

Here is a small part of the executive list of the local units of this Bureau: Zahinganskoe District – lieutenant-general A.P. Baksheev; Manchurian District – A.M. Zaalov; Mukden District – P.S. Kornilov, etc. (Great Manchu Empire, 1942; Karasev & Kuznetsov, 2016).

The economic bodies of the main Bureau were represented by a number of economic organizations. Among them there was the Union of the Owners of Bakeries, which was organized in late 1934. With the introduction of bread cards in 1940, the work of this Union reached its peak. The purpose of its establishment was flour and bread supplying and the charity work.

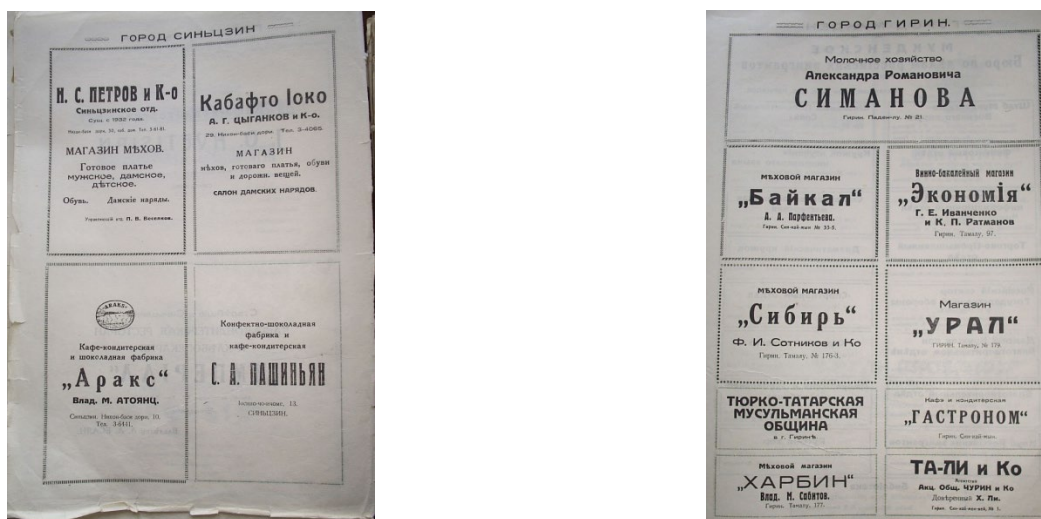


Figure 01. Some economic and other entities on the territory of Manchukuo

The Society called "Russian Transport" included about 900 people. The purpose of this society was to ensure the needs of the society members, their professional protection and interaction with the authorities.

The Union of the Owners of Wine, Gastronomic and Grocery Enterprises consisted of 64 members only in Harbin.

The other influential organizations were "The Society of Dairy Enterprises", "The Society of the Owners of Restaurant Enterprises", "The Union of Contractors and Suppliers", "The Association of the Owners of Vodka Factories", "The Union of the Military" and "The Union of Cossacks".

It is also necessary to mention another very important component of the life of Russian emigration in Manchukuo. The "Bureau" conducted a great charitable work; it founded charitable hospitals, asylums for the elderly, various groups and youth organizations. All this worked in the close connection with the flow of information that the Japanese side directed to Russian emigration, of course in Russian. Among them there were such publications as: "Collection of Laws and Regulations of ManchuKuo", "Russian-Japanese Sputnik" (Kuznetsova, 2003; Chromov, 1983).

The Russian authors also printed their works. They included the issues of the memoirs about Russia, and the books on special subjects. For example, in Dajren, from 1940 to 1943, the magazine "Eastern Review" was issued (Polanski, 2002; Vorontsov, 1967). There were the religious publications, such as "Heavenly Bread". This magazine was published in Harbin from 1927 to 1944. (Polanski, 2002; Pu, 1968).

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the article is to conduct an analysis of the formation of Russian industry in Manchuria, which gives an opportunity to consider not only the directions of economic activity, but also the opportunities of the representatives of these companies, and to examine some mutual interests of Russian, Chinese and Japanese businessmen.

5. Research Methods

The methodology applied in the study is based, of course, on the unity of humanitarian and natural approaches. It combines analysis and synthesis, comparison, statistics and historical unity of events. In this research, the historical-comparative method has been applied to define both similarity and difference in the investigated questions. It also employs historical-system method, which followed the development (genesis) of the issues investigated in the article. The historical and genetic method, as the most common, helped to reveal the causal relations of the investigated phenomena, and to consider the historic events as an image-individuality.

6. Findings

The dramatic political changes that took place in Russia after the October coup of 1917, as well as the previous events, resulted in the representation of the Russian Empire in China, had a serious influence, both on the formation of Russian emigration and its development.

The attempts to give Russian emigration in China a political image, the image of the enemy of the USSR, of course, had a certain degree of success. But its main merit was that together with people on these territories, the emigration provided the penetration of Russian talent, Russian spirituality, Russian thought, and Russian memory.

The fact that when the USSR Army entered these territories in 1945, the Manchu old-timers of the Russian nationality according to the military tradition welcomed the Soviet army wearing their Russian Empire Army uniform with royal awards shows the importance of these values. Moreover, the economic course, which was maintained by Russian emigrants, in many cases has served as the basis of development of the national economy of Manchukuo, though it was an artificially created state.

7. Conclusion

The various relations established between China and Russia, including economic activity, have their roots in the deep past. In this way there were periods of tension and apparent contradictions. This was not only due to the policies of the two states, but also because of the relationships between people.

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