

Competing Imperialisms in Northeast Asia: *New Perspectives*

Book of abstracts

DE ANGELI, Aglaia (Queen's University Belfast)

Maps of Manchuria: towards new visualisation of global, transnational, or cross-border activities.

This paper outlines the scope, methods, sources and first outcomes of the maps created for the project on “Competing Imperialisms in Northeast Asia, 1894-1953”. Focusing on Manchuria, it explains how the compilation of historical maps can help to integrate narratives on the region deriving from different methodologies and perspectives, offering unifying visual representations of intersecting research approaches to a challenging and constantly transforming area.

Addressing historical questions to the land within a geographical framework, this paper shows that technologies such as archaeological and historical Geographical Information Systems (GIS), combined with historical geography and applied to existing data and already compiled maps, cartographic or topographic resources, can provide new answers, better definitions of old problems, deeper understanding, and more thought-provoking questions than previous, more fragmented approaches have produced.

The Manchurian region, the focus of this research, will be scrutinized historically using mapping as methodology. The analysis of the treaty port system in Manchuria in conjunction with the examination of the regional topography will demonstrate that political and military choices made by the competing empires were dictated by the ecosystem, its orography, hydrography, and related waterway systems, which reverberated in the settlement of the Russian and Japanese populations in the region. Furthermore, topography in concomitance with the customs system will reveal to which extent China could claim governmentality in relation to sovereignty, territoriality, and taxation within its territory.

KHARITONOVA, Anna M. (Saint Petersburg University)

Contribution of G.A. Planson in the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire in the Far East in the Early 20th century.

At the beginning of the 20th century, many essential changes took place in the relations between Russia and China. Issues related to the demarcation of the state border in the Ili region and the implementation of trade in Western China were resolved. In the 1890s, an allied Russian-Chinese treaty was signed, which included a clause on joint opposition to the Japanese expansion in East Asia, as well as on the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway (1896). In 1897, the Russian squadron was located in Port Arthur, and a year later the Russian Empire signed a convention with the Qing government on leasing part of the Liaodong Peninsula with the ports of Port Arthur and Dalny located there. However, good neighborly relations began to deteriorate rapidly after the Russian troops took part in the suppression of the Boxer rebellion (1898-1901). At the end of hostilities in 1901, the eight powers, including Russia, signed the Final Protocol, which finally consolidated the semi-colonial status of China.

In the early years of the 20th century, the Russian Empire outlined two main approaches to building public policy towards China. One of them was promoted in separate circles in the Russian military elite

and was expressed in the implementation of armed expansion in Manchuria. Such a policy turned out to be ineffective, and resulted in the signing in March 1902 of the disadvantageous Russo-Chinese agreement providing for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Manchuria.

The other approach was advocated by the financial and economic elite led by S. Witte, who called for deepening trade and economic cooperation with China. However, this policy also did not have much success.

Such was the background on which G.A. Planson, a prominent Russian diplomat, performed his service in China. Since 1902 G.A. Planson was a diplomatic official under Admiral E.I. Alekseev, head of the Kwantung region. The main diplomatic event, which distinguished G.A. An outstanding diplomatic event, which distinguished G.A. Planson as a diplomat, was filing a note including seven conditions on the withdrawal of the Russian troops from China and delivering it to the Qing government. The relevance of this study dictates to apply to the diplomat's diary entries. Sources containing personal information can shed light on those events, since during that period the position of the Russian Empire was ambiguous in China. Thus, talk is dedicated to the contribution of G.A. Planson to the Russian foreign policy in the Far East at the beginning of the 20th century.

KOBAYASHI Akina (Tama University)

From Japanese militarism to the Soviet communism – the “change of heart” of Japanese POW through the Soviet indoctrination.

The collapse of the Great Japanese Empire had a major impact on the fate of Japanese servicemen who fought in the Soviet-Japanese war in 1945. This report focuses on the “change of heart” of Japanese prisoners of war during the detainment in USSR. After the defeat of Japanese Kwantung Army, these servicemen were given the propaganda education in the Soviet prison camps as soon as they arrived. The main purpose of the Japanese POWs' transportation to Siberia was to use them as laborers, but the second purpose was to create “soviet seeds” who sympathized with socialism and communism.

Political indoctrination in the USSR began in 1945 and lasted until 1949, by which time most of the POWs had been repatriated to Japan. The Soviet authorities hoped that through this political indoctrination, the Japanese POWs would experience a “change of heart” from the militaristic ideology they had blindly espoused, with the result that they would sympathize with the USSR's ideology when they returned to Japan, which was under US military occupation at the time.

The author provides three specific examples of prisoners who underwent their “change of heart” during the detention. One is Tadashi Itagaki, another is Masatsugu Shii, and the other is Goro Shikoku. Itagaki Tadashi whose father Itagaki Seishiro was the General and executed in 1948 had undergone a conversion from militarism to communism in USSR. Masatsugu Shii who was an intelligence staff of Kwantung Army became a soviet espionage in Siberia. Goro Shikoku (is known as anti-war artist in Hiroshima) was one of common soldiers who had military service for 10 months and held in Soviet for 3 years. In this presentation, the author would like to discuss his “changed of heart” by examining his diary brought from Siberia.

KOBAYASHI Somei (Nihon University)

Public Diplomacy of Japanese Empire and Imperial/Colonial Fraternity: The Carnegie Endowment's Tour for American Journalists to the “Orient” in 1929

Recently, the animated debate regarding Public Diplomacy has been the focus of attention among both government officials and academic scholars. Non-militaristic diplomacy has a long and ever-evolving history. In the case of Japan, it began a campaign of public diplomacy toward the United States, Europe and Asia at the end of the 19th century. In 1929, the Carnegie Endowment planned and executed a tour for American journalists to the “Orient”; Japan, Korea, Manchuria and China. The purpose of my presentation is to explore the public diplomacy of Japanese Empire *vis a vis* the tour and it aims to shed light on an aspect of imperial and colonial fraternity among the U.S.-Japan relations at least in the latter half of 1920s.

The paper clarifies that the tour was part of the public diplomacy strategy of the Japanese empire in two key ways. Firstly, the tour aimed to generate Western knowledge and positive attitude regarding the “orient.” The Japanese government intended to propagate and control its image in the eyes of the American people through the reports by the journalists in the tour. It hoped to raise American awareness of Japan within the Asian situation.

A second goal was to promote a shared sense of imperialistic recognition between Japan and the U.S. The American journalists grasped the “oriental” situation by accepting Japanese propaganda during the tour. They regarded Japan as Asia’s only westernized, civilized country. The goal was to distinguish Japanese from other Asian people by the standard of “civilized” versus “barbarian.” This cynical ploy helped to maintain discrimination among the Asian countries. It was a resource not only for Japan to maintain its imperialistic power but also for fraternal relations of U.S.-Japan by sharing the imperial and colonial gaze on “uncivilized” countries and people.

The use of Carnegie’s tour for American journalists to the “Orient” as a public diplomacy method for Japan thus played a key role in establishing the hegemony of the Japanese empire. This study identifies the imperial and colonial fraternity between U.S. and Japan, but also the structure and meaning of Japan’s public diplomacy in depth as a valuable lesson that still resonates today.

KOVRIGIN, Nikita (Saint Petersburg University)

Shaping the Chinese Community in Japan and Russia: the role of political factor

In the XIX – first half of the XX century, Chinese migrants had played a visible role in the economy and social life of many countries of the world, including Japan and Russia. On different historical stages, the role of Chinese migrants was also very important to the Japan’s and Russia’s economies. In these two nations, conventional migration factors had mostly been favorable for the inflow of Chinese migrants. The existed migration situation suggested that well-rooted and developed Chinese communities should have formed in both Japan and Russia. Moreover, in the discussed period, the process of Chinese migration to Russia and Japan, as well as the process of formation of ethnic communities there had been influenced by a similar set of factors. The nature of migration to these countries also drastically differed from that of the other parts of the world. This paper aims to demonstrate that despite favorable economic and legislative conditions, political events played the pivotal role in fate of Chinese migration to Japan and Russia. Political factors gave impetus to migration waves, and ironically, those waves were put to end by the other political events. The paper also shows how Soviet policy toward the Chinese migrants was affected by Japan’s policy in East Asia. The paper argues that the role and influence of irregular migration factors at the main historical stages had proved to be much stronger than that of conventional ones. As a result, unlike the U.S., Canada, European and Southeast Asian nations, no Chinese community existed in the USSR until 1980s. In Japan, such community was extremely small, divided, and isolated from the Mainland China.

MAYATSKI, Dmitry (Saint Petersburg University)

Virtual tour of the East Asia Library of Saint Petersburg University

MUMINOV, Sherzod (University of East Anglia)

The Myth of Soviet Superiority: Explaining Japanese Strategists’ Preoccupation with Soviet Power in East Asia in the Early 1930s.

In the early 1930s, some Japanese military strategists displayed a preoccupation with the Soviet Union that bordered on obsession. In what has been a well studied phenomenon, Japanese senior military officers in the Army Ministry and the General Staff, notably Ishiwara Kanji and his followers, viewed the Soviet Union as the most significant threat to Japan’s imperial expansion on the continent. For Ishiwara in particular, Soviet capabilities in the Far East were the chief menace to Japan’s Manchurian enterprise - the puppet-kingdom of Manchukuo he himself had helped create by masterminding the 1931 Manchurian Incident, and which he saw as a matter of Japan’s “life and death.”

While this preoccupation has been well documented in Japanese (and less well in Anglophone) historiography, the Soviet side of things is largely missing from the picture. While the USSR's domestic problems of the period (e.g. collectivization) have been researched extensively, these are rarely connected to Moscow's strategies and plans in the Far East vis-a-vis an increasingly confident Japan. On the diplomatic front, the first decade of official Soviet-Japanese relations (1925-1935) saw repeated attempts by the USSR to tie Japan to a neutrality pact, calls that were largely ignored by Tokyo. The influence of strategists who believed that such a pact would further strengthen Stalin's hand partly explains the unwillingness to sign one with the USSR.

In this paper I critically investigate the Japanese strategists' preoccupation with the USSR's influence and potential threat to Japanese interests in Manchuria and greater East Asia. While I stop short of questioning the USSR's significance as a military player in East Asia in this period, I argue that the nationalist officers in Japan's military agencies had clearly overestimated the capabilities, intentions and international standing of the Soviet Union. I will specifically focus on the thinking of Ishiwara Kanji and other officers, which I will analyze against the backdrop of Soviet official documents from the period.

O'CONNOR, Peter (Emeritus, Musashino University, Tokyo) – Keynote speech

Compradors of opinion: Influencers and adventurers on the road to systemic change in Northeast Asia

This talk is focused on the exploits of a small, hitherto uncategorised group of journalistic operators in the transnational media of Northeast Asia. Through a combination of professional flexibility and sheer good fortune, these people negotiated established networks and leveraged their access to power to their own advantage. Working the interstices of a series of overlapping imperialisms, they eventually became compradors of opinion in the long contest for the title of a just imperialism in Northeast Asia.

The aim here is to look more closely into individual histories in our historically under-explored arena and to discover and examine some hitherto unnoticed actors. By this process of exploration, we shall see how plausible but nimble opinion formers became at times opinion leaders during the protracted series of preludes to total war in Northeast Asia.

In the fog and desperation of Japanese incursions in a weakened and divided China, with the Soviet Union sometimes a daring, sometimes a retreating player, and a nervous West desperate for tips on where to place its bets, these influencers and adventurers skipped between the raindrops in the public sphere, emerging as significant drivers in the cluster of factors leading to systemic change in Northeast Asia.

Time permitting, the speaker will also explore the afterlives of our compradors in the wake of the Chinese post-war and the early Cold War in Asia.

SAMOYLOV, Nikolay (Saint Petersburg University)

Ivan Korostovetz and his role in Russian Diplomatic Activities in the Far East before and during the Xinhai Revolution.

Ivan Yakovlevich Korostovetz (1862-1933) – a famous Russian diplomat and sinologist. He was the author of a large number of books and articles on China and Russian policy in the Far East. He served in the Asian Department of the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In 1890, Korostovetz was appointed a second secretary of the Russian Diplomatic Mission in Peking.

In 1905, as a member of the Russian delegation he participated in conclusion of the Russian-Japanese Peace Treaty in Portsmouth, after which he was appointed Vice-director of the 1st Department at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

After the unexpected death of the Russian Envoy, the famous sinologist D. Pokotilov, in Peking on May 9, 1908, I. Korostovetz was appointed as the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Qing Empire (served until 1911).

Korostovetz played a decisive role in the preparation of the Qiqihar Protocol and its signing on December 7, 1911 (“the Border Treaty at Manchuria Station”, 满洲里界约- a border demarcation agreement in the region of the Argun River). It was the last of the border treaties between the Russian and the Qing Empires, signed with the Chinese imperial government after the outbreak of the Xinhai Revolution. The Qiqihar Protocol of 1911 set the last point in the long history of the border demarcation between Russia and Qing China.

In 1912, Korostovetz led the Russian diplomatic mission in Urga and on October 21 (November 3), 1912, signed the Russian-Mongolian agreement recognizing the autonomy of Outer Mongolia, and also giving a number of privileges to Russian citizens in Mongolia. This treaty, which played a decisive role in the process of the formation of Mongolian state, was one of the major diplomatic successes of imperial Russia before the World War I. The treaty and the negotiations held thereafter were of great political importance to Mongolia. This treaty not only made Mongolia officially recognized by the Russian Empire, but also gave the future legal basis for consolidating Mongolian state sovereignty.

Bogd Gegeen sent congratulations to Korostovetz after the signing of the agreement through his Minister for Foreign Affairs Handdorzhi. And on May 15, 1913, by the decree of Bogd Gegeen of Mongolia, Korostovetz was awarded the title of a Prince of the first degree and a special Order.

In August 1913, Korostovetz was dismissed from his post. This happened just after a scandal that arose as a result of the love affair of the then married Korostovetz with a young girl - a daughter of Théophile Piry (1851-1918), the Commissioner of Customs and first Postmaster General of the Imperial Postal Service in China (1911-1915). However, the scandal was resolved, and Korostovetz was allowed to continue his diplomatic career in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

After 1917, Korostovetz emigrated from Russia. He died on January 1, 1933, in Paris.

At the turn of the 20th century Korostovetz was one of the most capable diplomats in the Russian Empire and stood at the origins of an active Russian policy in Outer Mongolia. Having a deep understanding of the Russian geopolitical interests in the Far East and Central Asia, he was able to clearly formulate the main goals of Russia’s policy in this region at the time when the Xinhai revolution broke out in China.

SHULATOV, Yaroslav (Waseda University)

The Key Rivalry: Russo-Japanese Relations and International Order in Northeast Asia in 1895-1945

This paper examines the Russo-Japanese relations as the key factor, influencing dramatic changes of international order in Northeast Asia during the abovementioned period. After the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95 until the end of Soviet-Japanese war in August 1945 Russia (Russian Empire, then Soviet Union) and Japan were in the core of geopolitical competition over this region, redrawing its map and having an enormous impact on situation in China, Korean peninsula, and Mongolia. The study shows an unprecedented transfiguration of bilateral relations between the most influential geopolitical players in Northeast Asia of the first half of the twentieth century, providing a new perspective for the history of international relations in this region.

After the start of Russo-Japanese geopolitical rivalry in late nineteenth century up to 1945 the changes in bilateral relations were extremely dynamic and full of pendulum-like swings. We divide this half-a-century into several periods and examine their main features from the Japanese and Russian points of view, shedding the light upon their mutual perception in the past and nowadays.

STAROVOYTOVA, Elena (Saint Petersburg University)

The Image of China in Russian Satirical Periodicals During the Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905

Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 and the conclusion of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty radically changed the balance of power in the Far East. It caused considerable damage to the image of the Russian Empire in the international arena and had a negative impact on Sino-Russian relations. The history of these events has been covered in detail by both Russian and foreign scholars and publicists. However, a layer of sources that allow us to look at the well-known events from a different angle remained outside the attention of specialists in Sino-Russian relations. Russian satirical periodicals of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries can serve as such sources, for it was during this period that more and more information about China became available to a wide range of readers of the Russian press. Along with the growing number of references to China, authors and readers inevitably began to form a unique and often very contradictory image of the eastern neighbor. This image, on the one hand, was directly related to current events in politics and international relations, and on the other hand, could itself have a certain influence on the relations of the two empires at various levels. The Russo-Japanese War occupied a special place in the formation of Russia's image of the East, in general, and of China, in particular. References to military operations on the Far Eastern fronts are found in virtually every issue of popular Russian satirical magazines such as “Budil’nik” and “Strekoza” published at that time. Of course, Japan was portrayed more often as the main “evil” for contemporaries. However, China was not ignored either, especially since military actions partly took place on its territory. The report focuses on how China was seen by the representatives of one of the most popular journalistic genres of those years.

TITOV, Alexander (Queen’s University Belfast)

National appropriation of imperial lands in Northeast Asia.

This paper focuses on the transformation of imperial territories into national ones in Northeast Asia (NEA) in the late 19th and first half of the 20th century. What started as an area of intense imperial competition in the second half of the 19th century, by the mid 20th century was divided into national territories. Imperial borders do not always match national ones and inheriting imperial borders does not tell us about mechanisms of their inclusion into a nation's geo-body, which attaches an emotional value to a territory, making it a vital part of national identity by giving it a spatial representation.

For the three empires in NEA, making distinction between the home country and colonies was much more problematic than for classical European overseas empires. Therefore competing national imperialisms of Russia, China and Japan were able to transform themselves into competing national projects of appropriation in this period rather than face imperial collapse. These ‘nationalizing empires’ created nation-states based on empires. What united them was the existence of a core hegemonic nation extending their national claims on new territories. The paper outlines the principal mechanisms of this transformation and shows how modern geo-bodies of Russia, China and Japan were formed through the appropriation in the Russian Far East (RFE), Hokkaido, and China’s Northeast (Manchuria).

TSUCHIYA Reiko (Waseda University)

Media and imperialism in international press conferences before WWII

This paper aims to examine the connection between the media and imperialism through the organization and content of international newspaper conferences which journalists from different countries including Japan, China and Korea gathered and discussed. In particular, it will focus on the East Asia Press Conference of 1921, comparing with the Greater East Asia Press Convention of 1943, both held in Tokyo, and as its background, consider developments at the US-led World Press Congress of 1915, 1921 and 1926 to clarify their characteristics and meaning in the context of views at the time of the possibility of 'newspaper diplomacy', in parallel with 'people’s diplomacy' and 'private-sector diplomacy'.

YANCHENKO, Denis G. (Saint Petersburg University)

Nicholas II's economic policy in the Far East in the documents of the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA)

The reign of Nicholas II is a short but eventful period of Russian history. Fate-bearing decisions for the Empire were made in different spheres of public life. The wars pushed the economic development of several wide provinces of Russia [so-called “borderlands” or “outskirts”], including the Far East [In Russia, it consisted of Amur and Maritime regions, Sakhalin and Kamchatka] and adjacent territories of other countries [particularly Manchuria]. The uniqueness of the period we are studying is in a significant number of well-preserved archival documents. They describe in details government policy, political credo of top officials in the capital city and in the regions, various economic measures – railway construction, urban development and industry, resettlement from Central Russia to the Far East, colonization along Trans-Siberian Railway and Chinese Eastern Railway (CER), various difficulties and obstacles faced by authorities and settlers from the 1890s to 1917.

Most of the documents on this theme are kept in Saint-Petersburg, in Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA). Correspondence and discussions of ministers, materials of sessions of imperial State Duma and State Council (1906-1917), documents of CER Administration, activities of governmental Committee on settlement of the Far East, issues of defense and partially of foreign policy, financing of Russian colonization of “the Far East outskirts” – that is not a complete list of topics that were considered in the capital city of Russian Empire. The uniqueness of the St. Petersburg archive is in the content of its documents. For example, the materials of the only federal archive in Vladivostok – the Russian State Historical Archive of the Far East (RGIA DV) shows that in the region there remained documents about the practical implementation of the center's orders and climatic, agricultural juridical problems faced by local population in the Amur region, Kamchatka and Sakhalin. It is possible to characterize Russia's aims in the Far East at the turn of two centuries comprehensively only in comparison with Petersburg documents.