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To whom it may concern,

We attest the fact that the article written by Ms Olga Igorevna Shestak, Ms Svetlana Gennadievna Kovalenko and Ms Albina Alekseevna Vlasenko, entitled *Russian Historiography on the State Administration in the Northern Area Territories and Control over Their Development: A 300 Year Long Path*, has been accepted by our editorial board.

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# **RUSSIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY ON THE STATE ADMINISTRATION IN THE NORTHERN AREA TERRITORIES AND CONTROL OVER THEIR DEVELOPMENT: 300 YEAR LONG PATH**

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**Abstract.** The article outlines the Russian historiography of the Russian Empire, Soviet, and today's periods dealing with the issues of the state administration in the northern area territories of Russia. The survey of the Russian Empire historiography reveals that, before 1917, the issues were viewed in the context of the general political and socio-economic trends of Russian history as well as that of the geographical study of outlying lands and the Arctic seas. They discussed mainly if it were worthwhile to involve the territories of the Extreme North in the sphere of influence of the regular Russian state. Soviet historiography concentrated mainly on the socio-economic development of the territories of the Extreme North, especially in the 1930s and in the 1970-80s. However, the matter was given consideration primarily in order to ground the focal development within the framework of the development of territorial production complexes and the Northern Sea Route. The works of the current period concretely deal with the issues of the efficiency of the state control over the current socio-economic development of the Arctic area. Besides, the new methods appearing nowadays, the active use of the frontier modernization theory, and the introduction of the data of various disciplines into the study enables one to bring research works to a new level. By and large, the survey of the historiography makes it apparent that, at present, many important aspects of the control over the socio-economic development of the Russian northern area territories have been studied. However, lacking is a complex study of the systems and structures of the state administration in the northern area territories and the state control over their development at different times of Russian history.

**Keywords:** Arctic, Russian northern territories, government control, development, frontier modernization.

## **1. Introduction**

In Russian historiography, there are issues that have provoked interest in the course of its entire existence. One of them is the role of the government as a system factor determining the being of the Russian people. The wide scatter of opinions about it underlines its having been important for historians for more than three hundred years. As Russia has always been a frontier state, the issue of the effective state functioning in its boundary lands has occupied the attention of many outstanding philosophers and historians of the country. From the very beginning of the formation of the Russian state, one has been cognizant that the boundary and boundary area require a particular approach in the management strategy.

As a matter of fact, any territory within the Russian state may be termed "frontier one" at a certain stage of its formation which means a boundary between the country itself and other lands. Between 1553 and the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the territory of Russia enlarged from 2.8 to 5.4 square km. Under the Romanovs, 10 million square km were added to that. The territory and the length of the state borders continued to grow in the Soviet period of Russian history as well.

In the course of its expansion, Russia brought in its orbit the territories, where traditional administrative systems had already existed. To a certain degree, that was the case with the Far East, Siberia, and Arctic. However, those territories had virtually no population, a Russian one in particular, which made all the processes of colonization and administration peculiar ones. Besides, the extremely complicated foreign-policy situation determined Siberia and the Russian Far East as a border line between various cultures, whereas the climatic conditions determined the Extreme North and Arctic as the one between the humans and the "eternal ice". The way from the Arctic "desert tracts" through the "Russian desert tracts" to the "metropolitan lands" was more long and difficult than from other boundary areas, that is why the territories of the Extreme North and Arctic had a special position in the Russian state and received a special attention of those who studied the issues of administering the boundary territories.

## **2. Methodology**

The methodological basis of the research is the system approach providing for finding and describing maximally possible set of facts required for the solution of a certain research task, suggesting that all the events and things are causal, functionally related, vary by the level of significance, which ensures their analysis accounting for any links and interrelations with general historic changes of the studied period with a particular focus on certain historic reality.

## **3. Results**

In the 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the process of the formation of the state and the bodies of central and local

administrations took place, the principles of interrelations between the centre and the outlying territories being established, too. Beginning with the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian social thought developed various concepts and approaches when treating of the administering the Russian outlying areas. Public figures, authors, and historians, such as T. I. Pososhkov, M. M. Shcherbatov, S. E. Desnitskii, A. N. Radishchev, N. M. Karamzin, V. O. Kliuchevskii, E. N. Trubetskoi and others presented their ideals of the state and the methods to administer the territories as well as the ways to reform and improve the system. (Isaev, & Zolotukhina, 2003) Clearly the range of opinions on the efficiency of the imperial model of governing was very wide and this was conditioned by the peculiarities of the historical development of Russia.

It should be noted that, along with the general concepts of the development of the state, the latter's most prominent figures, such as the reformers V. N. Tatishchev, M. M. Speranskii, R. P. Pobedonostsev, S. A. Muromtsev, P. A. Stolypin, S. Yu. Witte, and others substantiated the concrete actions undertaken by the authorities and the existing forms of polity by the fact that Russia possessed different territories, which conditioned the necessity to expand and colonise the outlying territories. (Tomsinov, 2007)

M. V. Lomonosov was the first to substantiate the importance of the Arctic territories for the country. He made a conclusion of a possible navigation on the Northern Sea Route and presented a vast and multifaceted Arctic exploration programme. (Lomonosov, 1952; Perevalov, 1948) The Russian historiographer G. F. Miller who was the first to compile a scientific work on the history of Siberia should be mentioned as well. (Miller, 1999)

However, the issue of the presence of the Russian state in the North and that of its administering as such drew the interest of scholars much later. It was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century only that research works dealing with individual matters of colonisation and governance of the North and Arctic began to appear.

At different time, the issues of the colonization of the Arctic territories were considered by historians, ethnographers, anthropologists, archeologists, geographers, economists, etc. The works dealing with the most important Arctic expeditions and representing, along with the State policy in the North-East Asia, certain scientific results, contributed much to the Russian Empire historiography. M. M. Hedenström (1822), F. P. Wrangell (1841), A. E. Nordenskiöld (Mainov, 1880, p. 268-292) and others were the first who made an attempt to comprehend the inclusion of the northern area territories in the Russian Empire and to survey a number of issues: the mutual relations between the Russians and the aboriginals, the latter's life, the nature of the North, and new geographical discoveries. Besides, some of them contained the descriptions of the anthropological traits of the aboriginals, the peculiarities of their every-day life, and their social organization.

The establishment of the Russian Geographical Society, whose task was to "mobilize the young forces of Russia and direct them to the overall study of the native land" stimulated the interest of researches in the exploration of the North. The members of the Society carried out comprehensive scientific investigations of the territories included in the Empire and summed up the results in their works. (Pimenova, 2009)

In view of the complexity of the issues that the study of the North involved, certain aspects, such as legal ones, for a long time were not individually treated by scholars. V. V. Vagin was the first to probe into the legislative system of Siberia in his fundamental work on M. M. Speransky's activity. (Vagin, 1872) The researcher highly appreciated that state figure and particularly emphasised his role in the strengthening of Russian influence in the North-East Asia. In V. V. Vagin's opinion, M. M. Speransky's special contribution to the strengthening of the state administration in the northern area territories became the establishment of the government control system which gave the administration priority over the institutions of justice; it made it possible to solve many problems of the everyday life of the territories more efficiently. (Vagin, 1872)

The aboriginal population of Siberia received some attention, too. For the first time, a comprehensive study of the state policy toward the 'non-Russians' was carried out by N. P. Yadrintsev, an adherent of the Siberian regionalism. Judging, in general, the legislation of the period to be 'friendly' the scholar arrived at the conclusion that the problem remained unsettled, which, as a consequence, doomed the local tribes to extinction. (Yadrintsev, 1891) In his work, A. P. Shchapov treated the same matter, being the first to determine different ways of the colonization and development of Siberia and to consider the impact of the process on the local population. (Shchapov, 1906)

Despite the Russian government did not project to invest considerably into shipping on the Northern Sea Route at that time because the priority had been given to the development of rail transport, many scholars representing the historiography of the 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century turned their attention to the Northern Sea Route as an important element in the Russian state model of directing the colonization of the North. (Studitskii, 1883; Turbin, 1891; Breitfus, 1904; Vostrotin, 1906; Lesgraft, 1913) At the same time, Russian Arctic drew attention of other countries, which caused quite a justified concern in Russia. Various aspects of the functioning of that important transport artery could not fail to be reflected in the works of scholars.

While virtually none of the scholars did cast any doubt on the wisdom of new territories being included in the Russian Empire, there was no consensus on the utility of the Northern Sea Route for the regional and European trade. A. E. Goncharov considers the disagreement of opinion to be caused by a poor knowledge that the authors of scholarly research works had about the navigation conditions in the Kara Sea and that was the reason why the Northern Sea Route was not regarded as a big Arctic project. (Goncharov, 2013)

The matter of the navigation on the northern water area became vitally important for Russia after the Russian-Japanese War (1904-1905). Here, mention should be made of the works of A. A. Dunin-Gorkavich (1909) and B. A. Vilkitkii (1912), who extensively studied the difficulties and problems of the navigation on the Northern Sea Route. However, they reasonably did not deny the possibilities of its further development and exploitation.

The importance of the historiography of the Russian Empire period lies in its having amassed a considerable amount of information on various issues: the pioneering scientific studies of the North, the life of the aboriginal peoples, the natural peculiarities of the region, and the then control over the northern territories. That was time when only the first steps had been taken in the colonization of the northern area territories and the priorities of the state policy toward them had been determined. The historiography of the issues of the state administration in the northern area territories reflects, in many points, the search for an optimum relation between the central and local authorities.

From the very outset, the Soviet power began an intense activity in the North and Arctic. The Soviet government had strategic plans based on the socio-economic development of the country. It was the Northern Sea Route that received the bulk of attention because it was the shortest way from the port of Murmansk to that of Vladivostok, it ran entirely along the state borders and did not depend on the international situation (Boiakova, 2001). The Northern Sea Route was not a mere transport artery for the Soviet state. It was a structure combining administrative, economic and transport functions, which enabled the authorities a further colonization and development of the Extreme North. It was to provide a delivery of goods intended for export from the Arctic regions, to stimulate the timber industry, trapping, and exploitation of mineral resources in them as well as to organize fish canning industry and start regular shipping. As a consequence of the work of the administrative structures of the Northern Sea Route, the foundation of the Soviet economic strategy was laid which, in future, served to make the USSR a powerful Arctic state.

The Soviet model of a regular state with a rigid power vertical made it possible to accumulate resources in those sectors of the inner policy which became vital as the situation required. In the 1930s, when the active industrial development of the Soviet Polar Regions began, the scholars took a keen interest in the history of the colonization of the North.

Here, we should mention the works by V. Iu. Vize, who set up general conceptual approaches to treating the history of the development of the Arctic Regions which became predominant in Soviet historiography for a long time. (Vize, 1934, 1940) In his books, the Soviet period is represented as a chain of brilliant victories and achievements. No doubt on the efficiency of the centralised control model applied to the northern area territories was cast by the authors of the period: G. D. Krasinskii (1929), V. Itin (1933), A. I. Kosoi (1940).

At the same time, in the 1930s, the first works appeared, in which they made attempts at an impartial consideration of the initiated industrial and transport development of the Soviet polar regions from the point of view of its impact on the economic and social situation in the northern area territories. (Zinger, 1935; Kolesov, & Potapov, 1940) The Yakut economist G. G. Kolesov pointed to the development of river navigation and that of mineral deposits as well as the improved supply for the population of the northern districts of the Yakut Soviet Autonomous Republic and, as the most significant result, the Arctic route having been put into service.

In his article, P. G. Smidovich appointed as chairman of the Assistance Committee on the Peoples of the North set out in detail the principles that the Soviet state had adopted in its policy toward the native small-numbered peoples of the region. He said openly that the task of the Committee was the socialization of those peoples as complete as possible. Each of the nomad peoples was to achieve “a self-reliant existence as a self-ruling economic-political entity. The day when the socialization of the indigenous peoples of the North is completed will be the last one of the existence of the Committee”. (Smidovich, 1930, p. 14)

The 1940s – mid 1950s was the period of the erosion of interest in the matters of the North and their study. It was caused by the aggravation of the socio-political situation, which conditioned the militarization of Arctic. The strategic importance of the North Sea Route increased considerably in the course of World War II and those factors entailed the closure of basic archive funds for scholars. It was in the latter half of the 1950s that the source base enlarged as well as the research topics did. At that time, the first generalizing works on the history of discovery, colonization and development of the North Sea Route appeared. (Belov, 1959, 1963; Gakkel', et al., 1956-1969)

The 1957 government reform stimulated the scholars' interest in the matters of the state control over the northern area territories. That was conditioned by two important reforms: the switch to the principle of territorial governance and the establishment of the so-called Regional Economic Councils (*Sovnarkhoz*) in 1957 coincident with the former. Many northern regions could achieve their economic goals at that time due to the wakening of centralization. For the first time in their works, the scholars of the 1950s leveled criticism at the extremely centralized inner policy pursued by the state rather than individual shortcomings of the state control over the development of the northern area territories. (Broide, 1957; Petrov, 1958)

As a matter of fact, it was then that they accumulated experience in establishing and operating large industrial complexes. The process revealed the shortcomings of the Soviet model of rigidly centralized government system which caused considerable economic and social failures and made the system generally ineffective. (Kovalenko, 2006)

The gas deposits discovered in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug in the 1960s (the Tazovskii, Gubkinskii, Zapolarnyi, Urengoi, and other districts) outlined the boundaries of the West-Siberian oil and gas province and gave impetus to the development of the oil industry in the USSR. The functioning of the new economic structure was thoroughly examined in the works of N. F. Kolbenkov (1961), E. Iu. Lokshin (1964), V. V. Alekseiev (1987), M. M. Efimkin (1990), S. S. Bukin (1991), etc. They dealt with the issues of economy, urbanization, personnel policy, and socio-cultural changes conditioned by the establishment of the gas and oil complex.

The value of the works of the economists of the 1980s: T. S. Bud'kov (1982), A. G. Aganbegian (1984), and B. P. Orlov (1988) lies in the description of the party political control over the West-Siberian oil and gas complex, which enables one to trace the hierarchy of the adoption of decisions on various issues of the socio-economic development of the North. However, they contain no analysis of the problems that the northern economy ran into caused by the imperfections

of the Soviet economy mechanism.

The events of the mid-1980s termed *perestroika* (reconstruction) and *uskoreniie* (acceleration) marked a new stage in Russian historiography. Although there had already been certain prerequisites for new approaches to the issues of the colonisation of the northern territories and the state control, yet they could be realized only after the entire paradigm of the state development underwent a cardinal change.

In the post-Soviet period, a gradual deviation from the Soviet methodology of source studies took place. Considering the state control over the northern area territories it is necessary to determine the theoretical and methodological trends that had the greatest effect on the historiography of the issue. The works of Iu. S. Andreev (1989, p. 550-562), A. S. Akhizer (1997), V. A. Krasilshchikov (1998), Iu. V. Aksiutin (1999), and others treat the historical experience of Russia in the context of the modernization paradigm. The majority of scholars view the modernization as a transition from a traditional society, which is an agrarian one, to an industrial one. As this takes place, all the aspects of the life of the society undergo changes.

In the mid-1990s, the Institute of History and Archaeology, Ural Department, Russian Academy of Sciences, was one of the first among scholarly societies to work out the modernization theme. It resulted in the appearance of a research school which, in the course of a RF President grant competition, got the status of the leading research school of Russia. Being leader of this research area, V. V. Alrskveev correctly said that “the strategy of scholarly research is focused on revealing regularities in the Russian historical process basing on the long-term modernization theory.”

This research school has worked out a concept of the frontier modernization in the context of Russian civilization which has its particular features:

- the logics of the frontier dynamics: after the incorporation of new territories into Russia, the “fraternization” took place, that is the formation of frontier zones which gradually integrated into the national space;
- the colonization syndrome: it means the lengthiness of the colonization processes and that of the population movement;
- the division of the country’s space into the centre (the nucleus) and the periphery differing from one another socially, economically and culturally. However, the division line between the centre and the periphery was always mobile and, in due course, the periphery regions ceased to be such ones;
- the availability of accessible frontier areas abounding in resources which served like a valve for the regions with more dense population;
- the possibility to move to unpopulated territories for those who desired that;
- the demand for additional manpower necessary to exploit abundant resources of the frontier zones, the migration activity, and the adaptation of migrants in the peripheral territories;
- the increased role of the transport infrastructure under conditions when the integration of regions into the country’s space is not complete;
- the creation of conditions for a stable development when there are vast border regions and a hostile neighborhood which cause the militarization of the regions and the establishment of special militarized forms of administration;
- the differently directed diffusion of the traditional and modern types, which is natural under the conditions of colonization, those of the influx of migrants, and interethnic contacts;
- the conglomerateness, fragmentation of the society and landscape and, as a result, the prolonged colonization processes.

In the opinion of the scholars belonging to the modernization school, Russia’s is a frontier modernization, whose special feature is that the process of bringing new lands in the orbit of the regular state has never been easy and momentary and it has had its own distinctive features in each region. However, the peculiarity of Russia conditioned special features of modernization changes in the northern area territories, where the monopoly of the state was one of the most important distinguishing features of the different waves of Russian modernizations in the North. In this context, the state control over the incorporated territories was of key importance, as the modernization impetus was given on the top by the ruling elite rather than by civil initiative like in the European countries or the USA. The extreme conditions of the considered territories and the constant struggle of a number of countries for that sphere of influence which intensified at different times made the role of the state government bodies yet more significant.

The works of A. V. Remnev (1997; 2010), N. I. Krasniakov (2004; 2010; 2011), M. V. Shilovsky (2009), and A. V. Varlamov (2014) contain a detailed retrospective study of the state government in the boundary territories of the Russian Empire period with all peculiarities and variations in the control models at critical points of history.

Today’s scholars studying the issues of the colonization and administration of the northern area territories, such as A. V. Lamin (2012), A. I. Timopshenko (2012, p. 4-36; 2013; 2014), V. I. Smorchkova (2010), A. V. Istomin (2009) and others, also held to the idea that that the focused state policy was necessary in the North. This view is quite justified as the experience of the 1990s clearly demonstrated that the development in the extreme conditions of the North was possible only under the patronage of the state.

In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the international competition for natural resources and ways of communication intensified in Arctic. It was stated by President of Russia Vladimir Putin at the meeting of the Security Council of Russia in 2014. Among other things, he said: “We should also bear in mind the dynamic and ever-changing political and socioeconomic situation in the world, which is fraught with new risks and challenges to Russia’s national interests, including those in the Arctic. [...] given the circumstances, we need to take additional measures so as not to fall behind our partners, to maintain Russia’s influence in the region and maybe, in some areas, to be ahead of our partners. These are

our priority tasks.”(note 1)

The political interest entailed a revival of the scholarly research one. The historical reconsideration of the presence of Russia in the Extreme North based on modern methodological approaches is present in the works of V. S. Selin (2013) and M. V. Shilovskii (2014). The survey of foreign historiography on the Russian colonisation of Arctic was carried out by D. A. Ananiev (2012, p. 36-49).

The works on a number of scholars: A. G. Sintsov (2004), V. S. Selin (2008, 2010, 2011, 2012), A. I. Vizhina & V. I. Goldin (2011), O. B. Aleksandrov (2012), A. N. Piliarov (2011, 2014), and others contain a study of complex issues of the modernization of the northern area territories at the present stage of their development, a consideration of geo-political and economic processes in Arctic, and an attempt to determine the promising trends of the development of the Russian Federation Arctic area and that of the Arctic policy in general.

#### 4. Discussion

As may be seen from the survey of the publications, characteristic of the post-Soviet historiography is a search for new approaches to the traditional issues of the colonization and state governance of the north area territories. Under the world crisis conditions, the state turned to Arctic as a strategic resource for development, which stimulates the scholars' interest in the issues of the North. Foreign scientists are approaching the Arctic development issues from the same positions but stressing attention on their countries and their strategies of Arctic policies (James, & James, 2014; Baker, & Mooney, 2013; Riddell-Dixon, 2008; Koivurova, et al., 2012; Manicom, 2014). Foreign authors are also actively covering the issues of international policy in Arctic, security issues, international projects realized (Arbo, et al., 2013; Rintoul, 2008; Lukovich, et al., 2011; Vasudevan, et al., 2009; Doel, et al., 2014). Of high interest for foreign researchers is the Russian Arctic policy and its impact on the system of international relations (Wilson Rowe, & Blakkisrud, 2014; Immonen, et al., 2008).

#### 5. Conclusion.

By and large, the historiography of the colonization and governance of the north area territories is very complex and multifarious. Many issues have already been studied, whereas some others remain to be comprehensively considered. In many respects, this may be attributed to the fact that both in the Empire Russian historiography and the Soviet one the issues important at a certain period were, by virtue of that or other political or economic circumstances, of no interest at another. Unlike other issues of the colonization, the models and mechanisms of the state control in the northern area territories received less attention from the scholars who considered them in the light of the current state policy.

Today, the situation has changed. To compete successfully with the western powers in the Russian Arctic and Pacific areas, a model for governing the frontier territories is wanted, the one that would enable Russia to respond to all the emerging challenges, both socio-economic and geopolitical ones, promptly and to good advantage. This brings the relevance of studying the issues of state control over the northern area territories to a new level.

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**Notes:**

Note 1. Meeting of the Security Council on state policy in the Arctic. April 22, 2014. Access mode: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20845>