

# History of the Russian Far East: A Local and Historical Process (Period of “Stagnation”)

Nataliya Abramova\*, Kseniya Sanina and Ekaterina Bakhtina

Far Eastern Federal University, Oriental Institute- School of Regional and International Studies, Vladivostok, Russia;  
abramova.nv@dvvfu.ru, sanina.kg@dvvfu.ru, bakhtina.ev@dvvfu.ru

## Abstract

**Objective:** The history of Russian Far East was a subject of interest for many foreign researchers. Hence the goal was to analyze the way they regarded the development of this region. **Methods:** The method of systematical analysis helped to analyze the history of the Russian Far East described in the publications of the foreign authors as the history of a complex dialectical interdependence of socio-economic, military-strategic and foreign relations. The method of statistical analysis was used to systematize data and to understand the increase/decrease dynamics of the number of publications dedicated to the development of this region. **Findings:** Foreign authors believe that exploration of the Far Eastern natural resources and augmenting the regional economic potential were of significant importance and necessity for the further growth of the country's productive forces. Rapid development of the economy of the Soviet Far East was considered to be an integral part of the economic strategy of the government, implemented through five-year plans and resolutions on the socio-economic development of the Soviet Far East, but the rapid development did not happen. The program of 1965-1985 had not been implemented. Among the authors contributing to the journals under study there are unbiased scholars and their works are of great interest. Their articles are characterized by relevant and verified sources, a wide range of new materials on the history of Russian Far East. However, the interpretation of a number of issues of Russian history is objectionable, for example, accusations of the USSR of “the military expansion” in the Asia-Pacific region and the ambition for “the world dominance”. **Applications:** The results of the research helps to understand the way publications about history of the given region influence both the official position and the public opinion in the foreign countries.

**Keywords:** History, Russian Far East, Stagnation

## 1. Introduction

The Russian Far East is a special region in terms of supplying the country with some types of raw materials and their derivatives. The region occupies an important strategic position and plays a significant role in Russia's regional foreign policy. In general there were three problems to be solved in the Far East in the period analyzed in the article (1965-1985). First, a further increase of natural resource extraction and processing in the Far East of Russia was an important condition for the development of productive forces, especially with regard to the types unique and effective for the large scale development. At the same time natural resources of the Far East were supposed to be used

both directly and indirectly in the national economy: Partial product supply for export with the reverse supply of the imported machinery and technologies into the country. Second, there was a difficult international situation in the Pacific region at that time. The policy of Japan, the USA and a number of countries posed a continuous threat to the Far Eastern borders of the country and to the whole world. A large length of the Far Eastern land and sea borders and developing the commonwealth of the socialist countries in this part of Asia brought forward the border security of Russia and the security of the socialist countries of the Asian region. Third, there was a problem of Russia's political influence on the countries of different social systems. The prevalence of a socio-political lifestyle

\*Author for correspondence

in a number of countries of the Asia-Pacific region pre-determined Russia's active foreign policy in that region of the world. An increase of the economic potential of the Russian Far East was a prerequisite for strengthening the economic and political influence of Russia. In accordance with these three problems, the history of the Russian Far East could be structurally considered as the history of a complex dialectical interdependence of socio-economic, military strategic and foreign relations.

## 2. System Analysis of Foreign Periodicals

Social and economic development of the Russian Far East was supposed to include:

- Aspects of natural resource economy, that is availability, exploration and exploitation of natural resources, population and workforce of the region, development of the social infrastructure.
- Sectoral and cross-sectoral systems of the national economy, with the sectors providing regional specialization in the economy of the country and making up 12% of the total annual volume of industrial production.
- Major cross-sectoral and regional problems, including construction of the Baikal-Amur Mainline, development of foreign economic relations with the countries of a different social structure, with Japan being a leader among eight countries, maintaining regular trade and economic relationships with the Far Eastern region.

Military strategic relationships in the region were formed under the influence of the processes of the military forces buildup, military activities, creation of life-support bases of the air, naval and land forces of the country. In this respect the role of the Navy Pacific Fleet and the armed forces deployed in the Russian Far East was increasing. Taking into account the geographical isolation of the Far East of the country's major economic bases and the significant economic capacity of the modern armed forces, it was necessary to ensure the establishment of the economic base of the army and navy capable of operating in both normal and emergency circumstances.

The base had to be autonomous to provide the minimum needs of both the armed forces and the population and industry in a special period. As a result, the need to address the issues of the regional settlement, the reclaim

of the border areas and the development of the transport system arose.

Foreign policy relations in the Far East of Russia developed in the following areas: enhancing security and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region by improving bilateral relations with the neighboring countries – the USA, Japan, DPRK, PRC and others; supporting current conflict resolution in the region; expanding foreign relations; reducing military confrontation in the Pacific Rim region.

Each of the 153 studied articles focuses on one or more above mentioned aspects. The articles present the materials on socio-economic, military strategic and foreign policy relations in the Far East of Russia, with a number of articles highlighting the issues concerning fishing industry, "Soviet military threat" myth, "territorial problems". A quantitative analysis will be done (Table 1).

The dynamic pattern of the studied journal articles show general decline of interest to the history of the development of the Russian Far East from 1965 to 1975 (59 articles) and the growth of interest to this topic area in 1976-1985 (94 articles). A number of studies focusing on different issues of the history of the development of the Far East of Russia are distributed unevenly. Thus, socio-economic topic area is represented by gradually decreasing number of articles during the period. Foreign policy aspects of the history of the Far East in the first and the second five-year periods are represented by 14 and 13 articles, respectively, but in the third and the fourth five-year periods, on the contrary, they are represented by increasing number of articles (28(22) and 40(27), respectively). This statistics shows that dynamics of the total number of articles was determined by the change of the topic area, covering foreign policy aspects of the history of the Far East of Russia and including, first of all, the Soviet-Japanese political relations, a "Soviet military threat" myth and the so-called "territorial problem".

The number of articles on the topic "political relations in the Far East" in each five-year period was increasing: 7, 10, 13 and 14, respectively. In the first decade (1966-1975) the number of works on the topics "Soviet military threat" and "territorial problems" was falling down, in the second decade (1976-1985) they were increasing, therefore, a total number of articles is determined by these two topics on the Russian Far East imposed by the foreign authors. Similar trends take place in each of the studied sources. They are supposed to be considered in terms of their quantitative characteristics.

**Table 1.** Quantitative characteristics of the topic areas in the studied journal articles

Journals		Periods (years)				For the entire period
		1965-1970	1971-1975	1976-1980	1981-1985	
<b>Summarized data</b>	Total number of articles	32	27	42(36)	52(39)	153(134)*
	Socio-economic and foreign trade relations	18	14	14	12	58
	Foreign and military strategic relations	14	13	28(22)	40(27)	95(76)
	Including:					
	politics and fishing industry	7	10	13(11)	14(12)	44(40)
	“Soviet military threat” myth	2		7(6)	19(11)	28(19)
	“territorial problem”	9	3	8(5)	7(4)	23(17)
<b>Far Eastern Economic Review</b>	Total number of journal articles	24	18	23	23	28
	Socio-economic and foreign trade relations	12	11	8	6	37
	Foreign and military strategic relations	12	7	15	17	51
	Including:					
	politics and fishing industry	6	4	6	5	21
	“Soviet military threat” myth	2	-	5	9	16
	“territorial problem”	4	3	4	3	14
<b>Asian Survey</b>	Total number of journal articles	3	3	6	10	22
	Socio-economic and foreign trade relations	2	-	2	2	6
	Foreign and military strategic relations	1	3	4	8	16
	Including:					
	politics and fishing industry	1	3	2	6	12
	“Soviet military threat” myth	-	-	1	1	2
	“territorial problem”	-	-	1	1	2
<b>Pacific Affairs</b>	Total number of journal articles	5	6	7	6	24
	Socio-economic and foreign trade relations	45	3	4	4	15
	Foreign and military strategic relations	1	3	3	2	9
	Including:					
	politics and fishing industry	-	3	3	1	7
	“Soviet military threat” myth	-	-	-	1	1
	“territorial problem”	1	-	-	-	1
<b>Japan Echo</b>	Total number of journal articles	-	-	6	13	19
	Socio-economic and foreign trade relations	-	-	-	-	-
	Foreign and military strategic relations	-	-	6	13	19
	Including:					
	politics and fishing industry	-	-	2	2	4
	“Soviet military threat” myth	-	-	1	8	9
	“territorial problem”	-	-	3	3	6

\*The data in parenthesis are given without including the articles of the “Japan Echo” journal.

Note. The table is created by the author based on the analysis of the studied articles.

The number of articles in "The Far Eastern Economic Review", in a varying degree devoted to the history of The Russian Far East from 1965 to 1985, totals to 88. Dynamics of the overall number of articles in the first five-year period (24), in the second (18) and in the third period (23) coincides with the general trend: First, it is decreasing and only in the period from 1980 to 1985 remains at the level of the previous five years, thus violating the general trend. This violation is explained by a decreased number of articles on economics and in comparison with other journals by an increased number of articles on foreign policy aspects of the history of the Far East in the fourth five-year period (17 compared to 15 in 1975-1979).

A change in the number of articles in "The Asian Survey" equals the total number of the articles in all journals. The feature of the journal is that ignoring special problems of the history of the Russian Far East in 1965-1975, from 1976 it began publishing articles on the so-called "territorial problem" and from the 1980s – on the myth of the "Soviet military threat" to Japan.

The total number of articles in "The Pacific Affairs" about the Russian Far East was increasing during the entire period under study. The specific character of the journal is that it pays more attention to the trade and economic relations between the USSR and Japan than to the political aspects. The journal hardly mentions the "territorial problem", but the "Soviet military threat" myth appears on its pages only in 1980-1985.

"The Japan Echo" differs significantly from other journals regarding the lack of the articles on the history of the socio-economic development of the Russian Far East. Only foreign affairs aspects were covered in the journal, with the issues of the Soviet-Japanese political relations being regularly discussed there: two articles were published in 1975-1979 and another two articles – in 1980-1985. The topic on the "territorial claims" of Japan was covered in three articles in the third five-year period and three articles in the fourth one. A number of articles on the "Soviet military threat" rose sharply from one article in 1975-1979 to eight articles in 1980-1985.

Studying the distribution of the journal articles on the topic areas and time periods, we can formulate several hypotheses, explaining the trends in covering the history of the development of the Soviet Far East by the foreign authors. First, an interest of the foreign press to the history of the Far East of Russia covered in the studied journals was gradually rising. The period from 1971-1975 was an

exception. The growth of interest to the history of the Russian Far East in the studied period is explained, particularly, by the Soviet-Japanese political relations. What is more, the interest is caused by specific problems of the history of the Far East, such as: The "territorial problem", the fisheries issues and the "Soviet military threat" myth. Second, the tendency of the foreign authors to ignore the trade and economic issues indicates the existence of long-term trends in this area.

The history of the Russian Far East in 1965-1985 in "The Far Eastern Economic Review" was covered by 44 authors, with 60% of the total number of the articles written by 12 authors<sup>1-12</sup>. If "The Far Eastern Economic Review" is designed to be accessible to a wide range of readers, the journals such as "The Asian Survey", "The Pacific Affairs" and "The Japan Echo" have smaller circulations and attract a narrow circle of readers. The articles published in these journals are of analytical and prognosticative character and often express the viewpoint of Sovietologists from different countries on the history of the Russian Far East. "The Far Eastern Economic Review" just publishes the adapted conceptions of the development of the Soviet Far East, developed in the centers for Soviet studies and distributed through different sources. Not only were the "readymade" conceptions published in the journals, but there was an exchange of ideas and researchers. It is referred to such the well-known foreign researchers as<sup>17-33</sup>.

The foreign authors have similar viewpoints on the issues of the socio-economic development of the Russian Far East. This unity is due to the common interest of ruling and business circles of different countries, a corporation of research institutions and an exchange of materials. Moreover, it must be emphasized that a group of Japanese, Canadian, the US and Hong Kong journals under study publish articles of both local authors and researchers from Great Britain, Australia and other countries.

The internal unity of views on a number of issues is enhanced by a similar effect of several economic and political factors on these countries. The factors are supposed to be an external environment for interest shaping to the Far East of Russia. Among those factors, first of all, there are problems of development of the peripheral territories rich in natural resources and regional disparities. In particular, Japan has faced similar problems: 75% of its economic potential is accumulated in the zone of the Pacific coast, which turned into the zone of industrial and demographic super concentration. It resulted in the

structural crisis of the Japanese economy at the beginning of the 1970s. As a result the territorial spatial arrangement no longer met the goals of the general economic development and the objectives for profit maximization of the country's largest monopolies. Second, it is an interest of the Pacific Rim countries to trade and economic cooperation and joint development of the Russian Far East and its shelf zone. For example, in the 1970s Japan faced a problem of changing its role in the international division of labor. Processing, material- and energy-intensive industries had to be replaced by knowledge-intensive ones. In this respect, for Japan the question about broad international industrial cooperation resulted in elimination of some material-intensive industries and compensation of their product needs by import. Consequently, the Far Eastern areas developing material-, energy- and labor-intensive industries were of a major interest for Japan regarding its engagement in their development<sup>34</sup>. Third, the study of the Russian Far East and coverage of its history in the foreign press were facilitated by the attempts to create military and strategic Eastern flank of the USSR "deterrence". It was manifested in the deployment of the US military bases around the Russian Far East, militarization and "NATOization" of Japan, in the American plans to establish the so-called "Pacific Community" and reinforce psychological wars in the region.

### 3. Resource Potential for the Goal of the Economic Development of the Region in the Coverage of the English Language Press

In the period of 1965-1985 the English language press scrutinized the history of socio-economic development of the Russian Far East. Evaluation of the process of this development and the natural resources as a basis of the development was published in a number of articles and reviews and was of inconsistent and ambivalent character. Evaluation of the raw capacity of the Far East had long been subject to fluctuations in the foreign press from significant underestimation in the past due to the lack of official information<sup>35,36</sup> and the weak geological exploration of the area<sup>37</sup> up to certain overestimation.

Assessing the current state of the resource potential foreign authors<sup>15,16,19,20,25,35,38,39</sup> unanimously recognize the Russian Far East to have the status of "the propertied"

regarding the raw capacity of the region. Moreover, this positive inference is made in regard to the overall representation of certain types of raw materials in the Far East, their quantity and quality as well as (though to a lesser extent) the convenience of the deposits location and resources extraction. The Far East as stated in the articles is provided with the majority of mineral resources and has their huge excesses.

Reserves of the major types of resources of the Russian Far East are estimated as "large", "significant" and "huge"<sup>11,12,16,25,36,40</sup>. This factor of the regional development provides concentration of forces and means in the most efficient directions of the production activities. Accuracy of the estimates of the Far Eastern resources is also proved by Russian researchers. According to the member of the Academy of Science of the USSR<sup>41</sup> almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all mineral and energy resources, about a half of the reserves of industrial wood, one fifth of the land reserves suitable for agriculture, more than a half of the freshwater reserves are accumulated in the eastern regions.

However, at the beginning of the 1960s an American researcher<sup>42</sup> characterized the Far East of the USSR as a region with a problematic development due to the remote location of the major economic bases of the country and the extreme conditions for resource extraction, working and living of the population. The harsh conditions severely restricted a range of the resources that would have been worth to be extracted for the domestic market. Indeed, only those mineral resources which were impossible to be extracted from other sources were extracted and sent to the western regions. It was referred to the rare minerals (gold, tin, tungsten, mercury, diamonds, etc.) and valuable timber, moreover, 1/3 of national harvesting of fish was exported. Thus, the sectors of the Russian Far Eastern industry specialization were expanding. But a lack of attention to providing industries retained the region's dependence on agricultural produce and manufactured goods delivered at high prices from the Eastern Siberia and from the central parts of the country.

In<sup>42</sup> believed that the most effective way to boost growth of the Far Eastern economy was to export the natural resources to the neighboring countries of the Pacific Rim region and not to supply the domestic market. However, two of the most promising in this regard countries – Japan and China – turned out to be the worst trade partners for political reasons. A Canadian researcher<sup>23</sup> shared the viewpoint of Z. Mieczkowski who noted that since 1968 the Soviet government, despite the difficult political rela-

tions with Japan, its potentially major trade partner, took a number of measures to boost the economy of the Far East of Russia, in general, and its foreign trade, in particular. As a whole, the state and development of natural resources of the Far East as well as building its economic potential are of particular importance and necessary for the further growth of the country's productive forces<sup>43,44</sup>.

Foreign authors analyzed the reasons of the Soviet government to boost predominately export-oriented development of the Far East subject to the existence of a great number of constraining factors. It was required, according to<sup>23</sup> by the state of the Soviet economy. He noted that, first, over the last years, Western machinery and technologies had been imported. The payment was effected by the export of the Soviet industrial products and natural resources such as oil, gas, coal, timber and ore. Similar payments for the import of a significant amount of wheat were made. Second, there was a demand for the resources in the European part of the USSR and by the CMEA partners. Thus, the Soviet government experienced difficulties in maintaining a balance between meeting the domestic needs and Western-European demand as well as the need to export resources of the same type to earn currency<sup>17,18</sup>.

Initially, this problem was solved by constructing pipelines, transporting oil and gas from Siberia to the European part of Russia, the CMEA countries and Western Europe, but due to huge distances cost effective limit of transporting large loads to the Western regions was the longitude of the Lake Baikal. Moreover, significant investments were required to construct pipelines, but the Soviet Union due to long-term compensation transactions owed great debts to the countries of Western Europe, so it was problematic to further obtain credits.

In regard to this, according to a well-known Japanese Sovietologist professor H. Kimura<sup>19</sup> and a number of foreign reporters<sup>2</sup>, the development of the Russian Far East was aimed at increasing export opportunities from the Far Eastern region to the Pacific Rim countries, particularly to Japan, which was in need of raw materials available in abundance at the Russian Far East. Japan, in its turn, could provide the region with its funds and machinery. This export policy could have reduced the supply of raw materials to Western Europe, thus, increasing the supply both to the domestic market and to the CMEA countries. In case of Japan's sudden relinquishing of its share in the extraction of natural resources, they would have been utilized in the Far East or sent to the European part of the country<sup>19,28,29</sup>.

The foreign authors argued that a number of large-scale projects implemented in the Far Eastern economic region were supposed to be an evidence of the foreign economic orientation in the industrial development in the Far East between 1965-1985. As the reporters<sup>45</sup> and J. Lauriat<sup>3</sup> wrote, among the projects there was one called "Far East Land Bridge" which was started in 1972 and was aimed at transporting containers between the countries of the Far East and Europe via Trans-Siberian railway. "The Far East Land Bridge" entered into rivalry with international shipping companies. For a number of years almost all goods shipped between the two far apart regions were transported by sea. But with the commissioning of the Trans-Siberian railway, 20% out of 500 thousand containers filled with a variety of goods went by land. A growing success of the shipping method reflected, to a large extent, the government's efforts to increase the railway operations. The trend began emerging in 1972, when the USSR, with freight rates 25% lower than the rates of the sea routes, offered container shipping by land from the Pacific Ocean to the Baltic Sea. The container handling equipment was deficient, with the railway maintenance being rather messy and shipping delays being annoying. However, over the last four years the container handling equipment had been built in Nakhodka. The success of the Soviet government caused deep concern among the members of the Euro-Far Eastern Conference – the Union of the shipping companies that set the rates and determined the proportion of the cargo carried via the sea routes between Europe and Asia. One of the top-managers of the European merchant fleet once said that there were no signs of panic, but they did not like the trend anyway<sup>45</sup>. Many shipping companies became difficult to hold customers. Some even threatened to take coercive measures to those, who occasionally resorted to the services of the Soviet railroad. One of the measures was to remove a number of discounts guaranteed to the goods shipped by sea. As<sup>45</sup> wrote, the shipping companies of the TRIO group – the consortium of five lines of Great Britain, Japan, Western German and Scan Dutch group – were affected most of all. According to<sup>3</sup> competition with the Trans-Siberian route might have been reinforced if container handling had been further expanded as it was planned for the next few years. The USSR was competing successfully on the price front. It made a proposal to refund half of the shipping expenses in case of the terms default – from 3 to 45 days depending on the covered distance. Since the Suez Canal was reopened, the time

of shipping goods by railway was similar to the shipping time by sea, though transportation by rail had been much faster.

As<sup>23</sup> noted, the USSR foreign economic policy for the Far East development was proved by the desire to expand economic relations with other countries, particularly with Japan. The Trans-Siberian container line operated by the joint Soviet-Japanese company was an example of such expansion. Moreover, the containers and the equipment for their handling were of Japanese production. The observers<sup>8,13,15,16,46</sup> wrote that the proposals of the Soviet Union on the development of the Far East always exceeded the partners' demands, so a few proposals were accepted. The Soviet government wanted Japan to participate in two large projects in the Far East, negotiations on their implementation were held from the mid 1960s to the end of 1970s.

In<sup>8</sup> mentioned two projects in his article: relating to the development of the Tyumen oil field and natural gas reserves in Yakutia. The first was aimed at annual supplying of Japan with 25 million tons of crude oil, while under the terms of the Yakutsk project Japan and the USA were to receive 10,000 million cubic meters of natural gas annually over 20 years. The general obligation concerning Japanese investment in these projects may have been USD 5,000 million. China opposed the project on the grounds that the pipeline of 4,000 km which was supposed to be laid between Irkutsk and the port of Nakhodka might be a threat to China's national security. Beijing argued that the pipeline being close to the Russian-Chinese border and constructed under the asphalt highway may have contributed to solving problems with fuel of Russian naval forces based in Vladivostok and with maneuver capability of the Russian military complex in the Far East. China's fears may have been justified, because the pipeline was believed to pass more than 40 million tons of crude oil per year. Initially, Japan planned to receive that volume of oil from Tyumen. However, Moscow announced later that 25 million tons was the maximum amount for Japan. The Soviet Union did not intend to reduce the amount of oil supply, leaving oil surplus for its own use.

Turning to the second of the rejected projects<sup>37</sup> noted that the project involved the exploration of natural gas in Yakutia, its production and transportation by pipeline to Nakhodka where the gas was supposed to be liquefied and shipped to Japan and the USA by sea. The project raised fewer objections than the plans to supply the Pacific coast of the Far East from China but it was

blocked by the US and Japanese banks due to the controversy of the USSR and the USA on human rights in the Soviet Union.

According to<sup>21</sup> among all the measures taken for the development of the Far East, the Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM) was the most ambitious in terms of the costs. Its construction began in 1974 and was completed in 1983. The BAM can be compared with the Ural-Kuznetsk combine of the 1930s, the plan of virgin and fallow lands exploration of the 50s, the plan of gas and oil development in Western Siberia of the 60s in terms of the investments in mining, forestry and port's facilities construction. According to the calculations by<sup>21</sup>, the cost of the railway was 3 times higher than the cost of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline<sup>32</sup>. As<sup>11,12</sup> wrote, the construction of the BAM project was closely related to the construction of Tynda-the BAM-Berkakit railway. The stretch of the railway was called "the Small BAM". It was stretched to the South-Yakutia coal deposit and made it possible to supply coking coal to Japan. Along with "the Small BAM" did the construction of the BAM industries begin in the town of Shimanovsk. In general, the BAM would shorten the route to the Pacific Ocean by 1,000 km compared to the Trans-Siberian railway and provide access to apatite, drill wood, copper, mica, molybdenum and asbestos. The BAM initial capacity was supposed to be 35 million tons per year, including 25 million tons of oil from Western Siberia, mainly for export, i.e., the BAM was aimed at exporting oil. According to overseas scholars<sup>26,27,30</sup> seeking the military-strategic and foreign policy goal contributed to the rapid development of the Far East in the period from 1965 to 1985. Thus, the director of the Institute of East Asian Studies, the University of California<sup>47</sup> wrote that the Soviet government had the intentions to transform Siberia and the Far East into a source of economic and military power. A professor of the University of Huston<sup>21</sup> believed that the development of the regional economy of the Far East strengthened the base of the Soviet Navy and was part of the military-economic plan aimed at achieving the hegemony of the Soviet Union in the Pacific over the next 25 years. Moreover, many overseas scholars noted that the country crossed by the BAM would become so strong that the construction of the railway only for the mining sector sake was not justified as the construction of the branches of the Trans-Siberian Railway was enough<sup>7,42,48</sup>. The accelerated development of the region could have been explained by strategic reasons as well as the population of the regions that were under a threat of invasion

had always been a traditional countermeasure of Russia and the Soviet Union. However, some experts found that point of view provocative<sup>29</sup>. Western mass media pointed out that cooperation of the USSR and Japan in terms of the development of the Russian Far East was carried out to prevent the rapprochement Japan with China and contradicted the interests of the United States, Japan and China. It was also assumed that the cause of the region's development, in particular, the decision to build the BAM was "Brezhnev's desire to leave behind a personal monument"<sup>23</sup>.

However, the identified interpretations of the causes for the development of the Russian Far East in varying degrees reflected the reality objectively.

As already mentioned, the history of the Russian Far East is the history of the country's decision-making on the issues of socio-economic, military-strategic and foreign policy development of the region. Moreover, the factors of the economic development are supposed to be decisive, in the long run, i.e., they play a leading role while the military-strategic and foreign policy development plays a subordinate role, but the non-economic factors may come to the forefront in different periods of the history of the society. In accordance with this, in the period between 1965 and 1985 both economic and non-economic factors of the development of the Russian Far East came to the forefront.

It should be noted that during this period the Soviet scientists were discussing two theoretical conceptions of the productive forces development of the Far East<sup>49</sup>. The first one referred to the development of the region through the improvement and strengthening of its role in the inter-regional division of labor in terms of the domestic market capacity. Another conception was associated with the need for greater involvement of the region in foreign economic relations with the Pacific Rim countries. The conception was formulated by a prominent Soviet economist and scholar<sup>50</sup> in the early 1960s. In the late 1960s the inferences made by<sup>50</sup> were further developed: The export orientation of industries was considered as one of the areas of focus of national economic specialization of the region. Thus, up to the mid-1960s the first conception was implemented while since 1966 the foreign trade factors of the development of the Russian Far East were brought into action.

Thus, in 1979 the Far East exports accounted for about 60% of Soviet exports to Japan<sup>51</sup>. On the other hand, the share of Japan in the Far East exports made up about

70% due to its raw-material orientation. Such growth rate excess resulted in the logical consequences, with the region having a relatively high degree of export specialization manifested in its higher share of the country's export as compared with a share of gross industrial output of the country<sup>52</sup>.

In the early eighties the pace of foreign trade development fell sharply. The reasons for this were: the fall in world prices for natural resources; the expiry of a number of major Soviet-Japanese agreements; the policy of "embargo" and "sanctions", conducted by the United States against the Soviet Union; the economic slowdown in Japan and the pace of housing construction, in particular, a continued restructuring of the Japanese economy towards material and energy-saving industries. All of these were directly related to the Far East as the raw commodities and fuel products made up the bulk of the export to Japan and it raised questions about the need for further sectoral and geographical diversification of the Far Eastern export<sup>52</sup>.

With regard to the conception of "personal motives" in the development of the Far East and the construction of the BAM, it seems to find it unreasonable, since we may highlight the period of the 80s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century among the historical periods when the ideas and suggestions to construct the Baikal-Amur Mainline emerged first. In 1888 a decision was made to build the Great Siberian Railway, and in 1889 three expeditions – the Central Siberian, Trans-Baikal and South Ussuri ones – were launched for a railway location survey. In the late 20s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the project on the North-Baikal Railway construction was being discussed. In particular, the lines from the Aldan gold mining areas to the Okhotsk coast and simultaneously from Bratsk to Ust-Kut and along the Lena River to Yakutsk were supposed to be constructed. Then these roads were to be linked into one Great Northern Mainline. In 1932 one of the projects on creation of a new road was granted a governmental status. The railway called the BAM was recognized to be one of the most significant construction sites. The work on geological exploration of the upcoming railway began, but then it was temporarily canceled. By the end of the 1930s the economic expediency of the project became apparent. In 1970 the Far East made up half of the cargo transportation growth and the lack of transportation networks increasingly affected the pace of development of Siberia, the Far East and the entire national economy. The issue of resuming the construction of the Baikal-Amur Mainline

became critical. A rich material obtained as a result of the location survey in the 1930-40s allowed the government to choose the direction of the BAM in 1968. A comparison of available options showed that it was advisable not to change the previously adopted general direction of the mainline. In 1972 the construction of the line BAM-Tynda-Berkakit was started. The stretch of the mainline was called "Small BAM". At the same time, the construction of the BAM infrastructure system was embarked on in the town of Shimanovsk.

Thus, the construction of the Baikal-Amur Mainline was arranged by a long prior history of its design.

The BAM construction went through difficult periods due to the problems with the railway commissioning and the development of the economic zone of the railway. There was a lag in addressing urgent social problems, especially in the social infrastructure development.

## 4. Conclusion

After analyzing the articles, we came to the following general conclusions.

Foreign authors believe that exploration of the Far Eastern natural resources and augmenting the regional economic potential were of significant importance and were necessary for the further growth of the country's productive forces. Therefore, rapid development of the economy of the Soviet Far East was considered to be part of the program, an integral part of the economic strategy of the Communist party and the government, implemented through five-year plans and resolutions on the socio-economic development of the Soviet Far East. The economic necessity was driven by the political and strategic factors. As it is clear from a present-day perspective, the rapid development did not happen. The program of 1965-1985 had not been implemented.

Among the authors contributing to the journals under study there are serious and unbiased scholars and their works are of great interest. Their articles are characterized by relevant and verified sources, a wide range of new materials, the specific questions raised, observations approaching objective perception and reflection of the past and present of the Russian Far East. However, the interpretation of a number of issues of Russian history is objectionable, for example, accusations of the USSR of "the military expansion" in the Asia-Pacific region and the ambition for "the world dominance".

## 5. References

1. Davies D. Moscow's ruble strategy. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1979; 105(36):43-54.
2. Dahlby T. The bear at Japan's door. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1979; 106(41):16-7.
3. Lauriat G. Siberia's new umbilical cord (Recensia). *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1978; 101(31):31.
4. Lewis J. Profit before politics. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1979; 105(36):50-1.
5. Lewis J. A hard look at the real world. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1979; 105(31):15-6.
6. Munthe-Kaas H. Russian "fishermen". *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1970; 69(38):8-9.
7. Nakamura K. Treading the Siberian tightrope. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1973; 80(19):6-8.
8. Nakamura K. Partners in Siberian energy. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1974; 83(8):56-7.
9. Nations Rupert. The Russian evolution. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1986; 131(5):26-7.
10. Roscoe B. Moscow looks East. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1986; 133(37):117-8.
11. Sanders A. Tapping Siberia's riches. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1975; 87(5):58-9.
12. Sanders A. Mapping out Siberia's future. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1976; 92(24):101-2.
13. Sorenson JB. Siberia: another try? *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1968; 62(4):112-4.
14. Smith CH. Bone of contention. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1984; 126(43):20.
15. Takita K. Siberia to Japan. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1965; 50(2):99.
16. Takita K. Too big a bite. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1967; 58(4):199-202.
17. Zagoria DS. The USSR and Asia in 1984. *Asian Survey*. 1985; 25(1):21-32.
18. Zagoria DS. The USSR and Asia in 1985. First year of Gorbachev. *Asian Survey*. 1986; 26(1):15-29.
19. Kimura H. Japan-Soviet relations: Framework, developments, prospects. *Asian Survey*. 1980; 20(7):707-25.
20. Kimura H. Failure of Soviet policies toward Japan. *Asia Pacific Community*. 1982; 16:1-16.
21. Mote VL. Pacific-Siberian growth centers: A new soviet commitment. *Soviet Union*. 1977; 4:256-70.
22. Nakagawa T. Why Northern territories belong to Japan. *Japan Echo*. 1981; 8(3):78-7.
23. North RN. The Soviet far east: New centre of attention in the USSR. *Pacific Affairs*. 1978; 51(2):195-215.
24. Sakanaka T. Military threats and Japan's defense capability. *Asian Survey*. 1980; 20(7):763-75.
25. Stephan JJ. Sakhalin Islands: Soviet outpost in Northeast Asia. *Asian Survey*. 1970; 10(12):1090-100.

26. Alan W. Siberian development and East Asia. Houston.; 1980.
27. Alan W. Siberian development. Threat or promise? Stanford; 1981.
28. Falkenheim PL. Some determining factors in Soviet-Japanese relations. *Pacific Affairs*. 1977/1978; 50(4):604–24.
29. Falkenheim PL. Rec ad op: Soviet natural resources in the world economy. *Pacific Affairs*. 1984/1985; 57(4):673–75.
30. Horelick AL. Soviet policy dilemmas in Asia. *Asian Survey*. 1977; 17(6):499–512.
31. Hooson D. Rec ad op: Tupper H. To the Great Ocean: Siberia and the Trans-Siberian Railway. Toronto: Little, Brown and Co; 1965.
32. Shabad Th, Mote V. Gateway to Siberian resources (The BAM); 1977.
33. Shabad Th. Geography of the USSR. A regional survey. New York; 1979.
34. Gladchenkov A. Japanese social and economic literature on the problems of exploration and development of the USSR Far East. Japanese historiography of the Russian-Japanese and Soviet-Japanese relations in 19-20 centuries. Vladivostok: FEB of USSR AS, c. 65–6; 1987.
35. Kirby ES. The Soviet Far East. London. 1971.
36. Hanley M. Outlet for Yakutia's riches. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 1976; 82(21):51.
37. Bruce N. Dusting of Siberian gas plans. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1976; 92(21):50–2.
38. Martin D. A long season of havoc. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1981; 113(37):36.
39. Martin D. Natural partners with grounds for estrangement. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1982; 117(30):50.
40. Kirby E. Stewart. Siberia and Soviet Far East: Resources for the future. London; 1984.
41. Marchuk G. Prospects for further development of Siberia. *Science and Life*. 1980; 10:2–3.
42. Mieczkowski Z. The Soviet Far East: Problem region of the USSR. *Pacific Affairs*. 1968; 41(2):214–29.
43. Conolly V. Beyond the Urals. Economic development in Soviet Asia. London; 1967.
44. Conolly V. Siberia today and tomorrow. A study of economic resources problem and achievements. New York; 1975.
45. Williams J. Shippers losing trade to Trans-Siberian. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1975; 90(47):60.
46. Kanabayashi M. Delaying Siberian development. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 1974; 35(28):68.
47. Scalapino RA. The USSR: A rising Asian Power. Asia and road ahead. Issues for the major powers. Berkeley; 1975.
48. Simon Sh. The Japan-China-USSR triangle. *Pacific Affairs*. 1974; 47(2):125–38.
49. Bystritskii S, Shlyk N. Factor of accelerated development of the regional economy. Prospects for further development of the Far Eastern foreign economic relations. Vladivostok: DVNC of USSR AS; 1977. p. 3–18.
50. Nemchinov V. Theoretical issues of rational distribution of the production forces. *Issues of Economy*. 1961; 6:5–10.
51. Aleksandrov V. Place of Siberia and the Far East in the economic relations of the USSR and Japan. *Problems of the Far East*. 1982; 1:22–34.
52. Chichkanov V. The Far East: A strategy of economic development. Moscow: Ekonomika; 1988. p. 156–62.