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Northern Civilization Corridor in the Eurasian Socio-Cultural Space: Statement of the Problem

Andrey V. Ivanov¹, Dr. Sci. (Phil.), Professor

Yuri V. Popkov²✉, Dr. Sci. (Phil.), Professor, Chief Researcher

¹ Altai State Agricultural University, pr. Krasnoarmeyskiy, 98, Barnaul, Russia

² Institute of Philosophy and Law, Siberian Branch, Russian Academy of Sciences, ul. Nikolaeva, 8, Novosibirsk, Russia

¹ ivanov_a_v_58@mail.ru, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3125-484X>

² yuripopkov54@mail.ru ✉, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1036-9253>

Abstract. The article substantiates the important role of the Arctic zone of Russia in forming and strengthening not only its geopolitical, defense, resource and raw material, economic, transport and communication potential, but also as a significant civilization corridor, providing intensive interaction between different peoples and cultures, which goes far beyond the boundaries of this particular region. Civilization corridors are understood as the basis for the functioning of individual territorial locations, linking them into a living and developing organism of a single humanity due to their fulfillment of the most important migration, communication, information, trade and political socio-cultural functions. There are latitudinal and meridional civilization corridors in the Eurasian socio-cultural space, the intersections of which form the centers of civilizational dialogue of various political, ethnic and religious communities. The three most important latitudinal civilization corridors are the Great Silk Road, the Trans-Siberian Railway (Transsib), and the fundamental conclusion is substantiated about the possibility and exceptional importance for Russia and the whole world of turning the existing Arctic sea transport route into a new civilization corridor that is able to link not only the civilizations of the East and West into a single system of Eurasia, but also North and South. The article analyzes the objective prerequisites for the formation of this new and “youngest” civilization latitudinal corridor, as well as its unifying civilizational functions. The historical role of the Russian people, who united the peoples of the North into a single local Arctic civilization, possessing the civilizational gift of peaceful exploration of space through organic “ingrowth” into other ethno-cultural worlds, is emphasized. The civilizational approach in the unity of its synchronic and diachronic dimensions is used as the main methodological resource of the study.

Keywords: *civilization, peoples, civilization corridor, Transsib, Northern sea route, Eurasia, Russia, Arctic, North*

Introduction

The study of civilizations is one of the significant modern trends in social thought, primarily within the framework of theoretical sociology, social philosophy, and recently also geopolitics. The topic has become significantly relevant in the modern conditions of the global civilizational crisis and the forecast of S. Huntington about the conflict of civilizations [1].

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At once it is necessary to state a fact known to specialists: there is a variety of interpretations of the content of the very concept of “civilization”, a variety of distinguished bases for the typology of civilizations, as well as an ambiguous understanding of the civilizational approach as a methodological resource of social cognition. In our works we substantiate the heuristic value of combining the synchronic (spatial) and diachronic (temporal) versions of this approach, where civilizations are considered as local socio-cultural phenomena distinguished by their uniqueness, but at the same time the general historical vector of civilizational development with the dominance of a certain type of social structure and way of life is recognized [2, Ivanov A.V., Popkov Yu.V.]. One of the important results of such a presentation is the conclusion about the significance of the successful experience of individual centers of socio-cultural development not only for the ecumene of their own local civilization, but also for other regions and macro-regions, as well as the entire world community. All great civilizational shifts in the history of mankind initially have a specific civilizational location and embryonic period of maturation. Thus, the cradle of the great Eastern civilizations are the cities located on the great rivers (Yangtze, Indus, Nile, Tigris and Euphrates), which perform the function of civilization corridors. The ideological foundations of European civilization were laid in the Greek poleis of Asia Minor, which spread to the entire West via the Mediterranean civilization corridor. The formation of classical capitalism began with the manufactories of the city-states of Italy and then spread around the world through oceanic corridors.

The Arctic region and, above all, the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation are currently among the globally significant specific territories. Important state decisions have been made aimed at its comprehensive development, in the form of the establishment of a special ministry of the Russian Federation (for the development of the Far East and the Arctic), a new version of the Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (for the period until 2035), which is directly linked to ensuring the national security of the country. Important general and special programs for the implementation of this Strategy have also been adopted.

A large body of scientific literature, including generalizing fundamental works, is devoted to the history of exploration and the problems of modern development of the Arctic [3]. From the perspective of the internal significance of its Arctic zone for Russia, plans for its comprehensive development are assessed by experts as the most complex megaproject of those that have been proposed recently, and in terms of its scale and importance it is compared with the historical space and nuclear Soviet projects [4, Ivanter V.V., Leksin V.N., Porfiryev B.N., p. 6].

The importance of the Arctic zone development for other regions and the entire world community is no less significant. In this regard, we should agree with the following assessment, echoing what was said above: “In fact, we can say that the Arctic of the 21st century can potentially become an analogue of the Mediterranean Sea of the ancient world, the Baltic Sea of the Hanseatic period and the Atlantic Ocean of the era of great geographical discoveries” [3, p. 16].

Recognizing the fundamental role of the Arctic zone of Russia in the formation of the “geo-strategic axes” of the entire Eurasian continent, as well as the “core” regions within the country [3,

p. 13], most authors in numerous publications give priority to the analysis of its natural resource, economic, transport and communication potential, as well as geopolitical and military significance. At the same time, another fundamentally important aspect of the topic under consideration, which has not been the subject of special reflection by researchers so far, remains in the shade. We are talking about the civilizational influence of the Arctic and the grandiose projects carried out here on the development of other regions of the Earth, which will be the subject of this article. The emphasis is on the analysis of those spatio-temporal channels through which this influence is realized and which we designate as civilization corridors. The main focus of our attention is the latitudinal civilization corridors of Eurasia.

The concept of a civilization corridor and its functions

In the article “Meridional civilization corridors of Eurasia: retrospectives and perspectives” in the second issue of the “Eurasian Yearbook” [5, Ivanov A.V., Popkov Yu.V.], we substantiated the use of the concept of civilization corridor, highlighted and justified the crucial role played in the history of Russia by its four meridional corridors: two water corridors (Dnieper and Volga), located in the European part of Northern Eurasia; and two land corridors (Buryatia – Mongolia – Tibet and Altai – Himalayas), located on its Asian territory. These corridors, as well as the latitudinal corridors, which will be discussed later, were formed at different times, in different historical conditions between different civilizational and sub-civilizational communities. They had specific features and their own logic of historical development. However, despite all the differences, their functions were and remain close: to serve as spatio-temporal channels of communication and exchange of material and cultural achievements, experience in creating economic, state-legal, cultural and military institutions, as well as economic, household and technical skills between different communities, sometimes located in very remote territories.

Civilization corridors can be temporarily interrupted and then re-established. They can be controlled by various state formations and state unions. They are capable of acquiring new features and functions over time; they can be routes of both peace and war; both values and anti-values can circulate along them; both true and false knowledge, etc. But even in times of hostility and turmoil, they never completely lose their creative functions: transport, trade, information and educational, cultural and communicative, and pilgrimage. Civilization corridors maintain the unity of different loci of mankind, and its separate parts communicate and culturally nourish each other. Thus, starting from the second century BC, the Great Silk Road established trade and cultural interaction between the West and the East, never to disintegrate completely; and the Dnieper corridor (the famous “route from the Varangians to the Greeks”) enabled communication between northern pagan and southern Christian Europe, the Eurasian forest and steppe, in the terminology of the founders of Eurasianism.

Civilization corridors are a kind of inter-civilization veins, carrying the life-giving blood of economic and everyday practices, scientific and religious knowledge, artistic achievements and

philosophical insights between the various countries and peoples of the Earth. Meridional corridors intersect with latitudinal civilization corridors, and at the points of these intersections large trade, political and cultural centers arise that have played and sometimes still play an important role in world history. Such are Kyiv and Astrakhan, Derbent and Khorezm, Urumqi and Turpan, Yarkand and Ulan Bator.

The system of meridional and latitudinal civilization corridors can also be likened to a global trade, cultural and intellectual network that ensures the integrity of human development as a single world system. Any significant political, technical, scientific or religious fluctuations in various parts of this network quickly become known to its other segments; and destructive processes that threaten to break the established world order allow the elements of this network to prepare for destructive deviations from established creative trends and norms in advance.

There is one more regularity concerning the emergence and functioning of civilization corridors, which is important from the perspective of what will be discussed further: a civilization corridor can initially emerge as a regional channel of interaction and cultural exchange between local ethnic communities, and then, due to new natural and historical circumstances, acquire a global character, linking together large civilizational and sub-civilizational communities.

In this context, the theoretical model of A.V. Golovnev, supported by specific historical facts, seems heuristically significant. It characterizes the distinction, interaction, and symbiosis of mainline and local cultures in sociocultural dynamics [6, pp. 18–23; 7]. The main feature of local cultures is the development of a specific territory and its resources (cultivation of an econiche), and of mainline cultures — in the connection and integration of different populated spaces and cultures (organization of local groups into complex communities). An example of a complex ethno-cultural and civilizational configuration that arises in the process of interaction between local and mainstream cultures is, according to the author, the formation of a synthetic Russian culture (which exists in a wide range of its variations), as well as Russian civilization. “The dual mainline of Russian culture, which absorbed the traditions of Nordicism and Ordism, as well as Slavic local adaptability, became the engine of the epochal expansion that led to the formation of Russia and still preserves it in the vastness of Northern Eurasia” [7, p. 237].

Summarizing the methodological introduction to the topic of civilization corridors, it should be noted that the most important of them — both active and emerging — have had and still have a huge impact on the existence and development of Russian civilization.

Transsib as a latitudinal civilization corridor

The most significant and active latitudinal civilization corridors of Eurasia include the Great Silk Road, now actively promoted by China under the geopolitical brand of “One Belt, One Road”, as well as the Trans-Siberian Railway (Transsib), which runs through the whole of Russia. Hundreds of studies have been devoted to the Great Silk Road, so there is no point in dwelling on it. Let us

pay attention to a more northern latitudinal civilization corridor associated with the famous Trans-Siberian Railway.

Several years ago, the project of Transsib modernization as a civilization corridor was proposed by the then President of Russian Railways V. I. Yakunin and the Rector of Moscow State University V. A. Sadovnichiy. It was called the Trans-Eurasian Belt of RAZVITIE, TEBR. The project implied the joint interaction of Eurasian countries, primarily Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and China, in creating a single transport, energy and telecommunications latitudinal infrastructure that was to connect the ports of Primorye and border points of China with the western border of Belarus. At the second stage, it was supposed to build a transport corridor to America through the Bering Strait, ensuring a profitable flow of goods along the Europe-Eurasia-America axis. The mega-project implied not just the creation of a transport corridor based on a technologically updated Trans-Siberian Railway, but a belt of dynamic and comprehensive development of the territories through which it would pass. Particular attention was paid to Siberia and the Far East, with an emphasis, which is very important, on environmental safety, cultural cooperation and joint solution of social problems. It was stated that the project “will give an impetus to the development of Siberia and the regional economy, will connect remote regions with the center, will create new jobs and social infrastructure. The free spaces of Siberia and the Far East will serve as a platform for the creation of industries and settlements of a new techno-industrial and socio-cultural order.”¹

Due to a number of objective and subjective reasons, this project has remained at the level of a geopolitical declaration, although the systemic modernization of the Trans-Siberian Railway was and remains the most important state political and economic task facing Russia, which today is increasingly turning in an easterly direction. It is noteworthy that the global economic and geopolitical potential of Transsib, under the condition of its permanent modernization, was already noted in 1897 by the engineer, a Pole by nationality, Henryk Krajewski: “All world passenger traffic from Europe to Japan and back, and also partly from the eastern states of North America, will be carried out through Siberia” [8, p. 4]. He counted on the correct economic and tariff policy, thanks to which international cargo should increasingly go through this road, which will ensure the widespread development of our trade with Asia.

So far, such an optimistic prediction has not come true, but the strategic task of modernizing the Transsib as the most important railway and at the same time civilization corridor connecting Russia with the East and the West has not been cancelled. This is relevant not only in terms of strengthening the status of Russia as a great Eurasian and world power, but also for the development of Russia itself. According to the prediction of M.V. Lomonosov, it is possible to effectively develop the Trans-Ural lands only in parallel — through the development of land and sea

¹ The regular meeting of the Russian Academy of Sciences was held on 11th of March 2014. Russian Academy of Sciences. URL: http://www.ras.ru/news/news_release.aspx?ID=0c3705ee-0c1d-4830-963a-e7fe4ad99569&print=1 (accessed 15 July 2024).

transport routes: "... Russian power will grow through Siberia and the Arctic Ocean and will reach the main European settlements in Asia and America" [9, p. 354–355].

In essence, M.V. Lomonosov's project is still relevant, especially its key point about "excellent privileges and liberties" for Siberians [9, p. 351], which, alas, has never been and does not exist to this day.

The Russian Arctic as an emerging civilization corridor

However, let us return to the thought of the great Russian scientist and patriot about the connection between the power of Russia and the development of the Arctic Ocean. Here, in fact, a program for laying the future Northern Sea Route is outlined, which was implemented in Soviet times and played a huge role in the history of the economic development of the Arctic and the Arctic coast of our country.

So far, the Northern Sea Route mainly provides for the extraction and transportation of oil, liquefied gas and ore concentrate in northern latitudes, cargo for investment projects in the Arctic, as well as Northern delivery. Navigation in winter turns out to be extremely difficult here, and the use of icebreakers even in summer makes this route expensive and technically difficult. However, there are quite reasonable optimistic plans. In this regard, we will cite the forecast given by Maxim Kulinko, Deputy Head of the Northern Sea Route Directorate of Rosatom State Corporation: "...By 2030, transportation through the Arctic seas will become a routine operation — by that time, 13 icebreakers should be operating, and the "ice navigator" and the Roscosmos satellite group will supply ships with information in real time. The ship's transit time should be about 10 days all year round: although the Arctic is full of surprises, Rosatom believes that it will be able to tame the ice elements. By the same timeframe, international cooperation is expected to scale up and expand: the New Shipping Line Company from China started transiting cargo from Chinese ports in 2023, and the pilot launch has been recognized as successful by both parties." ²

Today, the prospects of turning the Northern Sea Route into a global transport corridor, significantly shortening the route from Asia to Europe and being a potential alternative to the sea route through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal, are also beginning to be discussed quite seriously. The cargo turnover along the Northern Sea Route in 2024 is expected to grow to 40 million tons ³. Interest in its use is demonstrated not only by China, but also by other countries of the East, and most recently even by the United States ⁴.

Understanding the well-known hypothetical nature of what will be revealed below, we will still risk expressing and substantiating a much more fundamental thesis: the Russian Arctic, taking

² Arctic Russia – Northern Sea Route 2023: preliminary results of the year and plans for the future. Investment portal of the Arctic zone of Russia. URL: <https://arctic-russia.com/article/severnnyy-morskoy-put-2023-predvaritelnye-itogi-goda-i-plany-na-budushchee/> (accessed 15 July 2024).

³ "More competitive advantages": perspectives of the Northern Sea Route. URL: <https://radiosputnik.ru/20240329/sevmorput-1936680158.html> (accessed 15 July 2024).

⁴ Media: The West has turned its attention to the Russian-controlled Northern Sea Route because of the Houthis. URL: <https://radiosputnik.ru/20240601/sevmorput-1949827481.html> (accessed 15 July 2024).

into account both global biosphere and geopolitical processes, in the near future has every opportunity to turn not just into a global transport corridor, but a new civilization corridor, linking together not just the civilizations of the East and West, but also the North and South of the Eurasian socio-cultural space. This realizes not only the prediction of M.V. Lomonosov about the special role of the Russian North, but also the scientific foresight of the classic of Eurasianism P.N. Savitskiy about the steady shift of the center of civilizations from the southern to the northern regions of the Earth (see his famous work "Migration of Culture" [10, Savitskiy P.N.]).

What are the objective grounds for talking about the possibility of turning the Arctic sea transport corridor into a new important civilization corridor?

Firstly, it is necessary to state the northern nature and northern identity of Russia. A.V. Golovnev writes about this most reasonably and systematically, having devoted a special fundamental study to this issue [11]. Although the most famous and officially recognized geopolitical and spatial orientations of Russia in history were "the European West, the Horde East, the Byzantine-Christian South", in reality, according to A.V. Golovneva, it is "the northernmost country on the planet in terms of location, nature and culture" [11, p. 2]. From this position, "all Russia is the North" [11, p. 147], and by the "northernness" of Russia the author means "not only geography and climate, but also anthropology and ethnography, where the main figures are not territory and temperature, but people — a northerner-man and northerners-peoples with their destinies, motives, values" [11, p. 7].

In this regard, it would be quite logical to conclude that everything we said above about the transformation of civilization corridors from regional to global has a direct relation to the Russian North. It already represents a historically formed northern civilization corridor with an exceptional diversity of cultures, languages, ethno-social structures, original economic crafts and cultural traditions of the peoples of the North. These northern cultures, primarily thanks to the Russian earliest explorers who came here (especially the Pomors), entered into a complex symbiotic relationship with a variety of cultural and economic borrowings, division of labor and ecological niches of existence. In the Russian North, locality and dynamism of the existence of Russian ethnic groups are intricately and uniquely intertwined, and their deep dialectic has been discovered [11, Golovnev A.V.].

A.V. Golovnev notes the fundamental importance of studying the peoples of the North for understanding the whole of Russia, its multinationality and cultural "flourishing complexity", to quote K.N. Leontiev. In particular, A.V. Golovnev writes: "Positioning the North as the main dimension of Russia fundamentally changes the place and significance of the cultures and peoples of the North, which in this perspective appear not as outlying, but as supporting ones. Archaeological and historical-ethnographic research reveals not only the huge fund of tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Russian North, but also the need to actualize it. This perspective presupposes a rethinking of the ethnic history and culture of Novgorodians, Pomors, Karelians, Komi-Zyryans,

Nenets, Khanty, Evenks, Yakuts, Chukchi and other communities of Northern Eurasia as a relevant and fundamental ethno-historical topic for Russia” [11, p. 371].

The presence of a northern civilization corridor (still proto-civilizational — from a global point of view), where Russians act as bearers of a formed main culture, is manifested in numerous facts of ethnic and intercultural synthesis, in the interweaving of the life foundations of many northern ethnic groups. A.V. Golovnev notes that “the Russian (Moscow) movement to the east was a reverse wave of the Mongolian movement to the west and did not generate a civilizational frontier, but followed long-trodden paths, only slightly updating the stable picture of multinationality. The best confirmation of this can be the abundance of marriages between newcomers and natives, as well as the inclusion of local nobility in the imperial nobility. In the north of Eurasia, relations from antiquity were oriented more towards maintaining ties than towards separation. Ethnic boundaries set by ecological boundaries and seasonal migration systems often served not as a zone of alienation, but as crossroads of trade and military connections and routes, where new ethno-cultural centers were formed (for example, on Lake Ladoga, where the routes of the Scandinavians, Finns and Slavs converged; at the mouth of the Ob, where the routes of the Nenets, Khanty, Komi and Russians intersected)” [11, Golovnev A.V., pp. 376–377].

Another thing is that so far, this northern corridor of interaction between peoples represents precisely the Russian Eurasian civilization. It played an important role in its history, if we take into account that the Russian movement eastwards along Siberia initially went along the circum-polar lands and only then began to shift southwards. In this regard, the Arctic Ocean has not yet become a global road for humanity, where the civilizations of the East and West, North and South meet. However, we can confidently say that in the Russian North we are dealing with a historically formed local civilization corridor, where there are not just transport-biospheric opportunities for the creation of a global civilization corridor, but also its objective economic, socio- and ethno-cultural prerequisites.

Russia has actually laid the spatial, infrastructural and ethno-cultural foundations of the northernmost global civilization corridor at the cost of incredible effort of people and state forces. It will pass through the lands where the process of great cultural synthesis and “germination” of the most diverse peoples into each other has already been accomplished. This historical northern Eurasian experience of cooperation and friendship of peoples is exceptionally important for the future of the entire, currently disunited humanity.

Secondly, if we move from the Russian to the global level of civilizational analysis, we can state a steady change in the world climate, which is most clearly manifested in the Arctic. Warming expands the technical capabilities of shipping in northern latitudes. In this regard, the Arctic Ocean claims to become the water latitudinal civilization corridor of Northern Eurasia. Perhaps, it will even surpass in its potential the land-based Great Silk Road, which runs through the Great Eurasian Steppe, which P.N. Savitskiy, already mentioned above, called the “terrestrial ocean”. Unlike the Great Steppe, this corridor does not cross state borders, does not depend on possible local

conflicts and changes in political regimes, and does not require capital investments in maintaining railway and automobile infrastructure. This, of course, does not mean that water and land civilization corridors should be opposed to each other. On the contrary, the well-known Bohr principle of complementarity should be in effect here.

The quantitative increase in the number of ships passing through the Arctic, which can be confidently predicted, will require a qualitative improvement of the technical infrastructure with new centers for repair and refueling of ships, junction points for sea, rail, automobile and air logistics. The international composition of crews and the qualitative diversity of cargo, in turn, will contribute to the development of their information-analytical and cultural-humanitarian support through the training of appropriate specialists — translators, pilots, dispatchers, managers and logisticians who speak foreign languages and have intercultural communication skills.

Here, as noted, not only representatives of the civilizations of the East and West (Europe, the USA, China and Japan), but also southern Eastern civilizations interested in cooperation with the countries of the global North, primarily with Russia, will enter into an intensive dialogue. Such processes are now becoming more and more active.

Thirdly, against the background of the Middle East, which is always torn by civilizational conflicts, threatening the world navigation in one way or another ⁵, the Arctic corridor is controlled by one country — Russia, which has always been civilizationaly oriented towards dialogue and synthesis, and not towards confrontation of cultures and civilizations; towards peacekeeping and equality in relations between peoples, and not towards political and economic dominance of individual blocs and countries. Accordingly, the Northern Sea Route together with the Trans-Siberian Railway should become roads of peacekeeping and union of peoples, their intensive civilizational interaction and mutual understanding.

Peaceful cooperation of peoples will promote joint rational and ecologically responsible economic development of the wealth of the North in the interests of not only those living now, but also future generations. The Arctic cannot be divided between selfish countries; and there can be no war in the Arctic. The common fragile Arctic home, as many researchers correctly emphasize, can be preserved and developed only together, in the interests of all countries and peoples of the Earth, especially in the context of global climate change. The North is the civilization corridor that can geopolitically, geo-economically, geo-culturally and ecologically reconcile the currently warring peoples and civilizations, open up new paths of dialogue and constructive interaction for them, given that historically it was not so much an arena of confrontation between peoples as of cooperation and development of skills of conciliar coexistence.

The outstanding thinker S. N. Bulgakov once perceptively noted that “unity of thoughts is achieved only through life unity” [12, p. 308]. This productive civilizational dialogue in the corridors vital for all peoples differs from the abstract call of S. Huntington, “hanging” in space and time, that “people of all civilizations should seek and strive to spread the values, institutions and

⁵ The shelling of ships in the Red Sea by the Yemeni Houthis is clear evidence of this.

practices that are common to them and to people belonging to other civilizations” [1, p. 235]. But the same Europeans, fixated on the values of democracy, tolerance and market, i.e. on purely European and relative socio-political values, are unlikely to accept the Russian spiritual values of conciliarity, brotherhood and truth. This requires not just an open and unbiased civilizational dialogue, but a common — vital — cause that helps separate civilizational value grains from civilizational chaff.

Fourthly, a single northern civilization corridor implies mandatory interaction not only of political and economic, but also scientific elites of different countries studying the Arctic. Such scientific interaction has been significantly undermined in recent years, although scientifically grounded support for northern shipping is simply impossible without a constant exchange of empirical databases, advanced methods and techniques, new conceptual models. The joint study of processes occurring in northern latitudes, their impact on climate and human economic activity, the formation of scientifically grounded biosphere forecasts — this is what also objectively brings peoples and cultures closer together, allows them to jointly and promptly respond to the ever-deepening climate challenges. In its interaction with the biosphere, humanity cannot but act as a single and united whole, because storms, floods, droughts and tsunamis know no human or state borders. Scientific intellect, designed to provide universal answers to natural challenges, knows no divisions into countries and peoples as well. The Arctic, as a particularly rapidly changing natural region, requires the adoption of quick, balanced and collectively thought-out scientific decisions.

Fifthly, if we take into account everything that we have said above about the exceptional cultural diversity of the northern Russian peoples, the Northern Sea Route, which is increasingly transforming from a regional to a global route, creates favorable opportunities for the development of world tourism. Residents of the southern civilizational and sub-civilizational socio-cultural communities will have the opportunity to get acquainted with a whole scattering of original northern cultures — from the Slavic Pomors to the Nenets, Yakuts and Chukchi. This, in turn, will open up new horizons for comparative ethnographic, ethno-social and cross-cultural research, for the search for kinship and intersection of today’s spatially distant cultures, which once may have had common roots.

Tourism is also significant from a civilizational perspective in the sense that representatives of other peoples and cultures, especially southern ones, will be able to learn about and appreciate the exceptionally harsh natural and climatic conditions within which the northern Eurasian peoples managed to organize their economic and everyday life, create and preserve their original cultural traditions.

Sixthly, the Pomors once played a special role in the development of Siberia. “The descendants of the Pomors,” writes V.N. Kalutskov in this regard, “acquired invaluable skills in survival and economic development of the northern territories. It is not surprising that the Russian North became the springboard and resource base for advancing into Siberia. But the most important resources in the development of new lands were the resources of human experience and

knowledge. Therefore, the Pomors formed the backbone of the Siberian explorers" [13, p. 152]. The Pomors and Don Cossacks, who formed the backbone of Yermak's detachments⁶, especially clearly manifested such human qualities of the Russian ethnos as the spirit of universal responsiveness and the ability to find ways to the hearts of the most diverse ethnic groups, the ability not to be alien to foreigners, but to kin and fraternize with them. This northern Russian spirit of mastering new space through organic "ingrowth" into other ethno-cultural worlds should play its unifying role in the current difficult historical conditions in the spaces of the northern civilization corridor.

In this regard, let us recall one of the most important factors in the formation and spatial expansion of Russia as a great Eurasian and world power: it is the harsh conditions of life that awaken the "will to a common cause", where people and nations die alone, and survive and prosper only together. The Northern Civilization Corridor, running through the harsh Arctic territories of Russia, is designed to awaken a new will for a common cause among the peoples of the East and West, North and South. The preservation and ecologically balanced use of the spatial and economic resources of the North — this common "ice roof" of the world — will teach people to manage common resources in the earthly home in a neighborly and fraternal manner, where cooperation is much more profitable than competition, a bad peace is better than a good quarrel, and giving ultimately turns into the greatest profit.

Personal factor in the formation and understanding of civilization corridors

Civilization corridors always have a clearly expressed anthropological dimension in the person of their discoverers and pioneers, scientists, artists and holy ascetics, who for the first time subjected them to scientific or artistic reflection. Thus, for the Dnieper civilization corridor, the holy apostle Andrew and the legendary Oleg are significant. For the Volga corridor, which connected Rus' with Persia and India, the most important figure is the Tver merchant Afanasiy Nikitin; for the Altai – Himalaya's land corridor — the Russian officer and Kazakh educator Ch.Ch. Valikhanov. Finally, the first scientist who passed through and described the civilization trade and pilgrimage corridor Buryatia – Mongolia – Tibet was the outstanding Buryat scientist and public figure G.Ts. Tsybikov.

For the northern civilization corridor, the figure of M.V. Lomonosov is extremely significant. He not only personifies the best qualities of the Pomor and the Russian people, uniting peoples and cultures, but in fact scientifically outlines the contours of the future northern civilization corridor, predicts the special role of the Arctic and Siberia in the fate of Russia, and finally, personally presents the image of a conciliar man of the future, in whom religious faith and reason, a scientist and a poet, a public figure and a sophisticated researcher of nature, a patriot and, in a way, a "universal man" organically coexist. It is no coincidence that the northern civilization corridor passes

⁶ It is not without reason that V.I. Surikov specially travelled to the Don to choose the types for his famous painting "Yermak's Conquest of Siberia".

through the ancestral lands of the great scientist, who once wrote with inspiration that “the Arctic Ocean is a vast field where ... Russian glory can be enhanced, combined with unparalleled benefit, through the invention of east-northern navigation to India and America” [9, Lomonosov M.V., pp. 290–291].

It is necessary to mention the great Russian artist, scientist, traveler, thinker and public figure N.K. Roerich (in 2024 it will be 150 years since his birth). This is a man who was connected to one degree or another with the Dnieper and Volga civilization meridional corridors; who always noted the exceptional role of the northern territories in the formation of Rus–Russia and himself had northern Varangian ancestral roots; who, during his unprecedented Central Asian expedition of 1925–1928, travelled along the Trans-Siberian Railway and walked on foot from south to north and back from north to south along two great land Asian civilization corridors: the Himalayas – Altai and Mongolia – Tibet – India. He is the author of the words that fully apply to the emerging northern civilization corridor: “Great migrations of peoples are not accidental... In contact with new neighbors, consciousness expands and the forms of new races are forged. Therefore, living mobility is one of the signs of wisdom. In the depths of Asia — this cradle of all spiritual and creative movements — in ancient times, movement was considered the completion of education.”⁷

There is every reason to believe that the future development of our northern territories and the formation of the Northern civilization corridor will put forward new Lomonosovs and Mikhail Sidorovs⁸, Sedovs and Papanins, because only great historical tasks call outstanding personalities under their banners. Our global turn to the East, which is being talked about so much today, should be carried out not only by land, but also by sea, and above all — in the interests of our own Russian civilization and its Siberian regions, as we should not forget that the Russian North makes up 70% of the entire global North, and the northern regions represent 2/3 of the entire territory of Russia.

Today we can also talk not only about the northernness of Russia, but also about the growing northernness of the entire earthly civilization, to which Russia is opening new “civilization gates” to the future.

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