

## **Abstract**

The goal of this thesis is to clarify the issues related to the New Order in East Asia and the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Emphasis will be added to motives which lead Japan to the creation of a new arrangement in East Asia. These motives are represented by both Japan's strategic interests, among which was the struggle for obtaining access to natural resources (such as iron ore, coal and oil), as well as the control over a certain part of Asian territory with the intention of creating a buffer zone, mainly because of fearing the Soviet Union. The effort to control the Far East was further strengthened by the Great Depression, which resulted with the creation of enclosed trade blocks. A significant source of Japanese expansionist policy was presented by the ideology of Pan-Asianism, which played a large role in Japan's foreign policy making since the second half of the 1920s. Pan-Asianism had been originally focused mainly on Northeast Asia and only later was it utilized to legitimize the Japanese occupation of Southeast Asia. The thesis also pays much attention to the creation of Japanese puppet regimes, both on occupied Chinese territory and in Southeast Asia. An important role here is played by the Japanese effort to cooperate with local elites, both political and religious. Not only did Japan collaborate with existing nationalist groups, but also initiated the establishment of many political organizations in order to gain the support of and control over indigenous population. Of great significance is also Japan's relationship with individual territories under her control. While Manchukuo and the Reorganized National Government of China were formally independent states, which were for propaganda reasons joined by Burma and the Philippines, the only truly independent member of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere was Thailand. With regard to other territories, such as Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, the granting of independence was a result of negative war progress on part of the Japanese.