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INTRODUCTION OF CUSTOMS PROCEDURES IN TRADE RELATIONS BETWEEN BUKHARA AND AFGHANISTAN IN THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

Akhmadov Akhmadjon
Associate Professor of Bukhara State University, Doctor of Philosophy, (PhD)

Radjabov Sherzod Rasulovich
1st year master's student of the Asia International University.
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Abstract: This article scientifically analyzes the trade relations between Bukhara and Afghanistan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, during the period when the Russian Empire introduced customs procedures.

Keywords: Customs, trade, communication, Bukhara, Afghanistan, Russian military, border, Russia, Pig Guzar, goods.

At the end of the 19th century, in order to completely bring Afghanistan into its economic and political sphere of influence, Russia extended its external border to the Bukhara-Afghan border, and the territory of the Bukhara Emirate was now also guarded by Russian troops. With the opening of customs posts in Chochka Guzar in 1894, the trade route on the Bukhara-Afghan border passed through the Russian trade post. Russia established a number of customs posts at convenient points of the Amu Darya, such as Kerki, Kelif, and Ayvaz. From that moment on, control of the Bukhara-Afghan trade routes and customs duties collected from trade passed to Russia and were fully subordinated to the interests of the Russian Empire. Nevertheless, Bukhara merchants played an important role in Russian-Afghan trade relations. Local merchants actively participated in exporting goods from Afghan cities to Bukhara to Russia, and vice versa, Russian goods to Afghan cities[1].

Badakhshan turquoise, purchased by Bukhara merchants from the Badakhshan population and brought to Bukhara, was transformed into an exquisite item by local jewelers and sold in Afghan markets[2].

According to researcher T. Safarov, the caravan route from Central Asia passed through such trading posts as Orenburg, Troisk, Petropavlovsk and Semepalatinsk, and reached the Nizhny Novgorod fair. The length of the Bukhara-Orenburg trade route was 1744 versts (miles). There were more than 20 wells along the caravan route, which were used for watering camels and horses, as well as for drinking water[3]. During this period, the trade relations of the Bukhara Emirate with the Russian Empire also developed well year after year, and the goods of both countries were in demand.

In connection with the political dependence of the Bukhara Emirate, Russia took measures to ensure the primacy of its interests in trade relations through Afghanistan. According to Article 7 of the 1873 Russian-Bukhara treaty, customs duties were not to be levied on goods transiting from Russia to Afghanistan, and Afghanistan to Russia. In practice, this was not observed. The imposition of customs duties on transit goods caused discontent among Russian merchants. To improve the situation, Russian commercial espionage was established in Bukhara[4].

By 1890, the issue of subordinating trade relations in Central Asia to the interests of the Russian Empire had become urgent. In particular, the goal of controlling the import of foreign goods into their territories and obtaining income from customs duties became an important task in the Bukhara and Khiva khanates.

In 1891, Bukhara resident Tohirboy Yusupov, who visited the cities of Kandahar and Herat, admitted that in addition to metal products, Russian textile factory products had increased in the Herat markets, and that Russian silk, wool, scarves, porcelain products, and sugar occupied a special place in the Herat markets.[5] According to the researcher A. Yusupov, the activity of Bukhara Jews in trade in Turkestan was prominent, and in 1892, 24 merchants in the 1st guild[6] and 107 merchants in the 2nd guild operated there, with a total turnover of 12,865,000 rubles. It is noted that the Vadyaev family of Bukhara Jews occupied a special place in this.[7] During this period, the Khanates of Bukhara and Khiva were completely subordinated to the political interests of the Russian Empire and had no authority in foreign trade. All foreign trade and diplomatic relations were carried out with the direct consent of the Russian government.

For this purpose, at the initiative of the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Empire, a special council was convened at the end of 1892. The council considered it advisable to include the Bukhara and Khiva khanates in the unified Russian customs system. However, due to the possibility of protest from the Bukhara emir, Alexander III was in no hurry to approve the council's decision and promised to give him part of the customs duties collected from foreign goods. In October 1893, a draft of a unified customs system was sent to the Governor-General of Turkestan, Veryovsky, and the Emir of Bukhara. The Emir was forced to approve this draft, and from 1894 it was decided to establish Russian customs offices at the border points of the emirate.

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