

The Customs Policy of the Russian Empire

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Abstract: *Imperial customs policy of Russia was linked to foreign trade and the level of development of the productive forces. It is customs policy determined the level of economic development not only in European Russia but in the Central Asian region also. It is known that the Russian Empire adhered to the ideas of protectionism (since 1877). The main reason for such economic policies rooted in the economic system of the Empire. Russia has moved to a capitalist way of development in the second half of the 19th century. Russian Empire mainly exported raw materials and was considered pretty backward country. It should be remarked that the Russian Empire needed modernization of all branches of industry and therefore it had not been able to exert effective influence on the development of Central Asia. In the Russian Empire, there were quite a lot restrictions on trade and industry. Overall, Russia defended its colonies from the invasion of British goods, as British goods were much cheaper and better of Russian products in quality. The main reason that the Russian Empire established protectionism, according to professor M. I. Tugan-Baranovsky was that "...the main market for Russian factory is a village and textile manufacturing preferably needs its economic strong. On the other hand, the textile industry is in need of cheap machines and should help to reduce duties on them. It closely associated with agriculture, than with the metals industry, which is a bastion of protectionism. Russian Empire exported abroad mainly wheat and imported technology and finished products, that is why it was interested in low taxes on wheat that helped to abstain from increasing the price of products. However, the Russian Empire also wanted to develop heavy industry, and to that had to impose duties on the products of heavy industry. «...175 million rubles - this amount during the 1900 overpaid Russian consumers», wrote the newspaper —Russian Turkestan, "in the form of bonuses for fun use of cast iron, iron, and steel of Russian manufacture.*

Keywords: Russian Empire, custom policy, protectionism, economic policy, Russian manufacture

1.Introduction.

Everyone knows that in Germany, England and the United States cast iron, iron and steel worth almost twice cheaper than in Russia. To strengthen sugar producers goes about the hundreds of millions. Expensive also is strengthening of manufacturers, machine producers and other representatives of the domestic industry". From imposed duties, primarily, had suffered rural population because fees increased cost of life, and established the monopoly in the heavy industry. History of Turkestan customs begins in 1868, when Orenburg and West Siberian customs lines were eliminated. Thus, the Russian Empire sought to incorporate Turkestan in Imperial customs system. In 1886 customs supervision was withdrawn from Turkestan General-Governorship and transferred to the Ministry of Finance[1]. In Turkestan was approved an official of special assignments of the Ministry of Finance on customs matters. Act of June 12, 1890 formed Semipalatinsk and Turkestan Customs okrugs 387, which controlled the border with China and neighboring Khanates. The Directorate of the Chief of the Customs District of Turkestan was in Tashkent. Precinct inspectors appointed by the Highest orders on the recommendation of the Minister of Finance[2].

2.Discussion.

The Act of June 6, 1894 formed special Transcaspian okrug and customs of the Bukhara Emirate was subordinated to the Chief of the Customs District. May 23, 1889 by decision of the State Council was created Reserve Fund in Turkestan, which was used for the development

of customs. Reserve Fund was used to strengthen the manpower of the customs institutions as well as for unexpected costs of customs supervision in the Turkestan region[3]. The source of Reserve Fund was 25% deduction from amounts derived from the sale of confiscated goods 390. This Fond served as the source for creating in the Ferghana Customs Okrug (1897) of special flying squad of 3 fellows and 12 guards to suppress smuggling from China. Transcaspian Customs Okrug controlled the border with Persia and Afghanistan. Act of June 4, 1899 in Central Asia has established posts of seven customs inspectors[4]. In addition, Semipalatinsk and Transcaspian Customs Okrugs were abolished and attached to Turkestan customs okrug. In addition, were established, Biysk, Zaysan, Kopal'skiy and Khoqand customs posts 393, which were subordinate to the Nachal'nik of the Turkestan Customs Okrug. Expenses for the maintenance of this group amounted to 3.960 rubles. Customs officers and inspectors in addition to oversight the borders, collected political information and send relevant information to the Office of the Turkestan General-Governorship[5]. For example, customs agencies at the border of Afghanistan mainly collected information about Afghanistan and the Bukhara Emirate. To work in customs departments employed members of the local population. They were called djigit. According to the circular of the Minister of Finance from March 20, 1891, djigits were ordered to wear beshmet of black or gray cloth, bloomers, boots, sword, revolver and a white cap with a visor and soldier's cockade. Transcaspian Customs was considered one of the most

important trade transit points of Turkestan. Transcaspian Customs Okrug controlled all trade of Bukhara Emirate and Khiva Khanate. In Transcaspian Customs Okrug controlled all products imported from Afghanistan, India and Iran to Turkestan and the Khanates. Persian and Afghan products were levied at a rate of 5%. English and European goods prohibited importation with the exception of the following items[6]: a) oranges and lemons, they charged fees 1 ruble 5 kopecks from pood; b) dates, Turkish delight and khalva - 2 ruble 70 kopecks from pood; c) spices (vanilla and saffron) - 21 ruble 60 kopecks from pood; d) cloves, cinnamon, pepper, ginger - 4 ruble 50 kopecks from pood; e) bay leaf 1 ruble 95 kopecks from pood; f) green tea, from higher grades - 14 rubles 40 kopecks from pood, and from lower grades - 6 rubles from pood; g) leather shoes of Indian production - 1 ruble 50 kopecks from pood 396 ; h) precious and semi-precious stones - 4 ruble 50 kopecks from pood; k) white muslin - 1 ruble from the pood; l) confectionery - 1 ruble 65 kopecks from pood[7]. Forbidden to import were the following items: 1) opium and all drugs; 2) firearms and edged weapons. Duty-free were allowed cereals, rice, vegetables, fruits and berries, milk, poultry, eggs, cattle, forest materials, charcoal and firewood. In addition, the Nachal'nik of Turkestan Customs was entrusted to skip duty-free livestock from Afghanistan to Bukhara. Russian Empire tried to develop extensive trading links with Persia and Afghanistan. Russia mainly exported textiles and sugar. —The nature and value of the imported fabrics almost remained unchanged for 60 years: before Russian textiles dressed 1/100 part of the population, and now wears half of all residents, wrote about this famous Eastern trade development specialist A. Gubarevich[10]. "More than anything," he continues in his article, —were imported the specially manufactured to Asia cheap chintz. One time English chintz tried to join the competition with it, but soon was completely killed. ... From 200,000 poods in 1891, in 1898 by Russian export manufactory reaches 1 million poods, and by 1903 - 1.300.000 poods. A very important reason affecting the expansion of import textile was the customs measures of our Government. From among the one million poods of the manufactory brought into Turkestan, 200,000 poods of it went in Khorasan, Afghanistan, Kashghar and Xinjiang province. Such export resulted from distribution of Central Asian borders according to the Act of 1892 for a refund of duties on cotton and other materials spent on the production of this factory[11]. Accounting for about 14% of the cost of the fabric, this benefit was originally a special award, permitted low price to our textile on foreign markets and forced all the major manufactures to seek ways for the development of exportation of the products of its factories[12].

A. Gubarevich was sure Russian factory would be able to supplant completely English goods from this region, and the main instrument would provide the right incentive tariffs for

both parties. Along with the Transcaspian Customs Okrug an important role in the economic life played customs of Turkestan Okrug and southern Semirechye[13]. According to the rules of December 19, 1881 approved by the Turkestan General-Governor, duty-free skipped all products of Bukhara and Khiva khanates, exclude Chinese tea 402 . Turkestan was protected from European and Anglo-Indian goods. According to Customs instructions English-Indian smuggled goods to the Emirate of Bukhara or Transcaspian oblast' were confiscated and sold at auction with condition of re-exportation of those products abroad, and if the buyer would not found, commodity subject to destruction. The following Anglo-Indian goods were allowed importing: citrus fruits, spices, precious and semi-precious stones and cochineal. Under the special direction of the Minister of Finance and Public assets were banned the importation and sale of silkworm eggs to Turkestan 405 . According to the law of July 16, 1893 limited to import any foreign silver coins in the Russian Empire, to stop the depreciation of silver coins with the exception of the Chinese yambs. But by the Act of October 29, 1893 permitted the importation of silver coins from Khiva Khanate of Bukhara Emirate to Turkestan General-Governorship. Bukhara and Khiva allowed duty-free export silver coin in Turkestan, as the Russian Empire had a positive balance with these semi-independent States[14]. Russian Empire signed with neighboring states customs treaties that regulated trade between contracting parties. For example, such agreements were signed with Bukhara, Khiva, Iran and China. September 28, 1873 in Shaar was signed Treaty of friendship between Bukhara and Russia, which also regulated customs issues. In article VI of the Treaty, it was noted that Russian merchants who traded with Bukhara will be charged no more than 2,5% of the value of the goods, and in its turn from Bukhara merchants in the Turkestan region levied 1/40 part of the value of the goods. Forbidden claiming from merchants additional fees and charges . Article VII of the Treaty noted that Russian merchants have right to skip duty-free with their goods through Bukhara territories to neighboring countries[15]. The Finance Ministry made concessions to the Emir of Bukhara in determining the assignment of customs duties on imported foreign goods to Bukhara. Before 1902, i.e. prior to the opening of the Samarkand customs, Bukhara customs as the most close to Turkestan was considered to be the major importer of tea, but the heavy trading conditions in the Khanate and the arbitrariness of Bukhara Administration when charging zakat, prompted merchants to ask the Russian Government about establishing for Turkestan customs in Samarkand, which undermined the value of the customs of the Bukhara in Central Asian region. After that, only a small portion of the tea, going through customs of Bukhara exported from to Khiva, and mostly, it began to serve exclusively Bukharian markets[16]. On average in a

year delivered from 80 to 85 thousand poods of tea, wrote the researcher of the issue, official of Turkestan, —the amount of fees up to 1 million rubles and assessment (considering the average 35 ruble for pood) up to 3 million rubles. In addition, since the beginning of the establishment of customs, in the form of special privileges, His Highness the Emir of Bukhara was granted to buy different goods, first on amount of 17.000 rubles with preferential duties, then in 1897, with 25.000 rubles annually[17]. The customs policy of the Russian Empire was highly politicized. For example, by special Decree of the Minister of Finance the Iomud tribe of Turkmen were allowed to freely cross the border with Iran, as the tribe constantly roamed on the borders with Transcaspian and Persia. Thus, the Russian Government has stressed its respect for the Turkmen-iomuds and demonstrated non-interference in the internal life of these tribes. Russian Government also frees frontier customs agencies from providing statistical information on duty-free goods carried, in order not to embarrass the Central Asian merchants[18]. As indicated in the circular of the Minister of Finance "...in Central Asian customs agencies, goods are subject to pass without any documents and stationery collection from them, no fee will be charged. Russian Empire, to attract Persia to his side, by a special Decree of January 13, 1889, allowed the Persian goods duty-free transit through Ashgabat and other stations of Transcaspian railroad. By special order of the Senate and the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Empire from February 6, 1904, Persian and Afghan goods were dutiable at 5% if they imported in Bukhara or Turkestan. By special agreement between the Finance Minister and the General-Governor of Turkestan from September 22, 1904, prohibited the importation from China to the Turkestan General-Governorship lollipops, caramel, candies, etc. In the Russian Empire was strictly monitored incoming literature to Central Asia[19]. By Decree of the Chief of the press from July 3, 1896 was prescribed: "All publications imported from abroad to Bukhara via newly formed at the Bukhara-Afghan border customs agencies, must be delivered by these agencies for consideration to Caucasus Censorship Committee in Tiflis. The same rules were introduced in relation to Turkestan. Transcaspian Customs Okrug was ordered to send in Caucasian Censorship Committee —...all publications imported by passengers, as well as sent from abroad by mail to individuals who are neither booksellers nor rank as members of the scholars and educational institutions. But postal parcels sent from European Russia in Turkestan and of Turkestan in the limits of European Russia, recognized the internal correspondence, free of customs inspection. Also postal parcels sent from Bukhara to European Russia were not subject to customs inspection. All other parcels sent to Turkestan from Western Europe, were subject to customs inspection and were dutiable. The

important role in Turkestan customs okrug played Semipalatinsk and Semirechye customs stations, which controlled the trade with China. In 1881 Russian and Chinese Empire agreed about boundaries and about the terms of trade between the two countries. Under the Treaty, Khul'dja city was returned to China, instead of it were gained a number of concessions on trade, according to which Russia gained the right to duty-free trade in Mongolia and throughout the Western and inner China. On the basis of article #1 of Trade rules applied to St. Petersburg Treaty with China in 1881, within 50 kilometers border with China resolved free and tax-free trade (Chinese goods), the only exception was tea and silver[20]. Products made outside China imposed according to the established by Customs Charter. Articles #1343 and #1370 of the Customs Charter of the Russian Empire and the Highest commandment from June 7, 1899 allowed to pass Chinese goods duty-free 425. Tea was the primary export of China to Central Asia, and the Russian Empire benefited from it, displacing Indian tea from the Central Asian market. Until 1894, the principal markets for the wholesale trade of tea served in Central Asia Bombay in India and Bukhara. Tea was sent in two ways: 1) from Bombay by rail to Peshawar, then through Afghanistan to the Kelif on Amudarya and next to Bukhara by camels; 2) from Bombay by sea to the port of Karachi or Bandar Abbas and further by camels through Persia to Dushak and Bukhara. The ways were very difficult, risky, tea was often subjected to spoil, and the freight cost was very expensive. That is why when in 1894 was allowed marine transit of tea from China to Batum, tea trading conditions have changed dramatically. Bombay lost its importance as a wholesale tea market, companies moved their activities directly to Shanghai and from there to Batumi, Baku, Krasnovodsk and from there send tea to Bukhara and Samarkand. There has been a significant reduction of freight from 8-9 rubles to 4 rubles in Asia. It was a major trade victory for Russian diplomacy, as it was able to refocus the tea trade for its benefit, as a result, weakened significantly the British India and the Emirate of Bukhara. St. Petersburg Treaty with China in 1881 was revised in 1913 and extended until 1921, but tax-free on 50-miles territory lifted 427. This meant that the Russian Empire, closed further its borders to Chinese goods, which filled Central Asia and other border areas of Russia. Since Russia in a trade with China has had a negative balance, she wanted to restrict trade with the Celestial Empire. —All our trade in Mongolia, Xinjiang Province, Manchuria and China in 1908, wrote the newspaper "Turkestan", —was 23 million rubles to export our goods there and 93 million rubles of import goods from China (i.e. 70 million in favor of China). Adverse influence on Russian trade with Xinjiang Province has the fact that trade is still in the hands of Asian intermediaries. ... Medium and small trade are in the hands of the Russians subjects of Andizhan people and Tashkent's sarts in Kuldja and Chuguchak. The Russo-Asiatic Bank issues loans

for goods and provides credit for large firms[21]. Russian big bourgeoisie only financed the trade with China but this trade was lead by Central Asian merchants. The main reason for this situation was the predominance in Xinjiang Province and in Kashghar of the Muslim population, with which merchants of Ferghana had antique trade links. Back in 1865, the newspaper "Golos" wrote about the passivity of the Russian merchant class: «...our merchant abstains if smells gunpowder. So it does in the Caucasus, even when it is completely appeased, providing perfect chance to use this area, allows making there enormous money by French, British, Americans, Armenians, Greeks and even Turks. ... Our merchants will calmly wait until all this will make for him a Government or foreigners. Russian Empire tried to seize markets of Afghanistan and Persia. Especially poorly evolved trade relations with Afghanistan because the Afghan Government had not allowed Russian merchants to their territories, and, basically, the trade was conducted through the merchants 430 from Bukhara and Persia. "The Afghan Government is taking all measures to hinder trade with us," wrote the newspaper Askhabad, "assigning in the Afghan-Russian border high tariffs on Russian goods. Due to its geographical position, Afghanistan should be within the scope of our industrial influence. ...The exchange of goods takes place mainly through Persia. Afghans brought in Meshed their raw materials and buy our textiles and sugar. This mediation is expensive to both of us. There are large bills: Commission to intermediaries in Persia, the fee charged by the Russian-Persian border and the difference between the cost of freight Askhabad-Mashhad-Herat and freight cost Askhabad-Kushka-Herat. Every extra arshin of chintz (fabric), excess pood sugar, which penetrate to our neighbors, stands a soldier's bayonet. Trade expansion was held through Russian possessions in the Central Asia. "On the one hand, our Government is giving out awards and composing excise on goods as though trying to encourage trade, wrote about this customs official Turkestan A. Gubarevich in his note, —on the other hand, laying the exorbitant high, almost prohibitive duties on main article of import, clearly hampers the development of trade. ... The transition of economic interests to the political ground, and as remarked in the Interagency Commission, the representative of the Ministry of Finance, through repression make the Afghan Emir to improve our trade with Afghanistan; in my personal opinion this case not only unworthy of grandeur and prestige of Russia, but it Trade relations between Russia and the Afghan Turkestan happens mainly through Bukhara merchants, as entry into Afghanistan the Russians and all foreigners except the bukharians face, wrote the newspaper "Turkestan" in a review of Russo-Afghan trade relations. Turkestan. March 17, 1913. No. 60. 431 Askhabad. 5 March 1899, no. 64. 117 seems to me that does not conform to the general direction of our policies in Asia. ... I think we should not

forget the fact that we ourselves have put Emir of Afghanistan in full political dependence on England, so what then might be talk and claim that it is more favorable to England than us. A. Gubarevich offered to create favorable conditions for the development of Russian-Afghan trade. "The main principle of our customs policy in regards to Afghanistan," he wrote, "must be the most preferential taxation of all products of Afghan origin. ... Isn't it full nonsense such as tariff rates to 80 kopecks for cotton fiber, costing 10 rubles pood and raw cotton 433 costing 2 rubles 50 kopecks for pood. Or 60 rubles per pood of Afghan shoes costing 80 rubles pood and 1 ruble 50 kopecks for Karakul costing 200 rubles pood or 120 rubles fees for simple chekmens and 50 rubles for silk cloth, embroidered with gold costing 400-500 ruble for pood. These rates have been in existence for 10 years. Anyway, it is time to eliminate for all sorts of prohibitive customs policy with Afghanistan, facilitate trade and strengthen peaceful relationship as a better basis to attract the sympathy of the Afghan border population to Russia. Persia was considered the main strategic trade partner of the Russian Empire in the Middle East. From the foregoing it can be seen that Persia played a significant role in the export of Russian goods to Afghanistan, it also actively traded with Russian Transcaucasia. «...The main items of export to Persia, wrote the newspaper —Askhabad, —are textile and sugar. The exported sugar is fully refunded excise duty, levied at us 1 ruble 75 kopecks for pood. Similarly, when exporting textile returns averaging about 4 ruble on every pood. Despite the railway almost at the border with Persia, only due to the above promotion, we conquered Persian markets where so recently dominated British goods. Russian goods were able to capture the markets of Northern Persia, constructing a Transcaspiian railroad, which lead to cost reduce of goods and gave it the opportunity to influence also to the Afghan internal trade. In addition, this railway began to play a major role in international transit of European and Oriental goods throughout Asia. For Russian merchants and factory created favorable customs conditions to compete successfully against British goods. Special circular of Department of Customs Duties from October 2, 1900 allowed merchants to export cotton products and Russian textiles (sugar, petroleum, tobacco and matches) on concessional terms to Afghanistan through the Kelif, Pend and Kushka customs. All these products were not levied, i.e., they were exempted from excise duties. In 1912, the Ministry of Finance proposed the draft plan to the State Duma —...on the unification of our entire Asian trade customs with the rest of Russia, except for trade within the Turkestan General-Governorship, Semipalatinsk area, in Bukhara customs and on coasts of the rivers Pyanj and Amu-Darya. This is very important for the development of our Asian trade because it would cancel existing of very constraining to trade, obsolete customs formalities. The trade levied excise duties, and as wrote in his

"Vsepoddanneyshiy Doklad" of 1906 Syrdarya military Governor: "Excise taxes gave this year 1,152,307 rubles 22 kopecks. More than half of the taxes are on excise duty from wines and spirits - 691.091 rubles 79 kopecks, then tobacco - 161.238 rubles 44 kopecks, sugar - 123.499 rubles 25 kopecks, and beer - 92.608 rubles 50 kopecks. Receipt of excise revenue increases noticeably every year. So in 1906, revenue exceeded by 8%, in comparison with 1904 to nearly 29%. In 1902 in Samarkand city opened customs, whose primary function was to provide oversight and taxation of tea importers. "Samarkand," wrote in his "Vsepoddanneyshiy Doklad" of 1901 Samarkand military Governor, —compared with the other cities of Asiatic Russia, is in the first place in the tea trade. It should be noted that the Turkestan and neighboring Khanates consumed tea in huge quantities and taking advantage of this, the Russian Government has constantly increased the duties on these products. In 1901, duties on black tea was 31 rubles 50 kopecks 440 for pood, the same duty on black tea was in 1894 year 25 rubles per pood. Russian Empire sought to have cotton independence, and for the implementation of these objectives, it has active customs policy towards imported cotton from the United States, which was advantageous to the Treasury and a major textile industry. Duty on imported cotton increased from 1 ruble 20 kopecks in 1891 to 4 rubles in 1903. 441 To increase duties on cotton influenced also the foreign policy of the Russian Empire. "Amplified expenses caused by the Chinese rebellion (boxer rebellion in China in 1900)," wrote the newspaper "Turkestanskiye Vedomosti", —among other activities of a financial nature have prompted the Russian Government to raise import duties on some subjects, in order to increase customs revenue; among such items turned out to be cotton fibre, which still charged a fee of 3 rubles 20 kopecks per pood; now this duty increased by 30%. Increased duties on imported cotton negatively affected on consumption of the textiles by the population, but authorities of Empire adhered to protectionist view on economic development. History of relations of the Russian Empire and Central Asia shows continuous growth of interchange of goods between them. If in 1835-1839, amount of commodity circulation of Russia with Tashkent, Khiva and Bukhara, did not exceed 3,5 million rubles, then, on the eve of the conquest of the region (1858-1862) it amounted 6,4 rubles. In 1896 total turnover of commercial traffic on the Transcaspian railway alone amounted around 65 million rubles per year, exceeding more than 10 times the amount of total Russian trade with Central It should be noted that since 1874 to 1878 imported to Russia cotton is not levied duty, and since 1879 to 1886 taxed only in the amount of 40-45 kopecks, in 1887 the fee has increased to 1 rubles 15 kopecks. Asia as it was 35 years ago 443 , and by 1914, the trade turnover between them amounted to 300 million rubles per year. By 1908, the total number of enterprises, under excise supervision increased from 41 to 63, i.e. at 53.6%; the number of places

for the wholesale of alcoholic beverages from 31 to 134, i.e. nearly 4 ½ times; finally, the excise revenues from 561,000 rubles (1890) increased to 3,032,000 rubles (1908), i.e. nearly 5 ½ times 444 .

3. Conclusion.

Every year in the Turkestan region grew up the number of collecting excises, indicating the development of domestic and foreign trade in the region. Russia exported from Turkestan cotton products (75%), cattle (10%), dry and fresh food products (4%), cottonseed oil (3%), fish (2.5%). Turkestan from Russia imported semi-finished and finished products of the textile industry (41%), food products manufacturing (13%), metal products (11%), grain (7%), chemical production products of glass and porcelain. Statistics clearly show that Turkestan mainly supplied agricultural products to Russia, which proves our thesis that Turkestan was not subjected to modernization in the European sense of the word. Turkestan served as the transit for the Russian trade in Afghanistan, Persia, and Western China. Russian Empire, most probably, always looked at Central Asia as the transport corridor to increase exports of its products to the East, and the region in this regard, quite justified all expectations of Russia. To sum up, it should be said that the protectionist policies of Russia, mostly defended the interests of the Treasury and major industrialists, in addition, in the Turkestan region helped Russia to establish itself as a catalyst for the development of cotton growing in Central Asia. Protectionism also helped Russia to expand trade with neighboring Eastern countries, as well as to affect the movement of goods across Asia and to create a real threat to English economic domination in the Middle East. Goods delivered from India in Kashghar, cost 8 rubles per pood, while Russian Turkestan only 2 rubles "-wrote one local newspaper. Turkestanskij Courier. April 4, 1909. No. 73.

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