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"THE HISTORY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FUND R-8 OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF UZBEKISTAN AND THE DESCRIPTION OF INVENTORIES (1917–1934)."

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Abstract: This article analyzes documents related to the activities of the Central Asian Department of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade of the USSR, preserved in Fund R-8 of the National Archives of Uzbekistan. Based on archival sources, the study highlights the history of domestic and foreign trade relations of the Uzbek SSR between 1917 and 1934. Furthermore, the archival files of this fund, which reflect the trade of products grown and manufactured within the republic, are scientifically analyzed from the perspective of archival source studies and document research.

Keywords: National Archives of Uzbekistan, People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade, report, Fund R-8, archival file, document, minutes, export, import.

Fund R-8, preserved in the National Archives of the Republic of Uzbekistan, serves as an essential source for studying the history of Uzbekistan's economic and trade relations between 1917 and 1934, particularly socio-economic processes and the activities of trade institutions. The formation of this fund and the composition of the documents accumulated within it represent a crucial resource, not only for reconstructing the history of trade.

Following the overthrow of the tsarist regime in the Russian Empire, all state institutions were radically reorganized or upgraded. Among these reorganized organizations was the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade of the USSR. Currently, documents pertaining to the history of Uzbekistan's trade relations during the years 1917–1934 are preserved in Fund R-8 of the National Archives of Uzbekistan.

Fund R-8 of the National Archives of Uzbekistan (NAUz) structurally consists of 15 inventories and encompasses a total of 1,660 archival files. The 1st inventory of the fund comprises files 1–539, dating from 1920 to 1929. According to archival staff, inventories 2, 3, and 4 are not present within the fund. The 5th inventory contains files 1–213 pertaining to the years 1930–1934, while the 6th inventory includes files 53–413, spanning 1927–1934. Additionally, files 13–18 for the years 1931–1932 are preserved in the 8th inventory.

Several inventories preserved in this fund, specifically the 9th inventory (files 1–174), the 10th inventory (files 1–20), the 11th inventory (files 1–21), and the 14th inventory (files 1–143), chronologically cover the same period — the years 1920–1922. It is worth noting that inventories 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 14, and 15 in the fund are compiled and preserved within a single volume.

As stated in the sources, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade of the USSR found its legal basis in the first decree "On the Monopoly of Foreign Trade," adopted by the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR on April 22, 1918, and signed by V.I. Lenin. The essence of this monopoly was formulated as follows: "All foreign trade operations are nationalized. Commercial transactions for the purchase and sale of all types of products (extractive, manufacturing industries, agriculture, etc.) with foreign states and individual trade enterprises

abroad shall be carried out on behalf of the Russian Republic by specially authorized bodies in the regions. Apart from these bodies, any export and import agreements conducted for foreign trade purposes are prohibited."

According to information provided in the documents, on March 13, 1922, a regulation on the body conducting foreign trade was introduced by a resolution of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (ВЦИК). In accordance with this regulation, the foreign trade relations of the RSFSR were set to be conducted as a monopoly, and the state trade monopoly was to be executed by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade (Наркомвнешторг).

Furthermore, the foreign trade monopoly excluded private entrepreneurs and merchants from this sector. This system prohibited any merchants possessing large capital from entering the Soviet market and engaging in commercial activities.

The trade policy of this period was an integral part of the foreign political relations of the USSR, serving as a powerful factor in establishing peaceful relations between the country and other states. As indicated in the documents, the trade policy pursued by the USSR with neighboring Eastern countries possessed distinct characteristics. On November 24, 1917, the Soviet government issued an appeal "To All the Toiling Muslims of Russia and the East." In this appeal, the Russian government declared its complete renunciation of the policies pursued by the Russian Empire toward the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East.

Furthermore, the Eastern countries bordering the USSR were closely linked to Russia by the character of their economies. These ties were further strengthened by geographic conditions and transport connections, as a result of which the USSR became the prime export market for the products of Eastern countries (cotton, wool, hides) and the most advantageous partner for supplying them with manufactured goods.

The geographical location of the Eastern countries relative to the USSR and their distance from Western markets made exchanging goods with the Soviet Union economically imperative for them. Moreover, in order to facilitate the entry of Central Asian products into the Soviet market, it is noted that the USSR introduced preferential customs tariffs for raw materials, livestock, and consumer goods imported from these countries — a system of either total exemption from customs duties or taxation at extremely low rates.

According to the data, during the initial stage, trade was primarily limited to local cross-border exchange, where transactions were conducted on an occasional basis in border areas, and international trade in most cases took the form of mutual barter.

As recorded in the documents, Russia's economic rapprochement with Eastern countries is highlighted by the establishment of the "Russian-Eastern Chamber of Commerce" organization in 1922. Furthermore, in 1928, the "Russian-Eastern Chamber of Commerce" was renamed the "All-Union Chamber of Commerce."

Sources indicate that the expansion of trade relations with Central Asian states began in 1923. Concurrently, the position of the USSR trade representations operating in Eastern countries, along with that of Soviet economic bodies managing all import-related operations, began to strengthen. According to information presented in the report documents, pursuant to the decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR dated April 23, 1918, on the nationalization of foreign trade, the responsibility for conducting trade with foreign states was vested in the foreign trade department under the Council of People's Commissars (CHK) of the USSR. In accordance with Order No. 31 of the Council of People's Commissars dated February 24, 1919, a foreign trade department was likewise established under the SNC of Turkestan[1].

Furthermore, "by Order No. 31 of the Council of People's Commissars of Turkestan dated February 24, 1919, a foreign trade department was established under the SNK. On October 21, 1919, by Order No. 57 of the Turkestan Central Executive Committee (ТурЦИК), the Regulation on the Foreign Trade Department under the SNK was approved, according to which the responsibilities of the Foreign Trade Department (Внешторг) included the following:

- Accounting for the supply and demand of exported and imported goods.
- Centralizing all transactions and settlements concerning foreign exchange of goods, and establishing agreements with the Commissariat of Finance to determine the procedure for their financing.
- Organizing cooperation with the regional food directorate for the planned procurement of various products and materials necessary to establish a systematic exchange of goods with neighboring states."
- Determining the target destination of exported and imported goods, among other duties.

Furthermore, in agreement with other commissariats, the following powers were progressively transferred to the disposal of the Foreign Trade Department: A. Consolidating (concentrating) foreign trade orders, including those of the military department; B. The right to manage all types of currency funds intended for circulation with neighboring states; C. Insurance of cargo transportation; D. Organizing the operations of commercial warehouses and grain elevators.

It was stipulated that in the process of organizing the exchange of goods with neighboring states, depending on the extent of the expansion of its activities, this department could establish regional trade districts as well as relevant subdivisions[2] and sections for important groups of exported and imported goods. The department was to be headed by a director and a deputy director appointed by the Presidium of the ЦСНХ [3].

Furthermore, a Council for Turkestan Foreign Trade Affairs operated under the department, with the director of the Foreign Trade Department simultaneously serving as the chairman of the Council for Turkestan Foreign Trade Affairs. The composition of this council included the following representatives:

A. The directors of all sub-departments of the Foreign Trade Department;
B. A representative from the Commissariat of Finance;
C. A representative from the People's Bank;
D. A representative from the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs;
E. A representative from the regional food directorate;
F. A representative from the regional council;
G. A representative from the Revolutionary Military Council (Реввоэнсовет).

Additionally, it is noted that the Council possessed the right to co-opt additional persons into its composition[4].

According to the data, the first meeting of the Council for Foreign Trade Affairs was held on November 4, 1919, during which the Regulation on the Council was reviewed. The documents state that on November 26, 1919, by a resolution of the Turkcommission, the Foreign Trade Department was established under the Turkcommission and was departmentally transferred to the jurisdiction of the Commissariat of Trade and Industry[5].

The Regulation on this department primarily envisaged the previous responsibilities, with the following functions added additionally:

Establishing the procedure for the formation and utilization of the commodity fund;

Comprehensively studying the markets of neighboring states in order to determine the most advantageous conditions and methods for trade and exchange of goods;

Superintending customs control and border guard operations.

The Foreign Trade Department was divided into the following sub-departments (подотдел):

Administration of Affairs;

Organizational Department;

Import and Export Department;

Finance and Accounting Department.

The activities of the sub-departments were governed by special regulations. Furthermore, there were sections within the sub-departments. To execute its assigned responsibilities, the Foreign Trade Department established local branches, offices, and agencies.

The People's Commissariat for Trade of the USSR (Наркомторг) was reorganized due to the shrinking share of the private sector in commodity turnover and the overriding importance gained by issues of supplying (provisioning) the country with goods. Furthermore, this reform was prompted by the necessity for specialized guidance over foreign trade, which had become increasingly complicated during the period of economic crisis in capitalist countries (1928–1933).

As stated in the sources, in order to increase export volumes, the rights of the representatives of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade (Наркомвнешторг) were expanded and clarified by a resolution of the Central Executive Committee (ЦИК) and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR dated February 13, 1931[12].

Pursuant to this resolution, the representatives of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade were tasked with the following responsibilities:

Verifying and monitoring the execution of government resolutions on foreign trade and Наркомвнешторг directives by all organizations;

Developing measures to expand exports;

Participating in the work of local organizations when establishing quotas (contingents) for products prepared for export;

Monitoring the execution of procurement plans approved by local organizations and ensuring the timely shipment of export goods;

Drawing up import plans for enterprises of republic and local significance.

According to the data, the People's Commissariat for Domestic Trade of the UzSSR was established on December 1, 1924, and was reorganized into the People's Commissariat for Foreign and Domestic Trade of the UzSSR on July 25, 1926. On November 22, 1930, the People's Commissariat for Foreign and Domestic Trade of the UzSSR was abolished, and the People's Commissariat for Supply of the UzSSR was established in its place. On July 29, 1934, the People's Commissariat for Domestic Trade of the UzSSR was re-established, and on August 20, 1938, it was transformed into the People's Commissariat for Trade of the UzSSR.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the history of the establishment of Fund R-8 was directly linked to the major geopolitical processes that took place in the Turkestan region — namely, the formation of the Turkestan ASSR, the implementation of the NEP (New Economic Policy), and the processes of national-territorial delimitation in 1924. The documents of this fund are not merely a compilation of statistical data, but serve as a primary source on the history of Uzbekistan's foreign and domestic trade relations between 1917 and 1934.

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