



TRADE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EMIRATE OF BUKHARA AND RUSSIA IN THE 19TH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the 19th century, merchants from Bukhara actively conducted trade not only in dozens of Russian cities such as Orenburg, Troitsk, Petropavlovsk, Tyumen, Astrakhan, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Kazan, but also at the Irbit, Nizhny Novgorod, Makaryev, and other trade fairs. Located at the confluence of the Oka and Volga rivers, Russia's Nizhny Novgorod Fair was considered the main warehouse for goods brought from Eastern countries and the Emirate of Bukhara. At this fair, trading also took place annually from July to the end of August.

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Hundreds of types of commercial goods were brought to this fair from the Emirate of Bukhara, including yarn, silk, cotton, silk and cotton fabrics, various types of clothing, Karakul pelts, dyes, precious stones, various leathers, dried fruits, carpets, calico, tea, indigo, and cashmere shawls. At the fair, fabrics such as "bakhti," "zandana," and calico were in high demand among the poorer population and were considered sought-after items. According to historical records, a piece of "bakhti" fabric was sold for 4-6 rubles until 1840, and from 1840 to the end of the 19th century, it was sold for 1-1.5 rubles.[1].

According to historical sources, the open importation of metal from Russia to Bukhara was prohibited until the early 19th century. However, as an exception, rare metals were brought into the emirate at the request of the Bukharan government with the consent of the Russian government. For example, in 1731, with the permission of the Russian government, 3,000 poods of copper were imported[2]. By the early 19th century, permission was granted for the unrestricted import of metal from Russia into the Emirate of Bukhara. Following this, large quantities of iron, copper, steel, and cast iron began to be freely imported into Central Asia, including the Emirate of Bukhara. The import of iron products assumed a leading role in

the trade conducted between Russia and the khanates. Between 1840 and 1850, 40,000 poods of copper, over 400,000 poods of iron, 75,000 poods of cast iron, and 25,000 poods of steel were brought into the Emirate of Bukhara from Russia through the Orenburg customs office[3].

In his article, P.S. Saveliev provided information about the travelers who had been to the Emirate of Bukhara. Furthermore, by comparing the contemporary state of Bukhara with that of the Samanid period, he noted that Bukhara still held first place among the cities of the East in terms of its economy and trade. He also stated that Bukhara played a significant role in the trade relations of Eastern countries, was a vital commercial hub for Central Asia, and that more than 4,000 Indians resided there[4].

Indian merchants brought large quantities of indigo, known as 'nil' dye, to the Emirate of Bukhara. Each pood of it was sold in Bukhara for 44 rubles. In the early 19th century, Indian merchants imported significant amounts of nil dye, as well as Kashmiri and Persian shawls, into Bukhara. Bukharan merchants, in turn, exported and sold these goods in Russia and various European countries. For instance, in 1828, a Bukharan merchant named Marqaboyev sent 600 Kashmiri shawls imported from India to the city of Orenburg to be sold. While a pair of Kashmiri shawls sold for 100 to 300 tilla in Bukhara, a single shawl in Russia was valued at a much higher price, ranging from 400 to 1,000 rubles. These items were predominantly purchased by the wealthy or by court nobles and officials. According to records, in 1809, the Governor-General of Orenburg, G.S. Volkonsky, personally placed an order and purchased 15 Kashmiri shawls of various colors at 400 rubles each, for a total of 6,000 rubles[5].

Fabrics woven from Bukharan cotton and silk were primarily purchased by poor families living in Russia's Volga, Kazan, and Siberian regions. While one arshin of inexpensive fabric sold for 1-2 kopecks in Bukhara, these same fabrics were valued at 5-6 kopecks in Russia. This not only generated substantial profits for merchants but was also considered affordable for the population. Merchants from the Bukharan and Khivan khanates exported large quantities of silver to Russia through the Orenburg customs, trading it for Russian-manufactured goods. In 1749, Bukharan merchants in Orenburg exchanged 418 poods of silver for products made in Russia[6].

Jewelry made in Russia from precious metals and stones was in high demand throughout the khanates of Central Asia. Consequently, large quantities of gold and silver coins were brought to Russia. From 1748 to 1755, 50 poods of gold and 4,500 poods of silver were sold from the Central Asian khanates. In 1749-1750, 10 poods of gold and 2,540 poods of silver were exported to Orenburg[7].

The Russian researcher I.G. Georgi paid special attention to covering the trade relations of the Bukhara Emirate with its neighboring states. He noted that livestock farming was one of the main income-generating sectors of the economy in the Emirate of Bukhara and that Indians purchased Bukhara horses for prices ranging from 30 to 80 Bukhara chervonets. Due to its favorable geographical location, the Emirate of Bukhara also held a significant position in Central Asia. Foreign countries and neighboring khanates conducted their trade relations directly through the Emirate of Bukhara. According to records, more than 15,000 camel caravans traveled to and from the Emirate of Bukhara annually. Bukharan merchants conducted trade with Russia not only through the Orenburg customs department but also via

Troitsk. Over 200 Bukharan merchants visited the trade center in Troitsk annually to engage in commerce[8].

In 1816, goods carried by 6,126 camels were exported from Bukhara to Russia, while goods carried by 5,008 camels were imported. In 1818, a total of 7,584 camel-loads of goods were brought into the Orenburg trade center from the Central Asian khanates in a single year, with 5,616 of these originating from the Emirate of Bukhara. In 1820, goods carried by 4,951 camels were sent from Bukhara to Russia. Between 1818 and 1824, trade goods valued at 3,384,854 rubles were exported annually from the Central Asian khanates to Russia. In 1824, products worth 1,228,852 rubles were exported from Bukhara. According to data from the Orenburg customs, among these exported products, one pood of precious turquoise stone sold for 100 rubles, and four robes made of silk fabric sold for 100 rubles.

In 1827, products valued at 1,207,073 rubles were exported from Bukhara and Khiva. Among these products, cotton goods were the leader (434,324 rubles), followed by cotton yarn (286,945 rubles), Kashmiri shawls (249,930 rubles), soft rags (107,457 rubles), raw cotton (1,600 rubles), woolen goods (776 rubles), dried fruits (9,070 rubles), silk and semi-silk items (3,174 rubles), turquoise (3,200 rubles), wormseed (citvariogo) (720 rubles), and Sarochin wheat (189 rubles)[9].

The Emirate of Bukhara held a leading position in the trade relations conducted between Russia and Central Asia. For instance, in 1828, a trade caravan of 3,578 camels from the Central Asian khanates arrived at the Orenburg trade center. The total value of the goods was estimated at 4,456,241 rubles. Of this, 2,480 camel loads were destined for Bukhara, 1,003 for Khiva, and 95 for Tashkent. The Orenburg trade center was considered vital in Bukhara-Russia trade relations. In 1829, 213 Bukharan merchants visited Orenburg, followed by 152 in 1833, 341 in 1835, and 388 in 1837[10].

Between 1850 and 1870, the Russian government viewed Bukharan-Russian trade with considerable distrust. During this period, commerce was primarily in the hands of merchants from Bukhara and other khanates. No matter how hard Russian merchants tried, they could not overcome the dominance of their local counterparts. This process led to a growing sense of hopelessness within the Russian government. According to records, from 1840 to 1850, Bukharan merchants exported goods to Russia valued at 7,309,000 rubles, while importing products from Russia worth 5,225,000 rubles[11].

Unable to establish themselves in the markets of Bukhara and Central Asia, Russian merchants, starting from 1852, attempted to enter these markets by trading through Kazan Tatars and Trans-Ural Kazakh Muslim merchants. V.V. Grigoryev, the chairman of the Orenburg Border Commission, cited the high trade duties as one of the main reasons for the difficulty Russian merchants faced in conducting trade in Bukhara and Central Asia and their inability to secure a place in the markets. He also writes that for Russian merchants, using the services of Muslim intermediary merchants was tantamount to taking a risk, as they feared that some of these local merchants might settle permanently in the places they traveled to[12].

Merchants from Bukhara and Central Asia were granted the right to trade freely in all cities of Russia, and the security of their persons and property was guaranteed. Subsequently, a 1 percent customs duty was imposed on all types of goods imported from the Bukharan and Central Asian khanates. Bukharan merchants rented the majority of the shops in the markets

located both inside and outside the city of Orenburg. For each shop, these merchants paid a monthly rent ranging from 15 to 35 rubles[13]. During this period, merchants from Bukhara were also permitted to live freely in Russia. Seizing this opportunity, they waited for a favorable moment to turn a good profit on goods brought from Bukhara and other regions.

Russia was one of the leading states in the Emirate of Bukhara's trade relations with foreign countries. By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the demand for goods imported from Russia remained high within the Emirate of Bukhara. Bukharan merchants freely conducted trade and commerce in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Orenburg, Orsk, Tyumen, Astrakhan, and other Russian cities.

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