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**ESTABLISHMENT AND ACTIVITY OF CUSTOMS OFFICES  
IN SIBERIA, FAR EAST AND MIDDLE ASIA FROM THE SECOND HALF  
OF THE XVIII CENTURY TO BEGINNING OF THE XIX CENTURY**

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This work studies the process of establishment and further activity of customs offices in Siberia, Far East and Middle Asia in the second half of the 18th century – beginning of the 19th century. This published article is based on legislative acts of the Russian Empire that were used while establishing of such offices. Thorough analysis of contents of the most important legislative act: Customs Regulations on Asian Trade, that became the foundation stone in practical activity of customs offices and was passed on May 30th, 1817, is presented in this article. Ways of realization of regulations' provisions in certain regions are also studied in this article.

**Key words:** customs offices, establishment, Siberia, Far East, Middle Asia.

Urgent imperative of the topic of this research lies firstly in the necessity to study history of customs matters development within the scope of history of state and law as its integral part and secondly, in the necessity to use experience of customs service organization of the past centuries and its analysis and possibly use it in the process of customs service reformation.

Works of scientists L.V. Boroditch, M.Y. Volkov, Y.I. Golovako, K.M. Kolestnikov, O.V. Morozov, G.M. Vinogradov, V.K. Kovalsky, L.N. Makarov, A. Pavlov, Y.L. Risitch, B.M. Novosad, V. Chornyi and many others should be considered the most famous and outstanding in the field of history of customs matters development [1 – 11]. In their works the aforesaid authors address different aspects and stages of establishment and development of the customs service in Ukraine and Russia including those examples from the ancient times. However, the complex process of establishing of the customs network in Siberia, Far East and Middle Asia is still left almost unstudied.

Combination of such diverse regions for collective review in the frame of studying development of customs offices network is determined by their development under unified state policy, including customs policy in regards to the regions mentioned. Apart from studying within unified chronological frame of our research, the process of establishment of customs offices in Siberia, Far East and Middle Asia, analysis of customs network establishment in the Caucasian region before 1831 will be conducted in this paragraph. Such approach is being determined not only by the previously mentioned statement on close customs policy in regards to the regions mentioned, but also by including them into combined unit by the Regulations on Asian Trade of 1817 in the Customs Administration on Asian Trade, according to which customs establishments of Caucasus and Siberia were in the common customs districts. Only with passing of *Regulations on Customs*

*Administration in Transcaucasian Territory* (№ 4621) on June 3rd, 1831, under which a special customs territory was established in Transcaucasia, the process of development of independent subdivisions in the customs system of the Russian Empire initiated in the given region.

The process of establishment of customs offices' system in Siberia took place simultaneously with the development of the region. Taking into consideration its under-population, under-development of its trade relations and state administration in this region, the process was very slow and was delayed many years. The most important establishment that oversaw almost all activity including customs matters in Siberia was Siberian Prikaz (1637 – 1763). From the Customs Regulations (№10486) that passed on December 1, 1755, we find out about all customs offices subordinated to the Prikaz. Under the Regulations the following customs offices existed in Siberia: «On Kyakhtinsk Outpost. In Tsurukhtayevo. On Chinese Border. Yamushevskaya. Semipalatnaya. Up from Irtyshsk Fortresses. On Ziungorsk Border» [12, p. 462 – 482].

Even with liquidation of Siberian Prikaz customs offices of Siberia did not lose the autonomy they processed due to their status, since in 1764 Siberian Governorate was renamed Siberian Tzardom, which consisted of Tobolsk and Irkutsk governorate generals. Independence of Siberian customs system in that period is also proven by the fact that when on November 20, 1763 supervision of all customs fees in the country was assigned to Count Minikh (No. 11975), he was told to collect according to «tariff rate port duties and octroi are to be collected except from Siberia and Orenburg, to which special rates apply, as it is written in the tariff rate itself, since Siberian Customs are under special administration of Siberian Prikaz and not under the authority of Commerce-Collegium and do not possess any special bartering» [13, p. 429 – 41].

Only in the end of the 18th century during the state's active development of customs offices network on western and southern borders of the Empire, the state turned to reforming customs system in Siberia. On October 7th, 1799 the decree was passed «On collection of duties on Ishimsk and Irtyshsk lines according to tariff rate issued for Orenburg trade; On the amount needed for upkeep of customs homes and workers and on establishment of personnel for all customs and outposts (№18141). The reason for passing of the decree was the fact that during establishment of Ishimsk and Irtyshsk lines of customs and outposts they were organized the same way the customs in European part of Russia were organized taking into consideration only some individual characteristics of local trade, and it turned out that the main list of goods going through these customs coincided with those that went through Orenburg governorate customs. Though at the same time on Ishimsk and Irtyshsk customs lines Kakhtinsk tariff rate was used. As a result of this, newly created Siberian customs were also transferred to Orenburg customs tariff. Besides that, taking into consideration the lack of qualified personnel in this region, Pavel I ordered to use handicapped people's labor instead of surveyors [14, p. 803].

At the same time (in 1799 – 1800) the personnel was also approved and established for the customs offices (№ 19141, 1489). In total, 499 people were provided for work in the given region [15, p. 363 – 375]

On October 23, 1803, the decree was passed «On establishment of Customs Outposts in Georgia and Transferring Mozdokskaya Customs Outpost into Dugout Fortress» (№21002).

Under this decree customs offices were being established in Suram, Zalk fortress, in «Shamshadil'skaya province» and near Yerevan a full customs house was established with three outposts subordinated to it» [16, p. 944 – 945]. Under the decree as of November 19, 1807 «On Adding Surveyors to Georgian Customs Offices» (№ 22699), the personnel of customs offices in Georgia was increased by 5 more people [17, p. 1331].

However, according to the data of table VII «Personnel of Various Customs Offices and Outposts», the number of workers in Georgian customs offices was as follows: Tiflis customs office (№ 23957, 10.04.1808): 7 people, in Horoshensk, Tsekhanovetsk, Goniondzosk (№ 23479, 12.02.1809): 15 people in each. In Surazh, Tsask Fortress, Shamsudilsk province (№ 21.002) 6 people each [15, p. 282 – 283].

As fast development of customs offices network in Siberia and Caucasian region initiated, the necessity for legal regulation of its activity arose, taking into consideration regional specifics as it had been done in regards to customs establishments, which activity was targeting trade with European states. On that basis on May 30th, 1817 the «Customs Regulations on Asian Trade» were passed (№ 26894). Regulations were implemented on January 1, 1818 and consisted of 6 divisions with corresponding chapters and «Establishment of Customs Administration on Asian Trade».

Division I of the Regulations «On Vessels Arrival, Their Admission into Quarantine or Getting under Outpost Authority, on Admission of Goods under Customs Authority and Their Customs Duty Clearance» consisted of two chapters: Chapter 1 «On Vessels Arrival and Their Admission into Quarantine or Getting under Outpost Authority» [18, p. 328] and Chapter 2 «On Admission of Goods under Customs Authority and Their Customs Duty Clearance» [18, p. 330].

Division 2 «*On Dispatch of Goods*» consisted on three chapters: Chapter 1 «On Preparation of Vessels for Loading» [18, p. 333], Chapter 2 «On Customs Duty Clearance and Loading Vessels» [18, p. 334] and Chapter 3 «On Release of Vessels out to Sea» [18, p. 335].

Division 3 «On Arrival of Caravans from Abroad to Customs Offices and Outposts and Customs Duty Clearance of Goods», was divided into 2 Chapters:

Chapter 1 «On Arrival of Caravans to Customs Offices and Outposts» [18, p. 337] and Chapter 2 «On Customs Duty Clearance of Goods».

Division 4 addresses the matter of goods let through customs offices and outposts [18, p. 338], Division 5 talks about the process of trade [18, p. 339], and Division 6 deals with duties taken for trafficking and goods, which value was lower than duties set for them [18, p. 340 – 341].

As for establishment of Customs Administration on Asian trade, it was divided into three customs districts:

- 1) Astrakhanskaya in Astrakhan and Caucasian governorates
- 2) Orenburgskaya in Orenburg, Tobolskaya and Tomskaya governorates including up to Bukhatarma.
- 3) Georgian in Georgia and other regions won from Persia.

Customs Administration in these districts as in the rest of the customs regions of the Empire oversaw the districts according to certain tables of organization. Customs offices as in European part of Russia consisted of a customs office administrator and members with

the corresponding number of customs officers and attendants. Customs outposts consisted of one surveyor and a certain number of attendants according to personnel requirements.

For trafficking prevention customs supervision over sea and land routes was established. On sea routes supervision consisted of surveyors with a necessary amounts of rowboats, boat's crew and rangers and the land customs supervision at customs offices and outposts consisted of surveyors and horseman rangers.

As in other customs offices in the Russian Empire, heads of customs districts were appointed and fired upon recommendation of the Minister of Finance with Tsar's approval. Administrators of customs offices, members and customs officers for heads of the districts were appointed upon recommendation of the Department of Foreign Trade with the Minister of Finance's approval. Appointment and firing of other customs staff members was carried out upon recommendation of heads of the districts with approval of the Department of Foreign Trade. Appointment and firing of secretaries and translators was carried out by customs offices with approval of heads of the districts and appointment and firing of customs officers, rangers and surveyors was made by customs offices [18, p. 342].

Chapter 4 «*On Responsibilities of District Heads*», Chapter 5 «*On Districts Heads' Authority*» [18, p.343], Chapter 6 «*On Responsibilities of Administrators of Customs Offices and of Other Customs Officers*» [18, p. 344] and Chapter 7 «*On Rights of Customs Officers*» [18, p. 345] mainly consist of principles similar to Customs Regulations on European Trade thus we won't be reviewing them closely.

Along with the Regulations this document also includes «*List of Goods Allowed and Prohibited for Import and Export*», «*Higher Ratified Rules for Duty Collection of Goods Value*» and «*Higher Ratified General Rules for Tariff Enforcement*» as of May 30th [18, p. 347]. The last document needs more detailed review, as it is crucial for determination of individual characteristics of customs offices' activity in 3 Asian districts. The abovementioned tariff was being implemented in all customs offices and outposts located in Astrakhanskaya, Orenburgskaya, Tobolskaya governorates, in Georgia, along Caucasian line in provinces adjacent to it as a result of the war with Persia but it expanded onto trade with China, which had its own tariff [18, p. 347]. According to the tariff, import of Asian goods was allowed through all customs offices and outposts but customs duties were collected only at customs offices. Exceptions to this rule were only goods traded from Kyrgyz people, customs duties collection of these goods was allowed at outposts as well. Export of goods and customs duties collection on them was also allowed only in customs offices excluding goods for Kyrgyz people, on goods for whom customs duties were allowed to be paid at outposts as well (P. 1 – 4).

For all Asian goods imported into Russia customs duties were collected in double: 1) on the amount, volume and weight of goods, which was being determined in Russian silver coin but was collected in paper money at constant exchange rate and 2) on the value of goods determined and collected in paper money under special rules. On all exported goods from Russia customs duties were collected in the amount of 1%. Merchants were given a right to argue the rated weight determined by the customs office and ask for the net weight of goods reweighting the goods without packaging. This tariff was implemented as of January 1, 1818 simultaneously with abolition of all other duties and taxes that had existed before at the boarder except for quarantine dues and last fees from vessels [18, p. 348].

According to table of organization of customs offices on Asian borders, during the given period of time the following establishments were active in that region: Astrakhanskaya customs office, Sedlistovskaya and Slashkoyeruchnaya outposts, Orenburgskaya customs office, Orskaya, Iletskaya, Uralskaya, Guryetevskaya outposts, Troitskaya customs office, Verkhneuralskaya outpost, Petropavlovskaya customs office, Presnogor'kovskaya outpost, Semipalatinskaya customs office, Ust'kamenogorskaya outpost as well as customs offices Bukharinskaya and Kizlyarskaya, Bakinskaya and Debrentskaya and Kubinskaya outposts.

Before full implementation of the Regulations it was necessary to adjust some of the organizational issues of Georgian customs district. On these grounds on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1817, it was decided before forming the district, to establish Bakinskaya and Kizlyarskaya customs offices with their outposts according to newly issued table of organization. These customs offices were to be subordinated to the Head of Astrakhansk customs district and to be subject to the new Tariff, Customs Regulations and their customs administrations were to be established. Tiflisskaya customs office with its outposts was left under the old table of organization and subject to Georgian tariff being subordinated to local government [18, p. 348] Kizlyarskaya customs office was targeting joint activity with quarantines and quarantine outposts along Caucasian line, which were acting at exchange courts and was supposed to serve Mountain people.

Ust'-Labinskaya outpost located on Caucasian line and subject to tax-free trade with Mountain people and left at a loose end was to be transferred to Skladkoyerichnaya pier and was established under new table of organization and assigned to Astrakhansk customs district (№ 26895) [18, p. 349]. All these regulations were in force only before final establishment of Georgian customs office. With organization and commencement of the district in 1828 the staff of Tiflisskaya customs office was increased significantly since it wasn't capable of carrying out its increased value of work with the help of its old staff (№1945). However, future reorganization of customs in the region was being planned and that's why this table of organization was being implemented only temporary «until final establishment of customs offices in Transcaucasus» [19, p. 381]. In fact, this customs office staff consisted only of 26 people.

During further development and administrative organization of Siberia on July 22, 1822 «The Higher Ratified Regulations in regards to Siberian Kyrgyz People» were passed, under which some changes were made to activity of customs offices in the region (№29127). In particular, under these regulations it was approved 1) to locate customs offices on Siberian lines before «official determination of actual national border», 2) to establish unification with national rules of customs offices' activity on Siberian line; 3) to collect previously determined duties.

Taking into consideration the lack of existing guarded border in Kyrgyz steppe, the main trade places of Petropavlovsk and Semipalatinsk regions were not considered ports. On that basis, the right to trade though sending caravans was given to merchants of not only the top guild but also to merchants of second guild. All foreigners coming out to Siberian lines were to cross through customs offices and outposts and to show documents issued in the steppes, which when signed by customs offices were used as passports for foreigners to show to city and territorial authorities. The same way passing through all Russian citizens



in the steppes with the exception of Combat Cossacks was to be carried out through customs offices and outposts using regular internal passports (P. 198 – 204) [20, p. 427].

In the following years development of customs offices system in Siberia took place along with the determination of rules and guidelines of its activity. So on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1834 decree was passed «On Amendment to the Customs Regulations on Asian Trade» (№ 7251) [21, p. 688]. Under this decree some of the rules of documentation flow were changed. Under the decree as of January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1837, the head of customs in western Siberia was obliged to inform Omsk regional head in regards to happenings behind the Omsk line (№ 9875) [22, p. 51]. In 1838 instead of an outpost acting in Omsk, customs office of the third class was established, and another customs office, located in Bukhtarma fortress was eliminated and instead of it a customs point was formed subordinating this division to Ust'-Kamenogorsk outpost (№12863) [23, p. 836 – 837]. As a result, staff of the new customs office consisted of 18 people and of the new customs point – of 4 people. In this capacity the system of customs offices acted all the way until 1860s when a new period of reorganization began.

To sum it all up, the process of establishment and development of customs offices in Siberia, Far East and Middle Asia has a long history and is closely associated with submission and developing of these territories. It was initiated in the XVIII century when Siberian Prikaz was assigned customs duties. However, slow development of the given regions resulted in system organization and legal regulation of customs offices in these regions beginning only in the XIX century along with passing of series of special decrees and consequently, the Regulations on Asian Trade in 1817 and «Customs Administration on Asian Trade».

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**Таран П. Ю., Змерзлий Б. В. Создание и деятельности таможенных учреждений в Сибири, на Дальнем Востоке и Средней Азии со второй половины XVIII века до начала XIX века / П. Ю. Таран, Б. В. Змерзлий // Ученые записки Таврического национального университета им. В. И. Вернадского. Серия «Юридические науки». – 2013. – Т. 26 (65). № 2-1. – Ч. 1. – С. 130-136.**

В работе рассмотрен процесс создания и дальнейшей деятельности таможенных учреждений Российской империи в Сибири, Дальнем Востоке и Средней Азии во второй половине XVIII – начале XIX в. Публикация построена на законодательных актах Российской империи, на основании которых данные учреждения были открыты. В статье дается тщательный анализ содержания важнейшего законодательного акта, ставшего краеугольным камнем в их практической деятельности, – это принятый 30 мая 1817 г. «Таможенный Устав по Азиатской торговле». Показаны пути реализации положений данного устава в конкретных регионах.

**Ключевые слова:** таможенные учреждения, становление, Сибирь, Дальний Восток, Средняя Азия.

**Таран П. Ю., Змерзлий Б. В. Створення та діяльність митних установ в Сибіру, Далекому Сході і Середній Азії з другої половини XVIII століття до початку XIX століття / П. Ю. Таран, Б. В. Змерзлий // Вчені записки Таврійського національного університету ім. В. І. Вернадського. Серія: Юридичні науки. – 2013. – Т. 26 (65). № 2-1. – Ч. 1. – С. 130-136.**

У роботі розглянутий процес створення і подальшої діяльності митних установ Російської імперії в Сибіру, Далекому Сході і Середній Азії в другій половині XVIII – початку XIX в. Публікація побудована на законодавчих актах Російської імперії, на підставі яких дані установи були відкриті. У статті дається ретельний аналіз змісту найважливішого законодавчого акту, що став наріжним каменем в їх практичній діяльності, це прийнятий 30 травня 1817 р. «Митний Статут по Азіатській торгівлі». Вказані шляхи реалізації положень даного статуту в конкретних регіонах.

**Ключові слова:** митні установи, становлення, Сибір, Далекий Схід, Середня Азія.