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TRANS-BORDER TRADE AND BUSINESS PRACTICES IN KHARKIV IN 1920S

У статті досліджується контрабандна торгівля та бізнес-практики пов'язані з нею в Харкові в роки непу. Робиться спроба проаналізувати роль концепту «кордону» в підприємницькій діяльності торгівців столичного міста. Виявлено причини появи контрабанди, її соціально-економічний характер, види товарів, шляхи проникнення, способи виявлення та боротьбу з нею.

Ключові слова: кордон, торгівля, контрабанда, посилки, дефіцит, Харків, неп.

The history of Soviet state and society has been often in the centre of attention of lots of scientists, especially it concerns 1920s. Historians learn a lot of about Soviet economical policy, everyday life, even about social anomalies during period of the New economic policy (1921 – 1929). But the problems of trans-border trade, business and related to them everyday practices require special attention of scholars.

Building on my previous research [1, 2], achievements of Ukrainian historiography [3], I would like to investigate now the place of trans-border trade in business practices in Kharkiv in 1920s. In the conditions of good's shortage everyday practices of private business have also changed. In these circumstances the main aim of this investigation is to analyze the role of "border" concept in business practices in Kharkiv in 1920s and to bring the scientific evidence that in the years of NEP in Kharkiv, capital of Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, was spread with trade of contraband goods. Also in the context of the study of trade in Kharkov during the NEP is particularly important question of the contraband trade in the city. Simultaneously with the change of the practices of private trade has transformed himself Nepman as an individual, which in turn can be seen in this study. The main sources of this investigation are archival materials.

Border, trade and Kharkiv. The concept "border" is very important for this investigation. Movement of goods across the international boundaries is a universal phenomenon. This kind of movement can be legal or illegal depending on some circumstances.

The three operational terms used in the study are border, movement and trade. The last two are also essential to our understanding of the processes that make a border. Trans-border trading has its own distinct features. It is an economic activity that can be regarded as being both internal and international. The classification of trading activities becomes complex when describing buying and selling at the border. Trading thus involves everyday buying and selling and other trading transactions.

It should be said, that Kharkiv was not the border city. It was not situated near foreign country in 1920s, but despite of this fact there was developed the illegal private entrepreneurship with special connections with trans-border trade. It was mainly based on selling the contraband goods. That's why the term "movement" is used here in connection only with goods. Movements of goods across a border in 1920s presented illegal everyday practices of Soviet traders in the conditions of shortage of goods. Some aspects of the uniqueness of this form of trans-border connections are its spontaneity, the categories of the "movers" / goods and main "actors" of this events – Nepmen. Its spontaneity is evident from its almost impulsive and repetitious manner of occurrence.

Reasons of trans-border trade in 1920s:

- Shortage of goods.

Therefore, the increase of the illegal import of goods is inextricably linked with the decrease, and the almost complete cessation of the state supply of private traders.

- Tax and administrative pressure of state organs on private traders that forced them to search for some other ways to save their business.
- Demand for some goods.

Questions about trans-border trade:

- socio-economic characteristics of the transactions;
- kind of smuggling;
- goods;
- place of departure;
- scale of smuggling in Kharkiv;
- ways of detection the contraband goods;
- traders.

Socio-economic characteristics of the transactions

The smuggling trade attracted members of virtually every Soviet social group and ethnicity along the country's vast borderline, and smuggled goods were channeled further inland as well. Introducing the New economic policy, allowing the development of the market and the different forms of ownership, the Soviet authorities at the same time retained the "commanding heights" in the sphere of foreign trade, including first of all the monopoly of its waging. The decree of the nationalization of the foreign trade was published in the years of "war communism" on April 22, 1918 [4]. Although private commerce was legalized under the New economic policy in 1921, entrepreneurs continued to be barred from foreign trade. Meanwhile, according to data assembled by the government and investigation of A. Shlyahter [5], the smuggling of goods reached unprecedented proportions. Indeed, the volume of contraband goods and the numbers of people involved in smuggling during the NEP were great. The number of illegally imported goods was so significant that, in 1923 in the report of Kharkiv guberniya's financial department it was pointed out that "the whole town is filled with them", especially tobacco [6].

Kind of smuggling. One of the types of contraband activity of Kharkiv's Nepmen was receiving parcels from abroad. The Customs Service delayed only about 1/10 of smuggled goods. Although to be exact from a legal perspective it was half-contraband form of trade. The matter is that under Soviet law it was allowed to receive parcels from relatives and different firms from abroad. Private traders quickly and efficiently built a broad network of so-called agents, private and legal persons abroad and

began systematically receive parcels. They could be as real relatives, mostly from the circle of immigrants and fictitious persons. Inside the country Nepmen also organized the extensive network among their relatives and acquaintances, who received these parcels. The total amount of them in different cities of the USSR reached 100 different representatives [7, p. 137]. Most of these received items, nearly 5/6, were not used for personal consumption, and were resold. The scale of this phenomenon was demonstrated by the fact that in February 1925 at the meeting of GPU of the Ukrainian SSR there were considered “the question of encircling the monopoly of foreign trade with the methods of systematically capturing by the citizens parcels from abroad” [8].

Goods. What goods were especially popular in contraband / trans-border trade in Kharkiv? It should be said that from the middle of 1920s there was the shortage of goods that became the trade’s problem in the years of NEP. The shortage of goods has not been liquidated, causing his transformation into a chronic problem of Soviet trade and society as a whole.

Among them were 12% of leather goods and footwear, 11 % of dry goods, 13 % of knitwear, 20 % wool fabrics, 5 % other manufactories and 27 % others goods [9, p. 136 - 137]. Despite the measures been undertaken, the number of illegal goods in the Kharkiv’s markets and shops was significant, and the “black market” continued to exist. The items of trade were mainly consumer goods, which were available and cheaper abroad (for example, saccharin, stockings and needles).

Place of departure. Most of confiscated goods in Kharkiv were sent from Germany, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Estonia, Czechoslovakia and France.

Scale of smuggling in Kharkiv. The scale of this type of semi-legal smuggling in Kharkiv, capital of Ukrainian Soviet Republic, is indicated by the following data. In October 1925 there were received 1422 parcels, in November – 1702, 13 days of December – 1002 [8].

Ways of detection the contraband goods. An important role in the identification and seizure the contraband have statements of whistleblowers on persons who had so-called “illegal” goods. As a rule there were indicated the name and address of the citizens who kept either sold smuggling under the counter [10].

Traders. Who were these traders? Mainly they were private traders that were searching for some other – illegal – ways to save their business. In Soviet Union they were cold Nepmen – people of the NEP. In conditions of tax and administrative pressure of state organs in the second half of 1920s

some adventurous businessmen decided to organize the delivery of shortage goods from abroad under the guise of parcels that were still allowed in USSR. So, it was the transformation of business practices and images of Soviet traders.

Conclusion. The concept “border” is very important in investigations of Soviet trade in 1920s, years of New economic policy. This concept didn't receive much attention in various scholarly discussions on Soviet economy and society. So it should be attentively studied nowadays. The three operational terms used in the study are border, movement and trade. The investigation of them in the context of this problem helps to understand one of the features of trans-border trade in Soviet Union. In spite of the fact of absence the borders the contraband trade was existed even in Kharkiv, capital of Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic of 1920 – early 1930s. With the help of trans-border trade Kharkiv Nepmen found scarce goods abroad. Therefore in its turn it forced to change the everyday practices of their business.

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СУСПІЛЬНА ДИФЕРЕНЦІАЦІЯ У ЗАСТОСУВАННІ АДМІНІСТРАТИВНИХ ШТРАФІВ ПО ВІДНОШЕННЮ ДО ХАРКІВ'ЯН У ПЕРІОД ЗГОРТАННЯ НЕПУ

Розглянуті особливості адміністративних правопорушень, які фіксувала міліція м. Харкова відповідно до суспільної стратифікації жителів даного населеного пункту.