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Bakhtiyor A. Alimdzhanov

Al-Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan

Shokhrukh H. Choriev

St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation

Employees of the Volga-Kama Commercial Bank Branches in Central Asia: Biographies and Activities at the Turn of the 20th Century in the Context of Imperial Periphery

Abstract

The article studies biographies of the employees of the Kokand, Samarkand and Tashkent branches of the Volga-Kama Commercial Bank (VKCB). The Volga-Kama Commercial Bank had an extensive network in the Central Asian region (4 branches). The Volga-Kama Commercial Bank is considered the first large imperial commercial bank, which opened its branch in Tashkent in 1893. The Volga-Kama Bank tried to take over the export of cotton and fruit. Unfortunately, the authors have found no data on the personnel of the Namangan agency of the VKCB. The article draws on archival materials from the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA). When compiling the portrait of a bank employee, their age, education, service life, previous place of work, marital status, religion, and origin have been taken into account. Based on this data, the authors have been able to determine the professionalism of the working personnel of the VKCB branches in Central Asia. For the first time in world historiography, the biographies of employees of the Central Asian departments of the VKCB have been studied. The authors note that the staff of the VKCB was not professional, as there were few experienced personnel to develop banking on the periphery of the empire. Despite all difficulties, the bank management tried to attract most promising young specialists from local Russian population of the second generation to work in the bank. The local Russian population knew local languages, customs, and local economy, which made them indispensable for successful functioning of banking in the imperial periphery. Imperial banks also recruited non-Russian people. Basically, non-Russian population was involved as translators and advisers on loan granting. During the First World War, local branches of the VKCB began to engage women due to personnel shortage, mostly noble girls graduated from local gymnasiums. It should be noted that the main staff of the VKCB branches consisted of people under 35 years old. In most cases, only local directors had a degree in finance or economics. In the Central Asian branches of the VKCB, there were many teachers and former military personnel among the staff. Despite all the difficulties in recruiting personnel, the Volga-Kama Commercial Bank branches in Central Asia showed good results due to specific economic conditions in the Turkestan General Government.

Keywords

Personal provenance sources, Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA), Volga-Kama Commercial Bank, Central Asia, Turkestan, Tashkent, Kokand, Samarkand, personnel,

biography.

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About the authors

Alimdzhanov Bakhtiyor Abdikhakimovich, PhD in History, associate professor, Al-Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies of Uzbekistan, assistant professor, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, +9-987-126-254-71, balimdjanov@gmail.com

Choriev Shokhrukh Kholturaevich, postgraduate student at St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, 8-812-328-20-00, gundogan1869@gmail.com

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