
CONTEMPORARIES ON THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE EMPIRE OF NADIR SHAH

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Abstract

In the 18th century the general economic crisis in the Safavid state led to political decline. The pressure of the Shiite clergy under Shah Sultan Hussein aroused the outrage of the Sunni minority in the border regions, in particular, the Ghilzai Afghans in Kandahar, which ended in 1722 with their capture of the capital of the Safavid state, Isfahan. By this time, the central and eastern regions were in the hands of the Afghan tribes, the Caspian regions - in Tsarist Russia, and Azerbaijan, Shirvan and adjacent regions - in the Ottoman Empire. The Safavid prince Tahmasib, who fled from the besieged capital, declared himself the rightful ruler of Iran - Shah Tahmasib II (pr. 1722-1732). The revival of the national spirit began in 1726 when Nadir Quli Khan from the Turkic tribe Afshar joined the Takhmasib Shah. The army under the leadership of Nadir, by the end of 1729, having won a victory over the Afghans in three decisive battles, conquered Isfahan, in 1730 began the liberation of Azerbaijan from the Ottoman Turks and in 1732 - the Caspian regions from the Russian troops. By 1736, the territory of the Safavid state was completely cleared of foreign invaders.

Keywords: Nadir Shah, contemporaries, economic situation, taxes

According to Mohammed Kazim's information in *Alam arai-i Nadiri*, Nadir, who rose to the rank of commander-in-chief of the army, Shah Tahmasib II, paid great attention to improving the economic situation in the state. The author of the source reports on the amazing ability of Nadir, once he saw a settlement and learned about its needs, to keep these questions "in the highest memory", studying the possibilities of eliminating the destruction required for the improvement of expenses. After a thorough study of the situation, he "published a ferman for its restoration" (9, p. 11, 136), which is confirmed by the reports of another contemporary of Muhammad Hashim in his *"Rustam at-tavarih"* that Nadir had an extraordinary mind and phenomenal memory, "never forgetting what was once heard" (5, p. 181).

It is known that in order to improve the abandoned and uncultivated lands, Nadir issued a number of decrees that farmers could take abandoned agricultural lands for plowing and restore the irrigation system. The hometown of Muhammad Kazim, the author of *"Alam arai-i Nadiri"* - Merv, on the improvement of which Nadir threw all his efforts, so that the city became a food base with "a large number of barns and agricultural products" during a future campaign to India (9, p. 610).

As you can see, at the beginning of his career, Nadir tried to implement measures aimed at alleviating the tax burden. So, in 1731, he removed five heavy taxes and taxes from the population of Khorasan for three years (9, p. 201), in the same year, in honor of the birth of his first grandson Shahrukh Mirza, he granted a tax exemption for one year and distributed alms to the poor Herat. He handed out 12 thousand tumans and various goods to the poor people of Azerbaijan, Iraq and Khorramabad, and to the poor people of Mashhad, 1 thousand tumans and 1 thousand harvars of grain (9, p. 239-40).

Later in 1734, by order of Nadir, some taxes were also removed from the inhabitants of Isfahan for three years (9, p. 352-3).

This information is confirmed by the reports of the English agent Jonas Hanway that at this time Nadir really distributed food to lonely peasants and exempted them from paying taxes (3, p. 286).

It should be noted here that, unlike Shah Tahmasib II, who began his reign by extorting money from the inhabitants who survived the Afghan invasion, Nadir, taking care of alleviating the tax burden of the people, granted exemption from taxes, distributed alms to the poor, who reigned in Isfahan. At the request of Tahmasib, Muslims had to pay 4 thousand tumans, Armenians - 600, Indians - 300, Jews - 100 tumans (2, p. 7-8).

However, later after the dismissal of Shah Tahmasib II in 1732 and the proclamation of his young son Abbas as shah, under whom Nadir declared himself regent, and especially, after being elected shah, the latter's policy underwent changes. So, under Nadir Shah, the positions of the rulers of the vilayats began to be sold at higher prices than under Shah Tahmasib: for the place of the ruler of Isfahan and its environs, it was paid 10 thousand more fogs than before - 80 thousand fogs (2, p. 18- nineteen).

After coming to power in 1736, Nadir Shah made significant changes in the financial sphere: he created a system according to which, on the one hand, the management of the entire financial department was personally subordinate to the Shah, and, on the other hand, to maintain strict control over all monetary funds flowing into the treasury, management was decentralized. The entire state was divided into 4 vilayats: Azerbaijan, Georgia and other possessions in the Caucasus, Persian Iraq, Khorasan and Fars, after the conquest of India a new province was formed. In each vilayat, Nadir Shah appointed mustofi al-mamalik to compile financial reports, and mustoufi al-mamalik was also appointed to India "of all income and expenses of the Hindustan vilayat" (9, p. 457).

During the reign of Nadir Shah, changes were also introduced in the methods of paying officials and the military. For the governors of the regions and tax collectors, decrees were issued, according to which all revenues were given to the shah's treasury, and all officials and military were paid a salary from the state. Thus, with the introduction of the fixed salary system, officials lost control over the tax system. According to Muhammad Kazim, from now on, the rulers of the vilayat (hakims) and tax collectors (crushed) could not interfere with the

“arrival and consumption of the vilayat”: each of them was assigned a salary from the collected money - up to 1,000 tumans per year (9, p. 457).

According to the "Ruzname (Diary)" of Mirza Muhammad, kalantar of Fars, who collected taxes in this province, after suppressing the uprising of the Bakhtiyari tribe in 1735-6 in Fars in 1735-6, in order to strengthen control, Nadir ordered a new land assessment of Fars with all its income and expenses. including taxes and taxes paid by peasants. Not only the lands of the “khalese”, but also those belonging to the seyids, ulama and the nobility of the land, were subject to assessment, but also private property turned into waqf (10, p. 13; 7, p. 183).

According to another farman, published by Nadir Shah in Kabul, mutawwali (manager of waqf) and tiuldars were deprived of their lands, since from now on these lands belonged to the lands of "khalese", the income from them was transferred to the management of "divan-i khalese" (7, p. 181, 183; 10, p. 13), and tax had to be paid from the tiul for 8 years (1, p. 13).

According to Hasan Fasai's "Farsname-i Nasiri", after the revaluation of Fars, Nadir Shah issued a decree on the revaluation of the lands of Azerbaijan, which was re-issued in 1741, as well as a decree concerning Isfahan. After the completion of the compilation of new daftars (registers), the same form of land valuation was to be carried out throughout the country (7, p. 181, 200-1). The results of the revaluation of lands were included in a new land register called "daftar-i rakabeh-i Nadiri". The new daftars included detailed descriptions of villages, types of land tenure and income estimates with all changes in the structure of land tenure made by Nadir (6, p. 36-8). It is known that due to the accuracy of the data contained in this book, both Kerim khan Zend and the Qajars took it as the basis for accounting for their tax system (10, p. 325).

The tax system under Nadir Shah remained the same as it was under his Safavid predecessors, with the only difference: the amount of taxes and duties collected and the proportion of their distribution were changed. Messages from modern Persian-language sources help not only to create an idea of existing in the XVIII century. taxes and duties, but also to clarify their terminology. Constant military campaigns and hostilities put the army in a privileged position in the Afsharid state, as J. Perry rightly notes, “the national economy was placed at the service of the victorious army and was ruthlessly subordinated to its needs” (9).

Most of the taxes and duties in the state went to the maintenance of the army. Nadir Shah, who was constantly in need of money to maintain his army, collected additional fees from the population, which even foreign trading companies could not avoid. The population of the empire was also burdened with extraordinary collections of food, fodder, uniforms and weapons for the army. In addition to money and siyursat, auxiliary work was constantly required for the army, therefore, orders were often received from various artisans demanding to arrive at a military camp and places of military operations.

According to the testimony of Mirza Muhammad, kalantar Fars, when during the Oman campaign the sardar of Fars and Oman stopped in Bendar Abbas, it was decided that the salary

and supplies (mawajab v siyyursat), as well as the daily needs of the army should be collected from the inhabitants of the province of Fars. Moreover, wages and supplies will be paid not from the provincial treasury (mal-i divani), but from vodzhukhat (tax on livestock and real estate). In particular, 19 thousand 400 tumans were demanded from kalantar Shiraz. But due to the severe devastation of many areas, this turned out to be not an easy task - money and food could be collected only thanks to the despotism of the tax collectors of city taxes. According to Mirza Muhammad, daily fees in kind were received from the districts to Fars, from which the kalantars gave salaries to the Uzbek, Afghan and Kyzylbash troops, which covered the needs of the troops in the "siyursat". And thus, in Fars, they were able to collect enough funds in the form of cash, agricultural products, food and clothing (10, p. 27-8).

The authors of Persian-language sources also report frequent cases of abuse by officials, tax collectors, overstating the required amounts, appropriating and hiding huge sums from the treasury. So, according to the kalantar of Fars, under the guise of various taxes from all classes - nobility, merchants, Muslims, Christians, Jews, the rich and the poor, 300 thousand fogs were collected. In addition, extraordinary taxes were usually collected by force and soldiers were involved in the collection of taxes, and the despotic behavior and extortion of tax collectors and officials, described in the writings of contemporaries, further worsened the situation of the taxable population. According to the testimony of kalantar, in Fars, the soldiers involved in the collection of taxes forced the residents of Samghin, who had never paid taxes before, to pay the debts for the past years (10, p. 20-22).

Muhammad Kazim, reporting on the increase in taxes and duties in the 40s, says that those who avoided paying taxes and other taxes on the "sofa" faced deprivation of their eyes and tongue (9, p. 939), and those who those who could not collect the required amount, took their wives and children and sold them to European and Indian merchants (9, p. 937-8).

In 1747, the whole country was gripped by uprisings, tyrannically suppressed by Nadir Shah. The sums of money he demanded reached crazy proportions, and brutal beatings and murders took place everywhere. Nadir's mental disorder against the background of excessive cruelty and greed became unbearable, and as a result of a conspiracy of close relatives and associates in June 1747, Nadir Shah was killed in his camp near Mashhad (8, p. 9-10).

So, based on the reports of modern sources, we can come to the conclusion that at the beginning of his career, Nadir took all possible measures to improve the condition of the cities and villages of the Safavid state. But all these measures aimed at easing the tax burden were most likely of a populist nature: he did everything to enlist the support of the people and look favorably in comparison with Shah Tahmasib. After the coronation of Nadir Shah in 1736, in order to take control of the tax system, he made changes not only in the financial sphere, in the methods of paying officials and the military, but he also made a new assessment of the land property of Fars, Azerbaijan, Isfahan.

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