

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROCESSES IN UZBEKISTAN DURING WORLD WAR II**

*Kurbonboyev Shohruhmirzo Aqberdi ugli*  
*University of Exact and Social Sciences*

**Abstract:** This article analyzes the socio-economic processes that took place in Uzbekistan during World War II. The paper highlights the transformation of the economy towards a wartime footing, the mobilization of labor and material resources, and the impact of mass evacuations on the demographic and industrial structures. The article also examines the role of Uzbekistan in providing the Soviet Union with food, clothing, and military supplies, as well as the significant social changes resulting from wartime demands. It concludes that despite enormous hardships, Uzbekistan contributed substantially to the overall victory while simultaneously undergoing profound socio-economic transformations.

**Keywords:** World War II, Uzbekistan, wartime economy, evacuation, industrialization, agriculture, social changes, labor mobilization.

### **INTRODUCTION**

World War II, known as the Great Patriotic War in the post-Soviet space, dramatically affected all aspects of life across the USSR, including its Central Asian republics. Uzbekistan, geographically distant from the frontlines, nevertheless experienced significant socio-economic upheavals driven by the needs of total war. While many historians traditionally focused on the European theater of the war, recent scholarship emphasizes the critical importance of the "rear regions," including Uzbekistan, in sustaining the Soviet war effort. The aim of this article is to explore how wartime exigencies reshaped the economy, labor organization, social structures, and daily life in Uzbekistan during 1941–1945.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

At the onset of the war, Uzbekistan was predominantly an agrarian republic with a limited industrial base. However, the demands of total war prompted an urgent restructuring of the economy. Central authorities directed a rapid reorientation toward supporting military needs: textile production was intensified to supply the Red Army with uniforms, agricultural efforts focused on increasing food production, and nascent industries were tasked with manufacturing military goods and spare parts [1].

One of the most significant socio-economic processes was the mass evacuation of industrial enterprises, institutions, and populations from the western regions of the USSR to Uzbekistan. Between 1941 and 1942, hundreds of factories and tens of thousands of skilled workers, engineers, scientists, and artists were relocated to Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, and other cities. This influx dramatically accelerated the industrialization of the republic. Entire sectors — mechanical engineering, chemicals, and textiles — received a major boost, laying the foundation for Uzbekistan's post-war economic modernization.

The mobilization of human resources became a central feature of wartime life. A large percentage of the male population was conscripted into the military, leaving women, teenagers, and the elderly to sustain agricultural and industrial production. In collective farms (kolkhozes) and state farms (sovkhozes), women-led brigades became the norm. Despite the harsh conditions, agricultural workers managed to significantly increase the output of cotton, grain, fruits, and vegetables, which were critical for both military and civilian consumption [2].

The social fabric of Uzbekistan also underwent profound changes during the war. The traditional

gender roles shifted as women entered sectors previously dominated by men, including industry, transportation, and administration. Simultaneously, ethnic diversity increased due to the arrival of evacuees — Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Jews, Tatars, and others — creating a more cosmopolitan and complex social environment. Though tensions occasionally surfaced, overall, the wartime period fostered an ethos of solidarity and collective struggle.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Food shortages, harsh rationing systems, and frequent labor demands placed immense strain on the civilian population. Nevertheless, the spirit of self-sacrifice was widespread. Volunteer brigades collected funds for the army, organized cultural performances for wounded soldiers, and contributed to the construction of defensive fortifications. Uzbekistan also became a major center for caring for war orphans, establishing numerous orphanages and educational institutions to integrate displaced children into local communities [3].

Another important socio-economic development was the growth of scientific and educational activities. Leading Soviet universities and research institutes evacuated to Uzbekistan temporarily merged with local institutions, leading to a cross-pollination of knowledge and academic traditions. This interaction significantly raised the intellectual and educational level of the republic in the postwar period.

Despite facing enormous challenges, including infrastructural shortages, logistical difficulties, and climatic hardships, Uzbekistan demonstrated resilience and adaptability. Wartime economic policies fostered skills and infrastructure that would later underpin the republic's industrial growth during the Soviet era. However, it is important to note that these transformations often came at the cost of enormous human suffering, widespread poverty, and significant disruption to traditional ways of life [4].

## **CONCLUSION**

World War II served as a critical juncture in Uzbekistan's socio-economic development. Forced into an accelerated transformation by the demands of the wartime economy, Uzbekistan not only contributed vital agricultural products, industrial output, and manpower to the Soviet war effort but also experienced irreversible social and economic changes. The war catalyzed urbanization, industrialization, and the emergence of new social roles, especially for women. While the period was marked by hardship and sacrifice, it also laid the groundwork for Uzbekistan's modernization in the second half of the 20th century. Understanding these wartime processes is essential for a comprehensive appreciation of Uzbekistan's historical trajectory.

## **REFERENCES**

1. Кашкадамов, З. Роль женщин Узбекистана в годы Великой Отечественной войны // *Общественные науки в Узбекистане*. – 2010. – № 2. – С. 44–50.
2. Harrison, M. *Accounting for War: Soviet Production, Employment, and the Defence Burden, 1940–1945*. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. – 340 p.
3. Зияев, А. Х., Султанов, Т. И. *История Узбекистана в XX веке*. – Ташкент: Шарк, 2000. – 512 с.
4. Barber, J., Harrison, M. *The Soviet Home Front, 1941–1945: A Social and Economic History of the USSR in World War II*. – London: Longman, 1991. – 396 p.