



Industry and Agriculture of the Kashkadarya Oasis During the Second World War

Panjiyev Adham*

Karshi State University

*Correspondence: Panjiyev Adham
Email: a.panjiyev@gmail.com

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Introduction

During the years of the Second World War, the Kashkadarya oasis, like all regions of Uzbekistan, became an active labor front behind the lines. The war had a profound impact on all sectors of the national economy, particularly on industry and agriculture. During this period, the main task of the national economic system was to meet defense needs by supplying food products and industrial raw materials.

In the Kashkadarya region, industrial production during the war years was primarily organized in the form of small enterprises, cooperatives (artels), and workshops, whose activities were reorganized under state control. Artels such as “Uchqun,” “Guliston,” “Qizil Sharq,” and “Stalin” produced clothing, tools, and consumer goods for the front. At the same time, cotton growing, grain cultivation, and livestock breeding sectors were rapidly expanded.

Methodology

The economic and social life of Uzbekistan, particularly the Kashkadarya oasis during the Second World War, has been studied in historiography across several stages. Scholars of the Soviet period approached this issue mainly from Marxist-ideological perspectives, interpreting the wartime national economic activity within the framework of

Abstract: *This study aims to analyze the development and transformation of industry and agriculture in the Kashkadarya oasis during the Second World War, focusing on the role of local enterprises, collective farms, and state policies in supporting the wartime economy. The research employs a historical method, using archival documents, periodicals, and secondary literature to examine economic activities between 1941 and 1945. The findings reveal that despite severe labor shortages, resource constraints, and wartime mobilization, the Kashkadarya region significantly expanded industrial production through artels and workshops, while agricultural output—particularly cotton, grain, livestock, and sugar beet—was maintained and, in some cases, increased. The study demonstrates that the coordinated efforts of state institutions, local authorities, and the population enabled the region to make a substantial contribution to the Soviet wartime economy. These results highlight the importance of regional economic resilience and organized labor on the home front during the Second World War.*

Keywords: *Kashkadarya Oasis, Second World War, Industry, Agriculture, Artels,*

the “socialist labor front.” In this regard, researchers such as R. Kh. Aminova and A. Jumanov assessed the economic development of Uzbekistan, including the Kashkadarya region, during the war years as achievements of Soviet policy.

In the years of independence, however, the issue has been studied from the standpoint of historical truth and national interests. For example, contemporary scholars such as Yu. Ergasheva, N. K. O’ljaboyeva, and D. K. O’ljaboyev have presented a more realistic picture of the socio-economic life of the region during the war. They examined the activities of cooperatives, local industrial enterprises, collective farms (kolkhozes), and state farms (sovkhozes) in the Kashkadarya oasis based on archival documents, periodicals such as “*Pravda Vostoka*” and “*Qizil O’zbekiston*”, as well as materials from local archival collections.

Result and Discussion

In 1940, most of the artels in the Qashqadaryo region were concentrated mainly in the Kitob district (7 artels), Beshkent district (7 artels), and Shahrisabz district (8 artels). These areas had long been centers of traditional craftsmanship, with skills passed down from generation to generation. Each artel operated several workshops [1:11]. Kitob district led in establishing workshops, which is unsurprising given its historical reputation as a hub of craftsmanship [2:148].

As in other regions of Uzbekistan, industrial production in the Qashqadaryo region during this period consisted mostly of small enterprises or workshops. For example, in 1942, the region had 309 mills, 408 oil presses, 77 blacksmith workshops, and 46 workshops producing spare parts for transportation. Their numbers increased in subsequent years: by 1943, the number of mills had reached 352, and oil presses remained at 408, while blacksmith workshops continued to operate. However, during this period, industrial enterprises faced numerous difficulties due to wartime conditions. Raw materials and electricity were in short supply, and the state imposed heavy obligations on enterprises. Fulfilling these planned targets required significant labor resources and funding [1:11–12]. During the war years, a cotton-processing plant in Shahrisabz produced 6,037 tons of cotton fiber annually, while a winery in Kitob produced 6,453 decaliters of wine per year [3:150].

The industrial sector of the Qashqadaryo region had to manage complex tasks similar to those faced by other rear districts during the war. Labor shortages were acute. In 1943 alone, 10,835 people from the region were mobilized into the active army. More importantly, skilled workers and advanced equipment from many industrial branches were transferred to defense enterprises.

According to Resolution No. 1749 of the Council of People’s Commissars of the Uzbek SSR on mobilizing labor for the textile industry, and in accordance with GOKO’s Resolution No. 1549 dated November 12, 1943, the Committee for Labor Accounting and Distribution of the USSR Council of People’s Commissars established the following measures to improve the functioning of textile enterprises:

1. In line with the Decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet dated August 7, 1943, 3,000 workers from urban and rural populations were to be mobilized to work in textile enterprises of the Uzbek SSR.
2. Additionally, 1,800 adolescents aged 14 to 18 were to be sent to textile vocational schools through orphanages under the People's Commissariat of Education and NKVD reception centers.
3. The responsibility for providing housing, clothing, food, and accommodations for mobilized workers and students was assigned to the People's Commissariat of the Textile Industry.
4. Regional executive committees were instructed to ensure timely implementation and supervision of mobilization measures [4:55].

Following this government directive, the proportion of women working in industrial enterprises increased significantly. According to statistical data, by the end of 1942, women made up 63.5% of industrial workers and 65% of agricultural workers. In contrast, before the war in 1940, women accounted for only 43% of the total industrial labor force in the republic [5:37].

The "Uchqun" artel in Karshi city held one of the leading positions in the industrial system of the region. Measures were taken to adapt the activities of this enterprise to wartime needs. Significant work was carried out in training personnel, fulfilling increased production tasks, and improving labor productivity. In the second half of 1941, 72 workers of the artel exceeded the production plan by 150–200 percent and more. Workers such as Zaripova, Nuriddinova, G'ulomova, Amirqulova, and Bo'ronova emerged as leaders within the collective. Short-term training courses were opened under each artel to prepare workers. In particular, more than 70 specialists were trained through the preparatory process organized at the "Uchqun" artel. These measures contributed to the expansion of the enterprise's production capacity. For example, in 1944 the "Uchqun" artel produced 21,351 military shirts and 20,933 pairs of gloves for the active army [6:82–84]. In addition, the range of products increased, exceeding one hundred varieties.

In March 1943, according to the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Qashqadaryo Region was established separately from Bukhara Region. The newly formed region consisted of 12 districts, 112 village councils, 3 settlements, 1,353 population centers, 686 collective farms, and 6 state farms [7:1].

After Qashqadaryo Region separated from Bukhara, changes also occurred in the industrial sector. The amount of capital allocated for local industry increased. Consequently, the volume of production at local industrial enterprises grew. In the center of Ko'kbo'loq District, the "Guliston" artel began operating, while in Qamashi District workshops producing carts, boots, and soap were established. In 1943, 68 industrial enterprises operated in Qashqadaryo, of which 12 were located in city and district centers. Twenty-nine enterprises were industrial artels, and ten were united artels [7:4–5].

During the Second World War, the Karshi Sewing and Footwear Factory played an important role in developing the industrial sector of Qashqadaryo Region. On 19 July 1943,

according to Resolution No. 2 of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the “Karshi No.10 Sewing and Footwear Factory” was established. A special organizational committee was formed under the government’s instruction to launch the factory. The factory was constructed using machinery transferred from the war front and restored for operation [8:26]. For construction, 20 cubic meters of timber and 10 cubic meters of boards for manufacturing equipment were allocated. Under the guidance of the regional organizational committee, major construction trusts – “Oblmestprom” (regional local industry) and “Oblmnogopromstroy” – carried out the initial organizational work [9].

Several workshops—including footwear, knitwear, and weaving—were launched at industrial enterprises across Qashqadaryo Region. To increase agricultural production for the front, the manufacture of plows, sickles, carts, and other agricultural tools was intensified. In Koson and Beshkent districts, brick-making and pottery workshops were established [10]. Despite a shortage of labor, the Stalin Artel collective in Shahrisabz District fulfilled the 1941 production plan by 109.3 percent as of December 1 and achieved 128.8 percent in 1942. In the second half of 1941, the artel produced an additional 45,818 rubles’ worth of goods at constant prices.

During the war years, continuous efforts were made to improve the operation of cotton-processing plants. For example, the team of the Kitob Cotton Processing Plant, which was part of the Bukhara Cotton Trust, produced 6,544 tons of lint cotton. In total, 9,242 tons of cotton were processed in the region in 1943, resulting in 4,500 tons of fiber and 5,624 tons of seed [11]. The Kitob cotton plants were tasked with producing an additional 4,122 tons of products, and it should be noted that they fulfilled this task by 103.2 percent. The same additional production target of 4,122 tons was assigned to the cotton plants in Kogon, Bukhara, G’ijduvon, Karmana, Qorako’l, and Kitob [12:65].

These processes were fully reflected in the agriculture of Qashqadaryo Region as well. In 1941, the people of Qashqadaryo were the first to exceed the cotton production plan, delivering 48,117 tons of cotton to the state. Despite the mobilization of 10,835 people to the front and 7,286 people to industrial enterprises in 1943, 21,000 hectares of land were sown with cotton, and 13,895 tons of cotton were delivered to the state. The sharp increase in field work—particularly the expansion of grain fields and the introduction of sugar-beet cultivation—led to an increase in the average number of workdays per collective farmer. Between 1942 and 1944, 583,000 tons of grain were harvested in the region. In addition, 460 tons of silk cocoons and various other agricultural products were produced. The heroic labor of Qashqadaryo residents on the home front was no less significant than the heroism shown on the battlefield. Thanks to the united efforts of the population, the country received large quantities of grain, cotton, meat, and raw materials for industrial needs [13:25–27].

During the Second World War, a new branch of agriculture—sugar beet cultivation—was introduced in Uzbekistan. The regions of Samarkand, Fergana, Tashkent, and Qashqadaryo were designated to specialize in growing sugar beet. In 1942, 65,000 hectares were planted with sugar beet, and in 1943, this figure reached 70,000 hectares. During the war years, Uzbekistan produced one-quarter of all sugar manufactured in the Soviet Union.

In 1941, 4,700 hectares of land were planted with cotton seeds in 25 villages of Beshkent District. In the village of Cho'li Ota, 625 hectares were allocated for cotton cultivation, yielding 28.5 centners of cotton per hectare [14:47]. Leading cotton pickers such as Dehqonboy Rasulov, Boltaboy Ochilov, and Salomat Niyozova harvested 100 kg of cotton per day or more [15:96]. That same year, Cho'li Ota achieved 101.1 percent of its grain delivery plan and 110 percent of its livestock product delivery plan. Much of this success was attributed to Cho'li Begimqulov, a native of Dasht village in Beshkent District.

When Qashqadaryo Region was established in March 1943, during a session of the Regional Soviet of People's Deputies, Cho'li Begimqulov—who had been serving as Chairman of the Beshkent District Executive Committee—was unanimously elected Chairman of the Regional Executive Committee. While most executive officials traveled in vehicles such as “Polutarka,” “GAZ-67,” or “Emka,” Cho'li Begimqulov often traveled on horseback between the farms of Beshkent, Koson, Guzar, and Qamashi districts. He stayed close to farmers and livestock breeders, discussing with them the urgent wartime need to deliver more food to soldiers and factory workers—those producing weapons, tanks, aircraft, and ammunition, as well as clothing. He encouraged residents to increase the volume and improve the quality of supplies, including clothing, felt products, carpets, butter, and dried fruits for the front. He also led initiatives to collect these items and send them to the battlefield.

At the meeting of the Beshkent District Executive Committee held on 27 December 1941, the issue of “re-registering citizens of military age and those listed on military records” [17:8] was discussed within the framework of mass mobilization. The plan for “delivering horses to the Red Army” [17:11] had been approved two months earlier. For this reason, the Jeynov Village Council decided to temporarily release horses engaged in grain harvesting from agricultural work and assign them to military purposes and care.

Significant progress was achieved in improving the quality of karakul pelts. In 1938, only 23.6% of the pelts produced in farms were classified as first-grade, whereas in 1939 this figure increased to 57.8%, in 1941 to 61.3%, and in 1942 to 67.2%. Some collective farms achieved even higher results. For example, in the Oxunboboyev kolkhoz of Beshkent District, 85% of the karakul pelts were submitted as first-grade. Similar results were recorded in the “Pomuq” farm as well [18:31–36].

In 1944, with the liberation of territories previously allocated for sugar beet cultivation, the area assigned to Uzbekistan for this crop was reduced. During that year, four regions of the republic—namely, Tashkent (5,900 ha), Fergana (14,300 ha), Samarkand (18,800 ha), and Qashqadaryo (1,000 ha)—were allocated land for sugar beet cultivation [19:122].

Growth in the livestock sector was observed, and the number of livestock increased; however, the plan for delivering meat to the defense fund was not fulfilled. For instance, Namangan, Surxondaryo, Khorezm, Qashqadaryo regions, and the Karakalpak ASSR all failed to meet their meat delivery targets [19:17]. In particular, more than 2,000 head of

livestock perished in each of the “Chorvador” and “Muborak” state farms of Qashqadaryo Region [14:47].

Conclusion

In conclusion, during the war years, Qashqadaryo Region, as one of Uzbekistan’s key agricultural centers, worked tirelessly to increase productivity. Along with cotton cultivation, efforts were intensified to improve food supply for the army by expanding the production of grain, sugar beet, and melon crops. Despite numerous challenges, new agricultural lands were developed, and irrigation facilities continued to be constructed across the region.

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