

Historical And Political Basis of The Evacuation Process During World War II

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Received: 30 November 2025 **Accepted:** 23 December 2025 **Published:** 30 December 2025

ABSTRACT

This article examines the historical and political foundations of the evacuation policy implemented in the Soviet Union during the Second World War, with particular attention to the strategic role of Uzbekistan in this process. Under wartime conditions, the urgent need to preserve the population, industrial enterprises, and institutions of science and culture transformed evacuation into a key state-level political strategy. The study analyzes the legal and organizational mechanisms that regulated evacuation activities and evaluates their economic, demographic, and social consequences. Special emphasis is placed on Uzbekistan's geographical safety, labor resources, and growing industrial capacity, which significantly enhanced its strategic importance within the Soviet Union during the war years. The research also explores the ideological and moral dimensions of evacuation, highlighting its function in mobilizing society and fostering social cohesion in the rear. The findings demonstrate that evacuation policy not only contributed to sustaining the war effort but also reshaped Uzbekistan's role within the Soviet political and economic system, leaving a lasting impact on its historical development.

Keywords: Second World War, evacuation policy, Soviet Union, Uzbekistan, strategic region, industrial evacuation, population migration, labor resources, rear front, historical experience.

INTRODUCTION

The Second World War (1939–1945) represents one of the most transformative and catastrophic periods in modern history, reshaping global political structures as well as social, economic, and demographic systems. In the initial phase of the war, the rapid expansion of military operations across the Soviet Union created unprecedented challenges that threatened the safety of the civilian population and the continuity of industrial and cultural life. In response to these challenges, evacuation emerged as a centrally coordinated state strategy aimed at preserving human capital, industrial capacity, and intellectual resources.

Within the broader wartime governance framework, evacuation functioned as a key instrument for stabilizing the rear and ensuring the sustainability of military production. By relocating population groups, industrial enterprises, and cultural institutions to safer regions, the Soviet state sought to maintain economic resilience and

support long-term military objectives. This article explores the emergence of evacuation policy during the Second World War, examining its historical and political foundations and assessing its significance within Soviet state strategy.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative historical research design aimed at providing a comprehensive analysis of women's activities during the Second World War. The research is grounded in a multi-methodological approach that combines systemic, problem-oriented, and goal-focused frameworks to ensure a structured and coherent examination of the subject matter. Such an approach allows for the integration of diverse historical sources and facilitates a nuanced understanding of women's roles within the broader socio-political context of wartime society.

Primary and secondary historical sources, including archival documents, official reports, memoirs, periodicals, and statistical materials, are analyzed using historical and comparative methods. The historical method enables the reconstruction of women's activities within their specific temporal and political contexts, while the comparative approach is employed to identify similarities and differences across regions, social groups, and institutional settings. This combination enhances the reliability of the findings and supports a contextualized interpretation of the data.

In addition, logical and analytical methods are applied to synthesize empirical evidence and trace causal relationships between wartime policies and women's social, economic, and political participation. Content analysis and thematic interpretation are used to examine narratives and discourses reflected in contemporary sources, allowing for the identification of dominant themes and patterns. Overall, the integration of qualitative and historical research methods ensures methodological rigor and contributes to a balanced and scholarly interpretation of women's activities during the Second World War.

Result and discussion. The findings of this study demonstrate that evacuation during the Second World War functioned as a multidimensional state policy that significantly reshaped social structures, economic organization, and regional roles within the Soviet Union. The analysis of archival materials and historical sources indicates that evacuation was not merely a logistical response to military threats, but a strategically coordinated mechanism aimed at preserving human capital, industrial productivity, and cultural continuity.

One of the key results concerns the transformation of Uzbekistan's role within the Soviet wartime system. As a result of large-scale evacuation, the republic evolved from a peripheral region primarily associated with raw material production into a strategically important rear-area hub. Industrial enterprises relocated to Uzbekistan were rapidly integrated into the local economy, contributing to the expansion of manufacturing capacities and reinforcing the republic's importance in sustaining the wartime industrial base. This finding supports the argument that evacuation policy played a decisive role in redistributing economic functions across the Soviet territory.

The study also reveals significant social and demographic consequences of evacuation. The influx of evacuated

populations - including women, children, skilled workers, scientists, and cultural figures - altered local demographic structures and labor dynamics. Women, in particular, emerged as a crucial workforce in industrial and agricultural sectors, compensating for labor shortages caused by mass mobilization to the фронт. This development not only increased women's economic participation but also contributed to long-term changes in gender roles within Soviet society.

From a political and ideological perspective, evacuation reinforced the narrative of collective sacrifice and unity between the front and the rear. Official discourse framed evacuation as an expression of socialist solidarity and state responsibility, while local practices of mutual assistance strengthened social cohesion. In Uzbekistan, the hosting of evacuated populations and institutions became a symbol of loyalty to the central government and adherence to Soviet ideological principles, further enhancing the republic's political significance.

At the same time, the research identifies structural challenges within the evacuation process, including shortages of housing, food supplies, and infrastructure. These difficulties highlight the contradictions inherent in centrally planned emergency policies implemented under extreme conditions. Nevertheless, the ability of local administrations and communities to adapt to these challenges underscores the resilience of the wartime governance system.

From the summer of 1941 onward, a series of decisions concerning evacuation were adopted by the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). The evacuation process was centrally planned and implemented under strict state supervision. By its nature, this process carried not only military but also significant political importance, as it served as a clear demonstration of the state's administrative capacity under wartime conditions.

The evacuation process was administered through specialized structures of the Soviet state apparatus. In June 1941, the Evacuation Council was established and entrusted with coordinating issues related to industry, transportation, healthcare, and social welfare. This body was responsible for determining the territories, population groups, and industrial enterprises subject to evacuation.

From a legal perspective, evacuation was characterized by a compulsory nature and was designed to ensure the primacy of state interests.

Evacuated populations and industrial enterprises were primarily relocated to the eastern regions of the country, including Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Siberia, and the Ural region. These areas were relatively distant from active military operations and were distinguished by the availability of infrastructure and essential resources.

From an organizational perspective, the evacuation process was highly complex and was accompanied by significant challenges, including transportation shortages, food supply deficits, and logistical difficulties. Nevertheless, within a relatively short period, thousands of enterprises and millions of people were relocated, demonstrating the extensive mobilization capacity of the Soviet Union under wartime conditions.

Following the severe losses caused by collectivization, dekulakization, and mass repression policies, the population of Uzbekistan gradually began to recover during the relatively peaceful conditions of the late 1930s and early 1940s. By this period, society had started to reengage in active constructive and developmental activities, which later facilitated the republic's ability to accommodate evacuated populations and enterprises during the war years.

During this period, the appearance of Uzbek rural areas and cities began to undergo noticeable transformation. On January 15, 1938, the first five provinces within the Uzbek SSR - Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent, Fergana, and Khorezm - were officially established. Subsequently, on March 6, 1941, Surkhandarya Province was separated from Bukhara Province, while Andijan and Namangan Provinces were formed from the territory of Fergana Province. Alongside these administrative changes, numerous new districts and towns were established across Uzbekistan, and the number of rural councils was significantly increased.

The evacuation process was not merely a technical or organizational measure but also carried strong political and ideological significance. Soviet propaganda portrayed evacuation as an act of self-sacrifice aimed at preserving the people and as a manifestation of unity between the front and the rear. This narrative played an important role in strengthening patriotic sentiment among the population.

By actively integrating evacuated populations into the labor front, the state leadership transformed them into direct participants in the war effort. Women, youth, and the elderly, in particular, assumed critical roles in industrial production and agriculture. Politically, this mobilization strategy was intended to unite all segments of society around a common wartime objective, reinforcing social cohesion under conditions of total war.

Through evacuation policy, the Soviet Union sought to reinforce its social model based on the principles of collectivism, mutual assistance, and loyalty to the state. In this sense, evacuation also functioned as a mechanism for sustaining political legitimacy during wartime by demonstrating the state's capacity to protect society and mobilize collective effort under extreme conditions.

During the Second World War, Uzbekistan emerged as one of the strategically significant regions within the evacuation process. Owing to its geographical distance from the front lines, relatively stable climatic conditions, and abundant labor resources, the republic became a major destination for evacuated industrial enterprises, scientific institutions, and hundreds of thousands of civilians. As a result, Uzbekistan assumed a critical role in supporting the Soviet rear and maintaining wartime production and social stability.

At the same time, the war intensified feelings of genuine attachment to the homeland and deep hostility toward the invading enemy, sentiments that often outweighed the hardships previously experienced under the authoritarian Soviet system. For many, the struggle was perceived not as a defense of communist ideology, but as a just fight against fascism and an existential battle for the survival of their land and people. In this context, the words of the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, are particularly significant:

“Regardless of how the Second World War is interpreted, regardless of under which ideology it was fought or by whose will it was conducted, we will always remember those who perished on the battlefields for their homeland, for the bright future of their people, and for a peaceful sky above their native land. No one has the right to forget this bitter yet supreme truth, and we This process led to significant changes in the political and economic life of the republic. During the war years, Uzbekistan evolved not only as a raw-material base but also as an important center of industrial production. Evacuated specialists and

workers, together with local personnel, contributed to the formation of new production systems and the rapid adaptation of industry to wartime needs.

Notably, on 22 June 1941, workers of the Tashkent Textile Combine declared that from that moment onward they regarded themselves as mobilized for the defense of the Motherland. Similarly, employees of the “Tashkent Agricultural Machinery” Plant and the “Qizil Tong” (Red Dawn) Factory publicly affirmed their readiness to carry out any task with honor in order to defeat the enemy, pledging to devote all their strength and resources to the war effort. Such declarations reflect the high level of labor mobilization and political commitment that characterized the rear during the initial phase of the war. [2;15].

From a political perspective, Uzbekistan demonstrated its strategic significance within the Soviet Union through the implementation of evacuation policy. In cooperation with the central authorities, the republican leadership managed the evacuation process while striving to maintain social stability under wartime conditions.

During the Second World War, Uzbekistan emerged within the Soviet evacuation system not merely as a receiving territory, but as a strategic support region. The republic's geographical location, economic potential, and socio-cultural factors transformed it into an area of critical importance during the war. Through the evacuation process, Uzbekistan's position within the Soviet Union was significantly strengthened.

Located far from the front lines, Uzbekistan was regarded as a relatively secure region throughout the war years. This circumstance created favorable conditions for accommodating evacuated populations and industrial enterprises. Furthermore, the republic's integration into Central Asian transportation networks—particularly its railway connections linking it with Russia and other eastern regions—was of considerable logistical importance. As a result, Uzbekistan functioned not only as a passive recipient of evacuees, but also as a coordinating hub for evacuation flows across the broader Central Asian region. This role substantially enhanced the republic's geopolitical significance within the Soviet military and political strategy.

As a result of evacuation policy, hundreds of industrial enterprises were relocated to Uzbekistan. Factories representing machine-building, metalworking, textile,

chemical, and defense industries were put into operation within a short period of time. This process transformed Uzbekistan during the war years from a republic primarily supplying raw materials into an important center of industrial production. Evacuated specialists worked in close cooperation with local personnel, thereby enhancing the republic's technical and scientific capacity. As a result, Uzbekistan played a significant role in supplying the front with weapons, clothing, foodstuffs, and other essential goods, which further strengthened the republic's strategic position within the Soviet economic system.

The evacuation process also had a significant impact on the demographic composition of Uzbekistan. Large numbers of skilled workers, engineers, scientists, and cultural figures were relocated to the republic. These human resources actively participated in the labor front during the war years, contributing to increased productivity and the effective functioning of wartime industries.

One of the most complex and demanding tasks during the initial phase of the Soviet - German War was the rapid transition of the national economy to a wartime footing. It should be noted that the restructuring of the country's national economy took place under extremely difficult conditions. This process required the reallocation of material, financial, and labor resources in accordance with the needs of the front, a sharp increase in military production alongside a reduction in civilian goods, and the relocation of production facilities from western regions to the eastern interior, where they had to be put into operation within a very short time.

All of these measures had to be implemented under circumstances in which the invading forces had occupied territories that, prior to the war, were home to nearly 40 percent of the Soviet population and accounted for approximately 63 percent of coal production, 50 percent of steel output, and 38 percent of grain production, as well as a powerful machine-building base that included many defense enterprises. [3;439].

Within the framework of state policy, evacuated populations were rapidly integrated into labor activities. The participation of women and youth in production processes, in particular, significantly enhanced the republic's labor potential. This development transformed Uzbekistan into a reliable labor base within the Soviet Union during the war years.

The effective organization of the evacuation process also demonstrated the coordinated interaction between the leadership of Uzbekistan and the central authorities. The republican government's organizational capacity in managing evacuation-related issues increased its political credibility and administrative reliability. As a result, Uzbekistan's political standing within the Union was further strengthened, reinforcing its role as a strategically dependable region in the Soviet wartime system.

During the war years, Uzbekistan also emerged as one of the important centers of science and culture. Evacuated research institutions, theaters, and higher education establishments contributed to the enhancement of the republic's intellectual and socio-political prestige. This process transformed Uzbekistan into a significant component of the Soviet cultural space, strengthening its role in preserving and developing scientific and cultural life under wartime conditions.

Through evacuation policy, Uzbekistan also assumed an important position within the ideological framework of the Soviet Union. The assistance, tolerance, and humanitarian support provided by the local population to evacuees were actively promoted in Soviet propaganda. These narratives reinforced the image of Uzbekistan as a reliable "rear-area stronghold" that embodied solidarity and collective responsibility during the war.

The acceptance of orphaned children, the development of guardianship systems, and various community-based initiatives further shaped Uzbekistan's reputation as a symbol of humanitarianism in the wartime period. This, in turn, significantly enhanced the republic's political and ideological significance within the Soviet wartime discourse.

Conclusion

During the Second World War, evacuation policy occupied a central place in the Soviet Union's strategy for survival and eventual victory. This process was implemented not only as a military and technical necessity, but also as a comprehensive set of political, economic, and social measures. Through evacuation, the population, industrial capacity, and intellectual potential were preserved, thereby creating the conditions necessary to sustain the needs of the front.

Within the framework of evacuation policy, Uzbekistan

emerged as a reliable strategic support region of the Soviet Union. The republic's geographical security, developing industrial base, and substantial labor resources facilitated the rapid adaptation of evacuated enterprises and populations. As a result, during the war years Uzbekistan became one of the key centers of industrial production, labor mobilization, and cultural and intellectual life.

The evacuation process significantly enhanced Uzbekistan's political and strategic importance within the Union, elevating the republic's wartime role to a new level. This historical experience retains considerable scholarly and practical relevance today, particularly in addressing challenges related to population and resource management in emergency situations, improving migration policy, and ensuring social stability under conditions of large-scale crisis.

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