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## **WOMEN'S DAILY LIFE AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES IN THE FACE OF STARVATION ON THE HOME FRONT IN WESTERN KAZAKHSTAN**

**Abstract:** This research paper delves into the experiences of women in western Kazakhstan during the Second World War and aims to shed light on their daily life and survival strategies amidst starvation and harsh living conditions. The study challenges the dominant Marxist-Leninist worldview of the Soviet era, which emphasized heroism and victories while ignoring the difficulties and hardships faced by the population. Through a historical approach and thematic analysis of primary and secondary sources, the paper highlights the significant role played by women in the war effort and provides new insights into the impact of war on women's lives. The findings underscore the need for further research on the experiences of women during the war and recognition of those who suffered on the home front. Overall, this research paper offers a valuable contribution to the historiography of the Second World War and brings attention to the often overlooked experiences of women in western Kazakhstan.

**Keywords:** Second World War, women, western Kazakhstan, starvation, home front

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## **БАТЫС ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ ТЫЛДАҒЫ АШТЫҚ ЖАҒДАЙЫНДАҒЫ ӘЙЕЛДЕРДІҢ КҮНДЕЛІКТІ ӨМІРІ ЖӘНЕ АМАН ҚАЛУҒА ТАЛПЫНЫСТАРЫ**

*Аңдатпа*

Бұл зерттеу жұмысында Екінші дүниежүзілік соғыс кезіндегі Батыс Қазақстан әйелдерінің күнделікті өмірі мен аштық тұсындағы тылдағы қиын жағдайы, қатал жағдайдағы тыл әйелдерінің өмір сүру амалдары айқындалады. Аталмыш зерттеу жұмысында Ұлы Отан соғысы кезеңіндегі бұқара халықтың басынан кешкен қиыншылықтарымен ауыр тағдыры еленбей, тек халықтың көрсеткен қайсарлығы мен жеңіске жігері сипаттаған кеңестік дәуірдегі үстемдік еткен марксистік-лениндік көзқарас сынға алынады. Мақалада негізгі және қосымша дереккөздерді тақырыптық талдау зерттеу әдісі арқылы әйелдердің тылдағы қиын күнделікті өмірін жан-жақты ашып көрсетеді. Әсіресе Батыс Қазақстан облысы әйелдерінің тыл жұмыстарында атқарған қызметтері, оларды бастан кешірген ауыр жағдайлары және соғыстың өңір әйелдерінің күнделікті өміріне қаншалықты әсерін басты назарға алады. Жалпы зерттеу соғыс кезіндегі әйелдердің тылдағы бастан кешірген ауыр жағдайын және олардың өміріне әсерін одан әрі терең зерттеуді назарға алу қажеттігін алға тартады. Жылпы бұл зерттеу жұмысы Екінші дүниежүзілік соғыс тарихнамасына қосылған құнды үлес болып табылады және Батыс Қазақстандағы әйелдердің бұған дейін зерттеуден тыс қалып келген тылдағы күнделікті өміріне назар аудартады.

**Кілт сөздер:** Екінші дүниежүзілік соғыс, әйелдер, Батыс Қазақстан, аштық, тыл.

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## ПОВСЕДНЕВНАЯ ЖИЗНЬ ЖЕНЩИН И СТРАТЕГИИ ВЫЖИВАНИЯ В УСЛОВИЯХ ГОЛОДА В ТЫЛУ В ЗАПАДНОМ КАЗАХСТАНЕ

### Аннотация

Данная исследовательская работа посвящена опыту женщин западного Казахстана во время Второй мировой войны и направлена на то, чтобы пролить свет на их повседневную жизнь и стратегии выживания в условиях голода и суровых условий жизни. Исследование бросает вызов господствовавшему в советское время марксистско-ленинскому мировоззрению, которое в большинстве случаев подчеркивало героизм и победы, игнорируя при этом трудности и невзгоды, с которыми сталкивалось советское население. Благодаря историческому подходу и тематическому анализу первоисточников в научной работе большое внимание уделяется важной роли женщин Западного Казахстана в тыловых работах и предлагается новый взгляд на влияние войны на повседневную жизнь женщин Западного Казахстана. Полученные результаты исследования показывают необходимость дальнейшего изучения опыта женщин Западного Казахстана во время войны и признания тех, кто пострадал в тыловых работах. В целом, эта исследовательская работа представляет собой ценный вклад в историографию Второй мировой войны и привлекает особое внимание к часто упускаемому из виду опыту женщин в тыловых работах в западном Казахстане.

**Ключевые слова:** Вторая мировая война, женщины, Западный Казахстан, голод, тыл.

### Introduction.

The Second World War was a defining moment in the history of the Soviet Union. The heroic efforts of the people who fought on the front lines are well documented, but little is known about the experiences of those who remained on the home front. In particular, the experiences of women in western Kazakhstan during the war are not well understood. This research paper aims to shed light on the daily life and survival strategies of women in the face of hunger on the home front during the Second World War.

Hunger during the war is often associated with the besieged city of Leningrad. However, it was a widespread phenomenon that affected the population of other Soviet cities, including those located deep in the Soviet rear. Despite this, the fact of the starvation was not officially recognized by the Soviet leadership, and sources on this issue were not available to researchers. Today, the historiography of the hunger during the Second World War remains limited, and there is a need for more research to better understand the experiences of those who suffered.

The dominant Marxist-Leninist worldview of the Soviet era contributed to a focus on the heroism and victories of the Soviet people, while ignoring the difficulties and hardships they faced. Furthermore, censorship and the concealment of miscalculations by the Communist Party prevented an objective depiction of the realities of Soviet society during the war years. This research paper aims to fill this gap in the historiography by exploring the experiences of women in western Kazakhstan during the war.

The research question for this paper is: How did women in western Kazakhstan on the home front during the Second World War cope with the daily challenges of hunger, and what survival strategies did they adopt to ensure the survival of their families and communities amidst the harsh living conditions? To answer this question, the paper will draw on archival materials and memoirs. The paper will highlight the problems faced by women during the war, including poor working and living conditions, and will argue that such conditions could cause widespread discontent. Ultimately, the research paper aims to give voice to the women who silently suffered during the Second World War and provide a better understanding of the realities of life on the home front during this pivotal moment in history.

### Materials and methods.

This study aims to explore the impact of the Second World War on the daily lives of women in the West Kazakhstan region. To achieve this, the research utilized a historical approach, gathering data from primary and secondary sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the war's effects on women's daily lives. Primary sources used in this study include personal recollections of labor veterans, government documents, and newspapers from the period. Government documents and newspapers were accessed

through archives and libraries. Secondary sources used in this study include scholarly articles, books, and reports related to the Second World War and women's experiences during this time. Secondary sources were obtained through libraries.

The data collected from primary and secondary sources were analyzed using a thematic approach. These themes were used to develop a comprehensive understanding of the war's effects on women's daily lives in the West Kazakhstan region.

### **Discussion.**

In the Soviet era, the publications only focused on the heroism and victories of the Soviet people, while ignoring the difficulties and hardships they faced. The dominance of the Marxist-Leninist worldview and the absence of alternative views, along with the prevalence of ideological clichés and propaganda that glorified the Soviet system and communist ideals, contributed to this phenomenon. Furthermore, censorship and the concealment of miscalculations by the Communist Party prevented an objective depiction of the realities of Soviet society during the war years. For example, Aralovets argues that the emancipation of women led to fruitful outcomes during the challenging times of war. The Soviet state and the Bolshevik party's educational efforts paved the way for women to exercise their full rights and pursue their creative endeavors [1]. Aralovets also argued that the Soviet social system played a critical role in nurturing such heroic women of labor.

In the 1960s, studies appeared in which the further development of these problems began. Morekhina [2], Arutyunyan [3], Aniskov [4] and Mitrofanova [5]. Aniskov considered the role and importance of women, involvement in leadership roles, study statistical data and female labor productivity, etc. Morekhina's research contained a large section on the pre-war period, where it was noted that female personnel became a major reserve of the national economy, which was of great importance for creating stable industrial personnel in war conditions [2, p. 38].

After the collapse of the USSR and the formation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, historical science in Kazakhstan began to develop in a new dimension. A significant amount of scientific and popular science literature on the military topic has appeared over the years of independence, with a focus on the regional aspect of the problem of Kazakhstan in the Second World War.

Zaresh Saktaganova demonstrate that women played a crucial role in the Soviet war effort, both on the front lines and in the mobilization of the military economy. However, the impact of propaganda on women's perceptions and experiences varied depending on their social and cultural backgrounds. Rural women in Kazakhstan faced unique challenges during the war, as they were often responsible for both agricultural labor and household duties. In this context, Saktaganova et al. [6] monograph, "Women of Central Kazakhstan during the Great Patriotic War. 1941–1945," provides an extensive review of the role of women in the mobilization of the military economy in Central Kazakhstan during the Great Patriotic War. The authors use a wide range of historical sources to examine the multifaceted activities and contributions of women to the war effort, highlighting the daily lives of women on the home front and their fates on the front lines of the war.

In her next article, Saktaganova explores the role of women in the mobilization of the military economy in the Kazakh SSR during World War II. The study is based on archival materials and a comparative historical method [7]. The article draws attention to the problems faced by women during the war, including poor working and living conditions, which often led to violations of labor discipline and staff turnover. The study argues that such conditions could cause widespread discontent and highlights the sacrifices made by women in the war effort.

In another work by Saktaganova, "Historiographical Review of the Problem 'Woman of the USSR in the Great Patriotic War - Hero or Victim?'," the author analyzes the literature on the role of women in the Great Patriotic War [8]. The article identifies three main types of historiography, Soviet, modern Kazakhstan, and foreign, and highlights the main trends characterizing each group. The article concludes that Soviet and Kazakhstan historiography overlooked many problems related to women in the war, including their place and role in military events and the socio-psychological portrait of women during the war.

The mobilization of women workers during World War II has been the focus of many research studies. In European historiography, the topic of women's participation in war has become increasingly significant since the 1990s, as demonstrated by the growing attention it has received in historical analysis. Barber and Harrison's book can be considered a pioneering work in this regard [9].

One seminal work in this area is John Erickson's "Soviet Women at War" [10], which explores the considerable contributions made by women to the Soviet Union's victory. Erickson highlights that prior to the war, women already constituted a large portion of the labor force. However, during the war, their

contribution significantly increased as they worked in munitions factories, anti-tank ditches, and heavy industry. The author emphasizes the physical and psychological toll the war took on women, as well as their sacrifices. Erickson's research emphasizes that women played a crucial role in the Soviet Union's victory during World War II. Moreover, his work illustrates the magnitude of the contribution made by women in the Soviet war effort. Despite this, women's contributions have often been overlooked in popular narratives of the war. Erickson's work sheds light on the important and often unrecognized role of women in the conflict.

In addition to Erickson's work, other scholars have explored the experiences of women during World War II. For example, Goldman examines how the war led to a significant increase in the number of women working in heavy industry [11]. Goldman argues that the wartime mobilization of women represented a significant turning point in the history of gender relations in the Soviet Union.

Wendy Z. Goldman and Donald Filtzer's book, "Fortress Dark and Stern: The Soviet Home Front during World War II," provides a comprehensive study of the Soviet home front during the Great Patriotic War [12]. The book draws on a wide range of sources, including archival documents from Russian collections on economic, labor, health, and social policy during the war. The authors examine the background, organization, and concrete experiences of the home front of state and society during the years 1941 to 1945. Goldman and Filtzer show that Soviet civilians on the home front, whether locals or evacuated, mobilized, deported, or incarcerated, often suffered from unspeakably difficult living and working conditions. The authors skillfully weave individual biographies into their narrative, which demonstrates the diversity of individual existential challenges and decisions. However, the book lacks a detailed discussion of the motivations of the combatants of the home front, which would have been desirable.

Karam argues that women in wars are often viewed as victims rather than active participants [13]. Karam emphasizes that women played several different roles and created different fates for themselves. This article is significant as it challenges the traditional view of women in wars as passive victims and highlights the agency of women in wartime.

Adrienne Marie Harris's dissertation, "The Myth of the Woman Warrior and World War II in Soviet Culture", examines the portrayal of the Soviet "woman warrior" in works about World War II and what this figure reveals about Soviet culture and memory [14]. Harris analyzes works that depict women who participated in WWII and identifies three archetypes: the martyr, handmaiden, and the "polianitsa" or knight. This dissertation sheds light on the deeply ingrained archetypes that continue to influence contemporary society.

Markwick's book chapter, "The Motherland Calls': Soviet Women in the Great Patriotic War, 1941–1945," explores the critical role played by women in the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany [15]. The chapter narrates the everyday struggles of Soviet women on the home and domestic fronts, including in factories, farms, hospitals, and families. Markwick analyzes the approach of the Soviet state towards women in wartime and considers the extent to which mass female participation in the war effort was emancipatory.

Novikova challenges the traditional view that Soviet citizens were passive recipients of the state's mobilization efforts [16]. The article highlights the agency of Soviet women in coping with the challenges of war and argues that they played an active role in ensuring their survival and that of their families. Novikova's study also sheds light on how women negotiated with the state to improve their living and working conditions during the war.

Wahlang in his article, highlights the significant role of women in the Second World War and how it challenged the patriarchal structure of Soviet society [17]. Wahlang argues that the Soviet Union's mobilization of women for the war effort was unprecedented compared to other countries involved in the war. He emphasizes the importance of examining the role of Soviet women in the war effort in a comparative perspective to better understand the unique challenges and opportunities that they faced. Wahlang's study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the role of Soviet women in the war effort and their impact on the wider social and political structures of Soviet society.

The starvation in Western Kazakhstan during the Second World War impacted the social, economic, and political dynamics of the region and shaped the memory and legacy of the war for the local population. Ironside explores the social dynamics of state fundraising on the Soviet home front during the war [18]. Soviet citizens paid for an entire year of the Second World War, and billions of rubles were generated through war bonds, lotteries, and cash donations. The internal dynamics of the fundraising campaigns led to an increase in the expected subscription amounts, and members of the elite and activists offered significant sums, pushing up the baselines expected of those avoiding the hassle or social penalties caused by withholding. Coercion ensured that almost no one gave less than the minimum asked of them.

Ironside also notes that resources were diverted from the consumer economy to the front, and factories assigned portions of their labor forces to grow food to feed their workers. Ironside's research suggests that Soviet citizens gave billions to the state during a period of great privation and uncertainty. Soviet officials attributed enthusiastic contributions to patriotism and selflessness. Coercion played a significant role in ensuring that no one was exempt from the burden, and internal dynamics of fundraising campaigns led to an increase in the expected subscription amounts.

Barnes [19] provides a broader context for understanding the Soviet home front during the war, focusing on the mobilization of forced labor through the Gulag system. While the Gulag was primarily a tool for political repression, it also played a key role in supplying the Soviet economy with labor during the war. Despite the economic burden it placed on the Soviet state, the Gulag was never dismantled during the war and remained an integral part of the Soviet system.

The research gap in this paper is the lack of understanding of the experiences of women in western Kazakhstan during the Second World War, particularly in the face of hunger on the home front. While existing literature explores the multifaceted activities and contributions of women to the war effort, their daily lives on the home front and their survival strategies are not well documented. The paper aims to shed light on how women in western Kazakhstan coped with the challenges of hunger during the war and the survival strategies they adopted to ensure the survival of their families and communities amidst harsh living conditions. While existing works provide a comprehensive study of the Soviet home front during the war, they lack a detailed discussion of the experiences and survival strategies of women in specific regions, such as western Kazakhstan.

### **Results.**

During the Second World War, the daily life of women in the West Kazakhstan region, particularly in the rear, was significantly affected as they took on the responsibility of caring for themselves, their children, the elderly, as well as providing food and clothing and medical care. This added burden led to negative health outcomes for women, affecting their ability to work and participate in public affairs. Despite heavy workloads, which were traditionally male-dominated, women's contributions were essential to the war effort [20, p.71]. As A.B. Shalak noted, the harsh reality of the war was felt by millions of people, including women, who endured tremendous hardships [21, p. 3].

Overall, the war had a devastating impact on the daily lives of people, especially women, who bore the brunt of the challenges. Women living in urban areas were particularly affected as working and living conditions deteriorated. With the country's industry focused solely on military production, consumer goods production declined, and real incomes plummeted [22, 138 p.].

Food shortages and production collapses were major challenges faced by the population at large. Wheat harvesting declined by two times, potato planting by 1.3 times, meat preparation by two times, and egg production by 2.5 times in 1945 compared to pre-war levels [23, p.126]. The share of collective farm trade decreased as well. The introduction of a card system for food distribution, coupled with a more than 100-fold increase in market prices, created an extremely difficult situation for even rural areas that supplied both the front and cities. There was no centralized card system in rural areas, with collective farmers receiving only 200 grams of wheat and 100 grams of potatoes on average during 1942-1943. Meat and milk were excluded from daily rations. In early 1944, a mere 1.5 kg of wheat, 91 grams of meat, and 0.3 eggs were allotted per day for each peasant family [24, p. 44-46].

Despite the difficulties faced during the war, local leadership attempted to address the food shortage by selling products produced in collective farms at high prices in city markets. In February 1942, Priural, Terek, and Zelenovsk districts collectively sent over 19,000 kg of wheat, 22,883 kg of millet, 1,400 kg of flour, and 6,229 kg of meat to the city market. The "KrasnyPutilovets" collective farm in Terekti district contributed the largest amount of agricultural products, including 2,000 kg of wheat, 7,000 kg of millet, and 972 kg of sold meat. A total of 27 teams participated in this initiative, resulting in a decrease of 50-60% in market prices. Collectives sold wheat for 25 rubles per bushel, millet for 16 rubles per bushel, sorghum for 35 rubles per bushel, flour for 30 rubles per kilogram, beef for 10 rubles per kilogram, mutton for 11 rubles per kilogram, pork for 12 rubles per kilogram, and fat for 25 rubles per kilogram [25].

During this time, women often did not go to work due to poor nutrition, lack of outerwear, and shoes. According to data from that period, one of the main reasons for the lack of employment of female specialists in enterprises was the difficult living conditions faced by working women [26, 263 p.]. As a result, women learned to rely on their own strength, engaging in activities such as knitting and sewing at home, and making new clothes from old ones [27, 143 p].

There exist personal recollections of war and labor veterans who bore witness to the hardships of their time. One such veteran, RozaSergeevnaPiskunova, enrolled in a handicraft school at the Allgay station after

completing her secondary education. Upon the outbreak of war, she was sent by the city committee of the Komsomol to work as a laboratory chemist at the KE Voroshilov plant. In the winter of 1942, the factory was relocated from Leningrad to the city of Urals, and was reconstructed in the place of former forges and state garages. Despite harsh weather conditions, the factory immediately began production of essential goods for the front, even when they had to work in the open air. Initially, Piskunova began her work at the factory as an apprentice locksmith, then became a locksmith and painter, responsible for painting torpedoes and mines that were produced for the Navy. Despite being a painter, her role required great responsibility, as a poorly painted torpedo could lead to a reduction in its power. Along with other women workers, Piskunova worked for 12 hours a day at the factory, receiving 400 grams of bread per day initially, and later 600 grams. Her life was characterized by great hardship, and hunger was a constant presence [28, p. 12-13].

The adoption of resolutions to increase the number of working days in different years had a negative impact on the social conditions and starvation of rural women. The historical evaluation of these documents differs among historians. G.V. Merzlyakova believed that increasing working hours was a punitive measure and that intimidation and punishment were widely used against women who did not want to work [23, p. 47]. Women were also forced to work without pay for the construction of Baskunchak airport, and their social conditions were already too poor. Additionally, they were tasked with taking care of the liberated districts of the Leningrad region [29, 72 p.] Local leaders organized social events outside of work and built stables for all kinds of animals using free labor from women, who were then forced to meet planned targets regardless of their social status. Some activists of farmers' collective farms used women's labor as much as possible, ignoring the hard life of women. However, some collective farms were unable to collect funds and deliver agricultural products to the state in excess of the plan.

The Kolkhoz authorities in the West Kazakhstan region extensively utilized the labor of women, disregarding the challenging circumstances faced by them. They adopted the Bolsheviks' working ethos and encouraged women and girls from the "Zhanaturmys", "Tegishil", "Dzhiger", and "Karl Marx" collective farms to engage in farming activities even after regular working hours. These women forced to receive of 10-12 centners per hectare and achieved yields beyond the plan. For instance, in the "Zhanaturmys" collective farm, Sultangalieva, the head of the unit, obtained 80 centners of millet from a single hectare, while Zharakeeva produced 84 centners of millet. Similarly, Ketanova produced 54 centners of millet, Arystakov produced 48 quintals of white wheat, and Khairullin produced 60 centners of white wheat in the "Karl Marx" collective farm [30]. At the collective farm named after Budenny in Terekti district, Zh. Akbolatova's brigade produced an excess of fodder [31].

M. S. Zinich highlights the arduous and tragic lives of workers during the war. Despite the nominal increase in wages, workers' living conditions did not improve. This fact is also noted by N. P. Paletskih, who states that increased salaries were only 40% of pre-war salaries, due to the rise in taxes, fees, and market prices [32, p. 33]. However, the burdens faced by working women in agriculture were particularly difficult in the rear. During the sowing and harvesting periods, collective farm women worked around the clock, without rest or sleep. Such arduous conditions resulted in food shortages and starvation in some rural settlements of Western Kazakhstan [33, p. 43-48].

The severe food shortages and resulting mass malnutrition in the Ural led to a rise in cases of child murder and adult suicide. This dire situation, characterized by increased female criminal activity, was largely caused by food supply difficulties throughout the country. Many of these crimes were motivated by desperation due to hunger within the family. Fraud and theft were rampant in the trade and public catering systems, where women comprised the vast majority of employees. Even strict punishment measures were unable to fully curtail crime in this area. During the war, female criminal activity increased from 18.1% to 27.5%, resulting in a fourfold increase in the number of women held criminally responsible [23, p.136]. Additionally, a lack of experience in trade, difficulty in accounting, ambiguities and distortions in orders, and gaps in the organization of food supply further contributed to the increase in female criminal activity within this field [34, p. 27].

Newly released archival documents shed light on the reasons for the hunger, revealing that the incompetence and authoritarianism of local authorities played a significant role in exacerbating the situation. In many instances, rural areas were overlooked, and the prevalent belief that there would always be something to eat prevailed. Consequently, after the authorities confiscated all available food, desperate individuals resorted to consuming spoiled potatoes and animal carcasses to survive. These findings highlight the critical need for local authorities to prioritize the needs of rural areas and implement effective food supply and distribution policies to prevent future starvations [23, p. 136].

Drawing from witness accounts, such as that of UtypovaSharipa, who lived through the war in the rural areas, we can gain insights into the challenging living conditions of the rural workforce at the time. Sharipa recounts that the onset of the war saw young people having to forego their childhood and begin working on the collective farms from sunrise to sunset, with the men leaving for the front lines. The situation was especially difficult for widows and orphans left behind in the villages, who had to rely on picking corn and hunting mice to feed themselves. Sharipa recalls that mice became a significant source of sustenance, with their skins serving as a currency for the exchange of vital supplies such as grain, cloth, and tea. The shortage of transportation made these exchanges difficult, with the biggest vehicle being an ox, and village children often working in the elevator, earning two liters of blue milk per day [35].

In addition to the memories of her own experiences, UtypovaSharipa also recounts the devastating effects of the hunger in her village. She notes that people were so hungry that a woman was sentenced to 25 years in prison for killing and eating her own child. Furthermore, individuals were given harsh sentences, such as three years in prison, for possessing just eight kilograms of wheat. Utypova also recalls a woman who worked as a chief in a village and was caught stealing wheat on her way back from work. The woman was subsequently sent to court for her actions. Utypova even remembers a mournful poem that was recited during the trial [35].

The memories of RahimaKydyrgalieva are etched deep in the annals of history, as a testimony to the horrors that befell the nation during the Second World War. Just a tender 15-year-old, Rahima bore witness to the unspeakable cruelty of war as the fascists ravaged their once-peaceful land. Rahima and her siblings sought refuge in Kasymtau, 18 kilometers from Shonai station, where they were to endure the most trying of times. It was the height of the Battle of Stalingrad, and every day, the skies were filled with the deafening sound of enemy planes. The roads were strewn with bombs, and the railway system was in shambles. Wagon after wagon of people and weapons were parked haphazardly, as if waiting for death to claim them. The fascists showed no mercy, bombing the hapless vehicles with impunity. The loss of life was staggering, and the number of injured beyond counting. Four or five families were crammed into a single house, each with at least six or seven children. There was no respite, even after a long day of field work, as they knitted gloves and socks by the dim light of handmade oil lamps. The only sustenance they had was milk, a pale reminder of better days. The roofs of their homes were in disarray, and in 1944, the harvest failed, plunging the village into starvation. Through all of this, they persevered, their unwavering spirit keeping them going. Despite the difficulties, they toiled tirelessly, driven by the indomitable motto: "Everything is for the front, everything is for Victory." Rahima's story stands as a reminder of the resilience of the human spirit, and the determination of a people to survive against all odds [36].

Maryam Ismakova, from Kuygenkol, also experienced hardship during this time. Her childhood was far from carefree, and the outbreak of war disrupted the plans and interests she had for her future. Her father and only brother went to the front lines, leaving her and her mother to work tirelessly on the collective farm from dawn to sunset. Maryam recalls the kolkhozization campaign. The witness's childhood was far from carefree, as it was typical for those who grew up during that time. The outbreak of war in his youth disrupted the plans and interests he had for his future life. When the war began, his father and only brother went to the front lines. Together with his mother, he worked tirelessly on the collective farm from dawn to sunset. In the summer, he cut grass, harvested crops, and collected corn, while in the winter, he tended to the collective farm animals. He transported grass several times between the barn and the village, and even when he was exhausted, he stayed up late knitting gloves and socks for the soldiers at the front by the dim light of a lamp [37].

ZareshAkhmetkalieva, born in 1932, recounts the hardships of her early years: "My mother and father raised me, but in 1942, my father left for war when I was only 10 years old. Like many other women, my mother was left to care for three children. We all worked together, plowing the fields and harvesting crops when allowed. Wheat was our staple food during the winter months, as there was no other food available. When we returned from school, we had to haul the mill, gather firewood, and dispose of ashes. We owe our upbringing to my mother. Several families lived in the same house, and we relied on the milk brought by one of the families from the collective farm, earned through hard work as a wheat carrier. We cooked our meals together in large pots, often tying meat to the bones to stretch it further. We never had a chance to experience childhood, as we lacked food and clothing, and carried felt bags to school." [38].

A similar memory is shared by A. Abdollina: When my father, AbdollaKaliyev, left for war in 1941, I was only four years old and my sister was two. My father, who had grown up without siblings, always took care of us and supported us. In 1943, the cruel war took away our father without even giving us a chance to see him again. My sister passed away when she was only seven, leaving my mother and me alone in a house. The hardships of being an orphan made us mature early, even though we were still just children. The

memories of the people and the difficult days of that time are still vivid in my mind. The people of the small collective farm "Molotov" were very kind and friendly. When all the men went to the front, everyone in the village worked together to harvest every single crop. My mother and I spent our days and nights in the fields, only returning home for brief periods of time [39].

The Second World War had a profound impact on the daily lives of women in the West Kazakhstan region. Women took on additional responsibilities in caring for themselves, their children, the elderly, and providing essential supplies and medical care. However, this added burden led to negative health outcomes for women and affected their ability to work and participate in public affairs. The war had a devastating impact on the daily lives of people, especially women, who bore the brunt of the challenges. Food shortages, production collapses, and the introduction of a card system for food distribution added to the difficulties. Women relied on their own strength to engage in activities such as knitting and sewing at home, and making new clothes from old ones. Personal recollections of war and labor veterans attest to the hardships endured by women. The adoption of resolutions to increase the number of working days in different years had a negative impact on the social conditions and starvation of rural women. Despite these challenges, women's contributions were essential to the war effort.

### **Conclusion.**

In conclusion, this research paper sheds light on the experiences of women in western Kazakhstan during the Second World War. The study highlights the challenges faced by women on the home front, particularly in the face of hunger. Despite the harsh living conditions and added burdens, women in western Kazakhstan adopted various survival strategies to ensure the survival of their families and communities. The research paper shows that women played a significant role in the war effort, although their contributions have not been widely recognized.

This study provides new insights into the realities of life on the home front during the Second World War. It challenges the dominant Marxist-Leninist worldview of the Soviet era, which emphasized the heroism and victories of the Soviet people, while ignoring the difficulties and hardships they faced. Through the use of archival materials and memoirs, this research paper gives voice to the women who silently suffered during the war. The study highlights the importance of recognizing the experiences of those who suffered, especially women who faced additional challenges.

The findings of this research paper have important implications for our understanding of the impact of war on women's lives. The study shows that the war had a devastating impact on women's daily lives, particularly in urban areas where working and living conditions deteriorated. Food shortages and production collapses were major challenges faced by the population at large. The introduction of a card system for food distribution, coupled with a more than 100-fold increase in market prices, created an extremely difficult situation for even rural areas that supplied both the front and cities. The study highlights the need for further research on the experiences of women during the Second World War and the impact of war on their daily lives.

In conclusion, this research paper provides a valuable contribution to the historiography of the Second World War. It sheds light on the experiences of women on the home front in western Kazakhstan, particularly in the face of hunger. Through the use of archival materials and memoirs, the study gives voice to the women who silently suffered during the war. The findings of this study have important implications for our understanding of the impact of war on women's lives, highlighting the need for further research on this topic. Ultimately, this research paper aims to ensure that the experiences of those who suffered during the war are recognized and remembered.

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