

# RADIO FREE EUROPE *Research*

## COMMUNIST AREA

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● SOVIET UNION:  
Population  
Characteristics

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### TENTATIVE RESULTS OF THE 1970 CENSUS

Summary: On 19 April 1970 the Soviet press published a report from the central statistical agency of the USSR on the tentative results of the January 1970 census. Preliminary commentaries on these results have also appeared in newspapers. This paper deals with some of the major points in the first census report.

As of 15 January 1970, there were 241,784,000 residents in the Soviet Union, or 32.9 million (15.8%) more than in 1959. The report from the central statistical agency of the USSR points out that four-fifths of the population of the Soviet Union was born after the October Revolution.

The following table indicates the increase in population by republic and regions of the RSFSR:

<u>Population Increase Between 1959 And 1970</u>			
(in percentages)			
	(%)		(%)
Soviet Union - total	16	Moldavian SSR	24
Tadzhik SSR	46	Georgian SSR	16
Uzbek SSR	45	Lithuanian SSR	15
Kirghiz SSR	42	Ukrainian SSR	13
Turkmenian SSR	42	Latvian SSR	13
Armenian SSR	41	Estonian SSR	13
Kazakhstan SSR	40	Belorussian SSR	12
Azerbaidzhan SSR	38	Russian SFSR	11

Source: Pravda, 19 April 1970

Thus, the Central Asian union republics and Kazakhstan had the highest rate of population growth; the data for these areas is broken down further in Table 2:

Residents of Kazakhstan and the Central Asian Republics

(in millions)

<u>Republic</u>	<u>1939</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1970</u>
Uzbekistan SSR	6,3	8,3	12,0
Kazakhstan SSR	6,0	9,1	13,0
Kirgizia	1,5	2,0	3,0
Tadzhikistan	1,5	2,0	3,0
Turkmenia	1,3	1,6	2,0
	<u>16,6</u>	<u>23,0</u>	<u>33,0</u>

Source: Data for 1959 and 1970 taken from Pravda, 19 April 1970. Data for 1939 from Itogi vsesoyuznoy perepisi neseleniya 1959 goda - SSR. Moscow, 1962, p. 19

The population of Central Asia, including Kazakhstan, has thus increased by 10 million in the eleven years between 1959 and 1970, while it grew by but 6.4 million in the 20 years between 1939 and 1959. Discounting Kazakhstan, the population increase amounted to 6 million between 1959 and 1970, or some 30%.

### Continued Russification of Central Asia

In one of the first commentaries on the population increase in Central Asia, it was said that:

In the report from the Central Statistical Agency the largest wave of migrations is mentioned -- [i.e.] the constant stream of people to Kazakhstan and the Central Asian republics ... The population growth in a number of the southern Soviet republics is notably greater than the Soviet average. That is the result of both the wave of migration and a higher natural increase which has to do with the traditionally large number of children in the families.(1)

1.2 million of the 10 million increase is accounted for by migrations from other republics; the rest can be attributed to an increase of the indigenous population.

With the exception of Kazakhstan, all the Central Asian republics suffer from a labor surplus. Thus, migrations from Russia and other European republics are not for reasons of economic necessity, but rather represent a continuation of the traditional tsarist colonial policies. The European migrants remain for the most part in the cities where they are employed in banking, postal and communications jobs.

### Settlement of Eastern Rayons Unsuccessful

Since the proclamation of the 1959 Five-Year-Plan, the Party and government have been involved in an attempt to direct the migration currents from the European part of the USSR to the eastern rayons of the RSFSR, that is, to Western and Eastern

(1) V. Pokshishevskij "O chem rasskazyvaet vsesoyuznaya perepis," in Novoe Vremya No. 18, 1970, p. 18.

Siberia and the Far East. The population developments in this area are shown in Table 3:

<u>Number of Residents in the Eastern Rayons of the RSFSR</u>			
<u>Rayons</u>	(in millions)		
	<u>1939</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1970</u>
RSFSR - total	108,3	117,5	130,0
Western Siberia	7,9	11,2	12,1
Eastern Siberia	5,2	6,5	7,5
Far East	2,6	4,8	5,8
	<u>15,7</u>	<u>22,5</u>	<u>25,4</u>

Source: Pravda, 19 April 1970 for the data for 1959 and 1970; and Itogi vsesoyuznoy perepisi naseleniya 1959 goda - SSR. Moscow 1963, p. 28, for 1939.

Between 1959 and 1970 the population in the three eastern rayons of the RSFSR thus increased by a mere 2.9 million or 11.4%. The highest rate of growth was registered in the Far East (20%), followed by Eastern Siberia with 15% and Western Siberia with 8%. The Soviet commentaries stress the fact that in the Tyumen region, where natural gas and oil are plentiful, the population has increased by 29%. In absolute numbers this means there were 1,407,000 residents on 15 January 1970 and 1,092,126 in 1959.(2) Estimates had, however, already set the population of the area at 1,410,000 in January 1969.(3) Even if one includes a generous margin for error in the estimate, it is notable that the census results fell well below the estimates made a year earlier. The same is true of the Chanty-Mansiyskiy National Circle, which contains the largest oil deposits in the Tyumen region. While the January 1969 estimate pegged the number of residents there at 289,000(4), the January 1970 census counted only 272,000. In both cases the differences indicate that the plans to settle the Tyumen region have not been fulfilled, and that those immigrants who settle there may, in fact, be taking the places of others who leave. Incidentally, the increase in the indigenous population of Western and Eastern Siberia is substantially greater than in the European portion of the Soviet Union.

(2) Itogi vsesoyuznoy perepisi naseleniya 1969 goda - RSFSR, Moscow, 1963, p. 162.

(3) Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR 1968 goda, Moscow, 1969, p. 15.

(4) Ibid.



## Uneven Urbanization

On 15 January 1970, 136 million Soviet citizens lived in cities, i.e., 36 million more than in 1959. During the same period, the population in the countryside decreased from 108.8 million to 105.7 million. Of the 36 million additional urban residents:

- 14.6 million can be attributed to natural population expansion;
- 16.0 million result from the elevation of towns to incorporated suburban areas;
- 5.4 million result from migration from the country to the cities.

It must be recalled here that in Soviet statistical terminology, the criteria for a "city" differ from republic to republic, and the term is generally a vaguely-defined one. Considering the progress made in industrialization, the figure of 5.4 million migrants from the countryside is a low one. The process of urbanization in the Soviet Union in general is uneven. In 1970, the percentage of rural population was below the all-USSR average in only four republics. Development in the percentages of rural population in these areas since 1939 is indicated in Table 4:

### Rural Population in Republics with Above-Average Urbanization (in percentages)

Republic	1939 (%)	1959 (%)	1970 (%)
Soviet Union	68	52	44
Armenia	71	50	41
RSFSR	53	48	38
Latvia	65	44	38
Estonia	66	44	35

Source: Same as for Table 2.

The rest of the republics, including the highly-industrialized Ukraine, have an above-average percentage of rural population and are undergoing a slower urbanization process:

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Rural Population in Republics with  
Below-Average Urbanization  
(in percentages)

<u>Republic</u>	<u>1939</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1970</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Moldavia	87	78	68
Uzbekistan	77	66	64
Kirgisia	81	66	63
Tadzhikistan	83	67	63
Belorussia	79	69	57
Turkmenia	67	54	52
Georgia	70	58	52
Azerbaidzhan	64	52	50
Lithuania	77	61	50
Kazakhstan	72	56	49
Ukraine	66	54	45

Source: Same as for Table 2.

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In the Central Asian republics, the slowing down of the urbanization process has led to near stagnation. When one considers the large percentage of Russians and other Europeans in these areas, the data point to a perpetuation of traditional social structures there. The results of the 1959 census suggested this conclusion, revealing that in numerous Middle Asian cities (Tashkent, Ashkhabad and Frunze, for example), there lived more Russians than indigenous residents. In the past eleven years, little appears to have changed there.

### Men in the Minority

The 1970 figures continue to indicate that the majority of Soviet citizens are women, a result of the Second World War. However, the distribution is slowly approaching "parity";

### Division of Population by Sex (percentage of men in total)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Urban Population</u>	<u>Rural Population</u>
1940	47.9	47.9	48.0
1959	45.0	45.2	44.9
1970	46.1	46.3	45.7

These statistics reflect that the percentage of women in rural areas is higher than in urban areas.

The next report to be issued by the Central Statistical Agency is to contain data on national composition, age structure, educational level, professional distribution, etc. of the Soviet population.