

UDC: [94(470+571)''1920''+31](045)

DOI: 10.37482/issn2221-2698.2021.43.161

## Population Formation and Development Dynamics of the Russian Far North in the 1920s \*

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**Abstract.** Based on the analysis of All-Union Population Census of 1926 and a wide range of general and regional scientific research, the author studies the processes of demographic and economic development of territories located in the Russian North and conventionally designated by the author as regions of European, Ural, Siberian and Far Eastern North. The paper identifies key trends and features of Northern regions' development in the 1920s, caused by the first Soviet reforms of the administrative-territorial structure of the country, economic development and national state policy, which had an impact on the demographic processes in the regions including population size, its composition and settlement structure. It is found that the economic development was the most active in the bordering areas, where intensive development of industry and transportation implied the need to strengthen national defense and expand trade and economic ties. This mainly concerned the regions of the European and Far Eastern North. The regions that were rich in natural resources, especially gold deposits, such as Yakutia, also developed more actively. Other regions of Ural and Siberian North developed in a more traditional way, based on growth of wood harvesting and fishing industry. Improving of living conditions of the indigenous peoples of the North, material support for their farms, medical care and legal assistance, introduction of education among the population in the 1920s had a positive impact on the economic and demographic development of the indigenous population.

**Keywords:** *Russian North, European North, Ural North, North of Siberia, North of the Far East, administrative-territorial structure, economic development, population size, structure of settlements, indigenous population, national policy.*

### Introduction

The unprecedented historical experience of the economic and demographic development of the northern territories during the Soviet period deserves special attention of researchers. The period of the 1920s, which was characterized by rather complex political, socio-economic and demographic processes associated with the end of World War I, the Civil War, as well as the establishment of Soviet power and the restoration of the national economic complex, was particularly important and crucial in the development of the North. It was during this period, in the context of a deep transformation of society and the first socialist transformations, that the centuries-old structure of the country's economic, political and socio-cultural life was restructured, a new concept for the exploration and development of the North was formed. The formation of the population and the economic structure of the northern territories as a whole obeyed the general historical patterns of development, but had their own specifics in different regions. A retrospective analysis of the northern territories of the European part, the Urals, Siberia and the Far East allows us

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\* For citation:

Kuznetsova Ya.A. Population Formation and Development Dynamics of the Russian Far North in the 1920s. *Arktika i Sever* [Arctic and North], 2021, no. 43, pp. 161–189. DOI: 10.37482/issn2221-2698.2021.43.161

to give a more complete picture of the general trends and features of the socio-economic development of the territories in this period and fill some gaps in the historiography of the study.

The problems of the northern regions development in historical retrospect and at the present stage attract a wide range of researchers in different directions: demographers, historians, geologists, ethnographers, political scientists, economists, etc. To date, there is a considerable number of scientific works in the historiography of the Soviet North, including general problems of the exploration and development of the northern regions, and special demographic studies. During the Soviet period and at present, a number of publications have been published, including academic scientific research in national regions: Tuva, Yakutia, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, etc.<sup>1</sup>, as well as large publications on the history of the European North, Siberia and the Far East in the Soviet period, including sections on the study of the northern regions population<sup>2</sup>. In addition to the array of published general and regional works related to the research topic, the documentary basis for the research was the materials of the All-Union Population Census of 1926, which served as comparable statistical data characterizing various statistical parameters of the Northern regions<sup>3</sup>.

According to demographers, the All-Union Census of 1926 was the most democratic Soviet census of the population, taking into account a number of various parameters, including demographic ones, the structure of administrative-territorial administration in the regions, etc. Only Tuva was not covered by the All-Union Census of 1926, as it was not part of Russia during this period. However, the republic was under the protectorate of Russia and the processes taking place on the territory of Tuva were closely intertwined with the interests of the Soviet state. Therefore, the Tuva Republic is also one of the objects of scientific research.

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<sup>1</sup> *Istoriya Tuvy v 2-kh tomakh [History of Tuva in 2 Volumes]*. Moscow, Nauka, 1964. Vol. 1, 410 p. Vol. 2, 453 p.; *Istoriya Tuvy v 3-kh tomakh [History of Tuva in 3 Volumes]*. Novosibirsk, Science. Vol. 1, 2001, 410 p., Vol. 2, 2007, 430 p., Vol. 3, 2016, 455 p.; *Istoriya Tuvy v 2-kh tomakh [History of Tuva in 2 Volumes]*. Ekaterinburg, Publ. house of RAS, 2010. Vol. 1, 415 p. Vol. 2, 367 p.; *Istoriya Yakutskoy ASSR v 3-kh tomakh [History of the Yakut ASSR in 3 Volumes]*. Moscow-Leningrad, Publ. house of AS of the USSR. Vol. 1, 1955, 432 p., Vol. 2, 1957, 420 p., Vol. 3, 1963, 364 p.; *Komi kray: ocherki o desyati vekakh istorii [Komi Region: Essays on Ten Centuries of History]*. Syktyvkar, Komi Publ. House, 2003. 368 p.

<sup>2</sup> *Istoriya Sakhalina i Kuril'skikh ostrovov s drevneyshikh vremen do nachala XXI stoletiya [The History of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands from Ancient Times to the Beginning of the 21st Century]*. Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Sakhalin Book Publ. House, 2008. 712 p.; *Severo-Zapadnaya Sibir' v 1917–1941 godakh. Natsional'no-gosudarstvennoe stroitel'stvo i naselenie [Northwestern Siberia in 1917–1941. Nation-building and Population]*. Nizhnevartovsk, 2002. 264 p.; *Rybakovskiy L.L. Naselenie Dal'nego Vostoka za 150 let [The Population of the Far East for 150 Years]*. Moscow, Nauka, 1990. 170 p.; *Istoriya Dal'nego Vostoka SSSR / Rossii v 5-kh tomakh. 1989–2018 gg. [History of the Far East of the USSR / Russia in 5 Volumes. 1989–2018]*; *Istoriya Sibiri s drevneyshikh vremen do nashikh dney v 5-ti tomakh [History of Siberia from Ancient Times to the Present Day in 5 Volumes]*. Leningrad, Nauka, 1968–1969.; *Korotaev V.I. Na poroge demograficheskoy katastrofy: prinuditel'naya kolonizatsiya i demograficheskiy krizis v Severnom krae v 30-e gody XX veka [On the Threshold of a Demographic Catastrophe: Forced Colonization and Demographic Crisis in the Northern Territory in the 1930s of the 20th Century]*. Arkhangelsk, Pomor University, 2004. 136 p.; *Traektorii proektov v vysokikh shirotakh [Project Trajectories at High Latitudes]*. Novosibirsk, Nauka, 2011. 440 p.; *Zubkov K.I., Karpov V.P. Razvitie rossiyskoy Arktiki: sovetskiy opyt v kontekste sovremennykh strategiy [Development of the Russian Arctic: Soviet Experience in the Context of Modern Strategies]*. Moscow, 2019. 367 p.

<sup>3</sup> *Vsesoyuznaya perepis' naseleniya 17 dekabrya 1926 g.: kratkie svodki [All-Union Population Census December 17, 1926: Brief Summaries]*. Moscow, 1927–1929; *Vsesoyuznaya perepis' naseleniya 1926 goda [All-Union Population Census of 1926]*. Moscow, Central Statistical Office of the USSR, 1928. Volume 9 – Volume 17.

### *Purpose, objectives and research methods*

The purpose of this study is to characterize the main trends in the demographic and economic development of the northern regions during the period of beginning of the Soviet power transformations in the 1920s. The objectives of the study include analyzing the main trends in the population formation — size, composition and settlement structure of the Northern regions, based on the reconstruction of administrative-territorial reform of the northern regions, the study of the economic level of their development in the context of the new economic policy that began in the 1920s.

The theoretical and methodological basis of scientific research is the concept of modernization and urbanization transition. The application of concrete-historical analysis in combination with comparative historical and statistical methods provides an opportunity for a more thorough comprehensive study and identification of the development specifics of various northern regions during the 1920s.

### *Chronological framework of the study*

The chronological framework of the study covers the period of the 1920s. During this period, in the conditions of a new Soviet state formation, a unified course for forced industrial modernization within the framework of the new economic policy was adopted. At the same time, the question of the development and implementation of a new Soviet policy in the North was raised. This was primarily related to the strengthening of strategic and geopolitical position of the new state and its borders in the North. In addition, the acceleration of economic and transport development of the resource-rich eastern and northeastern territories solved the problem food supplies for the European part of the country and enabled the export of raw materials to foreign markets.

During the 1920s (1923–1929), a new administrative-territorial structure of the country was formed: provinces, counties and volosts were abolished and more enlarged regions (krais), districts and regions were created. At the same time, throughout the studied period, the territories of the North were constantly changed, separated from or included in various administrative units, which was reflected in changes in the territorial area, density and number of rural-urban settlements and population.

In the late 1920s, the process of national-state reform began — the formation of national republics and districts, which to a large extent concerned the territories of the North. The establishment of self-government institutions in the national districts and their inclusion in the country's economic turnover contributed to the restoration and development of economic life of the northern outskirts, the improvement of social, medical and health services for the population.

### *Territorial scope of the study*

A number of objective and historical circumstances were taken into account in determining the territorial scope of the study. The boundaries of the northern territories did not always coincide with the boundaries of the country's administrative structure. A number of researchers formally divide the northern regions into two zones depending on the meridional or latitudinal direction — the Near and Far North, the European and Asian North. Taking into account the spatial localization, historical features of reclamation and development of the northern territories, their administrative-territorial structure in the 1920s, this study has identified the following zones: European North (Arkhangelsk Oblast, including the territory of the future Nenets National Okrug, Murmansk Oblast, the Republic of Karelia and the Republic of Komi); Ural North (Tobolsk Okrug, including the territories of the future Ostyako-Vogulskiy and Yamal National Okrugs); North of Siberia (Turukhansk Krai, including the territories of the future Taimyr and Evenk National Okrugs, the Republic of Yakutia and the Republic of Tuva, which was under the protectorate of Russia); North of the Far East (Sakhalin Okrug, Kamchatka Okrug, including the territories of the future Magadan Oblast, Chukotka and Koryak National Okrugs).

At the time of the All-Union Population Census in 1926 (Table 1), a number of the studied regions were not yet distinguished as independent territories within their present boundaries. The Soviet administrative-territorial system was just beginning to form<sup>4</sup>.

In the pre-Soviet period, almost all northern regions, despite their geographical dispersion, were at a rather low starting level of socio-economic development, in contrast to the central regions of Russia.

The economic and demographic development of the regions proceeded slowly. Since the 18th century, the population of the northern territories as places of exile and hard labor was replenished by exiled settlers. State policy of agrarian colonization at the end of the 19th century permitted more active economic development of the remote northern regions of the Urals, Siberia and the Far East by the peasant population. Nevertheless, the extreme natural and climatic conditions and the remoteness of the regions from the existing economic and transport infrastructure of large industrial centers impeded the economic development and settlement of vast Arctic spaces.

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<sup>4</sup> The Nenets National Okrug was formed in 1929, before that, its territory was part of the Arkhangelsk gubernia. Ostyako-Vogulskiy National Okrug (since 1944 Khanty-Mansiysk National Okrug) was formed in 1930, before that, the territory of the district was part of the Tobolsk Okrug of the Ural Region, formed in 1923. From 1934 it was a part of the formed Obsko-Irtysh Oblast, from December 1934 it became part of the Omsk Oblast. The Yamal (Nenets) national district (since 1940 - the Yamal-Nenets national district) was formed as part of the Ural region in 1930. Until 1930, the territory of the Okrug was also part of the Tobolsk Okrug of the Ural Oblast. In 1934, it became part of the Obsko-Irtysh Oblast, then Omsk Oblast. The Evenk National Okrug was formed in 1930 as part of the East Siberian Krai, and since 1934 as part of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. The Taimyr National Okrug was formed in 1930 as part of the East Siberian Krai, in 1934 it became part of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. The Tuva People's Republic was formed as an independent state in 1921, was included in the composition of Russia as the Tuva Autonomous Oblast in 1944. The Chukotka and Koryak National okrugs were formed in 1930 in part of the Far Eastern Krai, in 1934 were included in the Kamchatka Oblast. Magadan Oblast was part of the Kamchatka Oblast until 1938.

### *European North in the 1920s*

The regions of the European North suffered greatly from the hostilities and occupation of the territory by Western invaders during World War I and the Civil War. However, despite all the hardships of the post-war devastation, the economy of the regions was restored by the mid-1920s. The course towards industrialization and rapid economic recovery of the European North was of great strategic importance for the consolidation of Soviet power and the strengthening of borders. In the process of administrative and territorial transformations of the 1920s, the Komi Autonomous Oblast, the Karelian Autonomous Republic and the Murmansk Province were formed. In 1929, with the formation of a new administrative-territorial unit — the Northern Territory with the center in Arkhangelsk — the Arkhangelsk, Vologda and North Dvina Provinces and the Komi Autonomous Oblast (Zyryan) were united. Until 1936, all territorial transformations took place within the boundaries of the new region.

Regions of the European North, despite the common geographic localization, differed in characteristics and indicators of economic and demographic development. The most developed parts were the Arkhangelsk Province and the Karelian Republic. This is evidenced by the most developed structure of rural-urban settlements and quantitative indicators of the number of settlements in these regions. The largest area in the European North belonged to the Arkhangelsk Province and the Komi Autonomous Oblast. The areas of the territories of the Karelian Republic and the Murmansk Province were almost three times less. At the same time, the population density by regions was different: in the Arkhangelsk Province it was 1 person/km<sup>2</sup>, in Komi — 0.5 people/km<sup>2</sup>. The lowest indicator was in the Murmansk Province, the highest in the Karelian Republic — 0.2 people/km<sup>2</sup> and 1.9 people/km<sup>2</sup>, respectively (Table 1). According to the data of the 1926 All-Union Population Census, the Arkhangelsk Province included five counties, 28 volosts, 13 urban and 3022 rural settlements. Of the 13 urban settlements, 9 were in the Arkhangelsk Uyezd and one each in the other uyezds. There were 1341 out of 3022 rural settlements in the Arkhangelsk Uyezd, 180 — in the Mezensk Uyezd, 215 — in the Onega Uyezd, 145 — in the Pechora Uyezd, 1126 — in Shenkursk Uyezd (Table 1). There were 15 rural settlements with a population of 4.4 thousand people on the island territories. On average, the population density was small and amounted to 1 person/km<sup>2</sup>. There was a significant difference by district: the highest indicator was in Shenkursk Uyezd — 4.4 people/km<sup>2</sup>, in Arkhangelsk Uyezd — 2.8 people/km<sup>2</sup>, the smallest indicator was in Pechora Uyezd and on the islands — 0.2 people/km<sup>2</sup> and 0.04 people/km<sup>2</sup> respectively. The population of the Gubernia was 429.1 thousand people, of which 96.5 thousand people — urban population, 332.7 thousand people — rural population, including 2.4 thousand people of nomadic population of the tundra regions of the Mezensk and Pechora Uyezds.

In the second half of the 1920s, the Arkhangelsk Province economically was a rapidly developing region of the timber industry with its center in the port city of Arkhangelsk. The increased demand for timber export from the European North on the international market accelerated the development of the timber industry complex, which in turn ensured high rates of mechanical

growth of the urban population during this period. However, this concerned only the port cities, from which timber was exported, where most of sawmills were concentrated. In addition, in the 1920s, there was still a seasonal migration of the population to cities from nearby areas for seasonal work in the European North. Therefore, the size of the urban population during this period could fluctuate. In general, the urbanization process in the province, as can be seen from the table, proceeded at an uneven pace (Table 1). The total percentage of the urban population in the province was 22.5%. Such a high figure was achieved at the expense of the Arkhangelsk Uyezd — 36%, which was twice as high as in the country, as well as at the expense of the Pechora Uyezd — 17.5%, which had a small total population. In other uyezds, the percentage of the urban population was small. Thus, the rural-urban structure of the Gubernia's settlements was formed in the 1920s at the expense of rapidly developing regions, including at the expense of the Arkhangelsk Uyezd, which concentrated not only almost the entire urban population, but also more than half of the rural population of the entire Arkhangelsk Gubernia.

According to the All-Union Census of 1926, the distribution of the rural and urban population by sex in the Arkhangelsk Gubernia was characterized by a certain distortion of the structure: there were 225 thousand women per 204 thousand men. At the same time, this difference in the ratio was small in urban settlements, and the number of women was almost 20 thousand higher in rural areas. There were 1.1 thousand women per 1 thousand men (Table 2). The reasons for this disproportion were hidden in the general demographic trends and the intensification of migration processes in the conditions of industrial development of the regions and more active mobility of the male population.

Table 1  
Administrative-territorial structure and population of the northern regions of Russia in 1926

Gubernias, uyezds, okrugs	Area sq. km.	Number of volosts and districts	Number of village and settlement councils	Number of city councils	Number of settlements		Number of inhabitants			Average number of inhabitants		Population per 1 sq. km	Percentage of urban population
					Urban	Rural	In urban settlements	In the countryside	Total	Per 1 settlement	Per 1 village		
RSFSR	19748296	4079	55923	554	1240	486033	17440478	83417507*	100857985*	240	171	6.9	17.3
European North													
Arkhangelsk Gubernia:	438119	28	260	4	13	3022	96467	332717 330309**	429184 426776**	141	109	1.0	22.5
Arkhangelsk Uyezd	81490	9	109	1	9	1341	82457	146941	229398	169	110	2.8	36.0



Mezen Uyezd	113432	5	32	1	1	180	2952	37119 35792**	40071 38744**	215	199	0.35	7.3
Onega Uyezd	26330	5	30	1	1	215	5258	32408	37666	179	151	1.4	14.0
Pechora Uyezd	94456	3	14	-	1	145	3264	15375 14294**	18639 17558**	120	99	0.2	17.5
Shenkurskiy Uyezd	22406	6	70	1	1	1126	2536	96440	98976	88	87	4.4	2.5
Islands of the White Sea and the Arctic Ocean	100005	-	5	-	-	15	-	4434	4434	296	296	0.04	0
Komi (Zyryanskiy) Autonomous Oblast:	434149	95	134	1	3	1316	6765	200443 197493**	207208 204258**	155	150	0.5	3.2
Sysolskiy Uyezd	36459	27	38	1	3	647	6765	66442	73207	113	103	2.0	9.2
Izhmopechora Uyezd	27711	28	31	-	-	166	-	30723 27773**	30723 27773**	167	167	0.14	0
Ust-Vymskiy Uyezd	69269	21	30	-	-	240	-	46925	46925	196	196	0.7	0
Ust-Kulomskiy Uyezd	110710	19	35	-	-	263	-	56353	56353	214	214	0.5	0
Karelian ASSR:	143340	55	186	6	14	2841	61017	208717	269734	95	74	1.9	22.6
Petrozavodskiy Uyezd	1500	9	43	1	2	621	29713	60962	90675	146	98	6.0	32.0
Kemskiy Uyezd	40900	15	39	2	7	310	22414	25424	47838	151	82	1.2	46.8
Olonetskiy Uyezd	7140	7	24	1	1	516	1766	34764	36530	71	67	5.1	5.0
Padanskiy Uyezd	26100	5	20	-	1	168	727	13207	13934	82	79	0.5	5.2
Povenetskiy Uyezd	13200	7	27	1	2	613	4203	36330	40533	66	59	3.1	10.3
Pudozhskiy Uyezd	10400	5	17	1	1	292	2194	23519	25713	91	81	2.5	8.5
Ukhtskiy Uyezd	30600	7	16	-	-	321	-	14511	14511	45	45	0.5	0
Murmansk Gubernia	137459	9	44	1	3	228	9799	13207	23006	96	58	0.2	42.6
Ural (Tobolsk) North													
Tobolskiy Okrug	1176358	5	87	1	3	776	21206	170758 119062**	191964 140268**	180	153	0.16	11.0
North of Siberia													
Yakut ASSR	4023307	22	357	5	6	10261	15751	263058	278809	24	24	0.1	5.6
Turukhansk Krai	1566844	-	-	-	-	-	-	25000	23622***	-	-	0.02	-
North of the Far East													
Sakhalin Okrug	37988	4	43	1	1	145	2748	9111	11859	81	63	0.3	23.0
Kamchatka Okrug	1038996	8	132	1	1	328	1670	30134	31804	96	92	0.03	5.2

Compiled and calculated according to: All-Union Population Census of December 17, 1926: brief summaries. Moscow, Central Statistical Board of the USSR, 1927-1929. pp. 6-23.

\* — excluding population undistributed in settlements,

\*\* — excluding the nomadic population of the tundra,

\*\*\* — the population of the Turukhansk Krai is calculated according to: All-Union Population Census of 1926. Moscow, Publication of the Central Statistical Office of the USSR, 1928. Volume 9, Pp. 2–13, Volume 17, Page 2–3.

Table 2

## Distribution of the urban and rural population of the northern regions in 1926

Gubernias, okrugs	All population			Urban population			Rural population			Women per 1 thousand men		
	Men	Women	Both genders	Men	Women	Both genders	Men	Women	Both genders	Total population	Urban	Rural
PCФCP	48160653	52697332	100857985	8457891	8982587	17440478	39702762	43714745	83417507	1094	1062	1101
European North												
Arkhangelsk Gubernia	204241	224943	429184	47629	48838	96467	156612	176105	332717	1101	1025	1124
Komi (Zyryansk) Autonomous Oblast	94494	112714	207208	3326	3439	6765	91168	109275	200443	1193	1034	1199
Karelian ASSR	131839	137895	269734	30650	30367	61017	101189	107528	208717	1046	991	1063
Murmansk Gubernia	12728	10278	23006	5715	4084	9799	7013	6194	13207	808	715	883
Ural (Tobolsk) North												
Tobolsk Okrug	93359	98605	191964	10064	11142	21206	83295	87463	170758	1056	1107	1050
North of Siberia												
Yakut ASSR	147438	131371	278809	8360	7391	15751	139078	123980	263058	891	884	891
Turukhansk Krai	12221	11401	23622	-	-	-	12221	11401	23622	933	-	933
North of the Far East												
Sakhalin Okrug	7021	4838	11859	1622	1126	2748	5399	3712	9111	689	694	688
Kamchatka Okrug	17595	14209	31804	946	724	1670	16649	13485	30134	808	765	810

Compiled and calculated according to: All-Union Population Census of December 17, 1926: brief summaries. Moscow, Central Statistical Board of the USSR, 1927-1929, pp. 48–53.

The Komi Autonomous Oblast was formed in 1921 from the eastern parts of the Arkhangelsk and North-Dvina Gubernias of the RSFSR. Ust-Sysolsk became its administrative center. The region included the entire Ust-Sysolsk Uyezd, 21 volosts with the population of the Yarensk Uyezd and the Izhmo-Pechora Uyezd. In 1923, the Verkhnepechorsk (Troitsko-Pechora, Savinoborsk, Shchugorsk) volosts of the Cherdyn Uyezd of the Perm Gubernia were transferred to the region. In 1926, the region included four uyezds: Sysolsk, Izhmo-Pechorsk, Ust-Vymsk and Ust-Kulomsk, 95 volosts, 3 urban and 1316 rural settlements. The new oblast occupied a rather large territory, comparable in area with the Arkhangelsk Gubernia. At the same time, the number of settlements in Komi was twice less. The population density was 0.5 people/km<sup>2</sup>. This indicator varied by districts from 2.0 people/km<sup>2</sup> in the Sysolsk Uyezd to 0.14 people/km<sup>2</sup> in the Izhmo-Pechora Uyezd. The oblast was characterized by an agrarian specificity and an absolute predominance of the rural



population. According to the 1926 Census, 200.4 thousand (96.7%) out of 207.2 thousand of the population were rural residents, 2.9 thousand of which were people of nomadic population of the Izhmo-Pechora Uyezd (Table 1). The level of population urbanization in the region during this period was minimal. The percentage of the urban population was characterized by the lowest value in comparison with the neighboring territories and all the studied northern regions — 3.2% (6.7 people of the urban population). The urban population was concentrated in three urban settlements. The most populated in the region was the Sysolsk Uyezd (73.3 thousand people), where the entire urban population was concentrated. The percentage of the urban population in this district was three times higher than in the whole region — 9.2% (Table 1). The regional center of Ust-Sysolsk (since 1930 — the city of Syktyvkar) had 5.1 thousand residents, the factory settlements Kazhim and Nyuvchim — 1.0 and 0.7 thousand people respectively. There were 647 rural settlements in Sysolsk Uyezd out of the total number of 1316 in the region, of which only 18 were large settlements. Thus, the rural network of settlements in the Komi Oblast was characterized by the presence of the majority of small villages and hamlets, where the rural population was concentrated [1, Zherebtsov I.L., Beznosova N.P., p. 75]. With the formation of the new national statehood, the economic recovery of the region proceeded at a rapid pace in the context of the new economic policy. By the mid-1920s, the economy of the region has already developed at a faster pace. The economy of the region was restructured for the purposes of industrial development and utilization of its rich natural resources, construction of transport and industrial processing enterprises. Reconstruction of mining plants, as well as of the Seregovskiy salt plant was made. Logging production was actively developing. In 1926, a sawmill was built in the city of Ust-Sysolsk, the construction of a meat and fish cannery began in the village of Ust-Usa, power plants were built in Ust-Vym, Izhma and in some other settlements. The base of the construction industry was formed in Ust-Sysolsk. Despite the apparently rather stable economic situation in the region, researchers note that in the mid-1920s spontaneous peasant colonization continued actively, during which the Komi Autonomous Oblast was losing the peasant population, migrated in search of a better life to Siberia and beyond the Urals. V. I. Korotaev, a famous demographer, writes that in 1924–1925 more than a thousand people left the Komi Oblast for the Urals and Siberia [2, Korotaev V.I., p. 24]. The distribution of the rural and urban population of Komi by sex was also characterized by the predominance of the female population. There were 113 thousand women for 94 thousand men. In rural areas, this ratio difference was more noticeable. While on average there were 1199 women per 1000 men in rural areas, there were 1034 women in urban areas. This distribution of the population is explained by the same reasons: labor migration of men from rural to industrial areas.

The territory of the Karelian Republic was formed throughout the entire period of the 1920s. It included the Kemsk, Olonets, Petrozavodsk Uyezds, part of the Olonets Gubernia and five Pomor volosts of the Arkhangelsk Gubernia. In 1924, two more volosts were detached from the Leningrad Gubernia, and the islands of the White Sea, bordering the Kemsky Uyezd, were trans-

ferred. Thus, the Karelian Republic with the center in Petrozavodsk included seven uyezds: Kemsk, Olonetsk, Padansk, Povenetsk, Pudozhsk, Ukhta<sup>5</sup> (since 1927, uyezds were replaced by 26 districts) and 55 volosts, 14 urban and 2841 rural settlements. Approximately the same number of urban and rural settlements was in the Arkhangelsk Gubernia, the area of which was almost three times larger than the territory of Karelia (Table 1). This indicates a more densely populated structure of rural-urban settlements and a denser concentration of the population in the region — about 2 people/km<sup>2</sup>. This is the highest indicator of population density among the regions of the North. In several uyezdz of the republic, the population density was even higher than the average. Thus, there were 6 people/km<sup>2</sup> in the Petrozavodsk Uyezd, 5.1 people/km<sup>2</sup> — in Olonetsk Uyezd, 3.1 people/km<sup>2</sup> — in Povenetsk Uyezd. 208 thousand (77.4%) people out of 270 thousand were rural, the urban population was 61.0 thousand people (22.6%). Seven of the fourteen urban settlements were located in the Kemsk Uyezd, the rest were distributed in other uyezds, except for Ukhta. The Petrozavodsk and Kemsk Uyezds had the highest percentage of the urban population — 32% and 46.8%, which was explained by the beginning of labor migration in connection with the industrial development of the region. In general, the republic, like the neighboring regions during this period, was characterized by a low level of urbanization with a predominantly rural population. The military events of the World War I, the invasion of the interventionists and the subsequent peasant revolts in the bordering volosts after the establishment of Soviet power had a negative impact on the demographic situation in the Karelian Republic. According to experts, during the war, more than 5 thousand people migrated to Finland, and after the peasant uprising, more than 11 thousand people migrated. [3, Musaev V.I., p. 35, 37] After a fairly rapid economic recovery in the region in the second half of the 1920s, industrial sectors were formed in the republic at an accelerated pace, the capacities of enterprises of the timber and sawmill industries were increased, the construction of the Kondopozhskaya hydroelectric power station began as well as the foundation of new enterprises in the pulp and paper industry and the development of mineral resources in the region. This contributed to the attraction of population to the areas of industrial development. The distribution of the population of the Karelian Republic by gender was different, there was a slight increase in the number of women in rural areas, but there were 991 women on average per 1000 men in the urban areas (Table 2). The female population was less exposed to migration activity; in addition, the industrial specialization of the republic's industry attracted the male population to the cities.

Murmansk Gubernia was formed in 1921 from the Aleksandrovsk Uyezd of the Arkhangelsk Gubernia with the center in the city of Murmansk. It included 9 volosts, 3 urban and 228 rural settlements. The territorial area of the Gubernia was comparable to that of the Karelian Republic. However, the number of settlements, especially rural ones, was almost 12 times less. On average,

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<sup>5</sup> Atlas Karelii. «Olonetskaya guberniya i Kareliya v sostave RSFSR – SSSR – RF» [Atlas of Karelia. "Olonets Province and Karelia within the RSFSR – USSR – RF"]. URL: <http://nwpi.krc.karelia.ru/atlas/home/ot-pjatin-novgorodskih-dorpubliki-karelija/oloneckaja-gubernija-i-karelija-v-sostave-rsfsr-sssr-rf/index.html> (accessed 21 November 2020).

there were 96 inhabitants per settlement. The population density in the province was low among the regions of the European North — 0.2 people/km<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the population of the Murmansk Gubernia in comparison with other northern regions of the European part was almost 10 times less — 23 thousand people. The lowest population was observed only on Sakhalin 12 thousand people (Table 1). The urban population was 9.8 thousand people. The Gubernia had the highest percentage of the urban population among all northern regions — 42.6%. The urban population was concentrated in three cities — Murmansk, Aleksandrovsk and Kola. In 1926, the cities of Aleksandrovsk and Kola were transformed into villages, and the urban population decreased accordingly. These data from the 1926 All-Union Census indicate that the Murmansk Gubernia, still very “young” in the first half of the 1920s, was the least developed economically and demographically. The entire territory of the Gubernia was located practically beyond the Arctic Circle. The main economic activity was fishing, animal husbandry and reindeer breeding. Harsh climatic conditions and industry specificity made the region the least attractive for the permanent population, which prevented not only natural, but also mechanical growth.

Since the mid-1920s, the situation in the region changed dramatically. With the beginning of industrial development, the ice-free Murmansk port played an important role for the Murmansk Gubernia, which carried out export–import trade operations and subsequently became the most important center of foreign trade with Western countries. Shipbuilding and ship repairing industry, construction of new industrial enterprises developed at a rapid pace, the Murmansk railway was reconstructed. After the construction of the Umsk timber mill in the province, the development of the timber industry began. The labour migration from neighbouring villages and hamlets and from other regions to build new plants and factories increased the rate of urban population in the region. Murmansk was the only rapidly developing city and a center of attraction for migrants, mainly young working-age males, due to the industry specifics of the region and the population. It was at the expense of Murmansk, according to the statistics of 1926, that the Gubernia had the highest percentage of the urban population among the neighboring territories, as well as among all the northern regions — 42.6% (Table 1). The distribution of the urban and rural population in the province by gender in 1926 was distinguished by the predominance of the male population both in urban and rural settlements. In urban settlements, there were 4 thousand women for 5.7 thousand men, in rural areas there were 6 thousand women for 7 thousand men. In general, there were 808 women per 1000 men in the province (Table 2). This was due to the harsh natural and climatic conditions, the inaccessibility of the region and its industry specifics.

In the 19 — early 20 century, the territory of the future Nenets National Okrug was part of the Mezen and Pechora Uyezds of the Arkhangelsk Gubernia. In the 1920s, it also underwent territorial changes. In 1921, the Komi Autonomous Oblast was formed, which included the Pechora Uyezd. A little later, six volosts downstream of the Pechora were returned to the Arkhangelsk Gubernia, and the eastern part of the future Nenets National Okrug remained in the Komi Republic. This division of the traditional habitat of the Nenets population had negative consequences. In

fact, the close clans of Samoyeds, reindeer pastures, summer and winter camps, separated by administrative borders, destroyed the unified economic system of the indigenous nomadic population. The situation became more complicated for the administrative authorities in management of these territories. In order to manage the nomadic population, nomadic indigenous councils were created. Economically, like other regions, these territories experienced post-war difficulties, exacerbated by the introduction of new economic measures and government taxes. In 1924–1925, the Soviet leadership abolished taxation in order to support the economic development of the population. Fishing, animal husbandry and reindeer breeding were the main economic activities. In 1924, three enlarged volosts were formed in the Pechora Uyezd: Pustozersk (to which the Ermitsk volost was annexed), Telviska (which included the territory of the Bolshezemelskaya tundra) and Ust-Tsilma. The center of the district was the village of Ust-Tsilma.

According to the health department of the executive committee of the Northern Territory, quoted by V.I. Korotaev, the population of the district in 1926–1927 amounted to 12.4 thousand people. 5 thousand of them are representatives of the indigenous Nenets, the rest are representatives of the Komi and Russians. The author pointed out that this figure is approximate, which is associated with the difficulties of accounting for the indigenous nomadic population and the inaccessibility of territories [2, Korotaev V.I., p. 80]. The main factor was that during this period, there was a process of national-state formation of the future Nenets National Okrug with the redrawing of the borders of territories and settlements. This process was completed only by 1929.

### *Ural North in the 1920s*

The territories of the future national okrugs of the Ural North — the Nenets and Ostyako-Vogulskiy, were originally part of the Tyumen Gubernia of Tobolsk, Surgut and Berezovsky uyezds of Western Siberia. After formation of Ural Oblast in 1923–1929 and the transformation of uyezds, 15 okrugs were formed, including the Tobolsk Okrug with the center in the city of Tobolsk. Okrug was formed from the northeastern part of the former Tyumen Gubernia: Berezovskiy (without a part of the Sartynya Volost), Surgut, Tobolsk (without a part of the Istyatskaya and Malinovskaya volosts) and a part of the Verkh-Pelymskaya Volost of the Turin uyezds. The Okrug includes five districts: Berezovskiy, Kondinskiy, Obdorskiy, Samarovskiy and Surgutskiy, including three urban and 776 rural settlements. The Tobolsk North occupied a huge territory — more than 1 million km<sup>2</sup>. For comparison: the area of the entire Ural Oblast, which included the Tobolsk Okrug, was 1.7 million km<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, the population density, in comparison with the regions of the European North, was the lowest even in comparison with the small Murmansk Gubernia, where the indicator was 0.2 people/km<sup>2</sup>; it was 0.16 people / km<sup>2</sup> in the Tobolsk Okrug. In comparison with the regions of Siberia and the Far East, the lowest population density was in the Turukhansk Krai, Yakutia and Kamchatka — 0.02, 0.1 and 0.03 people/km<sup>2</sup>, respectively (Table 1).

According to the All-Union Census of 1926, the population of the Okrug was 192 thousand people, the urban population included 21.2 thousand people who lived in three urban settle-

ments: Tobolsk, Surgut, Berezov, two of them (Surgut and Berezov) were designated as rural settlements in 1926. Consequently, the urban population has decreased due to territorial and administrative changes. The percentage of the urban population in the Okrug was low — 11%. The urban settlements were inhabited mainly by the Russian old-time population. The largest rural settlements with predominance of the Russian population were Obdorsk, Nizhneartovskoe, Kondinskoe, Saranpaul, Nakhrachi, Leushi, Bolchary, etc. there were 180 inhabitants per town and village. The rural population, as well as in the whole country, prevailed in the Okrug — 170.7 thousand people, 51.7 thousand of which were nomads of the northern regions. There were 776 rural settlements in the settlement structure. The structure developed at a very slow pace, especially in the remote northern regions, where the nomadic population predominated. In general, the settlement structure in the district was determined by natural and climatic conditions, the level of economic development and transport accessibility of the region. In the 1920s, the Tobolsk North also experienced difficult times of post-war devastation and economic crisis. After the expulsion of Kolchak's army in 1921, the territories were engulfed in revolts, which were extinguished by 1922 and a gradual recovery of the region's economy began. During the New Economic Policy period, the region's economy was characterized by some recovery, the revival of fair trade and private entrepreneurship. The scope of business activities of the Tobolsk North was very limited and was conditioned by natural landscapes with a characteristic abundance of water and forest resources in the region. It was represented by fish and bread trade, retail trade, as well as timber and fish industry, transportation services, etc. According to the Soviet leadership, the inclusion of the Tobolsk North into the Urals industrial complex should have facilitated the involvement of vast forest lands and natural resources in various industrial sectors, including metallurgy, and the integration of the territory into the country's economic complex. However, in the 1920s, this was almost unrealistic due to the underdeveloped communications and the actual transport isolation of the region. In contrast to the regions of the European North after the recovery period, in the mid-1920s, the economic development of the Tobolsk Okrug was limited by the intensification of logging and fishing industries (hunting, fishing and reindeer husbandry). The main focus of the Soviet leadership was on the development of the fishing industry and further development of the resources of the Irtysh region, the middle and lower Ob regions. At the same time, the private sector began to be gradually excluded out of the industry.

The zone of denser population settlement passed through the southern territory of the Okrug and included a more developed structure of rural and urban settlements, as well as workers' settlements and settlements at railway stations (“railway stations”) [4, Tatarnikova A.I., p. 22]. The northern territory of the Okrug was traditionally occupied by a nomadic and semi-sedentary indigenous population: Voguls (Mansi), Ostyaks (Khanty), Zyryans, Selkups and Samoyeds (Nenets). Indigenous peoples had their own habitats, where they have coexisted peacefully since ancient times. As in the territory of the future Nenets National Okrug, indigenous councils were created in the territories of the Tobolsk Okrug for the administrative management of territories,

which also gave the leadership the opportunity to obtain more detailed information about the population of the territories. State support of the indigenous peoples of the North in the 1920s, their exemption from paying taxes and fees improved the living conditions of the indigenous population, and contributed to the strengthening of their economic position.

The gender distribution of the rural and urban population in the Okrug was characterized by a general tendency towards the prevalence of the female population. In rural areas, the difference in the male to female ratio was more pronounced. In urban settlements, there were 11 thousand women for every 10 thousand men, while in rural areas there were 87 thousand women for 83.3 thousand men. On average, there were 1056 women per 1000 men (Table 2). This distribution of the population was explained by the general demographic trends in the country and the migration activity of the male population.

### *North of Siberia in the 1920s*

In 1922, the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee adopted a resolution on the formation of the Yakut ASSR with the administrative center in Yakutsk. Among all the northern regions under consideration, Yakutia was the largest administrative-territorial unit in the country. Its territory stretches for more than 4 million km<sup>2</sup> (Table 1). The Autonomous Republic included the Yakutsk Gubernia, the Khatango-Anabarskiy district of the Yenisei Gubernia, the Olekminsko-Suntarskiy Volost of the Kirenskiy Uyezd, the islands of the Arctic Ocean and the Okhotsk Uyezd of the Kamchatka Oblast. In 1923, the Okhotsk Uyezd was transferred to the Kamchatka Gubernia. In 1926, instead of five uyezds, six okrugs were created, which were divided into uluses, volosts, village councils, naslegi and naslegi councils: Verkhoyansk, Vilyuiskiy, Kolymskiy, Lenskiy, Olekminskiy and Yakutskiy. According to the 1926 All-Union Census, the republic included six urban settlements: Verkhoyansk, Vilyuisk, Kolymsk, Olekminsk, Yakutsk, as well as Tommot, founded in 1923<sup>6</sup> and 10261 rural settlements. This is the largest number of rural settlements in comparison with other northern regions. Nevertheless, with such a number of settlements, the population density in the republic, as noted above, was characterized by one of the lowest values among the northern regions of the European part, the Urals and the Far East — 0.1 people/km<sup>2</sup> (Table 1). Settlement structure of Yakutia in the first half of the 1920s developed at a slow pace, settlements were small, with an average of 24 people. It is also the lowest among the northern regions. The specifics of agriculture in the region (nomadic and sedentary cattle breeding, reindeer herding) determined the dispersion of the settlement system and, accordingly, a low population density with a relatively uniform development of large territories of Yakutia. In the second half of the 1920s, the Soviet leadership tried to pursue a policy of consolidation of rural settlements, but later it turned into a policy of “forced concentration of the rural population” and was negatively perceived by the local population [5, Gavrilyeva T.N., p. 468.]

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<sup>6</sup> Yakut ASSR. URL: <http://bsk.nios.ru/enciklopediya/yakutskaya-assr> (accessed 20 October 2020).



The population of Yakutia, according to the 1926 Census, was 278.8 thousand people. The rural population predominated, it amounted to 263 thousand people, the urban population — 15.7 thousand people. Consequently, the percentage of the urban population was low — 5.6%.

The period of the 1920's was rather difficult and full of military and political events for Yakutia. After the expulsion of Kolchak's army, the establishment of Soviet power on the territory of Yakutia and the formation of an autonomous republic, a new stage in the political and socio-economic development of the republic began. The recovery period of the economy and the NEP implementation had positive results in the region, the pre-war level of development was achieved in a number of indicators (cattle breeding, agriculture). The industry of Yakutia was at the initial stage of development, almost at the level of handicraft production. In 1923, there were 8 state and 11 private enterprises, which included a power plant, metalwork and mechanical workshops, a flour mill, a printing house, etc.<sup>7</sup> A significant event and stimulus in the economy and transport development of Yakutia was the discovery of a gold deposit in 1924 in the Aldan region, where its production became the first in the country in a few years. The mines of Lebediniy, Zolotoy, Turuk and others were opened. Since the mid-1920s, an intensive inflow of migrant workers to the mines began. Population of the mines increased to 13.5 thousand in summer of 1925, however by November, it gradually decreased to 8 thousand people<sup>8</sup>. The first workers' settlements appeared, a new city of Tommot was formed in the Aldan region. Geological exploration and development of coal deposits, as well as tin, tungsten and other natural resources of the region, continued. Active industrial construction began. By the end of the 1920s, sawmill, leather shoe and brick factories were opened. In 1925, the construction of the Amur-Yakutsk Mainline (AYAM) marked the beginning of the transport development of the region and contributed to an increase in the mechanical population growth not only in mines, but also in other industries and transport. The indigenous national population continued to engage in nomadic herding and reindeer breeding, while part of the population switched to a semi-sedentary lifestyle. The economy of Yakutia continued to be dominated by hunting and fishing, with a special emphasis on furs, which were in great demand on both the domestic and foreign markets.

Thus, in comparison with the neighboring Tobolsk Okrug and the Turukhansk Krai of Siberia, Yakutia was a rapidly developing region during this period, attracting an active working-age population not only from neighboring areas, but also from remote ones. The ratio of the male and female population in the republic was characterized both in urban and rural areas by predominance of the male population. Thus, there were 7.4 thousand women for 8.3 thousand men in urban settlements and 124 thousand women for 139 thousand men in rural settlements. In general, there were 891 women per 1000 men in the republic (Table 2). This disproportion was explained

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<sup>7</sup> Antonov E.P. Promyshlennoe osvoenie Yakutii v 1920–1930-e gg [Industrial Development of Yakutia in the 1920s – 1930s]. URL: <https://zaimka.ru/antonov-yakutia/> (accessed 20 October 2020).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

by harsh climatic conditions, industry specificity of the region, focused on exploration and extraction of natural resources, development of mining industry and transport construction.

Territories of the future Evenk and Taimyr (Dolgano-Nenets) national okrugs in the 1920s were part of the Turukhansk Krai of North-Eastern Siberia. The territorial area of the Turukhansk Krai was 1.5 million km<sup>2</sup> and was one of the largest administrative-territorial units. It should be noted that the area of the Krasnoyarsk Okrug, which included the Turukhansk Krai, was only 208 thousand km<sup>2</sup>. The population density in the Krai was the lowest (0.02 people/km<sup>2</sup>), actually at the level of the islands of the European part, the territory of which was 15 times smaller (Table 1). The population in the Krai was rural, with 23.6 thousand people. In 1921, after the expulsion of Kolchak's army and the establishment of Soviet power in the region, three volost executive committees of Verkhneimbatskiy, Monastyrskiy and Dudinskiy were formed. The policy of the Soviet leadership in the region was carried out within the framework of the general state course to support the national indigenous population by organising aboriginal councils, establishing economic relations, cultural enlightenment, education and healthcare. In 1924, the indigenous population, like in other national northern regions, was exempted from paying taxes, and benefits for the supply of goods were established. In the middle of 1923, the "Integral-Soyuz" cooperative was organized in the Turukhansk Territory, which united the consumer, commercial and agricultural activities of the population. In the mid-1920s, under the conditions of the new economic policy, more than a dozen trading posts were founded in the Turukhansk Krai, where bread and other goods were exchanged for furs and fish. New consumer cooperatives were created to supply the population with goods and products. At the trading posts, cultural bases with medical and veterinary posts and elementary schools were formed. In total, five cultural bases and eight schools were opened. The first hospital in the village of Dudinka on Taimyr was opened in 1927. In total, by the end of the 1920s, five medical departments and first-aid posts were formed on the territory of Taimyr - in Dudinka, Volochanka, Tolstoy, Nos and in the Khatanga tundra [6, Bicheool V.K., p. 105]. In 1925, within the framework of the administrative-territorial reform in the Turukhansk Krai, three districts with the Russian population were formed: Dudinskiy, Monastyrskiy (Turukhanskiy), Verkhneimbatskiy, and six national districts: Eloguiskiy, Zatundrinskiy, Ilimpiyskiy, Podkameno-Tunguskiy, Tazovskiy and Khetskiy<sup>9</sup>. In 1927, the first settlement was built on the territory of Evenkia — the Turin cultural base — the future center of the formation of the Evenk National Okrug, with a hospital, a veterinary center and an elementary school. At that time, the traditional livelihoods of the indigenous nomadic population (hunting, fishing, reindeer breeding) were preserved in these areas. However, the indigenous population was gradually involved in new economic relations. Discovered in the early 1920s by the Yamal expedition on the study of natural resources of the region, large reserves of coal in the Taimyr Peninsula and the richest Norilsk nickel deposit contributed to the beginning of the industrial development of the region. Nevertheless, the population of the

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<sup>9</sup> Encyclopedia of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. Turukhansk District. URL: <http://my.krskstate.ru/docs/regions/turukhanskiy-rayon/> (accessed 26 October 2020).

Turukhansk Krai, and in particular the regions of Taimyr and Evenkia, formed very slowly during this period, mainly due to a small natural increase. In the ratio of the region's population by gender, as in neighboring Yakutia, the male population prevailed due to the harsh natural and climatic conditions and the specifics of the fishing industry. There were 11.4 women per 12.2 thousand men, on average there were 933 women per 1000 men (Table 2). In 1928, the territories of Taimyr and Evenkia were withdrawn from the Turukhansk Krai, and in December 1930, on the general wave of national state building, the Evenk and Taimyr (Dolgano-Nenets) national okrugs were formed.

During the 1920s, Tuva (Uryankhai Krai) was not officially part of Russia, but was under its protectorate (since 1914). During this period, Tuva was characterized by similar trends in development with the national northern territories of Russia, the period was rich in terms of military-political events and revolts. In the early 1920s, military operations to expel the White Guards from the territories continued in some border territories of Tuva and Mongolia. In this regard, there were frequent migrations of the indigenous population to neighboring territories, for example, to Altai. Since 1921, the period of the formation of Tuva statehood began. In that year, the All-Tuva Khural proclaimed the formation of the People's Republic of Tannu-Tuva Ulus (in 1926–1944 — the Tuvan People's Republic). Its independence was officially recognized by Russia and in 1926 by Mongolia. The territorial area of Tuva during this period was about 200 thousand km<sup>2</sup> and was divided into khoshuns (in 1921— 7, in 1941 — 16). The urban population was concentrated in a single city — the capital of the Republic, Kyzyl (since 1926). E.D. Prokofyeva provides data on the population of Tuva in the 1920s, which, according to various sources, was not the same. In 1922, according to the materials of the Commissariat of Nationalities, 100 thousand people lived in Tuva, of which 30 thousand were Russians and 70 thousand were Tuvians. Another source for the same year cited a figure of 120 thousand people. Periodicals cited lower figures. So, in 1925, according to their data, the population was 63 thousand people, including 51 thousand Tuvians [7, Prokofyeva E.D., p. 80]. The population was distributed unevenly across the territory, the population density in 1929 was 0.38 people/km<sup>2</sup>. In the west and in the center of Tuva, the density was much higher. 70% of the population of Tuva was concentrated in the Kemchik and Taiginskiy khoshuns [7, Prokofyeva E.D., p. 80]. The Soviet leadership provided economic and socio-cultural support to the republic. In strengthening its influence, it relied on the Russian labor colony, formed in 1921 on the territory of Tuva. The Russian population appeared in Tuva since the 19th century due to the active agrarian colonization policy of the tsarist government, its number was about 20% according to various sources.

At the beginning of the 20th century, there were 340 settlements with a Russian population of about 12 thousand people in Uryankhai. Half of them were established at the beginning of the 20th century. More populated territory was the Khemchik river basin (82 settlements) and the Turano-Uyuk steppe (66 settlements — 2.5 thousand people). The largest number of the population by this time settled in the area adjacent to Tannu-ola (modern Tandinskiy district). The main

population was agricultural. The large population was actively settled during the 1920s in the areas of Kaa-khemu and Tandy, where the Tuvinians had previously settled [7, Prokofyeva E.D., p. 156]. During the period of economic recovery, then under the NEP conditions, nomadic cattle breeding, fur and fishing remained the main economic activity of the indigenous population. In the Russian colony, they were engaged in agriculture based on individual peasant labor, as well as in gold mines and handicraft enterprises (pottery, soap, tar and pitch, sheepskin-leather, felting-pimokat, shoemaking, locksmithing, confectionery sausage-making, etc.). Gold mining enterprises became the basis of the Tuvinian industry. Due to intensification of gold mining in the republic, the number of workers in this industry doubled in 1928–1932. [8, Mollerov N.M., p. 121]. At the end of the decade, state farms appeared in Tuva — TOZs, TUZHs, the first agricultural artels (collective farms), the process of modernizing agriculture began. In the mid-1920s, the Tuvintsencoop cooperative was launched in Tuva, which played an important role in the development of Tuva's industry, in foreign and domestic trade. Besides, Tuvinbank was opened, a power plant was built, gold mining and handicrafts were established, and a printing house was opened. At the same time, the state-cooperative sector of the economy brought more than half of the revenues to the budget. In 1926–1929, a geological expedition of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR worked on development of coal deposits, and a comprehensive expedition for the study of national problems, which provided assistance in the creation of a number of scientific, cultural and educational institutions worked in 1930–1931. In 1931, a demographic and agricultural census was carried out in Tuva, the population of which was 82.2 thousand people; 64.9 thousand of them were Tuvans, 17.3 thousand belonged to other nationalities, mostly Russians. The population of the republic lived in 13 thousand yurts, 1.4 thousand chums and about 5 thousand houses. The overwhelming majority of the population (76.1 thousand people) belonged to the agricultural sector, 88% of Tuvan households in 1931 continued to lead a nomadic lifestyle<sup>10</sup>. According to the 1931 Census, there were similar trends in the gender distribution of the population in Tuva as in neighbouring regions. The number of men slightly exceeded the number of women: for 42 thousand men there were 42 thousand women. There were 935 women per 1000 men<sup>11</sup>.

Despite the state independence, socio-economic transformations on the territory of the Tuva Republic took place under the patronage of Russia in the 1920s and, in general, predetermined similar trends in demographic development with other northern regions. The inclusion of the republic in Russia's zone of interest, the active establishment and expansion of economic and trade relations contributed to the migration inflow of the Russian population to Tuva, as well as the return migration of the Tuvinian population from neighboring regions.

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<sup>10</sup> 85 let Tuvinskoy sel'skokhozyaystvennoy i demograficheskoy perepisi 1931goda [85th Anniversary of the Tuvan Agricultural and Demographic Census of 1931]. URL: <http://mkyzyl.ru/about/info/news/7964/> (accessed 27 October 2020).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

### *North of the Far East in the 1920s*

The Far Eastern region had a particularly important geostrategic and geopolitical significance. The most distant region from the centre of the country was an integral part of trade, economic and foreign policy relations with the Asia-Pacific countries, which necessitated strengthening the positions and defense capabilities of the young Soviet state in this region. The period of the 1920s was the most difficult for the Far Eastern regions. When the restoration of economic life was in full swing in other northern regions, military operations against the Japanese interventionists and White Guards continued in the Far East. In 1920, on the territory of the Far East and Eastern Siberia, an independent Far Eastern republic was formed with the administrative center in the city of Verkhneudinsk. It included Zabaikalskaya, Amurskaya and Primorskaya regions, Kamchatka (transferred to the RSFSR in 1921) and the right of way of the Chinese-Eastern Railway (CER). In 1923, after the defeat of the intervention and the White movement, the republic was abolished and it was annexed to Russia as Far East region with Zabaikalskaya, Amurskaya, Primorskaya and Kamchatskaya gubernias with the center in Vladivostok. In 1926 the region was transformed into the Far Eastern Krai, which included 9 okrugs, divided into 75 districts with the center in the city of Khabarovsk. The northern regions of the Krai were included in the Kamchatka and Sakhalin okrugs [9, *Dal'niy Vostok Rossii...*, p. 110.] In terms of territorial area, the Kamchatka Okrug was the largest northern region, comparable in size to the Tobolsk North — 1 million km<sup>2</sup>. (Table 1) The region was characterized by the lowest population density among all northern regions, this indicator was comparable to the population density of the Turukhansk Krai and the islands of the Arctic Ocean — 0.03 people/km<sup>2</sup> (Table 1). The settlement structure of the population in the Kamchatka Okrug consisted of 1 urban settlement and 328 rural settlements, which indicated a poorly developed settlement structure. On average, there were 96 people per one settlement. In contrast to the southern belt of the Far East regions, which were developed due to active mechanical growth of population, the process of development and settlement in Kamchatka was very slowly due to the harsh climate and inaccessibility of the region. Transport communication between settlements was difficult within the peninsula, as well as external. Initially, the Okrug was divided into 8 districts: Anadyrskiy, Bolsheretskiy, Karaginskiy, Penzhinskiy, Petropavlovskiy, Tigilskiy, Ust-Kamchatskiy and Chukotskiy. According to the All-Union Census of 1926, the population of the district was 32 thousand people. The rural population prevailed — 30 thousand people. The urban population was concentrated in the city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy and amounted to 1670 people. The level of urbanization was minimal, the percentage of the urban population was 5.2% (Table 1). According to the 1926 Census, the population distribution of the Kamchatka Okrug was similar to situation in other northern regions, where the number of men exceeded the number of women: for 17.5 thousand men there were 14.2 thousand women. On average, there were 808 women per 1000 men (Table 2). This was due to the remoteness of the region from transport interchanges with limited navigation, harsh climatic conditions and the specialization of the region on the fishing industry. The territory of Kamchatka was rather poorly included in the economy of

the country and the region. The underdevelopment of the Kamchatka Okrug hindered its socio-economic and demographic development. On the other hand, its main fishing and processing industries were owned by Japanese entrepreneurs on a concession basis. Such an economic policy in Kamchatka was due to the interest of the management in attracting foreign investments. After the expulsion of the Japanese interventionists and the restoration of the regional economy, the situation in the economic life of the district changed dramatically. In 1924, the first state-owned enterprise, the Okhotsk-Kamchatka Joint-Stock Fishing Company, was founded. In order to provide the joint-stock company (exploitation of fisheries, supply of the local population, purchase of gold and furs) with labor resources, seasonal hiring of workers was organized. Japanese migrants worked in concessional Japanese enterprises. At the same time, the number of Japanese workers on the peninsula was approximately the same in relation to Russian workers. In the late 1920s, the number of Japanese workers was 2788 people, Russian workers — 2 898 people. [10, Elizarova V.O., p. 67]. Since the mid-1920s, the public sector in the industry gradually strengthened. In a short time, fish canning factories and a number of auxiliary enterprises (timber processing plant, shipyard, tin can factory, etc.) were built [11, Ilyina V.A., p. 14]. An important role in this period was played by the formation of transport communications, which established a year-round connection between Kamchatka and the mainland. Transport development significantly accelerated the economic and demographic development of the region. The agricultural and forestry industries were further developed. Geological exploration expeditions of the region began. At the same time, the problem of labor shortage due to seasonal recruitment has not been resolved. In 1930, Kamchatka began accepting the first settlers for the planned organized resettlement of the population to the underdeveloped regions of Siberia and the Far East.

Traditional crafts — hunting, fishing, reindeer herding — remained the basis of economy of the indigenous peoples of Kamchatka. The nomadic Koryaks and Evenks had reindeer breeding as their main economic activity while the sedentary Koryaks, Itelmens and Aleuts fished and hunted sea mammals. In the late 1920s, a state monopoly on fur production and trade was established. The indigenous population was actively involved in this industry [12, Kirillova A.I., p. 43]. In 1925, the Far Eastern Committee for Assistance to the Peoples of the Northern Outskirts of the Region was created, which was of great progressive importance in the economic development of the indigenous population. In 1930, the Chukotka and Koryak national okrugs were formed from the territory of the Kamchatka Okrug. There were three districts left in the Kamchatka Okrug: Bolsheretskiy, Petropavlovskiy and Ust-Kamchatskiy. In general, the economic and demographic development of Kamchatka in the 1920s was inextricably linked to solving primarily foreign policy and geostrategic problems.

During the 1920s, Sakhalin Island was in the midst of foreign political events and diplomatic struggles. In 1920, the territory of Southern and Northern Sakhalin was occupied by Japan, only in 1925, after the diplomatic agreements and the withdrawal of Japanese troops from Primorye, the northern part of Sakhalin returned to Russia, and the southern part of it officially remained under



the protectorate of Japan. Since that time, socio-economic and demographic processes in the northern and southern territories have proceeded in accordance with the state policy of the countries. In 1926, the Sakhalin Okrug was formed with the center in the city of Aleksandrovsk as part of the Far Eastern Territory. The Okrug includes four districts: Aleksandrovskiy, Rykovskiy, Okhinskiy and Rybnovskiy. The Sakhalin Okrug occupied the smallest territorial area among all northern regions — 38 thousand km<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, the island, as well as the vast territory of the Kamchatka Peninsula, was characterized by the lowest population density — 0.3 people/km<sup>2</sup>.

The population, according to the 1926 All-Union Population Census, was almost 12 thousand people. In comparison with 1923, the population decreased by almost 3 thousand people. According to the published data of the occupation authorities of Japan, the population of Northern Sakhalin in 1923 was 15.2 thousand people, of which 50% were Russians, the rest were Japanese, Chinese, Koreans [13, *Istoriya Sakhalina i Kuril'skikh ostrovov...*, p. 403]. In 1926, the population consisted of Russian old-timers (67.9%), foreigners (17.1%) — Chinese, Koreans, Japanese and representatives of indigenous peoples — Nivkhs, Orochons, Tungus and Yakuts (15%) [13, *Istoriya Sakhalina i Kuril'skikh ostrovov...*, p. 408]. The rural population prevailed — 9 thousand people, the urban population was 2.7 thousand people. At the same time, the Sakhalin Okrug had a fairly high percentage of the urban population — 23%, comparable to the actively developing Arkhangelsk Gubernia or the Karelian Republic (Table 1). In 1926, in order to provide the region with labor resources, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR adopted a decree on benefits for those moving to Northern Sakhalin (exemption from the army service, from agricultural and trade taxes). This measure stimulated a quite rapid inflow of population to the region. In the second half of the 1920s, the population doubled due to peasant resettlements. In 1926–1929, its number was 26.5 thousand people. [13, *Istoriya Sakhalina i Kuril'skikh ostrovov...*, p. 408]. The rural-urban structure of the harsh and inaccessible region of the Far East was underdeveloped, it included 1 urban settlement and 145 rural ones (Table 1). The number of settlements was small, with an average of 80 inhabitants.

Sakhalin was somewhat different in its economic development during the 1920s from Kamchatka and other northern regions of Siberia. During the years of occupation, Japan has shown an active business position in relation to the region. In order to accelerate the development of Sakhalin and service its occupation forces, transport communications (bridges, roads and railways, telegraphs, etc.) were being built on the territory. In particular, the development of transport was aimed at the exploitation and development of oil fields. A number of industrial enterprises were built: power plants, mechanical workshops and sawmills, fish farms. Since the 19th century, Sakhalin, as already mentioned, was the main coal-mining region of the Far East. The fishing industry played an important role in the region's economy, and the agricultural industry was actively developing. The population was formed unevenly, migration flows were directed to the centers of industrial activity, timber processing, fishing and mining industries. The bulk of Sakhalin's labor resources were provided by organizational kits and recruits. The living conditions of the

migrants were rather difficult, with return migration reaching 25%. The indigenous population, as evidenced by the 1926 Census, constituted a small part of the Sakhalin population and was engaged in traditional trades — hunting, fishing, reindeer husbandry, and, like in other northern regions, was gradually involved in the economic life of the region. The distribution of the population by gender was characterized by a predominance of the male population. In 1926, there were 4.8 thousand women for every 7 thousand men. In the city, the difference between the genders was less than in the villages. On average, there were 689 women per 1000 men. This distribution is typical for a number of northern regions due to the harsh climatic conditions, the inaccessibility of the region and the specifics of the economy, where male labor is predominantly involved.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, the dynamics of the northern regions development during the 1920s was conditioned by the general trends of the Soviet state policy. With the beginning of the reform of the country's administrative-territorial structure, the regions of the North were subjected to a large-scale re-drawing of territories. With the changes in the territorial area, the territorial management system changed, as well as the population size and the structure of settlements. In general, the northern regions occupied vast areas in scale, stretching for thousands of kilometers. The largest area belonged to the Republic of Yakutia — more than 4 million km<sup>2</sup>, more than 1 million km<sup>2</sup> was occupied by the Turukhansk Krai, the Tobolsk Okrug, the Kamchatka Okrug and the territories of the islands of White Sea and Arctic Ocean. At the same time, the indicators of population density per 1 km<sup>2</sup> compared with the indicator for the RSFSR (5.1 people/km<sup>2</sup>) were incomparably small, in some regions they did not even reach 1, the lowest indicator was in the Turukhansk Krai, in Yakutia and on the territory of the Kamchatka Peninsula and the islands of the White Sea and the Arctic Ocean. This indicated, on the whole, poor economic development and settlement of the Northern territories at the beginning of the 20th century. After the end of the World War I, the Civil War and the expulsion of the invaders from the territory of the state, a period of economic recovery began in all regions, and then a unified course for industrial modernization was adopted within the framework of the new economic policy. These measures contributed to the rapid restoration and further economic development and settlement of the North. At the same time, as shown by historical and comparative analysis, the development of various regions of the North during this period, despite a number of similar trends, differed and was largely determined by such factors as the level of economic development, the presence of rich natural resources and external state borders.

European North during the 1920s was a rapidly developing region with a timber industry complex, a fishing industry and sea foreign trade ports in the city of Arkhangelsk and the city of Murmansk. It was the so-called “currency shop of the country” or “currency sawmill”. The intensive increase in production capacity was determined not only by the more developed level of the region's economy, but also by the proximity of the western borders and the need to strengthen

the borders of the new Soviet state. The Far Eastern North was also the epicenter of international diplomacy during this period and, as part of trade and economic relations with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region, was of particular importance to the state. In addition, Sakhalin was a developed center of the coal mining, forestry, fishing and gold mining industries at the beginning of the 20th century. The accelerated industrial development of these northern territories also resulted in rapid population growth and growth of urban settlements.

The development of the North of the Urals and Siberia during this period proceeded at a slower pace. By the beginning of the 20th century, these territories were characterized by poor economic development, lack of communications and transport isolation. In this regard, after the recovery period, from the mid-1920s, the economic development of these regions was reduced to the intensification of logging and various branches of the fishing industry. In some regions, industrial production remained in its infancy. In this regard, the density and size of the population there was small, the structure of the settlements was characterized by the dispersion of settlements across the territory. The exception was Yakutia, where in the mid-1920s the Aldan gold deposit was discovered, which became the center of attraction for investments and labor migrants.

State transformations of the 1920s influenced the formation of the population of the northern regions — the size of the population, including urban and rural, as well as changes in the gender structure and ethnic composition. The growth of the urban population was observed in the regions of the European North — the Arkhangelsk and Murmansk gubernias and the Karelian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, as well as in the Sakhalin Okrug of the Far East North. The high rate was explained by the influx of the urban population from neighboring districts, as well as from other regions for the construction of new enterprises, for working in the fishing, coal and gold mining industries on preferential terms. At the same time, the indicator of the urban population in these areas in percentage terms was 1.5–2 times higher than the average for Russia, although the North was characterized by a predominance of the rural population.

In the gender structure of the population, the European North (with the exception of Murmansk Gubernia) and the Ural North tended to be dominated by women. In the North of Siberia and the Far East, the male population predominated, which was due to the harsh climatic conditions, the inaccessibility of the regions and the industry specifics, where the male population is predominantly employed.

The general trend in the development of regions during the 1920s was a state national policy towards the indigenous peoples of the North. At the first stage, this policy provided material support to indigenous households, exempted them from taxes and duties, improved living conditions, introduced medical services, established indigenous councils in the regions — Soviet authorities and incorporated indigenous territories into the national economy. All these measures had a positive impact on the attitude of the population towards the new government and, in general, on the economic and demographic development of the indigenous population. By the end of the 1920s, the next stage of national policy emerged — the formation of national districts in the resi-

dence areas of the indigenous peoples of the North and the transition from measures of their state support to the transformation of life and activities on the basis of a socialist structure.

Thus, the beginning of the first transformations of the Soviet power in the field of administrative-territorial structure, economic development and national policy determined the main trends in the formation of the population and economic development of the regions of the North in the period of the 1920s.

### *Acknowledgments and funding*

The article was prepared with the support of the RFBR Foundation No. 19-09-00041a "Economic and socio-demographic development of the Arctic territories of the USSR (1920-1980s)".

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*Received on November 20, 2020*