

## POPULATION OF THE UZBEK SSR ( 1926 , 1939 ) HELD UNION POPULATION LIST ACCORDING TO THE RESULTS

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### Abstract:

The primary source of information about the population is census documents. These documents provide systematic data on the population size and its distribution across the republic, urban and rural settlements, nationality, language, gender, age, marital status, social origin, literacy, and education levels. The article examines the results of the 1926 and 1939 censuses, highlighting the social status of the population in the Uzbek SSR and the policies implemented by the Bolsheviks regarding the population.

**Keywords:** The All-Union population census, statistics, administrative-territorial division, migration, Central Asia, age groups, forecast, socialist population law, mortality, famine, social changes, workers, and peasants.

### Introduction

After the establishment of Soviet power, attention to statistical work increased. Following the 1917 revolution, Lenin immediately declared his slogan: "**Socialism is accounting.**" By the summer of 1918, practical steps were taken to organize Soviet statistics. In the first half of the 20th century, multiple population censuses were conducted in the USSR to fulfill state-planned objectives. In particular, the **1926 All-Union Population Census** was carried out across all Soviet-controlled territories, including almost all regions of the Uzbek SSR.

### Research Discussion

For the authoritarian Soviet regime and the Bolsheviks, it was convenient to divide and manage the Turkestan region. Thus, Turkestan was initially granted "Soviet autonomy." Later, the Bolsheviks prepared thoroughly to divide the region. This process took seven years with some interruptions.

On January 29, 1925, the first administrative-territorial division of the Uzbek SSR took place. Initially, seven provinces were established: Zarafshan, Samarkand, Tashkent, Fergana, Surkhandarya, Kashkadarya, and Khorezm. Additionally, Kanimekh was designated as a separate district, and the Tajik ASSR was formed. At that time, the Uzbek SSR consisted of 23 districts and 241 volosts (sub-districts).

The national delimitation process incorporated Uzbek, Tajik, Turkmen, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and other ethnic groups living across Turkestan, Bukhara, and Khorezm into newly formed national republics. After the national-territorial division, the total population of Central Asia was recorded at 8,131,062 people. The Uzbek SSR received 2,323,764 people from the Turkestan ASSR, 1,319,498 from the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic, and 320,023 from the Khorezm People's



Soviet Republic. Similarly, the Tajik ASSR incorporated 135,665 people from the Turkestan ASSR and 603,838 from the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic. The Turkmen SSR incorporated 350,000 people from the Turkestan ASSR, 313,101 from the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic, and 192,013 from the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic. Kyrgyz ASSR absorbed 714,648 people from the Turkestan ASSR, while the Kazakh ASSR incorporated 1,468,724 people from the same region.

On February 17, 1925, the "Declaration on the Establishment of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic" was adopted. The declaration confirmed that the newly established Uzbek SSR included the provinces of Tashkent, Samarkand, Fergana, Kashkadarya, Zarafshan (Bukhara), Surkhandarya, Khorezm, and the Tajik ASSR. (The Tajik ASSR remained part of the Uzbek SSR until 1929. The Karakalpak ASSR was incorporated into the Uzbek SSR in 1936.)

### Research Results

The 1926 census recorded the population of the Uzbek SSR at 5,274,998 people, the Tajik ASSR at 827,083, the Turkmen SSR at 975,599, the Kyrgyz ASSR at 989,971, and the Kazakh ASSR at 6,500,895 people. The 1926 census was the first of its kind conducted by the Soviet Union and was prepared with great scientific rigor. According to modern assessment standards, errors in the 1926 census accounted for only 1%. These data remain reliable and require minimal corrections.

According to the 1926 census, 74.4% of the population in the Uzbek SSR (3,475,340 people) were Uzbeks. Historical documents from the Central Asian Liquidation Commission (established on November 24, 1924) indicate that the combined population of the Uzbek SSR and Tajik ASSR was 4,701,788 people, with Uzbeks making up 74.2% (3,299,713 people).

In 1926, the urban population of the Uzbek SSR was 1,078,645 people (19%), while the rural population was 4,196,353 (68%). Compared to the 1920 census, the urban population increased by 2%, primarily due to the construction of industrial enterprises, which attracted more people to cities. In subsequent years, large-scale capital construction, industrial development, and the influx of specialists and workers from other Soviet republics transformed the Uzbek SSR into a major center of migration. According to initial data, from 1926 to 1939, the republic's population grew by 650,000 people (over 10%) due to migration. The Central Statistical Administration of the Uzbek SSR reported that in 1940 alone, the net migration balance was 95.6 thousand people. As a result of this policy, by 1926, the number of non-indigenous residents in Tashkent reached 117,300. Their residency duration was as follows: 2.4% – 30 years or more, 5.8% – 20-29 years, 8.6% – 13-19 years, 5.8% – 10-12 years, 12.5% – 6-9 years, 24.8% – 3-5 years, 11.5% – 2 years, 9.5% – 1 year, 19.0% – less than 1 year.

However, due to the turbulent social changes in the former Soviet Union, the **1926 population census** quickly became outdated. By **1930**, both the urban and rural populations, as well as their demographic composition, had changed significantly, leading to a drastic transformation in the social structure of the population. As a result, a decision was made to conduct another census. However, for various **subjective and objective reasons**, its implementation was repeatedly postponed. The census, originally planned for **1933** at the end of the **First Five-Year Plan**, was first delayed to **1935**, then to **1936**. By the summer of **1936**, it became clear that further



postponement was no longer feasible. Consequently, the next **population census was conducted on January 6, 1937.**

The **1937 population census** reflected the major contradictions in the country's demographic development during the early **1930s**. The demographic trends in the **Uzbek SSR**, and the Soviet Union as a whole, were highly unstable during Stalin's so-called "**Great Leap**" years. Despite **optimistic forecasts** and theoretical justifications such as the "**socialist population law**", the birth rate began to decline, mortality rates increased, and population growth slowed. Additionally, the gender and age composition of the population underwent drastic changes due to **external factors unrelated to natural demographic processes**. The **Stalinist government** was not interested in openly discussing the demographic crisis and took measures to conceal statistical data. The census, in particular, revealed a **significant population decline in some Soviet regions** due to the **1932-1933 famine**. According to the official Soviet narrative, the world's first "**workers' and peasants' state**" was expected to surpass capitalist countries in every aspect. The **All-Union census** was intended to serve as evidence of this superiority, especially through **favorable demographic indicators**.

The **1937 census results** were completely contrary to the previously made **optimistic projections**. The **State Planning Committee of the USSR** had estimated that, according to **Stalin's directive**, the population of the Soviet Union should increase by **3 million people annually**. Based on this calculation, the expected population for **1937** was projected to be **180.7 million** (see Table 1). At the **end of 1933**, the total population of the country was **168 million**, as Stalin stated in his report at the **17th Party Congress in January 1934**. However, the **actual census results** recorded a population of only **162 million**, revealing a **significant discrepancy** between the official projections and reality.

Table 1 Forecasts on the growth of the population of the USSR\*

The Central Administration for National Economic Accounting (TsUNHU) was established in 1932.	165.7 million
The Central Administration for National Economic Accounting (TsUNHU) was established in 1933.	168 million
Annual accounts of the League of Nations, based on UNCTAD data for 1934	170.5 million
1936 for the VIII Soviets by TsUNXU to the mandate commission of the congress delivered information	170.5 million
USSR State Planning Committee (Gosplan) of 1936 to the end	177.7 million

\* *Vsesoyuznaya perepis naseleniya 1937 g.,: Kratkie itogi. S. 8.*

Stalin **could not accept** the census figures presented by the statisticians, and as a result, those responsible for the count were **repressed**.

According to researchers, it was **Stalin himself** who insisted on including a question about **religion** in the census form. He likely expected that the results would highlight the **success of Soviet policies in eradicating religion**. However, the outcome was once again **not what the government had anticipated**—**56.7% of Soviet citizens aged 16 and older** still identified themselves as **religious**.

On January 6, 1937, the population census was conducted, but by September of that year, a special decree from the USSR Council of People's Commissars classified the data as secret. For



many years, these statistics were considered unreliable and distorted.

According to officials from the Bureau that conducted the census, the collected statistical documents were so extensive that they could have been published in a 110-volume collection. However, most of these documents were not preserved, especially those covering the USSR and RSFSR territories.

Despite this, a summary of the 1937 census data was finally published in 1990 in special issues of the "SOCIS" and "Vestnik Statistiki" journals. Additionally, researchers from the Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences released a publication titled "The 1937 All-Union Population Census: A Brief Summary." According to the census results:

- The total population of the Uzbek SSR in 1937 was 5,855,905 people.
- Of these, 1,326,261 (23%) lived in cities, while 4,913,583 (84%) lived in rural areas.
- The Uzbek ethnic group comprised 3,862,450 people, making up 81% of the total population.

Two years later, on **January 17, 1939**, another **All-Union population census** was conducted. This time, authorities sought to replace the **"distorted data"** from the **1937 census**, which had been blamed on **"enemies of the people,"** with the so-called **"correct numbers."**

Having **"learned lessons"** from the **1937 census**, Soviet authorities launched a **large-scale propaganda campaign** for the **1939 census**. According to reports from the **Uzbek SSR Statistics Committee**, the campaign was described as follows:

*"Extensive Bolshevik agitation and propaganda, conducted with political precision and truthfulness, prevented and eliminated attempts by remnants of Trotskyist-Bukharinite fascist enemies to spread false and foolish rumors aimed at distorting the national population census."*

As a result, the **official population figures were adjusted to match Stalin's pre-declared numbers.**

To further encourage participation, **Stalin's slogans** were widely spread, alongside **Lenin's famous quote:**

*"Without accurate record-keeping, no construction work, no state affairs, and no planned economy can exist."*

By the mid-1990s, historical and demographic literature began heated debates regarding the 1939 population census, arguing that the numbers had been deliberately inflated and that the structure of the census data had been significantly distorted.

Even statisticians themselves did not fully support the manipulated results of the 1939 census. For instance, in a letter dated August 3, 1939, addressed to census official Ilyin from the Head of National Economic Accounting of the Uzbek SSR, Ivanov, he admitted:

"We followed all orders to align the results, but we do not consider this method correct, as it distorts the census outcomes to a certain extent."

Such concerns were ignored, and researchers have continued to rely on 1939 census data. However, upon closer examination, this census allows an indirect assessment of the impact of famine on Uzbekistan's population, particularly through age group data.

Historian Marianne Kamp, in her oral history-based research, highlighted an important aspect of data collection:

- Children's ages were recorded by asking household heads about their living offspring.
- This data was retrospective, meaning it depended on parents' memory.
- Deceased children were not included in the census.





A significant decline in the 1933–1934 age groups suggests a correlation between the famine and a drop in birth rates or a higher infant mortality rate during those years. (See Table 2.)

Table 2

Uzbekistan rural population by age group according to birth year, 1939 Census

Year of birth	1930 (age 9)	1931 (8)	1932 (7)	1933 (6)	1934 (5)	1935 (4)	1936 (3)
Cohort size	105.171	130.616	122.313	112.890	103.850	111.847	131.262

*Vsesoyuznaya perepis naseleniya SSSR 1939 g., table showing rural population in Uzbekistan by age cohort,*

[http://www.demoskope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng\\_age39.php?reg=8&gor=2&Submit=OK](http://www.demoskope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_age39.php?reg=8&gor=2&Submit=OK)

The results of the 1939 census were delayed from publication due to the outbreak of World War II. However, the data collected played a crucial role in shaping the Soviet government's subsequent five-year plans.

According to the 1939 census results, the total population of the Uzbek SSR was 6,335,917 people, with:

- 1,469,874 living in urban areas, 4,866,070 residing in rural areas.

Ethnic composition data from the census indicated that:

- Uzbeks made up 3,475,340 people (69% of the population).

In terms of gender distribution:

- Men: 3,136,294, women: 2,940,857

This census reflected significant demographic shifts, serving as a baseline for Soviet economic and social planning, despite concerns over data manipulation and political interference in its reporting.

## Conclusion

In general, the Soviet census campaigns were presented as necessary to allocate funds for social programs and determine the exact population size. However, their true purpose was to extract resources from the region, secure cheap labor, and relocate Russian-Slavic populations to assert control over the republics. The census data were essential for monitoring the success of Soviet policies in its colonial territories and for planning future initiatives.

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