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Demographic Processes in the Southern Urals in 1920s-1930s

Abstract

In the study of demographic processes, regional approach is extremely important, as it allows to trace general patterns, as well as peculiarities in vital statistics. The article deals with vital statistics of the South Ural region in the period between official Soviet censuses of 1926 and of 1939; it studies both internal and external factors. General-logical methods of induction and deduction are used to consider vital statistics nationwide and in each subject of the Southern Urals as well. Historical methods (i.e., problem-chronological, historical-comparative) allow to conduct research in accordance with historical sequence and to identify main features of demographic processes in administrative divisions. General scientific and historical methods

allow to study year-by-year vital statistics in the Orenburg and Chelyabinsk regions and the Bashkir Autonomous Republic. Inaccessibility of sources on the 20th century demography to most researchers has had its negative impact on the scientific view on Soviet vital statistics. The authors strive to identify features of vital statistics of the Southern Urals in 1920s-1930s. The case-study has proved that Soviet economic and political reforms of the period had a significant impact on the demographic balance in the Southern Urals. Year-by-year comparison of rural and urban population dynamics over 13 years between two censuses suggests compensatory natural movement of the population in the pre-war period. The authors conclude that intra-regional features can be associated with rapid development of industry in the Chelyabinsk region in the days of the pre-war five-year plans. It resulted in predominance of urban population over rural population in the Chelyabinsk region, in a radical departure from the tendency in agricultural areas of the Southern Urals (Bashkiria and the Orenburg region). The results of the study can be used in textbooks and monographs on demography, as well as in special courses on Russian demography or demography of the Southern Urals.

Keywords

Historical sources, demography, Southern Urals, population, birth rate, mortality, population change

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