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Socio-Demographic Consequences of the Famine of the early 1920s in Kazakhstan

Makhabbat M. Kozybayeva ^{a,*}, Aizhamal I. Kudaibergenova ^b, Kuralay K. Sarsembina ^a

^a Branch of the Ch. Ch. Valikhanov Institute of History and Ethnology in Astana, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan

^b Ch.Ch. Valikhanov Institute of History and Ethnology, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan

Abstract

In the article, the authors attempted a comprehensive study of the socio-demographic consequences of the famine of the early 1920s in Kazakhstan, establishing the number of famine victims in the republic, highlighting the problems of high mortality, the spread of epidemic diseases and forced migrations and refugees, child homelessness and others. In the article, the authors note that the civil war, shortage of bread and herbs in 1920, and the death of livestock from jute in 1920 and 1921 brought the republic's agriculture into complete decline. The emergence of famine found the republic in an environment of complete economic exhaustion. The authors note that famine in Kazakhstan affected five provinces and one district, with more than 2.6 million people starving. The authors made an attempt to establish the demographic losses of the population during the famine, as well as other socio-demographic consequences of the famine in Kazakhstan, such as high mortality, epidemiological diseases, forced migrations of the population. At the same time, there was no reliable data on the number of starving people, and one of the problems in counting the number of starving people was the different sources of statistical information. The situation was complicated by the lack of medicine, food, fuel and money, which greatly complicated the fight against developing epidemic and other diseases, both due to hunger and general infection from the density of the hungry and the population itself due to the cold and lack of fuel in the cities.

Keywords: civil war, surplus appropriation, famine, famine relief commissions, mortality, epidemics, forced migration, child homelessness.

1. Introduction

One of the pressing issues of national history is the determination of the demographic consequences of the famine of the early 1920s in Kazakhstan. The question of determining the absolute number of starving people and those who died from hunger in the early 1920s, as well as the number of refugees on the territory of the republic, still remains open, since not all deaths were registered and taken into account, and some documents were lost or removed from archival funds. At the same time, the identification of statistical information about the scale of hunger and the number of people in dire need made it possible, through the joint efforts of the government and outside assistance, to organize the work of the republican commission to provide assistance to the hungry in a fairly short time.

2. Materials and methods

The source base for the research was archival materials identified in central and regional Kazakh and Russian archives, such as the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Archive of the President

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: koz.mahabbat_85@mail.ru (M.M. Kozybayeva),
kuka_ist@mail.ru (K.M. Murzakhodzhaev), akudaybergen@mail.ru (A.I. Kudaibergenova),
kuralai_sk@mail.ru (K.K. Sarsembina)

of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the State Archive of the Russian Federation, the State Archive of the North Kazakhstan Region and others. At the same time, the sources are represented mainly by official protocols, reports and statistical data, and periodical press materials. The theoretical basis of the study was the work of representatives of foreign and domestic historical thought who contributed to the study of various aspects of the famine in Kazakhstan in the early 1920s. When writing the article, general scientific and special historical methods were used. The multidimensionality and complexity of demographic processes as an object of research has determined an interdisciplinary approach as one of the approaches. All these research techniques and tools are united by a single methodological program based on the goal and research objectives.

3. Discussion

The problem of the demographic consequences of the famine of the early 1920s in Kazakhstan was often raised in the scientific literature in the works of both Soviet scientists and Kazakh researchers. The first works on the famine of the early 1920s in the RSFSR, including on the territory of Kazakhstan, which also covered demographic aspects, were of an informational and propaganda nature (Radek, 1921). A special place in the study of the demographic aspects of the famine is occupied by the materials of the representative office of the Russian Red Cross Society in America, which provide a comprehensive description of the famine in the RSFSR and show the features of the famine in individual autonomous republics, including Kazakhstan (Golod..., 1922). The work of dates back to the same time N.I. Mardarovskij «Golod v Kirgizii i bor'ba s nedorodami», in which the author provides an analysis of the causes of the famine of the early 1920s and its consequences for the Kazakh steppe (Mardarovskij, 1922).

In the works of Kazakh scientists M.K. Kozybayev (Kozybayev, 1992), T.O. Omarbekov (Omarbekov, 1997), Zh.B. Abylkhozhin (Abylkhozhin, 1997) M.K. Koigeldiev (Kojgeldiev, 2004), S. Smagulova (Smagulova, 2019) and others raised various aspects of the famine of the early 1920s, including the socio-demographic consequences for the Kazakh steppe. The works of researchers are devoted to the study of socio-demographic processes during the famine of the early 1920s in Kazakhstan A.N. Alekseenko (Alekseenko, 1993), M.Kh. Asylbekov, A.B. Galiev (Asylbekov, Galiev, 1991), B.A. Musaev (Musaev, 2005), T.A. Karieva (Karieva, 2010), G.B. Karsakova (Karsakova, 2021), A.S. Sarsenov, G.K. Kajrgalieva, D.J. Alipova (Sarsenov i dr., 2022) and others. Russian researchers devoted their works to the tragedy of the famine of the early 1920s N.V. Usmanov (Usmanov, 2007), V. Schmidt (Schmidt, 2018), G.G. Tsidenkov (Tsidenkov, 2018). A great contribution to the study of the famine of the early 1920s in Kazakhstan were the collections of archival documents and materials of the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan: «Sejtkali Mendeshev» (2021) and «Kazakhstandagy asharyshlyk. Golod v Kazahstane. 1921-1923» (2021). In general, the general trends of domestic and foreign historiography have shown that the demographic consequences of this large-scale catastrophe still remains a little-studied scientific problem.

4. Results

In the early 1920s, a famine broke out on the territory of the RSFSR, including Kazakhstan, and reached unprecedented proportions. The main causes of famine in Kazakhstan were the consequences of the civil war and surplus appropriation, which worsened against the backdrop of a poor harvest of grain and herbs, due to a prolonged drought, and the subsequent jute. Famine on the territory of Kazakhstan affected the Orenburg, Aktobe, Kustanai, Ural, Bukeevsk provinces and Adai district. At the same time, the total area of food shortage amounted to 1,048,100 square versts with the number of starving people being 2,653,300 people. The emergence of famine found the republic in an environment of complete economic exhaustion. The civil war that engulfed the territory of Kazakhstan in 1918-1920, the shortage of bread and herbs in 1920, the death of livestock from jute in 1920 and 1921 brought the republic's agriculture into complete decline (GARF. F. 1064. Op. 4. D. 45. L. 4).

In particular, in 1922, the Central Statistical Bureau cited the following indicators of the republic's difficult situation in terms of the reduction of crops: if in 1917 crops amounted to 5,840,000 dessiatines, in 1920 – 3,075,000 dessiatines, then in 1921 – only 2,098,000 dessiatines. Consequently, in the period from 1917 to 1920, the cultivated area decreased by 20 %, and from 1917 to 1921 by 47 %. According to statistical data in 1920, the population of Kazakhstan was 4,464,138 people (excluding Adaevsky and Mongishinsky districts). Of the total, the nomadic population accounted for 66%, the sedentary population – 34 %, the urban population – 6,7 % and the rural population – 93,3 % (GARF. F. 1064. Op. 4. D. 45. L. 4).

Local authorities stated that the unprecedented scale of the disaster due to the lack of food put the majority of the population of Kazakhstan at practical risk of death from starvation. According to reports from the field, people ate grass roots and plant leaves. In some regions, they ate dogs, cats and other small animals and ate their skins, stealing them from warehouses. In the Ural province and in other places, cases of cannibalism were observed; in famine-stricken areas, thefts, robberies, and murders became more frequent, and there were cases of insanity from hunger.

The nomadic population in the steppe, who lost all their livestock from jute, suffered especially hard. If the agricultural population, with timely seed assistance, could still restore their economy in a short time, then the nomadic population living on cattle breeding, even with support, needed years to restore it. At the same time, the agricultural population of the region was relatively easily removed from their places and moved to other agricultural regions – Ukraine and the central regions of Russia. This unauthorized

resettlement soon became widespread and was seen by the population as a chance to escape starvation. In turn, the nomadic population lived far from large cities and railway stations and, due to the isolation and specificity of economic life, did not have the opportunity to move to other regions (GARF. F. 1064. Op. 1. D. 88. L. 55). Therefore, the Kazakh population with their families died silently in winter quarters, not seeing or expecting help from anywhere. These messages were a valid indicator of the magnitude of the disaster that befell the population of Kazakhstan.

Despite the rapid pace of famine, the Central Emergency Commission for Famine Relief was formed only in the summer of 1921. The commission included all relevant government bodies and institutions, including the Red Army and the bodies of the Cheka-GPU. In Kazakhstan, the famine relief commission, created on July 15, 1921, was headed by the chairman of the Central Executive Committee of Kazakhstan S. Mendeshiev. Special commissions were also created under the provincial and district executive committees of the republic to provide assistance to the hungry. In-kind taxes were waived from starving regions, funds in the amount of 50 million rubles were allocated to help the nomadic population, and free food stations were organized. The authorities organized public meals for the hungry through canteens and food centers. However, the slow supply of food resources and the complete lack of supplies inside the starving provinces with a lack of funds, the vastness of the territory, poor communications and lack of transport put the work of the commission and committees to help the hungry in an extremely difficult situation (GARF. F. 1065. Op. 2. D. 116. L. 214).

According to the Republican Commission for Famine Relief, in Kazakhstan the population was 4,757,552 people; of these, adults – 2,522,997 people, children – 1,994,655 people, with the exception of Adai district, where there were 240,000 people without division into adults and children. In 1921, 5 provinces and 1 district with a total population of 2,653,300 people were starving. Of this number, the following were starving: on January 1, 1922 – a total of 1,600,452 people; on April 1, 1922 – a total of 1,761,470 people; on July 1, 1922, a total of 2,065,394 people. In addition, 3 districts of Akmola province needed help. For the period from November 1, 1921 to July 1, 1922 in the Orenburg, Ural. In Akmola and Aktobe provinces, only 37,657 people were registered as deaths due to hunger in medical institutions (Kazakhstanadagy asharyshlyk, 2021: 291-292).

At the same time, due to the use of different sources of information, the data of the republican and local authorities differed somewhat. For example, according to local information, by January 1, 1922, the total number of starving people in Kazakhstan was 1 476 985 people, including 927 adults 593 people, children – 158 392 people. At the same time, the largest number of starving people was recorded in the Kustanai province, the smallest in the Semipalatinsk province (Seitkali Mendeshiev, 2021: 98-105). In general, the starving people were distributed among the provinces as follows (Table 1).

Table 1. The number of starving people in Kazakhstan in January 1922 (AP RK. F. 139. Op. 1. D. 252. L. 126-138)

No.	Name of the province	adults	children
1	Orenburgskaya	138 339	209 671
2	Aktobe	171 389	134,000
3	Kustanayskaya	217 365	96 935
4	Ural	123 600	103,500
5	Bukeevskaya	100.000	
6	Adaevsky district	75,000	9 670
7	Semipalatinsk		5 616
8	Akmola	92,000	

As we can see, statistical data on the number of hungry people in regional and republican reports differed significantly. Let us consider the specifics of data registration using the example of the Kustanai province based on materials from the provincial commission for famine relief. Unlike other regions, in the Kustanai province measures were taken to find out the exact number of starving people as soon as famine became clear. According to the data, in November 1921, there were 184,904 people starving in the districts, and 7,436 people in the city, a total of 192,340 people, of which 70,561 were children (Kazakhstanadagy asharyshlyk, 2021: 93). With each subsequent month, the number of hungry people increased by 25-30 % from the number of hungry people in the previous month. Thus, on December 15, 1921, the number of starving people was 237,494 people, of which 96,933 were children. On January 15, 1922, the number of starving people reached 283,749 people (Kazakhstanadagy asharyshlyk, 2021: 93). Thus, of the total population of the Kustanai province (according to the 1920 census – 577,177 people), the number of hungry people in January was 52.5 %. By March 1, 1922, according to additional information from the regions, the number of starving people reached 354,350 people (Kazakhstanadagy asharyshlyk, 2021: 94).

This number of hungry people was already 59 % of the total population. For individual districts, the number of hungry people in March was presented as follows: Kustanai district – population 59,460 people of these, 35,437 people were acutely hungry, that is, 56 %, Borovsky district – 54,183 people are starving, Semiozerny district – population 30,000 people, 22,500 people are starving, that is 75 %, Semipalatinsk district – population 52,000 people, 35,000 people are starving, that is 67 %, Aktobe district – population 171,389 people, 103,500 people are starving, that is 60 %, Orenburgskaya district – population 138,339 people, 96,935 people are starving, that is 70 %.

Denisovsky district – population 37,000 people and 34,489 people are starving, that is, about 95 %, Fedorovsky district – 45,609 people are starving. Uritsky district – population 60,000 people, 23,414 people are hungry, that is, 33 %. Adamovsky district – population 49,000 people, 20,409 people were starving, Turgai district – 60,000 people starving, the city of Kostanay with a population of 24,000 people, of which 16,499 people were starving. At the same time, the largest number of starving people was recorded in the Denisovsky and Semiozerny districts, which, due to the complete shortage of crops and the destruction of the born grains, began to feel hunger earlier than anyone else, and where it took the most acute forms. In April and May, the number of hungry people in the province decreased to 333,106 people, and in June it reached 317,497 people.

According to the Statistics Bureau, as of July 1, 1922, the number of starving people in the Kustanai province amounted to 246,311 people out of 414,572 people. Thus, on July 1, 1922, 60% of the entire population of the province was starving, and the number of people who died from hunger was 37,146 people, which in relation to the number of those remaining was 9 %. The rest of the decline was attributed to the population that left ([Kazakhstanadagy asharyshylyk, 2021: 116](#)). In July 1922, the number of starving people and those who died from starvation in the Kustanai province increased by almost 20%. Already in August 1922, a report on the state of the province noted that “The Kustanai province, after excluding the Turgai district from it, having lost 45,603 souls from its population as a result of the hungry year, by August 1 of this year. (1922 – authors) 331,534 population”.

If we talk about republican data on the number of starving people, then the largest number of starving people was recorded in the Orenburg province, the smallest in the Semipalatinsk province. In general, statistical information for July 1922 for the provinces of the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic looked as follows ([Table 2](#)).

Table 2. Statistics on the number of hungry people for July 1922 for the provinces of the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (CGA RK. F. P-320. Op. 1. D. 36. L. 62).

No.	Name of the province	Children	Adults	Total
1	Orenburgskaya	234 512	263 539	498 051
2	Aktobe	72 309	227 691	300,000
3	Kustanayskaya	95 930	237 116	333 106
4	Akmola	210,000	230,000	440,000
5	Ural	165 559	126 539	292 098
6	Semipalatinsk	6 110	8 396	14,505

The situation was no better in other regions. The famine in the Bukey Horde was a consequence of the fact that cattle breeding had fallen into complete decline. If the number of livestock in the province in 1916 was 1,362,000 heads, in 1920, according to the state census and data from land authorities, there were only 450,000 heads, including both large and small livestock. There were only 1/2 - 3/4 heads of cattle per capita. Such a large loss of livestock was explained by military circumstances, as well as predatory meat procurement ([CGA RK. F. 5. Op. 1. D. 54. L. 38](#)).

According to the Aktobe provincial commission for famine relief, during the period from January 1 to February 7, 1922, famine in the province developed more and more strongly, the fight against it on the ground in areas remote from the center of the province, volosts, towns and villages was completely weak, since the products sold, both from the warehouses of the provincial food committee in Aktyubinsk, from the base at the station. Aktyubinsk, Akbulak, Martuk, Dzhurun, and Chelkar and locally from the warehouses of procurement offices reached their destination within half a month, and sometimes within three weeks. On January 1, 1922, there were starving people throughout the province: children under 16 years old – 97,809 people and adults – 263,742 people, and a total of 361,051 people, which accounted for 65 % of the total population in the province. In February 1922, this number decreased significantly: the center identified starving children – 30,000 people and adults – 18,000 people, and a total of 48,000 people ([GARF. F. 1064. Op. 2. D. 123. L. 57-57 vol.](#)).

The sanitary condition of the Aktobe province was very deplorable: the lack of medicines, food, fuel and money greatly complicated the fight against developing epidemic and other diseases, both due to hunger and general infection from the density of the hungry and the population itself due to the raging cold and lack of fuel in cities. In the regions the situation was even worse. According to available information, in the Akbulak region, mortality due to hunger from February 1 to 15 reached 12 %, and in some Irgiz villages of the Aktobe volost, such as in the village of Akbulak and nearby villages – up to 50 %, since starving people were concentrated here, heading to Akbulak in the hope of getting food or work. Reports of that time said that the daily mortality rate was up to 300 people, the roads to Akbulak were full of corpses, in the villages the corpses lay in dugouts, and there was no one to bury them.

The famine was accompanied by terrible diseases and epidemics. In the Aktobe region, there were villages of the Tamdinskaya, Khobdinskaya and Dzhirenkupinskaya volosts, where a disease, unexplained cholera or plague raged, when a sick person died after the onset of the disease in 6-28 hours. In the Chelkarsky district, the

incidence of illness due to hunger was 30% and the mortality rate was 20 %. The fight against this evil was extremely difficult, which was aggravated by the rapid spread of diseases with the approach of spring and the remoteness of areas and villages to provide timely medical care, and the practical cessation of any communications for two whole months during river floods (GARF. F. 1064. Op. 2. D. 123. L. 65-65 vol.).

Large demographic losses of the population were also observed in the Ural province, and forced migration of the population became a striking phenomenon of this period. So, if the population of the Ural province in 1920 was 500,000 people, however, according to the 1922 census, only 361,500 people were listed. At the same time, of those who left, according to the Gubposledgol, 47,273 people died for various reasons due to hunger, the rest were evacuated or simply fled, which did not guarantee their salvation from starvation. In November 1922, 97,691 people were starving in the province, in December 112,299 people, and in January already 132,767 people. Thus, we see that the number of hungry people has increased progressively. According to the Gubposledgol, the food needs of the population in dire need, with all local possibilities, were satisfied by no more than 10 %. In order for the new harvest to raise the welfare of the starving province, it was necessary to increase field cultivation, cattle breeding, and also replenish the missing living and dead inventory. If in 1916 the sown area was 536,030 dessiatines, in 1921 – 199,500 dessiatines, in 1922 – 153,891 dessiatines (GARF. F. 1065. Op. 2. D. 113. L. 35).

In the Akmola region in 1922 there were also a large number of starving people, and the picture was depressing by a wave of refugees from other regions, who also suffered a public disaster due to crop failures. Thus, in the city of Akmolinsk and the district there were a total of 128,698 people starving, of which 6,817 were refugees, in the city of Kokchetav and the district there were 20,083 starving people, of which 8,185 were refugees, in the city of Atbasar and the district there were 14,585 starving people, of which refugees – 4095 people (Table 3).

Table 3. Details Gubsovpomgol about the registered number of starving people in the Akmola province in 1922 (GASKO. F. 1616. Op.1. D. 2. L. 24).

Akmolinsk	In the city		In the county		Refugees	Total
	5570		116311		6817	128698
Kokchetav	In the city		In the county		Total	
	beige	places	beige	places	20083	
	1335	473	6850	11585		
Atbasar	In the city		In the county		Total	
	beige.	places	beige.	places	14585	
	895	540	3200	8950		

Basically, the population, fleeing from imminent death, moved to more prosperous regions. According to the monthly report on the work of the Semipalatinsk provincial commission, only for the period January-February 1922, the number of migrants and refugees accepted by the province amounted to 14,506 people, of which adults – 6,110 people, children – 8,396 people (GARF. F. 1064. Op. 5. D. 153. L. 13-14). The newspaper “Krasnyj Ural” dated February 28, 1922 reported that all organizations worked tirelessly to save the starving. Refugees poured into Semipalatinsk and were accommodated in the city. There were over 60 orphanages in the province. A feeding station for 2,000 people, two canteens, and one children's hospital were opened at the station. According to registration in the city of Semipalatinsk, there were 10,000 people starving, many of whom were children. Collections were carried out, which yielded 160,000 pounds of grain, 6,000 heads of livestock, 100 pounds of flour, and 300 million money. There were 15,505 children in Orenburg, 87,014 in the province, and 5,000 at the stations. There were 49 open houses in the city, and 385 in the province. In the near future, it was planned to evacuate 6,000 children to Orel, Tula, Semipalatinsk, and Petropavlovsk. In Orel, shelters for 300 people were opened (Krasnyj Ural. February 28, 1922, p. 2).

The issue of regulating the evacuation of the starving population from famine-stricken areas was one of the most important for the central famine relief commission. Spontaneous resettlement, which took the form of anarchic eviction from places, was an extremely serious phenomenon, since the massive accumulation of refugees at railway stations and in cities created intensified outbreaks of the typhus epidemic, making it difficult to send them by rail, as well as placing them in houses . During the period from July 15, 1921 to February 1922, 26,655 people were evacuated, of which 23,455 people were sent to Turkestan, 3,200 people were sent to Semipalatinsk.

Considering that the spontaneous resettlement led for the most part to the complete ruin and death of the settlers and, in addition, it was not profitable due to economic considerations, since those who endured the famine had the opportunity to still preserve part of their economy and could, with a small support from the republic to exist in the future as an economic unit. For all these reasons, the Pomgol Central Committee set itself not only the task of organized resettlement, but also the task of how to keep them in place and how to ensure their existence. Due to objective conditions: the disruption of railway transport and lack of food, this issue could not be resolved, despite the fact that a lot of attention was paid to it (Sejtkali Mendeshv, 2021: 98-105).

In April 1922, due to the increasing incidence of thefts, robberies and violence that intimidated the population, planting hooligan announcements in order to disrupt the spring sowing campaign, some areas of the Aktobe province were declared under martial law, the implementation of which was entrusted to the military registration and enlistment offices. In May 1922, in a report on the activities of the Kokchetav district commission for famine relief and the situation in the district, it was reported that the citizens of the district, not having any food supplies, were in dire need of food, consumed all kinds of surrogates, chaff, sorrel and its roots, ground bones, collected carrion, ate cats and dogs. Because of this, deaths increased more and more; during the month of May, 358 people died due to hunger in six volosts; the rest of the volosts did not provide information. In the district, due to the lack of food, nutrition centers and orphanages, which were dependent on the population, were abolished. During the journey to Kokchetav, people died on the way due to hunger, and local authorities did not have time to collect the corpses. Newly arrived refugees, despite circular orders and orders prohibiting resettlement, arbitrarily resettled back to Russia, abandoning their children along the way, all the more increasing extinction ([GASKO. F. 1616. Op. 1. D. 1. L. 99-99ob.](#)).

According to the report of the organizational and control department on the structure and work of the Kazakh Central Commission for Combating the Consequences of Famine under the Kyrgyz Central Executive Committee dated November 9, 1922, famine in 1921 affected the Orenburg, Bukeevskaya, Ural, Kustanay, Aktobe, Adaevsky district and 2 districts of the Akmola province, and since August 1922, the Ural and Bukeevskaya provinces, Turgai district, and Orsk district of the Orenburg province needed food assistance. At the same time, the number of street children outside orphanages was 189,233 people, the number of unsupported disabled people was about 36,000 disabled people from labor and war, the number of unemployed people was about 5,000 people ([GA RF. F. 1065. Op. 2. D. 113. L. 1](#)).

The demographic consequences of the famine were felt for a long time, including because there was no reliable data on the number of starving people. One of the problems in counting the number of hungry people was the different sources of statistical information. In the information report on March 5, 1923, it was reported that information from the Central Committee of the People's Commissariat of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on the number of people in dire need in the KSSR, as usual, suffered from incompleteness and partly unreliability. An example is the Bukeevskaya province, where, according to the calculations of the statistical bureau, there were 115,000 people in need, and according to the Provincial Posledgol for January – 33,574 people. At the same time, the ROKK Committees reported that there were 40,000 starving people in only two districts of this province. Official data from the Central Commission of the Final Goal of Kazakhstan for January reported on the number of people in need by province: in Bukeevskaya – 33,572 people, Ural – 132,767 people, Aktobe – 147,271 people, Kustanay – 65,000 people, Orenburg – 113,870 people in need. According to the Kazakh Central Commission of the Posledgol, up to 30 deaths due to hunger were already been registered. At the same time, the protocols and reports on these cases emphasized the severe swelling of the deceased, which indicated the facts of prolonged starvation. There have also been many reports of the use of surrogates ([GARF. F. 1065. Op. 3. D. 21. L. 78](#)). As of May 1923, the number of inhabitants in the republic was: Orenburg province – 539,370 people, Kustanai province – 414,300 people, Ural province – 515,400 people, Aktobe province – 464,100 people, Bukeevskaya – 221,791 people ([GARF. F. 1065. Op. 2. D. 113. L. 35](#)).

In July 1923, famine began to approach the relatively prosperous Semipalatinsk province. Due to dry weather, early seedlings burned out, and late crops did not germinate at all. In connection with the expected crop failure, the peasantry of the province began to worry about their fate. In many places, peasants abandoned their homes and headed to more prosperous provinces. The attention of the authorities was drawn to the fate of children evacuated in 1921 from starving areas. According to official information, there were more than 3,000 such children in the province registered in Gubono. If we take into account that during the famine of 1921–1922 many children arrived here by gravity and were not registered, then the indicated number actually doubled. At the same time, due to lack of funds, only about 800 people were placed in orphanages, and the rest were transferred to villages, where the children were distributed among private hands. However, due to the advent of famine, the Semipalatinsk province could not support such a large number of street children, so the only measure to save the children from their fate was to re-evacuate them back to their homeland. ([GARF. F. 1065. Op. 2. D. 211. L. 4-4a](#))

5. Conclusion

In general, the demographic consequences of the famine of the early 1920s in Kazakhstan remain a poorly understood problem due to the complexity of the famine as a phenomenon under study, as well as different sources of statistical information, high mortality, high prevalence of epidemic diseases, refugee and child homelessness. A comparative analysis of various sources of local and republican significance generally showed that during the famine of the early 1920s, there was a major demographic catastrophe in Kazakhstan, the consequences of which had a negative impact on the natural population growth. Only the provision of timely food and medical assistance by the state and charitable organizations saved thousands of people from death and helped the starving population of Kazakhstan return to normalcy when the famine in its most acute form had passed, and the country was faced with a new task of eliminating its consequences.

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