



US FRIENDS OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE

"CONTINUING THE WORK OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF AMERICAN-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP"

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Human Rights and Freedoms in the USSR

by Fyodor Medvedev and Gennady Kulikov (1981)

The Profiles of Twenty-Six Soviet National Minorities

Credo of US Friends of the Soviet People

US Friends of the Soviet People is dedicated to supporting struggles to restore socialism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. USFSP is the US Affiliate to the International Council for Friendship and Solidarity with the Soviet People. The International Council carries on the traditions of the "Hands Off Russia" Committees that were established internationally in 1918 to help protect the young Soviet Republic from foreign intervention. The aim of all Friends of the Soviet People is international cooperation in building socialism and solidarity with the anti-imperialist forces of the world who are struggling against US Imperialism - the main enemy of humanity.

USFSP acts as a unifying force to help consolidate and coordinate the anti-imperialist forces of the world with the ongoing movement to restore the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as socialist states. We act as a unifying front, but are not a forum for ideological debates. The people of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe themselves will chose their paths towards socialism



A family of Nenet people, circa 1913

The Far North accounts for over one-third of the total area of the Soviet Union. It includes the Komi, Karelian and Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics, the Koryak, Nenets, Yamal-Nenets, Dolgan-Nenets, Khanty-Mansi, Evenk and Chukotka National areas, and also part of the

Magadan, Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions. In terms of physical features, it includes islands of the Arctic Ocean, the tundra and the taiga.

The Far North is inhabited by 26 national minorities, namely, the Eskimos, Chukchi, Evenks, Evens, Saami, Khanty, Mansi, Nenets, Enets, Nganasans, Selkups, Kets, Dolgans, Nanais, Neghidalts, Ulchi, Udeghe, Orochi, Oroki, Nivkhi, Koryaks, Itelmens, Yukagirs, Chuvants, Tofalars and Aleuts. Some of them number several dozens or several hundred people (e.g., Nganasans), others number tens of thousands (Nenets).

Before the Great October Socialist Revolution, their plight was appalling: they lived in rawhide tents always filled with smoke from fires, and suffered from hunger. Infant mortality was high and illiteracy was total. Their only purpose was to survive and not to die from hunger or disease.

The tsarist officials and the merchants cheated the local hunters, fishermen and deer-breeders. While political exiles and peasants who had come... (continued on Page 2)



Yakuts Sakha, circa early 20th Century

to live there from Central Russia lived peaceably side by side with the Northern minorities, took an interest in their customs and shared know-how in livestock breeding and crop farming, the government officials levied heavy taxes on them and indulged in bribery and extortion.

The ruthlessness of the white “civilisers” jeopardised the very existence of the Far Northern tribes. The local population was very sparse at that time. In pre-revolutionary Yakutia, for instance, only 264,000 lived on a territory of over three million square kilometres, and this population could be subdivided into three groups: Yakuts, who engaged in livestock breeding, constituted over 82 per cent; Russians, including tsarist officials, resettled peasant families and exiles, accounted for 10.5 percent; the minorities, such as the Evenks, Evens, Chukchi and Yukagirs who went in for fur trapping and deer-breeding, constituted 7.2 per cent. Their numbers shrank constantly and they faced complete extinction. According to Vladimir Iokhelson, an authority on

the Far Northern peoples, the Yukagirs were to become extinct by the 1920s. The Yakuts also faced this plight: between 1897 and 1917 the Yakut population hardly grew at all.

The resurgence and development of the Northern peoples began after the Great October Socialist Revolution. The Soviet government gave them freedom and made them equal with all other nations in Russia. Lenin believed that a new society could only be built by the common efforts of all the big and small nations. It was necessary to give fraternal aid to the working people in those areas which lagged far behind in their economic, political and cultural development because of the colonial policy of the tsarist regime. That was the fundamental principle of the nationalities policy of the Soviet government, a policy of fraternal mutual assistance among nations and nationalities, of ensuring their flourishing and pooling their efforts in building communism.

Demographic Explosion

The economic and cultural progress of the national minorities under Soviet government, the steep rise of their living standards and the provision of health care for them have given the lie to the capitalist concept of the inevitable “extinction of savage tribes.” For instance, the population of the Nenets, Khanty, and Selkups has more than doubled since 1930. The above-mentioned Yakuts thrive just like the minorities living in the Yakut Autonomous Republic: in the time between the two censuses (1959 and 1979) the number of Evenks, Chukchi and Yukagirs grew by 20 per cent and that of the Yakuts by 26 per cent.

The growth of the Indigenous peoples under socialism is well illustrated by the following figures: between 1897 and 1917 the Yakut population grew on average by 67 persons a year and between 1959 and 1970 by 1,500. This brings to mind the words of Jay Hammond, Governor of Alaska, quoted by *Stern* in October 1975. Hammond said that eventually the Alaskan population rather than the northern deer might become the endangered biological species in the area. Well, the Governor had every reason to say so: according to the West German journalist Klaus Liedtke, Alaska today is plagued by prostitution, drugs, alcohol, blood-thirsty mosquitos during its short summer and deadly cold during its long Arctic winter. According to him, Alaska is a venture in which many go to the dogs and few make fortunes. Life is very different in the Northern areas of the Soviet Union; its hallmarks are the revival and advancement of the small peoples.



Soviet stamp featuring the Yakuts, circa 1933

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PROTESTS IN BELARUS: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR US, EU, AND NATO IMPERIALISM

Protests which spawned following the election of Lukashenko have opened a new pathway for imperialist ambitions in Eastern Europe. In August, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared that the US would deliver “freedom” in Belarus, and defend them against influence from the Russian Federation and the Communist Party of China.

Clearly, this is a projection of the US’ own ambitions and a vow to bring Eastern Europe further into the grip of US and capitalist imperialism. Previous vows from the US government to bring freedom have only brought about destruction, death, and chaos, as seen in Iraq, Libya, Ukraine, Syria, among many other nations. The US’ promises to bring “freedom” are hollow, as they seek only another color revolution to further bring about their own material interests.



Belarusians gather at Independence Square in Minsk in support of peace in Belarus amid anti-Lukashenko protests. Photo courtesy of BELTA.

THE US FRIENDS OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE DENOUNCES THE UNITED STATES, EUROPEAN UNION, AND NATO IN THEIR EFFORTS TO EXPAND IMPERIALISM IN EUROPE AND ACROSS THE WORLD! WE STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF BELARUS AND ALL OTHER BELARUSIANS WHO SEEK TO PRESERVE EXISTING SOVIET SOCIALISM AND FIGHT AGAINST CAPITALISM, IMPERIALISM, AND FASCISM IN THEIR COUNTRY!



Belarusian poster reading “Belarus, come to your senses!” Photo courtesy of BELTA.



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