

a total population of over 840 million people, have attained independence. Their distinguished representatives today play an important part in our deliberations.

Contemporary Soviet Imperialism

But what about the position of subject peoples within the Soviet empire? Assessments may vary, but there are about 96 million people under Soviet rule who have never been permitted to exercise the right of self-determination which the U.S.S.R. so loudly proclaims for others. It is a unique and disturbing phenomenon at this time in world affairs, when one of the highest aspirations of mankind is the peaceful and orderly evolution to viable freedom for all dependent people, that the U.S.S.R. should continue to deny the rights of free election and expression to subject nations under its domination.

It is all the more disturbing because the actual developments within the Soviet empire are so completely out of tune with the protestations of Soviet propaganda. Directly following the Soviet revolution, much was made of Communist belief in the right of self-determination. During the early Twenties, independent states did spring into being in the land mass now dominated by Russian Communists. The nationhood of separate peoples in that broad area was, however, quickly extinguished as soon as the Communist Party leaders in Moscow realized that these states were intent on protecting from Kremlin interference their political freedom and their cultural and linguistic heritage.

With callous disregard for earlier recognition of the independence of those states and with no thought for the treaties of friendship and non-interference legally binding between them and the U.S.S.R., the Red Army was deployed to subjugate many small but proud nations. And so it has been that, even in the period of progress elsewhere (that is, since 1939), the U.S.S.R. has incorporated over 260,000 square miles of additional territory with a population of 22 million people. Employing tactics devised in the earlier revolutionary period, with some refinements of more recent times, the Soviet empire in the last 23 years has absorbed the Baltic States, the Kurile Islands, South Sakhalin, Tannu Tuva (formerly a part of Mongolia), certain Finnish provinces, certain Polish provinces, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina (formerly belonging to Roumania), East Prussia and Ruthenia (formerly a part of Czechoslovakia and predominantly Ukrainian in speech and culture).

Suppression of Political Nationalism

Moreover, this spread of Soviet domination has always been accompanied by a systematic suppression of political nationalism in the subject areas and by the subversion of long-cherished cultures, languages and religions. And when resistance proved stubborn, the U.S.S.R. used deportation as a method of consolidating its rule. No less than seven minority nations were deported from their native regions, and it was not until 1957 that any pretense was made to restore to some of them even a token of their deprived rights.