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**Development of Foreign Relations of Mongolia
in the First Half of the 20th Century:
Mongolia's Struggle for Independence**

By
Buyanlham Tumurjav
(Z04H506D)

**Graduate School of Modern Society and Culture
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HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY:**

MONGOLIA'S STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

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Buyanlham Tumurjav

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Buyanlham Tumorjav

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Professor Tetsuo Imura, Supervisor

This thesis is a historical analysis of the development of Foreign Relations of the Mongolian People's Republic (Mongolia) in the 1st half of the 20th century. The main focus of the research is the struggle of this small nation, sandwiched between two giant neighbors, for its independence, which had been at stake several times in early 20th century. Prior to discussing independence movements in Mongolia, the research analyzed how Mongolia became a subject of another state, the Qing dynasty and what the Qing rule brought to Mongolia. The world situation, in particular internal disorder in China greatly facilitated Mongolia to announce its independence to the world in 1911, which unfortunately was not recognized in the international arena at that time. Although the victory of 1921 People's Revolution brought better chances for Mongolia to have its independence recognized, it was far too early and difficult to get Russia and China's recognitions as both of these countries had their special interests in this part of the region. Further the research discusses how nationalism was viewed in Mongolia and what consequences it brought to the people of Mongolia and Buryat Autonomous Republic of Russia, Comintern's role in Mongolia, Halkhiin gol war or Nomonhan conflict, and consequences of secret provisions of the Yalta conference. Mongolia was finally given a great opportunity to get formally recognized by its two neighbors, the Soviet Union and China, as a result of a provision of Yalta conference concerning Mongolia.

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INTRODUCTION

This research will attempt to analyze how Mongolia developed its foreign relations in the first half of the 20th century, focusing on Mongolia's struggle for independence. To become a sovereign member of the world and to have its independence recognized in the international arena, Mongolia has gone through different political regimes. This research comprises the first five decades of the 20th century and is written in a chronological order.

Reviews of researches carried out on Mongolia and its position in the international arena

Although there are already many books and materials published on the history of Mongolia and its foreign relations, some of these studies neglected or did not provide thorough judgments on some periods of Mongolia's history of early 20th century. Such books and documents varied greatly with regard to which academic world they represented, prior to 1990. It is the fact that the division of the world into two systems, communist and capitalist, made its reflection in the academic world by separating them into Western and Soviet doctrines. The history of Mongolia, therefore, was studied differently in both Soviet and Western academic circles.

Here I would like to discuss briefly what stages the study of Mongolian history has gone through in 20th century, in the lights of both Mongolian/Soviet and Western publications. The study of the history of Mongolia and its foreign relations reflected the atmosphere

of the era when Mongolia was still in the communist orbit. Most of the books and materials written on the history of Mongolia illustrated greatly how Mongolian arats (common people) managed to build socialism by passing the capitalist stage of the development, which was oppressing the working class. *History of the Mongolian People's Republic*¹ written by Mongolian and Soviet scholars is a clear demonstration of the Soviet style publication that was dominating the academic world then, and it summarizes the history of Mongolia as follows, “the contemporary history of the Mongolian people can be divided basically into two stages, namely, the first stage from 1921 to 1940, when the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution was completed and a firm foundation laid for non-capitalist development, and the second stage from 1940 up to the present day, when socialism is being built up”². Thus, we can see that during the era of communism the new history of Mongolia was inaugurated from 1921's People's Revolution in Mongolia. In addition, the main emphasis was applied to a great assistance provided by the Soviet people, the communist party, and the communist internationalism. Certainly, generations who were brought up by learning such history truly believed in only communism and its internationalism.

In my research, therefore, I would like to examine if the new history of Mongolia started from 1921, by discussing both 1911 and 1921 revolutions, the main aims of the revolutions and what these revolutions brought to Mongolia as a result. If we refer to the new history of Mongolia that believed to have its start in 1921, where 1911 national

¹ USSR Academy of Sciences and MPR Academy of Sciences, *History of the Mongolian People's Republic*, Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2000.

² Ibid., p. 16.

revolution should be placed when we discuss the development of new Mongolia in 20th century.

As mentioned earlier many books and publications on the history of Mongolia reflected the mood of the era. However, the change of the world system in 1990s brought us a lot of new information and we learnt many facts about our past history. It also opened our eyes to other sources that were previously impossible to obtain. Thanks to the changes in the world system we have become able to use some of the previously considered confidential documents on the history of Mongolia in archives of Mongolia and Soviet Union.

Indeed there had been many books and publications on the history of Mongolia written by Western scholars and many of them contributed their solid researches to the study of this country. I want to point out scholars such as O. Lattimore and G. Friters specifically as their books written on the history of Mongolia have become for many scholars the main sources to rely on. O. Lattimore is regarded one of the few scholars who wrote about the history of Mongolia objectively. In his book *Nomads and Commissars: Mongolia*³, he for the first time examined both positive and negative outcomes of 1921 revolution in Mongolia. O. Lattimore's conception about satellite character of Mongolia's relations with the Soviet Union had been a straight concept. He stated, "...a satellite is not a colony and stands somewhere between the protectorate and the "subordinate ally" – the ally which, in negotiating its alliance with a much stronger country, has had to waive, or at least to cease to exercise, some degree of effective

³ Lattimore, Owen, *Nomads and Commissars: Mongolia Revisited*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.

sovereignty, though retaining judicial equality”⁴. Although such a definition clearly showed in what position Mongolia remained during the communist regime, most books and documents viewed the history of Mongolia, both of its external and internal affairs, in this regard in a subordinate position to the Soviet Union and as a copier of the Soviet policy on this land.

Therefore, in my research I want to discuss whether Mongolia and its leaders were only “mere” copiers of the Soviet policy, what factors influenced Mongolia to land in such a position, or whether this was the only choice this country faced in a fierce struggle of the two big nations, Russia and China, to define their spheres of interests in this region.

The other historian, whose research was regarded one of the important sources on the history of Mongolia in 20th century, G. Friters discussed the situation of Mongolia in the international arena before WW II. In his book *Outer Mongolia and Its International Position*⁵, he analyzed relations of Outer Mongolia with Russia, China and Japan in details using many archival documents and provided many factual records on the Mongolian People’s Republic (MPR).

In addition, more and more researches have been contributed to the study of Mongolian history and its position in the international arena in recent years. Both Mongolian and foreign scholars address new topics using many disclosed archival documents and conducting visits to Mongolia. Most of these publications provide new findings with

⁴ Lattimore, Owen, *Nationalism and Revolution in Mongolia*, Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1955, p. 41.

⁵ Friters, Gerard M., *Outer Mongolia and Its International Position*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1949.

regard to the Mongolian history, external and internal affairs as well as its transition stage to a market-oriented economy. These publications also started addressing some of the issues which have not been studied in full scale before such as ‘nationalism’ and what it meant for Mongolia before and after 1990, when this country became a democratic state; relations between Mongol territories, including Outer and Inner Mongolia; and reasons why the same stock people have been separated for.

I would like to refer to these books here as well. Mongolian historians and researches have started re-analyzing Mongolia’s history and providing pluralist views, which were lacked in the past historical analysis conducted by Mongolian scholars. Several books that discuss the history of Mongolia were published in recent years. One of such books *History of Mongolia*⁶ was written at the Decree of the President of Mongolia, N. Bagadanbi, of January 19, 1999, which assigned the Academy of Sciences of Mongolia and respective organizations, within 2000, to organize the work to re-write the history of Mongolia and to have them published. As a result, a five-volume books on the history of Mongolia were produced by 2003 and in this research I relied mainly on its 5th volume, which discusses the history of Mongolia in the 20th century and provided many accurate information and details using archival documents, compilation of documents on revolutionary movements in Mongolia, resolutions of the State Khurals, laws and regulations, memoirs and speeches made by the leaders of the state, newspapers and journals, and researches conducted in Mongolian, Russian and other languages.

⁶ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch., and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon Publishing House, 2003.

In most researches, both Mongolian and foreign, 1911 national liberation revolution was seen as a national liberation movement and given somewhat inferior position to 1921 revolution. As Mongolians consider 1921 as an important year, they celebrate every year the anniversary of the victory of 1921 People's revolution. This public celebration made O. Lattimore provide a general view on 1911 revolution in Mongolia in the following way, "the celebration of 1921, without celebrating 1911, means that in the official view 1911 had been only the false dawn of an old-fashioned nationalist revolution. True revolution had begun only in 1921."⁷ Thus O. Lattimore clearly defined a subordinate role given to 1911 revolution and this trend has firmly existed in the succeeding years.

Other researchers such as U. Onon and D. Pritchatt referred to 1911 revolution as the independence movement following the general view. In their book *Asia's First Modern Revolution: Mongolia Proclaims its Independence in 1911*⁸, they indicated that "...the independence movement was approved by Bogd Javzundamba"⁹, but common people assisted the nobles in carrying out this important task. U. Onon and D. Pritchatt emphasized the role of common people, saying that although 1911 declaration of independence had been "the work of feudal lords, it undoubtedly restored the self-confidence of the Mongol common people"¹⁰. It was interesting to observe that these researchers accentuated the role of common people similar to Mongolian and Soviet publications.

⁷ Lattimore, Owen, *Nomads and Commissars: Mongolia Revisited*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 50.

⁸ Onon, Urgunge and Pritchatt, Patrick, *Asia's First Modern Revolution, Mongolia Proclaims its Independence in 1911*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5

The most recent publication on the 1911 revolution, produced by Mei-hua Lan in her research *The Mongolian Independence Movement of 1911: A Pan-Mongolian Endeavor*¹¹, presented 1911 revolution as an independence movement. She correctly observed the difficulty of this period as “...the history of this period has been mostly presented as a by-product of research on Sino-Russian relations, Russian foreign policies, and Chinese minority policies.”¹² Although it is unfortunate true to observe a subordinate position given to Mongolia’s history in most researches of Mongol studies, this research proves the fact that “the Mongolian independence movement of 1911 laid the foundation for the Mongol’s later success in establishing an internationally recognized independent country.”¹³ Although all of these researches pointed out the importance of this period, they did give 1911 revolution the status of national liberation revolution.

The Central Archive of Mongolia and the State Archive of Russia produced a compilation of documents regarding Comintern and its activities in Mongolia in a book *Comintern and Mongolia*¹⁴ in 1996 in accordance with the order issued by the Mongolia-Soviet commission to work in cooperation in the archive field. The team headed by Ch. Dashdavaa and V.P. Kozlov, research leaders, compiled documents dated from 1920 to 1935 on Comintern, its activities, correspondence between Comintern instructors in Mongolia and the Central office in Russia, speeches made by both Comintern advisors and Mongolian leaders. The early documents of 1920s were mainly

¹¹ Lan, Mei-hua, *The Mongolian Independence Movement of 1911: A Pan-Mongolian Endeavor* (a PhD thesis), Cambridge: Harvard University, 1996.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

¹⁴ Dashdavaa, Ch., Kozlov B.P., and others (eds), *Comintern and Mongolia* (compilation of materials), Ulaanbaatar: Publishing House of Science and Technology and Information Company, 1996.

focused on what assistance Mongolia needed to force out the Chinese military and what activities Comintern needed to carry out in this country. However, the contents of correspondence and documents, labeled as strictly confidential, of early 1930s discussed a great deal about how to weaken the influence of the religion and lamas among the population, threats of Japanese imperialism and Chinese militarism, and possibilities of cooperation between these forces.

Thus we can observe that Comintern activities were facing problems in 1930s as not all the Mongolian leaders were easy to be dictated and some of Comintern's activities brought negative results (i.e., campaign against religion and collectivization of livestock). Consequently, Comintern needed to find reasons why its activities failed in Mongolia and started blaming right and leftist groups among the Mongolian party for their failures, and Mongolia had to experience a dark period in its history along with the Soviet population, the great Purge.

The Comintern period in the history of Mongolia was also associated with the suppression of nationalist ideas in Mongolia. As nationalist sentiment, and even any ideas related to traditional culture of Mongolia had been considered anti-internationalism and anti-communist ideas and had no chances to be developed or even to survive in Mongolia. Thus study of 'nationalism' was neglected during the communist era as nobody was interested to be in conflict with the existing system. Those, who expressed anything considered nationalistic, were labeled anti-government and anti-Soviet and if they still had courage to have their ideas heard, they were placed in prisons as political dissidents.

Therefore, only in recent years many books and publications started addressing the topic of nationalism in Mongolia. Some of these books and publications, in particular *Nationalism and Hybridity in Mongolia*¹⁵ by U. Bulag, *Truth, History and Politics in Mongolia: The memory of Heroes*¹⁶ by C. Kaplonski, provide a new concept, Halh-centrism, in discussing nationalism in post-communist period. U. Bulag has contributed an interesting research to the study of nationalism in Mongolia. He examines the issue of nationalism in the context of Halh-centric nationalism or the main ethnic group in Mongolia by involving three Mongol populations residing in Mongolia, Buryatia and Inner Mongolia. He analyzes the two terms halh-centrism and hybridity opposing to one another, saying that in Mongolia people of not halh origin are regarded as hybrid or erliiz (half-breed) and treated negatively to some extent.

It is, however, an unfortunate fact that people in Mongolia may have showed their hesitation towards Mongols of Inner Mongolia, when they have finally become able to have contacts with each other after 1990. In my opinion, such an attitude is a result of the communist ideology, in particular the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations in the 1960s. The worsening relations between our neighbors left Mongolia with only choice to follow the Soviet Union and its policy and regard everything that lied behind the southern border as “them”. Perhaps, early 1990s were still too early for Mongolia to transform such old stereotypes that had been in our minds for a long time. C. Kaplonski viewed Mongolian nationalism through the Mongolian identity. He supports Halh-centric nationalism, a view described by U. Bulag. In addition, he tries to

¹⁵ Bulag, Uradyn E., *Nationalism and Hybridity in Mongolia*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

¹⁶ Kaplonski, Christopher, *Truth, History and Politics in Mongolia: The Memory of Heroes*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004.

identify Mongol entity and assumes that at present nationalism “has acquired a more subdued, reflexive nature and is largely concerned with revising Mongol identity”¹⁷ in this country.

I do agree that Halh-centric attitude can be observed in Mongolia towards Mongol people, residing in other territories than today’s Mongolia. This tendency, unfortunately, on one hand is a product of communist ideology, which hindered the development of friendship and cooperation between Mongol nationals, in particular in territories of Outer and Inner Mongolia. Halh-centric nationalism, thus, can not fully explain different types of nationalism that exist in Mongolia. Moreover, foreign researchers tend to see nationalism in Mongolia through ethnic background of Mongol people. Historically Mongolia was divided into three territories, Khalkh, Western and Inner Mongolia. After many years of internal struggle, the unfortunate fate to be ruled by the Qing dynasty for more than 200 years, and 1911 and 1921 revolutions Mongolia had remained as a nation on the territory of Khalkh Mongolia. This made them consider themselves as ‘legitimate’ Mongols who could secure their nation over years struggle in both internal and external arenas and regard Mongols living in other territories as “Mongols” in parenthesis. This observation usually emphasized by foreign researchers, shows the complexity of this issue in not only Mongolia but in other territories with Mongol people.

The above mentioned researchers, U. Bulag and C. Kaplonski, are some of the researchers who did extensive fieldwork in Mongolia right after 1990 Democratic

¹⁷ Kaplonski, Christopher, *Truth, History and Politics in Mongolia: The Memory of Heroes*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, p. 119.

revolution in Mongolia and did experience the first steps Mongolia was taking to part with the old closed system and to enter the world in its real meaning. Of course, a society which had been in a cocoon of the communist system for about 7 decades did find it new and at times difficult to survive on its own as it was heavily relied on the Soviet Union in almost every field of its economy. Although the country became a democratic society, it did take some time to change the people's thinking based on the communist ideology and internationalization within the Soviet orbit. Thus, the above works on the history of Mongolia, in my opinion, are the first big studies on the history of Mongolia published after 1990.

In addition, I used some articles on nationalism produced by O. Batsaikhan and D. Gankhuyag, Mongolian researchers in my research. O. Batsaikhan sees the reason for Mongolia's weak development in the insufficient number of people and expresses his wish to call all Mongol nationals, living outside of Mongolia, to Mongolia arising their nationalist sentiment.

While working on my thesis I had a chance to study some of the materials related to early 20th century history of Mongolia, in particular how Mongolians tried hard to ask for assistance from Russia and to have its independence recognized in the international arena sending notes and letters for the attention of influential countries after 1911 revolution, in National Archive of Mongolia. Most of the documents concerning early history of Mongolia were written in traditional Mongolian script, thus, many people use the translation service to understand their contents. As there are no official translations of these documents into English, people provide different translations to refer to these

documents. I also tried to make translation of some of the archive documents related to early history of 20th century, aiming to have their meanings as closer to original documents as possible (Appendix 3-7). At the same time translations made by Onon Urgenge of the 2 documents (Appendix 1-2) are used in the research.

Along with the documents from Mongolian archives, some of the documents from the Confidential US Department Special Files on North-East Asian countries are used in this research. As most of these materials were mainly concerned Russian, Chinese and Japanese affairs right after the WW II, it was not easy to find materials with regard to Mongolia. Those materials, which had some sort of connection with Mongolia, were mostly related to what relations the Soviet satellite countries and the USSR developed in educational and cultural sectors. This, in my opinion, shows the fact that Mongolia was not of great importance to the U.S. foreign policy in this area as it was regarded inferior to the Soviet Union, the influential power in this region.

Points to be argued in this research

Upon studying books, materials and researches carried out on the history of Mongolia and its struggle for independence, I found a few points which have not been studied thoroughly or studied deliberately in the way to reflect the mood of the era, i.e., overemphasis of communism and Soviet assistance to Mongolia, and communist internationalism. These are as follows:

- I want to argue that in 1911 Mongolia had a national liberation revolution and the

new history of Mongolia should be recorded from this date. Though there had been many researches available on this particular period of the history most of the sources regard 1911 national revolution as a national movement carried out on the territory of Outer Mongolia as a direct result of 1911 revolution in China.

- Next, I want to examine the reasons why Mongolia and its leaders were regarded as “mere” copiers of the Soviet policy and analyze what factors influenced Mongolia to remain in such a position and to argue whether this was the only choice this country faced in a fierce struggle of the two big nations, Russia and China, to define their spheres of interests in this region.
- The study of nationalism was neglected in the study of Mongolian history in Mongolia due to ideological concerns over internationalism. Therefore, I want to address this topic in my research but not in terms of Halh-centric nationalism, which is recently emphasized by overseas researchers. On the contrary, I want to see the meaning of nationalism through the lights of traditions and religion, which unfortunately had been regarded anti-communist internationalism. At the same time I would like to see what nationalism is meant for Mongolia. Is it a traditional thinking where one finds the meaning of independence? Is the current trend of nationalism and revival of national identity has its roots in the early 20th century Mongolia’s struggle for independence?

As we know, Mongolia could not exercise an independent foreign policy until the early years of the 20th century due to various reasons mainly based on its peculiar position. Thus this paper will make an attempt to analyze if a small nation with less than a million people (figure for early 20th century) and sandwiched between two giant

neighbors, Russia and China, had no capability to pursue its independent foreign policy. Whether it was due to geopolitical interests of the two big neighbors or it had no other option to rely on its northern neighbor to preserve its independence, which had become a bargaining chip of the two neighbors?

Chapter breakdown

This research will have 7 chapters, which include introduction and conclusion chapters as well. Chapter for introduction provides reviews of researches carried out on Mongolia and its international position, points to be argued, as well as Chapter breakdown.

The Chapter I will be an analysis of the Manchu years in Mongolia. It examines historical facts on relations between the Mongols and Manchus, the administrative system and social structure of Mongolia under Qing rule, its relations with the Chinese and Russians, and what Manchu rule brought to Mongolia. This period, in my opinion, is needed to be reviewed as it provides historical background for further development of history in Mongolia in early 20th century. I also intend to analyze the reasons how Mongolia, including all Mongolian territories whether it to be Outer or Inner Mongolia, was brought to be ruled by the Qing regime. It was unfortunate that under 200 years of Manchu rule Mongolia could not exercise independent foreign policy, though there had been some attempts to do that. Thus the fall of Manchu rule meant that the time came for the Mongolians to exercise an independent policy with regard to both internal and external relations. In addition, this chapter attempts to examine Mongolia's relations

with the Chinese and the Russians, and what the country gained after 200 years of domination by the Manchus.

The Chapter II discusses the national liberation movements evolved on Mongol lands, including Outer and Inner Mongolian territories, how these movements moved to the level of national revolution in Outer Mongolia, what factors influenced the victory of the national revolution, and finally the proclamation of an independence in 1911. Questions like, “though Mongolia proclaimed its independence in 1911, was it recognized by foreign countries?” or “was it ‘the right time’ for Mongolia to declare its independence?” will be explored in this chapter. Although the most important wish of Mongolia, independence, was recognized in 1911, the new history of Mongolia regarded this revolution as movement, giving a subordinate role. Thus this chapter argues that 1911 is a year when Mongolia’s new history started.

Chapter III analyzes the situation of Mongolia after 1911 revolution and how Mongols residing in Inner Mongolia approached the Mongolian government for assistance in their liberation movements, all Mongol’s wish for unification, political games carried out by outsiders like Ataman Semenov and Baron Ungern, how foreign regimes established in Mongolia made the progressive circles play a significant role in dealing with their forces, what activities these circles were engaged and whom they reached for assistance, and finally the victory of People’s Revolution in Outer Mongolia in 1921.

In the following chapter IV, the analysis will focus on the rise of national sentiments in Mongolia. The definition of nationalism will be discussed at the beginning and how this

term can be understood in case of Mongolia, the discussion of rise of nationalism in Mongolia as well as in other Mongol territories, with a focus on the Buryat Autonomous Republic of Russia. In addition, this chapter reviews some of the recent works on nationalism carried out by U. Bulag, C. Kaplonski and recent trend of nationalism in East Asia. It also attempts to provide analysis of nationalism in the context of Mongolia, associating it with the preservation of independence.

The Chapter V discusses the end of Japanese military expansion into East Asia as well as the WW II, and a formation of a new world system. It also discusses Halkhiin gol war or Nomonhan conflict to analyze if Mongolia and Manchukuo were the main players of the conflict, American views regarding China and the Soviet Union, Yalta conference, and discussions concerning the Far East. This period is a significant period in the history of Mongolia as this country could finally realize its dream to have its independence recognized in the international arena. Although Mongolia's independence was not recognized officially in the world arena, the Yalta secret agreement, in particular a provision concerning Outer Mongolia brought unexpected results. The consensus, that was reached between the Soviet Union, USA and Great Britain, on all the demands of the Soviet Union to enter the war showed the changed attitude towards the Soviet Union's position in the Far East by the USA and Great Britain. These two countries indirectly approved the Soviet-Mongolian relations, and in the end the independence of Mongolia through Yalta provisions. Thus it is important to see how Americans changed their views regarding Mongolia's two neighbors and what Mongolia gained as a result. In addition it also discusses the economic situation of Mongolia after WWII. Mongolia suffered enormously during Halkhiin gol war as well

as the WW II. Although this country had limited sources of both human and material capital, it did provide all possible capacity to end the war at Halkhiin gol and to help the Soviet Union on its western front. After the war Mongolia applied Soviet-model policies and activities to reconstruct its economy. Even though Mongolia had used all available sources during the war period, it finally entered into a new path to develop itself as a modern society by the middle of the 1950s.

Thus as a whole this research will attempt to help us understand who were the main players to carry out both internal and external affairs of Mongolia; what made Mongolia to take a subordinate position in handling its foreign relations; and what factors influenced to such a turn of history on this land. Although this country could not exercise absolute independent policies with regard to both internal and external affairs, no one would argue that it managed to reach a sufficient level in the development of its economy, education, culture and livelihood of people. To reach such a level Mongolian leaders had to balance interests of its two neighbors and at times they made the Mongolian population suffer (in 1930s) greatly.

Chapter I

MONGOLIA IN EARLY 20th CENTURY

Historical insights on relations of Mongols and Manchus

By early 20th century Mongol territories were under Manchu or Qing dynasty rule, which lasted for more than 200 years. Like any other nationals, who became subjects to the Manchu rule, Mongols certainly were not always obedient followers of their policy. They became parts of Qing dynasty territory after territory due to their peculiar structure based on regions. This part of my research, therefore, aims to analyze the factors that led Mongol territories became subjects of the Qing state and how the Manchus managed to rule these territories for such a long period of time.

Historically Mongols divided their territory into baruun gar (right wing) and zuun gar (left wing) and sometime in their history these were called as six tumen¹⁸ of Mongols and four tumen of Oirats. The central part of Mongolia was called Khalkh Mongolia, which later became a base for today's Mongolia. The internal struggle between Mongol princes to be the dominant power to control Khalkh Mongolia eventually made them come under the Manchu rule in 1691, after Inner Mongolia's capitulation to Manchus in 1636, and later Western Mongolia or Oirats in 1756. Here there is a need to talk briefly about Manchus. Who were they? How they became powerful to control many Asian nationals, including Chinese, Mongols, Tibetans, and others.

¹⁸ Tumen can be understood as small kingdoms.

Manchus were nomadic people similar to Mongols. “The Manchurians or Manchu are one of the numerous southern-Tungus tribes inhabiting the territory of present-day north-eastern China... The Manchu tribe dwelt in the southern part of Manchuria.”¹⁹ They became powerful after Nurhachi, a Jurchen chieftain, became the Manchu prince in 1575 by conquering small principedoms one after another, and declaring himself as the Khan of Manchu state in 1616, challenging the Chinese Emperor Wan-Li in Beijing. Though Nurhachi himself did not see the fall of China, his descendants, including his son Abahai saw the rise of Manchu state. “In 1635, Abahai announced that his people would no longer be called Jurchens or Chienchou Jurchens, as was the Chinese usage, but ‘Manchus’. And then, in May 1636, with forty-nine Inner Mongolian princes in attendance, Abahai proclaimed himself emperor of the Ch’ing (“pure”) dynasty. In 1638, he added to his governmental apparatus a Li-fan Yuan (Court for the Administration of Borderlands), charged with the handling of Mongolian affairs. The functions of that organ were destined to expand”.²⁰ From her on a new state, Qing dynasty, started its rule over a huge territory in the heart of Asia.

Like other nationals, Mongols were resisting with all their power not to fall victims to the Manchu rule. However, as stated above their succession struggles among themselves made them vulnerable to outside forces. As the book *History of the Mongolian People’s Republic* narrates, gradually the Manchus began to move into Mongol lands by “taking skillful advantage of feudal disintegration, bribing some Mongol princes, crushing

¹⁹ USSR Academy of Sciences and MPR Academy of Sciences, *History of the Mongolian People’s Republic*, Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2000, p. 169.

²⁰ Clubb, Edmund O., *China and Russia: The Great Game*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1971, p. 20.

others by force or arms”.²¹ The Manchus, thus, used any possible tricks in order to subjugate Mongol territories.

However, it took about six more decades for the last Mongol state-Zuungar or Oirat Mongolia to fall a victim to the Manchu rule. During 1755-1758 Zuungar Mongolia was engaged in an active struggle against the Qing rule and the major anti-Manchu movements were led by Amarsanaa, an Oirat-Mongol prince, and Chingunjav, a Khotogoid²² Prince. Compared with the resistance of other Mongols’ struggle against the Manchus, these revolts carried several peculiar characteristics: 1) it comprised all level of society, including arats (common people), low rank lamas as well as representatives higher rank people with titles; 2) those engaged in revolts used not only arms but also different opposing methods like leaving their Manchu duties, driving their cattle deep into the steppes and moving into other areas, etc.; and finally, although most of the management of these revolts were carried out by high or low rank princes, in some places they were organized by common people. Despite their active struggle, Oirat Mongol revolts were severely suppressed by the Qing regime and finally with the fall of an Oirat Mongol state in 1756, all Mongol lands became subjects to the Qing dynasty rule.

Thus by late 18th century all Mongol territories, including Inner Mongolia, Khalkh Mongolia and Oirat Mongolia became parts of the Manchu state. Mongols lost all their power to have their own and independent policy regarding their territories. Under

²¹ USSR Academy of Sciences and MPR Academy of Sciences, *History of the Mongolian People’s Republic*, Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2000, p. 170.

²² Ethnic group of Western Mongolia.

Manchu rule they had no Khan, no government and even no capital city and all its state authority was in the hands of the Manchu state and its Emperor. The Mongol princes were given the rights to be in charge of their only regional offices. These offices, in turn, had to report on their activities to the Qing Emperor.

In addition the Manchus carried out separate policies with regard to the nationals who became their subjects, in particular with regard to Chinese and Mongolians up to an early 20th century. Perhaps, as some Mongolian scholars observe, the Manchus had doubts on their long lasting existence and, thus, pursued a policy to keep Mongolian affairs, which had a similar lifestyle to them, separate from the Chinese. And if their power failed to exist in Beijing, they might have thought to move their government to Mongolia.²³ However, no such things were destined to be happened.

Administrative system and social structure of Mongolia under the Qing rule

The main apparatus that was governing Mongolia under the Qing rule was the Ministry, governing state affairs of Outer Mongolia. It was located in Beijing, where policies and guidelines to be carried out in Mongolia were developed. The most authoritative organization of the Qing state with a duty to control and supervise Outer Mongolia was located in Uliastai, a town in Western Mongolia. The following Table I illustrates the organizational structure of Khalkh Mongolia under the Qing rule during 1691-1754.

²³ Boldbaatar, J., Batbayar, Ts., Baasanjav, Z. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar: Admon Publishing House, 1999, p. 69.

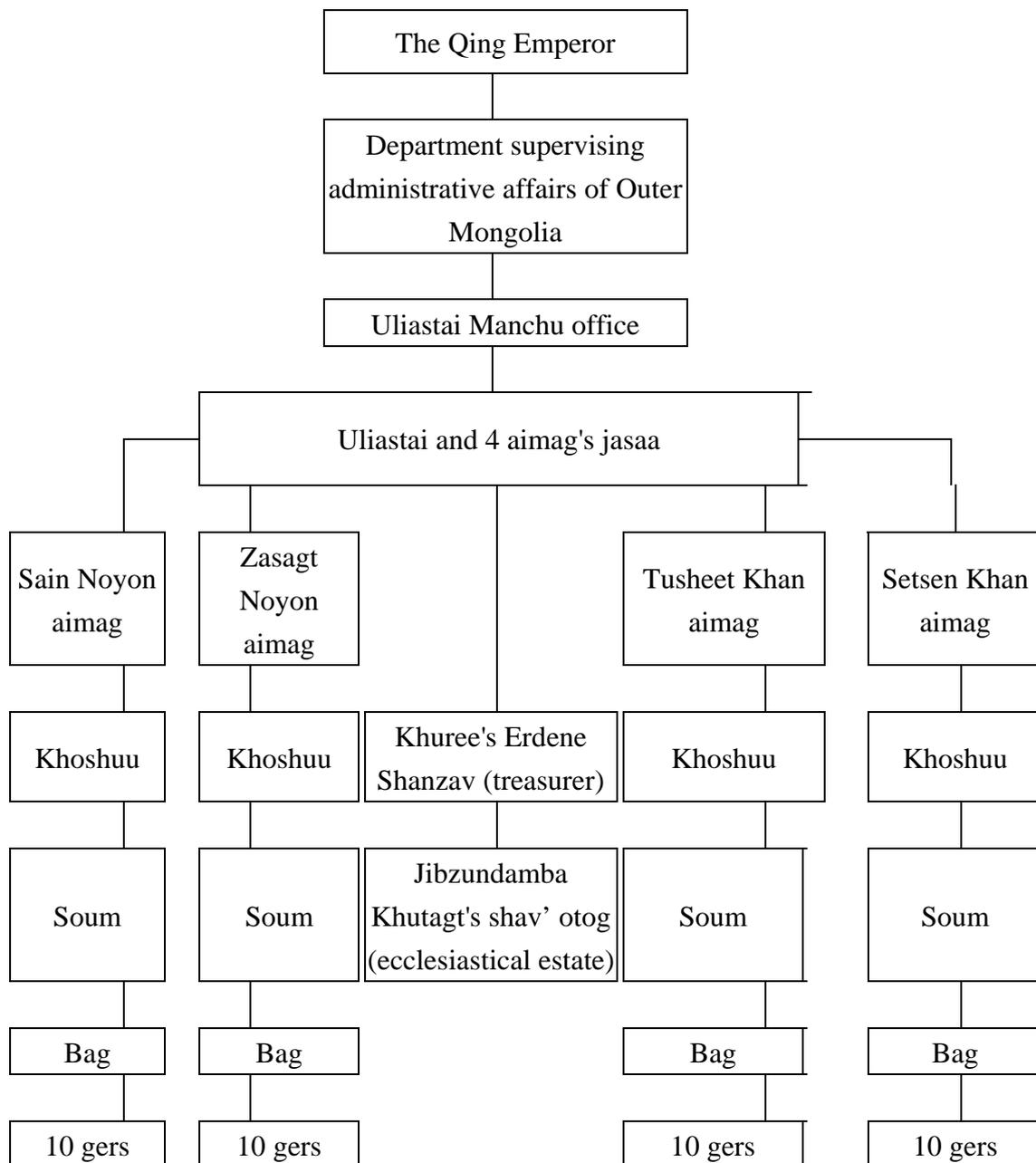


Table I. Source: Boldbaatar, J. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar: Admon Publishing House, 1999, p. 86.

During the Manchu rule aimag became the main and major unit of the administration. After subjugating Mongolia, the Qings remained Tusheet Khan, Setsen Khan and Zasagt Khan aimags as the main administrative units. In addition, they established Sain

Noyon Khan aimag by taking 19 khoshuus from Tusheet Khan aimag. This aimag was established and given to a prince named Dashdondov for his assistance to the Manchus in a struggle against Oirat Mongols in 1725.

Khoshuus (banner) were governed by Zasag noyon²⁴. They were similar to a division in military terms. The main unit under khoshuu was soum (squadron), which was similar to a military unit. A soum was formed of 150 men (of military age) with their families. If the number exceeded 150 men after establishing a soum, then a half soum or khondogo was formed. Soums were divided into arvans (arav means ten in numbers). Taijs²⁵ were not subject to soums; instead they formed bags or otogs separately. The above stated division of Mongolia into small units made the Manchus got the control of all Mongolia in their hands.

Ikh Khuree²⁶'s Department was established in 1758 and was responsible for not only the affairs of Tusheet Khan and Setsen Khan aimags and Bogd Jibzundamba's shav' otop but also was responsible for the relations with Russia. In 1762 Khovd Department was formed and was in charge of affairs of a Khovd province.

After occupying Oirat Mongolia, the Qings created two more aimags by dividing Durvud²⁷ into left and rights wings –Dalai Khan and Unen Zorigt Khan aimags in 1759. Moreover, they created many small khoshuus with an aim to prevent from any

²⁴ A title for a higher ranking person, similar to lord or prince.

²⁵ Taij – a title of nobility held by the descendents of Chinggis Khan and his brothers in the Borjigin line.

²⁶ The main administrative unit of Mongolia was called Ikh Khuree then.

²⁷ Durvud – ethnic group of Western Mongolia. By then so called Durvud tumen (a small principedom) included in itself besides Durvud other ethnic groups such as Bayad.

opportunities for all Mongols to become united against their regime. Consequently, Mongolia was divided into many small administrative units and by the 2nd half of the 18th century it had 125 khoshuus, which included Khuvsgul, Khovd and Tagna Uriankhai²⁸ provinces as well.

During the Qing rule, the population of Mongolia was divided into two categories as ‘noble’ and ‘non-noble’ citizens. The noble population was also divided among themselves as ‘ruling’ (those who governed khoshuus) and ‘non-ruling’ (those who did not). The remaining population was either arats²⁹ or lamas. Arats in turn were divided into albat, khamjlaga³⁰ and shavi nars³¹. Arats were subject to Mongolian khoshuus or banners and in the end all groups of population had to be reported to the Qing authority. Common people had no land and needed a permission to move from one place to another and in general were burdened by numerous labor and taxes. They were engaged in services such as postal relays, frontier guards, military men and herdsmen. Khamjlagas were owned by nobles, both ruling and non-ruling, and engaged in different types of services for their owners and their families. Shavis had the same fate as khamjlagas but were owned by monasteries and their khutagts.

As for lamas, they were in an exclusive position. “It was during the period of Manchu domination of Mongolia that the number of monasteries and temples grew rapidly and the land and number of shavi in their possession showed the growth of the economic power of monasteries, thus, the political influence of the representatives of the clergy

²⁸ Today’s Khalmykia.

²⁹ common people.

³⁰ working people.

³¹ pupils of monasteries and temples.

was correspondingly increased.”³² Accordingly both the influence and number of monasteries and Buddhist priests increased. Lamas were divided among themselves into ranks and degrees. The highest role was given to khuvilgaans or “living gods” who were equal to upper class nobles. In 1641 the son of Tusheet Khan Gombodorj was promulgated as khuvilgaan under the name of Under Gegeen. He greatly influenced Khalkh princes to accept the Manchu rule during Doloon Nuur congress in 1691.

Consequently, monasteries and temples became powerful and enormous amount of wealth was circulating in their hands. The monasteries were ruled by khutagts or senior monastery lamas, who in turn were divided into ‘seal-bearing’ and ‘non-seal bearing’ khutagts. According to the Manchu rule, seals were given to those khutagts whose number of shavi nars reached 700 and there were 11 seal-bearing and around 50 non-seal bearing khutagts and khuvilgaans. The khutagts had their own shavi nars who played the same duties as albat arats. “Predictably, the Ch’ing government was sensitive to the importance of the Lamaist church and to the obedience it commanded among all Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhists.”³³ Thus, they exempted higher rank lamas from service duties and payment of taxes. The highest-ranking khutagt was Jibzundamba Khutagt of Urga. Jibzundamba Khutagt’s shav’ system was formed when many princes had given shavi nars to Undur Gegeen. Later both human and material capital of Jibzundamba Khutagt was called Ikh shav’ (great disciple or ecclesiastical estate). Most of its wealth was formed of gifts (including men) and offers given to the monastery and by “...1873, the then Bogd Jibzundamba, the head of Mongolian religion,

³² “Mongolia under Manchu rule domination”,
http://www.mongolia.org.hk/english/country_info/country_info-2-07.htm.

³³ Ewing, Thomas E., *Between the Hammer and the Anvil? Chinese and Russian Policies in Outer Mongolia. 1911-1921*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, p. 11.

had under him 9,916 households, totaling 83,983 people. Their total herd counted half a million head, of which 36,000 were the property of the supreme lama.”³⁴

As shav’ was also exempted from most of the taxes and duties, there had been many who wanted to be shavi nars in order to escape tax duties. In addition, many nobles registered their livestock on the names of monasteries and lamas, and this later (when the Qing regime fell) led to many arguments over, who owned the cattle. As such a situation became visible, however, the Qing government started taking some restrictive measures against the above-stated practices. They issued an order under which only lamas who were residing in the monastery and those, who did not possess any livestock in the countryside, could benefit exemptions from services and taxes.

As most of the male population of the country were engaged in religious activities, Mongolia had not seen any progressive improvements with regard to its economy by early 20th century. “Lamaism diverted a considerable proportion of the male population from productive labour, thus impeding the development of the national economy and holding back the growth of the country’s population.”³⁵ As a result, the country was facing serious problems, in particular, impoverished economy, high taxes, decreases in the number of population as well as cattle, and enormous debts owed to Chinese merchants.

³⁴ Baabar, *History of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar: Monsudar, 2004, p. 94.

³⁵ USSR Academy of Sciences and MPR Academy of Sciences, *History of the Mongolian People’s Republic*, Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2000, p. 194.

Hence, it is important to see what the Manchu rule brought to all Mongols and Mongolia. How they managed to control Mongolia more than 200 years. From the above discussion the following conclusions can be made:

1. Disintegration: The Qings tried to make Mongols as disintegrated as possible. Thus regions already in disintegration were easy targets, though some managed to resist for quite a long time. The Qings knew that united Mongols would be very difficult to deal with, so, they took all possible measures to divide Mongolia into many small units. As a result, Mongolia was divided administratively into 4 aimags, which in turn into many khoshuus, and they were followed by soums, bags and gers respectively. In addition, such a division made the population split up and scattered over a huge territory.
2. Poverty: Mongolian people became highly dependent on Manchu/Chinese usurers who were charging enormous rates for any types of credits. As stated earlier, they charged very high interests on credits, which were supposed to be paid within a certain period of time. If such a time limit expired, they added up another interest and such a cycle was continued further. Consequently, the borrowers, mainly ordinary people became tied, in most cases, for the rest of their lives to the usurers. To such a heavy burden of themselves they also had to pay loans made by their princes of khoshuu or soums. It made lives of ordinary people enormously difficult as they became impoverished in masses.
3. Backward economy: Although social life did not change much during the Qing rule, no change was seen in the development of Mongolian economy. Its economy remained as backward after more than 200 years of Manchu ruling.

The backwardness also had a connection with the religion. Many people, mainly men were in service of the religious establishments, thus, the country lacked in workforce. Subsequently Mongolia remained a backward nomadic country and not any modern, even on a basic level, industries were introduced.

4. Illiteracy: The major teaching that was practiced in Mongolia was Lamaism which had its roots in Tibet. Consequently, all religious books were written in Tibetan and all religious services were conducted in Tibetan. For the majority of the population these religious services and preachings were something very magic and important. Only lamas with high ranks could understand their meanings and shavi nars who had to memorize all the preaching or incantations, without understanding their meanings. Besides shavi centers, there were no other educational institutions and the majority of population was illiterate. Consequently, no journals or newspapers were published in Mongolian.
5. Decrease in the number of population: For various reasons, including support by the Qing rulers to expand religion in Mongolia and tax benefits for religious centers and their permanent settlers, lamas, the number of lamas was on increase. Therefore, 70,000, out of 100,000 male population, were lamas at the onset of the 20th century³⁶ and Mongolia was experiencing low rates in both marriages and birthrates. At the same time, medical services were rather primitive as it was mainly based on incantations or prayers. If prayers did not help, the Tibetan medicine was used. All these factors, thus, made the number of population drop significantly.

³⁶ Baabar, *History of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar: Monsudar. 2004, p. 99.

6. Decrease in the number of livestock: Animal husbandry, the country's main economy, suffered greatly during this period as well. Mongolians used their cattle and their produces as the main trading items and borrowed heavily from Chinese traders on credit. Consequently, the number of livestock decreased in huge numbers.

Although Qing rule brought such negative consequences, how they managed to control this country for such a long period? Firstly, as most scholars observe the Mongolian princes' struggle to be a dominant power on Mongol territories made them an easier target for a Manchu penetration. To weaken the strong determination of Mongol princes not to be subjects of the Qing rule, the outsiders used the princes themselves smartly. As Thomas E. Ewing points out, "...it was the ruling nobles (banner princes) who were objects of Manchu interest—sometimes affectionate, sometimes implacable, but never impassive. Descended from Chinggis Khan, they claimed to be the lawful and hereditary rulers of Mongolian society, and the Ch'ing did all it could reinforce this claim. Ultimately, the success of Manchu rule hinged on the support which it could draw from the princes, and the institutional history of the Ch'ing administration of Mongolia testifies to how profoundly the Manchus understood this."³⁷ This way the Manchus used smartly the Mongol princes' struggle among themselves by at times supporting some of the princes, at times pushing them against one another or suppressing some when force was needed.

³⁷ Ewing, Thomas E., *Between the Hammer and the Anvil? Chinese and Russian Policies in Outer Mongolia. 1911-1921*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, p. 10.

As a result, they managed to have all Mongol territories under its rule region by region. Secondly, when the Qings became the rulers of Mongol territories they divided them into many small units as they feared from a possible unification of Mongol princes. After they divided the territories into aimags, khoshuus and other small units they gave power to control their respective regions to the princes of aimag, khoshuu and other units. When such princes got the power to control their own territories they did not wish to fight against the regime as what they were offered (a territory, a title, a monetary allowance etc.) were better offers than to fight with one another for power and against the existing foreign system. For Mongol princes at that time it was important to keep their power in their sovereign territories as well as their titles as the rulers over their territories. Thus titles as van, beil, beis and gung introduced by the Qings and respective monetary allowances were the aims of Mongol princes to get. Thirdly, the Manchus exercised favorable policies towards religious centers, their leaders and religion as a whole. They excluded high-ranking religious leaders, their monasteries, and lamas permanently staying in monasteries from tax duties. Consequently, religious leaders became silent prayers who did not wish to be engaged against any regimes as long as they were treated favorably. This in turn made the male population of the country less productive as most of the men became permanent settlers of the monasteries and temples. As a result, Mongolia lacked its permanent army and effective soldiers. Finally, all the above-mentioned factors hindered the development of not only the economy but also the population growth as well. Both external and internal factors contributed negatively for Mongolia to have a leader who could unite the country in his hands. More than 200 years of the Manchu domination exhausted the country, and by the end

of 19th century dissatisfaction with the Manchu regime was on rise not only in Mongolia but also in other territories ruled by them.

Mongolia's relations with Chinese and Russians

Both Mongolia and China became subjugated to the Qing rule. Although the Qing system had given to Manchu, Mongol and Chinese languages official status, it pursued different policies with regard to Mongolia and China. The Manchus did not want to mingle all the nationalities, which were under their control. They feared from any possible opposition that may be carried out collectively by different nationalities against their rule. Or perhaps, as earlier stated, they were not sure of their eternal existence. Thus if they failed in one area they might have thought to move to another one. The Qing separation policy with regard to different nationalities under their rule, moreover, made them prohibit intermarriages between Mongols and Chinese, the use of Chinese language in Mongolia, and Chinese traders bringing their families to Mongolia³⁸.

Although such policy is applied to Mongolia and China, commercial relations between Mongolia and China did have a special impact in relations between these two countries. Prior to the Qing rule, Mongolia had trade relations with China on its frontier areas. As the Manchus had no intention to mix the nationalities under its rule, it was employing a strict policy towards the Chinese merchants initially. To conduct trade in Mongolia the Chinese needed to have trading licenses. The Qings gave authorization to only three

³⁸ Boldbaatar, J., Batbayar, Ts., Baasanjav, Z. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar: Admon Publishing House, 1999, p. 69.

places for trade activities - Khaalgan, Khukh-khot and Doloon Nuur. Later they allowed the Chinese traders go to other areas but special restrictions were imposed, for example, on the number of people staying in one place, the kind of items for sale, and etc. At the same time, a one-year time limit was imposed for those who wished to remain longer. Besides taking the above measures in 1805, for instance, “the Manchu authority in Uliastai issued an order to send back those Chinese citizens, who were engaged in trade activities in Mongolia, without debts and others with debts were given a year limit to pay off their debts and leave the country. ...However, there were some who stayed in the country by taking advantage of being not able to pay off their debts”³⁹. Thus at the beginning the Manchus employed strict measures against the Chinese traders as stated before.

From early years trade relations between Mongolia and China were based on a barter trade. Livestock produces were the main items for such trade, as Mongolia’s economy is based on animal husbandry since old times. Mongols grow five types of domestic animals, which include sheep, goat, horse, cow and camel. These animals are bred and trained from wild animals, thus, they suit well to the constant migration or lifestyle of nomadic people. However, this economy has a seasonal character as livestock produces can be processed only during warm seasons.

Despite the Qing restrictions, the number of Chinese merchants was growing. They were settled in populated areas of Mongolia such as Urga, Khiagt, Uliastai and Khovd. As stated above, Mongolians used their livestock produces as trade items and purchased

³⁹ Baljinnyam, B., *Summary of the Entire History of Mongolia: Brief Chronicle*, vol. 3 (1758-2004), Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2005, p. 70.

in return Chinese silk, cotton fabrics, tea, tobacco, metal, porcelain and pottery wares, and household items⁴⁰. Due to the seasonal character of their economy, Mongolians had to purchase necessary items on credits, which later became the main cause of the impoverishment of the population and badly hurt the whole economy of the country.

Credit operations of Chinese traders dated back to the late 17th century. At the initial stage, though the Manchus were imposing various restrictions, the Chinese managed to have a firm base in Mongolia. For Chinese traders it was a profitable business and they used any opportunity to charge high interest rates. Besides applying high interest credits, they got a huge profit by purchasing cattle and raw materials at a very low price in Mongolia and selling them at a higher price in China. They also increased the high annual interest rate of 36%, set by the Manchu government, as many times as they wished by adding more interests if a borrower failed to pay debts by due date. In some cases, failed borrowers were obliged to perform all types of work for the usurers.⁴¹

Therefore, by late 19th century the economy of Mongolia was in disorder due to huge debts owed to the Chinese usurers, decrease in the number of livestock and rising taxes. Mongolian nobles were also using the service of usurers and even some of the high-ranking nobles were shifting their personal debts to the people of their khoshuu or soums, and that made the lives of ordinary people unbearable.

⁴⁰ USSR Academy of Sciences and MPR Academy of Sciences, *History of the Mongolian People's Republic*, Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2000, p. 203.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 201-4.

As for relations with Russia, Mongolia did not exercise independent policy with regard to its northern neighbor under the Qing rule. When the Qings were expanding its areas into Mongol territories some of Mongol sovereign princes did have independent external relations mainly with Russia. During Baatar Khuntaj's rule, Western Mongols had maintained both diplomatic and commercial relations with Russia. As mentioned earlier, during the early years of the Qing rule Ikh Khuree's Department was in charge of Mongolian affairs with Russia. However, when Manchus were gaining more power and territories, they prohibited Mongolia to have independent foreign policy with regard to Russia. It wanted to make Mongolia as isolated as possible fearing for the penetration of not only Russia but also any other country with an interest in this area. As a result, Mongol princes became responsible for only their local affairs and had a duty to report on their activities to the Manchus. Such a policy consequently made most of the Mongol princes 'passive' observers of the world situation. The Mongol princes approached Russia to ask for their assistance several times, when they faced a threat to their existence, particularly "in the early 1600s and 1757"⁴². However, they were not provided the support they wanted except for occasional assistances. Russia, perhaps, either was not ready to be involved in the Mongolian affairs, or perhaps, they sensed the situation that a lot more powerful state, in the name of Qing dynasty, was emerging on the land of China, in the East.

Thus the succession struggle of Mongol sovereign princes made this country remain disintegrated for a long time and eventually two of its neighbors had been given the opportunity to expand their dominance over the Mongolian affairs. Such a vulnerable

⁴² Ewing, Thomas E., *Between the Hammer and the Anvil? Chinese and Russian Policies in Outer Mongolia. 1911-1921*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, p. 32.

position was also facilitated with the fact the Mongolia lacked a solid leader who could unite all the sovereign princes and control its vast territory. The small principedoms scattered over a huge territory and their constant struggle for power opened spaces for outside forces to come and maintain their control.

Relations between Mongolia and Russia had no permanent character. In their struggle against each other some of Mongol princes were seeking Russian help and even sometimes expressed their readiness to be under a Russian protectorate. However, such agreements bore a temporary nature and as Thomas E. Ewing points out “their interest invariably cooled once the threat had passed (apparently only the Altyn Khan Ombo Erdene in the 1630s actually did swear fealty to the Tsar)”.⁴³ After Altan Khanate became a part of Zasagt Khan their relations with Russia declined. Torguuds, a part of Oirat Mongols, started developing friendly relations with Russia and as stated previously Kho-Urlug prince moved to Volga river with his people and established there Khalmyk Khanate. When Oirat Mongols became powerful they did develop more frequent relations with Russia. In particular, Baatar Khuntaij maintained more regular trade relations with Russia and his son Galdan continued that as well. When the Qing threat was a reality the Mongols were seeking Russian help as well. However, Russia was not keen to interfere as they had no intention to worsen its relations with the Chinese and were not ready to come to this area due to other concerns in a different part of their vast territory.

⁴³ Ewing, Thomas E., *Between the Hammer and the Anvil? Chinese and Russian Policies in Outer Mongolia. 1911-1921*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, p. 17.

However, the situation was changed after Mongolia became subjugated to the Qing state. Although Mongolia did have some independent foreign policy with regard to Russia, it did not last long. Consequently, Russia and the Qing state became the ones, which decided the fate of Mongolia and they signed the Treaty of Nerchinsk (or Nerchuu) in 1689, which began “the process of dividing up the long border zone between them”⁴⁴, and the Khiagt Treaty in 1727 where Russia and China defined their respective borders. Khiagt Treaty, as Baabar observes “as compared with the Nerchuu treaty of forty years previous, this one provided a clearer framework for the relations between the two countries and fixed their joint border from Central Asia to the Pacific shores. Mongols of Lake Baikal region were to become Russia’s subjects, and Mongols south of the Selenga those of China. But the state of Zuungar-lands to the west of the Uriankhai territory, known to be the geographical center of the Asian continent-managed to remain independent.”⁴⁵

For some time there was not much contact between Mongolia and Russia. General Muraviev’s trip to China made the Russians turn their interests to Mongolia again. Muraviev, a governor general of Eastern Siberia, became a historical figure for his role to bring Amur basin region under Russia’s control. R. Quested writes upon his review of some materials related to the Chinese history in his publication *Further Light on the Expansion of Russia in East Asia: 1702-1860* that, “Muraviev submitted an eight-point letter of suggestions of his own, via Te-le-k’e-tuo-er-c’hi, which reached the Ch’ing

⁴⁴ “Manchu Consolidation of Power”, <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~kaplan/H370/mp32.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Baabar, *History of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar: Monsudar, 2004, p. 87.

emperor on November 22, 1858.”⁴⁶ Muraviev expressed Russia’s wish to have friendly relations with China and stated that “Russia and Great Ch’ing have been at peace for over two hundred years, and recently have become closer still. Whatever happens to your country, the Governor General [i.e., Muraviev] asks that you inform the [Russian] Emperor and if everything is done according to the ideas of our Emperor, all can certainly be amicably settled. The Governor-General is a very close and trusted servant of the Emperor. If the English barbarians continue with their crafty schemes and want to occupy your territory, Russia can certainly protect and defend the people of Mongolia and Manchuria and enable them to go on living as before.”⁴⁷

Under Aigun and Tientsin Treaties of 1858 and Beijing Treaty of 1860 not only Amur but also PriAmur, Ussuri regions as well as some parts of Central Asia became parts of Russia’s territories. At the same time in 1853 General Muraviev even suggested that Russia should also bring Mongolia under its control saying, “in case the Manchu Dynasty fell and decided to retreat into its homeland in Manchuria, we should act at once to take steps to prevent a new Chinese government in Peking from extending its authority over Mongolia, which in such an event could be proclaimed our protectorate”.⁴⁸ Thus a special Committee (Amur Committee), which reviewed Muraviev’s report, suggested to have friendly relations with Mongols. The reason for making such a decision is quoted by Thomas Ewing, “...in the opinion of the Committee any unnecessary participation in this matter, and in particular the placing of

⁴⁶ Quested, R., “Further Light on the Expansion of Russian in East Asia: 1792-1860”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 29, No. 2, Feb. 1970, p.327.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.327.

⁴⁸ Rupen, Robert, *How Mongolia is Really Ruled. A Political History of the Mongolian People’s Republic, 1900-1978*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1979, pp. 6-7.

these two provinces (Manchuria and Mongolia) under our protection, will on the contrary arouse the opposition of the European powers and could force them moreover to occupy any part of China, Korea for example, and thereby put us in contact with a neighbor far more dangerous than the territory of China”.⁴⁹

Though Russia was not enthusiastic in interfering into Mongolian affairs due to various reasons, it did develop commercial activities in Mongolia. In 1860 Russia opened its consulate in Urga⁵⁰ and in about two decades the Russians were given the rights for unrestricted trade and movement throughout Mongolia. These commercial rights were resulted from a number of agreements, which were finally made into a Russo-Chinese Treaty in 1881. Many Russian were operating in Urga and other towns along with the Chinese firms. Moreover, the Russians were given the rights to open consulates in other Mongol towns such as Khovd and Uliastai.

The Russians could not compete the Chinese firms which had made a firm base there, although they opened commercial firms and were engaged in commercial activities. In 1910 P.P. Riabushinskii, a Moscow merchant, organized a conference with representatives of Moscow firms and banks in Moscow. This conference issued a decision to dispatch a group of Russian merchants to Mongolia with an aim “to survey travel routes, trade centers, the nature of imports and exports between Mongolia and Russia, the way of life and needs of the Mongolian population, and, in particular, the situation in the northern and northwestern Mongolian towns of Urga, Uliastai, and

⁴⁹ Ewing, Thomas E., *Between the Hammer and the Anvil? Chinese and Russian Policies in Outer Mongolia. 1911-1921*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, p. 19.

⁵⁰ Urga or Urgee – then the capital city of Mongolia.

Khovd. Special focus was to put on the inroads allegedly being made by Chinese merchants in the northwest”.⁵¹ Upon their return, the traders published reports on their trip with a title *The Moscow Trade Expedition to Mongolia*, which provided valuable information on the trade situation, the statistics on Mongolian imports and exports, and anything related to this country.⁵² In their report they indicated their concerns over the decline of Russian trade in Mongolia and agreed on their observation that the Chinese managed to control the trade activities there as they were well organized, united and had a good support of the local government. On the contrary, according to the articles, the Russian merchants in Mongolia were not well organized and coordinated though the Russian consulate was operating in Mongolia for about 40 years.

Besides the unfavorable position of Russian merchants, the international situation did contribute for Russia not to be involved in full scale in the affairs of Mongolia. Although Russia saw in Mongolia a strategic position in its Far East, it did not take an active participation in this area unless a real threat to the Russian security was seen there. At the same time, Russia was aware of other Western nations’ interests in securing their commercial rights in different strategic regions of China, thus, they were waiting for an opportunity to claim their interests as well. Nevertheless, Russia did make two different agreements, one with Britain and another with Japan, which directly or indirectly concerned the position of Mongolia. In 1899 Russia and Britain signed an agreement where they recognized each other’s spheres of influences respectively. According to this Scott-Muraviev agreement of 1899, the Yangtze was recognized as

⁵¹ Endicott, Elizabeth, “Russian Merchants in Mongolia: The 1910 Moscow Trade Expedition”, in Stephen Kotkin and Bruce A. Elleman (eds), *Mongolia in the Twentieth Century: Landlocked Cosmopolitan*, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1999, p. 60.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 60.

Britain's sphere of influence whereas the territory north of the Great Wall, including Mongolia, as Russia's sphere of influence⁵³.

There was another interested party, besides Western powers, in the affairs of Far East – Japan. Russia and Japan had tried to reach consensus on their interests in China, including Manchuria and Korea, several times. Consequently these two powers clashed in a Russo-Japanese war which brought a victory to a Japanese side. They finally reached an agreement with respect to their spheres of influences in this region, Russia recognizing southern Manchuria and Korea as Japan's spheres of interests while northern Manchuria and Mongolia were recognized as Russia's respectively. According to Article III of 1907 Secret convention between Russia and Japan, "The Imperial Government of Japan, recognizing the special interests of Russia in Outer Mongolia, undertakes to refrain from any interference which might prejudice those interests",⁵⁴.

Mongolia had a subordinate position in Russia's foreign policy regarding the Far East until the beginning of the 20th century. The Russians had extensive borderlines with China whom they wanted to have friendly relations without concerning whether they were Manchus or Chinese as this territory was the biggest trading partner to Russia.

In conclusion, the Qing regime managed to rule Mongolia for such a long period of time without demonstrative resistance from the latter due to different reasons. Mongolian princes of khoshuus and religious leaders had been passive to oppose the existing

⁵³ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Outer Mongolia. Treaties and Agreements*, Washington, 1921, p. 13.

⁵⁴ Price, Ernest Batson, *The Russo-Japanese Treaties of 1907-1916 Concerning Manchuria and Mongolia*, Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1933, p. 108.

system as they preferred to keep their positions as rulers of their respective territories. The Manchus knew how to rule Mongolia, so, they let the Mongolian princes have the rights to control their regions. It seemed as if they did not touch the internal structure of Mongolia, however, in fact Mongolia was divided into many small administrative units, which in turn had to report to the Manchu authority in Beijing. The division of Mongolia into many small units helped the Qing regime control this country easily as heads of these administrative units preferred to remain in their posts, which provided them some kind of allowances as well. At the same time the Manchus approached the religious leaders carefully giving them benefits like exemption from tax duties, as they were aware that Mongolian people were very religious and they would not resist any system unless religion and its leaders dictated them to do so. Thus having favorable relations with the princes, nobles and religious leaders made the Qing regime lasted long and Mongolians got, in some way, used to such a fate of their existence. At the same time Mongolia lacked a leader who could have courage to organize and unite all the administrative units to fight with the Manchus. The Manchu rule brought nothing positive, but only disintegration of Mongolia and decreases in not only the size of population but also livestock, on which the main economy of Mongolia was based on.

Moreover, the Qing rule did not allow Mongolia develop its country as Mongolia remained as backward as it was 200 years before. Mongolia lost its power to carry out independently both external and internal affairs. Regional developments, including special interests of Russia and China in this country, limited rights to control its affairs, and economic dependency on Chinese traders, have contributed enormously to impoverish Mongolia in all possible ways. Thus along with other nationalities, which

were suffering at hands of the Qing regime, Mongolians started showing their dissatisfaction and resistance against the Qing rule more than before in late 19th century and further circumstances in this region greatly influenced Mongolia to change its position in the world.

Chapter II

NATIONAL LIBERATION REVOLUTON OF 1911

National liberation movements against Manchu rule

Prior to addressing the national liberation revolution in Mongolia, we need to see in what positions the Manchu state and Mongolia were in early 20th century. There had been already signs to oppose then the existing system set by the Qing dynasty in many places which were under their rule. Although the Qing state, which was ruling a huge territory with different nationalities, managed to pursue its policy isolating its country from the outside world, it started facing real threats from Western powers in the second quarter of the 19th century. The Western powers started their penetration into the Qing land or the Chinese territory with the Opium War (1839-1842). Although the Qing government was struggling to cease the penetration of opium into the country, it lost the war to the British side. Consequently, the two sides signed a treaty in Nanjing in 1842, which became a favorable deal to the winning side, Britain. According to this so-referred unequal treaty, the Chinese were obliged to transfer Hong-Kong to Britain, to pay 21 million lans as a war indemnity, and to open five port cities (Kanton, Amoi, Fujou, Ninbo, Shanghai) for foreigners to reside and be engaged in trade activities. This treaty was the first treaty for the Qing dynasty made with a Western power, thus, it opened doors for the penetration of foreign capital into this country.

The penetration of foreign capital, in particular low price industrial products made many manufacturing firms in China go bankrupt, consequently, left many people with no jobs.

At the same time, an obligation to pay a war indemnity made the economy and finance of this country face great devastation. As a result many revolts against the Qing rule were on the rise in different parts of China.

Therefore, the Qing regime faced with both internal and external threats to their existence. Many uprisings were taken places as a result of dissatisfaction with the Manchu system. Along with an anti-Qing sentiment, these revolts carried out also anti-foreign aims. Though the Manchus wanted to use smartly such anti-foreign insurgents by declaring a war against the foreigners in June 1900, it lost again the war for being powerless against foreign modern weapons and machinery. After the war the Qing dynasty signed the Boxers protocol with the participant countries, under which it was obliged to pay 635 million roubles (at the exchange rate of that time) as a war indemnity within 39 years⁵⁵.

Faced by such harsh situation, the Qings made their last efforts to survive and started the New Administration, a reform program, which was initiated by then the Empress Dowager Cixi. Under this program, the Qings began employing different policies towards Chinese and Mongols. As Mei-hua lan, associate professor in the Department of Ethnology, National Chengchi University in Taipei, Taiwan, observes, “while in China proper the Qing government hoped to use the New Administration to prevent the growth of anti-Manchu forces and to secure support of the Chinese provincial governors and foreigners, in Mongolia it sought to prevent any further foreign penetration and to convert this region into a secular Chinese province. Therefore, the colonization of

⁵⁵ Naran, Dugarjav, *History of China, XX century*, Ulaanbaatar: Mongolian State University Publishing House, 2002, p. 14.

Mongolia by Han Chinese was emphasized.”⁵⁶ Contrary to the policy in China, the reform program in Mongolia was also aimed at employing every possible measures to prevent Russia or any other country’s penetration into this land. They wanted to make Mongolia a base for their crop farming, which in turn could help them solve some of their problems as China was facing enormous difficulties such as food shortages resulted from natural disaster, huge number of impoverished farmers and a high war indemnity owed to the war winning parts.

According to the New administration, many reforms were taking places on the Chinese land. These reforms also covered all the territories that were under the rule of the Qing dynasty as well as all spheres, including administration, army, and court. Under the reform many old laws, decrees and restrictions were abolished, in particular restrictions for Chinese nationals to be settled in Mongolia, intermarriages between Manchus, Mongols, Chinese, Bargas and other ethnic groups, usage of Chinese language by Mongols, and for Chinese traders bringing their families to Mongolia. The New Administration reform in Mongol territories started with the settlement of Chinese, mainly farmers in Inner Mongolia. Prior to this reform, the Qing government allowed Mongol princes to plough and plant land in their respective territories since 1902. They appointed and sent high rank officers to such places with an aim to take control of the planting process and crops. Moreover, they set up many offices responsible for planting crops in Inner Mongolia. New Chinese administrative offices such as fu, tin, chjou and syan were established to supervise the Chinese farmers settled in Inner Mongolia. And

⁵⁶ Lan, Mei-hua, “China’s ‘New Administration’ in Mongolia”, in Stephen Kotkin and Bruce A. Elleman (eds), *Mongolia in the Twentieth Century: Landlocked Cosmopolitan*, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1999, p. 41.

even a decree to reward Inner Mongol princes, who were employing Chinese farmers in crop farming, was issued as well.⁵⁷

Further, in 1907 the Qing rulers issued an order to start crop planting in the territories of Outer Mongolia and approved subsequent rules. According to such rules, all the territories in aimags previously ploughed were to be measured with a line. The Ikh Khuree administrative office appointed a team of Manchu, Mongolian and Chinese officers in 1907 and according to their report, the planted land in Tusheet Khan and Setsen Khan aimags territories were in total 9,216 ha they measured the land with lines. Accordingly, many offices responsible for crop farming were established in Mongolia. The land was classified into three categories and respective selling prices were set as well. It was decided that the Qing government and Mongolian khoshuus would divide the revenues of the sold land. Before employing the above mentioned measures to convert the livestock pastures into arable land, the Qing rulers wanted the Mongolian princes to report on the size of land, both already ploughed and non-ploughed, suitable for farming in their territories.⁵⁸ However, to their surprise, previously obedient Mongolian princes were reluctant and slow and even some of them were providing various reasons not to report on their findings.

In early 20th century, the Qing dynasty allowed Mongolian princes of khoshuus collect customs commissions from the Chinese traders, who did commercial activities in their khoshuus' territories, and to receive a certain percentage for themselves. Then in 1904 the rulers of khoshuus and shav's were given the rights to collect commissions from the

⁵⁷ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol.5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 45.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

sales of cattle and other items conducted in their respective territories. The Chinese Customs offices were opened in the most populated areas. In addition, treasury funds/banks of the Qing state were established in Khuree in 1907 and later in Khiagt and Uliastai towns.⁵⁹ The Qing rulers issued an order to establish a new Transportation office in late 1910 in Mongolia and informed of their demand the Mongolian aimag rulers. According to them, customs fees would be taken from the transportation of both local and external routes, and respective fees were charged on carts of horses and camels, and these monetary fees would be a contribution to the New administration reform. As a result, Mongolia had to bear more burdens from such newly established offices in its territory. By the middle of 1911 about 20 Mongolian and Chinese new offices were formed and Mongolians had a duty to finance these offices.⁶⁰ This in turn made lives of its population enormously difficult.

In order to implement the policy of the New Administration, the Qing rulers attempted to make changes in many areas, including military, education and tax systems. Prior to implementing the reform, the Qing government established Tsagdan Tseerluuleh Yam (Law Enforcement Ministry) in Mongolia, which had an aim to prevent from any public resistance to the New reform programs and to control the territories under their rule. As a result, branches of the ministry were formed in bigger populated areas of Mongolia. For instance, a Law enforcement unit was established in Ikh Khuree, and so-called Syan-hua defense unit, consisting of 40 people, arrived from China. At the same time, 40 young people were mobilized from each territories of Tusheet Khan, Setsen Khan aimags and Ikh Shav' and they were obliged to control the areas in Maimaa

⁵⁹ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol.5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 47.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

(Amgаланбаатар) town. Later the number of such troops was increased twice by early 1910.⁶¹

The Qing government began organizing its military organ similar to that of European or Japanese systems, and classified such new military as Southern (Bay Yan) and local military. They attempted to make such a change in the territory of Mongolia as well, starting from 1907. They ordered the administrative organs in aimags and khoshuus to provide information on the names of frontier guard units, their numbers, distances between them, numbers of frontier officers and soldiers, names of places, names of defense units, and numbers of defense soldiers. However, Mongolians were slow by not submitting the information within designated times.

Although the Manchus put restrictions on the usage of Chinese language in Mongolia, they started making changes in this field, starting from the second half of the 19th century. They established a Manchu and Chinese language school in 1898 in Khuree, but local authorities were obliged to bear its expenses. This school taught the above languages to mainly the selected children of van, gung (noble people), and khoshuu's officers of Tusheet Khan, Setsen Khan aimags and Ikh Shav'. Such schools were then established in Khuree in 1908 and in Uliastai in 1910.⁶²

Thus by early 20th century the Mongolians started feeling a direct presence of the Manchu government in Mongolia under the name of the New Administration. Dissatisfaction with the New Administration reform actions was also facilitated with an

⁶¹ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol.5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 43.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 48.

appointment of a new Amban in Ikh Khuree. In 1910 a man named Sando (who previously served as Deputy Lieutenant-General in Hohhot)⁶³ replaced the previous Ikh Khuree Amban Yanzhi. Urgunge Onon and Derrick Pritchatt provide some more information on Sando, “we know little about him except that he studied in Japan and was strongly anti-Russian, but it is known that the post of Imperial Resident (amban) used to be sold in Peking for 200,000 taels of silver, and that of judge over the Chinese trades in Northern Mongolia for 5,000 taels”⁶⁴. From such comments, we can make a conclusion that Sando arrived in Mongolia with an aim to gain more by applying reform policies as much as he could to compensate, perhaps, all the costs he made.

Upon arriving in Mongolia Sando started implementing New Administration reforms aggressively. First, he increased contributions provided to the needs of Ikh Khuree Amban by Tusheet Khan, Sestsen Khan aimags and Ikh Shav’ a great deal, and made an attempt to recruit lamas of Ikh Khuree as soldiers and to send the troops to beat Togtokh taj, who organized a revolt in Inner Mongolia and entered the territory of Mongolia.⁶⁵ However, a new Ikh Khuree Amban Sando was not aware that the situation was different this time. To his surprise, Mongolian nobles, including religious leaders, made complaints about Sando and his reforms, thus, wanted to remove him from his position.

As Nakami Tatsuo, Professor of the Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, correctly observes, “the various anti-Qing movements and protests against the new policy had heretofore been random

⁶³ Lan, Mei-hua, “China’s ‘New Administration’ in Mongolia”, in Stephen Kotkin and Bruce A. Elleman (eds), *Mongolia in the Twentieth Century: Landlocked Cosmopolitan*, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1999, p. 47.

⁶⁴ Onon, Urgunge and Pritchatt, Derrick, *Asia’s First Modern Revolution. Mongolia Proclaims its Independence in 1911*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989, p. 5.

⁶⁵ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol.5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 53.

and local in character, but these now began to solidify and become organized”⁶⁶. Very soon Mongolian leading figures, including some Inner Mongolian nobles, initiated a more challenging move, to send a delegation to a northern neighbor, Russia.

Mongolians ask for Russian assistance

By 1911 both external and internal situations made Mongolia wake up from more than two centuries of the Manchu rule and its exploitation. Although the Qing rulers could rule Mongolia for such a long period of time without demonstrative resistance from the Mongolian side, the time came for Mongolians, finally, to show their resistance against the regime. As Thomas Ewing observes, “the circumstances of 1911 were very different –Mongolia’s parlous economic situation, which touched the princes as directly as it did the arats, and the broad challenge laid down by the Ch’ing court to their traditional culture fortified the will of every Mongol, irrespective of class, to resist”⁶⁷. Therefore, the Mongolians were not happy to feel the direct presence of the Qing system, in the name of reforms.

In June 1911 the Mongolian princes and religious leaders, headed by Jibzundamba Khutagt held a secret conference, where they discussed if to accept the New Administration reforms, initiated by the Qing government. The majority of the participants agreed that Mongolia could not accept the New Administration policy as a

⁶⁶ Nakami, Tatsuo, “A Protest Against the Concept of the ‘Middle Kingdom’: The Mongols and the 1911 Revolution”, in Eto, Shinkichi and Schiffrin, Harold Z. (eds), *The 1911 Revolution in China. Interpretive Essays*, University of Tokyo Press, 1981, p. 132.

⁶⁷ Ewing, Thomas E., *Between the Hammer and the Anvil? Chinese and Russian Policies in Outer Mongolia. 1911-1921*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, pp.25-6.

whole as it was not suitable for the lives of their people. Besides expressing their dissatisfaction with the New Administration reforms, the princes also exchanged their views how to end the Manchu rule. Prior to this conference some of the princes, in particular Janjin Khanddorj and Chagdarjav of Tusheet Khan aimag and Da lam Tserenchimed of Ikh Shav' had secretly met and agreed to develop a proposal to receive Russian assistance, thus, to become owners of their land by ending the Qing rule. They put their proposal for discussion at this secret conference and subsequently it received Jibzundamba Khutagt's approval. The conference also decided to send Janjin Ching Van Khanddorj, Da Lam Tserenchimed and Khaisan, an Inner Mongolian prince, as Mongolian representatives to Russia to seek her assistance in their struggle against the Qing regime. Then they informed Mr. Lavdovskii, the Russian consul, of their decision to send a delegation to Russia with a request for assistance. The Russian consul wired a telegram to Russia informing the Russian government of the Mongolians decision in July 1911.

Thus the four heads of 4 khoshuus of Mongolia led by Jibzundamba Khutagt sent a letter/petition addressed to Russian Tzar, in which they explained the situation of Mongolia referring to past and present positions of Mongolia, including more than 200 years rule of the Manchus, changes of Manchu attitudes towards Mongolian religion, and their dissatisfaction with the new reform policy. Further they stressed they need assistance from the Imperial Russia by saying, "we wish to trust in your great nation. ...As we know, from international precedents, any weak and small nation which can rely on a bigger and stronger nation can become independent. It is common for strong

nations to help weak and small nations”⁶⁸. Thus the Mongolians expressed clearly their wish to become independent with the help of Russian assistance.

Along with the letter the Mongolians brought 20 remarking notes to the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Imperial Russia. These remarks expressed the Mongolians’ wish not to encourage the reforms initiated by the Chinese, strongly showing their dissatisfaction to allocate their land for farming as, “now the Chinese attempt to take over our livelihood by getting Chinese farmers to farm our land...if the Chinese should settle down and farm in the northern frontiers of Khalkh, they would eventually encroach on your great and traditionally harmonious country as well. This also brings endless and poisonous suffering to our Mongolian people”⁶⁹. Through this remark the Mongolians wanted Russia to pay their attention to this part of land as they knew that it is in Russia’s interests not to see the settlement of Chinese on its southern frontier.

Nakami Tatsuo shares his views and analysis on this topic in his article *Russian Diplomats and Mongol Independence*.⁷⁰ He states, although the Mongolians decided to send a delegation to Russia, their goals were not fully agreed upon. They could be divided into three groups in accordance with what views they supported. The first group was seeking an independence from China whereas the second group hoped that Russia would agree to intervene on the behalf of Mongolia. And there was a quite large group, who argued in favor of compromising with Beijing. Consequently, as Nakami points out

⁶⁸ See Appendix No. 1-Documents regarding the delegation who went to Russia with a request for assistance from the Russian Tzar as well as independence.

⁶⁹ See Appendix No. 1.

⁷⁰ Nakami, Tatsuo, “Russian Diplomats and Mongol Independence”, in Stephen Kotkin and Bruce A. Elleman (eds), *Mongolia in the Twentieth Century: Landlocked Cosmopolitan*, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1999, p. 69.

“what it was decided the Mongol delegation should ask of Russia was its ‘khamagalakhu’, a word in Mongolian that can mean ‘to take care of’, ‘to guard’, or ‘to protect’. In his haste to report the Mongols’ intentions, however, Lavdovskii translated this word in its strongest possible sense as ‘protection’ and further stated that ‘in St. Petersburg, the [Mongol] delegation will officially offer the Russian Government a request accepting Khalkh under her protectorate.’ This apparent, perhaps deliberate, misunderstanding over terminology was to have serious repercussions. For the Mongols, what they wanted from Russia was help in stopping the Qing government’s reform in Mongolia. ...The new consul⁷¹ clearly did not understand the underlying complexities of the political situation in Mongolia, and so perhaps exaggerated the Mongols’ desire for closer ties to Russia.”⁷² Consequently, the Russians were not expecting to such turn of event on Mongolian side at all.

The Mongolian delegation secretly left for Russia by taking with them a letter addressed to the Russian Tzar, where they made several requests, in particular, to make agreement regarding the recognition of the Mongolian independence, and to sign agreements on trade activities, establishment of a railroad and expansion of postal relations. The approach of the Mongolians, thus, made Russia take relevant actions and, “in August 1911 under the chairmanship of Stolypin, the president of the Council of the Ministers of Russia, the ministers of Finance, Commerce and Industry, Foreign Relations and Navy and War Ministries as well as other high level officials had a special meeting on

⁷¹ Mr. Lavdovskii replaced Shismarev, Y.P, who had served many years in Mongolia.

⁷² Nakami, Tatsuo, “Russian Diplomats and Mongol Independence”, in Stephen Kotkin and Bruce A. Elleman (eds), *Mongolia in the Twentieth Century: Landlocked Cosmopolitan*, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1999, p. 72.

the affairs of Mongolia.”⁷³ They issued a resolution, which stated, “... it would best correspond to our political tasks as well as to the present political situation, if the Imperial Government, without taking the responsibility upon itself of giving armed support to the separation of China planned by the Mongols, would step forward as a mediator between them and, through diplomacy, support the aspiration of the Mongols to preserve their distinctiveness without breaking with their suzerain, the Emperor of the Ta Ch’ing dynasty”⁷⁴. In addition, they conveyed their message to the Mongolian delegation that Russia would not be able to support the separation of Mongolia from China, as it would not be possible for Mongolia to get separated from China fully, however, Russia would provide all possible supports against any intervention to be possibly made from the Chinese side. At the same time, the Russians promised to send 200 armed soldiers to protect the returning Mongol delegates as well as to strengthen its consular guard unit in Urga⁷⁵.

Although the Russians were paying their main attention to other parts of their territory such as the Near and Middle East, it did exchange several notes with the Qing government regarding Mongolia. The initial response of the Qing government, as expected, was a negative reply that the issue of Mongolia would be their internal affair and it had no intention to discuss its internal affair with Russia. However, after Russians urged the Chinese to take measures regarding their military and administrative reforms on the territory of Mongolia, the Qing government started making some moves, finally,

⁷³ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 54.

⁷⁴ Ewing, Thomas E., *Between the Hammer and the Anvil? Chinese and Russian Policies in Outer Mongolia. 1911-1921*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, p. 27.

⁷⁵ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 55.

sensing the discontent of the Mongolians about their new reforms and their policy and the threat that Russia would get gains out of this unstable situation in this area.

Sando, the Qing government Ikh Khuree Amban, was in a shock after he heard about the secret Mongolian delegation to Russia. He demanded Bogd to wire a telegram to Khanddorj and other delegates to come back urgently and to withdraw their requests. Bogd Jibzundamba replied that he would wire a telegram if the Qings agreed to suspend programs of the New Administration and to have all the members of the delegation amnestied. Sando conveyed to Beijing the Mongolian demands in the middle of July, 1911 and soon the Qing government instructed Sando to stop those programs, with which the Mongolians were unhappy. In addition, they in late September informed the Russian consul in Beijing of their intention to suspend all military and political reforms carried out in Mongolia and later through their interim representative in Saint-Petersburg the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁷⁶.

All these concessions indicated that the time was changed. The Qing regime was on its edge of decline and their request for a loan for its struggle against uprisings on the Chinese land from foreign powers was not supported at all⁷⁷. As a result, anti-Manchu uprisings in China reached a level of revolution, making the Qing dynasty, finally, come to an end.

⁷⁶ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 56.

⁷⁷ Naran, Dugarjav, *History of China, XX century*, Ulaanbaatar: Mongolian State University Publishing House, 2002, p. 23.

Thus both internal and external situations had positively influenced Mongolia to gain a positive outcome as it managed to balance the special interests of its two neighbors. Previously the Mongolian nobles and religious leaders were against the anti-New Administration policy of the Qing government under the “Yazguuriin yosiig juramlaḥ” (observing fundamental principles) call. However, the Chinese revolution and the Russian promise to support the Mongolians’ struggle for their national liberation movement made the Mongolians have a new call for “all Mongols to have an independent state proclaimed, thus, to have their religion prospered”⁷⁸. From here on the national liberation movement moved one step forward to a national liberation revolution.

Subsequently, several nobles and lamas had discussed how to implement the above-stated call and established an Interim Department of the Khalkh and Khuree Affairs (IDKK) headed by state-tushee Gung Chagdarjav, who was head of Tusheet Khan aimag’s assembly, and with other representatives such as Ching Van Khanddorj and Da Lam Tserenchimed on November 30, 1911. This Department played a role of a provisional government to organize and lead national liberation revolution to overthrow the Manchu government in Ikh Khuree and to revive Mongolia as a state.

Upon establishing the IDKK they sent a decree, issued by Jibzundamba Khutagt, to zasag noyods of Inner Mongolia and Mongols in Barga, Alasha and Khukh Nuur regions and informed them of their decision to elevate Jibzundamba Khutagt as a Khan of Mongolia. At the same time they ordered to mobilize troops from 4 Khalkh aimags.

⁷⁸ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 56.

Within a day or two about 500 troops were gathered from nearest khoshuus of Khuree.⁷⁹

The Mongolians did not give a priority to use arms while gathering troops. Instead they informed (November 30) Sando amban that the troops were gathered with an aim to protect the Qing emperor, thus, they would need relevant monetary allowance as well as arms. Further, they asked Sando amban to reply by the deadline they set (November 30). Upon the notification of the Mongolian demands Sando amban wanted to see the Mongolian minister in Ikh Khuree, but the minister did not meet him by providing various excuses. When the deadline was passed several nobles and lamas approached Sando amban to inform of their decision, “no reply to the requested question meant to be a refuse? Thus Mongolians decided to protect their own territory, to establish Ikh Mongol state and to have Bogd Jibzundamba crowned as a Khan and demanded Sando to leave the country within 3 days”.⁸⁰

The same day the IDKK issued a declaration to revive the Mongolian state and announced their decision by sticking posters in streets and markets. After Sando and his subordinate Manchu and Chinese officials found a refuge in the Consulate of Russia, the Mongolians abolished the Qing government ministry, all the left belongings of the ministry and homes of the officials were registered, and these places were prepared as the basis for the reviving ministries. Then, all the weapons of the Chinese troops in Khuree were confiscated and the Qing officials who had a refuge in a Russian consulate

⁷⁹ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 57.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

were sent to Khiagt on December 4, accompanied by Mongolian officials and troops using urtuun service.

The victory of National Liberation Revolution resulted in national liberation movements in some Inner Mongol territories

On December 3, 1911 the IDKK changed the Manchu Syuantun calendar to the Mongolian calendar of 12 years and the year was called as the year of “white boar”. Then, on December 29, 1911 or the 9th day of the middle month of winter of the White Pig/(boar) year a ceremony to elevate Jibzundamba Khutagt as the Khan of Mongolia was held and the establishment of the Mongolian state was officially announced. The same day the government of Mongolia with 5 ministries was established. Those who played important roles to initiate and organize the national liberation revolution to establish an independent state were appointed to the major posts of the new government. Ching Van Khanndorj (Tusheet Khan aimag’s janjin) was appointed as the minister of External Affairs, Da Lam Tserenchimed (Ikh Khuree) as the minister of Internal Affairs, Gung Shagdarjav (Tusheet Khan aimag’s chuulgan/assembly head) as the minister of Finance, beis Gombosuren (Setsen Khan aimag’s janjin) as the minister of Military Affairs, and Namsrai (Tusheet Khan aimag’s gun) as the minister of Justice. Da lam Tserenchimed also played a duty of a head of the government and his ministry was leading the government.⁸¹

⁸¹ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 59

As a result, on the territory of Mongolia the dual theocratic monarchy was formed in 1911 as a result of the national liberation revolution. I agree with Jamsran, who believes that the victory of the national liberation movement in Mongolia can be regarded as a national revolution. The main objective of a revolution is to take over the state power. What the Mongolians did in 1911 is that they ousted out the Qing government, which was controlling the country for more than 2 centuries and established an independent government.⁸² Therefore, we can assume that Mongolia obtained its independence thanks to the national liberation revolution, which main objective was to overthrow the foreign domination and have their sovereignty in their hands.

The population of Mongolia, irrespective of their social class and position, all actively supported the struggle of the nation for national liberation. Initially common people's struggle in late 19th and early 20th century was against not only the Qing regime and Chinese usurers but also against nobles and princes of their respective territories. There had been uprisings against then existing regime and nobles and princes in many parts of the country, i.e., Mongolian troops initiated a mutiny in 1900 in Uliastai town; common people's uprising that continued until 1902 in Sansraidorj's khoshuu of Setsen Khan aimag; and the most well-known Ard Ayush's uprising, which had taken place in Darkhan beil khoshuu of Zasagt Khan aimag in 1903.⁸³

Low rank lamas, military troops and taijs also started joining the common people's struggle against the Qing regime and ruling nobles. At times their interests differed.

⁸² Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 59.

⁸³ Boldbaatar, J., Batbayar, Ts., Baasanjav, Z. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar: Admon Publishing House, 1999, p. 122.

When common people wished to end the serfdom system, the low rank lamas or taijs wanted to restore their lost rights or even to have not only themselves but also their khamjlagas get exempted from taxes. Although their interests were not all the time alike, they all had one aim to end the foreign domination and restore Mongolia's independence. The common people realized to see the main cause for their suffering in the Qing regime, its serfdom system, which was carried out in the end by the Mongolian nobles, princes and religious centers.⁸⁴

Prior to establishing an independent state the IDKK demanded the Western region assemblies to mobilize troops and using such forces to have Uliastai and Khovd, the main Manchu administrative units, liberated. When such mobilized troops arrived in Uliastai, the Manchus gave in without much resistance in January 1912 as they had no chance to get an external support, but Khovd remained still resisting.

Like any newly established government, the new Mongolian government faced with conflicts on ideas and methods. Although, they were succeeding in establishing an independent government, the leaders did not go on well all the time. Thus several nobles had had a secret discussion with regard to Da Lam Tserenchimed, who was exercising an excessive power, and they agreed that a zasag noyon/noble could lead the government and conveyed their message to the Bogd Khan. As a result, some changes were made to the administration of the government and Sain Noyon khan Namnansuren was appointed as the Prime Minister in July 1912.

⁸⁴ Boldbaatar, J., Batbayar, Ts., Baasanjav, Z. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar: Admon Publishing House, 1999, p. 123.

After Ikh Khuree and Uliastai's liberation, the Mongolians wanted to free other areas, including Khovd, where the last administrative unit of the Qing government was still located. At the same time the new government was calling Western Mongolian territories, Inner Mongolia, Bargat and other Mongol territories to join the newly established Mongolian state. However, the Qing rulers appointed Palta Van, who was working in Mongol and Tibet Affairs Division in Beijing, as a governor of Altai province in Mongolia and was engaged in propaganda among the nobles and people of Western Mongolia not to cooperate with Outer Mongolia. Through Palta van they wanted to persuade Galsannamjil, the dalai khan of Durvud, not to follow the Khalkhas.⁸⁵ To their surprise, however, Durvud aimag sent their request to join Ikh Khuree's government in an official letter in summer 1912 and Durvud's 16 khoshuus, Zahchin's 3 khoshuus, and Altai Uriankhai, Torguud, Uuld, Myangad, Khasag, Chahar and other ethnic groups joined Mongolia as well. Moreover, Sodnomdovdon, who was serving as a supervisor of all the cattle of the Qing Emperor in Dariganga area (today's Sukhbaatar aimag of Mongolia) and Magsarjav, semi-supervisor, informed of their decision to join Mongolia in a written official note in March 1912 and joined Mongolia.

A battle to liberate Khovd, the last place for which the Manchus were fighting, lasted for about 3 months and the joint Mongol army, which consisted of Khalkh, Barga, Tsakhar, Uriankhai, Torguud, Durvud and other troops of ethnic groups, could break the Manchu defense, which was supported by the Chinese troops arrived from Sintsyan, on August 5. The joint Mongol army was organized and led by Magsarjav Gung, the vice-minister of the Internal Ministry (who previously served in khalkh jasaa of Khovd

⁸⁵ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 61.

representing Sain Noyon Khan aimag), Damdinsuren zangi, the vice-minister of the External Ministry (arrived from Barga), and other military officials, ministers, and religious representatives such as Togtokh, whose name has been recorded as “in the four years from 1906 to 1910, Togtokh fought the Chinese soldiers 104 times in small-scale and large engagements. ...Togtokh’s comrades all showed a common purpose, [to “reclaim their land from the Chinese”]...and fought for the Mongol nation”⁸⁶, Khaisan, Dambijantsan and Damdinbazar. Finally on August 7 Khovd was liberated.

The liberation of Mongolian territories from the foreign domination had set a good example for other Mongols living outside of Mongolia. Although the Mongol territories were divided into outer and inner, as a result of the Manchu policy to control the occupied territories separately both politically and economically, the news on the victory of the national revolution in Mongolia, the establishment of the new Mongolian state, and the liberation of the Mongolian territories from the Manchu rule reached other areas with Mongol population.

Thus 1911 national liberation revolution in Outer Mongolia entered into a new phase of its development in 1912 with a national liberation movement in Mongol territories in Inner Mongolia. It was spread out in a big scale in Khulunbuir khoshuu, which bordered with Outer Mongolia. Some nobles in Khulunbuir, headed by Shen Fu, head of Uuld majority, had held a meeting in early 1912 where they agreed to accept the government of Mongolia in Ikh Khuree and to send Tsend, who was head of Solon khoshuu’s majority, as their representative. At the same time, some leaders of a national movement

⁸⁶ Navaangnamjil, G., “A Brief Biography of the Determined Hero Togtokh”, in Onon, Urgenge. *Mongolian Heroes of the Twentieth Century* (ed), New York: AMS Press Inc., 1976, p. 62.

in Barga area, in particular Damdinsuren, zangi of soum, Gaihasu, the typist, and altogether 7 people arrived in Ikh Khuree representing Bargas. The armed uprising in Barga was taken place under the direct management of Ikh Khuree. Certainly Ikh Khuree was supporting all such national liberation movements in other Mongol territories. All those people who arrived together with Damdinsuren, zangi of the 3rd soum of Shuluun Tsagaan khoshuu of New Barga, were awarded relevant titles and Damdinsuren was appointed as the deputy Minister at the Ministry of External Relations.⁸⁷ As a result, Khulunbuir became one part of Mongolia and all affairs were conducted in accordance with guidelines of Mongolian state.

At the same time Van Gunsennorov, zasag noyon of Kharchin khoshuu, had a meeting with other nobles of Zost and Zuun-ud regarding the fate of Inner Mongolia. They appointed Luvsan-chejuur as their representative to attend the ceremony of crowning Jibzundamba khutagt. The proclamation of independent Mongolia was encouraging Mongols to seek their liberation from the Manchu rule and many other territories, including some khoshuus of Shiliin gol, Jirem, Zos, Ikh zuu, Ulaantsav's chuulgans, and altogether 35 khoshuus out of 49 khoshuus of Inner Mongolia sent their representatives to Ikh Khuree with their statements to join the Mongolian state.⁸⁸ The newly established Mongolian government accepted such requests to join Mongolia with a great appreciation and awarded those people, who made great efforts, with titles or promotions and in some cases provided them with a right to supervise their respective territories, and appointed those nobles who had relevant academic and military skills to work in ministries of the Mongolian government. As a result, Gonchigsuren, zasag jun

⁸⁷ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 63.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 64

Van of Umnud khoshuu of Zuun gar, Jirmen chuulgan, was appointed as the deputy minister to the Prime Minister of Mongolia, zangi Khaisan, zahiragch of Kharchin Van khoshuu, Zostiin chuulgan, as the deputy minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Damdinsuren and Tsend from Barga as the deputy ministers of the Ministry of External Affairs, and beis Nasan-Arvijih and taj Togtokh from Jirem chuulgan as the deputy ministers of the Ministry of Military Affairs respectively.⁸⁹

There had been many requests for assistance to be liberated from the foreign domination as well as for supply of arms to the Mongolian government from many territories of Inner Mongolia. Although Mongolia was happy to support them in every possible way, it, itself a newly established government, was not able to provide arms to all the parties who made requests. Mongolia could provide some 100 quick-firing guns and 30 thousand bullets to beis Khurleg, head of left wing chuulgan in Khukh Nuur, who arrived to Mongolia, representing 24 zasag (administrative units) of Khukh Nuur with a request for aid.⁹⁰

Accordingly, national liberation revolution of 1911 in Mongolia resulted in many national liberation movements in Mongol territories in Inner Mongolia. The main aim of the national revolution to liberate its country from the Qing rule or foreign domination was achieved, although not in all Mongol territories, in Mongolia. Then it entered into a new phase, to establish a united Mongolian state, and to oppose any aggressive policy applied by China, which inherited the Qing policy and made attempts to control all the territories which were ruled by the Manchus during the Qing dynasty.

⁸⁹ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 64.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 64

In areas, bordering with Mongolia, many resisted such a hostile policy of the Chinese. Some of the nobles were even sending envoys to Mongolia with a request to help them in their struggle against the Chinese. Udai and Raashminjuur of Jirem chuulgan in Inner Mongolia got support from the Mongolian government and on August 20, 1913 they announced their independence. The army under Udai Van could take control of city Shaazgai and two syans such as Chjendun and Tzinan. However, when the above news reached the newly established government of Yuan Shikai in China, they sent troops immediately to the area. A fierce battle was taken place near Shaazgai and Chjendun and the armed uprising headed by Udai Van was completely suppressed there. Udai Van and Raashminjuur could flee with the remaining people to Outer Mongolia, where they were given a residency status and Udai Van was appointed as the deputy minister of the Ministry of the Army and Raashminjuur as the deputy minister of the Ministry of External Affairs.⁹¹

Accordingly, the Ministry of Military affairs of Mongolia made a proposal to send troops to five directions with an aim to protect not only its territory but also the Mongols living in Inner Mongolia on January 24, 1913 and had the following five directions were approved by Bogd Khan. The five directions were as follows:

1. Troops headed by Chimidtseren to the direction of Eguzer monastery,
2. Troops headed by Gung Khaisan and deputy minister Bavuujav to the direction of Dariganga,

⁹¹ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, pp. 65-6.

3. Troops headed by bishrelt beis Nasan-Arvijikh to the direction of two khoshuus of Sunid and Durvun van,
4. Troops headed by Gung Sonomdorj to the direction of Khukh hot, and
5. Troops headed by tushmel Zutgelt to the direction of three monasteries in Urad and Khatan gol.

In addition manlai baatar Damdinsuren from Barga was appointed to lead troops to the direction of East-south.⁹²

Consequently, ten thousand Mongolian troops left for Inner Mongolia in January 1913. The troops consisted of the soldiers of Khuree Military school and mobilized troops from aimag and khoshuus of Mongolia. The commanders of the troops were those, who arrived to Mongolia with an aim to liberate their territories. Although the number of Mongolian troops was not adequate, they managed to liberate some of the Mongol territories there. The local people were also supporting the Mongolian troops in every possible ways. As a result, the number of people, who joined Mongolia, was on the rise. In the territories, which officially joined Mongolia, the Mongols started paying from 1912 some of the customs revenues to the Mongolian government and that contributed in some way to the military expenditures of the Mongolian troops, who arrived with an aim to liberate Mongol territories there.

Independent Mongolia and how other powers reacted to such news

⁹² Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, pp. 66-7.

Although Mongolia declared its independence and it was trying to have other Mongol territories joined it, the outside world, in particular, Russia on the north and China on the south reacted to such unexpected moves of the Mongolians in different ways. As already discussed earlier, Russia approached this issue carefully as it did not want to hurt the feelings of the Mongolians, thus, they conveyed the message to support Mongolia. Although they promised to support the Mongolians, in fact the Russians were not ready to come to this area yet. There had been different opinions on the Russian side how to deal with the request of Mongolia for assistance. On one hand, there were some who believed that the recognition of the independence of Mongolia would make them worsen their relations with China. Sazonov, Foreign Minister of Russia, “in his speech in the Duma on April 13, 1912... explained why Russia was not prepared to recognize or admit the independence of Khalkha or Outer Mongolia ...the Mongols of Khalkha possess neither a military nor a financial organization, nor leaders, without whom an independent state is impossible. To tear them away from China would, therefore, demand that we assume the task of organizing a state, a difficult task, which would cause great financial expense and enormous labor. At the same time Khalkha would be in permanent danger of being re-conquered by the Chinese, and the duty would evolve upon us to defend her with the power of our arms. A completed breach between Khalkha and China would put us in a dilemma: either to occupy Khalkha or retreat from it and to readmit the Chinese strength of the right of the conqueror. We have tried to avoid this dilemma and we have declared ourselves ready to undertake mediation between the Chinese and Mongols for the conclusion of such a compromise as would, as far as possible, respect the wishes of the Mongols to preserve their peculiar customs, and the wish of China to reestablish her suzerainty over Mongolia. Peace could only be

preserved in Khalkha if she knew that her two powerful neighbors, Russia and China, had come to an agreement about her future.”⁹³ The Russian Foreign Minister’s speech confirmed that big powers, in this case, Russia and China had the right and power to decide the fate of a small country, Mongolia.

On the other hand, there were others, who believed that Russia should take immediate actions in Mongolia. Another important figure of this period Korostovets, Imperial Minister in Peking, “commented unfavorably on the passive attitude of the Foreign Minister. ...the nationalist paper ‘Soviet’ demanded a Russian protectorate for Mongolia. The opposition organ ‘Rech’ emphatically rejected this scheme and thought the limit to which Russia could go without violating the status quo in the Far East was to support Mongolia’s endeavors to become an independent buffer-state between her and China.”⁹⁴ Thus the opinions and thoughts with regard to the issue of Mongolia differed greatly in Russia, as a whole the Russians were not in a position to recognize the independence of Mongolia. They, perhaps, were right in some way that, for a small country like Mongolia, it would be difficult to survive as a nation during that time.

However, a great disorder that was shaking the Qing dynasty provided some, but little opportunity for small nationalities to liberate their territory as well as population from their long-lasting rule. If they could not take that little opportunity then, such a chance would not have come again. Although Mongolia lacked in almost everything, including sufficient number of people, self-financing, provisions of arms and food, it managed to

⁹³ Friters, Gerard M, *Outer Mongolia and Its International Position*, New York: Oktagon Books, 1974, p. 66.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1974, pp. 67-8.

use the opportunity to declare its independence by balancing the interests of its two big neighbors as none of its neighbors wanted each other to absorb Mongolia.

In China the Qing government, until it announced officially its resignation, tried to take any measures to attract the Mongolians not to get separated from it. “On January 30, 1912 the Qing Emperor made some promises to the Mongolian feudals. According to the promises, equal rights would be given to the Mongolians similar to the Chinese, and freedom for religion would be provided to van, gung and others who inherited titles.”⁹⁵ Consequently, there were some nobles, who started opposing revolutionary activities that were taking places in not only China but also in Mongolia. After the change of the government in the Chinese territory some Khalkh nobles like “Nayant Van and other Mongolian van, gung and lamas expressed their wishes to join Mongolia and Tibet to the Middle Kingdom to Yan Shikai and asked to organize a meeting to eliminate damages occurred in Mongolia and Tibet”⁹⁶. Consequently, the Department of Outer Mongolian State affairs was replaced by the Mongolia-Tibet affairs bureau (Men Tzan Shiyutzuyi) in Beijing and Van Gunsennorov from Kharchin was appointed to lead the bureau. It was not a coincidence to appoint Gunsennorov, who was trying to get Japanese support for the independence of Mongols and doing big reforms in his respective territory. They wanted him to change his policy and, unfortunately, very soon Van Gunsennorov gave up his struggle for independence by believing in the propaganda of the Chinese to give equal rights to all nationalities in China⁹⁷.

⁹⁵ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 70.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

The Qing authorities declared their resignation officially on February 12, 1912 and all the power was transferred to Yuan Shikai. The two Chinese leaders, Yuan Shikai and Sun Yatsen, had had negotiations concerning the Manchus and the future of China earlier and Sun Yatsen promised to transfer his provisional President position to Yuan Shikai if he exerted himself in overthrowing the Qing rule. At the same time, the Manchus were still hoping that Yuan Shikai would support them to put down the revolution. However, Yuan Shikai had his own personal interest to have the power in his hands. Thus he could use the weak position of the Qing authorities and obtained first their power in his hands. Then “he took the President’s position in March 1912 and Sun Yatsen was officially resigned on April 1, the same year”⁹⁸.

One of the important tasks for the Mongolian leaders was to have the independence of Mongolia recognized, firstly, by its two neighbors. Accordingly, they informed the main ministries of the Qing government, in particular ministries of Internal Affairs, Government Collaboration, and External Affairs on December 30, 1911 of the crowning of Bogd Khan as the head of the government as well as the establishment of the Mongolian state. The Mongolians also proposed to discuss this issue after the situation got normalized in China.

Though the governments established after the fall of Qing dynasty had conflicting interests among themselves, they pursuing the same policy towards Mongolia or Outer Mongolia as they referred to. The Chinese national conference held in March approved the provisional constitution on March 10, 1912. According to Article 3 of this

⁹⁸ Naran, Dugarjav, *History of China, XX century*, Ulaanbaatar: Mongolian State University Publishing House, 2002, p. 26.

constitution, “The Middle Kingdom consists of 22 regions, Outer and Inner Mongolia, Tibet and Khukh Nuur” and Article 18 of this constitution stipulated that “...region, Outer and Inner Mongolia, and Tibet appoint 5 representatives each to the national conference”.⁹⁹ Therefore, it was an official document where the Chinese new government expressed its view officially that Mongolia was a part of their territory and demanded Mongolia to observe their laws.

As it was expected, the Mongolians refused to accept such a demand. Therefore, a telegram was sent on behalf of the Internal Ministry of Mongolia, which informed the Chinese of the restoration of Mongolia’s independence and pointed out, “...we respectfully praise your honourable ideas which are aimed in all directions for uniting the world as a family, unifying all the Chinese people to be a single body. ...we should combine our efforts to advance with your ideas as a guide, but we Mongols have different traditions, language and literature from those of the Chinese. Our Mongolian and Chinese cultures are as far as heaven and earth. Especially after being brutally oppressed by the Manchu dynasty for over two hundred years, our knowledge and way of life have not yet even improved. ...Therefore, it is proper for us to live harmoniously as neighbors. ...If you want to discuss the affairs of the traders, drifters and frontiers, it would be better for both our countries to have a neighboring country as a witness. ...If you wish to discuss matters related to your traders and other citizens residing in Mongolia as well as borderlines we should do it with a presence of another

⁹⁹ Naran, Dugarjav, *History of China, XX century*, Ulaanbaatar: Mongolian State University Publishing House, 2002, p. 71.

neighbor.”¹⁰⁰ The above stated were the true wishes the Mongolians wanted to express and they suggest the best way to solve the problem as to discuss the issue, having the third country, perhaps, Russia as an observer.

The government of China did not accept this proposal at all and Yuan Shikai himself sent a telegram to Bogd Khan Jibzundamba on March 1, where he stated that Mongolia would not be able to develop independently. The only way for development would be under the jurisdiction of China. To this telegram Bogd Jibzundamba replied that “Mongolia obtained its independence with an aim to have its nation and religion protected and to maintain its territorial integrity.”¹⁰¹ Further he said that Mongolia had its own statehood and religion, thus, it needed to have an independent state by uniting all its territory and did it not at the provocation of other countries. Then Bogd Khan proposed to convene an international meeting to discuss this matter and, perhaps, this way he wanted to get an international recognition of Mongolia’s independence. To this telegram Yuan Shikai sent the same reply stating it would be better for Mongolia to join China and informed the Mongolian government of his decision to send delegates to Mongolia for negotiations. Although the Mongolian government refused to meet the delegates, the 2 representatives of Yuan Shikai did arrive in Mongolia and met with Bogd Khan. No agreement was reached as it was expected.

Although most Western scholars believe that Mongolians declared its independence at the instruction of the Russians, in fact, the Mongolians’ approach of Russia made them

¹⁰⁰ See Appendix No. 2-A part of folded documents with regard to the crowning Bogd Gegeen as the Khan of Mongolia and the announcement of the year as the Initial Year Exalted by All (Olnoo Urgegsenii Terguun On) to the world.

¹⁰¹ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 72.

to re-analyze the situation in this region, and eventually made them take the opportunity to consolidate their rights and interests in this country. Although the Russians promised to provide support to Mongolia, it made a secret convention with Japan on July 8, 1912 and that conflicted with the genuine beliefs of the Mongolians. Article II of this secret convention stated that “the Imperial Government of Russia undertakes to recognize and to respect the Japanese special interests in the part of Inner Mongolia to the East of the meridian above indicated¹⁰², and the Imperial Government of Japan undertakes to recognize and to respect the Russian special interests in the part of Outer Mongolia to the West of the said meridian”¹⁰³. As big nations have specific relations with one another, they do not think it important to bother small nations although the latter’s fate is decided.

This secret agreement between Russia and Japan was signed at that time, when Mongols in Inner Mongolia were struggling to join Outer Mongolia and to restore their independence as well. After the agreement “Russia pursued a policy, on one hand, to have its interests in Mongolia approved by the government of the Middle Kingdom, and on the other hand, to act as if they were supporting Mongols’ independence movement but without violating their secret agreement with Japan, thus, to have Mongolia not to join China and at the same time to have it not to be completely separated from China as well”¹⁰⁴. As a whole Russia’s position was not to make any of these parties turn away

¹⁰² According to the Article II of this agreement, “Inner Mongolia is divided into two parts: one to the West, and the other to the East, of the meridian of Peking (116 27’ East of Greenwich)” Appendix D, Price, Ernest Batson, *The Russo-Japanese Treaties of 1907-1916 Concerning Manchuria and Mongolia*, Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1933, p. 117.

¹⁰³ Price, Ernest Batson, *The Russo-Japanese Treaties of 1907-1916 Concerning Manchuria and Mongolia*, Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1933, p. 117.

¹⁰⁴ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 74.

from them, instead, it pursued to gain more by maintaining good relations with each of these countries.

Although big powers were negotiating to define their spheres of interests, there had been other circles which took a completely different position than the official responses issued by respective governments regarding the regional situation. For instance, in Japan, as Masaru Ikei observes, although the Japanese took a position of a non-interference or 'wait and see' in revolutionary activities taken places in China, "there were also plans afoot within the Army (mainly the General Staff) and among certain "continentalists" like Kawashima Naniwa to establish the independence of Manchuria and Mongolia. ...With the outbreak of revolution, Kawashima called for the division of China."¹⁰⁵ However, his view did not get sufficient support and subsequent policies taken by Japan failed as the policy makers "never had a clear understanding of the situation in China"¹⁰⁶. Perhaps, such ideas existed among some circles, but circumstances were different with regard to the above two regions.

During this time the Chinese made preparations to send troops to Mongolia by appointing Chin Van Nayant, who was residing in Beijing from Mongolia, for the position of general in Uliastai town, Western Mongolia, with an aim to have Outer Mongolia give up their intention. Russia considered this period, however, as an appropriate time to have negotiations with Mongolia, thus, to have their interests consolidated there¹⁰⁷. Consequently, the Russian government started making a direct

¹⁰⁵ Ikei, Masaru, "Japan's Response to the Chinese Revolution of 1911", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, ABI/INFORM Global, Feb. 1966.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 74.

negotiation with Mongolia in autumn 1912. Russia was in a favorable position as there was a request made by Mongolians for Russian assistance and they promised to support the Mongolian independence, but avoiding to recognize it. It was without doubt that the Russian government's decision to have a direct negotiation, though a secret one, with Mongolia was to have a positive impact on Mongolia, having this country to step into an international arena, as Batsaikhan observes, "as the parties to make a negotiation were to be 'Russia and Mongolia' and the document to be issued afterwards was to be a diplomatic agreement which in one or other way corresponded to the norms and regulations of the international legal framework"¹⁰⁸. This is what Mongolia needed to move on with their wish for independence. Prior to the negotiation "Sazanov, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russia, sent instructions to Korostovets, the Russian representative to have a negotiation with the Mongolians, on August 23, 1912, where he defined the Imperial Russia's policy in Mongolia as 'to pursue not to have a military strong state in this region with which we have borders'."¹⁰⁹

The Russian Council of Ministers discussed the issue of having negotiations with Mongolia during its special session on August 2, 1912 and made a decision at the initiative of the Foreign Minister to start a secret negotiation with Khuree. As they had an issue with the Chinese regarding Mongolia, they decided to name the document as 'an agreement to be made with Khutagt of Khuree and Khalkh nobles'.¹¹⁰ The negotiations started in September 1912 and lasted for about 2 months and finally the two countries, Russia and Mongolia, signed an agreement on November 3, 1912.

¹⁰⁸ Batsaikhan, O., *Mongolia: To Be a Nation State*, Ulaanbaatar, Admon, 2005, p. 19.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 20.

¹¹⁰ Batsaikhan, O., "Russo-Mongolian 1912 Friendship Treaty", www.tsahimurtuu.mn.

According to the Article 1 of the Agreement, “the Imperial Russian Government shall assist Mongolia to maintain the autonomous regime which she has established, as also the right to have her national army, and admit neither the presence of Chinese troops on her territory nor the colonization of her land by the Chinese”¹¹¹. The Mongolians request to support them in establishing a united independent Mongolia, including Barga and Inner Mongolia and opening a Mongolian representative office in Saint-Petersburg were not supported at all by the Russians. Then the Mongolians decided to send an official note to foreign consulates residing in Kharbin in late autumn 1912 with an aim to get international support in their independence. According to this note, “Mongolia has formed an independent state, being separated from Qing rule, pursuing our faiths and principles and our territory, which had been established since old times and enthroned the head of our religion of Khalkh Mongolia Jibzundamba lama as Khan of Mongolian state and called the year as the Year Exalted by All¹¹². The Ministry [of external affairs] has sent this not to announce it to the world.”¹¹³ However, such a move could not get any support though consulates of 9 countries, including Great Britain, France, Germany, America, Japan, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and Austria, were approached¹¹⁴.

Although the Russians did not officially recognize Mongolia’s independence in the document of the Russo-Mongolian Friendship Treaty, Mongolia did participate in the

¹¹¹ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Outer Mongolia. Treaties and Agreements*, Washington, 1921, p. 17.

¹¹² Exalted by All or Olnoo urgegdsen – reign title of the King of the Autonomous Monarchy of Mongolia, 1911-1914 (Charles, Bawden, *Mongolian-English Dictionary*, London: Kegan Paul International, 1997, p. 257).

¹¹³ See Appendix No. 3- A note sent to foreign representatives on the establishment of independent Mongolia.

¹¹⁴ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 74.

negotiations as an independent state. "...It had a huge political importance for Mongolia. The agreement made between Russia and Mongolia put an end to the previously set relations of Mongolia and China, thus, it opened opportunities for Mongolia to have equal relations with any country of the world."¹¹⁵

Many scholars agree that, on the contrary, the Mongolians were obliged to "grant, as in the past, to Russian subjects and trade the enjoyment in their possessions of the rights and privileges"¹¹⁶ and that was enumerated in the attached protocol. As Peter Tang observes "the protocol entitled Russian subjects to all the privileges they had enjoyed under former Russo-Chinese treaties, and at the same time converted Outer Mongolia into an economic fief of Russia. The Russians could move or reside anywhere in Outer Mongolia, engage in every kind of business, commercial, industrial, or otherwise; could make contracts of every kind; could export and import goods free of duties, taxes, or other dues; could have allotments on lease, and acquire them as private property or for cultivation; could obtain concessions of any kind; and Russian credit institutions could maintain branches in Mongolia and transact all kinds of business there"¹¹⁷. Although the Russian-Mongolian agreement of 1912 was an unequal treaty with a powerful state dictating its interests, it brought some promises to Mongolia.

A small country, which was oppressed by Qing regime and that later was absorbed by one of its giant neighbors, had no opportunity to dictate its wishes. Instead it had to be

¹¹⁵ Batsaikhan, O., "Russo-Mongolian Friendship Treaty", www.tsahimurtuu.mn.

¹¹⁶ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Outer Mongolia. Treaties and Agreements*, Washington, 1921, p. 17.

¹¹⁷ Tang, Peter S.H., *Russian and Soviet Policy in Manchuria and Outer Mongolia: 1911-1931*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1959, p. 312.

very careful and to use any opportunities that would make them declare their desires to the world by bargaining the conflicting interests of its two neighbors and by, at times, hitting stone walls made by the powerful states. Therefore, the Russian-Mongolian “treaty had become the first legal document which could define the status of Mongolia in the international arena since it announced the independence of Mongolia”¹¹⁸. Although this treaty has brought some promises for Mongolia, it was far too early to obtain the real official document, where both of our neighbors reached consensus on Mongolia’s independence.

The next task for Russia was to obtain China’s agreement to the treaty. No matter how much China tried not to accept the Russo-Mongolian agreement Russia firmly insisted on their special interests there. Finally China agreed to accept the treaty in order to maintain normal relations with Russia. After many correspondence and long discussions Russia and China signed ‘a Declaration and Exchange of Notes’ with regard to Outer Mongolia on November 5, 1913. According to the Declaration, “Russia recognizes that Outer Mongolia is under the suzerainty of China”, whereas, “China recognizes the autonomy of Outer Mongolia”¹¹⁹. At the same time, they agreed to provide Mongolia the rights for internal administration.

However, the Mongolians were not fully happy with both of these documents, in particular with so called autonomous rights. In winter 1913 a Mongolian delegation headed by M.Khanddorj, the Foreign Minister, visited Saint-Petersburg with an aim to

¹¹⁸ Batsaikhan, O., *Mongolia: To Be a Nation State*, Ulaanbaatar, Admon, 2005, p. 22.

¹¹⁹ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Outer Mongolia. Treaties and Agreements*, Washington, 1921, pp. 25-6.

have some negotiations with the Russians regarding the independence issue of Mongolia and to have some of the foreign countries such as Great Britain, France and Japan recognized the Mongolian independence by approaching foreign missions in Russia and, if possible, to make a request to visit some of the countries. However, the foreign embassies were careful to deal with this sensitive issue and none of them met the Mongolian delegation.

Then the Mongolians made some attempts to reach the Japanese and, if possible, to get their support in the establishment of independent Mongolia. Da lam Tserenchimed and Van Gonchigsuren were appointed to go to Japan. To Korostovets' urging not to contact the Japanese Da lam Tserenchimed replied that "the Mongolians are approaching the Japanese to save the Inner Mongolians from the Chinese domination. This can be done through negotiations with the Japanese who can pay attention to the fate of Inner Mongolia"¹²⁰. However, no positive outcomes were seen as the Russians prevented them to reach the Japanese in every possible way.

Though Mongolia failed to get international recognition for its independence, there was only one country, which recognized Mongolia's independence, Tibet. G. Friters in his book *Outer Mongolia and Its International Position* writes, "they concluded a treaty shortly after the Russo-Mongolian agreement in Urga in January 1913. ...The Mongols signed this 'rather harmless' agreement for the sake of prestige. They wanted to sign a treaty with a nation other than Russia which especially recognized their 'independence'

¹²⁰ Batsaikhan, O., *Mongolia: To Be a Nation State*, Ulaanbaatar, Admon, 2005, p. 48.

and whose position in relation to China was similar to their own”¹²¹. This treaty was a sign that these two nations were resisting domination by any outside force, whether they were the Qings or the Chinese. At the same, it may have encouraged them in some way to continue on their struggle for freedom and national independence.

Mongolia sent another delegation in late 1913 and early 1914, headed by Sain Noyon Khan T. Namnansuren, then the Prime Minister, to Russia. They wanted to make clear that Mongolia had become an independent state and to ask for Russian assistance in joining Inner Mongolia to a Mongolian state, as well as to have a permanent Mongolian representative in Russia. However, the Russian government supported none of the above requests. During this visit Sain Noyon Khan learned of the Russo-Chinese Declaration and Exchange of Notes of 1913, which was disappointing news to Mongolia. Then the Mongolian Prime Minister tried to reach the foreign missions there by sending notes of protest “...to all diplomatic representatives in St. Petersburg, including the Chinese Minister, denouncing the Russo-Chinese declaration and averting that Mongolia had entirely broken with China”¹²². Though no one even cared to bother with the approaches made by Mongolians, these people tried their best to protest against aggressive stances made by the two neighbors.

Although the Mongolians could not secure its position as an independent state, they did get promise for some assistance form the Russians. During this visit the Russian government agreed to provide a loan of 3 million roubles to Mongolia as well as to sell

¹²¹ Friters, Gerard M., *Outer Mongolia and Its International Position*, New York: Oktagon Books, 1974, p. 72.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 83.

20 thousand rifles. “The Russians from the beginning of the negotiations laid stress on the condition that it could not be put at the disposal of the Mongolian government without Russian control.”¹²³ Thus they appointed Kosin as an adviser for the management of the finances of the Mongolian government. The Russian government was, at the same time, not interested that Mongolia approached any other third power for financial assistance as well as supply of arms. They told the Mongolian delegation to pull out their troops from Inner Mongolia; to participate in a tripartite conference in Khiagt; and to get military support from no other power than Russia. In addition, Russia was not interested that Mongolia made any diplomatic and trade relations with other countries. Peter Tang points out that Russia wanted to secure its domination in Outer Mongolia and “the best way to achieve the isolation and control of Outer Mongolia, it was felt, was to forestall the latter’s independence by leaving it under China’s weak suzerainty”¹²⁴. Russians were sure all the time that they would have power to deal with the Chinese regarding the position of Mongolia.

It was difficult task for the Mongolians to give up their wish to unite all Mongol territories into one country. During this time, the Mongols in other territories, in particular Khulunbuir region sensed the difficulty of this issue and sent a letter addressed to the Internal Minister of Mongolia dated December 5, 1914. In this letter they wrote, “we heard that in the capital city of China they together with the Russian ambassador were discussing to separate Khulunbuir from Mongolia and to make it a Chinese region. ...though we were trying to get the Russian support in discussing this

¹²³ Friters, Gerard M., *Outer Mongolia and Its International Position*, New York: Oktagon Books, 1974, p. 77.

¹²⁴ Tang, Peter S.H., *Russian and Soviet Policy in Manchuria and Outer Mongolia: 1911-1931*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1959, p. 336.

issue several times, they said they could not discuss this issue once Khulunbuir joined Mongolia at the own will. When three parties were to hold discussions, we asked again the Russian minister [consul] to discuss Khulunbuir issue together. However, he said he had no power to discuss it and the ambassador residing in the capital of China would join the discussions and a special right could be issued. Then it would be your internal task how to join each other. ...We were discussing important matters related to our territory with the Russian consul. Our government could not stop resolutions to be made between Russia and China and also go against their decisions, thus, we'd better follow the Russian government suggestion and have our rights [declared] and then seek ways how to join one another.”¹²⁵ Further, they stated that they could not decide this issue by themselves, thus, they asked the Mongolian government to consider and discuss it properly. This letter clearly illustrates the fact that Inner Mongolia similar to Mongolia, in particular their leaders were hoping that Russia would support them in their unification. Therefore, they proposed to have Mongol territories restored their independence separately and then to have them united. However, as we know from the history, the Mongols' wish for unification was not to be fulfilled.

The tripartite conference of Russia, China and Mongolia started on August 26, 1914 in Khiagt. As all three sides' interests conflicted on the issue of Mongolia's independence, the conference continued the following year, too. Finally the two big powers made Mongolia agree to the Russo-Chinese declaration of 1913 and the agreement was signed on June 7, 1915. For Mongolia, this agreement was a complete disappointment. It brought no independence, but only autonomous rights. According to the Khiagt

¹²⁵ See Appendix 4 – A folded document regarding the letter to not accept decisions made between the Russian and Chinese delegates in Beijing to make Khulunbuir and Barga parts of China.

agreement, “Outer Mongolia recognizes China’s suzerainty, China and Russia recognize the autonomy of Outer Mongolia forming part of Chinese territory”¹²⁶. The Agreement also defined the territory of Mongolia as follows “...the territory of autonomous Outer Mongolia comprises the regions which were under the jurisdiction of the Chinese Amban at Urga, of the Tartar-General at Uliassutai and of the Chinese Amban at Kobdo, and connects with the boundary of China by the limits of the banners of the four aimaks of Khalkha and of the district of Kobdo, bounded by the district of Houlounbouir (i.e., Hailar) on the East, by Inner Mongolia on the South, by the Province of Sinkiang on the South-West, and by the district of Altai on the West”¹²⁷. No matter how Mongolians tried hard, the treaty brought no changes to the position of Mongolia in the international arena.

Mongolia could not secure the inclusion of Inner Mongolia, Barga and other Mongol territories into one Mongolia. Moreover, it could not provide support to Mongols, who were working for the Mongolian government with an aim to join their territories to Mongolia. Many of such people had to go back to Inner Mongolia. During this time, both Russia and China had been involved in the WW I and the political and military collisions in these countries influenced both external and internal situations of Mongolia. In 1917 the Tsarist Government in Russia was replaced by Bolshevik Government as a result of October Revolution there. To these changes that occurred around Mongolia the Mongolian authorities reacted in different ways. There were still some who preferred to

¹²⁶ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Outer Mongolia. Treaties and Agreements*, Washington, 1921, p. 34.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

have close ties with Russia, whereas, there were others who thought to become closer to Japan, or even to China.

The internal disorder in Russia made the Chinese take this opportunity to be actively engaged in the affairs of Mongolia. The Chinese Ambans like Chen Lo, who came to Mongolia in June 1915, and Chen I, who replaced Chen Lo in 1916, conveyed the message of the Chinese government, “it would be easier for China to control Mongolia if it refuses its autonomous rights voluntarily and in such case the Chinese government guarantees to provide more power and allowances than they offered during the Qing dynasty to Bogd Khan and many other nobles and lamas”¹²⁸, to Mongolian leaders and they developed a paper with 64 articles regarding the improvement of Outer Mongolian affairs from the Government of China. According to this 64 article Agreement, the autonomous rights of Mongolia would be abolished; Mongolia would be ruled by the Chinese amban with assisting officials residing in Ikh Khuree, Khovd, Uliastai and Khiagt; the Chinese troops would enter Mongolia; and Bogd Khan and other nobles and lamas would be given relevant privileges.

This 64 article Agreement was a violation of the Khiagt Treaty, Article VI of which stated “...China and Russia to engage not to interfere in the system of autonomous internal administration existing in Outer Mongolia”¹²⁹. However, under a strong pressure of Chen I the rulers of Autonomous Mongolia had this proposal to abolish the autonomous rights in Mongolia discussed during the State meeting. The Little Khural

¹²⁸ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 85.

¹²⁹ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Outer Mongolia. Treaties and Agreements*, Washington, 1921, p. 33.

(Assembly), which consisted of chancellery officers, refused to accept the proposal at all. On the contrary, the Great Khural, which consisted of high rank nobles and lamas, showed their readiness to accept the proposal. Therefore, the Bogd Khan's government decided to send a delegation to Beijing with a request not to abolish the autonomous rights in Mongolia. Nevertheless, it was clear that Beijing would not accept their request, too.

In autumn 1919 the Chinese military force, headed by Xu Shuzeng, entered the Mongolian territory. Upon occupying Niislel Khuree Xu Shuzeng established a military regime in Mongolia. Then he declared himself as the Head Person in charge of West-northern area affairs and demanded Chin Van Badamdorj, the Prime Minister of Mongolia, to provide a request to abolish autonomy on a voluntary base. The scared and at the same time overpowered Chin Van Badamdorj and others provided such a document to Xu Shuzeng on November 17, 1919 and the Chinese President issued an order to abolish the autonomy of Outer Mongolia on November 22, 1919.

Thus the history of early 20th century tells us that the Mongolians finally started playing an active role in determining the fate of their country. More than 200 years of foreign domination ended after all. Although the treaties and agreements, that Mongolia made with other powers, did not always bring wanted results, the Mongolians believed that their country was an independent state. They lacked in almost everything, including both financial and human resources, besides their wish to restore their independence. Therefore, they asked for assistance when it was needed, they made compromises when they sensed the situation, and at times they agreed to different demands and conditions

under a strong pressure from other sides. These true feelings of the Mongolians were observed by Thomas Ewing, “Western and Chinese accounts of this period, indeed of modern Mongolian history generally, often portray the Mongols as obliging marionettes responding obediently to their Russian puppeteers. But after a careful study of the sources, a different story emerges. The Mongols, although untutored in diplomatic finesse, were nonetheless tenacious and scrappy negotiators, who frequently drove their Russian opposite numbers into paroxysms of frustration and anger. They met Tsarist bullying with procrastination, and Tsarist threats with evasions. When the Mongols conceded, they expected compensation; when dissatisfied, they looked elsewhere”¹³⁰. The Mongolian leaders tried at best to have the country’s independence recognized by other countries, but both the world and regional situations did not allow it to be happened. They had sometimes to accept others’ demands with an aim to gain anything acceptable to their country’s fate. It was not the time for the Mongolians to dictate their wish but to sense the situation and do the right moves.

¹³⁰ Ewing, Thomas E., *Between the Hammer and the Anvil? Chinese and Russian Policies in Outer Mongolia. 1911-1921*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, pp. 64-5.

Chapter III

FORMATION OF RED MONGOLIA

Mongolia after Khiagt Treaty

Mongolia could not secure what it wanted from 1915 Khiagt Tripartite treaty. Although Russia was in a favorable position in Mongolia, acquiring several agreements earlier, including “the 1912 commercial protocol, the Mongolian acceptance of a financial adviser, plans for a national bank under Russian supervision, and the railroad agreement”¹³¹, its influence was in decline by the middle of 1910s. This change, as Thomas Ewing observed, was “primarily the result of Russia’s insistence that the Mongols accept autonomy rather than independence, and the exclusion of Inner Mongolia, Barga, and Uryankhai from the Bogd Khaan state.”¹³² Perhaps, it is true that, the Russians did not consider the genuine hope of the Mongolians to include other Mongol territories into their country. Or perhaps the Russians did not want to have a united strong state between its territory and China as it may have caused them to deal with two neighbors instead of one on its eastern frontier. Thus it wanted to have Mongolia remain separated as had been before.

Although the Mongolians could not get international recognition for its independence, they did not give up their wish to have all Mongols united under one roof. The Bogd Khan government did go through different regimes during its reign, including

¹³¹ Ewing, Thomas E., *Between the Hammer and the Anvil? Chinese and Russian Policies in Outer Mongolia. 1911-1921*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, p. 64.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 77.

independence, autonomy and finally the abolishment of the autonomy. All these changes in the government made the Mongolians change their policy from time to time. However, they never gave up their idea of establishing a united country. I do not agree with all the observations made by Thomas Ewing that, “after the Kyakhta treaty the issue of pan-Mongolia quietly dropped from sight for the rest of Bogd Khaan period, except for a brief period in 1918-19 when it was revived by the Buryats and Semenov. It is interesting that the Chinese and Russian sources of the Kyakhta conference do not show the Mongols pressing for pan-Mongolia with the same purposeful energy which they had shown only a few months earlier.”¹³³ Perhaps, Mongolia did not put their wish for unification of all Mongols as convincingly as it used to be. At this time Mongolia was concerned mainly with matters how to secure its rights for independence, though the idea to unite all Mongols was still in their minds. They understood clearly that it was not time for Mongolia to dictate its wishes and sensed it through negotiations with both Russian and Chinese sides, thus, they deliberately leaving this matter until circumstances allow them raise this issue again.

During this period Mongolia was in a difficult position to secure its independence which was not supported by any outsider power except for Tibet, which shared the same fate or was in a less favorable position than Mongolia. Thus the Bogd Khan government did make attempts to secure firstly its independence. Once it became an independent state, it would have been much easier for Mongolia to raise further issues like establishment of a united country with other Mongol territories. Or perhaps Bogd Khan agreed with suggestions made by some of the Inner Mongolian leaders, in particular from

¹³³ Ewing, Thomas E., *Between the Hammer and the Anvil? Chinese and Russian Policies in Outer Mongolia. 1911-1921*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, pp. 77-8.

Khulunbuir region, to have their independence approved separately, and then, to join each other establishing a united Mongolia. Both of the sides in Outer and Inner Mongolia believed to get Russian support as the following archive material states.

After the Khiagt conference, with results of which Mongolia was not happy, the Mongolians' belief that the Russians would support Mongolia's independence started fading, though until the last minute the Mongolians were looking forward for a positive response on the Russian side. At the same time the Mongols in Inner Mongolia were still hoping to get support from Bogd Khan government and were asking for further advice and assistance. Here I would like to refer to a letter (1915 or Year of Blue Rabbit), received from Mujingaa of Zuun tumd khoshuu of Zost chuulgan, Inner Mongolia. In this letter he expressed his disappointment on the separation of the Mongolian nationals at Khiagt. Mujingaa wrote, "the circumstances such as some of the Inner Mongolian khoshuus had close borders with China and Russia's internal fighting...caused us to be separated into two parts. ...The government of Mongolia could have negotiations with the Chinese government regarding the release of the territory of Inner Mongolia from the Chinese force."¹³⁴ In this letter the Mongols in Inner Mongolia suggested to use the situations or chances as China had internal struggle and its relations with the Japanese were in deterioration, thus, to have the Mongol nationals united. However, things were not as simple as they seemed to be. No matter how it wanted to have other territories join it, the Mongolian government itself was not capable enough to defend its independence. Consequently, the Khiagt treaty legally

¹³⁴ Archive document regarding a note sent by Mujingaa, Zuun tumd khoshuu, Zost Chuulgan, Inner Mongolia to the Government of Mongolia where he expressed his views on uniting Mongolia by using the situations. Stock A-4, Stock Unit-319, The National Archive of Mongolia.

made the Mongol territories separated as Autonomous government of Mongolia and Inner Mongolia to be a region of China.

1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and subsequent changes in the Russian foreign policy had direct consequences in Mongolia, too. Mongolian people reacted to the news of the Russian revolution in different ways and Mongolia needed time to judge the situation. Due to different systems based on a different ideology, one pursuing the communism and the other pursuing the democracy, the Soviet-oriented and the Western academic circles reviewed the world situation, in particular affairs related to Mongolia, and the influence of the Bolshevik revolution to Mongolia differently. According to both Mongolian and Soviet academic studies during communist era, “it was only the triumph of the October Revolution and the emergence of the neighboring Soviet socialist state that radically changed the situation and greatly facilitated the speedy ripening of subjective prerequisites for a people’s revolution in Mongolia, ensuring the possibility of direct contact between the progressive sections of the Mongolian arats and the victorious working class of Russia. All this created favorable conditions for the successful development and triumphant consummation of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution, the principal motive force of which was the arat class, led by a revolutionary party of the Marxist type, closely allied internationally with the working class of Soviet Russia”¹³⁵. As it is stated above, the academic studies during the socialist period put the main emphasis on the class struggle, in particular it focused on the fight of the common people or arat class against the rich or feudal class and religious leaders of Mongolia. On the contrary, the Western academic circle reviewed the turn of

¹³⁵ USSR Academy of Sciences and MPR Academy of Sciences, *History of the Mongolian People’s Republic*, Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2000, p. 271.

Mongolia into communism as a result of an aggressive policy of the Red Russians in this country.

Therefore, these Communist teachings on the Mongolian history were leaving the most important topics such as a wish of Mongols for independence and unification behind. 1911 revolution was never considered a national liberation revolution, although “1911 national revolution made the Mongolians thrive the patriotism for the country of Mongolia and brought back Mongolia to the Mongolians.”¹³⁶ This is a true observation that the humbly named “1911 national movements” paved the way for the victory of 1921 revolution.

Consequently, in this chapter I intend to analyze both external and internal affairs of Mongolia different regimes imposed by foreign countries and finally, the victory of 1921 revolution in Mongolia. By 1920 there had been many issues for Mongolia to deal with. Although Mongolia could not get Russian support for establishing its independent government, including Inner Mongolia, their wish to have a united Mongol state was still in their minds. At the same time, it had to determine policies with regard to both of its neighbors, Russia and China as in neighboring areas of the Mongolian northern frontier already new Soviet governments were established as a direct result of 1917 October revolution there. Soon the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia received a telegram from Chicherin G.B, the commissar of foreign affairs of Soviet Russia,

¹³⁶ “Bogd and 1911”, <http://tsahimulaach.tsahimurtuu.mn/index.php?action=Archive>, No. 12, February, 2002.

regarding the appointment of Vasiliyev as the representative of the newly established Soviet government to Mongolia in March 1918.

The approach by the Soviet Russia of Mongolia and its rising influence in the Far East made China take relevant measures. When Russia became completely involved in an internal struggle, the Chinese took an aggressive move by letting their troops enter Mongolia in autumn 1919 under the pretext of protecting Mongolia from the Russian revolution. They were wise enough to have pre-negotiations with the Mongolians as such a move could rise an antagonism towards them among the Mongolians. The Chinese developed 64 Article agreement, where they proposed to have Mongolia joined China by abolishing the autonomous government in Mongolia, to have the Chinese administrator ruled the country with assistant officials residing in Ikh Khuree, Khovd, Uliastai, and Khiagt, to have the Chinese troops entered the country, and in doing so to award the Bogd Khan and others with respective titles and allowances. Consequently, the Mongolian rulers, who were forced by the Chen-I, had the issue of abolishing the autonomous government discussed at the state meeting. The two houses reacted differently. The Lower Khural or House, which consisted mainly from military officers and those who oversaw paperwork or documents and protected the rights of the population, refused to accept this plan at all. On the contrary, the Upper Khural, which consisted of nobles and high-ranking lamas, showed their readiness to accept this plan. Therefore, the Bogd government had to consider refusal, demand and dissatisfaction of the majority and it sent a delegation to Beijing with an aim to ask the Chinese president

not to abolish the autonomous rights in Mongolia, but no positive outcomes were expected.¹³⁷

Thus the Chinese troops entered Mongolia in autumn 1919 under the supervision of Xu Shuzeng, who demanded the Prime Minister Badamdorj to submit the document to abolish the autonomy in Mongolia on a voluntary base. As it was not the time for the Mongolians to dictate their wishes, they had no way but to submit the document to the Chinese general and a decree to abolish the autonomy of Mongolia was issued by the Chinese president on November 22, 1919.¹³⁸ Under his rule, “the Mongols were held responsible for the provisioning of the greater parts of the Chinese army, and Chinese firms which had operated in Outer Mongolia before its autonomy returned, not only asking for the repayment of the old debts but also for all the interest which had accumulated during the eight years of autonomy, as well as for recompense for the loss which they had suffered during the Revolution in 1911-12.”¹³⁹ These actions taken by the Chinese were not in the interests of the Mongolians. To the land of Mongolia, however, the Chinese regime was brought again. The Bogd Khan government had to deal with the facing problems with great care. It needed a support to get rid of the foreign occupation and to establish an independent country. Bogd Khan himself considered Inner Mongolia inseparable part of Mongolia, thus, he wanted to join Mongol territories into one state. However, power was not in his hands, and he needed to wait for chances to come.

¹³⁷ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 86.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹³⁹ Friters, Gerard M, *Outer Mongolia and Its International Position*, New York: Oktagon Books, 1974, p. 190.

Political games carried out by outsiders: Ataman Semenov and Baron Ungern

During 1917-1919 many Russians were entering the territory of Mongolia escaping the disorder that was embracing the territory of Russia. These included not only the White Russians, who escaped from the Soviet government, but also the Red ones, who were chased by the White Army forces. Among them two figures- Ataman Semenov and Baron Ungern played significant roles with regard to Mongolian affairs both in external and internal areas. Although they were engaged separately in the affairs of Mongolia, one in the role of an organizer of a new Mongol state and the other as a rescuer of the Bogd Khan's government, Ataman Semenov and Baron Ungern had been counterparts of the White Army in Manchuria. Further, this paper discusses what Semenov and Ungern did to Mongolia and how their participation is viewed in the historical records.

Those, who fled Russia due to different reasons, were looking for any possible opportunities elsewhere. By 1919 Mongolia was in a very difficult position. The regional situation, in particular, the affairs of its two neighbors, Russia with its internal disorder caused by the struggle between the old and new regimes, and the Chinese demand to have more Chinese troops to be located in Mongolia in order to protect it from a rising influence of the Russians, including both the White and the Red Russians, made Mongolia take some hesitant policy with regard to its two neighbors.

During this unstable period, there were some Buryat intellectuals and leaders of Inner Mongolia and Barga, who supported the Pan-Mongolian movement for all Mongol nationals' unification. Although the Mongols showed their interests to form a united

country, their wish was used by the outsiders as a tool for them to get power and spread their fading influences in other territories. One of such figures was Ataman Georgii Semenov, a half-Buryat who was assigned to raise troops of Buryat origin by the Provisional Government of White Russia in July 1917 in order to fight with the Bolsheviks in Far East. While working in this area he, perhaps, got to know of many Mongols', including Buryats and Inner Mongols, wish for unification. At the same time, he "had formed and had been maintaining his detachment on Japanese money".¹⁴⁰ Ataman Semenov, who was looking for a chance to gain power, therefore, decided to use this opportunity, his influence among some Mongol origin society as well as the Japanese support, to establish a Mongol state. He played the main role in organizing a conference of Mongols in Dauria, a village near Chita in February 1919 with 15 participants who represented Inner Mongolia, Barga and Buryatia. The conference announced the establishment of a Pan-Mongol state "on a federal basis including Inner Mongolia, Outer Mongolia, Barga and Buryatia. Niis Gegeen from Inner Mongolia was elected Prime Minister. The Inner Mongolian Naidan Van became the War Minister; Tsend Gung of Barga, Internal Minister; Tseveen Jamsrano of Buryatia, Foreign Minister; and the Finance Minister's position was reserved for an Outer Mongolian representative. Ataman Semenov himself accepted the rather humble responsibility of senior adviser to the Provisional Mongolian Government"¹⁴¹. However, no representatives from Outer Mongolia were present at this conference.

¹⁴⁰ Morozova, Irina. Y., *Japan and its Influence towards Panmongolism and Panbuddhism*, International Journal of Central Asian Studies, vol. 4, 1999.

¹⁴¹ Baabar, *History of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar: Monsudar. 2004, p. 185.

The organizers of the conference, therefore, believed that it was crucial to have Outer Mongolia to participate in the activities of the Provisional Government and “with this aim Tsidipov, Ts.E, and Levitskii, the colonel, were sent to Khuree in June 1919”¹⁴². This delegation met with Tserendorj, the Foreign Minister, but was instructed officially that Mongolia would not send its representatives to the conference. I agree with the observation made by O. Batsaikhan, research worker at the Institute of International Studies, Mongolian Academy of Sciences, that this decision for Mongolia not to send its delegates to the Chita conference was made upon a thorough judgment of then the current situation, of its own ability and capacity and of its status in not only in the region but also in the international arena. “The Bogd Khan government preferred its independent status in the territory of Mongolia that was recognized by the two neighbors”¹⁴³, though it was limited to autonomous rights. For the Mongolians, then, their autonomous rights were equal to being independent as they were given the rights to control their internal affairs.

During the conference the participants of the conference, who presented Inner Mongolia made a resolution on the establishment of a Mongol state of all Mongol nationals at Chita. According to the resolution, ...“Mongol is a separate country since old times, and later it became related to the Manchu state with whom it had similar religion and beliefs, however, at present Mongolia’s beliefs and religion conflict with those of Chinese, thus, it established an independent state in conformity with international regulations.”¹⁴⁴ Further the resolution listed the decisions made during the conference, including

¹⁴² Batsaikhan, O., *Mongolia: To Be a Nation State*, Ulaanbaatar, Admon, 2005, p. 122.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁴⁴ See Appendix 5 – Resolution made by Inner Mongolia on the establishment of a Mongol state at Chita.

creation of constitution; appointment of head of the government, ministries, and ministers representing all Mongol aimags; establishment of the government in Khulunbair; announcement of a new country to the international arena; maintaining friendly relations with Tibet and the Manchus with whom the same religion is shared; and others. These decisions showed the true intention of the participants from Inner Mongolia to have a united Mongolia. However, it was not time for Mongolia or Bogd Khan government to step in. It would bring only complications to the fate of not only his country but also its desire for a united Mongol state, if they did lead such an uncertain move headed by Semenov, an outsider.

The organizers of this conference even decided to get a loan for the period of 20 years from a ‘foreign state’¹⁴⁵ in return for a guarantee of gold, silver, salt and other mineral resources for the newly established state. However, Ataman Semenov’s ambition to establish the Pan-Mongolian government did not get recognition from any state, except for some Japanese military officers. Soon the Japanese gave up their intention to support Ataman Semenov in Pan-Mongolian movement. As Friters writes, “in Tokyo, however, the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs denied to the Russian Ambassador that Japan had anything to do with the attempts to create a new Buryat-Mongol state”¹⁴⁶. Bolshevik Russia reacted to it seriously by having two different declarations: one to Mongolia and another to China. The Soviets declared that they supported the Mongols intention to be an independent country and refused to accept all the treaties with China and Japan concerning Mongolia. With regard to China, they issued Karakhan

¹⁴⁵ Probably Japan.

¹⁴⁶ Friters, G. M., *Outer Mongolia and Its International Position*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1949, p. 228.

declaration, which nullified 1915 Khiagt negotiation. As S. Damdinsuren, research worker and Head of a sector at the Institute of International Studies and North-East Asia Study Center, Mongolian Academy of Sciences, correctly observed “the Daurian government was soon collapsed as it had no territory, no subjects, and could not get support from the Autonomous Outer Mongolia”.¹⁴⁷ The main reason for failure of Pan Mongolian state was that Mongolia, the country which had more legal rights than any other Mongol territories, was not a part of this initiative.

As stated earlier Mongolia experienced different types of governments, including independence, autonomy and finally the abolishment of the autonomy by 1920. It housed not only the Chinese troops but also the remnants of the White Russians who fled the Soviet government as well as the Red Russians who wanted to spread their influence in Siberia and Mongolia. Another figure, whose name was written in the history of this period in Mongolia, was Baron Ungern.

Baron Ungern or Roman Fedorovich Ungern Sternberg “lived all across the tsarist state, from the Baltic to Manchuria and Mongolia”¹⁴⁸. As a descendant of Baltic German aristocrat born in Graz of Austria-Hungary in 1885, Baron Ungern had studies of both German and Russian schools, which included uncompleted studies in the Naval school in St. Petersburg for 2 years. His further life became connected from here on with Russian army after he voluntarily joined the force in Manchuria to fight in the Russo-Japanese war in summer of 1905. In the following three years he could return to

¹⁴⁷ Damdinsuren, S., *Mongolia's Independence: A Century Confirmation*, Ulaanbaatar: Bembi san Publishing House, 2001, p. 9.

¹⁴⁸ Sunderland, Willard, *Baron Ungern, Tomic Cosmopolitan*, project by The National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, NW: 2005, p. 3.

St. Petersburg and complete Paul I Military academy. After the school “he was offered a posting with the Siberian Cossaks on the Semirech’e line. Instead, perhaps because of his war experience in Manchuria, he chose to join the 1st Argun Regiment of the Trans-Baikal Host, headquartered in the village of Dauria, on the train-line to Harbin. He served with the Arguntsy for two years, until 1910, when he transferred to the 1st Amur Regiment of the Amur Host, deployed near Blagoveshchensk, serving with them until late 1912.”¹⁴⁹

He did not stay there long and resigned from his duty in 1913 due to his impulsive behavior and reached Mongolia in the end. Baron Ungern temporarily served in a Russian council force in Khovd in the Western Mongolia in early 1910s. As this period was unstable period in not only Mongolia but also in Russia, he served in different garrisons of the Russian force, including Nerchinsk and Chita. In 1914 he was in Moscow to fight for the Great European War. He fought for 3 years “on at least 3 fronts, was wounded at least five times, and received at least five recommendations, including St. George’s Cross he wore at this trial”¹⁵⁰.

It is interesting to see how he ended up in Mongolia. Some sources, for instance Arkadii Stolypin wrote in his book *Mongolia between Moscow and Beijing* that a secret correspondence between the general staff of Chita and Kharbin, where the White Russians were still strong, on one hand and Niislel Khuree, where Bogd Gegeen was imprisoned, on the other side was kept going during the summer of 1920. And “the live

¹⁴⁹ Sunderland, Willard, *Baron Ungern, Tomic Cosmopolitan*, project by The National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, NW: 2005, p. 7.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

god of Mongolia Bogd asked baron Ungern to provide an urgent assistance”¹⁵¹. Further Arkadii Stolypin notes that Baron Ungern “felt that there was an opportunity to revive the monarchies of Russia, Mongolia and Manchu if he could use the time properly before the Bolsheviks covered all the Europe and Asia”¹⁵². Therefore, Baron Ungern had a different aim when he arrived in Mongolia the second time. He organized his army of 800 from cossak and buryat soldiers with 6 cannons and 20 machine-guns with an aim to occupy Mongolia and beat the Chinese troops there.

Baron Ungern and his so-called Asian Cavalry division could enter Mongolia without facing any opposition in August 1920. “The Mongols, whose hatred of the Chinese had reached a critical point, saw Baron Ungern as their savior and they joined his army and gave him fresh supplies. He was aware of the Mongols’ expectations and he endeavored to arouse Mongolian support by claiming that his purpose was to liberate Mongolia from the Chinese, to restore Bogd Khan to his rightful throne and to revive autonomy”¹⁵³. Baron Ungern was smart enough to sense what the Mongolians wanted at that time. What Baron proposed met with the desire of the Bogd Khan and as a result he was welcomed in this country.

With the support of the Mongolians, Baron Ungern could liberate Ikh Khuree and restore the autonomous government. It is true that Baron Ungern helped Mongolia become liberated from the Chinese force. Upon the restoration to his throne on February 21, 1921 Bogd Khan issued a decree to award a military title “ulsiig manduulagch ikh

¹⁵¹ Stolypin, Arkadii, *Mongolia Between Moscow and Beijing*, Ulaanbaatar: Monsudar, 2000, p. 68.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁵³ Baabar, *History of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar: Monsudar. 2004, p. 208.

baatar janjin tsol”¹⁵⁴ and respective outfits to Baron Ungern as an appreciation for his contribution to restore the autonomy of Mongolia. Similar awards were given to other Mongolian and Russian military leaders such as general Rezhin, ded janjin Jigmedjabalon, taij Luvsantseen, Gung Naidanjav, Gung Jamts for their contributions as well¹⁵⁵.

However, with getting more power in his hands Baron Ungern started showing his real face, aggressive by nature he was at the same time anti-Bolshevik and anti-Semitist. Upon consolidating their power in Mongolia Ungern’s troops became engaged in aggressive actions against not only Jewish and Bolshevik-oriented Russians but also ordinary Mongolians. Their regime, mobilization of troops and threatening actions devastated Mongolia, which had been already exhausted by the presence of the Chinese army, more and more. There had been robbery and banditry all over the country, and the common people also fell victims to such aggressive acts. The government of Mongolia did try to solve this problem by issuing respective orders, for instance an agitating poster with a government order has shown how serious the problem was.¹⁵⁶ However, this poster issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the rule of Baron Ungern, talked much about robberies carried out by Mongolians and warned them of harsh charges if they found guilty of such wrongdoings. According to this agitating poster, not only soldiers but also common people were blamed for robbing the Chinese different items and “by damaging Chinese farmers our soldiers and population, at the same time,

¹⁵⁴ A title janjin for the hero who could make the country prosper (translation).

¹⁵⁵ Batsaikhan, O., *Mongolia: To Be a Nation State*, Ulaanbaatar, Admon, 2005, pp. 131-2.

¹⁵⁶ Appendix 6.

bring great destruction to all the population of Mongolia”.¹⁵⁷ As this document was issued when Baron Ungern was still in power, therefore, it tried perhaps not to mention the Russians as the primary force engaged in misconduct in order to make their names associate with positive results as rescuers of Bogd Khan’s government.

As the situation in this country became very unstable with robberies taking places in many parts and the disunited policy of Baron Ungern’s army made it clear that the cooperation between Baron Ungern and Bogd government would not last long. Then Baron Ungern issued so-called 15th order, where he called all the garrisons of the White Russians which were located on the territory of Siberia on May 21, 1921 to fight against the Soviet Russia and left Ikh Khuree to the north¹⁵⁸.

While such figures as Semenov and Baron Ungern as well as the army of Kuomintang Chinese had played some sort of leading roles in the affairs of Mongolia on one hand, a new progressive force was formed among the Mongolians during this period, on the other hand, with an aim to liberate the country from foreign domination. How this new force was developed and whether it could play an important role in deciding the fate of the country will be discussed in the following passage.

Formation of secret circles in Mongolia

¹⁵⁷ See Appendix 6 – An agitating poster issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the reign of Baron Ungern. The National Archive of Mongolia.

¹⁵⁸ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 115.

The newly established Soviet government denounced all the treaties made by the Tsarist governments, and in July 1919 “it surrendered all concessions made by China to the Tsarist Government”¹⁵⁹ in a special declaration to the government of China. Soon after this declaration “on August 3, 1919 the Soviet government addressed a special appeal to the government and people of Autonomous Mongolia stating that it completely renounced the advantages and privileges which had been seized by tsarist Russia under the unequal treaties imposed by the latter. ‘Mongolia’, the appeal said, ‘is a free country. All authority in the country must belong to the Mongolian people. No single foreigner has the right to interfere in the internal affairs of Mongolia....The Soviet Government publicly announces this to the Mongolian people and proposes the opening of forthwith of diplomatic relations with the Russian people and the dispatch of envoys of the free Mongolian people to meet the Red army’. ”¹⁶⁰ This appeal clearly conveyed the message of the Soviet government that Mongolia had the right to control its land as well as their wish to develop good relations with independent Mongolia.

However, under the influence of various persuasions made by A. Orlov, the Tsarist Russia’s consul, as well as by the Chinese general, the Mongolian Bogd Khan government did not immediately accept the Soviet Russian proposals. It did not even respond to the Soviet Government message of 1919 and refused to have Vasilyev, the representative of a new government, enter the country.¹⁶¹ Though, it seemed that the Mongolian government followed concerns and warnings of the above-mentioned figures,

¹⁵⁹ Friters, Gerard M., *Outer Mongolia and Its International Position*, New York: Oktagon Books, 1974, p. 120.

¹⁶⁰ USSR Academy of Sciences and MPR Academy of Sciences, *History of the Mongolian People’s Republic*, Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2000, p. 273.

¹⁶¹ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 104.

it needed time to judge the situation, to understand the purpose of the new Soviet government, which replaced the Tsarist Russia with a long history, and to work out an appropriate policy to deal with those conflicting parts.

Prior to the appearance of Baron Ungern, the rulers of Mongolia, including Bogd Khan, were engaged in making contacts with foreign powers to seek the assistance to restore their autonomous government. They sent Gung Gurragchaа to Japan secretly and tried to contact the Americans via a trader named Larson, but no positive outcomes were seen as these countries already divided their spheres of interests in this part of the world.

All these factors influenced in the formation of a new force in Mongolia. Two secret circles, consisted of national freedom seeking people, were organized in Niislel Khuree in late 1918 and early 1919. One group was organized by Bodoо, the teacher of Mongolian at Translator's school under the Russian Consulate and it was called the Consular Hill group. This group had members like D. Chagdarjav, Kh. Choibalsan, D. Losol, S. Jamyаn, Namsrai and others. The first members of the group were mainly intellectuals, who knew some foreign languages and had seen development of other countries like England, Japan, Russia and Italy. They had maintained contacts with some Russians residing in Ikh Khuree such as Kucherenko, a mechanic for Russia-Mongolia publication council under the Russian Consulate, Maslakov, a worker at Mongolian news section, and Gemberzhevskii, a Secretary to Russian administration in Khuree, to learn of political life developments in Russia and to introduce their objectives.¹⁶²

¹⁶² Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 106.

In the later history of Mongolia, some of these newly formed Mongolian leaders played an important role in ruling the country, whereas others were labeled as anti-government dissidents. People with such fates can be seen in the history of not only Mongolia but also the Soviet Union. When some, mainly not the smart leaders, gain more as a result of the change of the governments, others, mainly the initiators of a movement or revolution, lose a lot. This is an unfortunate truth of the history.

The other secret circle or group was initiated by S. Danzan, a customs official. It was comprised of members such as D. Dogsom, U. Dendev, M. Dugarjav and D. Sukhbaatar. This group obtained a name as East Khuree group in accordance with the location where it was originally formed. They aimed at expanding their group with similar oriented people, learning of the number and location of Chinese troops, and finding out the orientation of the new government formed in China, a southern neighbor.¹⁶³ Similar to the Consular Hill group's members, this group would later have both leaders and losers.

Although, both of these groups initially did not have definite programs, they were connected with one wish – to protect their nation from conflicting parties and to obtain their freedom. As a result of great efforts made by Bodo, the two groups finally made steps to work closely. Then, on January 1920 about 20 members of groups met in Khuree and agreed to work against any obstacles that were hindering the lives of the people as well as religion of Mongolia. The secret groups worked jointly to exchange their tactics and aims, to have meetings, to stick placards and posters, which revealed

¹⁶³ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 106.

the aggressive activities of the Chinese military, in public places, to collect arms, and even to try to assassinate the Chinese military leader. All these activities were aimed at liberating the country from the Chinese military regime, thus, obtaining their freedom.¹⁶⁴

While exchanging their views how to fight for national freedom, both groups eventually agreed to rely on Soviet Russia as an external ally. Therefore, the secret groups sent Danzan and Sukhbaatar to Russia in winter 1920 to maintain relations with the Soviet Russia. However, they failed to leave the country due to the strong guards of the Chinese military on the borders with Russia.

The secret circles were able to meet with N. Burtman, who was returning from China via Mongolia to Russia, a Comintern worker, in spring 1920. The Russians living in Khuree such as Kucherenko, Maslakov, and Gemberzhevskii acted as intermediary figures to have the secret circles meet with Burtman. In June the same year, the Mongolians could also meet with Sorokovikov, a Comintern worker, who arrived in Mongolia in a secret mission to collect information on Mongolia.

During these meetings with Burtman and Sorokovikov the Mongolians “asked to convey their request to Irkutsk for assistance of the Soviet Russia as they lack in force to fight against the Chinese army, and to have a friendly relations with the Red Party of the Soviet Russia”¹⁶⁵. The Russians were definitely pleased to hear the wish of

¹⁶⁴ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, pp. 103-112.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

Mongolians and Sorokovikov replied that “the Soviet government welcomed their struggle for the national liberation of the Mongolian people and that it would render ‘assistance of all kinds’ to the Mongolian ‘workers’. The Mongols were advised to send delegates immediately to Soviet Russia for consultations”¹⁶⁶. It was an encouraging note for the secret groups.

A historic meeting of the two groups took place on June 25, 1925, when they officially organized the Mongolian People’s Party with an aim to call and lead the population for national liberation. During this joint meeting they discussed and approved the Party Oath, which consisted of an introduction and 9 articles. The Article I or the Party Oath described the goals of the party as follows:

“The goals of the Outer Mongolian People’s Party are to liquidate the foreign enemy which is hostile to our religion and race; to restore lost rights and truly revive the state and religion; to improve sincerely the internal government; to give total attention to the interests of the poor and lowly masses; and to live neither oppressing nor oppressed”.¹⁶⁷

Each of these 9 articles described what the Party needed to carry out, i.e, the Articles 2-6 and 8 specifically stated that a party member should carry out party activities faithfully without caring much of one’s life and capital; keep party secrets confidential; care all the time interests of the poor and lowly masses and stop any actions that may bring harms to the population; expand party membership; and inform the mass of the party objectives.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Ewing, Thomas E., *Between the Hammer and the Anvil? Chinese and Russian Policies in Outer Mongolia. 1911-1921*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, p. 176.

¹⁶⁷ Baabar, *History of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar: Monsudar. 2004, p. 202.

¹⁶⁸ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 108.

Another important decision taken at the meeting was to discuss formally the need for Russian assistance and appoint the delegates to go with such a request to Russia. It was agreed to send S. Danzan and Kh. Choibalsan first to Russia and to finance their mission by the voluntary fund collected from the party members. After Danzan and Choibalsan left Khuree in July 1920, another decision to send more party delegates to Russia was approved.

D. Bodo, D. Chagdarjav left Khuree earlier and D. Sukhbaatar, D. Dogsom, D. Losol followed them by taking with them the letter sealed by Bogd Khan. The Mongolian delegates reached Irkutsk in August 1920 after meeting with Makstenek, the Consul of the Soviet Russia in Deed Shivee, and Shumyatskii, the member of Siberian Committee of the Russian Communist Party, in Deed Ud.

As mentioned earlier recently many documents, which were previously regarded as confidential, became disclosed. Some of the documents related to Comintern' role in Mongolia, its direct presence there and what activities they were engaged made public documents. One of such books titled "*Comintern and Mongolia*" presents valuable materials, mostly decisions made by Comintern and Mongolian leaders, and speeches, letters and reports made by Comintern delegates working in Mongolia, collected by a team of Mongolian and Russian researchers. By using the above-mentioned materials we can look at the history again and try to re-analyze the situation and circumstances for Mongolia to become a member of the communist system.

When the Mongolian delegates arrived in Irkutsk in August 1920, they met with F. I. Gapon, deputy to the Authorized Representative of Foreign relations in the People's Commissariat of Siberia and Far East and deputy to the Authorized Representative of Comintern. The Mongolian delegation asked "the Soviet government to provide their assistance in restoring the Mongolian autonomy. This assistance can be implemented, as suggested, by the means of: 1) diplomatic support, 2) provision of arms assistance, 3) provision of technical assistance as well as military trainers, and 4) provision of state loans."¹⁶⁹ At the same time they submitted the sealed letter written by Bogd Khan to the Russian negotiators.

Upon meeting the Mongolian delegates F.I. Gapon sent a confidential letter to I.N. Smirnov, Head of the Revolutionary Committee in Siberia, with regard to the negotiations held with the Mongolian representatives and of need to send part of delegates to Omsk in order to continue the negotiations on August 26, 1920. In this letter he made comments on the Mongolian delegates' views dividing the 7 delegates into 3 groups: "2 delegates who supported the high ranking nobles and lamas, another 2 delegates who supported military personnel, which were not currently engaged in any activities, and traders, and 3 delegates who called themselves representatives of people's party and the mass population"¹⁷⁰, and suggested that "it is an appropriate time now to organize national revolutionary elements, to have in our hands the control to

¹⁶⁹ Minutes No. 3 of negotiation between the Mongolian delegates and workers of Foreign relations people's commissariat of Siberian Representative office of the Soviet Union cited in *Comintern and Mongolia* (Compilation of materials), Ulaanbaatar: Publishing House of Science, Technology and Information Company, 1996, p. 13.

¹⁷⁰ Dashdavaa, Ch., Kozlov, B.P. and others (eds), *Comintern and Mongolia* (Compilation of materials), Ulaanbaatar: Publishing House of Science, Technology and Information Company, 1996, p. 18.

manage them, thus, to increase our influence and presence in Mongolia”¹⁷¹. Moreover, he said that only representatives of people’s revolutionary group wanted the Russians to organize the democratic mass of Mongolia, while others needed the assistance only to be liberated from the Chinese regime. Therefore, Gapon suggested “to deal with this issue very carefully as it may make the Mongolians turn aside from us or even make them collide with one another before the time comes”¹⁷². This explains why the Russians wished to provide assistance to only those, whom they regarded as revolutionary elements.

In addition, Gapon suggested the Mongolian delegation to draft a letter, on behalf of the Mongolian People’s Party (MPP), that incorporated the ideas on the objectives set by the delegates, what government would be established after the assistance provided, how to fight with the foreign enemies, and how many arms were needed. Then, the Russians informed the Mongolian delegation of their decision to send the request to Omsk, the center of Siberian region, and respective decisions would be made by the central government.

Therefore, a letter was drafted by Bodoov and Dogsom and sent on August 29, 1920 to the Mongolia-Tibet section of Siberian department of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, where objectives of the MPP was defined and assistance was requested. Through the 7 articles of this letter the Mongolians asked for an assistance to restore the autonomy of Mongolia, to have a [Mongolian] representative in Khiagt

¹⁷¹ Dashdavaa, Ch., Kozlov, B.P. and others (eds), *Comintern and Mongolia* (Compilation of materials), Ulaanbaatar: Publishing House of Science, Technology and Information Company, 1996, p. 18.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

responsible for correspondence, to open branches of the party in different parts of Mongolia, to establish the main party committee in Khuree and publish papers to raise people's awareness, to send people for training to Irkutsk, to establish a mutual assistance cooperative and other related issues.¹⁷³

The Russians replied that they would convey the Mongolians' request to Omsk, a center of Siberia region, and the central government would make respective decisions. Subsequently the Mongolian delegates were divided into 3 groups to further proceed with their plans. S. Danzan and Chagdarjav reached Moscow via Omsk, where they met with G. V. Chicherin, People's commissar of Foreign Relations, his deputy L. M. Karakhan, S. Kamenyev, Chief Military Commander and other leaders. They submitted a more detailed letter for asking the Soviet assistance to the Soviet leaders. Bodoos and Dogsom returned to Khuree to get to know the situation in the country, in particular the common people's views and activities of the ruling government. At the same time they had a duty to increase the capacity of the party by involving progressive parts among nobles and lamas with influence and popularity in their activities. Upon returning to Mongolia they met with other party leaders such as Dendev and Dugarjav secretly and could inform Bogd Khan on the results of their trip to Russia via Dendev. As this period was very unstable when Chinese promised a huge amount of money to people who would catch those seven who went to Russia and such notes were stuck everywhere in the streets. Thus Bodoos went to the east of Mongolia, whereas Dogsom stayed in Khuree in order to keep Sukhbaatar and Choibalsan and others informed of the situation

¹⁷³ Dashdavaa, Ch., Kozlov, B.P. and others (eds), *Comintern and Mongolia* (Compilation of materials), Ulaanbaatar: Publishing House of Science, Technology and Information Company, 1996, p. 21.

in the country and Khuree. Sukhbaatar and Choibalsan remained in Irkutsk during this time. They were keeping in touch with people in Khuree and waiting for responses from those who went to Moscow. At the same time, they became acquainted with the activities of Comintern and local Communist party organizations and could temporarily study at Red Army chief's school there.¹⁷⁴

Rise of Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and 1921 Revolution

When the Mongolian delegates, including S.Danzan and D. Chagdarjav returned back from Moscow to Erkhuu the party delegates held discussions to prepare for liberation of Mongolia from foreign forces. Subsequently “they held further discussions on December 19, 1920 and on January 18-19, 1921, where they agreed to study military and political situations around borders and to develop a military force.”¹⁷⁵ Sukhbaatar was chosen to be responsible to gather troops as he had training in this field. With all their efforts they managed to establish first regiments of a new Mongolian People's army.

During 1-3 of March 1921, the representatives of Mongolian People's Army, military management of People's army, representatives from regiments and some frontier khoshuus had a discussion with Comintern representatives such as Begzeev, Borisov and Makstenek, representative of GHAK (People's Commissariat of External Relations) of Soviet Russia in Troitskovsavsk/Deed Shivee. During this discussion (which later

¹⁷⁴ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, pp. 109-11

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 119.

was called a conference) on the 1st day the S. Danzan reviewed the current situation of Mongolia and determined the position of the Mongolian revolutionaries. The main objectives of the revolutionaries, he said, was to be an independent nation, and in this struggle for freedom and national independence Mongolia should rely on Soviet Russia, but not on Baron Ungern.¹⁷⁶ On the second day, the delegates of the discussion agreed with S. Danzan's proposal to get rid of the White Russians, while waiting for the assistance of the Soviet Russia. On the third day the internal affairs of the party was discussed, including discussion and approval of the Announcement by the Mongolian People's Party and election of the Central Committee members of the party. The most important of this conference was the establishment of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Party with 4 members, appointing Danzan as the head of the Committee and Dambadorj and Losol as members. The 4th member was to be appointed from Comintern.¹⁷⁷

As this conference had discussed many important issues, established the Central Committee of the MPP and approved the main documents of the Party, later in 1924 it was named as the "First Ikh Khural" (or the first great meeting) of the Party. One of the important matters discussed at the conference was the Ten Aims of the People's Party or the Party Programs. The Ten Aims were:

1. "to have the people's rights and power prospered and to make all equally happy by developing [the country] through the path of the knowledge and education similar to other nations,

¹⁷⁶ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 116.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 116-7.

2. to establish an independent state for Mongol nationals, for this, it needed to be liberated from the Chinese rule and to have a new autonomous country, and in future to have all Mongol nationals come under one state,
3. to establish a federate state by joining all in it upon establishing independent and trustworthy government,
4. the MPP observes revolutionary rules to implement the two objectives such as to respect the people's rights of Mongolia and to establish a nation,
5. if other parties are emerged and work helping the party affairs, the MPP works in cooperation with them, if they hinder the party affairs, the MPP regards them as enemies,
6. to develop the country progressively by taking into account its internal administration, religion, customs, way of life, the world situation and its future, and to destroy those things that are destructive to the masses and irrelevant to the date,
7. the MPP establishes contact with foreign parties, including of Russia and China,
8. to support the oppressed weak countries by friendly relations,
9. the MPP checks and determines how to deal with affairs related to the internal administration and state authority,
10. to have any honest person who wishes to struggle for the Mongolian nation be enrolled in the party without considering their social status and sex.”¹⁷⁸

These programs or aims were indeed the goals that Mongolians were aiming to reach genuinely at that time. What the Mongolians were seeking were supports based on the

¹⁷⁸ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 118.

friendly relations. Although the Party thought to observe revolutionary rules, it was aiming to have its backward country developed and its oppressed population prospered. At the same time it did not give up the idea of uniting all Mongolian nationals under one roof.

During the second day of the conference another discussion was held on organizing The Administrative Organ to Handle Military Affairs of the People's Party (AOHMAPP). Later they decided to establish the Headquarters for AOHMAPP with 5 members, including 3 members from MPP and 2 members were expected to be appointed by Comintern. D. Sukhbaatar was appointed as the Chief of the Military Headquarters with Danzan and Biligsaikhan as the members. The Military Headquarters played a leading role in forming and organizing military regiments, increasing the number of troops, training the troops, and finally in preparing for the fight for the national liberation.

Then on March 13, 1921 the representatives of the Party, army and administrative units, including Ts. Dambadorj and D. Losol, the members of the Central Committee of the MPP, D. Sukhbaatar, the Chief of the Military Headquarters, N. Biligsaikhan of Army Headquarters, and Chagdarjav, and Choibalsan had a joint meeting, where a People's Provisional Government with 7 members was established. D. Chagdarjav was appointed as the head of the government, D. Sukhbaatar, L. Sumiya, N. Biligsaikhan, D. Bodo, and Kh. Choibalsan as the members of the government and it was decided to appoint one member from Uriankhai region.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, pp. 117-9.

In the beginning it was decided to liberate Khiagt and relevant military strategy was developed and the troops were relocated and stationed there. Upon preparing for the fight for Khiagt, the Mongolians sent an ultimatum to the leaders of the Chinese troops on March 17, 1921 through Makstenek, a representative of People's Commissariat of Foreign Relations of Soviet Russia in Troitskosavsk. According to the ultimatum, the Mongolians wanted the Chinese troops to transfer the city by surrendering their arms. However, as no positive reply came from the Chinese side, a fight to liberate Khiagt started the following day.

The fight for Khiagt was fierce and the Mongolians used their power in full capacity. The circumstances positively influenced to the Mongolians as well. In their fight they had some assistance from the Soviet side, from the trainers of the troops as well as some forces of Red army stationed near the border. At the same time Baron Ungern's force, which was located in nearby areas, was blocking the roads for the Chinese troops to move south, though the latter had large number of troops. As a result, the Mongolians could liberate Khiagt from the Chinese Kuomintang force and this victory later led the Chinese leave Mongolia finally.¹⁸⁰

However, during this time there was another party, which had moved faster than the progressive force, the Baron Ungern's army. With the support of Bogd Khan, Baron Ungern managed to announce the restoration of the autonomous government of Bogd Khan on February 21, 1921 as stated earlier. This restored government had 5 ministries responsible for domestic affairs, foreign relations, military affairs, and finance and

¹⁸⁰ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, pp. 120-22.

justice. At the beginning Baron Ungern got enormous support in Mongolia as he made the Mongolians believe in him by stating openly “to restore the autonomous government of Bogd Khan”, “to liberate Mongolia from the Chinese regime”, and “to establish a Great Mongolian state.” As most sources say, Baron Ungern could restore the Bogd Khan government and this made him popular among some groups in Mongolia. Mongolia was a totally religious country and anyone who could help its living god be released from the foreign imprisonment could be regarded as a rescuer.

After the victory in Khiagt the Mongolian People’s Army started preparing for the fight against the remnants of the White Russian troops, including Baron Ungern’s force. This task was not an easy one as Baron could make himself a hero for some time. His influence could bring negative outcomes by breaking the Mongolians into opposing sides and making them fight against one another. Before Baron Ungern started his crusade against the Bolsheviks, including the newly established People’s army, the Mongolian People’s Army began fighting with the White troops.

The wish to liberate Mongolia from any foreign domination, sought by all the parties which had their presence in the Mongolian politics, including both the nobles and religious leaders and the MPP, destined to, finally, be realized as a result of the 1921 revolution. On June 16, 1921 the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party decided to have the Red troops enter Mongolia with an aim to destroy all the force headed by Baron Ungern and to secure the safety their frontier. In accordance with this decision, a unit was formed from the regiments of 5th army located in Irkutsk, and K.A. Neiman was appointed as the commander of the unit.

Therefore, in accordance with the war plan, the joint troops of Mongolian and Soviet forces agreed to attack in 3 directions and to liberate Niislel Khuree. The liberation of Niislel Khuree was completed within a short period of time with a great success. On July 6 the main units entered Khuree and took the control of important locations such as the communication lines.

The Central Committee of the MPP held an expanded meeting on July 9, 1921 and made a decision to transfer all the government rights to the People's Provisional Government. The following day a permanent government was established with 5 ministries. Bodoо was appointed as the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Foreign Affairs, da lam Puntsagdorj as the Minister of the Internal Affairs, D. Sukhbaatar as the Minister of Military Affairs, S. Danzan as the Minister of the Finance, and beis Magsarjav as the Minister of Justice respectively. On July 11, 1921 the announcement was made to the public that the new people's government was established. The newly established government gave Bogd Khan limited rights. Thus, the national revolution finally had its victory in the territory of Mongolia.¹⁸¹

After the establishment of a new government, the Mongolian government also wanted to have other countries recognized its government. The newly established government pursued a policy to make contacts with other countries with the assistance of the Soviet government. The People's government of Mongolia sent a delegation headed by S. Danzan and D. Sukhbaatar in October 1921 to have negotiations with the Soviet

¹⁸¹ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 129.

government and consequently the two countries signed Friendship Treaty on November 5, 1921, where “Soviet Russia accepted the request of the Mongolian People’s government to work as intermediary to coordinate relations of Mongolia and China.”¹⁸² This treaty became the first important document that recognized the existence of Mongolia by the Soviet Union.

At the same time D. Bodoov, the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, sent a note, which declared Mongolia as an independent state, to foreign powers in September 1921. However, no country wished to recognize Mongolia. The same year a letter signed by D. Bodoov, the Foreign Minister, and Jigmeddorj, the Deputy Foreign Minister, was sent to the Department of State of the U.S. In this letter they described the situation of Mongolia for the period 1919-1921, and expressed their wish to have relations with foreign powers. Further the letter said, “the request of Bogd Khan, the government of Mongolia and the people [of Mongolia] is to have agreements between our governments, to have your Ambassador [in Mongolia], to develop commercial relations in order to develop relations of the two parties.”¹⁸³ However, no materials regarding the response of the American side were explored yet.

As S. Damdinsuren, a Mongolian historian, assumes that “the 1921 revolution laid the foundations for developing the people of Mongolia as an independent nation, and the government of Mongolia as a proclaimed, democratic as well as a world policy and

¹⁸² A speech made by U. Dendev, Deputy head of MPP and deputy minister, at the 1st conference of the Far Eastern people, with a title “Mongolia and its struggle for independence. *Comintern and Mongolia* (Compilation of documents), Ulaanbaatar: Publishing House of Science, Technology and Information Company. 1996, p. 53.

¹⁸³ See Appendix 7 – Documents sent to have friendship and trade relations with America. Archive material of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia.

international relations subject.”¹⁸⁴ The 1921 revolution was, in my opinion, the continuation of the 1911 national liberation revolution. The national sentiment of the Mongolians to be an independent state was still in their minds, though their proclaimed independent government did not receive an international recognition after 1911 revolution.

The Mongolians, irrespective of their class positions if they were representatives of the nobles, religious institutions or newly formed class of revolutionaries, had one aim to restore its national independence. Their wish to liberate the country from foreign domination was used for some adventure-seekers like Semenov and Baron Ungern in their political games. Such games brought both gains and losses. They brought Mongolia the possibility to implement their wish for all Mongols come under one roof and get rid of some foreign domination, in particular the Chinese force. However, the main players of these games were not the Mongolians but the outsiders who wanted to gain on the wish and interests of the Mongolians. Therefore, what they succeeded did not last long and the circumstances did not let the Mongolians establish a united country. Though the Mongolians could get rid of the Kuomintang Chinese and the White Russians as a result of the 1921 national revolution, it was not yet to determine the real players of their internal and external politics.

As it is stated earlier the Mongolian history was taught in its native land from the view point of the communism until the last decade of the 20th century. It has been only a decade and a half since the Mongolians started getting more and true information on its

¹⁸⁴ Damdinsuren, S., *Mongolia's Independence: A Century Confirmation*, Ulaanbaatar: Bembi san Publishing House, 2001, p. 57.

history. We can now develop a real history based not on the ideology but on the real facts and data. As many materials previously confidential have been disclosed in recent years we can have “real touches” on our history.

We know from the history that the Mongolian autonomous rights were nullified by the Chinese on November 22, 1919 and this autonomous government was restored on February 21, 1921, and the Provisional People’s government was established on March 13, 1921 and it finally made into a permanent government on July 10, 1921. Although there had been different governments existed between February and July 1921, the system based on communist ideology did not accept the fact that there had been two governments existed during the same period in Mongolia.

Therefore, recently not only historians but also researchers started writing of the existence of the two governments in Mongolia during the above-mentioned period. However, a debate is still going on as some still believe that the restored autonomous government was not the real one as it had no recognition in the international arena. Whereas the other government had a status of Provisional government and was backed by the Soviet Russia thus, it may have stronger status than the restored autonomous government.

Tachibana Makoto, a young Japanese PhD degree-seeking student at Waseda University, is one of those who support the idea that the two governments existed alongside during the above-mentioned period. In his book titled *1921 Mongolia with Two Governments* he states his idea that “ upon the restoration of the Autonomous government it was late

for the Soviet Russia to implement its idea of establishing ‘Autonomous government’ in Mongolia, thus, they needed to take the following action as soon as possible and a Provisional People’s government was established as a result”.¹⁸⁵ He, further, develops the idea that the Russians were smart enough to blame Baron Ungern in his aggressive activities his troops done in Mongolia by not mentioning anything negative about Bogd Khan as they knew that the people were very religious in this country. Thus they could make the newly established Provisional government have a positive image in liberating the country from an aggressive army of Baron Ungern. This idea, perhaps, made the people stand against Baron Ungern, whether his actions were beneficial for the country or not, and subsequently it made the restored autonomous government called as “a puppet government” formed by Baron Ungern, thus, made the Provisional government play the main role.

In my opinion, the existence of two governments at the same time, when a country is trying to determine its government or it is in struggle for power, take places from time to time throughout the world history. The restored Bogd Khan government and a new Red government are one of such examples, though past historical analysis did not mention of such existence clearly.

While Mongolia announced its new Soviet-style government with the Red army assistance and genuinely believed that Soviet Russia recognized Mongolia’s independence, some other negotiations were taking places between our two neighbors behind the curtains.

¹⁸⁵ Makoto, Tachibana, *1921 Mongolia with Two Governments*, Ulaanbaatar: Bitpress, 2006, p. 25.

Chapter IV

MONGOLIA'S STRUGGLE FOR NATIONALISM

Definition of Nationalism

The end of the 20th century has brought many changes that greatly affected the world structure. The countries, which were in the opposing systems for more than 4 decades, for the first time started viewing each other through different eyes, this time, as a partner or a possible friend. Amicable relations started developing among many countries, which relations had been dictated by the world situation, its two opposing ideologies, one proclaiming communism and the other proclaiming democracy.

Although more than a decade has been passed since the world entered into a new era, when many countries are engaged in developing amicable relations with one another, some negative memories of the past are still in present. The anti-Japanese demonstrations that took places in April 2005 in China and South Korea are one of such examples. These demonstrations bore the tone of nationalism and patriotism as most of the world media has reported. Though demonstrations and protests based on the nationalism or patriotism is a matter of a certain country, it is important to look at causes of such actions and that in turn will help us avoid anything that could harm the stability of not only the region but also the entire world.

Therefore, these demos based on nationalistic or patriotic sentiments made me address this topic in my research but with a more focus on Mongolia and its neighboring region

with Mongol inhabitants, in particular the Buryat Autonomous region of Russia. Prior to addressing the main topic there is a need to look at the definition of nationalism.

The Columbia Encyclopedia describes nationalism as a “political or social philosophy in which the welfare of the nation-state as an entity is considered paramount. Nationalism is basically a collective state of mind or consciousness in which people believe their primary duty and loyalty is to the nation-state. Often nationalism implies national superiority and glorifies various national virtues. Thus love of nation may be overemphasized; concern with national self-interest to the exclusion of the rights of other nations may lead to international conflict.”¹⁸⁶ Thus general meaning of the term refers to a nation-state. It can have a positive factor like love and pride for someone’s country. At the same time, however, it can have a negative implication as defined above by valuing national self-interest exclude other nations` rights.

According to John Breuilly, “the term ‘nationalism’ is used to refer to political movements seeking or exercising power and justifying such actions with nationalist arguments.”¹⁸⁷ Whereas, the Social Science Encyclopedia refers to nationalism as “the belief that each nation has both the right and duty to constitute itself as a state. There are many difficulties in specifying what a nation is, ...but some common culture is indispensable and a shared language highly desirable.”¹⁸⁸ The latter description of nationalism better portrays the nationalism and its development in the territories of

¹⁸⁶ *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Sixth edition, 2001. <http://www.bartley.com/65/natlism.html> May 26, 2005.

¹⁸⁷ <http://www.nationalismproject.org/what.htm> May 26, 2005.

¹⁸⁸ Minogue, Kenneth, “Nationalism”, in Kuper, Adam and Kuper, Jessica (eds), *The Social Science Encyclopedia*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985, p. 551.

Mongol stock people. What the Mongol people wanted seemed to sound very simple – to unite all Mongol nationals in one country, if possible on the territory of Mongolia. These people shared the same language, religion and lifestyle, so it seemed that nothing would have hindered their desires to become true. However, in reality it was a very difficult task as some of the Mongol people were living in other territories than the territory of Mongolia, in neighboring giant countries, and none of these neighbors wanted to let these people join Mongolia taking their territory as well as their inhabitants. It was an unfortunate fate for Mongol stock people to be separated this way.

As definitions of nationalism differ and it is a very complex and controversial term and in each circumstances it should be dealt in terms of that particular period as situations vary. Many scholars and historians in Mongolia started openly addressing the nationalism in their studies only after 1990s as it was regarded a taboo topic in the past. The term nationalism was closely associated with Pan-Mongolism, which was considered an anti-state, anti-communism and at the same time anti-communist internationalism, thus, it was a very sensitive topic with negative consequences in Mongolia. The country had had many victims, who suffered during the Great Purge in the 1930s for the alleged conspiracy with Pan-Mongolism. As a direct consequence of such tragic period, people in this country stopped openly discussing the issue of nationalism and it was unfortunate that many traditional customs were prohibited due to the nationalist sense in them.

However, the time has come to end it all and many studies, analysis and research have been produced to re-analyze the history. I believe that we are now at the initial stage to

re-study our history and the studies on the history of Mongolia needed more work as it may take time to thoroughly judge the available historical documents and more and more new documents may become available in the archives of not only Mongolia but in our neighboring countries as well.

Here I would like to refer to two of the studies made on the issue of nationalism in Mongolia. Uradyn E. Bulag, a research fellow at Corpus Christi College in Cambridge as of 1998, analyzed this topic in his book titled *Nationalism and Hybridity in Mongolia*. Bulag, who had a field work in Mongolia right after this country entered a new phase of its development, a democratic path during 1991-2, analyzed in his book how nationalism inherited from the socialist era was developed in early years of 1990s with a focus on the pure or indigenous Khalkh Mongols and how they treat other Mongols or hybrid Mongols with other ethnic origin like himself from Inner Mongolia. Perhaps, such a negative attitude towards other Mongols or Hybrids how Bulag calls them can bring its root from the conflicting system based on a communist ideology which considered anyone, who were on the other side of “our” group as not “us” but “them”.

People in early 1990s in Mongolia for the first time had an open right to express what they wanted to say or write but we can not believe all what different individuals write or say. The new world brought us the right to feel the freedom but it needed time to make accurate judgments. Freedom does not mean to say whatever one wants to say as it needs limits as well. Thus in the early years of 1990s Mongolia for the first time had witnessed so many different beliefs, opinions, arguments, suggestions, and proposals how to develop this country further, what ways may well suit, and at the same time

many harsh words were addressed to the past rulers of the country as well as to the already collapsed regime. Although such public wordings were sometimes conflicting to each other, the people were given opportunities to express themselves.

Christopher Kaplonski, who is affiliated with the Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit at the University of Cambridge, contributed his book titled *Truth, History and Politics in Mongolia*, to the academic world, too. In his book he tried to analyze the history of Mongolia and how it reached the era of democracy, doing an extensive field work in Mongolia after 1990. He truly observes that “the examination of the historical images and memories in Mongolia inevitably leads us to the concept of nationalism.”¹⁸⁹ Kaplonski further associates the nationalism with ethnicity in Mongolia upon judging the term, “generally speaking, there are two broad variants of nationalism recognized by most scholars of the subject: nationalism as a political (and usually spatial) ideology and nationalism as an ideology motivated by ethnic/cultural concerns. ...The complicating factor in the Mongolian case is that both are present, but not necessarily in the ways that may be expected. The result has been a collision (although often a silent one) between contrasting views of what it means to be a Mongol, although the views are not always consistently articulated as such.”¹⁹⁰ He further talks about ethnic cultural understanding of the Mongolian identity and brings pan-Mongolism to be a politically oriented nationalism. As a contrast to Pan-Mongolism he brings Khalkh centrism supporting Bulag’s idea.

¹⁸⁹ Kaplonski, Christopher, *Truth, History and Politics in Mongolia: The Memory of Heroes*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, p. 14.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-5.

The above-mentioned two scholars both agree on the Khalkh centrist nationalism in the post-socialist era in Mongolia. According to Bulag, “the creation of the ‘pure’ and ‘indigenous’ Halh is, in my view, both a modern version of Mongol nationalism and a deliberate reconstruction at the behest of the Soviet overlord, who did not want to see a link between all Mongol groups.”¹⁹¹ This is true judgment as Mongolia during socialism had no chance to develop close relations with Mongols in Inner Mongolia due to the complexity of Sino-Soviet relations.

Thus the issue of nationalism can be associated with Pan-Mongolism as a political ideology whereas Khalkh centrism can talk for nationalism created on the basis of ethnic and cultural understanding of the identity of Mongols. This is an interesting observation made by foreign scholars and it needs to be studied more in Mongolia. In this chapter, however, I attempt to address the issue of nationalism as a way for Mongolia to survive in the conflicting world of 2 systems. Unfortunately nationalism was prohibited along with traditional thinking of Mongolia during this period. To understand the difficulty of this topic we need to see different stages of development Mongolia went through after it became the 2nd communist country in the world.

Internal Affairs of Mongolia and Mongolia vs Comintern

Mongolia, which went through two revolutions, 1911 national liberation revolution and 1921 people’s revolution, finally could take some measures to develop the country after years of struggle for independence. Although it could not secure the recognition of its

¹⁹¹ Bulag, Uradyn E., *Nationalism and Hybridity in Mongolia*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, p. 78.

independence by the international circle, Mongolia believed that the Soviet government recognized its newly established government. However, very soon it would recognize Mongolia to be a sovereign part of China, which in turn would put the Mongolian leaders in a puzzle over whom to believe and seek other options.

After 1921 revolution the Mongolian government had to carry out a very difficult task to build the country's economy. The fights against the Chinese army and the White Russians devastated the country, both physically and economically. Subsequently the government of Mongolia started carrying out completely new reforms that would help this country develop further. It issued respective decrees and orders and finally annulled the serfdom (Mongolian nobles used to retain so called hamjlagas, people who worked as servants for them) for the first time in its history, annulled the rights of noblemen setting a limit to their power, and was engaged in activities to renew old administrative systems.

As a result, the state power was transferred to People's Khural, based on the principles of election. All administrative units, including small units such as bag and soum, were given rights to elect people's representatives and held meetings in sequences. While reforms were conducted to the administrative system, in 1923 four aimags and 116 khoshuus were re-named after well-known mountains or places, thus, ending to name these units by the names of nobles, who were ruling those territories.¹⁹²

¹⁹² Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, pp. 138-9.

The new government started to create principal guidelines to develop the economy of the country in 1922 and formed a respective committee to work on the guidelines. This committee's produced document "Main guidelines of the economy", which was approved at the Government meeting in 1923, introduced clearly the main strategies to develop the country. These were: "to establish national economy based on two directions, using national resources and processing raw materials from animal husbandry, by maintaining animal husbandry as the core sector of the economy; to begin activities in the fields of crop industry, infrastructure, transportation and communication; to improve trade activities; to establish banking system and issue national currency; and to form finance and accounting system respectively"¹⁹³. It also instructed to support all types of economic entities. In addition, the issues like to educate and train factory personnel abroad and to involve all capable people in the construction of a new society, without discriminating them as religious or common people, were considered to be important objectives.

The government started its economic policy with formation of sources for state budget and financial system. It was decided to collect 3 million lans from 4 aimags and shav' in equal amounts and a subsequent order to collect money and tax for the formation of state financial source was approved by the government on April 27, 1922.¹⁹⁴ According to this order, taxes on production, service and revenues were applied to all entities. Subsequently, 5% tax was applied on assets and large livestock of religious centers, and

¹⁹³ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, pp. 140-41.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

expenses of Bogd Khan and his palace were substantially decreased. Starting from 1923 collection of money from the people for religious services was stopped.

At the same time the government paid considerable attention to collection of customs tax and customs agencies were established accordingly. 24 customs agencies were in operation during 1922-1924. As a result, the customs tax, including tax on foreign traders, increased and it rose from 1.5 million tugrugs to 2.5 during the above-mentioned period.¹⁹⁵

As for animal husbandry, tax was applied in accordance with the number of cattle herders owned. From 1924 the government started using a newly developed livestock tax law. According to this law, herders with up to 100 cattle were exempted from tax. “The following percentages of taxes were applied for herders who owned more than 100 cattle: 5% tax¹⁹⁶ for 100-500 cattle; 15% for 501-1000 cattle; and 20% for more than 1000 cattle, respectively.”¹⁹⁷ The amounts of taxes were changed quite often. All these legal procedures on tax system were beneficial to poor households, but they were aimed at limiting rights of wealthy households. Consequently the number of households with large stock of cattle started decreasing.

Subsequent livestock laws and procedures were aimed again at supporting poor households. According to “Maiskii’s estimation, there had been 13,474 households with

¹⁹⁵ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 141.

¹⁹⁶ Taxes were taken generally in the forms of cattle as not much currency was in circulation among herders at that time.

¹⁹⁷ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 141.

roots of titles and nobles in 1920 in Khalkha, Durvud, Khuvsugul, Uriankhai and Dariganga territories, however, they were decreased twice and reached 6,654 in 1928.”¹⁹⁸ Not all the households which considered wealthy, including people with titles, nobles, high rank lamas at religious centers, were rich and owned a large number of cattle. However, from 1928 on they became centers of criticism and were labeled as the remnants of feudals. Such negative attitude towards them contributed greatly to the destabilization of political life of the country.

Although the number of livestock increased in the 1920s, there was not much change to the lives of cattle owners. Therefore, to maintain equal standard of living for the population, the government organized a campaign to confiscate possessions and livestock of the nobles and religious leaders and to distribute them among the poor for ownership during 1929-1931, and what consequences it brought will be discussed later in this chapter.

In the field of trade, the government paid sufficient attention, in particular to develop Mongolian Mutual Assistance Committee (MMAC) and supported it by providing monetary assistance and exempting it from tax duties. As a result, there were increases in the number of new branches as well as shareholders. By the end of 1924, 24 divisions and 86 branches were under the control of MMAC, and some offices were operating in Moscow, Tianjing, Khailaar and Janchkhuu.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Department of History, Mongolian National University, *Reviews on the Mongolian History (1924-1940)*, Ulaanbaatar: Ungut Khevllel, 2000, p. 11.

¹⁹⁹ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 142.

As newly established cooperatives lacked in capital and sufficient transportation system, private trading was still playing the main role. The government was in charge of developing respective regulations regarding private traders as well as collecting taxes. According to private traders and entrepreneurs rules, approved in 1922, they were divided into 6 groups in accordance with their sales and from 7 to 200 lans were collected as a result. Such rules were changed the following year and private traders were divided into 9 levels and 500-7500 lans or tax equaling 1.5 or 21.5% of total trade was allotted to them.²⁰⁰

The main partner in foreign trade became the Soviet Union, though traders from other countries such as China, UK, US and Germany were still trading in Mongolia. Mongolia signed trade-economic agreement with the Soviet Union in 1923 and Soviet trade centers such as Sibgostorg and Daligostorg started operating in Mongolia. 11% of all import was from the Soviet Union only by 1924 as a result.

Although Mongolia was engaged in implementing the “Main guidelines of the economy”²⁰¹, the government began neglecting the idea to support all types of economic entities from 1925 and following recommendations and instructions of Comintern and the Soviet Union. Their main instructions on the economy concerned private entrepreneurs and foreign traders, mainly Chinese traders. They instructed that private business would lead to the formation of rich bourgeois class, which conflicted with the communist doctrine that only private capital was the cause for people being divided into two classes: rich and poor. As for foreign traders other than Soviets, they

²⁰⁰ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 143.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

stated that only cooperatives “...should fight with aggressive foreign and Chinese capitalists’ attempts to exploit”²⁰² and could become an independent organization to deal with trade issues.

While there had been many changes in the economic sector of the country, the political, in particular administrative system also faced enormous changes. Death of Bogd Khan on May 20, 1924 brought an end to transition years (1922-1924) of the People’s government with limited monarchial rights. The 3rd Khural of the Central Party Committee issued a decree to establish a republican government on June 17, 1924 and announced of its decision to organize the 1st State Khural in the first month of winter during celebration of 3rd anniversary of People’s Revolution on July 7.²⁰³

One of the important parts to prepare for the state meeting was development of the constitution. A committee to develop the constitution was formed initially in 1922, studied constitutions and related materials of England, Sweden, Belgium and Holland, and compared their studies with Mongolian laws and regulations, considering own traditions and customs. However, it took long to develop adequate laws as the Comintern instructor were providing their recommendation to have the Soviet constitution as a model.²⁰⁴

On November 8, 1924 the first State Khural was held in Niislel Khuree and it approved the first Constitution of Mongolia. The Baga Khural, a non-permanent parliament, was

²⁰² Dashdavaa, Ch., Kozlov, B.P. and others (eds), *Comintern and Mongolia* (Compilation of materials), Ulaanbaatar: Publishing House of Science, Technology and Information Company, 1996, p. 126.

²⁰³ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 151.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

formed and it had a role to lead all the country affairs. P. Genden was appointed as the head of the Baga Khural and B. Tserendorj as the Prime Minister respectively. The 1st State Khural named Niislel Khuree as Ulaanbaatar. The first constitution defined the equal rights of all people without distinguishing on the base of origin, religion and sex. At the same time it differentiated political and religious affairs but stated that people had the right to decide to follow a religious faith. However, the population was divided into two groups “real arats and feudal”²⁰⁵. While the latter one’s political rights were taken, some from a group of real arats were to be considered as reliable and appointed into management positions or became members of the party or Youth Union easily. Political rights of the group called black feudals²⁰⁶ were also taken.

The main source for the state budget was tax as discussed earlier and from 1926 in accordance with the economic general tax law households and entities, including lamasery property, manufacturing and crop industry were obliged to pay taxes. The tax policy was important not only to collect capital to the state funds but also it was used as a tool to discriminate against the religion and to have it economically collapsed.

Although the Mongolians obtained its political rights after 1921 revolution and became owners of their country, in reality the Comintern and Soviet instructors interfered in the affairs of the country too much without considering a peculiar characteristic of the customs and lifestyle of the Mongolian people. Their influence made the Mongolian leaders conflict with regard to their views how to further develop their country. At the

²⁰⁵ Department of History, Mongolian National University, *Reviews on the Mongolian History (1924-1940)*, Ulaanbaatar: Ungut Khevllel, 2000, p. 3.

²⁰⁶ People who previously resided in monasteries such as lamas, khutagts or nobles with titles, who worked for administrative units of khoshuu, aimags and their children.

beginning the Mongolian leaders, certainly, shared the same wish to consolidate their independence, if possible, by uniting all Mongol nationals into their country, however, they did not reach similar views on what methods to use and whom to rely for the support. Followers of national democratic path, headed by S.Danzan, for instance, wanted to develop the country steadily by considering its peculiar customs and level of its development, and to increase roles of the state and to maintain relations with many countries irrespective of their systems. However, the 'left wing' of the party or the followers of the Comintern instructions wished to rely heavily on Comintern and the Soviet Union, to follow the communist path and to increase the role of the communist party. To such a turn of the history some Comintern instructors, including E.D.Rinchino and T.P.Riiskulov, played decisive roles by supporting the 'left wing' group and conflicting its views openly with that of Danzan's. In fact it was a conflict between views to introduce to the country either national democratic or socialist paths²⁰⁷.

No matter how S. Danzan and his followers wanted to develop their country through national democratic path, the circumstances unfortunately did not allow that happen. As a result this force was eliminated for their alleged anti-people's views. Accordingly, the belief to have a better and peaceful life under the rule of the People's government was weakening among the population, mainly religious people, who suffered greatly at the hands of the Comintern policy applied in this country. At the same time the leaders of Mongolia became aware of a possible threat to its independence, which was discussed at different level meetings between the Soviet and Chinese sides. Although the

²⁰⁷ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, pp. 146-7.

Mongolians reached the Russians several times to discuss the issue, but no moves were taken due to geopolitical considerations on the Russian side.

The Soviet Union had their representatives such as A.Paikes, A.Ioffe and L. Karahan visit China for negotiations several times during 1922-1924. The Soviet Union's position to support Mongolia's independence was altered for the sake of revolutionary movements in China and East Asia. Since 1922, when A.Paikes had negotiations with the Chinese side, the Soviet Union showed their readiness to agree the Chinese sovereign rights in the territory of Mongolia and to pull out their troops from the territory of Mongolia.²⁰⁸ Consequently in May 1924 the Russians recognized Mongolia to be a part of China. At the same time, they agreed to have their troops leave the territory of Mongolia upon the agreed time with the Chinese side.

While Mongolia's international status was defined without participation of Mongolian leaders, the same policy was also applied in the domestic affairs. According to Comintern's instructions, the main economic guidelines for Mongolia to observe were to fight with the rich class and to develop cooperatives and state industry for better life of the population. In addition, they blamed the private property for dividing people into two classes, rich and poor, and stated openly if public property dominated economy was established, everyone would live in a communism. Such instructions and policies were successfully carried out in Mongolia and as a result many capable leaders, who expressed views different from the Comintern's, including Dambadorj, were removed from their posts for allegedly being labeled as 'rightists' or 'leftists'.

²⁰⁸ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 149.

Comintern representatives were reporting every moves of the Party leaders and their activities back to the Soviet Union. As not all the instructions and recommendations provided by Comintern were well suited to the conditions of Mongolia, some of the Mongolian leaders, including Tserendorj, were still relying on their traditional views, based on nomadic culture and Buddhism. Such attitudes on the part of Mongolians were not what Comintern wanted to see in this country. That is why they started paying more attention on young revolutionaries, in particular the Youth Union, and purposely conflicting its views with the Party's. The Central Committee of Communist Youth International²⁰⁹ was even instructing the Mongolian leaders what they need to do, for instance, in a letter dated June 20, 1923 and addressed to the Central Committee of the MPRP regarding the agreement made between the Party and the Union they shared their dissatisfaction with the agreement. According to the letter, "...a few discrepancies, unacceptable to both the People's Party and Revolutionary Youth Union, are found. ...refusal to accept independent position of the Union diminishes the significance of the [organization]. ...Youth have no economic interests and they are not much influenced by aggressive force and old traditional views. ...Lessening political independence of the Union, making it as an autonomous organization, will break the foundation of the Union,..thus, Party may lose a vital counterpart for its struggle for interests of the Mongolian working population."²¹⁰ This way, Comintern instructors were advising every level of the administrative organizations in the country. They had purposely conflicted leaders of party and government by labeling them not only as "rightist" and

²⁰⁹ A section of Comintern, organized in 1919.

²¹⁰ Dashdavaa, Ch., Kozlov, B.P. and others (eds), *Comintern and Mongolia* (Compilation of materials), Ulaanbaatar: Publishing House of Science, Technology and Information Company, 1996, p. 61-2.

“leftists” but also as “countryside’s” and “city’s” or even as “with traditional views” and “with new views”.

Not all the leaders were comfortable with Comintern’s activities and some of them, in particular B. Tserendorj, the Prime Minister, wanted to resign from his position for “being old and sick”.²¹¹ As there was a wish of the Central Committee of the party to keep him his position and the Soviets considered him important at that time, he remained in his post. However, his health condition did not allow him remain long and the Prime Minister died in 1928. Then A.Amar was appointed as the Prime Minister of Mongolia.

The compilation of documents regarding Comintern and Mongolia provides many details about the activities of Comintern in Mongolia. Most of the documents had been classified as “strictly confidential” by then and reports made by Comintern representatives provide very detailed information on not only about the country but also about all Mongolian leaders who were serving different positions for the government. In his report, Ryskulov, who served as a Comintern representative in Mongolia during 1924-1925, thoroughly described the situation in Mongolia and provided his views on different groups in Mongolia after his 1st month in Mongolia in November 1924, in particular he suggested to work in close cooperation with such figures as Dambadorj, Head of Central Committee, Jadamba, Head of Central Committee of the Youth Union, and Choibalsan, General Chief of the Army. Further he wrote “this group is the strongest and have closer views with us. They try to make the party organizationally

²¹¹ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 157.

closer to Comintern ..., and I believe that this group is the only group which avoids any old-fashioned dogmas”²¹². Although Comintern could use new leaders against old leaders with traditional views, they soon targeted these new leaders for any failures they faced in this country. Ts. Dambadorj served his duties truly, believing in Comintern’s support to develop his country. While working as the Head of the General Committee of the MPRP Dambadorj himself made visits to some of the Western European countries and supported the view to have trade relations with other foreign countries.

The new Mongolian government paid sufficient attention to the new personnel of the country, established new schools, extended primary schools and particular attention was paid to establish schools in the countryside as well. Starting from 1922 Mongolian young people started studying in Soviet Russia at the government expenses and later the government of Mongolia started to sending students to Germany and France in 1925. At the same time the Ministry of Enlightenment of Mongolia was established in early 1924. “As of 1925, 46 students were studying in different cities of the Soviet Union, 35 students in Germany, 4 in France at the expenses of the Ministry of Enlightenment, and more 151 students were sent to Soviet Union and 5 to Germany in 1926.”²¹³ All these positive moves on the education field were successfully carried out until 1928. However, at the instructions of the Comintern and the Soviet government Mongolia could maintain relations with only the Soviet Union and Tannu Tuva, thus, it had to call back students studying in Germany and France very soon and prohibited people to privately study in Japan and China.

²¹² Dashdavaa, Ch., Kozlov, B.P. and others (eds), *Comintern and Mongolia* (Compilation of materials), Ulaanbaatar: Publishing House of Science, Technology and Information Company, 1996, p. 76.

²¹³ Department of History, Mongolian National University, *Reviews on the Mongolian History (1924-1940)*, Ulaanbaatar: Ungut Khevlél, 2000, p. 13.

Some of the Mongolian leaders could express their views how to rule their country and showed their resistance to some of the policies of the Comintern. Ts. Damdadorj, Head of the Central Committee, expressed his views that some of the Comintern representatives' activities conflicted with the solidarity of the party. He made a report where he addressed some conflicting ideas with Comintern's representatives in Mongolia, in particular with Amgayev, at Comintern's meeting in 1928, but his efforts failed to get support. On the contrary Dambadorj was blamed for trying to keep the MPRP and Mongolia apart from Comintern and the USSR and to rely on China and Japan, and to have Mongolia developed by capitalist path, thus, was labeled for being 'rightist' instead.²¹⁴

The leaders of Mongolia during that period, although there was some misunderstanding between them in terms of some views, did their best to develop their country and to have the country's independence recognized. However, any new ideas developed by Mongolian leaders were under strong attack from Comintern, in particular a slogan "to have all become rich" and "pan-mongolism", a wish to have other Mongol territories joined Mongolia.

When there was already conflict over ideas among Mongolian leaders as well as with Comintern representatives, Comintern stepped in to deal with all problems in Mongolia. They managed successfully detect anti-Comintern and nationalist ideas in Dambadorj

²¹⁴ Department of History, Mongolian National University, *Reviews on the Mongolian History (1924-1940)*, Ulaanbaatar: Ungut Khevlal, 2000, pp. 16-21.

and others' views and "pan-Mongolism" as a way to turn away from communist internationalism.

In 1928 the Comintern sent a special commission consisting of 7 people to Mongolia, which included "Shmeral, a Czech communist, William Dune, an American communist nicknamed McDonald, Amgayev, the Comintern representative in Mongolia, Vartanyan, representative of the KIM (Communist Youth International), as well as the notorious Borodin. This international gang was intent on ousting the disobedient rulers of Mongolia and replacing them with younger people with no strong opinions, but poisoned by communism and loyal to Comintern."²¹⁵ Subsequently with the direct assistance of Comintern, its representatives headed by Shmeral, new policies for Mongolia were developed and the 7th State Khural of MPRP held in September 1928 defined the right way to develop Mongolia as "non-capitalist development path".

After the 'rightist' group was detected and eliminated, the Comintern got more power in its hands. "The materials of the meetings²¹⁶ at Comintern's department of the Orient in early 1929 stated that they could prevent Mongolia to go into capitalism, thus, Comintern managed to have the rights to lead all internal policies of Mongolia."²¹⁷ Therefore, in fact the real players of political and economical lives of Mongolia were the Comintern instructors and their followers. Any views different from the instructions of Comintern regarded as nationalistic and anti-communist internationalism and those people were blamed for any failure of the Comintern activities in Mongolia. These two

²¹⁵ Baabar, *History of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar: Monsudar. 2004, p. 285.

²¹⁶ Consultative meetings of secretaries of the Comintern of the Orient, held in January 1929.

²¹⁷ Department of History, Mongolian National University, *Reviews on the Mongolian History (1924-1940)*, Ulaanbaatar: Ungut Khevllel, 2000, p. 22.

forces, nationalist sentiment of the Mongolians and Comintern, in fact conflicted in Mongolia. The Comintern's aim to build socialism in Mongolia made this country become more and more isolated from the outside world. Perhaps, it is a fate of a small country, sandwiched between two giant countries, to be within a circle of then dominating power.

Nationalist sentiment and Mongolia in the 1930s

In dealing with nationalist sentiment in Mongolia Stalin smartly used Comintern, which had a role to instruct Mongolian new leaders. According to their instructions, Mongolians carried out almost everything that was done on a Soviet soil, including collectivization of farmers, collection of private livestock to state ownership, struggles against rich or so called feudal elements, and even struggle against religion.

The new leaders of the party or left wing communists, including U.Badrakh and Z.Shijee, started implementing Comintern instructions truly believing in them. We must admit that the newly appointed leaders were divided among themselves into two groups; one that intended to follow the instructions of Comintern and the other that was against implementing the measures as they feared that it would lead to a domestic rebellion. The Soviets were urging Mongols to start their campaigns against feudal elements and lamas since 1927. After 7th Khural of the Party the time came for Comintern to fully carry out its activities on the land of Mongolia as they successfully eliminated the force, including Ts.Dambadorj who disagreed to implement such a Comintern decision in Mongolia. Subsequently, the Central Committee of Communist International Comintern

issued a decree with regard to Mongolia in March 1929, where they indicated that “the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party works under direct ideological and political control of the Comintern as a appreciator-party to the Comintern”²¹⁸ and the Central Committee of the party appointed a committee to develop policies regarding confiscation of the property of feudal elements.

“On November 16, 1929 the joint meeting of the Presidium of the Baga Khural and the Administration organ of the government issued a decree to start the confiscation of the property of feudals and respective procedures to implement the decree. ...According to this decree, all households that owned 100% or more private property would be registered and upon such registration respective committees would decide whose property to be confiscated. ...In other words, those who owned 100% or more private property would be considered ‘feudals’ and consequently their property would be confiscated. 100% private property was equal to 3,000 tugrugs at the exchange rate of that time (or 60 camels or 100 horses or 100 cows or 500 sheep).²¹⁹

The government formed a central committee to confiscate the property of feudals with 8 people, headed by Kh. Choibalsan, head of the Representatives of State Baga Khural. Respective sub-committees were formed in local areas as well. Thus, the campaign to confiscate of the property of feudals started on September 18, 1929 in Ulaanbaatar and later that month in local areas and continued until the beginning of 1930. Altogether about 920 households were registered and the property, including cattle and immovable

²¹⁸ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 171.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 172-3.

property, of 729 households (worth 5.2 million tugrugs at the exchange rate of that period) were confiscated.²²⁰

In fact, we can say that the campaign to confiscate the property of feudals was carried out in two stages. The primary aim for the second stage was to find and confiscate the hidden property of feudal elements. During this campaign (1930-1932) the property worth 4.5 million tugrugs (at the exchange rate of that time) were confiscated from 825 feudal elements.²²¹ The noblemen and feudal elements, of course, were not always passive observers and they employed different methods to struggle against the communists' taken actions by selling, hiding and transferring their livestock to others. Consequently, Mongolian cattle decreased in great numbers, as Ruben writes "the livestock total for the MPR had fallen from twenty-three million head in 1930 to sixteen in 1932"²²². In the second campaign against feudal elements, thus, a lot of people fell victims to the campaign and many people were put into jails for their misconduct.

The campaign against religion was a lot more aggressive than against feudal elements. The main purpose of the communist doctrine against religion was to eliminate it, if possible. To confiscate the property of monasteries, temples and lamas, therefore, the communists employed a different way than that was employed against feudal elements. They did not confiscate the livestock and property of religious centers and lamas as they did with feudal elements. Instead they issued a very high tax on almost everything these religious centers possessed, including statues of Buddha. At the same time many

²²⁰ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 173.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

²²² Rupen, Robert, *How Mongolia Is Really Ruled: A Political History of the Mongolian People's Republic 1900-1978*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1979, p. 56.

influential and popular religious leaders were arrested or killed. All these measures taken against feudal elements, noblemen, and religion certainly arose antagonism towards the communists among those who suffered a lot from these campaigns. The most common way to show their dissatisfaction towards the new communist regime was to escape or to flee their native land to Inner Mongolia and North China. According to "unofficial document, totally 7,542 families consisting of 30,000 people joined these border crossing"²²³ during 1930-32, including not only feudal elements and lamas but also party, government officials, ordinary people, and herdsmen. The other and most severe way to show their antagonism towards new regime was expressed through revolts. The first uprising took place in Tugsbuyant monastery, Hubsugul province in 1930 headed by disappointed lamas to the new regime. The shocked government put down the revolt severely by executing 19 lamas, 9 feudals and 20 arats²²⁴. In different parts of Mongolia hurt and disillusioned lamas and religious people joined such revolts against the communist regime and party workers. To this revolt a rumor that a Tibet religious leader Panchen Bogd was coming to help Mongols in restoring Buddhism contributed partly. As Panchen Bogd visited Japan once, it was thought that he would bring the Japanese assistance to fight against the communists. Thus, the main "anti-red"²²⁵ revolt started in April 1932 in Hubsugul province. Though the government reacted to these revolts very quickly by sending their internal affairs force, uprisings took place not only in Hubsugul province, they covered almost all parts of the country. Therefore, in May the government passed a decision "to use regular army"²²⁶ against

²²³ Batbayar, B., *Horidugaar Zuunii Mongol (Twentieth Century Mongolia)*, Ulaanbaatar: Hevleliin Gazar, 1996, p.395.

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 175

²²⁵ Communists.

²²⁶ Batbayar, B., *Horidugaar Zuunii Mongol (Twentieth Century Mongolia)*, Ulaanbaatar: Hevleliin Gazar, 1996, p. 401.

the rebels. As Batbayar admits, it was a civil war; on one side the Mongolian government, representing a dictatorial regime supported by the outside, Soviet force, on the other side injured, disappointed, and disillusioned people who were protesting this excessive repression. In the end the rebellions were defeated.

The collectivization (confiscation) of livestock did not result in the increasing number of cattle, but on the contrary it led to its decrease and moreover, resulted in the rebellions against the government, too. These outcomes were not what the Comintern, particularly the Soviet government was looking for. Therefore, they decided to change the direction on Mongolia and in the end of May 1932, they issued a resolution to the MPRP to reverse the course and abandon collectivization. The Soviets criticized that Mongols did not consider the country's specific conditions by copying the Soviet collectivization. Therefore, they suggested a new move "New Reform Policy", according to which people were allowed to have some livestock for a private ownership, and this conflicted with the collectivization policy. As Rupen says, "the immediacy of the Japanese threat and the vulnerability of the MPR, which was being torn by violent dissention, undoubtedly contributed to this decision; but it was also probably easier for the Russians to admit their mistake and abandon their policy in an area that was not formally part of the USSR and thus did not directly involve Stalin's prestige"²²⁷. The communists' campaign against feudal elements and religion, and collectivization of livestock was a failure of the Soviet doctrine in Mongolia.

²²⁷ Rupen, Robert, *How Mongolia Is Really Ruled: A Political History of the Mongolian People's Republic 1900-1978*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1979, p. 56.

However, the most tragic period was coming very soon. In the failure of the communist policy regarding collectivization, the communists had to find someone to blame for what happened. Consequently, the two conflicting groups of the new leaders of the party received what they deserved, according to how they viewed the campaigns against feudal elements and religion. Those who they were supporting to follow the Comintern's instructions blindly were named as "left opportunists". A new party leader Genden was appointed as the Prime Minister in 1932 and was entrusted to carry out the New Reform Policy (NRP). At the beginning of his career, Genden seemed to believe in the programs of NRP. Therefore, some of the decisions he made were in favor to the disillusioned lamas and herdsmen. He released some lamas who participated in counter-revolutionary uprisings. A newly adopted 1932 tax law decreased tax on livestock. Tax on almost all property of religious centers was abolished leaving only tax on livestock. Some actions were taken to bring some of the fled people back and to their surprise some of them were not blamed for leaving their country but even were given herds, loans and in some cases were exempted from tax for one year. Though it was short but 'sunny period' just before another darker period was striking the history of Mongolia.

Very soon a campaign against Buryat nationals and Japanese spies started in Mongolia by the middle of 1930s. There were many Buryats who fled the Soviet Union at the start of communist revolution in 1917. When Mongolia became the second communist country some of them fled again, this time to Manchuria. Perhaps, their destination, Manchuria gave the communists the idea to claim them to be spies of Japan. In their struggle against Buryats the communists employed a new method, making a story about

someone's provocative actions. These false stories, in some cases, gave some officials of the party and Ministry of Interior (MI) to revenge their enemies.

One of the suspects of "Lkhumbé's Affair"²²⁸, Choibalsan, however, did not get any penalty from the Soviet Union, though his name was mentioned during the process of interrogation of the affair. This must be admitted as in the coming history of the communist rule in Mongolia this dual thinking about so-called dissidents was a normal picture. If they wanted to blame someone for misbehavior to communist principle, they employed whatever possible to blame him for that. If some of their 'treasured' people to the party were involved in one of these affairs they did everything not to involve his name into the list of dissidents. Therefore, according to this dual thinking, Choibalsan was not touched at all, even was appointed as an assistant to the Prime Minister Genden. At that time Genden was in already in a disfavorable position to Stalin, as he was employing his own measures to deal with then the current situation of Mongolia, favoring lamas. Genden was arrested suddenly in summer of 1937, and was executed in November 26 with a claim to be a Japanese spy and counter-revolutionary dissident. With the failure of Genden, Choibalsan started rising to stardom. Choibalsan was appointed to the post of head of Ministry of Interior in February 1936.

In the campaigns against feudal elements and so-called counter-revolutionary dissidents the Soviet commissars played a significant role. They were even given 'limitless' rights in the leadership conference of central and local administrative units by Marshal Choibalsan in 1937. This conference issued a decision to study and make a survey the

²²⁸ The case of counterrevolutionaries and Japanese spies.

situation of Mongolian monasteries, temples, lamas, and feudal elements. This decision meant that the communist government declared a “real war’ to the remaining lamas and feudal elements. The communists had a plan to deal with the religion and feudal elements in three stages in accordance with survey or study results. In the first round 23 religious leaders were caught and 19 of them had the fate of execution. Then some of the party and government officials were targeted. The victims of Choibalsan’s distrustful policy towards his countrymen and the Soviet policy to be free from national-minded Mongolian leaders in line with Genden became not only Mongolian leaders but also their Soviet instructors.

A “Great Purge” of political dissidents started on 10 September 1937. Prior to this day “a Soviet group led by Frinovskii, the deputy minister of the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs²²⁹ visited Mongolia and introduced a Japanese occupation plan of Mongolia to Mongolian leaders. At the same time they handed to Choibalsan the list of 115 names of people, who allegedly participated in “Plot” and materials concerning the Prime Minister Genden”²³⁰. Many party leaders and State Baga Khurals members, and mostly intellectuals were arrested. Most of these captured people were suspected to be members of ‘Genden and Demid plot’ against the communist government. As they were instructed to finish the interrogations in 25 days, all possible cruel and violent methods were applied to make the dissidents claim their personal guilt, and their participation in counter-revolutionary provocative actions. In order to deal with the Japanese spies and counter-revolutionary dissidents, a Special Commission was established in October

²²⁹ The secret police system.

²³⁰ Boldbaatar, J., Batbayar, Ts., Baasanjav, Z. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 1999, p. 135.

1937 with a right to investigate and to try accused dissidents and “51 meetings of this Commission discussed 25,785 political cases. Out of this, 20,099 were shot and 5,739 were imprisoned until the last day of the Commission’s existence, 22 April 1939.”²³¹ This was indeed a real tragedy this country was facing at that time.

The irony of this dark period lies behind the fact that the same fate was waiting the ones who were in the first front to deal with the political dissidents. As Batbayar admits, it was in fact a copy of the Soviet strategy employed against political dissidents in the Soviet Union. Just as Stalin blamed his counterparts Yagoda and Yejov for the bloody repression in his country, Choibalsan had to blame someone for this act in order to save not only his name but also the Soviet name. This time the main figures that 'fought effectively' against the political dissidents were caught, such as the first secretary of the MPRP Luvsansharav, Dogsom and Losol. In this campaign against his counterparts Choibalsan was also instructed to deal with the Prime Minister Anand Amar who sought to employ his policy suitable to his motherland. His name also was put into the 'people's enemies' list along with Dogsom for the fact that they released some of the prisoners on the 15th anniversary of revolution in 1936. Amar had the same fate as some other leaders of the state faced, the execution.

Thus, the dark repression period cost the lives of 30,000 Mongols. It is a very big figure if we consider the population of Mongolia of that period was about 700,000. It was a real tragedy in the history of Mongolia. It is not exaggeration, if we say that there is no

²³¹ Batbayar, B., *Horidugaar Zuunii Mongol (Twentieth Century Mongolia)*, Ulaanbaatar: Hevleliin Gazar, 1996, p 456.

family that did not experience this dark repression period in Mongolia. Its shadow reached every part of the country even remote provinces.

Nationalist sentiment and a strive for unification of all Mongols did not get a support from the Government of Mongolia as it was backed by the Soviet Government. Such actions, on the contrary, led to a tragedy that cost many lives and resulted in the destruction of traditional culture including religious centers. The meaning of the word “nationalism” associated with such negative terms as anti-socialist development in the country, people’s enemy or even a foreign country spy. As a result, people in this country have hidden their feelings towards nationalism for several decades until a peaceful democratic revolution took place in 1990 in Mongolia.

Buryat Autonomous Republic of Russia

The issue of nationalism and nationalist sentiment was a very sensitive topic in the former USSR, which was comprised of many different nationalities. “The October 1917 Revolution gave a powerful impulse to the struggle of the oppressed non-Russian nationalities to put an end to the “prisonhouse of nations” that tsarism had created. The Bolsheviks recognized that the advance to socialism was possible only on the basis of guaranteeing the right of national self-determination to all oppressed nations, and through the creation of a voluntary federation of worker’s republics”²³². Initially the intention was to have a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) consisting of different nationalities on the basis of equal treatment of all who joined the Union and

²³² Lorimer, Doug, “The Collapse of ‘Communism’ in the USSR. Its Causes and Significance”, <http://www.dsp.org.au/dsp/Collapse> August 5, 2005.

eradicate economic gaps between them. However, it turned out to be different as Mr. Doug Lorimer, a member of the National Executive of the Democratic Socialist Party of Australia, points out “the USSR became a new `prisonhouse of nations` dominated by the central bureaucracy in Moscow with its Great-Russian chauvinist outlook”²³³. As a large part of the Soviet population was not Russian national “of course, there was much talk of the Soviet people, of Soviet patriotism, but the various nation’s histories had to be written, so that Russia appeared as their protector. Thus she saved Georgia from Turks, the Ukrainians from the Poles, and this was good”.²³⁴ In all regions of the Soviet Union, the role of the Soviet assistance was, thus, overemphasized, too.

During 1936-1938 the Soviet Union with its all Republics had suffered the terrible purge carried out by Stalin and his cliques. Stalin wanted to build his own regime and have the whole country under his control. As Alec Nove argues, Stalin liquidated all his enemies in some kind of order starting with leading members of the Party. Then he turned to a large number of senior military officers, a high proportion of managers at all levels, leading scientists, engineers, almost every Party and state leader in every national republic within the Soviet Union. Even the head of the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs (Yagoda) and most senior police officials, people who had contacts abroad (including diplomats, trade representatives and even many communist leaders who were residing in the Soviet Union), and finally anyone who was associated with the above-mentioned groups of people, including their colleagues, friends and family members suffered the terrible purge. Therefore, it will be difficult to find someone who

²³³ Lorimer, Doug, “The Collapse of ‘Communism’ in the USSR. Its Causes and Significance”, <http://www.dsp.org.au/dsp/Collapse> August 5, 2005.

²³⁴ Nove, A., *Stalinism and After. The Road to Gorbachev*, Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989, p. 68.

had not had any connection with people, who suffered during this terrible years of Purge in the Soviet Union.

The primary charge for the purge was treason. The suspects were called as the enemies of the people for their alleged betrayal of the country and facilitation of the enemies. Stalin intended to liquidate all capable men who could challenge him. He also charged the leaders of Soviet Republics for real of alleged bourgeois nationalism. Although Stalin himself was from Georgia, his homeland also suffered severe repression during this period.

National parties and governments were under real or alleged charges for nationalism and they were repressed in masses. All national groups including minor ethnic groups suffered greatly during this period and each of them can be a case study for research. Therefore, this paper attempts to narrow it down and examine how Buryatia faced this harsh period in pre WW II period.

Nationalism was spread out in all territories where Mongols were residing in the beginning of the 20th century. As a result in 1923 Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Republic was established in Soviet Union and they could experience some sort of independence. “At its inception, the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic had a population of slightly more than 450,000, 49% of which were Buryats.”²³⁵ However, the Soviet Government was not in favor of the Buryats’ strive

²³⁵ <http://www.buryat.info/sach-en2.htm> August 8, 2005.

for independence. Thus, it started an aggressive policy to eliminate Buryat's nationalism starting with a harsh action against the religion in Buryatia.

Buryats follow the same religion the Buddhism like other Mongols, in particular Shamanism. Buryat religion came under an attack with a forced atheism, which was denying existence of any Gods. For people, who had practiced Buddhist and Shamanist traditions for more than two centuries²³⁶ it was difficult to face a new reality, a world without a religion. Many people, in particular lamas were resisting to this new phenomenon. However, any opposition was violently crushed and as a result, most of the religious traditions, including datsans and many cultural treasures were destroyed and many lamas were either killed or sent to labor camps.

One of the very active organizations in Buryatia the Writer's Union faced a big turmoil as well. Though short but a promising period, which started with the establishment of Autonomous Republic, for Buryat nationalist activists, writers and teachers came to an end. Most of the members of the Writer's Union were arrested for their real or alleged work against the Soviet Government. One of the Buryat representatives of the Writer's Union Mr. Dambinov (named also as Tsolmon Tuya) had undergone different paths of this unstable period in the history of Buryatia. A play titled "The Great Shamaness"²³⁷ was one of the charges imposed on him though "this play - the only work not written by Dambinov to be mentioned in his interrogation protocol - was part of the "evidence" presented in Dambinov's forced confession in 1938 linking him to a fanciful

²³⁶ It is said that in 18th century Tibetan Buddhism was officially recognized in Russia as one of the religions.

²³⁷ This play describes how Buryats from 11 clans asked for petition Peter the Great and had an imperial decree issued regarding the lands from the river Yenesei to Lena to be under Buryat control.

Pan-Mongolist conspiracy. By staging this play, his accusers insisted, Dambinov had tried to promote Pan-Mongolist goals and Buryat-Mongol nationalism. Thus, this play, and none of the other Buryat plays of the same era, apparently met with particular displeasure from the Soviet authorities and partially sealed the fate of Dambinov during the Stalinist Great Purges of the late 1930s”²³⁸. Moreover, this work was criticized as politically wrong play for its lack of proletarian direction and praise of religious traditions. Though the theater understood the situation of that certain period and stopped staging plays with nationalist points and started performing Soviet style plays and work, it could not help many, whose fates were already decided by the Great Purge. Only a few have survived of the over 100 members of the Buryat Writer’s Union.

Stalin was specifically harsh towards the Buryats as many of them fled into Mongolia escaping the struggle between the White and Red Russians in the 1920s. Thus he urged the Mongolian Government to take measures against the Buryats who had settled in Mongolia by blaming them as part of Ataman Semenov’s people, who made an attempt to establish a United Mongol State in 1919 in a secret meeting with representatives of 49 khoshuus of Inner Mongolia and 7 aimags of Buryatia and 16 people representing Bargas. Though Semenov’s force gained some support at the beginning in some parts of Buryatia, he soon lost his position for their bad behavior and as a result he could not gather troops there as well. This attempt to establish a united Mongolia became the main reason for Stalin to blame Buryats for Pan Mongolian conspiracy and resentment against the Soviet government during the dark years of the purge. Many Buryats who

²³⁸ <http://www.buryat.info/solb2-en.htm>.

even dared to think about any conspiracy or plots were charged for Pan Mongolism and called as enemies of the people.

Thus, fearing for Buryat nationalism Stalin had 11,000 Buryats killed in the 1930s. During only 1937-1938, 6,836 people were arrested and 4,709 of them were charged for their alleged work against the Soviet Government. “As of February 15, 1938, 2,036 people were arrested for their Pan-Mongolist aspirations and 1,303 of them were lamas”²³⁹. Though the Buryats suffered a lot during the dark years of purge, they did serve in the Red Army honorably during the WW II. They received more ‘Hero of the Soviet Union’ decorations than any other ethnic groups in the USSR.

During WW II Buryats also made some attempts to revive Buddhist datsans and “Stalin as a gesture of gratitude allowed the Ivolginsk datsan to be rebuilt.”²⁴⁰ Though they could revive some of their traditions, all the decisions regarding their nation were still made in Moscow. Stalin’s suspicious attitude to Buryats for their alleged Pan Mongolism was continued by the subsequent leaders of the Soviet Government and the name ‘Mongol’ was removed from the name of Buryat Mongol Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic during N. Khrushchev’s leadership.

Buryatia like Mongolia had gone through similar periods with regard to the nationalism and nationalist sentiment. Though many Buryats resisted to the Soviet policy in their homeland they did not get a support from both inside and outside. In fact it was

²³⁹ Byambasuren, D., *Origins of Buryat People and Their Ethnic Peculiarity*, Ulaanbaatar, Uurlakh Erdem Publishing House, 2003, p. 38.

²⁴⁰ <http://www.strategicnetwork.org/index.php>.

interesting to compare how nationalism was developed in Mongolia and Buryat Autonomous Republic of Russia. These two territories, unfortunately, faced the same situation when they tried to express their wishes openly to have their independence in their hands. Although there had been efforts to unite all Mongols into one country in early 20th century, both internal and external factors hindered its fulfillment. It was the only chance for all Mongols to be gathered under one government but the unstable period and new governments oriented to communism had prevented it to be happened.

Current views of nationalism

To conclude the review of nationalism and its related issues in Mongolia, I would like to say a few words about its current trend. As already discussed earlier nationalism during the era of communism in Mongolia was associated mostly with Pan-Mongolism, which believed to be a disadvantageous idea that opposed the communist internationalism. Thus in order to go along well with the Comintern the topic of nationalism has become a taboo topic in Mongolia to discuss about.

However, the time has been changed and many people, including scholars, publicists, and students started addressing this sensitive topic. Many disclosed documents show why there was not much talk on nationalism before 1990s in Mongolia. Although we have more freedom of speech and more available documents, nationalism in Mongolia needs to be studied more in comparison with nationalism or how it is developed in other territories with Mongol stock people, including Inner Mongolia, Buryatia and Kalmykia.

As all Mongol territories were included in the communist world, most of the books and materials published in the last century one way or another reflected the ambiance of the conflicting ideas and went through a thorough scrutiny of the state control. The above-mentioned Mongol territories were also under jurisdiction of three different countries, though all were parts of the same system. When the interests of the two influential powers collided, their amicable relations became deteriorated and Mongolia had to follow the USSR with which it had more close relations.

Although pan-Mongolism was closely connected with nationalist idea in Mongolia, it was not supported that much in Mongolia due to geopolitical, political and ideological reasons. Geopolitically, Russia and China did not want it to be developed and all Mongols to be united. In terms of politics, Comintern did not want Mongolia to continue what Mongolian leaders in early 1900s wished to restore, in particular Great Mongolia by uniting all Mongol stock people, by claiming that this idea would harm the development of internationalism within communist bloc, which included Mongolia as well. In addition, such ideas were believed to make Mongolia turn away from the Soviet Union, thus, become an easy target of imperialist force or non-communist system. Ideologically, anything related to traditions of Mongolia, including its religion, believed to be remnants of feudal society and blamed for backwardness, thus, they along with an idea of pan-mongolism had to be ignored. During such ideological system, therefore, Mongolians tend to pay no attention to the issues like nationalism, which would make communist internationalism uncomfortable.

Today we see changes not only in people's thinking but also in political systems of former communist countries. As already discussed, many new ideas and thoughts have been expressed, published and some of them been materialized into books. It is apparent that all such ideas differ but the important thing is that this topic, nationalism in Mongolia, has attracted researchers' attention.

D. Gankhuyag, a political researcher in Mongolia, believes that nationalism is needed in the country for the sake of its development. He claims that "if a country does not have a devotion to develop its nation, approach any issues through a filter of nationalism and rely on its national principle, there will be no talks about a country, its people and national development"²⁴¹. It is unfortunately true that we knew little about Mongolian nationalism due to policies carried out by big powers and were escaping this topic due to negative consequences it brought.

Recent publications on nationalism in Mongolia and its related issues provide lots of fresh ideas about history of not only Mongolia, but also other territories with Mongol inhabitants. Here I would like to refer to some of the opinions for us to get a picture on the study of nationalism in East Asia.

"If we look at different countries in Asia, nationalism and nationalist sentiment takes different forms"²⁴². This view is provided by Richard Bush during "Asian Nationalism and Implications for the Region",²⁴³ a part of a conference titled "Democracy,

²⁴¹ Gankhuyag, D., "Long Live Mongolian Nationalism", <http://www.tsahimurtuu.mn> April 27, 2007.

²⁴² Conference material on discussions related to Asian nationalism, p. 1.

²⁴³ Conference under a title "Democracy, Nationalism and Security in the Asia Pacific", held on November 12, 2003 in Taipei, hosted by Centre for Northeast Asian Policy Studies, the Brooking

Nationalism and Security in the Asia Pacific”, held on November 12, 2003 in Taipei. During this conference participants from countries such as South Korea, Taiwan and USA shared their views on nationalism in some East Asian countries. For example, two kinds of nationalism are viewed by Chung Jae-ho, Professor of International Relations at Seoul University, in China: Firstly, “nationalism is a fundamental component of Chinese foreign policy, which is based upon a perception of its past inflicted by imperialist powers of the West.”²⁴⁴ According to the second view, “Chinese foreign policy contains a, sort of, hypersensitivity to issues related to sovereignty and national integrity.” However, China will start appreciating cooperation and international norms when its economy successfully developed. Accordingly, “Chinese nationalism could become a more soft and open kind of nationalism, and therefore, positive confidence could actually help contribute maintaining stability in the region, as well as in the world at large.”²⁴⁵

Philip Yang, Professor of International Relations at Seoul University, shares his views on Japan’s nationalism by providing two arguments: “there is a growing trend of new nationalism in Japan, and secondly, ... the new nationalism in Japan is a positive support for a closer and more equal US-Japan security alliance.”²⁴⁶ This new nationalism is resulted from “a growing desire among the Japanese public to embrace international society with a more active, independent foreign and security policy, and to become more competitive in international economy and trade.”²⁴⁷ As for nationalism in

Institution (USA) and Institute for National Policy Research (Taiwan), and co-sponsored by Taiwan Foundation for Democracy.

²⁴⁴ Conference material on discussions related to Asian nationalism, p. 2.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

²⁴⁶ Conference material on discussions related to Asian nationalism, p. 6.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

South Korea, generational change is given as one of the main factors in the development of nationalism by Jack Pritchard, an Ambassador. He refers to US forces deployment and how older generation and younger generation of South Koreans view it. The younger generation, which did not experience Korean War, believes that “South Korea should have its own identity, its own foreign and security policy.”²⁴⁸ These are some views shared on nationalism in some East Asian countries.

Consequently, nationalism certainly is viewed differently in Asia. The issue of nationalism plays a significant role in the above-mentioned regional leading powers of Asia. Although these powers have conflicting interests over the past history, they all wish to play decisive roles in the development of the region. For this they tend to rely on nationalism in order to become powerful not only in terms of security but also in economic fields.

On the contrary, small nations like Mongolia do not have such big aims. For Mongolia national sentiment is closely connected with the wish of Mongolians to remain as independent as possible, though this topic was not addressed openly during the Cold War era due to the communist doctrine, advocating internationalism but not nationalism.

Changes to the world system have brought many new flows to the lives of Mongolia. Everything, which was banned earlier, was brought to public attention. Chinggis Khan, whose name people feared to mention not in order to be regarded as “nationalist”,

²⁴⁸ Conference material on discussions related to Asian nationalism, p. 11.

became regarded as a great ruler and almost everything was named after him. As Baabar, a famous publicist, replies to a Western journalist: “the communists very brutally cut off from our traditions and history and got us to adopt the ways and views of Western civilization-with a red color of course, but still Western. Now we are becoming Mongols again.”²⁴⁹

Perhaps Baabar expresses truly the current trend in the study of history that Mongolians are searching themselves again by re-analyzing its 20th century history, much of which had been amended to meet the mood of epoch. In this search we have found that there had been chances for all Mongol people residing in different territories united in one country. However, the regional and political situations did not allow it to be happened.

With the victory of democratic revolution in Mongolia in 1990s newly established parties were calling for all Mongols’ unification. “In 1990, after the Mongolian Democratic Party publicly stated its: ‘Uniting the Three Mongolians’ stance (Mongolia, Inner Mongolia, and Mongolian Buryatskaya), the party also advocated ‘providing a unified spoken and written language and a nationality which could naturally be linked together’.”²⁵⁰

Now at the onset of the 21st century some of the Mongolian scholars, including O. Batsaikhan also believe that the time has come to call all Mongol nationals into Mongolia. He sees the reason for Mongolia to remain weakly developed in its small

²⁴⁹ Pocha, Jehangir S., “Mongolia Sees Genghis Khan’s Good Side”, *International Herald Tribune*, May 10, 2005.

²⁵⁰ Henderson, Tony, “*For Chinese Neighbors, Caution is the Byword and Trader the Catchword-Part One*”, *ON LINE Opinion* (Australia e-journal of social and political sciences), June 20, 2005.

number of population, thus believes that “one of the ways to get out of this situation is to increase the number of population in Mongolia”²⁵¹ by arising their national sentiment.

Many archive materials became available not only in Mongolia but also in other territories, including Inner Mongolia. Christopher Atwood, Professor of Mongolian History at Indiana University, shares his views on Inner Mongolian nationalism in the 1920s upon his study of archive materials in Mongolia and Inner Mongolia. He sees two processes in nationalist movements in Inner Mongolia in early 20s: “- traditional elites seeking foreign power patronage and new modes of education producing ‘enlightenment’-oriented elites – producing two distinct types of nationalist movements, each based on different regions, or occasionally occurring successfully in the same region.”²⁵² As they lacked unification, no positive results were seen. He also talks about available documents on People’s Revolutionary Party of Inner Mongolia.

Current trend in dealing with the issues of nationalism and its sentiment, therefore, vary as situations differ. While bigger powers tend to employ this issue to consolidate their national interests and further to play decisive roles in not only region but also in the world. On the contrary, small nations tend to address this topic in making their voices heard, thus, to continue their independence if they have one.

²⁵¹ Batsaikhan, O., “Time to Call Mongol Nationals”, <http://www.tsahimurtuu.mn> February 11, 2007.

²⁵² Atwood, Christopher P., “Inner Mongolian Nationalism in the 1920s: A Survey of Documentary Information”, *Twentieth Century China*, vol. 25, No. 2, April 2000, p. 82.

Chapter V
END OF JAPANESE EXPANSION INTO EAST ASIA
AND WORLD WAR II

Japanese military expansion into Manchuria and Mongolia

In 1939 a big scale military conflict between Mongolia and Japan took place, when the Japanese Kwantung Army, based Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo established in 1932, waged a military war on the Mongolia-Manchuria border, at Halkhiin Gol. Prior to this attack, there had been many border conflicts, waged by both sides. There are many books, articles and memoirs about Halkhiin Gol war or Nomonhan incident. However, the comments and opinions made by the two fighting sides, the Soviet – Mongolian, and Japanese, differ. Thus, in this part the discussion includes both sides opinions and the focus will be on Japanese military expansion into Manchuria and Mongolia and Halkhiin Gol War.

As Alvin D. Coox points out in his book *Nomonhan: Japan against Russia, 1939*²⁵³, Japan identified Russia as the primary hypothetical enemy on the continent in the First Imperial National Defense Policy of 1907. The Japanese army was interested in launching a decisive offensive against Russians in Manchuria in the years following the Russo-Japanese war. To implement their plan they needed a big military presence in South Manchuria. Thus, it was the beginning of the talk about the formation of the Kwantung Army, which later led the Japanese army expansion into north Manchuria

²⁵³ Coox, Alvin D., *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985.

and Mongolia. Kwantung Military Government established under Manchuria Army initially sought to administer the leasehold, deal with army affairs, and defend the South Manchurian Railway (SMR). The military government was replaced soon by the peacetime Kwantung Government General giving an army bureau the rights to handle military affairs. In 1919 the Kwantung Army was set up on the base of this bureau.²⁵⁴

With the end of the World War I, the Japanese national defense policy was examined again. As Coox points out, three hypothetical foes were identified: Russia remained the army's main enemy, America- the navy's, and China – the third hypothetical enemy. In 1923, the Japanese army decided to draft contingency plans against these three enemies. According to Army General Staff (AGS) Operations plan, a wartime-mobilized strength of 32 divisions would be used against these three national enemies. This plan remained constant in the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) until 1932.

The Japanese attack on Manchuria started on September 18, 1931. “When the Chinese attempted to blow up a rail bridge in Manchuria, the Japanese started an offensive and subsequently established their control over Mukgen (present-day Shenyang)”²⁵⁵ and by January 3, 1932 Manchuria was occupied. Subsequently the Japanese firmly established their presence in Manchuria establishing a Manchukuo state by enthroning Pu Yi, the last emperor of the Qing state, as the Emperor of the Manchukuo.

²⁵⁴ Coox, Alvin D., *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985, pp. 3-9.

²⁵⁵ Baabar, *History of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar: Monsudar. 2004, p.335.

As the borders of Manchukuo, the newly established state in 1932, with Soviet Russia and Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) were not clearly defined, there were many small and medium scale disputes since 1930s. According to Japanese sources, 152 border small-scale border conflicts occurred between 1932-34 on Manchuko and Russian borders. According to the Soviet sources, there were 1,850 border violations from Japanese side between 1932 and 1945.

After the establishment of Manchukuo, the Japan-Manchukuo side indicated their interests in settling borders with Mongolia through negotiations with Soviet Russia. The discussions were in progress until the border clashes occurred in 1935. As Coox writes, in 1936 the Japanese side again proposed to have mixed boundary commissions to deal with two facing problems: "one to handle border disputes; the other would investigate demarcation of the controversial eastern frontier between lake Khanka and the Tumen River."²⁵⁶ This time the Soviets agreed to consider the proposals. However, they did not reach agreement as the Soviets argued against the Japanese statement that Manchukuo would join the working committee as an independent representative. The frontier between Manchukuo and the MPR was also a disputable area. As Gerard Friters points out "the Japanese considered Lake Buir Nur as a part of Manchukuo and the Halkha River as 'natural boundary between the two countries'. The Outer Mongolian maps, however, included the Halkha River and Lake Buir Nur within the territory of the

²⁵⁶ Coox, Alvin D., *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985, p. 97.

Mongolian People's Republic"²⁵⁷. That is why there were number of border conflicts along this borderline with each party claiming the territory as their land.

Though Manchukuo was a puppet state formed by the Japanese, as a new state it had a great interest in defining their border lines with neighboring countries and get formal recognition of its independence by other powers. In its relationship with Mongolia, prior to the settlement of the border disputes, Manchukuo wanted Mongolia to recognize their independence and to have their representatives in Ulaanbaatar and in five other places in Mongolia. Former Japanese Ambassador (1925-1930) in Moscow, Tokichi Tanaka during his position as Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote in 1932 that "in my personal opinion Japan should accord recognition of the independent Mongolian Republic and formally enter into official relations with it. There can be nothing strange in treating a state as independent, when that independence has not been challenged either internally or externally for over a decade. I see no serious reason which will preclude either Japan recognizing Mongolia, or Mongolia from accepting the recognition, unless the northern giant should stand in the way, which all things considered, is extremely unlikely..."²⁵⁸. It seemed as if both states recognized each other's independence, Japan was ready to recognize the existence of the MPR, too.

The Soviet Union saw in the MPR an important strategic location and that was later said by Stalin in 1945 that "it was necessary that Outer Mongolia be independent because of its strategic position, highly important for the Soviet Union; if a military power were to

²⁵⁷ Friters, Gerard M., *Outer Mongolia and Its International Position*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1949, p. 235.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

attack through Mongolia and cut the Trans-Siberian Railway, the USSR would be finished.”²⁵⁹. Having this idea in their mind, as Coox points out, “to shield the satellite regime in Outer Mongolia against the possibility of external inference, especially by Japan, the Soviet Union in November 1934 signed a so called gentleman’s agreement with the MPR representatives in Moscow, providing for reciprocal assistance in case of attack on either party – though in practice this meant on Mongolia”²⁶⁰. By this gentleman's agreement Stalin declared that Mongolia was an ally of Soviet Russia. At this time, the agreement was not published as the Soviet Russians did not want to confront with the Chinese over the issue²⁶¹ of Outer Mongolia. Two years later in March 1936, Stalin in his interview with an American journalist Roy Howard publicly announced that “the Soviet Union will help the MPR if the Japanese attack this country and encroach upon its independence.... We will help them as we did in 1921”²⁶². Soon after that on March 12 1936 the Soviet-Mongolian mutual defense protocol was signed as part of 10 year Soviet-Mongolian pact of friendship. According to this protocol, both sides take the responsibility of assisting each other, including military assistance, if the third part attacked any of the two parties.

In the middle of 1930s a number of border incidents occurred between Mongolian and Manchurian sides. As Coox writes, in January 1935 Outer Mongolian soldiers invaded Manchukuo at the complicated estuary of the downstream Halkha. Contrary to this, Mongol sources say that armed 17 Manchukuo soldiers entered the border of Mongolia

²⁵⁹ Rupen, Robert, *How Mongolia Is Really Ruled: A Political History of the Mongolian People's Republic, 1900-1978*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1979, p. 45.

²⁶⁰ Coox, Alvin D., *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985, p. 149.

²⁶¹ USSR at that time recognized the sovereignty of China in Mongolia.

²⁶² Batbayar, B., *Horidugaar Zuunii Mongol (Twentieth Century Mongolia)*, Ulaanbaatar: Hevleliin Gazar, 1996, p. 438.

and went to the direction of Halkha sum. This led to the firing from both sides and led to the dispute between the MPR and Manchukuo. It was a usual claim from both sides, as the conflicting sides never accepted that they waged the aggressive trespassing first. During 1935-1937 MPR and Manchukuo negotiated five times, but no agreements were reached to settle the border disputes. Mongolia considered Nomonhan and Burdovoo-hills its territory, whereas Japan and Manchukuo considered Halkhiin Gol as the borderline between MPR and Manchukuo.

According to the Mongolian and Soviet sources, the Japanese detachments conducted systematic provocations along the Mongolian frontier and on May 11, 1939 Bargut horsemen under Japanese control and accompanied by 'advisers' from Komatsubara's 23rd Division intruded the territory of Mongolia, in the area of Halkhiin Gol and attacked the Mongolian soldiers. As Coox observes "as is usually the case when frontier incidents erupt, accounts by the opposing sides are radically dissimilar. The experience of Nomonhan is no exception"²⁶³. The Japanese force then occupied the area up to the eastern shore of Halkhiin Gol. As the dispute erupted again the Mongolian and Soviet troops²⁶⁴ were reinforced to Halkhiin Gol from Tamsagbulan and neighboring posts. By May 25, about 10,000 men were counted on the joint Mongolian-Soviet side. With reinforcements the joint forces pushed the Japanese soldiers back to the border by May 29. After that both sides started taking serious preparations against each other. The Japanese gathered three times more force than before. As Moscow was already alarmed,

²⁶³ Coox, Alvin D., *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985, p. 189.

²⁶⁴ As part of the mutual defense protocol between Mongolia and Japan, number of Soviet garrisons were stationing in the territory of Mongolia, particularly in the eastern province Dornod, which bordered with Manchukuo.

they sent Georgii K. Zhukov to the place of military dispute, Halkhiin Gol. He went to the front personally and judged the current situation, “if Japanese force increases their offensive military acts from different regions and sites the only 57th special Corps will not be able to stand against them”.²⁶⁵ As Moscow agreed to the proposed plan, it immediately sent a group of experienced pilots, all heroes of the Soviet Union and ‘Chaika’ aircrafts.

With this reinforcement of the air force on June 22, 1939, the two sides went into a fierce air battle. According to Zhukov, 95 Soviet and 120 Japanese planes were participated in the battle. During 22 –26 of June the Japanese side lost 64 of their planes. As Zhukov wrote, the Japanese gathered their force during June in Halkhiin Gol area with a purpose to have a big military operation under the name of “The Second stage of Nomonhan” against the Soviet-Mongolian force. To implement their operation they brought reinforcements from Hailar. The Japanese wanted to finish this operation in the first half of July as the Headquarters wished to end all military operations in the territory of Mongolia by autumn. Before dawn on July 3, the Japanese took Bayantsagaan mountain with surrounding hills. That made the 6th cavalry division of Mongolia to draw back. As the situation became serious the Soviet force was brought to Bayantsagaan. According to Zhukov, 10,000 soldiers were counted on the Japanese side whereas there were 1,000 soldiers on the Soviet side.²⁶⁶

Then both sides started preparing for the third battle. The Japanese brought two infantry regiments, several more divisions from Manchukuo army. They increased their airforce,

²⁶⁵ Zhukov, G.K., *Memoir*, Ulaanbaatar: State Publishing House, 1977, p. 170.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 170-1.

brought heavy rifle force from Port Arthur. After that, as Batbayar writes, the Japanese side had 76,000 men, 304 machine guns, 500 mortars, 182 tanks, and about 300 airplanes. The Soviets in their part took more measures by bringing two rifle divisions, tank and airborne brigades, and a rifle division from the Soviet Union. In the end the number of Soviet soldiers grew to 1.5 more than the Japanese force and its weapons increased significantly. Therefore, though the incident was not declared, the number of force and weapons reached the size of a war.²⁶⁷

In the Japanese part, General Komatsubara reported that Mongolian forces violated the border line in May and he showed his strong reaction by “committing the main body of his reconnaissance regiment under Lt. Col. Azuma Yaozo, two infantry companies under a battalion commander, and all available Manchukuo army troops”²⁶⁸. As Coox writes, at this time “the High Command was quietly studying the possibility of shifting operational emphasis, in the event of hostilities against the Soviet Union, from the eastern and northern fronts of Manchukuo to the long neglected west”²⁶⁹. When Azuma’s force reached Nomonhan on May 15, the Mongol troops were almost withdrawn back. Some Mongol troop concentration was found and attacked by Japanese light bombers. As Azuma got an instruction to return to Hailar, a Manchukuo cavalry regiment (300 men) was left in Nomonhan area. The Mongols repeatedly appeared on the right side of the Halkhiin Gol, and even recrossed the river, according to Japanese source. Therefore, Komatsubara decided to form a stronger force to oust them. According to Coox's account, “general officers were not given orders as such in the

²⁶⁷ Baabar, *History of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar: Monsudar. 2004, p. 388.

²⁶⁸ Coox, Alvin D., *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985, p. 193.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

Japanese army; they received recommendations, for reference only, which they were free to accept or not. Hence Komatsubara was not ignoring any order but only reacting, as his own professional discretion, to suggestions transmitted by the Kwantung army”²⁷⁰. By May 26, Yamagata’s detachment moved to Kanchuerhnia as Komatsubara instructed. Then after inspecting the situation he ordered to launch offensive against Soviet-Mongolian force. The Japanese expected to have an easy operation like Azuma had before. Their plan looked perfect on paper, as they never had an experience of meeting Soviet-Mongolian force in combat.

According to tactical plan, Azuma’s reconnaissance unit was supposed to seize Halha-Holsten confluence, where as intelligence reported the enemies built military bridges, to cut the retreating enemy from the back. Though, Azuma’s unit fought heroically until it nearly annihilated, the battle for Halkha junction was decided against Japanese.²⁷¹

As Coox writes, though the Japanese officers knew that the opposing forces were partly Soviet, “no one expected the Russians to become heavily involved in the Nomonhan fighting”²⁷². Since it was known that the Japanese were tapping the telephone lines, the Soviets made a whole set of deceptive radio and telephone programs. Moreover, as Zhukov remembers “a special radio apparatus was employed to transmit sound and noise of hammering of beams, aircraft engines and tanks in order to move the divisions

²⁷⁰ Coox, Alvin D., *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985, p. 202.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 203-9.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 246.

and battalions to the front.”²⁷³ It gave the Soviet force to cross and concentrate the divisions and brigades without difficulties. The Soviet Headquarters planned to launch an offensive not later than August 20. Tactically, Zhukov’s army group preferred August 20 because it was Sunday and the lax Japanese command had allowed and senior officers to take leave. By August 20 Zhukov managed to move all his main forces, except for the 6th Tank Brigade, across the Halkhiin Gol, and deployed in three groupings. At 8:45 the offensive started in 70 km wide front. As Zhukov remembers, the offensive was done according to the tactical plan and by August 26, the 6th Japanese army was circled and a strike upon the Japanese continued for a week. In three battles 18,100 died and 48,600 wounded on the Japanese side whereas the Soviet side countered 8,900 dead and 15,900 wounded.²⁷⁴

On September 15, the Japanese started their operation again in the area of Numrug river, and occupied the left side of the river. When the Soviet-Mongolian sides prepared to give a counter attack, Moscow sent an order to stop the fighting as on September 15 the two opposing sides started a negotiation in Moscow. As Batbayar notes, due to the Halkhiin Gol war Mongolia lost some of its territory, particularly the left shore of Numrug river, Mana mountain to later China at Soviet and Japanese fault. Initially this area was not a disputed matter between Mongolia and Manchuria.

The Soviet and Japanese teams could not reach an agreement on a number of negotiations and finally in May 1942 the Soviet Mongolian side had secured the

²⁷³ Zhukov, G.K., *Memoir*, Ulaanbaatar: State Publishing House, 1977, p. 179.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

controversial main boundary in the basin of the Holsten. As Coox supposes, “the lopsided settlement of the frontiers is one objective way of choosing the victor at Nomonhan”²⁷⁵. Finally the war at Halkhiin Gol was over with a victory of the Soviet Mongolian army.

The Soviet Union did approach China with their requests for the Chinese to make attacks against the Japanese military force. As John Garver writes, “while the Nomonhan conflict was escalating in June and July, Soviet military advisors in China began pushing Chiang Kai-shek to launch a major offensive in central China which would limit Japan’s ability to redeploy forces from China to the Manchurian-Mongolian border. According to Aleksandr Kalyagin, a senior Soviet advisor in China, after the clash near Nomonhan on May 28 the head of the Soviet advisory mission, General A.I. Cherepanov (who had also been a military advisor to the KMT during the early 1920s) drew up plans for two major offensives by Nationalist forces that were to be launched in June and July.”²⁷⁶ He then presented his plans to Chiang Kai-shek on 16 June or “six days after the third Soviet credit agreement with China was signed. ...Having just received Soviet largess, and still desiring to ensure actual Soviet delivery of goods, Chiang could hardly decline the Soviet request for an offensive. But perhaps with the experience of 1938 in mind, and with one eye on the rapid expansion of Chinese Communist power behind Japanese lines, Chiang was also in no mood to agree with the request.”²⁷⁷

²⁷⁵ Coox, Alvin D., *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985, p. 986.

²⁷⁶ Garver, John W., *Chinese-Soviet Relations, 1937-1945. The Diplomacy of Chinese Nationalism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 36.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

The Chinese discussed and approved the plan made by Cherepanov during a KMT military council session. Although they agreed to launch the offensive in mid-July, it was postponed until mid-September. The Russian leaders, Stalin and Voroshilov, the Defense Commissar, were urging the Chinese to launch the offensive by sending Chiang a letter on July 9. However, no offensive launches were made and “Soviet military advisors in China felt that Chiang was deliberately stalling to ‘await developments in the international situation’, a euphemism for a Soviet-Japanese war.”²⁷⁸

In the battle at Halkhiin Gol the Japanese army took serious defeat. Five months later of the cease-fire, in February of 1940, War Minister General Hata was addressed some questions at the open budget committee hearings on Japanese industry about Nomonhan affair. As Coox points out, General Hata replied in generalities saying “the fighting at Nomonhan, with its many precious victims, had provided ‘a very good lesson’ for the Japanese military”²⁷⁹. When the military authorities were trying to convince that Nomonhan incident was not a failure of Japanese army at all, there were also honest efforts made to analyze the incident objectively.

After the cease-fire Nomonhan Incident Research Committee was established at the Vice-Minister of War’s request to AGS. In the reports of the Nomonhan Incident Research Committee, it was said that all the Japanese troops fought strongly to the end

²⁷⁸ Garver, John W., *Chinese-Soviet Relations, 1937-1945. The Diplomacy of Chinese Nationalism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 37.

²⁷⁹ Coox, Alvin D., *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985, p. 1001.

regardless of rank or branch of service. “The greatest lessons of Nomonhan were judged to center on the need to strengthen the traditional fighting spirit while improving the capacity to wage a war of firepower, whose standard was still low in the Japanese army”²⁸⁰ and suggested several ways to enhance spiritual quality: by increasing and nurturing an officer corps geared to wartime, by creating a command structure at war level, and by boosting morale. Though the Japanese worked on firepower for quite a long time, it did not reach the desired level by 1939. The Nomonhan experience, thus, “could provide the basis for a firsthand and objective comprehension of the nature of modern firepower war, and for epoch-making improvements in organization, equipment, supply, training, deployment, and techniques,”²⁸¹ as Coox argues. The Committee also addressed the problems of armament as inadequate compared to the Soviets modernized equipment. At the same time the Kwantung Army prepared a report with detailed attachments, derived from experiences from Nomonhan incident.

The Nomonhan conflict, thus, made the Japanese army leave the northern front and turn to the south, though there were still some high-ranking Kwantung army officers who wanted to go for offensive against Japan. The Japanese refer to Halkhiin Gol war as an ordinary border clash between the two sides, Mongolia and Manchukuo, as there were no clear boundary lines. It is also widely believed that the Soviet and Japanese armies tested their military capabilities in the territory of Mongolia, in Halkhiin Gol area. However, the battle of Nomonhan, was a merely the culmination of a long process of Japanese-Soviet rivalry, which had very serious internal implication for Mongolia,

²⁸⁰ Coox, Alvin D., *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985, p. 1009.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1010.

leading directly to the savage political repression of 1937, two years before the battle, as discussed earlier.

The Halkhiin Gol war and the circumstances in which it took place had negative consequences in Mongolia. The entire period of the 1930s, in fact, was a tragic one in Mongolia's history. At that time Mongolia was heavily influenced by Soviet doctrines and followed everything that Stalin was testing out on the Soviet population, from collectivization of farmers to the purges of intellectuals. Throughout the 1930s one of the main charges leveled against so-called 'counter revolutionists' was that they were 'spies of Japan'. Many innocent people became victims of these terrible purges. The clash at Halkhiin Gol made it easy for the Mongolian people to believe that Soviet inspired purges had, in fact, some basis. It also served to tighten the Soviet grip on Mongolia, intensified negative views of Japan and destroyed all possibility of amicable relations between Ulaanbaatar and Tokyo for a long time.

Pre-Yalta American views on China and the Soviet Union

Prior to analyzing the Yalta conference and its outcomes there is a need to review the American policy with regard to China and the Soviet Union in 1944-1945 to get a clear picture why the Americans sought to secure the Soviet entry into the Pacific war, and how it helped Mongolia secure its independence both politically and geographically.

China by 1944 had seen a fierce struggle between the Chinese Nationalist Government headed by Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Communist Party headed by Mao Tse-tung

whom to lead the country. Although both sides were expressing their intentions to be united against their common enemy – Japan, it was far too optimistic to believe in their cooperation.

General Joseph Stilwell, Commander of all American forces in the China-India-Burma (later China) Theater of WWII, who favored a tough policy toward Chiang Kai-shek and his government, was recalled in October 1944. He believed that the removal of Chiang would save China from a fight between the Kuomintang and Communist Parties by stating that “the only thing that keeps the country split is fear of losing control. He [Chiang Kai-shek] hates the Reds and will not take any chance on giving them a toehold in the government....If this condition persists, China will have civil war immediately after Japan is out. If Russia enters the war before a united front is found in China, the Reds, being immediately accessible, will naturally gravitate to Russia’s influence and control. The condition will directly affect the relations between Russia and China, and therefore indirectly those between Russia and the United States”²⁸². Thus, he could predict the future of China but his thoughts did not get support. In addition, though General Stilwell indicated the problems with the National Government like corruption and incapacity of the leaders, he was removed from his post in China mostly due to conflicting personality with the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

General Albert C. Wedemeyer was appointed as Commander-in-Chief of American forces in China in 1944. Though he maintained friendly relations with the National Government, “in 1944-45 he contributed decisively to convincing Marshall that

²⁸² Pogue, Forrest C., *George Marshall: Statesman*, New York: Penguin Books, p. 42.

Stilwell's portrayal of the Generalissimo and China's weaknesses was accurate"²⁸³. Nevertheless, he was successful in cooperating with the Nationalist Chinese and established an effective China-American cooperation.

During this time Major General Patrick J. Hurley was appointed as a Personal Representative of the President of the U.S. to China and later became an Ambassador in China. Prior to the arrival of General Hurley the National Government and the Communists were negotiating for about seven years to reach a consensus with regard to establishing a united front against the Japanese aggressors but no success was reached.

As there was no success in reaching consensus between the National Government and Communists some Americans suggested to having relationship with both of the parties that were struggling for power to control the whole country. In particular George Acheson, American charge d'Affaires at Chungking, raised a question of supplying arms and military equipment to the Communists along with the Kuomintang army. He suggested that "the President inform Chiang Kai-shek in definite terms that we are required by military necessity to cooperate with and supply the Communists and other suitable groups who can aid in this war against the Japanese. ...Chiang Kai-shek can be assured by us that we do not contemplate reduction of our assistance to the Central Government."²⁸⁴ However, General Hurley strongly opposed these recommendations and the National Government headed by Chiang Kai-shek remained the only

²⁸³ Pogue, Forrest C., *George Marshall: Statesman*, New York: Penguin Books, p. 55.

²⁸⁴ U.S. Department of State, *The China White Paper*, August 1949. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970, p. 89.

Government of China which received military materials and financial support from the U.S.

The U.S. Government did everything possible through its people in China to make the two parties of China reach a consensus and unite against the Japanese. However, no positive outcomes were seen despite their efforts. Thus their belief in Chiang Kai-shek that he was the only one who could hold China together was waning.

When General Hurley was heading for China via Moscow he met with Molotov, Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, and had a discussion with regard to the Chinese matters in September 1944. As George Kennan, the U.S. charge d'Affaires in Moscow, wrote: "General Hurley had carried away from the interview a most remarkably optimistic impression of Soviet intentions towards China. He summed up as follows... what he understood Molotov's views to be:

- (1) The so-called Chinese Communists are not in fact Communists at all.
- (2) The Soviet Government is not supporting the Chinese Communists.
- (3) The Soviets do not desire dissensions or civil war in China.
- (4) The Soviets complain of Chinese treatment of Soviet citizens in China but frankly desire closer and more harmonious relations in China."²⁸⁵

General Hurley met with Stalin on April the following year. His views on Soviet considerations regarding Chinese matters remained as optimistic as it was before.

²⁸⁵ Kennan, George F., *Memoirs 1925-1950*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1972, p. 236.

According to the report of the interview, the U.S. policy would be supported by the Soviet Government, the Soviets would provide complete support for immediate actions directed to the unification of the armed forces of China, and they would fully recognize the Chinese National Government under the leadership of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. When George Kennan became familiar with the report of the interview he decided to make some corrections as its content was much more optimistic than the real situation was. Thus he together with Mr. John Davies²⁸⁶ drafted a personal message to Mr. Harriman, the U.S. Ambassador in Moscow (who at that time was in the U.S.). As Kennan writes "...to the Russians words mean different things than they do to us. Stalin is of course prepared to affirm the principle of unifying the armed forces of China. He knows that unification is feasible in a practical sense only on conditions which are acceptable to the Chinese Communist Party..."²⁸⁷ Although men like George Kennan was providing different views on Soviet intentions there were other men like Hurley and Marshall who viewed cooperation with Russia as possible. "After meeting Stalin at Tehran and Yalta he [Marshall] concluded that the Russian leader would keep his word if he had positively and unequivocally given in"²⁸⁸. Thus, the American policy towards China was changed when friendly relations with Soviet Union took precedence over all other issues. A military necessity on the first place made the U.S. government agree to conditions the Soviet Union requested in order to join the Allied force. At that time the Japanese Kwantung army seemed to have a considerable force in Manchuria. Above all, the U.S. government wanted to make the war end as early as possible by saving as many lives of their people as possible. All these concerns were the governing reasons for

²⁸⁶ The U.S. embassy secretary, who was most familiar with Chinese affairs, in Moscow.

²⁸⁷ Kennan, George F., *Memoirs 1925-1950*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1972, p. 238.

²⁸⁸ Pogue, Forrest C., *George Marshall: Statesman*, New York: Penguin Books, p. 153.

America to seek the Soviet entrance into the Pacific war along with their primary concern of securing their sphere of influence in East Asia.

Yalta Conference: Discussions concerning Far East and reaction of Nationalist China

Prior to Yalta conference American and Soviet military officers were holding discussions on their joint operations against Japan. Of course, “these were dealt with in a separate secret accord between the Heads of State”²⁸⁹. Russians had in their mind to enter the Pacific War soon after the defeat of Germany and their plan in fact suited the American military strategy.

Stalin saw in the war against Japan an opportunity to realize some of his ambitions in the Far East. As Tien-fong Cheng argues, “he wanted to choose a most advantageous moment to enter the war so that the Soviet Union would get maximum benefit at the minimum sacrifice”²⁹⁰. Thus Stalin declared his intention (to join the Allied force when he defeated Germany on the western front) at Moscow Big Three Foreign Ministers’ Conference as well as at Teheran Conference in 1943.

On February 11, 1945 the heads of three states, Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin signed the secret Yalta agreement with a title “Agreement regarding Japan”. According to this agreement the Soviet Union will declare war on Japan “in two or three months” after the

²⁸⁹ Feis, Herbert, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin. The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974, p. 503.

²⁹⁰ Cheng, Tien-fong, *A History of Sino-Russian Relations*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1975, p. 263.

surrender of Germany. “The conditions for Soviet participation in the war against Japan are as follows:

1. The status quo in Outer-Mongolia (The Mongolian People’s Republic) shall be reserved;
2. The former rights of Russia violated by the treacherous attack of Japan in 1904 shall be restored, vis:
 - a) the southern part of Sakhalin as well as all the islands adjacent to it shall be returned to the Soviet Union,
 - b) the commercial port of Dairen shall be internationalized, the preeminent interests of the Soviet Union in this port being safeguarded and the lease of Port Arthur as a naval base of the USSR restored,
 - c) the Chinese-Eastern Railroad and the South Manchurian Railroad which provides an outlet to Dairen shall be jointly operated by the establishment of a joint Soviet-Chinese company is being understood that the preeminent interests of the Soviet Union shall be safeguarded and that China shall retain full sovereignty in Manchuria.
3. The Kuril islands shall be handed over to the Soviet Union.”²⁹¹

In fact, discussions concerning the above issues were held between only American and Russian sides. In his book *Triumph and Tragedy*, Churchill wrote: “I must make it clear that though on behalf of Great Britain I joined the agreement, neither I nor Eden²⁹² took any part in making it. It was regarded as an American affair and was certainly of prime

²⁹¹ *Confidential US State Department Special Files. North East Asia, 1943-1956*, Frederick, Md: University Publications of America, Reel 1 of 24.

²⁹² Foreign Minister of Great Britain.

interest to their military operations. It was not for us to claim to shape it. Anyhow we were not consulted but asked to approve. This we did....To us the problem was remote and secondary”²⁹³. Thus the Yalta secret agreement concerning the Far East was discussed primarily between the Americans and Russians as stated earlier. Of course, the Americans did not agree with the Soviet desires immediately. The provisions concerning the Dairen port, Chinese Eastern Railroad, South Manchurian Railroad, as well as maintenance of the status quo in Outer Mongolia required Chinese approval. Therefore, upon discussing the above issue the two sides agreed to include a statement: “it is understood that the agreement concerning Outer Mongolia and the ports and railroads referred to above will require concurrence of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. The President will take measures in order to obtain this concurrence on advice from Marshall Stalin”²⁹⁴. For its part the Soviet Union expressed its readiness to conclude a pact of Friendship and Alliance with the National Government of China and to provide assistance to its armed forces.

At Yalta conference, therefore, the Soviet Union formally agreed to enter the war against Japan. As Cheng Tien-fong writes “due to inaccurate intelligence reports, however, American leaders overestimated Japanese strength and were exceedingly anxious to get the Soviet Union into the war against Japan so as to shorten the duration of the war and to save many American lives”²⁹⁵. Although there can be many interpretations on the American act, it is a fact that such negotiations took place at that time.

²⁹³ Feis, Herbert, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin. The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974, p. 517.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 515.

²⁹⁵ Cheng, Tien-fong, *A History of Sino-Russian Relations*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1975, p.263.

The Soviet Union declared a war on Japan on August 8, 1945 as promised after joining the Potsdam Declaration. At the same time Mongolia, an ally to the Soviet Union, declared war on Japan a day later. In the morning of August 9, 1945 the Soviet army entered the North East China in three big fronts and occupied Manchuria, Sakhalin and Kurile islands within a short period and liberated towns in North Korea. Kharbin, Mukden, Chanchung and Giring were liberated on August 20 and Port Arthur was liberated on August 23.²⁹⁶

Two reasons why China was not consulted with regard to Yalta agreement, especially its provisions on China, can be explained. Primary concern of both American and Russian sides was a fear that there would be a leak of the information from Chinese sources to the Japanese. And the governing consideration was a “military necessity”. America wanted to secure the participation of the Soviet Union into the Pacific war for whatever it cost, however, for this reason the American leaders would be blamed later.

As the Chinese were not aware of this secret agreement concerning some parts of their land both the American and Soviet sides found it hard to break the news to Chiang Kai-shek. Both of the heads of state, the U.S. President and Stalin wanted each other to deal with this sensitive issue. Finally, as Stalin requested the American side agreed to consult first with Chiang Kai-shek. Roosevelt did it so through his Ambassador Hurley, who informed Chiang Kai-shek in June 1945, in China.

²⁹⁶ Naran, Dugarjav, *History of China. XX Century*, Ulaanbaatar: Publishing House of Mongolian National University, 2002, p. 126.

This is what Forrest C. Pogue, a historian, writes about a reaction of Chiang Kai-shek: “he described his shock at the Yalta agreements relating to China. Under the circumstances the Generalissimo had accepted these arrangements, although they were contrary to the United States’ traditional stand²⁹⁷ toward China and would create resentment. Action of the Moscow Conference of the Council of Foreign Ministers regarding China, in late 1945, had also been offensive to Chiang.”²⁹⁸ Thus the secret agreement was a shock to Chiang Kai-shek. Although there were positive promises on the Soviet side the Chinese were skeptical when they were to conduct direct negotiations with the Russians.

The National Government, represented by T.V. Soong, the Foreign Minister, met with Stalin in Moscow on June 30, 1945 as both sides, the National Government of China and the Soviet Union, needed to tackle the issues discussed at Yalta conference. Soong “immediately took up the question of Outer Mongolia and stressed ... that his government did not want this issue included in the negotiations. Stalin, in response, underlined the strategic position of Mongolia and his firm belief that in the future Japan would rise again. ‘We must have legal right to defend ourselves in [the] territory of Outer Mongolia,’ Stalin said. He then added the Machiavellian argument that an independent Mongolian republic would reduce the danger for a nationalist rebellion in Outer and Inner Mongolia. Such a rebellion would be ‘to the detriment of China and us.’ ”²⁹⁹. Prior to meeting with the Soviet leader, the Chinese, in particular Chiang

²⁹⁷ Open Door Policy. It originally stated that every nation should have equal economic opportunities in China but it was soon redefined as a call for the territorial and administrative integrity in China.

²⁹⁸ Pogue, Forrest C., *George Marshall: Statesman*, New York: Penguin Books, 1989, p. 140.

²⁹⁹ Westad, Odd Arne., *Cold War Revolution: Soviet-American Rivalry and the Origins of the Chinese Civil War, 1944-1946*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993, p. 37.

Kai-shek, was hoping to get the American diplomatic support in dealing with the sensitive issues of Yalta conference. However, America was not in a position to provide their support to the Chinese as itself was a part who signed the Yalta agreement with the Soviet Union.

In his memoir Harry Truman, the President of the U.S., wrote, “On July 4 I instructed Secretary of State Byrnes to inform Harriman that the United States did not want to act as interpreter on any point in the Yalta Agreement during the present discussions in Moscow. Harriman was told, however, that he could ‘informally’ confirm to Soong his understanding that in so far as the United States was concerned there was no discussion of interpretation of the wording of the Yalta decision relating to the status of Outer Mongolia and that in the absence of such discussion accepted meaning of the words written would be that the present factual and juridical status of Outer Mongolia to be preserved.”³⁰⁰

Most of the Chinese scholars support the view that 1945 Yalta agreement bore a tone of inequality similar to old unequal treaties it made early with foreign powers. According to Dong Wang, Assistant professor of History, Gordon College and Research Associate at the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research, Harvard University, “the unequal nature of the 1945 treaty is apparent from four sets of documents annexed to it. First, there is the exchange of notes between Wang Shijie, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and V.M. Molotov, the People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs, dated 14 August 1945. This exchange concerns China’s binding recognition of the independence of Outer Mongolia,

³⁰⁰ *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman. 1945: Years of Decisions*, New York: Smithmark, 1955, p. 317.

which had long been seen by China as an integral part of Chinese territory.”³⁰¹ He further discusses other documents concerning Chinese Changchun Railway, Port Arthur, and Dairen and states that the provisions on China resemble old Unequal treaties. Dong Wang’s statement on Mongolia clearly shows what the Chinese believed by then.

As promised at Yalta Conference, the Soviet Union concluded the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance with the Republic of China on August 14, 1945. According to the Article V of the Treaty, the two countries “agree to work together in close and friendly collaboration after the coming of peace and to act according to the principles of mutual respect for their sovereignty and territorial integrity and of non-interference in the internal affairs of the other contracting party”³⁰². Although the Chinese side did not fully support the provisions of Yalta agreement, it did sign the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance with the Russians. In his article “Redeeming “A Century of National Ignominy”: Nationalism and Party Rivalry over the Unequal Treaties, 1928-1947”, Dong Wang refers to Wang Shijie, who was then Minister for Foreign Affairs of China and put his signatures on the treaty. The Kuomintang Chinese had three motives to accept the Yalta provisions concerning China. “First, China was unwilling to run the risk of isolating itself by alienating its most powerful ally, the United States. Second, the GMD³⁰³ government was hoping to improve relations with the USSR so that Russia would moderate its support of the CCP³⁰⁴ and its ‘rebellious behavior’. In the 1945 treaty, the Jiang government was recognized as ‘the Central Government of China’ and

³⁰¹ Wang, Dong, “Redeeming “A Century of National Ignominy”: Nationalism and Party Rivalry over the Unequal Treaties, 1928-1947”, *Twentieth-Century China*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Center for Chinese Studies, vol. 30, No. 2, April 2005, p. 87.

³⁰² Pogue, Forrest C., *George Marshall: Statesman*, New York: Penguin Books, 1989, p. 586.

³⁰³ GMD –Guomindang/Kuomintang or the Nationalist Party of China.

³⁰⁴ CCP-Chinese Communist Party.

designated as the sole recipient of Russian moral and material support. Third, Wang recognized that the Russian Red Army had already entered Manchuria on 8 August and feared that Japan might surrender in response to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on 6 August, before the USSR could enter the war.”³⁰⁵ Although these can be the reasons for the Nationalist party to sign the treaty with Russia, their main drive was political considerations. They wanted to take more power in the post-war settlements, especially in Manchuria. The two conflicting parties in China, one headed by Chiang Kai-shek and another headed by Mao Tse-tung, were as much against each other as they were against Japan. Their wartime unification was to be tested with the fall of Japan.

As it was expected, after the surrender of the Japanese army the struggle between the Communist and Nationalist Chinese bore a danger to lead this country into a civil war. Chiang Kai-shek invited Mao Tse-tung several times to Chungking to discuss the changed situation. After some time and hesitation, Mao decided to go to Chungking. As Pogue writes “Mao Tse-tung’s decision to come to Chungking may have been influenced by the announcement of the Sino-Soviet Treaty in mid-August 1945, in which Stalin appeared to favor the Nationalists over the Chinese Communists”³⁰⁶. Anyway the Communists also thought it important to have closer relations with the Soviet Union.

General Hurley submitted a report with regard to the negotiations conducted between the National Government and the Communists before he departed to the US. According

³⁰⁵ Wang, Dong, “Redeeming “A Century of National Ignominy”: Nationalism and Party Rivalry over the Unequal Treaties, 1928-1947”, *Twentieth-Century China*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Center for Chinese Studies, vol. 30, No. 2, April 2005, pp. 87-8.

³⁰⁶ Pogue, Forrest C., *George Marshall: Statesman*, New York: Penguin Books, 1989, p. 74.

to the report, both parties agreed to cooperate to establish a democratic government in China. They both agreed to support the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek as well as Sun Yat-sen doctrines³⁰⁷. The Communists agreed to recognize the Kuomintang as the dominant party and cooperate with it during a transition period to a democratic regime. However, there were two issues on which the two sides could not reach agreement. One of them is the claim by the Communists the right to appoint, select, or elect any Communist governors and mayors in certain places. The second point was regarding the number of Communist troops to be included in the National peace-time army of China. Although both sides were negotiating to reach consensus, it needed time to accomplish positive outcomes.

After a while a consensus was reached on the number of troops (20 divisions will be allotted to the Communists in the National army), when the Communists agreed to the National Government proposal. No agreement was reached with regard an issue of political control in the liberated areas dominated by the Communists. As they could not agree on all the issues discussed, they agreed to continue their negotiations. However, their cooperation did not last long as the Communists were repeatedly expressing their concerns that the National Government had an intention to secure the military control in areas liberated by the Communists. And a failure to conduct a Political Consultative Conference resulted in a deterioration of relationship between the Nationalist Government and the Communists.

³⁰⁷ Three people's principles of Dr. Sun Yat-sen – the establishment in China of a government of the people, for the people and by the people.

Although the Nationalists were getting support from America, they were no longer capable enough to control the situation in this country. The Communists were gaining power. There had been a dramatic change in the power ratio between the above two sides with the Communist Party retaining ¼ of the population and 1/5 of the territory. In its final stage, their friction turned into a war between the Communist and Kuomintang forces.

Nevertheless, the Yalta secret agreement concerning the Far East was signed and real disputes and problems over the signed statements would be brought up very soon after all the promised desires of the Soviet Union were satisfied. Although it was believed that China managed to have all extraterritorial treaties with foreign powers abolished by 1943, the characters of the treaties signed with the Soviet Union in 1945³⁰⁸ and the US in 1946³⁰⁹, some Chinese scholars, including Dong Wang, state, bore the nature of inequality. This idea had been also supported by Bruce A. Elleman, who writes, “...successive Chinese governments signed a series of agreements with Soviet diplomats which secretly allowed the USSR to retain extraterritorial rights from 1924 through China’s 1949 communist revolution and well into the 1950s. ...Only in August 1960, with the beginning of the Sino-Soviet split, did the Soviet Union apparently also lose these special legal rights”³¹⁰ and these two countries became engage in a struggle against each other.

³⁰⁸ The treaty of Friendship and Alliance between the Republic of China and the USSR (1945).

³⁰⁹ The treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation between the Republic of China and the United States of America (1946).

³¹⁰ Elleman, Bruce, “The end of Extraterritoriality in China: The Case of the Soviet Union, 1917-1960”, *Republican China*, vol.21, No. 2, April 1996, p. 65.

Although the Chinese governments wanted to end all the extraterritorial treaties made with foreign powers for the sake of their national sovereignty, they did make such new treaties when the world, in particular, regional situation dictated them to do so. At the same time, they wanted not to end their favorable relations with other powers at this unstable period when the two forces were in the fight over whom to lead China. Such concessions on the Chinese side brought favorable conditions to the others sides, which included the Mongolian people as well.

A provision of Yalta agreement concerning Mongolian People's Republic

Although a new Mongolian People's Republic was promulgated as a result of the People's Revolution in Mongolia, the status of this country considered to be unclear until 1945 in the international arena. Back then Mongolia's independence was officially recognized by only two states, the Soviet Union and Tuva Tanu Republic (which was absorbed by the Soviet Union in 1944 at the latter's "request").

A provision of the Yalta Secret Agreement concerning Mongolia was a very important clause for this country. The people of Mongolia declared their independence in 1911 after more than 200 years of Manchu domination and this independence was confirmed by the 1921 revolution.³¹¹ However, China was not recognizing Mongolia's independence at all by deliberately claiming it to be a part of their territory. Thus a

³¹¹ Although most scholars write that a new history of Mongolia started from 1921, I support the circle of scholars who believe that Mongolia's new history was originated from 1911 national liberation revolution.

provision “the status quo in Outer Mongolia (The Mongolian People’s Republic) shall be restored”³¹² was a promising move towards independence of Mongolia.

China did not want to recognize initially the Yalta agreement, in particular its clause on Mongolia, as they were sticking to the Sino-Soviet treaty of 1924, which recognized the Chinese sovereignty in Outer Mongolia although it had stopped to exist many years before. To the Chinese as well as to the Americans the Soviet proposals exceeded the provisions of the Yalta agreement. The Americans advised the Chinese against making any concessions beyond the terms of the Yalta Agreement. Then, “on August 10, 1945, Mr. Harriman³¹³, acting on instructions, informed Dr. Soong as a matter of record that the United States Government considered that the proposals which he had already made fulfilled the Yalta Agreement and that any other concessions would be with the understanding that they were made by the Chinese Government because of the value it attached to obtaining Soviet support in other directions.”³¹⁴ Although the Chinese were ready to agree to any other concessions in return for Outer Mongolia they accepted this provision “should a plebiscite of the Outer Mongolian people confirm this desire, the Chinese Government will recognize the independence of Outer Mongolia with the existing boundary as its boundary”³¹⁵. Obviously the people of Mongolian People’s Republic were happy enough to confirm their desire for independence. On October 20, 1945 a referendum was held in Mongolia under the supervision of observers from Chinese government and the people of Mongolia voted for their independence.

³¹² U.S. Department of State, *The China White Paper: United States Relations with China, With Special Reference to the Period 1844-1949*, Stanford University Press, 1979, p. 113.

³¹³ American official and diplomat/U.S. ambassador to Moscow at that time.

³¹⁴ U.S. Department of State, *The China White Paper: United States Relations with China, With Special Reference to the Period 1844-1949*, Stanford University Press, 1979, p. 117.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.588.

“Altogether 487,409 people or 98.4% of the population who reached the age to vote took part in the election and 7,551 people could not take part in the vote due reasons such as being on trips”³¹⁶. Finally on January 5, 1946 the Chinese Government formally recognized the Mongolian People’s Republic as an independent state and on February 27 Mongolia and the Soviet Union concluded a twenty-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation.

The Soviet expansion into Eastern Europe was also formally approved at Yalta Conference. Although it was agreed to hold free elections in those countries liberated by the Soviet force in the region, the newly elected governments were dominated largely by the communists. As a result, by 1948 seven East European countries had communist governments.

The Western powers reacted strongly to this expansionist policy of the Soviet Union. An “*ally*” between the Soviet Union and the West, thus, was collapsed after the WW II. 1946 and 1947 were the turning periods in the world history when The Big Three declared their division of the world into two systems: communism and capitalism. In his famous speech, Winston Churchill said, “from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent”³¹⁷, and which unfortunately lasted for more than 4 decades.

³¹⁶ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p.255.

³¹⁷ Lafeber, Walter, *America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1980*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1980, p. 19.

There can be several reasons for the collapse of the ally between the Soviet Union and the West. Firstly, their task to destroy the common enemy was accomplished, and secondly, as Mr. Georgi M. Derluguian of Northwestern University writes “the geopolitical history of balance of power suggests that Russia is simply too big to the West’s ally in normal times. In a pattern that has held for more than 300 years, Russia has been an ally to the West only in times of serious trouble in world governance”³¹⁸. Finally, their mutual suspicions with regard to each other’s intention and actions were flourishing, thus, made them separate into two directions.

The tension between America and the Soviet Union was also accelerated by the Marshall Plan, which aimed to send economic aid to Europe in 1947. “Molotov represented the Soviet Union, which turned down the proposals and exerted pressure to ensure that their allies did likewise”³¹⁹ as A. Nove writes in his book entitled *An Economic History of the U.S.S.R.* The Soviet Union refused to join the Marshall plan as this plan, firstly, required to disclose its economic records to the U.S. Secondly, the Soviet Union feared of western influences. As a counter measure to the Marshall Plan, the Soviet Union offered financial aid to its satellites through the Molotov Plan.

Thus the world was divided into two antagonistic blocks after the World War II. Both blocks, one headed by the U.S and the other headed by the Soviet Union, tried to maintain their influences in their respected areas, including so called satellite countries. As Alec Nove admits “The Soviet Union emerged from the war no longer isolated, no

³¹⁸ <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/6004-10.cfm>.

³¹⁹ Nove, A., *An Economic History of the U.S.S.R.*, Penguin Books, 1978, p. 313.

longer the world's only communist-ruled state".³²⁰ The Soviet Union besides Eastern Europe and Mongolia had China in the same bloc after the war. On October 2, 1949, the Soviet Union recognized the People's Republic of China. Very soon Mao Tse-tung, the Chinese Communist leader, was received at the Kremlin in Moscow on December 16, 1949. Thereafter, amicable relations started developing between these two Communist powers. On February 15, 1950 Stalin and Mao Tse-tung signed a mutual defense treaty in Moscow.

To sum up the Yalta Agreement brought to Mongolia what it wished for many years, the international recognition of Mongolia as an independent state. Though it could not get official recognition of Mongolia's independence by other participants of Yalta Agreement, the U.S. and Great Britain, their eagerness to agree to all Soviet proposals made us believe that these two powers agreed to almost all the outcomes this agreement may derive.

The formal recognition of independence of Mongolia, however, did not bring much opportunity to have its own development policy due to the Soviet influence in almost all spheres of economy, including foreign relations. There was no space to have relations outside the communist world for Mongolia at this stage of its history.

Political and economic situation of Mongolia after WW II

³²⁰ Nove, A., *An Economic History of the U.S.S.R.*, Penguin Books, 1978, p. 313.

The recognition of Mongolia by its southern neighbor consolidated the position of Mongolia as an independent state in the region. 4 days later after the Soviet Union's recognition of the communist China, the MPR also recognized the PRC on October 6, 1949. During the period of 1948-1950 Mongolia made diplomatic relations with all the countries which entered the communist system, including Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Albania, Bulgaria, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland.

In February 1946 Mongolia signed a new 10 year Friendship and Mutual Assistance Treaty with the Soviet Union and made respective agreements regarding economy and culture. The same year on June 21 Mongolia made an application to be a member of the United Nations. At the initiative of the Soviet Union in August 1946 the Security Council of UN had a meeting to discuss Mongolian application for membership, however, due to refusals made by UK, US and Kuomintang China Mongolia could not secure a seat for UN and such preventions lasted until 1961.

Though Mongolia could not develop full scale international relations outside the communist orbit, it along with other socialist countries entered a new era to reconstruct its economy. According to a data of 1941-1945, "Mongolia spent 43.5% of revenues and 48.5% of expenditures of state budget for its defense. ...The number of cattle decreased from 26.2 million to 20 million due to the war and natural disaster"³²¹. In addition, "in the war against Japan alone, in 1945, the national economy of the MPR

³²¹ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, pp. 259-60.

suffered losses amounting to more than 200 million tugrugs.”³²² Therefore, the government of Mongolia put immediate objectives: firstly, to transfer the economy of the country to a peaceful construction, and secondly, to develop economic and social lives of the country by putting plans.

The 11th Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party Congress was held in December 1947 and adopted the 1st Five Year Plan to develop the economy and culture of the country for the period of 1948-1952, some of which main objectives were to develop the productive forces of the economy in every possible way, to fight with remnants of feudalism, to make the number of cattle reach 31 million, to expand industrial development and increase its total production up to 96.8%, to have all children enrolled in elementary schools, and to eradicate illiteracy among adults.³²³

Consequently all activities at all levels of organizations were directed to fulfill the objectives of the First Five Year Plan. Along with party organizations, Trade Union, Youth Union and Women’s Federation were actively engaged in organizing the population to work for the fulfillment of the plan. At the same time socialist competition was encouraged to use all available capacity and power.

The State 9th Khural, held in February 1949, discussed the activities carried out by the Government. One of the significant decisions made at this Khural was to relieve the herdsmen from the obligation to perform urton services, which “was especially

³²² USSR Academy of Sciences and MPR Academy of Sciences, *History of the Mongolian People’s Republic*, Honolulu: University Press of Pacific, 2000, p. 388.

³²³ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2003, p. 262.

welcome since the amount of services required had been increased in 1941 in order to meet military requirements. Henceforth such services were to be performed by the state.”³²⁴ Although the households of herdsmen were relieved from urban services, the number of livestock was not on increase as the economy of the country was on its initial stage to recover.

The government decided to change the tax policy and livestock tax was changed in 1950. “Under the new law, only incomes from livestock was taxed. This law, while ostensibly progressive (and praised for this feature by Soviet writers) since tax rates rise as the number of livestock held increases, is in fact really regressive because schedules for the different types of animals do not adequately reflect very substantial differences in their relative values. ... The new law also includes an important incentive device: to encourage livestock breeding, all households received reductions in tax-liability for success in increasing their herds above the number in their possession on August 1 of the previous year.”³²⁵ At the same time exemptions were given to also deliveries in kind of livestock and livestock products. “The nomads were freed from deliveries on that part of their herds which represented an increase over the amount planned for that year. In 1954, exemptions from delivery were extended to include all cattle over and above those counted in the census of 1953”.³²⁶ These changes in the tax policy were welcomed by the majority of the population, including herdsmen.

³²⁴ Holzman, Franklyn D., “The Tax System of Outer Mongolia, 1911-55: A Brief History”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 16, No. 2, Feb. 1957, p.221.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Holzman, Franklyn D., “The Tax System of Outer Mongolia, 1911-55: A Brief History”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 16, No. 2, Feb. 1957.

Despite great efforts to raise the livestock of the country, the targets set by the First Plan were not met as the number of livestock reached only to 23 million by 1952 compared to the target of 31 million. “The severe winter of 1950 and spring of 1951 contributed largely to this failure but, ...it was largely due to problems connected with the methods used in taxing the nomads. ...This failure must have left a considerable impression on the Mongolian planners, for the Second Five-Year Plan target was set at only 27.5 million head of stock, a figure well below the First Five-Year Plan target and only equal to the size of the herds in 1941.”³²⁷ This proved that the targets did not bring expected results as they exceeded the capability the country could have.

Although not all the objectives set by the First Five-Year Plan were fulfilled, some sectors of the economy, including industry, construction, transportation and culture, saw positive results. During these five years many factories such as Nalaikh Mining factory, Central Power station, Industrial Combine, and several other factories were expanded. With the Soviet assistance many large-scale mining factories, in places such as Burentsogt, Tumentsogt, Chuluunhoroot and Tsenhermandal, as well as oil-refining factory in Zuunbayan were established. About 400 km long railroad was established along the route between Naushki, Russian border station, and Ulaanbaatar. Autostations were created in all aimags, electricity was brought to most aimags, and telephone communication lines connecting Ulaanbaatar with aimags and some soums were established.

³²⁷ Murphy, George G.S., “Planning in the Mongolian People’s Republic”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 18, No. 2, Feb. 1959.

Such developments of Mongolian economy were also observed by foreign countries. “With the economic assistance of the Soviet Union, the Mongolian People’s Republic has developed modern techniques in industry and transportation. The three achievements of which the Mongolians are signally proud are the Ulan Bator Industrial Combine, the Nalaykha Coal Mine and Machinery Manufacturing Plant, and the newly constructed New Ulan Bator Railroad which began operations in 1949”³²⁸. This is what the Hong Kong Wan-Hui Pao, a daily newspaper, wrote in one of its 1950 edition. Further the newspaper wrote that Mongolia and Soviet Union opened embassies of each other in their respective countries and drew their attention to the economic development in Mongolia.

Accordingly there were improvements in the livelihood of the population, medical and educational sectors, as well as cultural fields. Intra-aimag hospitals were established and cost for all types of medicines was decreased. Such changes brought only advantages to the medical sector, which was previously relied on only traditional medical services. Number of schools increased during these five years and subsequently the number of people enrolled in educational institutions increased to 52,000-67,000.³²⁹

One of the fields that greatly gained, in my opinion, is educational system. Due to the nomadic culture, there had been not many opportunities for ordinary citizen to be enrolled in schools as no such permanent school system existed in Mongolia except for lamaist teachings based on Buddhist religious doctrine. Though schools were not

³²⁸ *Confidential US Department Special Files. Information from Foreign Documents of Radio Broadcasts*, Report No. 00-W11429, 1950.

³²⁹ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch. and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar: Admon Publishing House, 2003, p. 265.

welcomed in their initial openings, they soon helped Mongolia have educated personnel in many fields.

According to the agreement to train Mongolian people in Soviet institutes and universities of 1948, many Mongolian students started studying in Soviet institutes and universities. According to American Intelligence Report of 1956, “a considerable volume of student exchange has existed within the Soviet bloc since the consolidation of Communist power in Eastern Europe. ...the exchange has been primarily one way, with bloc country students going to the Soviet Union for study. There is little evidence that any Soviet students have gone to the satellites. ...On the basis of both official and press reports, it would appear that close to 12,000 students from entire bloc were studying in the Soviet Union in 1955.”³³⁰ Such student exchange programs included not only Mongolia but also other communist countries in Eastern Europe as well as China, Vietnam and North Korea in the 1950s.

By 1950s, therefore, Mongolia reached significant developments not only in its international position but also its domestic field. Backward economy, which suffered greatly during 1930s due failures of some Soviet model policies and activities that were not well suited to a peculiar economy based on animal husbandry, finally stepped into a peaceful construction of its economy with the assistance of the Soviet Union.

Finally Mongolia managed to get recognition of its independence from its southern neighbor and this recognition consolidated Mongolia’s position internationally. A small

³³⁰ *Confidential US Department Special Files. Intelligence Report, The Sino-Soviet Bloc Student Exchange Program, March 8, 1956.*

country, whose fate was very “fragile” in these 5 decades of 20th century history, at last could take a deep breath. To reach this level Mongolian leaders did everything, at times sacrificing lives of its people or at times bargaining special interests of its two giant neighbors. Whatever they did can not be re-done. Perhaps, their moves were the only choices they depended on.

CONCLUSION

The study of foreign relations of any country is a complex topic. In this research I attempted to emphasize the following three points, presented in the Introduction chapter, to discuss the vulnerable position of Mongolia in the international arena in the first half of the 20th century:

1. To regard 1911 as the first year to start Mongolia's new history in 20th century, assessing developments of 1911 as a national revolution;
2. To argue that Mongolia and its leaders had no other choice than to rely on the Soviet Union, consequently to apply all Soviet policies in the territory of Mongolia in order to preserve Mongolia's independence; and
3. The two concepts, nationalism and independence, are generally interrelated and we can see such a tendency in case of Mongolia as well. Nationalism is expressed through Mongolia's struggle to preserve its independence as well as its traditions.

Due to an ideological confrontation between academic worlds of the Soviet orbit and Western countries, many of the facts on the history of Mongolia either had been distorted or neglected until 1990s in Mongolia. One of such periods that had not been studied properly was early years of the 20th century when Mongolia was struggling desperately to have its independence in their hands and have it recognized in the international arena. Thus upon analyzing if Mongolia managed to pursue independent foreign relations, which is the main criteria for a country to be regarded as sovereign state, I have come to the following conclusions:

1. As discussed earlier books and publications produced during the era of communism put more stress on 1921 revolution and the Soviet Union's assistance to make a backward nomadic country a communist state and started recording Mongolia's new history from 1921. In accordance with the theory of class struggle, such publications viewed developments of 1911 as a result of national liberation movement when Mongolian arats put an end to Manchu rule by deliberately omitting the roles played by religious leaders and nobles, who had been viewed only as local exploiters.

In 1911 both external and internal situations positively influenced Mongolia to successfully carry out the national liberation revolution in Mongolia. The main objective of a revolution is to take over the state power and what Mongolians did in 1911 is that they ousted the Qing regime and established a new Mongolian government on its base. There are a group of researchers such as L. Jamsran and J. Boldbaatar in Mongolia, who consider that Mongolia had a national liberation revolution in 1911. I agree with this argument made by these researchers, who contributed their findings and researches in the latest book on Mongolian history *History of Mongolia*³³¹.

Indeed Mongolia could announce its independence in the international arena only after the victory of 1911 national liberation revolution, although no country wished to recognize it, except for Tibet which had been in the same position as Mongolia was. In addition, Mongolia managed to make a direct negotiation with Russia and

³³¹ Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch., and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon Publishing House, 2003.

finally Russo-Mongolian Friendship Treaty was signed in 1912. Although Russia did not recognize Mongolia's independence, it was for Mongolia a great advantage to have a legal document signed with another state.

Therefore, I assume that Mongolia's new history starts from 1911 when it established the first Mongolian government and announced its independence to the world. One might argue that Mongolia could not secure international recognition to its newly established government and proclamation of independence. This is a true fact, however, Mongolia finally could make its voice heard in the international arena. As a result of Mongolian national liberation revolution, other Mongol territories, in particular from Inner Mongolia, wished to join the new state of Mongolia. Some of them did join Mongolia and showed others that it was possible to fight for their freedom and to have their power in their hands.

Overthrow of old regime, establishment of new government, announcement of its independence, request to join the newly established Mongolian government and request for assistance to liberate their territories from the Qing regime and Chinese military made by several Inner Mongolian princes, and Treaty signed with other state, Russia, are all the strong points that can make us begin the new history of Mongolia from 1911, when national liberation revolution had a victory in this isolated territory of East Asia.

2. The next point I explored in this research was if Mongolian leaders were obedient followers of the Soviet policy in Mongolia. It had been enormously difficult for a

country with less than a million people (647,504³³²) and a backward economy, situated between the two giant countries, to have any power to resist aggressive policies carried out by both of its powerful neighbors. Mongolia's northern neighbor, Tzarist Russia and later the Soviet Union, saw in Mongolia a strategic position to secure its security of their frontier and a base of cheap raw materials for their huge consumption market, whereas its southern neighbor, China, was denying any moves made by Mongolia for independence regarding this country to be a part of Chinese territory inherited from Qing rule.

Thus in this difficult situation Mongolia had no other choice than to rely on its northern neighbor, Russia, in order to secure its independent position as it was the only country (no third country wished to be enrolled in this affair) which promised to provide assistance to the newly established Mongolian governments during 1911 and 1921 revolutions, though refusing to recognize Mongolia's independence. Courageous and unexpected moves on the Mongolian side to declare its independence made, at the same time, see this country in a different way by both Russia and China. They made several negotiations regarding Mongolia after Mongolia announced its independence and in 1913 these two countries signed the Declaration and Exchange of Notes with regard to their position on Mongolia. Although Russia recognized China's suzerainty over Mongolia, it did limit their rights in the territory of Mongolia by recognizing "the exclusive right of the Mongols of Outer Mongolia to provide, themselves, for the internal administration

³³² This figure is given by M.Maiskii in his research titled *Contemporary Mongolia* (Irkutsk, 1921), cited in Ochir, A., Dalai, Ch., and others (eds), *History of Mongolia*, vol. 5, Ulaanbaatar: Admon Publishing House, 2003, p. 34.

of Autonomous Mongolia”³³³ and both of these countries agreed not to send and keep troops in Outer Mongolia, to intervene in internal matters of this country, and to abstain from colonizing Mongolia.

Although 1913 Declaration brought no progress for Mongolia’s hope to restore its independence, this legal document clearly showed the changed attitudes of these two neighbors towards Mongolia as none of them wished each other to be the owners of this land. In addition, it needs to be noted that Russia approached this issue carefully and only after its interests, to keep its strategic position in Mongolia as well as to have it as a base of raw materials, matched with the desire of Mongolia to be separated from the Chinese domination, made a move to protect interests of Mongolia to some extent.

Subsequent changes in the government of Mongolia in 1921 and Soviet Union’s assistance in many fields of the economy tied this country greatly to the Soviet Union. Mongolia lacked in everything. It had no human and capital resources, its economy was backward and impoverished, thus, Mongolia needed desperately assistance and support. Such a dependent position of Mongolia made this country heavily tilt towards its northern neighbor.

Early years of Red Mongolia provided promises for the country to develop itself through the right path. The country indeed did introduce many modern developments in this remote land with the assistance of the Soviet Union, however,

³³³ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Outer Mongolia, Treaties and Agreements*, Washington: Gibson Bros., Inc., 1921, p. 26.

so much dependency gradually made the country and its leaders the followers of the Soviet policy and Comintern instructors. Indeed Mongolia became a satellite state to the Soviet Union as O. Lattimore correctly observed. When too much power is given to foreign instructors and advisors, a country loses its sovereign rights. Mongolia faced such a fate. Then a question arises if Mongolia was given a subordinate role to control their country why it desperately tried to be separated from China.

Here I would like to bring an important point that explains the position of Mongolia in the international arena. The main objectives of 1911 and 1921 revolutions were to free the country from aggressive foreign domination and to restore Mongolia's independence. Although Mongolia did not get any international legal recognition to its independence, which had been proclaimed in 1911 and again in 1921, the people of Mongolia finally became the owners of their land and regarded themselves as people of independent country. That is why Mongolia needed to preserve its independence at any costs. Such a strong desire on the part of Mongolia and the Soviet Union's wish to spread out its regime outside of its boundaries made these two countries become closer after Mongolia asked Russia for assistance several times. As a result, Mongolian leaders had to follow and in some cases obey the Soviet Union and its advisors as this country had no other choice than to rely on the Soviet Union. If Mongolia dared to worsen its relations with the Soviet Union, it would have no chances to remain as an independent state. Thus the strong wish to preserve the national independence made the country stay in a subordinate position to control its country for several more decades in the 20th century.

Obviously there had been many who protested the Soviet policy and their activities, some of which did not value Mongolia's traditions, in particular its religion. However, their protests brought only negative consequences as the Soviet instructors knew how to deal with them without raising much antagonism among the population towards their policy. Many of such courageous leaders had been labeled as anti-government and anti-international dissidents and removed from their positions. In worst cases, they ended their lives in prisons or were killed. As a result, Mongolia lost the lives of 30,000 people and destroyed more than 700 monasteries and temples due to the aggressive policy applied on the land of Mongolia by Soviet instructors during 1930s campaigns against religion, anti-socialist dissidents and foreign spies.

Only the collapse of the communist system brought a new era to the study of Mongolia's history and its position in the international arena. Many new evaluations and observations made on the past history, and Kh. Choibalsan and Yu. Tsendenbal, who were regarded as the implementers of the Soviet policy, have been blamed for such a dark period in the history of Mongolia that cost 30,000 lives, a great loss for Mongolia as the population of Mongolia was only 760,000³³⁴ in 1930, and letting the Soviet Union obtain some of Mongolia's land. On the contrary, there are others who believe that these leaders had no other option but to let such negative things happen as they wished to remain Mongolia as independent as

³³⁴ Figure for 1930 according to the statistics of the Outer Mongolian Ministry of Interior, given in Mishima, Yasuo and Goto, Tomio, *A Japanese View of Outer Mongolia*, New York: International Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1942, p. 3.

possible. As everything has two sides, Mongolians had to bear a lot for the preservation of their independence. Paths to become a sovereign member of the world and to transfer a backward economy into a semi-industrialized country were not always straight, thus, Mongolian leaders had to bargain the interests of its two neighbors to get a better gain for their small country, at times making its population suffer greatly and at times letting the others dictate their policy in their country.

3. One of the areas that have not been studied properly due to the existing system in Mongolia is the issue of 'nationalism' in this country. Although recently some researches have been contributed to this study, they are still limited in numbers. Therefore, I aimed to address this topic in this research to find out if there is connection between nationalism and independence in Mongolia, which have been 'sensitive' ideas in early history of the 20th century as well as in the history of succeeding years. The struggle for separation from the Qing rule and independence raised the people's nationalist sentiment as well as patriotism in early 20th century. Along with an aim to restore independence of the country, Mongolia wanted to have all Mongol nationals come under one roof and establish a Great Mongolian state. However, such a dream was not destined to be fulfilled. Instead in the 1930s their wish was regarded as a disadvantageous idea that opposed the communism and its internationalism. Thus anything associated with the traditional ways of life of nomadic people, including religion, customs, and even written language were considered and labeled as old fashioned, anti-modern as well as anti-internationalist development by the communist doctrine. As a result, Mongolia parted with many monasteries, with their valuable belongings such as statues of Buddha and religious

books, and even the old Mongolian script was changed to Cyrillic as a result of the modernization policy in Mongolia which at the same time had an aim to eradicate anything traditional or remnants of feudal society, which also meant nationalistic. Nationalism had become, thus, a taboo topic in Mongolia.

Only in recent years we started reviving our traditional culture, including religion. It is good that we can talk about nationalism freely today but nationalism in Mongolia differs from nationalism in other countries. The issue of nationalism plays different roles in different countries. Leading powers, for instance, wish to play decisive roles in their respective regions, or in some cases in the world arena. To do this they tend to rely on nationalism with an aim to become more powerful not only in the area of security but also in economic fields.

On the contrary, small countries like Mongolia do not have such big aims. For Mongolia, nationalism is closely connected with their wish to remain as independent as possible and to preserve their traditional culture. Although several researchers contribute their study on nationalism with a focus on Halh³³⁵-centrism, such a term can not fully describe Mongolia's nationalism. Halh-centric nationalism can talk for nationalism created on the basis of ethnic and cultural understanding of the identity of Mongols. Historically Mongolia consisted of three territories of Khalkh, Western and Inner Mongolia. However, due to different historical circumstances, i.e. Manchu policy to control Mongolian territories separately and failure of Mongolia to unite all Mongol territories into one country,

³³⁵ Words Halh and Khalkh both have the same meaning as the main ethnic group of Mongolia

the Mongol territories still remain separated. Today's Mongolia, based on Khalkh Mongolia's territory, has become homeland for mainly Khalkh and Western Mongolians, but Mongols in Inner Mongolia is left outside of the Mongolian land. Thus Mongolians living in the territory of Khalkh Mongolia considered themselves 'legitimate' Mongolians, which could secure their independence over years of struggle, and regard Mongols living outside of the Mongolian territory as "Mongols" in parenthesis. This attitude was also facilitated by the communist ideology which wished not to see any relations of Mongolia with Mongols outside of the Soviet orbit. In particular the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations made Mongolia regard everything that lied behind the southern border as "them". Therefore, it may take time, perhaps, for Mongolians to transform such old stereotypes that had been in their minds for a long time.

Situations may dictate to develop various types of nationalism in certain periods of a history, however, in Mongolia nationalism, in the form of its traditions, exists throughout history of the 20th century. For Mongolia, to safeguard its independence means to preserve its traditions, including its belief, culture and language, without which it would be difficult for this small country to remain as a sovereign state.

Therefore, when we look at the development of nationalism in different historical periods of the 20th century Mongolia we can come to the following conclusion. In 20th century nationalism was expressed in many different ways. The nationalist sentiment that present Mongolia is enjoying, in the form of revival of its traditions, customs, religion and even the use of traditional Mongolian script along with

Cyrillic, has its roots in early nationalist sentiments arisen among Mongolians during 1910s.

Struggle for 1911 national liberation revolution, Ataman Semenov's attempt to establish a Pan Mongolian state, and Baron Ungern's assistance in restoration of Autonomous Government of Mongolia are all different expressions of nationalism in Mongolia that comprised the first two decades of early 20th century. Though Ataman Semenov and Baron Ungern did not concern much about the rise of nationalism in Mongolia, they did help Mongolians express themselves through their nationalist sentiment. At the same time Mongolians could restore its national identity, which was almost lost during the reign of the Manchu rule. In other words, they became 'Mongols' in its real meaning.

However, nationalism, arisen as a result of the above developments in Mongolia, had to go through different stages of survival in the succeeding years, especially in the 1930s. Mongolia could not develop national sentiment further among its population due to the internationalism, dictated by the communist policy. If traditions of Mongolia and Mongol identity had a chance to be developed further, other Mongol territories, which share the same origin, may have sought again to do the same and to seek for their identity as well, thus, putting the identity of internationalism initiated by the Soviet Union at risk. It may have led the USSR to lose some of its territories along with its raw materials base, Mongolia. Thus the "Iron Curtain" was an advantage to the Soviet Union to control all spheres of Mongolia and to not allow the spread of nationalism in this territory. As a result

Mongolia nationalism was changed to internationalism, which was developed only within the Soviet orbit.

Changes in the world in 1990s brought Mongolia chances to revive its lost rights and similar to early 20th century Mongolia is now reviving its nationalism as well as national identity, but with a big difference, as a sovereign member of the world.

The 1st half of the 20th century, therefore, is a very significant period in the history of Mongolia and its analysis helps us understand both successes and failures this small nation faced, their causes, and most importantly its struggle to be real owners of their land.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Documents regarding the four Khalkh aimag delegation, who went to Russia with a request for assistance from the Russian Tzar as well as independence. Stock No. A-4, File No.1, File Unit No.785, The National Archive of Mongolia.

Appendix 2: A part of folded documents with regard to the crowning Bogd Gegeen as the Khan of Mongolia and the announcement of the year as the Initial Year Exalted by All (Olnoo Urgegsenii Terguun On) to the world. Stock No. A-4, File No.1, File Unit No.157, The National Archive of Mongolia.

Appendix 3: Folded documents regarding a note sent to foreign countries on the establishment of an independent Mongolian state, crowning Bogd Khan and the naming of the year as the Year Exalted by All. Stock No. A-4, File No. 1, File Unit No. 125, The National Archive of Mongolia.

Appendix 4: A folded document regarding the letter to not accept decisions made between the Russian and Chinese delegates in Beijing to make Khulunbuir and Barga parts of China. Stock No. A-4, File No. 1, File Unit No. 252, The National Archive of Mongolia.

Appendix 5: Resolution made by Inner Mongolia on the establishment of a Mongol state at Chita. Stock No. A-4, File No. 1, File Unit No. 626, The National Archive of Mongolia.

Appendix 6: An agitating poster issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the reign of Baron Ungern. The National Archive of Mongolia. A-4, File No.1, File Unit No.736.

Appendix 7: Documents sent to have friendship and trade relations with America. Archive material of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia. (a translation into Russian included).