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**MONGOLIA'S QUEST FOR IDENTITY : A  
STUDY OF MONGOLIA - CHINA RELATIONS,  
1911-1946**

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19th July, 1996


## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled " Mongolia's Quest for Identity : A Study of Mongolia-China Relations, 1911-1946" by Tuladhar Bhoi, which is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of degree of Master of Philosophy (M. Phil.), is an original work. It has not been previously submitted for any other degree to this or any other University.

We recommend this dissertation to be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
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## PREFACE

The Mongolian Peoples Republic (MPR) formerly known as the Outer Mongolia lies in the heart of Asia with Russia to the north and China to the south, east and west. Since fourteenth century Mongolia has had no access to outside world other than Russia and China. Historically and politically Mongolia most of the time remained subjugated under China and Russia. The early seventeenth century to witnessed factional politics in Mongolia which paved the way for its subjugation to Chinese-Manchu rulers.

The present work outlines the transformation, through popular uprisings and awakenings, of Mongolia against Chinese subjugation to an independent developing state. At the outset of the present century, the Mongols are noticed as divided among sections, (namely, Khalkhas and Oleuths) antagonistic to each other. Taking advantage of their inter-clan rivalry the Manchu imperials of China practically subjugated Outer Mongolia (later known as the Mongolian Peoples Republic, the MPR), in seventeenth century.

The Chinese followed a calculated strategy which

was designed to support the weaker Oleuths under their leader Kang Hsi as against the popular Khalkha people. The Manchus were able to instal their puppet Kang Hsi to the royal throne of Mongolia and utilised its weak status to settle Chinese migrants in the Mongolia territories. The mass settlement of the Chinese in Outer Mongolia was naturally resented by the native populace. Russia which is another powerful neighbour of Mongolia also found the Manchu designs as challenging to its historic privilages in its dealings with Mongolia. Consequently, the Russians promoted the Khalkha leadership of Mongolia's and it was largely through their support that, the Khalkha could proclaim, after a coup, independence of Mongolia in 1911.

The Russo-Mongolian alliance became a highly vexed issue within the Sino-Russian diplomacy. The Chinese tried to solve the issue diplomatically and for a time being were successful in safeguarding their imperial interests over Mongolia through Russian consent. It is reflected through the declaration of Peking of 1913 as well as through the 1915 treaty of Kikhta between China, Russia and Mongolia which recognised China's 'suzerainty' over Mongolia. The diplomatic parleys,

however, made significant turnings in the wake of the October Revolution in Russia.

The Soviet approach towards Mongolian question remained tilted to and overshadowed by the European and the trans-continental diplomatic developments between the two world wars. Meanwhile, the oppression of Mongols by China as well as Soviet imperialist designs paved the way for popular revolts in the country. Coupled with their diplomatically advantageous position in terms of the Sino-Russian tussles, the Mongols pursued their struggle for independence. However, the goal of freedom could be achieved by them largely through international circumstances and through global implication of the second world war.

The present study makes an appraisal of this quest of the Mongols for their identity and their struggle to oust Chinese colonialists. The first chapter highlight the dynamics of Mongolia's geopolitical situation and provides a historical perspective of its colonial past under China. The second chapter provides an insight into the Chinese rule over Mongolia by its Chi'ng dynasty during 1911-1921. Further, it analyses the Sino-Russian diplomatic negotiations over Mongolia and

Mongols struggle for liberation against Chinese rulers who followed the policy of internal colonialism.

The third chapter deals with the nationalist movements in Mongolia vis-a-vis diplomatic development between 1921 and 1946. It also examines the new political, economic and military treaties between Mongolia and Russia or Soviet Union, Russian/Soviet stand on China's 'suzerainty' over Mongolia and the tripartite treaty between China, Russia and Mongolia. The fourth chapter puts into focus the political dynamics of the recognition of the MPR as an independent state by the Chiang-Kai Shek government of China and outlines the implications of the second world war for Mongolia. The discussion is wound up in the final concluding chapter.

This dissertation could not have been produced but for the valuable suggestions so kindly extended by my supervisor **Dr. K. Warikoo** at all stages of its preparation. His inquisitive guidance at every step I received in plenty and his incisive comments on my rough draft went a long way in benefitting the work. I express my profound gratitude to him for not only supervising the present work but nourishing the whole

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I also pleausurably acknowledge debt of all those great savants whose works in any shape or form have been utilised in this dissertation.

A great influence on the present work has also been of my friend Sarita who has been inspiring figure in my life.

I am thankful to Sanjit, Narendra and Tirtharaj for bestowing their encouragement on me. It were Kanjiv Lochan, Md. Sohrab, Rabindra, Gopi, Mohan, Rakesh, Sankirtan, Rama, Pradeep, Naveen and Trilochan whose companionship, concern and support provided me the strength to complete my work.

I am also grateful to the staff of the Central Library JNU, Central Secretariat Library, Teen Murti Library, Monglian Embassy Library and External Affairs Ministry Library for their kind co-operation.

Nevertheless, the faults and errors in this work are entirely mine.

Dated 19-07-1996

  
**Tuladhar Bhoi**

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# **Chapter I**

## **Introduction**

## I. GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION

The Mongolian People's Republic is a landlocked country situated in northern latitudes of continental Asia bordering on the former Soviet Union to the north and China to the south, east and west. Its land mass is roughly equal to that of United Kingdom, Eire, France, Spain, Portugal, Benelux and Switzerland combined, i.e. about one-sixth of the United States of America. Visitors to the Mongolian capital travelling from Russia by train gently climb the valleys of the Selenge and Orhan, passing through the industrial town of Darhan and numerous farm settlements. The traveller from China, before entering the undulating grasslands, crosses flat and barren Gobi areas of south-eastern Mongolia, where the population is sparser, and the herds of the 'five animals' - cattle, sheep, goats, horses and camels - more scattered.<sup>1</sup>

The Gobi region extends from north-west to south east Mongolia in northern and southern strips between the Hangay - Hentiy and Altay mountain regions and occupies one third of the country's territory.

The geostrategic position of the vast Steppe of

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1. Alan J.K. Sanders, *Mongolia Politics, Economies and Society* (Frances Printers, London, 1987) P.1.

Inner Asia had been the "heartland" of fierce nomadic empires, among which the Mongol empire in the pre-modern period perennially threatened the security of major settled regions of Eurasian continent. The ceaseless attack of the Mongols made a Chinese exclaim, "Since the beginning of the world, no nation has been so powerful as these Mongols are now. They annihilate empires as if they were tearing up grass, why does heaven permit it."<sup>2</sup>

The Mongol exception in the thirteenth century was without question the most significant impact of nomadic peoples of Inner Asia on the sedentary world. Mongol troops reached west through Hungary and Poland and the Southeast Asia and the Middle East. China and Central Asia being the two nearest neighbours of Mongols, had greater and longer exposure than other regions to the descendants of Chingis Khan. The Mongol conquests in China and Central Asia led to the destruction and dislocation generated by the initial conquests.

Sandwiched between former Soviet Union and China, Mongolia also known as Outer Mongolia has the distinction of sharing the largest chains of frontiers between these

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2. P. Stobdan, Mongolia in a Strategic Vacuum, *Strategic Analysis*, April 1992, p. 29.

two powerful neighbours. Due to its peculiar geopolitical situation of being land-locked, Mongolia has had no access to markets except in its direct neighbourhood - Soviet Russia and China, and has had no independent communication outlets or transportation facilities and has had no tradition of political association with powers other than Russia and China since fourteenth century. From its very outset of its modern history, Mongolia was influenced by the developments taking place in former Soviet Union and China. History and geography combine to place Mongolia between its two powerful neighbours, Russia and China-which threatened its existence not only as an independent entity, but also its culture and way of life. Political changes in Mongolia must be regarded as a part of a wider general process of change in both its immediate proximity and globally as well. The most intimate linkage is with accelerating the process of revolution in China since 1911 and in Russia since 1917.<sup>3</sup>

The Mongols could not avoid being involved in and subordinated to events in China except by leaning against the other wall of the compartment in which they lived -

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3. G.M.Frieters , *Outer Mangolia and its International Position*. (John HopKins Press, Baltimore, 1949) P. XII.

which meant that they had to adjust themselves so closely not only to Russia but to events in Russia. So much so Russia became the primary external factor in the process of internal change in Outer Mongolia.

There is a definite continuity between this policy in the Tsarist times and in the Soviet times. The Tsarist policy } as Friters shows, was not to annex or absorb Mongolia. There were some groups in the Tsarist Russia which would have liked to exploit Mongolia but on the whole they were held in check, since the Tsarist policy was to maintain Mongolia as a buffers state. Soviets also adopted similar policy in Mongolia though the Soviet policy was much less static than that of the Tsars<sup>4</sup>.

From the Mongolian point of view, even before 1911, the most pressing danger was not the 'colonial' control of their country by a few foreigners representing foreign governments, but actual colonising of the best part of their land by Chinese settlers; not subjection, but displacement.

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4.    ibid, p. XVIII.

## II COLONIAL LEGACY : THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Mongol empires of the thirteenth and fourteenth century came closer to becoming a common nation of all the peoples of the known world than the Roman Empire had. There was more movement of races and peoples during this period than at any other time in the history of mankind. First, there was the massive movement of Mongols from east to west, during which many nations and races added their blood to the peoples of the east. During the yuan dynasty, there was a large agricultural and military colony of ten thousand Russians living in settlements near Peking. After the death of Tamerlane, the Mongols played a secondary role in the history of Asia. For many years, various influences had been at work and eventually divided the Mongols into two distinct branches - the Oirats of Western Mongolia and the Khalkha of eastern Mongolia. After Tamerlane, the destiny of western Mongols was to be linked with that of Central Asia. The majority of the Mongols in the present Mongolian's Peoples Republic are descendants of Khalkha Mongols.<sup>5</sup>

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5. Victor A. Petrov, *Mongolia A Profile* (Pall Mall Press, London, 1970) p. 42-44.

Eastern Mongolia retained its independent status for nearly 250 years after collapse of the Yuan dynasty in 1370, but the area was in a sorry state. Petty struggles among princely houses, palace assassination, raids against neighbours and an almost constant changing of Khans were common place, as were the struggle for the title of great Khans, who was seldom able to exercise any real political power. Only once during these years was the country unified under the leadership of competent Khan. Dayan Khan ruled during the first half of the fifteenth century. After his death, eastern Mongolia was again torn by internal strife. The last great Khan to attempt to force his will on other Khans and princes was Ligdan Khan of Chahar, who reigned at the beginning of the seventeenth century. He met with little success. By that time, a tribe of people, the Manchus, centred in Manchuria, east of Mongolia, had begun to threaten Mongolia and to challenge the authority of the Ming Dynasty in China. In an incredibly short time, the Manchus emerged from the plain of Manchuria into the fertile valleys of China, which was still ruled by the weak emperors of the Ming dynasty. The westward pressure exerted by the Manchus proved too strong for Ligdan Khan, who abandoned the Mongol princess in

eastern Mongolia. Unable to obtain support from the Mongol princess in the west, he retreated to the shores of Koko Nur in Central Asia, where he died in 1634. Two years later, the Manchus formally annexed southern Mongolia. They entered Peking in 1644 and established Chin'g dynasty, which was to last until 1911. However, they were not able to extend their rule to northern Mongolia until 1691.<sup>6</sup>

Traditional Mongol history is characterised by the tendency of using religion to foster unity. Shamanism, which was ideally suited to the tribal stage of Mongol development, was inadequate when the thirteenth century Mongols tried to govern the sedentary domains they had recently subjugated. This traditional religion could not be discarded but rather needed to be integrated into wider world view and system of values. Kublai Khan was one of the first Mongols who consciously used religion for political purposes.<sup>7</sup> The Altan Khan (1507-82), however was the first Mongol leader who used explicitly religion to unify various Mongol peoples under his jurisdiction.

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6. *ibid*, p. 44-47

7. Morris, Rossabi, *Kublai Khan : His life and times* (Berkeley, 1988) P. 141-147.



He converted to Tibetan Buddhism and initiated effort to conquer all the Mongols. Nonetheless, the eventual conversion of the Mongols did not lead to political unity. Some scholars have asserted that the growing economic and political power and the attendant corruption of the Buddhist monasteries weakened the secular Political leadership in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>8</sup> Nor did monasteries serve to rally the Mongols to resist the encroachment of China and Russia during the same time. It was only in twentieth century that Buddhist Mongols organised against outside influence, and ineffectively tried to oppose the secular and anti-religious doctrines espoused by the communists. However, their corruption and exploitation had alienated much of the Mongolian populace, and their efforts to mount a campaign of resistance did not yield any results.<sup>9</sup>

Commerce was crucial for the Mongols and often shaped Mongolia's relation with its neighbours. The Mongols needed to trade with the nearby sedentary peoples, as they were not economically self sufficient. Nomadism prevented them

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8. Larry, Moses, *The Political role of Mangol Buddhism* (Bloomington, 1977) p. 121.

9. Betrice, Manz, ed, *Central Asia in Historical Perspective* (Westview Press, Oxford 1993) p. 34-36.

from producing the manufactured articles they required. Their fragile economy made them dependent on the more settled populations. The Mongol's desire for trade repeatedly provoked tensions and hostilities with their closed sedentary neighbours the Chinese. Restriction on commerce imposed by the dynasty that ruled North China in the twelfth century may have been a factor leading to Chinggis Khan's initial assaults in the South. Later on, nomad attack had similar motivation.<sup>10</sup>

Once the Mongols had lost their power and mobility, their dependence on trade became a serious liability and what had been a danger to the Chinese now threatened the Mongols. When Ching dynasty occupied Mongolia in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth centuries, Chinese merchants capitalised on the Mongols' need for outside products. The Mongols were forced to buy on credit, a practice that placed them in the hands of unscrupulous Chinese money lenders. The Ching government limited the interest of loans to three percent a month, but the Chinese illegally charged even higher rates. Since Mongols were often unable to repay the interest, they found them-

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10. *ibid*, p.37-38.

selves perpetually in debt. The Chinese merchants brought the cheapest and low quality goods from China and sold them in Mongolia at prices normally reserved for higher quality merchandise.<sup>11</sup> In short, the Chinese impoverished the Mongols and retarded the development of the Mongol economy.

Mongols have been dependent upon external both in medieval and modern times. Having no experience in administering a sedentary civilisation, the thirteenth century Mongols could not well govern the territories they had conquered in China, Persia and Russia. They turned first for assistance to the Uighurs and other Turks whose language and societies most closely resembled their own. These Turks served as interpreters, tutors and officials in local and Central governments.<sup>12</sup> Later the Mongols employed defectors from China as officials in the government they established. Central Asian Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists for example, assumed official position in China

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11. Sandorj, *Manchu Chinese Colonial rule in Northern Mongolia* trans. by Urgunge Onon (St Martin Press, New York 1980) p. 89.

12. De Rachewiltz, "Turks" 1-59 cited in n. 4. p. 40.

13. Henry, Serruys, *Chinese in Southern Mongolia during Sixteenth Century*, *Monumenta Serica*, 18 (1959) p. 1-59 cited in n. 4 p. 40.

under the Mongol yuan dynasty.

Chinese defectors proved to be useful in later Mongol attempts at unification and expansion.<sup>13</sup> Some Mongol traditionalists opposed such cooperation with representatives of the sedentary civilization due to fears of strong influence and growing power of these subjects, which could lead to Sinicisation of the Mongols. Manchus, Chinese and Russians have often either dominated or played vital roles in Mongolia since the late seventeenth century. Upto the late seventeenth century the Mongols recruited foreigners with specific administration, literacy, technical and economic skills and some of these recruits were natives of the regions that they had subjugated. They themselves sought to attract or compel foreigners to work for them. However, as was the case with trade, Mongol dependence on outsiders proved to be liability later. Once the Russian and Chinese became dominant in Mongolia and Central Asia after the seventeenth century, foreigners imposed themselves on the Mongols and Central Asians who had no choice but to accept them.

In the course of the seventeenth century, the Manchus subjugated first the Inner Mongols and towards the end of the century-the Outer Mongols. The first document dealing

with the relations between Manchu emperor and Inner Mongolian tribes has been found to be dated 1636 and in it, the suzerainty of the Manchu emperor is recognised. It was stipulated, however that, should the dynasty fall, all the laws previously existing should come into force again.<sup>14</sup> Historical records suggest that Mongolia became a client state as a result of forced submission of the Mongol Khans in AD 1691 at the conventions of Dolonnor.<sup>15</sup> Earlier, we find intermittent instances of liberation movements coming up in Mongolia, which were inspired by its history and tradition, as well as by the particular circumstances of the day. Particular mention may be made of three such attempts to unite the Mongols, all of which were made during the Chinese Ming dynasty (1368-1643). These were led by the three great Khans, Batmonkh Dayan Khan (1592-1634); Tumet Zasgt Khan (1558-1593) and Ligden Khan of the Tsakhar tribe who fought against the Manchus.<sup>16</sup>

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14. Herbert A Giles, *China and the Manchus*, Cambridge, 1912, P. 20, cited in *Friters*, no 3, p. 151.

15. Mosses Larry, *Inner Asia in International Relations : The Role of Mangolia in Russo-Chinese Relations.* " *The Mongolia Society Bulletin*, Blomington, Indiana , Vol. II, No. 2 Fall 1972 p. 56.

16. Urgunge Onon and Derrick Pritchatt, *Asia's first Modern Revolution : Mongolia proclaims its independence in 1911*, (Leiden : EJ Brill, 1989) p. 2.

The power balance, however, was such that neither Mongols nor Chinese won a clear victory during the period of Ming dynasty and relations between the nations remained at a stalemate. Relations with the Manchus, however, took a very different course. In the early seventeenth century, the Manchus resorted to factional politics by wooing one group of Mongols against the other. Accordingly, the Manchus made an alliance with the Korchin tribe of the Mongols in Manchuria in 1624. Although other Mongol tribes fought against the Manchus under the great Khan Ligden, they were eventually crushed in 1634. The Manchus afterwards spread the rumours that they had found the great seal of the Mongolian Yuan dynasty, and in 1636 the Mongols of the Southern Mongolia elevated the Manchu Emperor Avkhai as their great Khan.<sup>17</sup> Manchu success thus can be attributed to the existing divisions among Mongols. Mongolia at that time was divided roughly into three sections : Southern (Inner) Mongolia, Northern (Outer) Mongolia (Khalkha), and Western Mongolia (Zungar).

It was in the year 1688 that the Western Mongols under the leadership of Galdan Boshigt (1651-96) invaded Northern or Outer Mongolia. Following their defeat by the

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17. *ibid*, p. 2.

forces of Galdan, the Northern Mongols or the Khalkas, in particular Tusheet Khan Chakhundorj alongwith his brother the first Jevsundamba Khutugt fled to the borders of Mongolia and China. In order to fight back the Western Mongols, the Khalkha nobles held a special conference to discuss whether to seek the help of Russians on the Manchus to counter the forces of Galdan Boshigt. While one group insisted on seeking assistance from Russia, the other wanted to get help from the Manchus. At the conference the first Jevsundamba Khutugt, a religious leader exerting great political influence, pleaded : "the Manchus have same kind of religion and wear the same clothing as the Mongols. However, the Russians have a different religion. Therefore it would be good idea for us to submit to the Manchus."<sup>18</sup> Though the term 'submit' was used, the Khalkhas, only wanted military aid from the Manchus. In 1688, an assembly of Mongol princes at Dolonnor decided to submit to the Manchu Emperor. The Chinese later considered this event as marking the formal annexation of Mongolia, but the Mongols claimed that the assembly only paid homage to the Emperor personally. In 1691 this 'an-

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18. Khalkhyn Tuxh, *History of Khalkha*, ( Ulanbataar , 1963) p. 44-45 (In Mongolian Language).

nexation' was solemnly ratified. The Emperor Kang Hsi accompanied by all his guards and many followers came to Dolonnor, where 24 regional princes of Khalkha swore an oath of allegiance.<sup>19</sup> After accepting vassalage in return for protection they were given the official documents and the great seal. Thus Khalkha became a dependency of China.<sup>20</sup>

The Manchus were ethnologically akin to Mongols and their nobility had for sometime used the Mongolian literary language. Both Manchus and Mongol's were followers of Tibetan Buddhism. Initially Manchus could sustain control over the Mongols by exploiting the common factor of racial affinity such as same religion and same way of living. But, later the Manchus recast the system of administrative and military organisation in Mongolia in order to consolidate their authority. The aim was to intensify the feudal disintegration in Mongolia. For example on the territory of Khalkha four aimaks were created instead of three. The fourth was formed in 1725 and

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19. G. Grumm, Vol. 11, p. 683-684, Korostovets, p. 22  
Cited in Friters, no 3, p. 151.

20. Michael N. Pavolovsky. *Chinese - Russian Relations*  
Ruth Kraders trans, (New York 1949) p. 19.



consisted of 19 khosuns taken from the Sain Noyon Khan to correspond to the title of one Mongol prince who had done good service to the Manchu emperor in war against the Oirats.<sup>21</sup>

Under the Manchu rule, the Lamaist Church became so strong that it soon held a leading place among the feudal institutions of Mongolia. This was encouraged by the Manchu policy of favouring Lamaism. Not the senior ranking lamas but even the whole of the monastery lamas were exempted from military transport and servitudes and from taxes. Lamas were given the right to travel free of charge, using the facilities of arat population, for preaching purposes or carrying out monastery business.<sup>22</sup> The feudal church nobles became wealthy from the exploitation of the whole arat population. Under the Manchu rule Lamaist church became the weapon not only for the feudal exploitation of the arat population but also for the national oppression of the Mongol people.

The success of Manchus in establishing its dominance over outer Mongolia was due in part to their adept manipu-

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21. Shirendyb and others (ed), *History of Mongolian Peoples Republic*, (Moscow, Nauka, 1973) p. 188.

22. *ibid*, p. 193.

lation of the Mongol political situation as well as the absence of significant Russian strength in East Asia.

Parameters of the Russo-Chinese relations in this zone were defined by the treaties of 1689 at Narchinsk and the treaty of 1727 at Kiakhta. The treaty of 1689, which defined the boundary between China and Russia in general terms, established the boundary of Manchuria, including the Bargar as well as Daghor and Solon Mongol tribes south of the Amur and Lane river. The treaty of 1727 under which China set up its border post with Siberia, did not permit any Europeans, not even the Russians, to enter the region till the Chinese-Russian treaty of 1860, except for their annual caravans across Mongolia to China.

Manchu domination certainly enriched a few Chinese merchants, but it impoverished much of the Mongol population. One of the principal Manchu objectives was to isolate Mongolia. To prevent foreign influence and to preserve the existing political and economic system in Mongolia, the Manchu court hindered the economic development of its northern territory, which delayed the

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23. Morris Rossabi, *China and Inner Asia : From 1368 to present Day*, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1975) p. 150.

modernisation of Mongolia and fuelled anti-Chinese feelings among Mongols.<sup>23</sup> Though the Manchu court was unsuccessful in creating a closed, static society, it appears to have achieved its other goals in Mongolia. It prevented direct Russian involvement, devised regulations for Sino-Mongolian trade and imposed restriction of Chinese merchants. Despite the restrictive Manch regulations, Chinese merchants also victimised the Mangols. The Manchus had forbidden their people from crossing into Mongolia except on official business. Sino-Mongol trade had been conducted either in Peking or at specially designated border markets. Smuggling of Chinese goods into Mongolia was not unusual, but it was only in the middle of sixteenth century that Chinese merchants began to evade the regulations on a large scale.

Some of the court's own policies, however, impeded its efforts to curb the Chinese merchants. The treaty of Kiakhtha of 1728 had eliminated the only serious competition - the Russians, that faced Chinese traders. The Chinese were thus given a virtual monopoly in Mongolia, a tremendous advantage in the conduct of trade. They also

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24. *ibid*,p.153.

encountered few difficulties in evading the Manchu restriction on commerce.<sup>24</sup>

The new methods adopted by the Manchu dynasty to enslave Mongolia began to emerge extremely clearly at the end of eighteenth century as the colonialist system of imperialism gained supremacy in the Far East and the predatory division of China into "Sphere of influence" among the great powers were completed. While submitting to the will of the Western aggressors, the Ching government directed the principal spear head of its policy on the north against former Russia. While opposing a rapprochement between Russia and Mongolia and safeguarding its supremacy in Mongolia, the Manchu government enacted some laws in the second half of 19th century. These laws lifted all restrictions on the operations in Mongolia of capitalist traders and usurers. These further open up the way for Chinese feudal nobles and traders to colonise Mongols land and created favourable conditions for English, Americans and other foreign firms to exploit the Mongolian people both directly and through the intermediary of Chinese capitalists.<sup>25</sup>

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25. Shirendyub and Others, no 21, p. 207.

As money relationship increased, the exploitation of Mongol masses intensified. The decline of productive forces of the country continued. From the mid-19th century Chinese usurers started becoming the real owner of large parcels of land in many of the Khosuns of Outer Mongolia. They seized the land domains in lieu of 'rent' or on account of payment for the debts of the khosuns. The changes effected not only China but China's relation with the Mongols, and prepared the way for a future Mongol nationalism.

In the first decade of the twentieth century the Peking government, in support of the colonising ambitions of the usurers and to resist the increasing influence of Russia in Mongolia, carried through a series of urgent measures to speed up the complete colonisation of Outer Mongolia. Peking had approved the "Colonisation Plan" in which the traders and usurers started to seize land against debts owned to utilise them for ploughing up for vegetable growing and pasture, on which they then began grazing cattle stolen from Mongols, or to use the land for speculation. The growing activities of foreign capital in Mongolia in the period of imperialism helped to increase the imbalance in trade and were ruining the arat popula-

tion. The Mexican dollars which circulated in China, Russian rouble and the old Chinese lan all were accepted as currency unit in Mongolia. As money relationship increased, the exploitation of Mongol masses became more and more intensified. This resulted in decline in the productive forces of the country.<sup>26</sup>

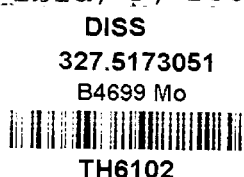
Apart from their policy of colonisation, the Manchu government enhanced the powers and functions of the Manchu administration and limited the rights of the local Mongol authorities and also strengthened the Manchu garrisons. The policy of Manchu government, aimed at stepping up oppression of the Mongols as a nation and turning Outer Mongolia into a 'barrier' against Russia, while at the same time intensifying interfeudal exploitation. Mongolia was being made into a raw-materials appendage to the world capital market, which reduced this country to serious economic straits.<sup>27</sup>

As a result the whole span of the 19th century saw former Russian interest in Outer Mongolia limited only to economic matters. The year 1860 witnessed the establishment of first Russian trading firm in Urga, the capital of

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26. Shirendyb and Others (ed.) n. 21, p. 206-208.

27. ...ibid, p, 208-210.



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Outer Mongolia. The Peking convention of November 2, 1860 which constituted the official basis for opening direct Russian trade in Mongolia, provided in Article V : "Russian merchants enjoy their ancient right to go from Kyakhta to Peking for commercial affairs. En-route it is permitted to them to trade at Urga and Kalgan. The Russian government has the right to maintain a consul (at Urga) and to construct these living quarters for him."<sup>28</sup> Thus, in 1861 a Russian consulate was opened in Urga whose property and personnel were guarded by a small Buryat Cossack detachment.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, a series of trade agreements were concluded between Russia and China to control the commercial traffic then passing between the two countries. Former Russian privileges in respect of trade in Outer Mongolia were extended in the strength of the "Rules for the Overland trading" between Russia and China signed additionally on Feb. 20, 1862 by both parties. Under this agreement, "in addition to the trade in the border strip, Russian trading firms and individual traders were given

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28. Cited in Robert, Rupen, *Mongols of the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington : Indiana University 1964) p. 54.

29. *ibid.*

30. Shirendyb and Others (ed), n. 21 P.210.

the right to carry on petty trade with Mongols free of custom duty in all the inhabited centres of Outer Mongolia."<sup>30</sup> The St. Petersburg treaty of 1881 provided detailed regulation which governed the transit of goods passing through Mongolia from Russia to China, and entrance points on the Mongolian frontier for Russian merchants were specified. In addition, Russia secured the right to open consulate in Kobdo and Uliasutai, among other places.<sup>31</sup>

Towards the end of the nineteenth century former Russia began to seek special railway rights in Manchuria and Mongolia. In June 1899, Russia secured from China the promise that "if railroads are in future built from Peking to the north or to the north east towards the Russian frontier," China if not constructing them herself, would reserve the right of construction for the Russian government or a Russian Syndicate.<sup>32</sup> It was only after the defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese war of 1905, that

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31. Peter S.H. Tang , *Russian and Soviet Policy in Manchuria and Outer Mongolia, 1911-31* (Durham, N.C. : Duke University Press, 1959) p. 287.

32. See Mc Murray (ed.) *Treaties and agreement with and Concerning China 1894-1919* (New York : Carneogie Endowment for international peace, 1921), Vol. 1. p. 204.



Russia turned its attention towards Mongolia. Following its defeat, the Tsarist government was obliged to conclude an agreement with to specify the Japan sphere of influence. particular mention may be made to a secret agreement which was concluded between the two "under which Outer Mongolian was recognised as the sphere of influence of Tsarist Russia and Inner Mongolia (except Barga) as that of Japan".<sup>33</sup> This imperiarlist act was called by Lenin as an "exchange" of Korea for Mongolia.<sup>34</sup> Since then Tsarist Russia paid increasing attention to Outer Mongolia in its Far Eastern Policy. Russian penetration into Outer Mongolia became more steady and influential. In 1905 a Russian Consultate was opened in Uliasutai; and later in 1911, one at Kobdo. Manchu Chinese concern over this steady Russian penetration resulted in a sudden activisation of Chinese policy towards Outer Mongolia. For almost two centuries since 1691, when Outer Mongolia accepted Manchu sovereignty, "China had followed a buffer State policy with regard to Outer Mongolia."<sup>35</sup> But when

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33. Shivendyb and others n. 21, p. 219-20.

34. See V.I Lenin, Notebooks on imperialism, 1939, p. 621 Cited in *ibid* p. 220.

35. Tang, n. 31 p. 288-289.

36. *ibid*, p. 293.

Outer Mongolia began to occupy an important place in the policy of Tsarist Russia after Russo-Japanese war, "the traditional Manchu policy could scarcely provide the needed bulwark against Russian infiltration and expansion."<sup>36</sup> Thus it was natural that the Manchu government had to adopt what it called its 'New Policy' to maintain its position. Tsarist Russia, having profited from the Manchu frontier 'vacuum' policy in the past did not at all welcome this alteration of what was in effect a no man's land in Outer Mongolia<sup>37</sup>. Eventually, a new struggle began between Russia and China to fill the power vacuum in Outer Mongolia.

### **III. RISE OF MONGOLIA'S STRUGGLE AGAINST MANCHU DOMINATION**

Under the so called "New Policy" the Manchu government adopted a number of measures which were not only resented by Russia but also led to the growth of anti-Manchu feelings among the feudal lords of Outer Mongolia. The new policy which meant the growing influence of the Chinese comprador bourgeoisie, was characterised by the forced

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36. *ibid*, p. 293.

37. Pavlovsky, n. 20, p. 40-42.

colonisation of Mongolia through mass settlement of Chinese, intensification of the military occupation and isolation of the country from the rest of the world, above all from the influence of Tsarist Russia.<sup>38</sup> Though the Chinese immigrants had made inroads into Mongolia earlier, it was not until 1902 that the Manchu court formally opened Mongolia to Chinese settlers.<sup>39</sup> The pressure of Chinese colonisation was felt in Outer Mongolia vigorously Mongols found themselves faced with the threat of ethnic extermination due to the control by the foreign government and by the actual colonisation of the land by Chinese.<sup>40</sup> To encourage Chinese emigration to Mongolia, a "Bureau for the colonisation of Mongolia" was established in Peking in 1906. Later in 1911 a Colonisation Bureau was opened in Urga also to expedite the process of colonisation from Inner China.<sup>41</sup> This process of chinese colonisation was taken seriously by the Russians. It became clear to

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38. *Information Mongolia : The Comprehensive Reference source of the People's Republic of Mongolia MPR* (Oxford : Pergamon Press, 1990), p. 116.

39. Tang, n. 26, P. 294.

40. See Lattimore, *Studies in Frontier History*, Collected papers 1928-1958 (Paris : Monton & Co. 1962) p. 276.

41. IU, Kushelev, *Mongolia i Mongoliskü Vopros* (Mongolia and the Mongolia Problem) St Petersburg, 1912 p. 53. Cited in Tang. n. 26 p. 294.

them that the Manchu policy of driving away the Buryats and Kazakhs from the frontier region and replacing them with Chinese settlers was aimed at getting the Mongolian land for the Chinese people, and weakening the Mongols.<sup>42</sup> At the same time it was considered by the Russians that the policy of Chinese colonisation in Outer Mongolia was directed towards preventing Russian influence in the region.<sup>43</sup> They feared that through this colonisation process, China with her more than four hundred million population would soon become the immediate neighbour of Russia<sup>44</sup> and in the event of an armed conflict, China might overwhelm Russia with its large population. The next important measure adopted by the Manchu government was the political reform conducted in Outer Mongolia. Russians viewed these political measures in Outer Mongolia as a means "to abolish the autonomy of the Mongol princes in order to reduce Mongolia to the status of a Chinese province".<sup>45</sup> It was seen to be depriving Russia of the

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42. *ibid.*

43. Anatolii Kalinikov, *Revoliutsionnaia Mongolia* (Revolutionary Mongolia) Moscow, 1925, p. 64 cited in Tang n. 26 p. 294-5.

44. *ibid.*, p. 295.

45. Chin Chieng tsu, *Wai-Mangching-Shih-Shih* (*A Modern History of Outer Mongolia*) (Shanghai, 1922) p. 5 cited in Tang n. 26, p. 295.

special position which she had enjoyed among the Mongols since ancient times because of the proximity and the close unity between the Russian and Mongolian border territories.<sup>46</sup>

Under the 'New Policy' some economic and military measures were also taken by Manchu government. According to the evidence collected by the Russian trade mission, a policy of feudal exploitation was practised by systematic increase of debts owed by Mongols to Chinese and other firms which decayed Mongolian's economy. The situation was aggravated by a national disaster, due to severe winters and the droughts experienced in the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>47</sup> Besides, plans were made to establish permanent Manchu garisons in Outer Mongolia, which provoked Russian opposition. Mongol resentment against this plan was not far less. In 1911 barracks for a division of Chinese troops were established at Urga and many Chinese Officers arrived there.<sup>48</sup> All these measures escalated the tension between the Manchu authorities and

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46. Yu. Khushelov, *Mongoliya i Mongol'skii Vopros (Mongolia and Mongolian Problem)* St. Petersburg p. 53-54 cited in Tang n. 26 p. 295.

47. Shirendyb and others, n. 21 p. 210.

48. China Year Book 1921-22, Tiatsin : Tientsin Press Ltd., 1921, p. 572.

the Mongols, who viewed the Chinese colonisation and formation of Chinese garrisons as means to end their autonomy.<sup>49</sup> However, constant inroads by the Chinese into Mongolian lands as well as in their economic life made it imperative for the Mongols to look for external aid to achieve their national liberation. The danger of extinction of Mongolia as a nation strengthened national consciousness among the Mongols. So much so, national liberation movement emanated from the lower strata of Mongolian society and arats organised small sporadic outbreaks. Large scale armed uprising also took place against the Manchu officials and Chinese usurers.<sup>50</sup>

As the Manchu policy of colonisation in Mongolia intensified, the religious and secular ruling classes of outer Mongolia turned against it. The common herdsmen felt a great danger of losing their land and livestock. Thus erupted a national movement of all classes to resist Chinese domination in Outer Mongolia. Since religion and politics were quite intermingled in Mongolia, the new developments for nationalist assertion increased the importance of Jepsun Damba Khutukhtu, the religious figure

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49. *ibid*, p. 572.

50. *Information Mongolia* n. 38, P. 116-117.

of Mongolia at Urga. The Jelsundamba Khutukhtu called a confidential consultative meeting of the princes and leading lamas of Outer Mongolia in Urga. After having discussed the situation in Outer Mongolia, the meeting took up the issue of restoring the independence of Mongolia, and decided to send a delegation to Russia to seek assistance from Tsarist government. The Mongolian delegation went to St. Peterberg along with a letter to the Tsar signed on July 17, 1911<sup>51</sup> by the Khutukhtu and the four Khalkha Khan (princes) to seek Russian assistance in their struggle for independence. A special conference on the question of Mongolia's independence movement took place under the Chairmanship of P.A. Stotypin, the Russian Prime Minister after which the Tsarist government decided to mediate between Manchus and Mongols. In accordance with the conference declaration and Tsar Nicholas II's approval, on August 6, 1911, Neratov (in charge of Tsarist Ministry of Foreign affairs) informed Korostovets (the Russian Ministry in Peking) about Russia's decision to stand by the desire of the Mongols for independence from the Manchus,

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51. Shoizhelov, Avotonomnoe Dvizhenie Mongolia i Tsarkaia Rossiia (*The autonomous Movement in Mongolia and Tsarist Russia*) The Vortok no. 13-14, 1926 p. 352-4 cited in Rupen n 28, P. 60-61.

if Chinese failed to stop the encroachment of Mongolia under its so called reform programmes.<sup>52</sup> By early October 1911 Russian troops had started pouring into Outer Mongolia under the pretext of protecting the Russian Consulate at Urga.<sup>53</sup> The Mongols had asked for Russian diplomatic protection rather than armed intervention. Since Russia had its designs, it sought to take a decisive role in the orientation and development of Mongolian independence movement."

Meanwhile China's position was weakened by the outbreak of the revolution at Wuchang in October 1911, which made the task of a Mongolia coup d'état easier. As a result, underground Mongolian opposition increased in vigour and Urga became the centre of the activity by the anti Manchu princes, who rallied round Urga Khutukhtu as their leader.<sup>54</sup> When the Chinese revolution broke out,

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52. As to details of instruction send by Neratov to Korostovets dated August 6, 1911, cited in Rupen n. 28 p. 298.

53. Cited in Tang n.31, p. 298.

54. G.C Binstad '*Mongolia*' China Year Book 1919-20 (London : George Routledge & Sons Ltd. n.d) (Reprinted from China Year Book 1914 edition) p. 587.



the Manchus were incapable of suppressing the Mongols. The Mongolian princes and religious leader seized this opportunity to stage a coup d'état on December 1, 1911. On this day a conference of all the princes of Mongols as well as religious leaders (high lamas) was called in Khutukhtu where it was decided to proclaim the restoration of independence to Mongolia from Manchu domination. The Conference declared:

"Our Mongolia when it was first founded, was separate state and so taking its stand on ancient right, Mongolia affirms that it is an independent state with a new government.... it is hereby declared that we Mongols from now onwards will not submit to Manchu and Chinese officials whose authority is completely destroyed."<sup>55</sup> On December 4, 1911, Manchu troops were also sent out immediately. Peking's view on the event was that "hoping to 'divide China', Russia instigated a few princes of the Mongols to declare "independence" of Outer Mongolia."<sup>56</sup>

Drawing their own conclusion from this event, the Mongols declared their complete separation from China and

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55. Shirenadyb and others, n. 21 p. 237.

56. Alan J.K. Sanders *Mongolia : Politics, Economics and Society*(London : Frances Printer, 1987), p. 15.

on December 28, 1911 the independence of Outer Mongolia was formally proclaimed with the birth of the new state named "The Empire of Mongolia". On that day the Bogdo • Gegen Jepsutdamb Khutukhtu was crowned as the Head of the Lamaist Church and State. Subsequently, a new Mongolian government was formed with a ministry of five portfolios namely, Interior, Foreign affairs, Finance, War and Justice. Later on in the autumn of 1912, a new post, that of Prime Minister, was created and given to Sain Noyon Khan Namnasuren. Thus Mongolia's independence as a feudal theocratic monarchy took shape after almost 200 years of Manchu domination.

## **Chapter II**

### **Ching Rule and Mongolia's Struggle for Independence, 1911-21**

For the first time, after over two hundred years of colonial subjugation Mongolia re-entered the mainstream of history, proclaiming her independence from China as a feudal theocratic monarchy under Jebtsundamba Khutuktu. The road to liberation of the Mongol people from the chains of colonialists and feudal oppression lay through strengthening the traditional friendship with the Russian people and also with the labouring classes of China who at this time had risen up in a revolutionary rebellion, which soon led to overthrow of the Manchu dynasty. Mongolia was one of the first nations in modern times, outside Europe, to escape successfully from subjugation to an alien power. Tibet, in contrast, though her legal and factual status was very similar to Mongolia's, never managed to accomplish the same transition to nationhood for want of a powerful protector.<sup>1</sup> For the prestige of a new regime in Chinese Republic, it was a serious matter that it had no control over a territory the inhabitants of which had until recently professed allegiance to the Manchu empire. The legal argument was that, because Outer Mongolia was a part of Chinese empire under the Manchu

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1. C.R.Bawden, *The modern history of Mongolia*, (Weidenfield and Nicolson, London, 1968) pg. 18.

dynasty, it should remain an integral part of the territory of the successive Chinese government.

The Chinese felt that the Mongol princes stood in a special relation to the former dynasty. Yuan-Shi-Kai, the first President of the Republic of China recognised the special position of the Mongol princes and applied primitive methods to gain their allegiance to the Republic. The last Manchu emperor in his last edict appealed for having a union of five races in Mongol, Chinese, Manchus, Mongolia-Tibetans and Mohammedans. Furthermore, the edict provided that the Mongol princes were not only to retain their titles but the rank of each holder was raised a degree, and when nobles were already princes, the title of prince would be given to one of their sons. This, however, applied in practice only to those princes, mainly living in Peking, who were willing to help the Chinese government to regain control over the dissenting princes.<sup>2</sup>

The Chinese government followed a set of policies towards Mongolia, who included negotiation with the Outer Mongols themselves. But these negotiations failed completely, as the intermediaries who were sent either

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2. G.M. Friters, *"Outer Mongolia and its international Position"*, (Baltimore, JohnHopkins Press, 1949,) P. 163.

did not reach their destination or were prevented from establishing contact with the living Buddha in Urga. Telegrams sent by the Chinese President to the Mongols remained unanswered.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, it soon became evident that the leaders in Outer Mongolia aimed at inducing the nobles of Inner Mongolia to adhere to the new Mongol State, and that their ambition carried them as far as sending armed bands of Mongols beyond the territory of Khalkha. An immediate necessity arose, therefore, for the Chinese government to counter such offensive, and save Inner Mongolia from being meted the fate of Khalkha and retain control in Western Mongolia and the Altai district, and the adjoining area of Turkistan. It is not quite clear whether Chinese troops ever reached Kobdo, but 2000 soldiers were reported to have been stationed there in December 1912. Yuan-shikai, however, admitted that Chinese reinforcements were sent to Altai and Turkisthan<sup>4</sup>.

At the same time, whether with special approval from the Peking government or independently, the troops in Inner Mongolia and Manchuria took extremely brutal mea-

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3. The Minister in Peking to Bethman Hollweg, Nov. 13, 1912, cited in No. 2, p 164.

4. *The Times*; London, December 7, 1912, P. 5, cited Friters No. 2.

asures against the opposition forces among the Inner Mongols so that several Inner Mongol leaders fled to Urga.<sup>5</sup>

## I. SINO-RUSSIAN NEGOTIATIONS OVER MONGOLIA

which China now took recourse to retain control over Mongolia into negotiations with Russia, and to accept her good offices in reestablishing relations with Urga. By the end of September 1912, the Assistant to the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs repudiated the Russian Minister's protest against sending of troops to Altai and Kobdo. He stated that "the present state of affairs in Mongolia had become intolerable," and that upto the present time the Chinese government paid great attention to the wishes of the Russian government, but it must now ask the latter to abstain from neutralising measures which were necessary to establish law and order in outer Mongolia."<sup>6</sup> He proposed that a third power should be asked to mediate between China and Russia. Which this third power was to be was not specified, but a month later, in a debate in the Chinese National Council, a delegate proposed Japan. Sub-

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5. Miller to Sazonev Oct. 28/Nov. 10, 1913, cited in Friters, No. 2, P. 164.

6. G.M. Friters, no 2, P. 165.

mission of the case to Hague tribunal was considered useless as it was felt that weak states got no justice there.<sup>7</sup>

In these circumstances, China concentrated on the defense of Inner Mongolia against any invasion. In the middle of November 1912, it was reported that 10,000 Chinese troops were stationed at Kalgan, which was also the headquarters of a division, and arrangements had been made for other divisions to proceed to Inner Mongolia by way of the Peking-Kalgan railway.

The government took these measures to save its face when the agitation in Mongolia reached its climax at the beginning of November 1912. Then it became known that Russia had concluded an agreement with the Living Buddha in Urga and other Mongolian princes, in which Russia maintained that the old relation between China and Mongolia had come to an end.

Convinced of the impossibility of reaching agreement with the government of Yuan-Shi-Kai, the Tsarist government decided to legalise independently the exist-

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7. *The Times*, London, December 3, 1912, P. 5, cited in *ibid.*



ence of Mongolia's autonomy and its predominant interest in it. As a result of lengthy negotiations between the representative of Tsarist Russia, Korostovets, and the Plenipotentiary of government of the Bogdo-gegen, a Russo-Mongolian agreement was signed in Urga which signified Russian support for Mongolia autonomy, but did not accept Outer Mongolia's claims on Urianghai, Barga and part of Inner Mongolia.

In the autumn of 1912 fighting broke out in Inner Mongolia between the forces of Yuan-Shi-Kai, who was trying to reestablish China's position there, and those of autonomous Mongolia which were pursuing the dream of a pan-Mongol state. Russia while willing to help and advise Mongolia and incidentally strengthen her commercial position there, was not going to burn her fingers by championing more than a limited autonomy within the old boundaries of Outer Mongolia. This was all that was recognised in the Protocol signed by Korostovets in Urga in November 1912. And Khandadorji, making a second visit to St. Petersburg at the end of the year, could not extract any greater concessions. Mongolia's international position was extremely weak. She had totally failed to get diplomatic recognition from

any of the powers, and her only success, a treaty signed with Tibet early in 1913, was not taken seriously by any one.<sup>8</sup>

Towards the end of November 1912 President Yuan of China during his meeting with the visiting French Minister discussed the position of Mongolia vis-a-vis Russia and China. President Yuan was told by the French minister that any agreement between China and Russia had to be based on the acceptance by China of three conditions : no occupation, no administration and no colonisation by Chinese in Outer Mongolia. Though China's President declared himself opposed to Chinese colonisation in Outer Mongolia, but he insisted that China wanted real Chinese sovereignty; and not mere suzerainty over Outer Mongolia. But Mongolians, believed that their acceptance of China's sovereignty would be tantamount to her having no voice whatever in Outer Mongolia and to her giving up the territory altogether. Besides, China believed that it was below its dignity to negotiate with Russia about a territory which could only be considered as belonging to China."

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8. C.R. Bawden, no 1, p. 200.

9. Friters, n. 2, p. 168.

Inspite of this failure to establish direct contact with the Mongol authorities in Urga, Yuan persued by sending extensive telegrams to impress on them China's determination to consider the whole of Mongolia as belonging to China. He warned them that by their attitude they would ultimately suffer the same fate as Korea and Formosa.<sup>10</sup>

In 1912 a second mission under Khanda Dorji was sent from Urga to St. Petersburg to negotiate with the government of Tsarist Russia loan and assistance in the organisation of an army etc. and also to discuss the problems of frontiers. After the negotiations Russia agreed to the Kobdo district being added to Outer Mongolia but rejected all other territorial claims of Urga. In February 1913, a special agreement was signed for the formation of a Mongol brigade and also for giving the Bogd-ogegens government a loan of 2 million roubles and some armaments.

The conclusio of the Russo-Mongolian agreement of November 3, 1912 aroused great irritation in the Chinese camp which demanded that Yuan-Shi-Kai take punitive mea-

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10. E.T. Williams, *American Journal of International Law*, 1916 p. 804-805.

sures against 'mutinous' Outer Mongolia. The Peking government began to launch an expedition from Sinkiang against Outer Mongolia. In the summer of 1913, the government of Tsarist Russia despatched Russian troops to Kobdo area, which forced the Peking government to recall its troops from the borders of Outer Mongolia. At the beginning of 1913, bitter fighting broke out between Mongol and Chinese troops. Since Tsarist Russia was bound by a special treaty which restricted its 'sphere of influence' in Inner Mongolia, it did not support the Bogdo Gegen's claims. When the government of the Bogdo Gegen appealed to the Government of Tsarist Russia with a request to take the Khoshuns of Inner Mongolia under its protection, it refused. The Tsarist government wrote to the Bogdo Gegen saying that if the Chinese troops entered the territory of Outer Mongolia, Russia would immediately come to its help but that it could not give money or troops for conducting military operations outside Khalkha borders.<sup>11</sup>

Tsarist stand was known to Peking. Yuan - Shi - Kai became more and more convinced that he could not begin

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11. Shirendyub and Others, ed., *History of Mongolian Peoples Republic*, (Nauka, Moscow, 1973), p. 244.

military operation against Outer Mongolia. In view of these circumstances Tsarist Russia and the Chinese Republic took steps to settle the Mongolian question behind the back of Mongols themselves in a manner which substantially suited both their purposes. This was a characteristic feature of international relations in the era of imperialism. At last on November 5, 1913, Russia and China signed a declaration that recognised Outer Mongolia's autonomy, at the same time acknowledging Chinese 'suzerainty' over the autonomous Outer Mongolia. Although the Chinese Republic was strong enough to crush the Mongols of southern Mongolia, it was insufficiently strong to challenge the people of Northern Mongolia and the Russians. However, by concluding the Russo-Chinese agreement on 5th November 1913, the Republic of China gained the right to rule southern Mongolia, to which they had no valid claim whatsoever. They also gained suzerain status over Northern Mongolia. In effect, the Chinese Government had no alternative but to accept a compromise over the status of Mongolia. The declaration signed by Russia and China had little practical value for China. Acknowledging the exclusive rights of the Mongols of the Outer Mongolia, the declaration made them responsible for the

internal administration of autonomous Mongolia and to decide all questions affecting this country in the spheres of trade and industry. It stated, "China undertakes not to interfere in its affairs and accordingly will not maintain there any civil or military authorities and will refrain from any colonisation of said country... Russia, on her part undertakes not to keep troops in Outer Mongolia with the exception of Consulate guards, not to interfere in any branch of the country's administration whatsoever and to abstain from colonising it."<sup>12</sup> According to the declaration, government of China agreed that the territorial question connected with Outer Mongolia would be settled only in agreement with the government of Tsarist Russia. According to the declaration of 1913, the government of autonomous Mongolia was given the right to conduct negotiations, even with other states, on economic matters, but was not allowed to negotiate with other states on the question of a political nature or to conclude political treaties.

The Mongols wanted full independence and not the Chinese "suzerainty". So they objected to the Russo-Chinese declaration of November 5, 1913. In fact, while

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12. *ibid.* ✓

the Mongolian Prime Minister, Sain Noyon Khan was in St. Petersburg from December 1913 to January 1914, he denounced the Russo-Chinese declaration in a note addressed to Sazonov and all the diplomatic representatives including the Chinese Ministers. He claimed that Mongolia had completely broken with China.<sup>13</sup> But his denunciation did not yield any positive results and attempts by the Mongols to exercise the control over their own foreign relations were rebuffed. Sazonov pointed out to Sain Noyon Khan that, "it was impossible for Mongolia to obtain recognition of her independence by other powers. The majority of them did not desire disintegration of China."<sup>14</sup> Such a policy of Russia was no more than a prevaricated one to serve its own interests. The Mongols had to remain contented with the assurance in Russo-Chinese Declaration that in the negotiation soon to follow, they could take part on equal footing with China and Russia and that their best interests would be given due consideration.<sup>15</sup>

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13. Sain Noyon Khan, Mongolian Prime Minister and Special envoy to Sazonov, Letter, December 16, 1913. Cited in Peter Tang, *Russian and Soviet Policy in Manchuria and Other Mongolia : 1911-1931*, (Duke University Press, Durham, 1959) p. 337.

14. Sazonov to Miller confidential letter, January 30, 1914, cited in *ibid.*

15. Weigh, Ken Shen, *Russo-Chinese diplomacy, 1689-1924* (University Prints and Reprints, Bangor, Maine, 1949), Vol. 3, p. 180.

## II. TREATY OF KIAKTA 1915 :

Developments in Outer Mongolia were hardly encouraging for China. The entry of Chinese goods into Outer Mongolia, whether through Russian or Chinese merchants suffered severely from the imposition of Likin charges and various other collections and fees. As was reported in June 1914, influx of Chinese settlers into Outer Mongolia had again begun, taking advantage of the fact that its exact boundaries were not yet settled. Anxieties in China increased when rumours spread that Russia had fortified her position by several agreements with Outer Mongolia, of which one on railways was made public after its conclusion in September 1914.<sup>16</sup>

At last the tripartite negotiation opened in September 1914. At that time Russia was deeply involved in the European war. Chinese delegation thought, it to be the opportune time for them. From the beginning, their attitude was aggressive which rendered the negotiation process difficult. The Chinese delegation headed by General Pi-Kuei-pang and Chen Lu, asked that the Living Buddha should renounce his title of Bogdokhan, and that the Mongolia

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16. Friters, n. 2, p. 175.



national calendar should be replaced by the Chinese. They wanted the Mongols to recognise the Sino-Russian declaration and to make a specific admission that Mongolia had never been independent.

They were playing the same tactics to which they had resorted with so little success during the Sino-Russian negotiations. The Chinese maintained that Autonomous State or Government as in Outer Mongolia could not maintain troops, contract loans or conclude treaties of a commercial and industrial character, such as telegraphs and railways agreements or even accept the Russian diplomatic agents in their capital.<sup>17</sup> The Sino-Russian declaration and Peking notes represented the maximum of possible compromise to be attained by the two powers on the question of principles and definition. Chinese demanded trade rights in Outer Mongolia. The Chinese delegates aimed at obtaining for their merchants the same privileges that Russia had secured for her merchants in the Russo-Mongolian Protocol of 1912.

Russia countered that such participation by the Chinese representative in the internal administration of Outer Mongolia could not be permitted, as the autonomy of

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17. *ibid*, p. 176.

Outer Mongolia provided it rights to control independently all matters concerning trade and customs. The KIAKTA tripartite conference occupies a special place in the history of feudal theocratic state of Mongolia. The conference which was attended by China, Khalkha Mongolia and Tsarist Russia, began its work in the autumn of 1914 and completed it eight months later in May 1915. The Mongolian plenipotentiaries pleaded in vain full independent state hood for Inner and Outer Mongolia. All three parties were agreed in accepting that Khalkha Mongolia would remain as part of China. China would not interfere into its internal administration, would not colonise and not bring troops into it. This agreement was same as was earlier laid down in the Russo-Chinese declaration of Nov. 5 1913. Eventually, Russia, China and Mongolia reached an agreement at the end of the tripartite conference held on the basis of the Mongolian-Russian agreement of 1912 and the Sino-Russian declaration of 1913 at Kiakta on the Russo-Mongolian border in July 1915. The tripartite agreement split Mongolia into two parts - Inner Mongolia and Outer Mongolia. It made Inner, south Mongolia adjoining China part of China and Outer, north Mongolia further from China autonomous under the suzerainty of China. Thus

the autonomous Mongolian state existed as such until 1915, when it became an autonomous Outer Mongolia.<sup>18</sup>

The Russo-Mongolian Agreement of November 3, 1912 and the Russo-Chinese-Mongolian agreement of Kyakhta of July, 1915, created favourable conditions for Russian capital to capture the Mongolian market. Russian capitalists, however, failed to take full advantage of the results of the diplomatic victories won by Tsarist policies. They could not take over the place of Chinese merchants, most of whom had been driven out of Mongolia in 1911-1912. The first world war had the effect of weakening Tsarist Russia's position in Mongolia, as from 1916 onwards deliveries of Russian goods to Mongolia ceased completely. In these circumstances the Kyakhta Tripartite Agreement of 1915, which legalised the activities of Chinese merchants in Mongolia, though it did not place them on an equal footing, legally, with Russian capitalists, very soon led to the reestablishment of their predominance as supplier of goods to Mongolia and as purchaser of Mongolian raw materials. The weakening of economic position of Russia and its military failures on the

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18. Ram, Rahul, *Mongolia Between China and USSR*, (Munshiram Pub. Ltd., New Delhi, 1989), p. 8.

world war front led to the gradual decline in political influence of Tsarist Russia in Mongolia.

### III. LOSS OF AUTONOMY & PEOPLES REVOLUTION

Although the tripartite agreement was a settlement of controversies and disputes "which had spun out since the date set for the renewal of St. Petersburg treaty of 1881 between Russia and China, it virtually retained Russian privileges in Outer Mongolia including the right of free trade. By this agreement as one Western writer has pointed out, China recognised the autonomy of Outer Mongolia under Chinese suzerainty but as Russian 'protectorate'.<sup>19</sup>The victory of the Great October socialist Revolution in Russia marked the beginning of a period of transition from capitalism and pre-capitalist relations to socialism. The 1917 revolution paved the way for an alliance between the working class of Soviet Russia and arat revolutionaries in Mongolia. The historical roots of this alliance date back to the past when the Mongolian people, fighting against feudal and colonial oppression, sought and found support from progressive representatives of Russian people. Association between the Mongols and Rus-

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19. Leonard Ludwin, "Mongolia against Japan", *The New Republic*, Vol. 94, 23 March, 1938, p. 188.

sians made it possible for leading members of arat population to absorb the revolutionary experience of Russian working class and its party. Leading representatives of the arats realised that the cause of liberating the long suffering Mongolian people was intimately linked with the revolutionary struggle and the success of working class of Russia. During 1917, in a number of Khosuns of the aimaks of Tsetsen Khan and Tushetu Khan, arats came forward with clear demands of an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist character. However, due to the absence of any leading organisation and of a programme of action, these agitations met with no success.<sup>20</sup>

Direct contact between the progressive sections of Mongolian arats and the victorious working class in Russia created favourable conditions for the successful development and triumphant consummation of 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. Consequently, the revolution in Mongolia was characterised by several features. Firstly, it developed under the direct ideo-

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20. Shirendyb and Others, ed., no. 11, p. 270-1.

logical influence of the Great October Socialist Revolution and in close international association with the Russian working class. Secondly, its attack was directed primarily against imperialism, Thirdly, that from the very outset, the liberation struggle of the Mongolian People against imperialist oppression was very closely interwoven with the struggle against feudalism.<sup>21</sup>

At the end of 1917 and the beginning of 1918, bitter fighting developed in the provinces bordering on Mongolia between the Russians, Tuva, Buryat and other working people on the one hand and the foreign interventionists, white guards and the local oppressors, on the other. At the end of 1918 when, with the help of foreign interventionists, the white guard mutineers temporarily suppressed Soviet authority in the Far East and Siberia, Soviet activists and individual workers and peasants supporters, of the Soviet regime - also began to emigrate to Mongolia to escape from counter-revolutionary terror. They contributed to a large extent to mobilise the herds. The warfare developed in Siberia and Far East between workers and peasants, on the one hand, and the white Guard mutineers supported by the troops of Japanese, American

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21. *ibid.*

and other imperialist interventinists, on the other. As a result of negotiation between the Japanese government and the Chinese militarists, held in March, April and September 1918, agreements were concluded by which the latter agreed to join in armed intervention against Soviet Russia. The Chinese military undertook to introduce their troops into Autonomous Mongolia and using it as a base, advance in the direction of Lake Baikal in order to cut off the Far East from former Soviet Russia.<sup>22</sup> Some White Russian leaders began to play with the idea of creating a single Greater Mongolian State i.e. Pan- Mongol State. The idea was planned by a White Russian, Ataman Semenov who oed his allegiance to the Tsar and also claimed to have Mongolian blood in his veins.<sup>23</sup> But Semenov's plan of a Pan-Mongolian State was cut short as the Red forces succeeded in ousting him from Siberia and Mongolia.

Cheng Lu, the Chinese dignitary in Urga and one of the delegates to tripartite conference highlighted those rights and duties granted to China by Kiakhta agreement in 1915. Chinese merchants took several steps to recover the lost economic ground. At first they were unsuccessful

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22. *ibid*, p. 272-4.

23. Robert, Rupen, *Mongolia of the Twentieth Century*, (Indiana University, Bloomington, 1964), p. 132-3.

and after the collapse of Tsarist Russia in 1917 they resumed to open Chinese banks in Urga. Strong protests lodged with the Chinese government by the Russian minister in Peking, the Russian diplomatic agent in Urga and the Mongolian government itself, were of no avail. The Chinese retorted in defense against Russian and Mongolia's protest saying that the establishment of a new firm of a purely economic character such as a bank, did not violate the stipulation, and that in any event it was clear that if nothing was said about credit establishments in the text of the treaty this did not mean that such institutions were forbidden.

The Mongolian government issued a decree forbidding the circulation of Chinese bank notes and imposed a fine on all those who possessed these notes . Ignoring Mongolian and Russian protests, Chinese were confident that neither the Mongols nor the Russians were in a position to take active measures. By the end of 1918 the Chinese dignitary had reinforced his guard in Urga, in defiance of the specific stipulation of the Kiakhta agreement. It was obvious that Chinese aimed at getting rid of the restriction placed on them by that agreement. Chinese foreign office admitted in a statement made in December



1918 in answer to an enquiry by the American government, addressed to the Chinese ambassador Dr. Willington Koo, that "with regard to Outer Mongolian affairs the Chinese government, for the sake of the relation between China and Outer Mongolia, does not want to abolish the autonomous government without due consideration, but it is the policy of Chinese government to terminate the treaty between China & Mongolia."<sup>24</sup>

In January 1919, the Chinese foreign office authorised the Chinese dignitary in Urga, Cheng Yi to try to come to a new agreement with Outer Mongolia, which should substitute the existing tripartite agreement, and should serve as a bargaining point for the recognition by China of the new Soviet government. Cheng Yi's secretary went to Peking to obtain his government's approval for this draft in which the Living Buddha had promised to abolish the autonomous government after he had agreed with Cheng Yi on a draft of sixty-three articles, enumerating the special privileges which the Mongols would retain.

Relations, however, became worse with the arrival of General Hsu Shu Tseng in Urga in October 1919, after his

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24. C.F. Strong, "Re-collection of Outer Mongolian Question", *Independent Critic* (Peking), April 26, 1936, p. 5.

appointment in June as special envoy to the North Western Frontiers. Two facts stand out clearly : First that General Hsu took much stronger attitude towards the Mongols than Cheng Yi. Secondly, the relations between General Hsu and Cheng Yi were extremely strained, so that there was no collaboration between these two representatives of China. It appears that General Hsu was not briefed by Cheng Yi with the details of sixty three articles, and General Hsu was not only in favour of a drastic revision of many privileges enumerated in them, but also pressed for the abolition of the autonomous government before an agreement had been reached on the extent of these privileges. He presented them to the Outer Mongolian government and gave them thirty six hours to answer his demand for the abolition of the autonomy, threatening that otherwise he would escort the Living Buddha and the Premier to Kalgan.<sup>25</sup> Under increased pressure and threats from General Hsu, the ministers of Mongolia government agreed to sign petition for the abolition of autonomy, Armed with this Petition, the President of the Chinese Republic issued a mandate, dated November 22, 1919, which granted "desires of the people of Outer Mongolia." Concerning foreign relation,

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25. *ibid*, p. 6.

it was stated that since Outer Mongolia had renounced its autonomy, all treaties or agreements concluded between Russia and Mongolia as also the Kiakhta agreement "became null and void automatically".<sup>26</sup>

The dignity of Bogdo Gegen of Outer Mongolia was preserved and rights and privileges of the four leagues and the Shabrina administration were respected. Any honorary title was also conferred up on the Living Buddha. Though General Hsu's rule in Urga did not last long, he strengthened Chinese influence considerably, which pushed the Mongols back again into their former attitude of hostility towards China.<sup>27</sup>

The situation in Outer Mongolia took a serious turn, due to the launching of an offensive against Mongolia by Ungern Sternberg. With the Japanese backing, Ungern Sternberg along with his band of white Russian guards launched an offensive on Urga in October 1920.<sup>28</sup> The attack was carried out with a large force of cavalry

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26. Chisney Hill, "The doctrine of *Rebus-Sic-Stantibus* in International Law", *The University of Missouri Studies*, Vol. IX, July 1, 1934, no. 3, p. 25.

27. *Friters*, no. 2, p. 190.

28. A.E. Khodorov, "Mongolia and its claimants" *Living Age*, Vol. 314, 5 August 1922, p. 337.

and artillery but faced stiff resistance from the Chinese troops. Although the Urga Khutugtu and his entourage had protested the invasion of Russian troops and along Mongolia's eastern border in 1919, this time they sent secret congratulation and beckoned the troops of Ungern to enter Urga<sup>29</sup>. When Ungern was approaching Urga, the Chinese put Khutugtu and several princes under their custody accusing them of having conspired with Ungern. The capture of Khutuktu was regarded as an unprecedented sacrilege by the Mongols. As a result Mongol discontent increased and many of the Mongolian princes besides arats turned for aid to Ungern. Ungern's forces, comprised of white Russians, Mongolians, Buriats, Japanese and other nationalities, laid seige to Urga successfully, and his forces entered the city on February 1921.<sup>30</sup> After Urga was taken by Ungern, the independence of Outer Mongolia was proclaimed under the nominal leadership of Bogdo gegen (Khutuktu) with Ungern himself assuming the title of

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29. Shirendyb and Others, ed., *History of the Mongolian People's Republic*, William A. Brown and Urgunge Onon, trans, London : East Asian Research Centre, (Harvard University, 1976), p. 86.

30. Rodney, Gilbert, "Major Dockray's Story of Urga", *North China Herald*, (Shanghai), 26 March 1921, p. 793.

Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. Discontent among the Chinese troops contributed a lot to Ungern's success. It was reported in the press that before Ungern occupied Urga, the Chinese troops, whose pay had been delayed and who disliked their commanders, had mutinied.<sup>31</sup>

However, Ungern's attempts were doomed to failure. The idea of fighting against the revolutionaries, particularly the people of Soviet Russia was sharply rejected by the people of Mongolia under the leadership of the revolutionary group. For the revolutionaries, it became an urgent task to organise the Mongolian masses for struggle against the occupying forces - the Chinese militarists and the White Russian band led by Ungern. At this critical period, when the situation in Outer Mongolia was grave, Mongolian revolutionaries prepared to organise the first Party congress in order to have a political platform, a provisional government and a national army. The historical importance of the first congress was that it provided the Mongolians Peoples Party, an organization and created a Central Committee. They organised People's Revolutionary Army with a five men staff under the command of Sukhebatuur. The Peoples Party, underlook the

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31. Cited in Shirendyb and Others, ed., no. 29, p. 89.

urgent last of expelling Chinese militarists and Russian white guards i.e. the Ungernists. The Peoples Provisional Government appealed to the Government of Soviet Russia (RSFSR) on April 10, 1921 asking for military aid for the joint struggle against the common enemy - white Russian guards. Although the request was accepted by Soviet Russia, the Red Army did not enter Mongolia until Ungern had actually attacked Russian Kiakhta.

The entry of white Russian guards into Mongolia in June 1921 created an easier situation for the Soviet government. On June 28, 1921, the joint force of Red Army and the Mongolian People's Revolutionary army began their historic march for the liberation of Urga in a planned manner. After a series of battles with the White Russian guards they stormed the capital on July 6, 1921. On 10th July they defeated the Russian white guards and handed over the authority to the Mongolian revolutionaries. Next day, the Mongolian Peoples Party established the Mongolian People's Government. Jepsundamba Khutuktu was the nominal head of the government, but it was Suckhebaator, the Minister of War, who really wielded power. The roots of Mongolian revolution lay deep in Mongol history. The Soviets only helped the Mongols to win freedom. The Mongolian revolution ended China's control over Mongolia.

## **Chapter III**

### **Assertion of Mongolia's Independence and China's Response, 1921-46**

The joint Red army and the Mongolian Peoples Revolutionary Army began their historic march for the liberation of Urga in a well planned manner. After a series of battles with the white guards covering Urga, on the morning of July 6, 1921, the advanced detachment of the revolutionary troops entered the capital. Two days later, on July 8, they arrived in Urga, along with the main forces of the army, the provisional peoples Government and the Central Committee of the party.<sup>1</sup> They were warmly welcomed by the Mongolian populace. Thus the capture of Urga established the revolutionaries control over the country. Following this event, Sukhebator in his speech declared : "For the liberation of our country from foreign aggressors and for winning freedom and rights for the Mongolian people we have chosen a peoples government. We have decided to establish state power on completely different principles."<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, an ultimatum was sent on July 9, 1921 by the Peoples Revolutionary government, to the Bogdo Gegen government asking it to "bring their seals and badges to the office of the interior ministry by noon,

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1. Shirendyba and Others, History of Mongolian Peoples Republic (Nauka, Moscow 1973) p. 299.
  2. *ibid.*



July 10, 1921 and hand them over to the representatives of the peoples party and the government as well as the Commander-in-Chief of the Army who would be gathered there to decide governmental questions."<sup>3</sup> When the provisional people's government took over the ministerial seals from the Bogdo government, on July 11, 1921 now celebrated as the Mongolian National Day, the peoples government was proclaimed but under "limited constitutional monarchy" with Bogdo Gegen as the "Constitutional monarch".<sup>4</sup>

Thus, all national political power was shifted to the peoples government. Bogdo was made the Country's first prime minister, Sukhebator remained as Commander-in-Chief and Minister of war with Choibalson as his Deputy and Den Zen was appointed as Finance Minister.<sup>5</sup> The transfer

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3. Revolutionary measure taken by the peoples government (1921-1924) Documentary Collection (Ulan Bator, 1954) p. 20-22, cited in Shirendyb and other (ed) *History of the Mongolian Peoples Republic*, William A Brown and U. Onon trans. London, 1976 p. 153.
  4. Constitutional is not the right word here, because the first constitution had not yet been adopted and authority of Bagdo Gegen was considerably curtailed. His authority was only limited to religious matters by an agreement between the Bogdo Government and the peoples government, which is known as the 'Oath treaty' signed formally on November 1, 1921.
  5. For other members of this 'government see R. Rupen. *Mongols of the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington, Indiana Univ. 1964) p. 431.

of power to the peoples government marked the beginning of an important period in the history of Mongolia.

Although Ungern suffered a heavy defeat and for the time being evaded battle with the Soviet troops, he was still far from being totally defeated. The white guard forces still held a large part of the country's territory - including the towns of Kobdo, Ulliasutai, Van-Khure, Sain Baise (present day Choibalson) and others.<sup>6</sup> On July 24, 1921 the bands of Ungern & Rezukhin again crossed into RSFSR (Soviet Russia), counting on assistance from Japanese troops. On August 5, 1921 Red Army units defeated the White Guards in the region of Goose lake. Ungern with the remnants of his troops, again fled into Mongolia to escape being surrounded and finally smashed.<sup>7</sup> Not many details were known in Peiking for some time as to Soviet Russia's relations with Outer Mongolia except that Russian troops were stationed in several parts of the country. In unofficial negotiation, began at the end of 1921 between the Peking government and a Soviet representative, the latter declared that the Soviet army presence in Outer Mongolia was of a purely temporary character and

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6. Shirendyb and others, n. 1, p. 300.

7. *ibid*, p. 301.

that no Russo-Mongolian agreement had been concluded." But when Russo-Mongolian agreement of the 5th November 1921, which treated Outer Mongolia as an independent state and omitted all mention of her relation with China, was published soon afterwards, the Peking government on May 1, 1922 lodged a protest with the Soviet representative, Parkes, against this agreement. The Chinese declared that Outer Mongolia was Chinese territory and that Soviet Russian policy in that region, inspite of all contradictory statements from the Soviets themselves, was falling in the foot-steps of Tsardom.<sup>9</sup>

## **I. EMERGENCE OF MONGOLIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC**

After the success of armed struggle to smash the remnants of Ungern forces, several important developments occurred in Outer Mongolia's domestic and external politics. These developments in the end, made it possible to replace the People's Government by a "peoples democracy" i.e. the establishment of People's Republic" in 1924. The former Soviet government wanted to build in Outer Mongolia a party whose leaders could, and would,

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8. T. Pollard, *China's Foreign Relations 1917-1931* (New York 1933) p. 166.

9. Alfred Dennis, *The Foreign Policies of Soviet Russia* (London, 1924) p. 323-24.

implement Comintern directives - directives that came to reflect the Soviet Union's national interests. The interests of the former Soviet Union thus came to dominate the solution to two main problems at the Kiakhta congress of 1921, viz; the Mongol's aspiration towards independence, and their desire for a Pan-Mongol state. By 1925 both these aspirations had already suffered frustration at the hands of former leadership. In 1921, however, the question of Outer Mongolia's independence was of primary concern. In that year the Bolshevik government, determined to maintain its influence over Outer Mongolia did its best to prevent the Mongolian government from exercising any of the prerogatives of independence. Soviet policy of dominance in Outer Mongolia was pursued even at the risk of endangering other objectives.<sup>10</sup>

The Soviet diplomats in Peking between 1921 and 1924 strived to gain Chinese recognition of the Soviet regime. The former Soviet Union desired to prop up an independent China against the so called imperialist countries and, at the same time, to obtain opportunities for promoting pro-Communist movements in China.

10. Murphy George G.S., *Soviet Sattelite - A study of the oldest political sattelite*, (University of California Press, Los Angles, 1966) p. 72.

When a new Soviet Russian delegate Karakhan, arrived in Peking in September 1923, the Chinese government insisted on a discussion on the status of Outer Mongolia. China refused to agree to the Russian proposal to make the beginning of official negotiations dependent on the previous recognition of the Soviet government by China. The unofficial negotiation pursued during the following months ended in the March 1924 with the signing of a treaty draft. Article 5 of this draft contained a stipulation concerning Outer Mongolia, recognising it as an integral part of the Republic of China and former Soviet Russia engaged herself to respect China's sovereignty therein. She also promised to withdraw all her troops as soon as feasible. The Peking Cabinet, however, was not prepared to agree to this draft, and repudiated its negotiation by accusing him of having exceeded his instructions. China wanted the treaties between former Russia and Outer Mongolia to be cancelled . . . ., in view of the fact that these treaties considered Outer Mongolia as an independent country. Besides a Russian minister had been sent to Mongolia which was quite contrary to the sentence "respecting the sovereignty of China". Secondly Chinese government asked for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Mongolia, with-

out any pre-conditions.<sup>11</sup>

In a manner recalling the Russo-Chinese negotiations between 1912-1915, the Soviet representative, Karakhan, in the middle of 1924, demanded that the Chinese government should agree to the draft within three days; otherwise he would not consider himself bound by its stipulations, and the Chinese government would have to bear the consequences of its refusal. Though the Soviet leaders were ready to recognise Chinese sovereignty over Mongolia, they were not prepared to discuss the rights of Soviet troops and the policies being carried out by Soviet agents in Urga. Neither did the Bolshevik government accept discussion of the Outer Mongolia question as a precondition for the negotiations on the larger question of Chinese recognition of the USSR.<sup>12</sup> Finally, The Sino-Soviet accord was concluded on May 31, 1924 which accepted the status quo. Soviet government recognised the Chinese sovereignty over Outer Mongolia and simultaneously Soviet government agreed to remove RSFSR troops from Outer Mongolia.

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11. T. Polard, No. 8 p. 883. Cited in Friters GM *Outer Mongolia and its international positions*. (John Hopkins Press Baltimore 1949) p. 195.

12. A. Whitting, *Soviet Policies in China, 1917-1924* (New York, 1954) p. 248-262.

It was stipulated that all treaties, agreements, etc. concluded between the former Tsarist government and third party or parties affecting the sovereign rights and interests of China were null and void. The two governments agreed that in future neither of them would conclude any treaties or agreements prejudicial to the sovereign rights and interests of either. However, no mention was made of any treaty concluded by Soviet Russia. In the final agreement, the Soviet-Mongolian agreement of 1921 was thus not repudiated. Whereas the Chinese government indirectly recognised the Soviet-Mongolian agreement, the Soviets recognised China's sovereignty of Outer Mongolia, which was more than the suzerainty conceded to China by Tsarist Russia at Kiakhta in 1915.

The Socio-economic measures carried through in 1922-1924 under the leadership of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) created the necessary conditions for forming a republic. The republic was set up against the background of further aggravation of the class struggle which was expressed in serious resistance by the feudal nobles and the national bourgeoisie elements.<sup>13</sup> Soviet Russian recognition of China's sovereignty over Outer

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13. Shirendyb and Others, no. 1, p. 316.

Mongolia in May 1924 contained for China nothing more than a principle. The Chinese government was in fact compelled to stop short of concrete realisation of sovereignty over Outer Mongolia, as the Civil war of 1926-28 as well as the actual circumstances in Outer Mongolia eliminated any possibility of establishing China's control there. Only a month after the agreement of May 1924, upon the death of the Living Buddha, Outer Mongolia, had declared itself a Mongolian Peoples Republic. This showed clearly the extent of Soviet Russian influence there, as well as the unwillingness of Outer Mongolia to accept China's sovereignty.<sup>14</sup>

The proclamation of the Mongolian People's Republic and the adoption by the Grand People's Hural of the first constitution of the MPR further consolidated the people's power. After the First Grand People's Hural the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist people's revolution developed in a relatively more favourable international situation than in 1921-1924. This was due to strengthening and development of friendship and co-operation between the MPR and former Soviet Union in political, economic and cultural spheres.<sup>15</sup>

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14. Friters, no. 11, p. 197.

15. Shirendyb and Others, no. 1, p. 320.



During the period from 1925-1928, which is considered by Friters as a period of revival of the feudal capitalist ("right wing") forces",<sup>16</sup> the government of Mongolian People's Republic became a little more independent of Moscow. In other words, within the Mongolian polity, right wing leaders enjoyed considerable freedom to some extent by dominating top leadership in the MPRP and government policies. They virtually rejected the need for strengthening the Mongol-Soviet ties. T.S. Jamtsarano was reported to have declared before the fifth congress of Mongolian People's Revolutionary party in 1926 that Mongolia "should be a neutral state like Switzerland, recognised by the USSR, China and other states" rather than having close ties with the USSR.<sup>17</sup> In 1925 the government of the MPR recognised Tuva's independence and concluded a treaty of friendship with it. In order to reinforce external position of the MPR, it was important to establish normal good neighbourly relations with neighbouring China. As a true friend of the Mongolian people, the former USSR was concerned for regulating the

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16. Friters, G.M., no. 11, p. 134.

17. Shirendyb and others (ed.) *History of the Mongolian Peoples Republic*, William A Brown and Urgunge Onon trans London : East Asian Research Centre, Harvard University, 1976, p. 809.

mutual relations between China and the MPR. However, the Chinese militarists not only refused to recognise the independence of MPR but were also opposed to establishing diplomatic relations between China and the former USSR. It was only under pressure of the revolutionary liberation movement developing in China and because of the changed international circumstances that the government of China was obliged on May 31, 1924, to sign a Soviet-Chinese treaty on "General principles for regulating problems between the Soviet Union and the Chinese Republic."<sup>18</sup>

The value of the recognition of the principles of China's sovereignty over Outer Mongolia by Soviet Russia was diminished when in 1927 Sino-Soviet diplomatic relations were interrupted, to be resumed only in 1932, thus preventing the conference on outstanding questions mentioned in the 1924 agreement from completing its task. The Chinese government was too much absorbed in internal troubles to be able to occupy itself effectively with Outer Mongolian affairs. The Manchurian authorities under General Tsou-hua were, however, endeavouring to advance the railway system to keep pace with colonisation

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18. Shirendyb and others (ed.), no. 1, p. 321.

towards the Outer Mongolian frontier. These plans found encouragement in a short lived intrusion of Soviet troops in Barga in 1929.<sup>19</sup>

Chinese General Tsou aimed at the creation of a self supporting Chinese population along a strategically selected portion of Mongolian frontier. To attain this object, conditions imposed upon buyers of these land were much more stringent. They had to have enough capital to develop the property, and had to plough their land and occupy it, or provide tenants within three years failing which they lost their title.<sup>20</sup>

In May 1930, the Chinese government called together a Mongolian Affairs conference, which was not, however, attended by any delegates from Outer Mongolia. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed an appeal to the people of Mongolia reaffirming that Mongolia was Chinese territory. It stated, "Both Mongolia and Tibet are integral parts of Chinese Republic and the local authorities should take care to avoid establishing direct diplomatic relations with any foreign government. They are the citizens of Republic of China and are entitled to

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19. Friters n. 11, p. 198.

20. *ibid.*

protection by the Central government against foreign oppression." The statement also referred to the fact that Russia, in the Sino-Russian agreement of 1924 had formally recognised Mongolia as an integral part of China, as well as China's complete sovereignty over the territory. It further stated, "It is, therefore, obvious that USSR had renounced and does not possess any special interest in Outer Mongolia. The authority for dealing with the foreign relations of Mongolia and Tibet rest with the Central government of China; local authorities in these districts may act only through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."<sup>21</sup>

As against such a stance of China, the resolution of the Eighth Congress of the MPRP (which met from February 21 to April 30 1930) established that the Mongolian leadership was becoming more oriented towards the Soviet Union. New leadership was essentially a group of leftists who agreed with the policies that the commintern wished to implement in the Mongolian Peoples Republic. The period from 1929 to 1932 was of a left wing deviation and in the words of Friters, this period was one of 'Violent

21. *Chinese Affairs* no. 82-88, International Relation Committee, Nankiang, May 31, p. 1 cited in Friters, n. 11, p. 200.

Socialisation'.<sup>22</sup> However, in 1932, government policy began to change, and the left deviation was reversed by what is called "New turn" policy.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, a new period opened in 1934 with the visit of the then Mongolian Prime Minister, P. Genden to Moscow. It was now recognised that the Mongolian People's Republic "was not yet a socialist state but was still in a period of transition."

Out of these internal political developments, there emerged a leading figure in Mongolian politics namely Kh. Choibalsan who managed to survive various purges and lived longer than all his colleagues. Although he had earlier actively participated in the Revolution of 1921 and had been one of the important figures in MPRP, "he did not become the dominating figure until the decisive years from 1932 to 1934."<sup>24</sup> It is also significant to note here that Choibalsan did not occupy a prominent place in the government until it became vital for the Soviet interests.

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22. Friters G.M., no. 11, p. 132.

23. D. Daspurev and S.K. Soni, *Reign of Terror in Mongolia, 1921-1990*. New Delhi, South Asian Publishers 1992, p. 23-24.

24. Owen Lattimore, *Nomads and Commissars : Mongolia Revisited* (New York Oxford University Press 1962). p. 127-8, p. 148.

However "Choibalson, as co-founder (with SukheBator) of the Mongolian Army and its long time Commander-in-Chief enjoyed special Soviet favour."<sup>25</sup> In 1930, he formally joined the government as Minister of Foreign Affairs and in 1931, became Minister of Livestock and Agriculture. Subsequently, Choibalson became Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Minister of war in 1937, and emerged as the undisputed leader of the country in 1939 when he rose to the highest position by becoming the Prime Minister of Mongolia.

Due to Japanese advance in Manchuria, China lost Manchuria and Jehol with their many Mongolian inhabitants. Now the problem arose that those Mongols who still remained under China's rule would wish to join the Mongols of Manchukuo who had got an "autonomous" regime in the province of Hsingan. That would have been tantamount to China's complete loss of those regions which are now called Inner Mongolia. China, desired to prevent the Inner Mongolia from following the example of the 'independent' Outer Mongolia. It applied a policy extensive colonisation and penetration in these regions."<sup>26</sup>

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25. Robert Rupen, no. 5, p. 234.

26. G.M. Friters, no. 11, p. 202.

A Mongolian political Council created by the Inner Mongols, Prince Teh soon came under the influence of Japanese officers. To counteract this Council, the Chinese government formed in March 1936, the Suiyuan Mongolian Political Council, which gave to the Mongol princes and nobles a certain degree of autonomy.<sup>27</sup> The hostilities with Japan made China seek closer relations with former Soviet Russia and a pact of non-aggression was concluded between the two powers in the autumn of 1937. It became obvious that the Chinese government, by force of circumstances was now made to look differently at the Protocol of Mutual Assistance concluded between the former J.S.S.R. and the Mongolian People's Republic in early 1936. When the terms of Soviet-Mongolian protocol of Mutual assistance had become known, the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs sent two notes of protest to the Soviet Ambassador, the first on April 7, the second on April 14, 1936. The first recalled the recognition of Chinese sovereignty over Outer Mongolia by the Sino-Russian agreement of 1924, and reasserted that "in so far as Outer Mongolia is an integral part of Chinese Republic, no

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27. For Chinese point of view see Hsu Shuhsi, *The North China Problem* (Sanghai 1937) p. 41-59.

foreign state may conclude with it any treaties or agreements. The actions of the government of U.S.S.R. which concluded with Outer Mongolia the above mentioned protocol in violation of its obligation towards the Chinese governments, form undoubtedly a violation of sovereignty of China and the terms of Sino-Soviet agreements of 1924. It is therefore my duty to declare a strong protest to your Excellency and to state that the conclusion of the above mentioned protocol by the government of the U.S.S.R. is illegal and the Chinese government can't under any circumstances, recognise such a protocol and is in no way bound by it."<sup>28</sup>

Japan on the other hand alleged that China's protest was just a means to hide an understanding with former Russia on Outer Mongolia. But the fact remains that the Russo-Mongol protocol of Mutual Assistance helped in stemming the advance of Japanese troops into Outer Mongolia, and at the same time it imposed upon Japan the heavy obligation of keeping a considerable number of troops in the regions of Manchukuo bordering Outer Mongolia, thereby at least delaying her advance into Inner Mongolia and

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28. The Chinese Year Book, 1936-37, second issue p. 425-428.29. G.M. Friters, no. 11, p. 205.



North China. "Such a situation was certainly not to the disadvantage of China which as formal sovereign of Outer Mongolia, was quite unable to give her the help which was to be expected from sovereign and suzerain alike."<sup>29</sup>

China had lost greater part of Inner Mongolia due to Japanese occupation in 1937-38. China viewed Mongolia as the first line of defense in the Northwest. If the Chinese lost Mongolia, its northwest was immediately subject to danger. On the economic front, Mongolia meant a field open for colonisation and for Chinese exports as well as imports. It was prophesied that Mongolia would come to occupy a place in China's economic system similar to that of Denmark in Europe's - a reservoir of dairy products.<sup>30</sup>

From January 1939 onwards the provocative actions of the Japanese military clique became especially frequent. On May 1, 1939, Japanese troops attacked the state frontiers of the MPR and penetrated as far as the river Gol. The aggressive action of the Japanese military clique aroused indignation of the people of the MPR. Perhaps the Japanese militarists had meant to test Soviet military strength. On 31 May 1939 Molotov, the Soviet Commissar

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29. G.M. Friters, no. 11, p. 205.

30. Friters G.M., no. 11, p. 206.

for foreign affairs warned the Japanese government - "The borders of the MPR ... will be defended by the USSR as vigorously as we shall defend our own borders."<sup>31</sup>

The high morale of the Soviet-Mongolian troops combined with their high skills in warfare, show the superiority in strategy and tactics of their commanders. By 30 August, 1939 the Soviet-Mongolian combined force under the command of Lieutenant-General Zhukov had achieved a decisive victory over the Japanese forces in the battle of Nomonkhan. Following the defeat of Nomonkhan, Japan concluded a neutrality pact with the former Soviet Union in Moscow on 13 April 1941.<sup>32</sup>

China's military could not control the Outer and Inner Mongolia. Consequently China was inclined to make the Mongols their friends. It was in 1920 in Outer Mongolia, and in 1936 in Inner Mongolia, that China was prepared to concede the Mongols their demand for "self-government". For geographical reasons also Outer Mongolia could never have been subject to complete control by China and to intensive colonisation by the Chinese.<sup>33</sup>

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31. Ram Rahul, *Mongolia between China and USSR*, (Manohar Publication Ltd., New Delhi, 1989), p. 22.

32. *ibid.*

33. *Friters* n. 11, p. 207.

In early 1944 there were major clashes between China and Mongolia in the Altai region of their common border. On 11 March 1944 Chinese troops in pursuit of rebelling Kazakhs of north-western Sinkiang entered the Mongolian territory. According to the Mongols, the Chinese government provoked the incident in order to slander Mongolian government in the estimation of the United Nations, with a view to prevent it from being accepted as a member of the UN. On the eve of second World war John Gunther had described the status of Mongolia : "On the maps Outer Mongolia is almost invariably shown as part of China. Outer Mongolia is no longer in reality part of China. To say it belongs to China is to say that Roosevelt belongs to Hitler. Outer Mongolia since 1924 has been the 'Mongolian Peoples Republic', and it is almost exclusively a Soviet Sphere of influence. When they came into power, the Soviets gave up the imperialist treaties with China".<sup>34</sup>

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34. Ram, Rahul, no. 31, p. 22-23.

## II. MONGOLIA-SOVIET TIE-UPS : CHINESE RESPONSE

Mongolia's geographical situation in the heart of Asia has been the single most factor which has determined the nature and course of its history as well as its relations with the outside world. Its strategic location proved to be both advantageous as well as disadvantageous in its internal political developments and relations with external powers. Its geostrategic position made Mongolia along with other frontier regions of Central Asia, a zone of recurrent political conflicts between Russia and China in their territorial expansion from the seventeenth century onwards.<sup>35</sup> Mongolia falls in the largest chain of frontiers and being sandwiched between the former Soviet Union and China, provides a classical example of "buffer politics". Naturally, its geographical compulsion being land-locked affected much of its geo-politics. It became inevitable for Mongolia to be associated with either of its neighbours. Besides, due to the expansionist designs of Japan and the absence of a strong and friendly government in China both before and after the revolution in

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35. R.C. Sharma and P. Stobdan, Economic transformation and political integration in Mongolia in R.C. Sharma, ed., *Perspectives on Mongolia* (Seema Publishers, New Delhi - 1988), p. 96.

Mongolia, provided enough ground for Mongols of Outer Mongolia to have their choice of dependant ally. As a result, the choice of allies was found in the Tsarist Russia and later Soviet Russia, in order to keep the Chinese away. In the post-1921 era, taking due note of limitations imposed by her geographical settings, the extent and pattern of Mongolia's external relations has been influenced by and was heavily oriented towards former Soviet Union.

In the diplomatic history of the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR), the period from 1921 when it achieved independence till the end of the second world war, Mongolia's foreign relations were limited to contact with the former Soviet Union alone. As such Mongolia had to live in diplomatic isolation and the Soviet policy was one to monopolise its foreign relations. In the intervening period, hardly any distinction was made between Mongolia and the constituent republics of the former USSR as Mongolia's foreign relations were handled by the former USSR. Furthermore, Mongolia was tied formally to the Soviet Union by means of several treaties, signed between the two during this period. The Soviet-Mongol treaty relationship was, in reality, one of the devices used by

the Soviets to fulfil their own objectives. The Soviet - Mongolian agreement of 1921 and Sino-Soviet agreement of 1924 which constituted the basis of the international status of Outer Mongolia were, in reality mutually contradictory. Soviet Russia being too weak during these years and strongly craving to arrive at some agreement with China, took a cautious line towards Outer Mongolia inspite of the Soviet-Mongolian agreement.<sup>36</sup>

The Sino-Soviet agreement of 1924, which formed the basis for the Soviet-Chinese treaty relations upto 1945, stood in contradiction to the various agreements between Russia and Mongolia - the Soviet-Mongolia treaty 1921, the Gentleman's Agreement of 1934, and the mutual Assistance pact of 1936 in recognising sovereignty over Mongolia. It contained no mention of Outer Mongolia's autonomy, as was done in the Sino-Russian agreement of 1913 and the tripartite agreement of 1915. No Sino-Soviet convention was concluded in which Outer Mongolia participated. Thus if China did not officially recognise Outer Mongolia's autonomy, Outer Mongolia too did not accept Chinese sovereignty.<sup>37</sup> Evidently, Soviet policy was directed towards

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36. *Treaties and Agreement with and concerning China, 1919-1929* (Washington, 1929) p. 53-54.

37. Peter Tang, *Russian and Soviet Policy in Manchuria and Outer Mongolia* (Duke University, Durham, 1959) p. 383.

isolating Mongolia from the outside world and Mongols knew that without the Soviet Union, their contemporary existence and development of Mongolia would have not been possible. A number of important agreements were signed between Mongolia and the former Soviet Union, which covered nearly all fields namely, political, economic, cultural and military. In the post - 1921 and pre world war II era, one of the most vital agreements between two sides was a ten years "Protocol of Mutual Assistance" signed on March 12, 1936 in Ulanbattar.<sup>38</sup> Incorporated in this protocol was a Soviet-Mongol "Gentleman's agreement" (existing since November 27, 1934) which provided for Mangolia's defence and mutual aid in case of attack by a third country. In effect, this agreement of mutual aid amounted to a military alliance. China protested over this Mutual Assistance Pact of 1936 claiming that it constituted a violation of the Sino-Soviet agreement on May 31, 1924 China claimed that "Outer Mongolia being an integral part of the Republic of China, no foreign state

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38. Leonard Shapiro ed., Soviet treaty series : A collection of Bilateral treaties, Agreements and Conventions etc. concluded between the Soviet Union and foreign powers, 1929-1939 (Georgetown Univ. Press, Washington, 1955) vol. 2, p. 162.

has the right to conclude with it any treaty or agreement."<sup>39</sup>

The background of this treaty can be seen through the Japanese occupation of the Far East in the 1930s which ultimately posed a threat to Mongolia and Siberia's security. It was only natural that the fear of Japanese aggression created conditions for signing the Mutual Assistance Pact of 1936 between the former Soviet Union and the MPR.

Mongolia's protection turned out to be vital for Soviet Union's own strategic needs. By providing political, economic and military assistance to the Mongols, Soviets not only succeeded in dominating the MPR but also secured the active involvement of Mongolia on the USSR's side in Far Eastern war. As a result, "all Japanese attempts from 1934 to 1939, whether through military or diplomatic means, proved unsuccessful in effecting a change in Mongolia's status."<sup>40</sup> In the decade of 1940s, some major events took place that led to the change in Mongolia's international status. To begin with Mongolia's partici-

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39. China Year Book, Shanghai : *The North China Daily News* (1938) p. 31.

40. Dallin, *Soviet Russia and the Far East* (Hollis and Carter, London 1949) p. 80.



pation in world war II, it was confined to support the Soviet Union chiefly in the form of supplies of horses and food stuffs to the Soviet Red Army. Japan was defeated by joint army of Mongolia and Russia. Following the Japanese defeat in the war, Sino-Soviet relations again came to force, when a treaty was concluded between the two sides on August 14, 1945. Before signing of the Sino-Soviet treaty, there was a conference of the Allied Heads of State that took place in the hilltop of Yalta in Crimea in February 1945. The conference reached an agreement on February 11, 1945, according to which Soviet Union's participation in the war against Japan had been assured on the condition that "the status quo in Outer Mongolia (the Mongolian People's Republic) shall be preserved." The words "the status quo" had been a matter of wider interpretation between the Chinese and the Russians. Whereas China insisted that it meant formal and legal status i.e., recognition of Chinese sovereignty; the Russians claimed it meant de facto independence".<sup>41</sup>

The secret agreement pertaining to Mongolia provided that, the status quo in the Mongolian People's Republic

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41. Rupen, no. 25, p: 257.

would be maintained. The American President also gave giving concessions in Manchuria. The US support on the issue compelled Chiang-Kai-Shek to accept the agreement reached by Stalin and Roosevelt. In January 1946 as Mangolia opted for independence, Chiang-Kai Shek had no otherway to recognise Mongolia as an independent state in January 6, 1946.

## **Chapter IV**

# **China's Recognition of Mongolia, 1946**

Right from the establishment of independent Mongolian People's Republic in 1924 till 1946, the international position of Mongolia in the community of nations remained unclear. The comment made in 1900 by the Russian Minister of Interior that "in intercourse with Asiatic States the principles of International Law are not completely applicable"<sup>1</sup> has been particularly true of Outer Mongolia and it was rather a puzzle to understand why former Soviet Russia should have recognised China's sovereignty over an 'independent' Mongolia, where as Tsarist Russia was only prepared to concede to China's "suzerainty" over an "autonomous" Mongolia<sup>2</sup> and finally, China's recognition of Outer Mongolia in 1946.

The only clear definition of Mongoli's status had been in the tripartite Agreement of Kiakhta of 1915, but this operated in practice for only two years, after which the legal position became very confused.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Cited by G. Grumm, Vol. II, p. 791 cited in G.M. Friters, *Outer Mongolia and its International Position*, (John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1949) p. 284.

2. G.M. Friters, *Outer Mongolia and its International Position*, (John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1949) p. 284.

3. *ibid.*

The Mongolian People's Republic considered itself an independent state since 1924. The constitution adopted at that time declared that Mongolia must coordinate its foreign policy with the interests and fundamental aims of small oppressed nations and the revolutionary workers of the whole world. It was also stated, it was the function of supreme organ of the Mongolian Peoples Republic to represent the Republic in international relations, to conduct diplomatic relations, and to conclude political and commercial and other treaties with other powers and to modify the frontiers of the Mongol State; to declare war and conclude peace, and to ratify international treaties.<sup>4</sup> Few changes were, however made by the new constitution of 1940.<sup>5</sup> Before January 1946 this independence was recognised only by the former USSR. Mongolian Peoples Republic had no treaty or official relations with any other state except for the Republic of TanuTuva before latter's absorption into former Soviet Union in 1945. Besides,

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4. British and Foreign state papers, 1939, Vol. CXXXIV, London 1936 Cited in *ibid*, p. 284-285.

5. United Nations, Security Council, Official Records First Year, Second series Supplement no. 4, esp p. 127-8 cited in *ibid* p. 285.

a trade Delegation established in Germany for a brief period in 1925-27. In January 1946 China also recognised the independence of Outer Mongolia.

## **I. MONGOLIAN PEOPLES REPUBLIC AND SECOND WORLD WAR**

Germany's attack on Poland in September 1939 marked the beginning of the world war II. It arose between Germany, Italy and Japan, on the one side and the USA, Great Britain and France on the others. The Peoples Republic of Mongolia was the follower of socialist path of development of USSR from 1924 onwards. During the War Mongolia Peoples Republic took up a position of alliance with the former USSR. From the very beginning German fascism and Japanese imperialism sought to destroy the socialist policy of former USSR and MPR and restore capitalism there. The other side Britain and America wanted to establish their Supremacy and weakening the strength of Germany, Japan and USSR. With the Japanese attack on USSR, former USSR believed that it was an effort to conquer Mongolia by Japan and then the Soviet Far East.

The second world war representing as it did the

result of the exacerbation of imperialist antagonisms, assumed to begin with an imperialist character. The former Soviet Union, realising the threat of fascism for the whole world, proposed to the British and French government to organise a collective rebuff to the fascist aggressors. The negotiations, begun, in the summer of 1939, between the representatives of Great Britain and France, on the one hand, and of the former Soviet Union on the other which yielded no result. The Japanese imperialists, who had in September 1939 made a military attack on the MPR in the Khalkhin Gol area and utterly routed by Mongolian and former Soviet troops, did not abandon their aggressive aims and awaited a suitable movement for an attack on the former USSR and MPR. The threat of an attack on the former USSR became ever greater and war drew nearer both from West and from the East.<sup>6</sup>

The interest of socialism and the interest of the working people of all countries called for the preservation of the first socialist state in the world. By the non-aggression pact of September 1939 between

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6. Shirendyb and others (ed) *History of the Mongolian People's Republic* (Moscow, Nauka, 1973) p. 362.

time to prepare the country for defence and saving itself from the danger of having to wage war on two fronts. The foreign policy of MPR was for strengthening its friendship with the Soviet Union, and to wage the fight against fascism and to extend all possible support to extend all possible support to the antifascist peace loving forces headed by the former USSR. In the report to the Tenth Mongolian Peoples Revolutionary Party congress, it was stated that Mongolian Peoples Revolutionary Party and the government was obliged to persue a foreign policy which would guarantee the peaceful existence of the Republic and strengthening and preserve its national independence.

In pursuance of its policy, the government of the MPR, acting together with the former Soviet Union blocked the path of aggressive Japanese imperialism in the Far East. Mongolia was also drawn in the vortex of second world war when Germany launched an attack on the Soviet Union.

At the dawn of June 22, 1941 Germany alongwith Japan attacked the former USSR without any declaration of war. This was the beginning of the Great Patriotic



war of the Soviet People against fascist Germany which went on for about four years. The news of the treacherous attack on the former USSR by Hitler's Germany aroused the immense indignation of the Mongolian People and evoked a national movement to gear the national economy to the task of the war time and extend material assistance to the Soviet people in the Great patriotic war. On June 1941, a joint meeting of the Presidium of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party Central Committee, the Presidium of Little Hural and the council of minister of the MPR to this war. The declaration adopted at this meeting stated that German fascism had "thrown down a challenge to all progressive mankind by daring to attack the homeland of the workers of the whole world - the union of Soviet Socialist Republic."<sup>7</sup>

It went on to add that the Mongolian People who were "linked by ties of blood and indissoluble friendship with the Soviet people, would respond by strengthening in every way the friendship of the Soviet and Mongolian Peoples, will faithful to the obligation assumed under the mutual assistance treaty concluded between the MPR and the former USSR on March 1936."<sup>8</sup>

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7. *ibid*, p. 365-367.

8. BNMAU, "Zkhu-Yn ekh Orny ikh dainy Yed" Ulan Battar, 1954, p. 5-6 cited in Shirendyb and others no. 6 p. 367-368.

In its resolution the government of the MPR and the Presidium of the MPRP Central Committee assumed the government of the Soviet Union that the Mongolian People would fight hand in hand with the Soviet people in defense of their freedom and independence. In a telegram sent on June 25, 1941, by the MPR government to the USSR government it was stated "the gains won by the Great October Socialist Revolution areas dear to us as the gains own by our national-democratic revolution. Our people are ready, hand in hand with the Soviet people, to stand staunchly in defence of the sacred frontiers of the great socialist power, the homeland of the working people." Now the MPR worked to extend all possible assistance to Soviet Union in latter's fight against Germany. Upto March 1943 i.e. in 20 months of the war, eight trains with Mongolian soilders and gifts had been despatched to the war front. The train-loads of gifts despatched in 1942 by the Mongolian People were escorted by the four groups of Mongolian delegation. On this return from the USSR the delegates told the Mongolian people about the heroic fight of the Soviet army, of the meetings of the MPR delegates had with the soilders and officers

of the Soviet Army, with the workers and with leading figures of the Soviet Union.

World war II brought Mongolia "closer officially and logistically" to the former Soviet Union. Not only were the two sides allied by treaty, but also Mongolia was an important source of Soviet war supplies. On June 22, 1941, when Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union, Mongolia from the very first day defined its position. It declared its readiness to send its armed forces to the Soviet-German front. The offer was received warmly by the Soviets. However, since there was a real danger that Japan might attack the former Soviet Union and the MPR, the Soviet government considered it expedient to keep the Mongolian forces on their positions and if necessary, ask them to help the Soviet Red Army to repulse a Japanese attack. Thus, Mongolia could not participate directly in the European war but it did participate indirectly by contributing in the form of supplies to the former Soviet Union.

Mongolian support to the Soviet war efforts clearly found its expression in a resolution adopted on June 22, 1941 at a meeting jointly held by the President of the MPRP Central Committee, the President of MPR Little

Khural and the council of ministers. It announced "the rendering of appropriate, and towards the USSR, defeat of the war launched by German fascists, and the further strenghtening of solidarity with the former Soviet People".<sup>9</sup> During the war years 1941 to 1945. Mongols contributed various kinds of 'gifts' to the Soviet Red Army which included warm clothing, footwear blankets and foot stuffs besides supply of horses. A tank brigade "Revolutionary Mongolia" and air Squadron "Mongolia Arat" were purchased out of amounts collected from the people and handed over to the Soviet Army. In this process, Mongolian people collected and sent to the Red Army gifts to the value of 65 millions of Tugriks (Mongolian Currency) and undertook to maintain the personnel of the tank brigade and the air Squadron until the end of the war.<sup>10</sup> Thus, contribution rendered by Mongolia to the Soviet Union, was in itself a measure of involvement in the war on the western front.

One can see that notwithstanding the friendly alliance between Mongolia and the Soviet Union in the

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9. Cited in Shirendyb and others, *History of Mongolian Peoples Republic*, William A Brown and Urgunge Onon, trans East Asian Research Centre (Harvard University, London, 1976) p. 416.

10. Shirendyb and Others (ed) no. 6, p. 372.

military Sphere, the directives used to come from the Soviet Union. The Mongol participation in the world war II presents a case of the domineering Soviet influence. Since the very inception of Mongolia's struggle against the Chinese occupiers and later against the Ungern Sternberg's aggression, Mongolia remained very much dependent on Soviet Support, both politically and militarily.

## **II. POLITICAL DYNAMICS OF RECOGNITION**

From world war II to January 5, 1946 momentous changes took place in many countries of Europe and Asia. Mongolia was one such country which got her place as Member of the community of nations of the post war world. Previously, one one country, i.e. USSR had accorded diplomatic recognition to Mongolia. Mongolia came into being in 1921. From that period Mongolia wished to maintain diplomatic relations with other countries of the world. After the Mongolian declaration of September 14, 1921, Mongolia appealed to the United States as well as other non-socialist countries of the world, but without any result. Other countries did not consider the independent status of

Mongolia till 1946.<sup>11</sup>

During the second world war, there was alliance between Mongolian Army and the Soviet Red Army against Japan. Mongolia contributed a lot to the Soviet war effort in mobilising and fighting against Nazi Germany and Japan during the war.

After the defeat of Japanese forces in the battle of Nomonkhan in 1939, a Neutrality pact was concluded between former USSR and Japan in 13, 1941 which governed the relationship between Germany and USSR. When war began between Japan and USSR, Japan did not observe the neutrality in the war but on the contrary followed a hostile policy to the Soviet Union and asserts Germany. Japan deployed large army comprising about one million men, more than 50,000 guns, 1000 tanks, upto 1500 aircrafts and several thousand troops of the puppet government of Manchukuo on the north east of China.

Just before the complete collapse of Hitlerite Germany in spring of 1945. Japan did not change its hostile policy towards the former Soviet Union and the

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11. Victor A. Petrov, *Mongolia A Profile*, (Pall Mall Press, London, 1970) p. 150.

MPR. The Soviet Government considering that "in such situation the Neutrality Pact had lost its meaning and continuation of the pact had become impossible." She denounced it on April 5, 1945. When Germany surrendered to the former USSR, Japan made a formal 'protest' in reply and broke the military and other treaties with Germany. In its desire to gain time for regrouping its forces and hoping for difference of opinion to arise among the members of the antifascist coalition, in July 1945, the former USSR government to act as the intermediary in peace negotiation with USA and Great Britain.

After the end of world war II peace was established in Far East. As the war turned to the advantage of the allies, both Chiang Kai Shek and Stalin manoeuvred for an advantageous position in the post war period. China which had suzerainty over Outer Mongolia on the basis of the Sino-Soviet accord of 1924, still wanted to control all of Mongolia. On the other hand the Soviet leaders wished to preserve the status-quo : that is, the maintenance of the Mongolian People's Republic as an independent state. In February 1945, therefore, the leaders of three allied powers the USSR, the USA and

Great Britain met in Yalta in Crimea. The three powers agreed to liquidate German militarism, Nazism and fascist Organisation and institution in order that Germany might never disturb global peace. Issues of the creation of United Nations and future of Pacific region were also discussed. On the proposal of the Soviet delegation the representatives of USA and Great Britain agreed to maintain the status quo with regard to Mongolian People's Republic after the world war II. They agreed for the status quo after acknowledging the fact that, independence of MPR was the result of the Mongolia's fight for independence and victory owned by Soviet armed forces and consolidation of the People's Democracy.

The Soviet Union, the best friend of Mongolia defended the interest of the Mongolian People's Republic which led to its negotiation with China. Negotiations between former USSR and Kuomintang government of China were held in Moscow in August 1945. The Kuomintang government of China agreed to acknowledge the Mongolian Peoples Republic as a sovereign and independent state within its existing frontiers subject to the condition that, plebiscite should confirm the desire of the Mongolian people to retain their independence. Thus,



the consensus emerged at the Yalta conference between at the three great power, the USSR, the USA and Great Britain, was followed by China as well. The Kuomintang put the demand for plebiscite in the hope that this would create a snag in its final recognition of Mongolia. Lacking the support from the United States on the issue of independence Mongolian People's Republic, Chiang Kai Shek was forced to accept the agreement reached by Stalin and Roosevelt in Yalta conference in 1945. On September 21, 1945 the Presidium of the Little Hural of the MPR, in conformity with the content of the agreement, which was signed between former USSR and Kuomintang government of China on August 14, 1945 resolved that, a plebiscite must be taken throughout the Republic simultaneously on Oct., 20, 1949. The Presidium of Little Hural also resolved that all citizens of MPR should take part in the plebiscite by casting their voters lists drawn up by the Mongolian local government bodies. To quote a Mongolian scholar, the plebiscite proved a striking demonstration of the country, lofty patriotism and political consciousness of the masses of the MPR. More than thirteen thousand meetings and gatherings were held throughout the country

which were attended by hundreds of thousands of people - arat - herdsman, workers and intellectuals."<sup>12</sup>

Accordingly, the plebiscite was held in Mongolia in presence of the plenipotentiaries of Chinese government. In all, 487,409 Mongols taking part in the plebiscite (98.4% of the adult population) overwhelmingly voted for independence. The Kuomintang government of China was informed about the result in January 5, 1946. It was on January 6, 1946 that Chiang Kai Shek government' recognised the Mongolian People's Republic. On February 13, 1946 diplomatic relations were established between Mongolian People's Republic and the republic of China. But it was after 1949 when communist revolution took place in China, that friendly relations between People's Republic of China and MPR were established.

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12. Shirendyb and Others, no. 6, p. 380-383.

## **Chapter V**

## **Conclusion**

The Mongolian history between 1911 and 1946 illustrates the dynamics of international relations between the first revolutionary states i.e. China and Russia via-a-vis its implication for their Mongolian neighbour, a people under the feudal theocratic social formation stage. The history of the Mongols takes a turn in 1911 with the declaration of an independent Mongolian feudal theocratic state in opposition to the Manchu subjugation. While as the Mongols pushed to assert their identity and to uphold their right to decide their own future, China and Russia got embroiled in the question of status of Mongolia.

When the curtain of modern history lifts over Mongolia, the country is under the colonial occupation of alien Manchu imperial powers of neighbouring China. Initially, the Manchus sustained their control over the Mongols by exploiting the common factor of racial affinity and common religion and life style. Later the Manchus recast the system of administrative and military organisation in Mongolia in order to consolidate their authority. This measure intensified the feudal disintegration of Mongolia. The success of Manchus in establishing their dominance over Outer Mongolia was due in part to their manipulation

of Mongol political situation as well as the absence of significant Russian strength in East Asia.

Under the so called 'New policy' the Manchu government adopted a number of measures which were not only resented by Russia, but also led to the growth of anti-Manchu feelings, among feudal lords of the Outer Mongolia. The Russians strongly resented what they called the forced colonisation of Mongolia, through mass settlements of the Chinese. The pressure of Chinese colonisation was felt in Outer Mongolia vigourously. It threatend the ethnic extermination for the Mongols in the east. Even in Outer Mongolia main threat to the Mongols came not from the control by the foreign government but through the actual colonisation of the land by the alien population. To encourage the Chinese emigration to Mongolia land, a "Bureau for colonisation of Mongolia was established in Peking in 1906. Later in 1911 another 'colonisation bureau' was open at Urga to expedite the process of colonisation from Inner China. This process of Chinese colonisation was taken seriously by the Russias, as they felt that policy of Chinese colonisation in Outer Mongolia was directed towards preventing Russian influence in the region. The next important measure adopted by the Manchu government

was the political reform conducted in Outer Mongolia. The Manchu Amban in Urga by name San arrived there in 1910 to carry out the 'new policy' of Manchus. Under his new policy heavy taxes were imposed in such a way that the Mongols, who failed to meet these crushing burdens fled their homes. This ultimately led to the growth of anti-Manchu feelings among the Mongols. Russia viewed these measures in Outer Mongolia as a means to abolish the autonomy of Mongol princes in order to reduce Mongolia to the status of a Chinese province; and to deprive Russia of the special position which she had enjoyed among the Mongols since ancient times because of the proximity and the close contact between the Russians and the Mongolians.

National liberation Movement in Mongolia emanated from its lower strata of society, and arats organised small sporadic outbreaks and also large scale armed uprising against the Manchu officials and Chinese usurers. As the Manchu repressive policy intensified, the religious and secular ruling classes of Outer Mongolia turned against it and common herdsmen felt a great danger of losing their land to Chinese colonialists. Jebсутдamba Khutughtu approved the idea of seeking help from Tsarist Russian government. After the discussion with the Mongolian delegation, Russian

troops started pouring into Outer Mongolia under the pretext of protecting the Russian consulate in Urga. Meanwhile, China's position was weakened by the outbreak of the revolution at Wuchang in October 1911, which made the task of a Mongolian coup d'etat easier.

When the Chinese revolution broke out, the Manchus were quite incapable of suppressing the Mongols. The Mongolian princes and religious leaders seized this opportunity to stage a coup d'etat in December 1911. The Mongols declared their complete separation from China and on 28, December 1911, the independence of Outer Mongolia was formally proclaimed with the birth of the new state named 'The Empire of Mongolia' and Bogdo Gegen Jepsundamba Khutugtu was crowned as the head of Lamaist Church and its state.

The Tsar government signed an agreement and also a commercial protocol, with the Bogdo Khan government in Urga on 3 November 1912. By this agreement Russia pledged to assist Mongolia in maintaining its independence, in upholding its right to have its own army and to refuse admission to the Chinese colonialists and troops.

China denounced the Mongolia-Russian agreement. This

led for the first time to direct discussion between China and Russia on the question of status of Mongolia. The Tsarist government agreed to recognise the Republic of China on the condition that Mongolia would be an autonomous state. China and Russia signed a declaration in Peking on 5 November 1913, in which they adhered to the principle of an autonomous Mongolia under suzerainty of China. The Chinese-Russian declaration of 1913 stated the principle of Mongolian autonomy as embodied in the Mongolian-Russian agreement of 1912. It legalised the activities of Chinese merchants in Mongolia and exempted Russian trade in Mongolia from internal custom duty.

The tripartite treaty (1915) between Russia, China and Outer Mongolia recognised Outer Mongolia and also China's suzerainty over it. Russia supported the Mongols in their struggle against Chinese authority, but at the same time restrained them from asserting their full independence.

Thus, the Mongolian attempt to have entire Mongol land included in an autonomous Mongolia failed. The Bogdo Gegen government even militarily supported the movement for the independence of Barga and Inner Mongolia. Early in August 1920 a Mongolian delegation headed by Sukhebator,



Choibalson and five other revolutionaries appealed to the Soviet government for help against the Chinese militarists. The Soviet government agreed to help the Mongolian revolutionaries. On July 1921 a joint Soviet-Mongolian force of 10,000 troops descended on Urga and Outer Mongolia declared itself independent. Ungern Sternberg declared the 'restoration of the autonomous rights of Mongolia' and elevated Bogdo Gegen to the imperial throne. In November 1921, Soviet government signed a treaty of friendship with Mongolia at Moscow and simultaneously it recognised the independence of Outer Mongolia.

After prolonged negotiation with China one of the first task that confronted the new government was a definition of its relation with China. Soviet Union, China and Mongolia concluded a tripartite agreement on 31 May 1924, recognising China's sovereignty over Outer Mongolia while the Soviets promised withdrawal of their troops from Mongolia. But only after a month, in June 1924, Outer Mongolia declared independence and formed the Mongolian Peoples Republic, thus preempting China from exercising its sovereignty there.

The value of the recognition of the principles of

China's sovereignty over Outer Mongolia by Soviet Russia diminished when in 1927 Sino-Soviet diplomatic relations were interrupted to be resumed only in 1932. In May 1930 Chinese government affirmed that Mongolia was Chinese territory and its people being citizens of the Republic of China were entitled to protection by the central Chinese government against oppression.

The conflicting stands of China and Soviet Union vis-a-vis Mongolia compelled both to manoeuvre for advantageous position in the post-war period, thereby empowering the USA as a bargainer. The United States acknowledging its compulsion with regard to its proposed blitzkrieg against Japan showed its tilt towards the Soviets, which was manifested in the Yalta agreement of February 1945. Stalin had pledged Soviet participation in the final offensive against Japan. The other fallout of the Soviet agreement was the resolution on the maintenance of the status-quo in the Mongolian People's Republic. The combination of the two factors firstly, the defiant postures of the Soviets against the Japanese, Japanese doom after the dropping of the bomb and secondly, loss of support from United States for the Chinese on the said Mongolian question forced Chiang Kai Shek to agree for a plebiscite

in the Mongolian People's Republic, in October, 1945. This plebiscite in which Mongols voted overwhelmingly for independence, resulted in the recognition in 1946 by China of the Mongolian Peoples Republic as an independent state.

The sequence of events in Mongolia and the nature and content of diplomatic parleys between the contending parties during the period of this study (1911-46) suggests that in spite of their revolutionary credentials and pro-people proclamations both the Comintern China and Soviet Russia continued to approach the Mongolian issue through their respective national interest. The interests of the Mongols were continually suppressed by both the governments, who were determined not to let a unified Pan-Mongol state emerge. It was only through the incessant demands and popular uprisings of the Mongols that the theocratic state could transform itself in a progressive nationhood. This too was made possible by the decisive help provided by Russian and later Soviet governments, who wanted this area not to be exclusive Chinese colony.

Another significant point that emerges out of the foregoing discussion is that a commonness in terms of religious leanings and life style as well as ethnicity

does not disqualify groups of individuals to assert political sovereignty. Though China and Mongolia shared many such common features, latter discarded and rejected the supremacy of the former when exploitation levels touched a new height.

Finally, Mongolia's quest for identity during the first half of the present century presents a brilliant example of struggle of native population not equipped by professional leadership of the stature of Lenin or Mao and by rich resources, economic or military means. The study shows that the peripheral areas like Mongolia could and did remain under Chinese domination only when the central authority in China was strong and stable.

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