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Diplomatic Relations between Russia, China and Mongolia: The Creation of the Mongolian
People's Republic, 1881-1924

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Abstract

Beginning with an agreement between China and Russia in 1881, Mongolia was faced with a series of unfair treaties that prevented them from becoming independent from China. This thesis examines the agreements and treaties made between China, Russia and Mongolia between 1881 and 1924 to illustrate how the Mongolian People's Republic formed as a direct result of unfavorable diplomatic relations between the three nations. However, due to the wording of these agreements, Russia never acknowledged Mongolia's autonomy from China making Mongolia's push for independence difficult to achieve. With China facing the Revolution of 1911, Mongolia seized independence only to be stripped of this independence by China in 1919. Key revolutionaries formed two groups that eventually merged in 1920 to form The Mongolian People's Republic. These revolutionaries went into Russia to find aid in pushing the Chinese out of their country again. In 1921, a White Army General Baron Roman von Ungern-Sternberg invaded Urga, driving out the Chinese. China refused to retaliate or act on the behest of the Mongolian people allowing the Soviet Union to act instead. In late 1921 the Soviet Union executed the Baron and liberated Mongolia from both China and Tsarist Russia in one act. With China unwilling to act, they had effectively ceded their influence over Mongolia to the Soviet sphere of influence in which the Soviet Union backed the establishment of the MPR in 1924.

Introduction

The Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) formed as a direct result of the political landscape created by agreements between Russia and China regarding the autonomy of Mongolia beginning with agreements in 1881 and culminating with the formation of the MPR between 1920-1924. The relationship between Mongolia and the Soviet Union began as a way for the Mongolians to expel the Chinese from their country as prior to the formation of the MPR, the Mongolian country was still considered to be a part of China. However the Soviet Union utilized this temporary alliance to exert influence and control over the government and people of Mongolia to better protect their own borders from China beginning with the Tsarist ruled Russia in 1881. The use of Mongolia as a satellite nation was pertinent to the Soviet sphere of influence and Mongolia had been attempting to make itself independent of China and in doing so required the assistance of the Soviet Union. This provided the Soviet Union with the opportunity to begin asserting power over the government of Mongolia, through trade agreements and treaties. The assistance came at a price for Mongolia because it now not only lived in the shadow of the Soviet Union but was brought into the fold under the guise of a people's Mongolia, free from the influence of the outside world, and governed by its own people. Since the formation of the Soviet Union they have been experimenting with satellite countries and decided that Mongolia should govern itself. However the Soviet Union heavily relied on Mongolia for livestock such as beef, so while they were allowed to freely govern themselves the Soviet Union heavily influenced the outcomes of elections and changes in policy such as trade with China. As Mongolia drifted further and further away from Chinese influence, they instead drifted into the orbit of the Soviet Union which shaped and molded the Mongolian way of life in the early 20th century. Through the examination of treaties and agreements involving Mongolia made by other countries, the

political landscape that formed the MPR was a result of the unfavorable diplomatic relations between China, Mongolia, and Russia, and how these treaties attempted to keep Mongolia as a part of China.

The Chinese Revolution of 1911 and the Russian Revolution of 1917 were the catalysts required for Mongolia to seize independence from China in order to defend itself from Japanese colonial expansion and to prevent further encroachment by China into Mongolia. The Bogd Khanate of Mongolia feared they would lose their country to foreign invaders, and in this fear, they opened up their borders to the Soviet Union for protection. The Russian revolution provided a standard for the Mongolians to model themselves after and provided a new political ally that held great interest in protecting their borders from outside invaders by creating dependent satellite nations.¹ The Mongolian government would follow suit with the Soviet Union by eventually creating their own Communist government called the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR), beginning their control of Mongolia in 1924.

Prior to the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Russian government had been making treaties with Japan over the territory of Mongolia, which is indicative of their intentions to exert influence over Mongolia.² After the revolution of 1917 the Soviet Union began carrying out some of the plans laid out by the Russian government including turning Mongolia into a dependent state that relied on the protection that the Soviet Union could offer against Japan and China. The treaties laid out with Japan between 1907-1916 over the area known as Outer

¹ Owen Lattimore, *Nationalism and Revolution in Mongolia*, (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1955), 36-37.

² Ernest Batson Price, *The Russo-Japanese Treaties of 1907-1916 Concerning Manchuria and Mongolia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1933), pp. 107.

Mongolia bought the Soviet Union time as Russia began to enter into their own Civil War against the Bolsheviks.

In 1920, during the Russian Civil War, Roman Von Ungern-Sternberg led one of the Tsar's White Armies into the area of Mongolia known today as Ulaanbaatar. This army helped the Mongols begin to revolt against the Chinese who controlled the area heavily. The success of the White Army however drew the attention of the Red Army led by Russians who did not oppose Soviet control into the area. There were some skirmishes between the two armies before the white army eventually fell, ending with the execution of Sternberg in 1921.³ The Soviet Union had effectively exerted control over the people of Mongolia through treaties and assisted revolutions.

The Soviet Union had a plan to rid Mongolia of Chinese business and colonialism, and this plan consisted of heavily taxing the Chinese doing business or living abroad in Mongolia. The Soviet tax system in place in Mongolia began to heavily tax the purchasing and movement of livestock throughout the country after the formation of the MPR in 1924.⁴ These taxes directly targeted the Chinese merchants in Mongolia, making their lives more difficult and cutting the profit that they were seeing by conducting trade within the Mongolian border. The Soviet Union hoped they could force out the Chinese through taxation and discrimination.

Soviet propaganda began to surface within Mongolia soon after the formation of the MPR as they began to exert their influence on the people and government of Mongolia. The propaganda usually consisted of racist depictions of Americans, Japanese, and the Chinese, while shining a light on the Soviet Union making them appear to be heroes and protectors of

³ William Ballis, "The Political Evolution of a Soviet Satellite: The Mongolian People's Republic." *The Western Political Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1956): 293-328.

⁴ Ma Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, trans. John De Francis (Boston: Johns Hopkins Press, 1949)

Mongolia.⁵ The propaganda that appeared in Mongolia functioned as a way for the Soviet government to subconsciously influence the people of Mongolia to be more receptive of their Soviet neighbors to the North and the Communist policies that they enacted.

Tsarist Russia, prior to the emergence of the Soviet Union, had been making plans to turn Mongolia into a buffer state that they could use as a tool against China, however with the formation of the Soviet Union in 1922, the Mongolians began to focus on how the Soviet Union could better aid their cause than Tsarist Russia could. Once the Soviets had won the Russian Civil War and pushed into Mongolia to defeat Sternberg, they continued with the Russians plans and began to influence Mongolia through treaties and assisted revolutions. Once the Soviet Union had been accepted by the Mongolians, their propaganda and influence began to seep into the foundations of Mongolia life. The Soviet Union began to heavily tax any Chinese merchants working or traveling in Mongolia, attempting to force any unwanted Chinese out of the country. Through treaties, agreements, and diplomatic relationships by the Soviet Union, China, and Japan, one can find just how far the reach of the Soviet Union extended. The Mongolians looked for assistance in dealing with the Japanese and the Chinese; in doing so, they aligned themselves with one of the most powerful nations of the 20th century.

The topic of Mongolian-Soviet relations and the formation of the MPR have been written about by many historians in the past, including Daniel Schmucking, William Heaton Jr, and Ropert Rupen by examining the movements of troops, migrations of people in Mongolia, and even an attempted use of western journalism. The history of Mongolia has been examined through many lenses, most of them being of the Cold War variety with more emphasis placed on who was forming the MPR and what the results of a policy change were instead of what

⁵ Ma Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 38.

diplomatic policies helped to shape the formation of the MPR and why the policy was changed in the first place. The historiography of the topic of Mongolia covers many different aspects of Mongolian life each with their own strengths and weaknesses. The historiography of Mongolia has primarily been focused on life after the MPR and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 taking a look back at the final years of each Communist country. Meanwhile other historians focus on life after the formation of the MPR and the subsequent relationship with the Soviet Union between the 1930s-1990s often focusing on agriculture and industrialization.

Historiography

Historians have long written about the effects of the Sino-Soviet dispute on Mongolia with a focus on how other countries perceive these changes rather than a focus on how the people of Mongolia perceived and reacted to changes in policy and economics. Prior to the intervention of the Soviet Union in the early 1920s , Mongolia held a literacy rate of less than 10%, making primary sources written by someone not involved in the government, such as personal letters or books, very difficult to find.⁶ While exploring the topic of the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) historians heavily rely on outsiders, writing about these topics, utilizing primary sources such as formal treaties and agreements from China, Russia, the United States, and Japan. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, more access to primary sources such as letters written by Mongolians became available to the public, providing a unique view on how the people of Mongolia themselves felt about their own communist government and the interactions it had with the Soviet and Chinese governments. Most historians have approached this topic wearing Cold War lenses, meaning they were usually overly critical of the Soviet Union and their policy in Mongolia. Many historians who examined this topic are

⁶ Batchuluun Yembuu and Khulan Munkh-Erdene, *Literacy Country Study: Mongolia*, (UNESDOC 2005): 4.

often at fault for discussing policy implemented and aid given to Mongolia by the Soviet Union while simultaneously ignoring the effects of these policies on the people of Mongolia, focusing more on how these policies affected the relationship between China and the Soviet Union.

When approaching the topic of effects of Soviet foreign policy in Mongolia, most historians began by exploring government documentation such as Soviet and Mongolian foreign policy reports, troop movements, imports and exports, and the amount of aid provided to Mongolia through the Soviet Union. These same historians also focused on the diplomatic history between the Soviet Union and Mongolia while regarding the reaction of China to these policies and the subsequent policy changes by China who was looking to wrestle control of Outer Mongolia from the Soviet Union. Some historians have chosen to explore the cultural history of Mongolia by examining the oral traditions in Mongolia where stories of lineage are passed from generation to generation. While sources written in the language of Mongolia are available, translations are difficult to come by making the search for primary sources written by Mongolians a challenge for historians looking to explore this topic from another perspective. This challenge of finding translated primary documents from Mongolia forms a barrier that makes any sort of shift in exploring this topic difficult to explore. This unbalanced perspective is a glaring weakness for any person writing about Mongolia at any period of time, however these historians cannot be held at fault for writing about the interactions of two countries due to their inability to understand the dialect of Mongolia. Due to the barrier in place for exploring the history of the people by the people, historians have shifted to archeology in the 21st century to find answers about past events in Mongolia, including the search for the burial place of Genghis Khan.

By examining the entire history of Mongolia, historian Sh.Bira outlines the importance of oral histories and cultural traditions through the use of archeology and the recording of oral histories. “News of the Profession” written by Sh. Bira from *The Journal of Asian Studies* in 1961 outlines the different ways Mongolians and other East Asian countries have researched Mongolian history by examining the evolution of sources used in Mongolia from the Mongolian Empire in the 13th and 14th century to the formation of the Mongolian People’s Republic (MPR) in the 20th century.⁷ Sh. Bira is a Mongolian historian and scholar with a focus on ancient history and Mongolian communism. One of the major sources discussed within Bira’s work is the *Secret History*, which is a history of the lineage of Genghis Khan. The importance of this primary source is in relation to the tradition of oral history in Mongolia stating that these oral histories are the foundation of Mongolian History.⁸ Bira also advocates for the use of archeology, since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the MPR have made nationalism something the people of Mongolia could freely explore once again.⁹ While Bira is more focused on the oral traditions of Mongolia while exploring their past through archeology, Bira neglects to mention any modern oral histories within his work.

Writing about the relationship between the Soviet Union and Mongolia cannot be done without also examining the interests that other countries such as Japan and China had in Mongolia. “The Relations Between China, Russia and Mongolia” written by E.T. Williams for *The American Journal of International Law* in 1916 examines the relationships that formed between Mongolia, Russia, and China at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the

⁷ Sh. Bira, “News of the Profession: Historical Science in the Mongolian People’s Republic,” in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 20, no.3 (1961).

⁸ Bira, “News of the Profession,” 417-418.

⁹ Bira, “News of the Profession,” 419.

20th century. Williams outlines and details the history of the two Mongolia's, consisting of Outer and Inner Mongolia, focusing on how these two parts of one country interacted with each other and how the Soviets and the Chinese used this divide to seek control over Mongolia.¹⁰ The sources utilized by Williams consist primarily of treaties and agreements signed between the three countries. These treaties outline tax rates set by Russia against the Chinese in Mongolia and vice versa. Williams explores how these treaties were used to levy control of Mongolia away from China. The weakness for this source once again rests on the issue that no primary sources written by Mongolians about these events and government actions are utilized or mentioned. Where this article lacks in primary Mongolian sources, it is strong in government policy and by viewing these documents, the reader can find evidence of the formation of a relationship between the governments of Mongolia and the Soviet Union.

The use of newspapers as primary sources has long been a staple of writing a history that directly reflects the time in which these events took place such as the general attitude of the population towards change and the transferring of political personal from one position to another. Within *Mongolia Between China and the USSR*, the author, Ram Rahul, explores the development of the MPR through assistance from the USSR and the consequences these developments had on Mongolian-Chinese relations. Written in 1989, Rahul focuses on life in Mongolia after the proclamation of the MPR in 1921 and how key figures in the MPR, such as Choibalsan and Sukhe Bator, began to take control of their country.¹¹ Rahul also frames Mongolia within his work as a pawn or bartering piece utilized by the USSR in their agreements

¹⁰ E. T. Williams, "The Relations Between China, Russia and Mongolia." *The American Journal of International Law* 10, no. 4 (1916): 799-800.

¹¹ Ram Rahul, *Mongolia Between China and the USSR*, (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1989), 12.

with the Chinese.¹² Rahul utilizes sources such as the soviet newspaper *Pravda*, and the Mongolian newspaper company Montsame. Rahul's work examines the development of the MPR, negotiations between the three countries, and the Soviet-Mongolian treaties that aided Mongolia in becoming independent from China.

Prior to the shift in thought during the 1970s other historians have chosen to focus on the effects of Soviet policy on the improvement of educational programs and infrastructure within Mongolia through the examination of public policy and agriculture. The article "Outer Mongolia since 1955" written by Robert Rupen in 1957 explores the influence of the Soviet Union on Mongolia, from the architecture of their buildings to the attempt at collectivizing farms.¹³ A historian who authored dozens of scholarly articles on Mongolia and the Soviet Union between the early 195's-1970s, Rupen also taught political science at the University of North Carolina for over 30 years. Mongolia allowed for Western journalists to enter their country for the first time in 1956, allowing those who were reporting on the MPR to have a first-hand account of what it was actually like.¹⁴ However Rupen states that these western photographers and journalists were prevented from interacting with ordinary people, meaning much of what they were allowed to report on while there was heavily propagandized.¹⁵ Rupen also explores the buildup of infrastructure within Mongolia, and how the North Koreans and Soviets sent students to attend the university at Ulaanbaatar.¹⁶ Rupen does not rely on these sources but instead focuses on

¹² Rahul, *Mongolia Between China and the USSR*, 17.

¹³ Robert A. Rupen, "Outer Mongolia Since 1955," *Pacific Affairs* 30, no. 4 (December 1957): 347-348.

¹⁴ Rupen, "Outer Mongolia Since 1955," 342.

¹⁵ Rupen, "Outer Mongolia Since 1955," 348.

¹⁶ Rupen, "Outer Mongolia Since 1955," 346-348.

sources written by scholars and doctors such as Owen Lattimore. Rupen also emphasizes the importance of a document written by a British Communist writer Ivor Montagu who spent six weeks in Outer Mongolia in 1954.¹⁷ Rupen's sources focus on the use of media from China and the Soviet Union, claiming that the Soviet Union has written some of the best and most complete works about Mongolia and its history.¹⁸ Rupen manages to write about the Soviet Union and the MPR without being overly critical of either country, as other researchers were apt to do during the Cold War. There are not many weaknesses in Rupen's article; however, like others writing about the MPR, he is forced to use the works of other countries to support his points instead of using Mongolian sources.

With Mongolia firmly in the grasp of the Soviet Union by the late 1920s, historians began in the early 1960-1970s to shift toward sources written by the Soviet Union about the history of Mongolia; these sources include economic, military, and government sources such as treaties and agreements. William Heaton Jr's article outlines the percentage of aid being supplied to the MPR during the five year plan taking place during 1978, the development of politics within Mongolia, and the development of foreign relations between Mongolia and other nations participating in Communism within "Mongolia 1978: Continuing the Transition." Heaton Jr. was a captain in the USAF and served as Associate Professor of Political Science at the USAF Academy; Heaton holds a M.A. in Asian Studies and a doctoral degree in Political Science from University of California Berkeley. Heaton focuses on political and economic developments occurring within Mongolia as a direct effect of Soviet foreign policy, such as the exportation of livestock to the Soviet Union and the migration of peoples from rural to urban areas and the subsequent

¹⁷ Rupen, "Outer Mongolia Since 1955," 343.

¹⁸ Rupen, "Outer Mongolia Since 1955," 343.

restrictions on travel to prevent people from overpopulating cities.¹⁹ This short journal article written by Heaton Jr. covers many topics within Mongolia such as a rise in young people being educated to border disputes with China marking a weakness for this article. Each topic is lightly covered and leaves the reader wanting more information on each of these subjects. The strength of this work lies in the sources used; Heaton utilized the *Foreign Broadcast Information Service* (FBIS) and Montsame, a Mongolian state-owned news agency, as his primary tools to support his points. The FBIS was a translation service run by the CIA that monitored foreign news/media and translated it into English while Montsame is a news agency out of Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia. The FBIS translated verbatim meaning that Heaton had access to direct translations of events occurring within Mongolia, while access to Montsame provided him with a unique Mongolian perspective for his article.

The use of personal correspondence such as letters and telegrams are an important aspect of studying the relationship between China, the Soviet Union, and Mongolia. Written by Thomas N. Haining in 1996, “The Yak, the Bear and the Dragon: Uneasy Bedfellows. A Cautionary Tale of Russian and Chinese Influences on Mongolian History” in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* explores the development of interest in Mongolia by the Soviet Union, China, and Japan primarily through the use of telegrams and government reports, such as treaties and agreements between these countries. These reports and telegrams reflect the anxiety felt by the government and people of Mongolia towards the development of Chinese and Soviet influence within their borders.²⁰ Haining focuses on how China and the Soviet Union vied for control of Outer

¹⁹ Heaton Jr, William. “Mongolia 1978: Continuing the Transition.” *Asian Survey* 19, no. 1 (1979): 58-59.

²⁰ Thomas N. Haining, “The Yak, the Bear and the Dragon: Uneasy Bedfellows. A Cautionary Tale of Russian and Chinese Influences on Mongolian History,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 6, no.1 (April 1996): 71-72.

Mongolia due to the importance of Mongolia's position between the two nations.²¹ The approach taken by Haining illustrates the importance of examining treaties and agreements between countries and what these treaties may tell the reader about the time period they were written in.

The history of Mongolia has many unique angles at which historians can view and discuss, such as the emergence of nationalism within Mongolia even in the face of hostile pressure from the Soviet Union. Paul Hyer wrote the article “The Re-Evaluation of Chinggis Khan: Its Role in the Sino-Soviet Dispute” in 1966 outlining the issues the Soviet Union had with Mongolia’s and China’s attempt to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the birth of Genghis Khan in 1962.²² The Soviet Union was notoriously anti-nationalist, and the celebration of the Great Khan could not be tolerated by the Soviet Union because they feared that with nationalism the Mongolian Empire would rise again and envelop Russia as it had in the 13th and 14th centuries.²³ Hyer writes about these events like many of the historians before him, by mostly utilizing newspapers and reports from China and the Soviet Union while briefly mentioning Mongolian newspapers. Hyer relies on foreign works such as articles, books, and foreign policy prepared in Japan so that he may use their reports on what is happening within the borders of Outer Mongolia. There are strengths and weaknesses when writing about one country using sources from another. The strengths take the form of unbiased reporting of events taking place, however if this source comes from Russia or other communist countries during this celebration, then one can only find heavily negative reports as they were often written by Americans or Soviets with Cold War lenses. There is a balance in finding the right information without

²¹ Haining, “The Yak, the Bear and the Dragon,” 72-73.

²² Paul Hyer, “The Re-Evaluation of Chinggis Khan: Its Role in the Sino-Soviet Dispute,” *Asian Survey* 6, no. 12 (December 1966): 697.

²³ Hyer, “The Re-Evaluation of Chinggis Khan,” 699-700.

including much of the bias and Rupen does a good job walking that line while writing this article.

A common theme found within the works of the authors reviewed here is an examination of Mongolia itself, and the production of Soviet style infrastructure that is required for the reader to understand how deep the Soviet influence ran in Mongolia. Henry Bradsher's article "The Sovietization of Mongolia " written in 1972, details some of the political and economic interactions between the Soviet Union and Mongolia from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, such as the issues faced by Mongolia in exporting agricultural products and the implementation of Communist friendly personnel into positions of power within the Mongolian government.²⁴ Bradsher is currently retired but wrote for the Associated Press and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in international reporting in 1972. The sources used by Bradsher focus on the Mongolian five year plans, the amount of aid Mongolia has received from foreign countries, and documentation such as treaties, agreements, and the implementation of key figures into office. Bradsher's article focuses on the political landscape of Mongolia and like other historians Bradsher writes utilizing sources from the countries that surround Mongolia, he attempts to make up for this lack of sources by exploring the effects that these key figures had on the MPR once in office. Primary sources included in this research mostly consist of government documentation from China, Mongolia, and the United States of America.

One of the prime examples of viewing the development of Mongolia by the Soviet Union is through the examination of infrastructure and the development of an industrial revolution within Mongolia. "The Industrial Revolution in Mongolia" written by Michael Kaser in 1982, this article outlines the relationship between Mongolia and the Soviet Union through the

²⁴ Henry Bradsher, "The Sovietization of Mongolia," *Foreign Affairs* 50, no.3 (April 1972): 545.

exploration of Mongolia's history and by traveling to Mongolia to see firsthand in 1981 the direct effects of prolonged Soviet influence.²⁵ Kaser is the Reader Emeritus in Economics at the University of Oxford and a British economist specializing in Eastern Europe and the USSR. Utilizing his experience in economics, Kaser examines the economic development of Mongolia by the Soviet Union. By traveling to Mongolia he was able to witness first-hand the influence of the Soviet Union through architecture and industrialization.²⁶ Kaser utilizes government documentation to examine the effects of the five and three year plans implemented in Mongolia.²⁷ Kasers' sources, however, run into the same issues that other historians examining this topic face, which is a lack of translated sources originating in Mongolia.

Other historians have taken it upon themselves to begin compiling laws, treaties, and agreements made between the Soviet Union and Mongolia. William Elliot Butler compiled and published in 1982 business and trade laws between the Soviet Union and Mongolia; this monograph is filled with different trade laws, customs and duties, not just from the Soviet perspective but from the Mongolian one as well. The purpose of this work is to provide a reliable source of laws and agreements that were enacted by both countries. This primary source compilation involves government documentation from the MPR such as trade laws, customs control, and tax laws within Mongolia and the Soviet Union.²⁸ So while it falls under the same category of government documentation, it also involves sources that directly come from

²⁵ Michael Kaser, "The Industrial Revolution in Mongolia," *The World Today* 38, no. 1 (January 1982): 12-14.

²⁶ Kaser "The Industrial Revolution in Mongolia," 15.

²⁷ Kaser "The Industrial Revolution in Mongolia," 15.

²⁸ William E. Butler, Mongolia, and Russia, *Commercial, Business and Trade Laws. The Soviet Union and Mongolia*, (New York: Oceana Publications, 1982).

Mongolia. This compilation of documents illustrates the importance of trade between Mongolia and the Soviet Union, for the betterment of their own economies.

A small pamphlet compiled by lawmakers of the United States and Mongolia titled *Economic Assistance: Agreement between the United States of America and Mongolia, Signed at Ulaanbaatar September 8, 1992* covers the assistance provided by the United States to Mongolia following the collapse of the Soviet Union and Mongolia.²⁹ The purpose of this document is to illustrate that while the Soviet Union attempted to provide aid to Mongolia, following the collapse, Mongolia was left in disarray and no longer had a world power playing their protectorate. Mongolia required aid to keep their economy afloat, and the United States provided them with economic and political resources.

The evolution of Mongolia from nomads to sedentary people is a prime example of the works of Ibn Khaldun and his thoughts on the cyclical nature of civilization. The monograph *Twentieth Century Mongolia* by Bat-Erdene Batbayar (shortened to Baabar) was first published in 1999 and examines the entire history of Mongolia from the formation of a unified Mongolia from nomads to conquerors in the 13th century to communist Mongolia in the 21st century and beyond. This book is broken up into three sections; however book two covers the Mongolian Revolution of 1921, while book three illustrates the relationship between Mongolia, China, and Russia while covering the formation of the MPR.³⁰ Baabar was a Mongolian politician and the

²⁹ George Bush, and the United States, Congress, House, Committee on Ways Means, *Extension of Waiver Authority : Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Notification of His Determination That a Continuation of Waiver Currently in Effect for the Republic of Bulgaria, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Soviet Union, and the Mongolian People's Republic Will Substantially Promote the Objectives of Section 402, of the Trade Act of 1974, Pursuant to 19 U.S.C. 2432(c), (d)*. House Document (United States. Congress. House); 102-94. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 1991.

³⁰ Baabar (Bat-Erdene Batbayar), *Twentieth Century Mongolia*, ed. C. Kaplonski. (Cambridge: White Horse Press, 1999).

Minister of Finance in Mongolia until 1999, as well as an educated biophysicist and samizdat writer.³¹ The evidence offered by Baabar consists of documentation that was not open to the public until the fall of the Soviet Union, such as court documentation and secret agreements made between Mongolia and the Soviets. The strength of Baabar's work lies in his use of sources that were not available to the public for many years, and through his connections as a samizdat, he is able to carefully cipher through media articles such as newspapers to draw on information that will support his work without casting doubt on his heavy reliance of media sources pertaining to modern Mongolia in book three.³² The work done by Baabar lays out the entire history of Mongolia and it is within the sections pertaining to the events that led to the formation of the MPR, such as the dissection of treaties and agreements made between the three countries, Russian and Chinese expansion, and how the balance of power shifted in Mongolia as a result of the treaties and expansion.

One historian offers a unique look at Mongolia through the German perspective, by utilizing sources written by Germans about the relationship between the militaries of the Soviet Union and Mongolia. Written in 2015 Daniel Schmücking's report "Search for the Third Border: Mongolian Foreign Policy Between Russia and China," Schmücking spends considerable time exploring government documentation such as import and export reports in 21st century Mongolia.³³ Dr. Daniel Schmücking was the head of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftungs (KAS) office in Mongolia, now in Cambodia. The KAS is a political foundation based in Germany that

³¹ A person or group who distributes literature banned by the state.

³² Baabar, *Twentieth Century Mongolia*, 429-440.

³³ Daniel Schmücking, "Search for the Third Border: Mongolian Foreign Policy Between Russia and China," in *"Small" States in International Politics*, report, edited by Wahlers Gerhard and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, (2015): 23.

aids in strengthening democracy and human rights all over the world. The sources implemented by Schmücking seem to be mostly of German origin, meaning they are authored by Germans and usually reflect the relationship between Germany and Mongolia since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Schmücking utilizes military history to emphasize the importance of Mongolia's location as being a strategic position for the Soviets to control. No other historian reviewed here utilizes military history or the relationship between the militaries of the Soviet Union and Mongolia. This is a weakness within the work of Schmücking due to the nature of which he is writing and the time in which he wrote this report (2015), Schmücking's position in Mongolia may have afforded him time in the recently opened archives, but instead he chose to focus on movements of military units, defense spending, and costs of infrastructure.³⁴ The article by Schmücking offers a modern look at life in Mongolia in a post MPR world and how Mongolia still relies on Russian and Chinese goods such as gasoline and diesel.³⁵

For the majority of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, historians have been forced to watch and report on the MPR and the Soviet Union using mostly Soviet sources and sources written by scholars from other countries. Many of the historians discussed herewith also attempt to view the relationship using Marxist methods by concentrating on the labor and the infrastructure being put into place by the Soviet Union in Mongolia; they attempt to write about the relationship between these three countries by focusing on their production values and what they offer Mongolia in the form of monetary aid. Historians have also written about the progressive nature of Mongolia utilizing the thoughts of Ibn Khaldun and the evolution of society from a nomadic one such as the Mongolian Empire to a sedentary one such as the MPR.

³⁴ Schmücking, "Search for the Third Border," 23-25.

³⁵ Schmücking, "Search for the Third Border," 22.

When writing about the relationships between China, Mongolia, and the Soviet Union, approaches have remained relatively stagnant until the 21st century and even today translations of relevant information out of Mongolia are difficult to come by, making the shift from sources written by outsiders difficult to transition away from. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the MPR, archives in Mongolia have opened up, however, not many have access to them and most of the work remains untranslated.

The formation of the MPR is a direct result of the diplomatic relations between China, Russia, and Mongolia wherein Russia and China vied to keep Mongolia within their spheres of influence through a series of agreements and treaties. The following primary sources will illustrate almost every point made within this historiography section from the development of relations between the Soviet Union and Mongolia, to the formation of Mongolia's own communist government in the MPR through the evaluation of treaties and diplomatic relations between China, Russia, and Mongolia and the accounts of a Chinese explorer/traveler named Ma Ho-T'ien in 1926. Beginning with an agreement between China and Tsarist Russia in 1881, the state of Outer Mongolia became a political battlefield for these two giants to wage their diplomatic war in which each country attempted to sway Mongolia through the promises of improved infrastructure and more political freedom. Several treaties were made between China and Russia, often leaving Mongolia on the sideline while they discussed who was permitted to do what within the borders of Mongolia. Independence from China was the main goal of Mongolia during the early 20th century, and in order to achieve this end, the Mongolian government under the Bogd Khan declared themselves independent of China while China was in the middle of their 1911 revolution, however this would not last long, as China finished the revolution, their government began to once again target Mongolia. The following treaties and agreements made

between the three countries in conjunction with the Chinese Revolution of 1911 and the Russian Civil War less than a decade later culminated with the formation of the MPR in the 1920's and the subsequent travels of Ma Ho-T'ien to survey the newly independent Mongolia. The sources discussed herewith describe in great detail the diplomatic relations between the three countries and through this diplomatic approach, the reader will have a better understanding on the historiography of this topic and the approaches taken by historians over the years as they attempt to transcribe the history of Mongolia through the use of foreign sources, instead of examining what these treaties might say about the state of each country during this revolutionary period in Asia.

An Examination of Treaties (1881-1924)

The examination of treaties between China, Russia, and Mongolia is essential for the understanding of the political landscape that led to the formation of the MPR. Through the examination of treaties from 1881 to the formation of the MPR in 1924 the reader will discover that Mongolia was not satisfied with their position as a Chinese country, nor were they satisfied with how the Chinese government handled political affairs in Mongolia. While exploring these treaties is not a new tactic in examining the relations of these three countries, it will shed light on how and why the Mongolian people felt it was necessary to step away from China and embrace Russia and the Soviet Union.

Following the establishment of Russian consulates in Mongolia under the treaty signed between Russia and China in 1881, the Russian government under the rule of Alexander III began to encroach on Mongolia through the use of treaties, promised infrastructure, and the

ability to trade.³⁶ This 1881 treaty with China was followed by a procession of treaties between China, Mongolia, and Russia all dealing with the autonomy, infrastructure, and the trading happening in Mongolia. Each treaty was an attempt to keep the country of Mongolia in the Russian or Chinese spheres of influence. With the collapse of the Chinese sphere of influence following the Chinese Revolution of 1911, the Russian government under Nicholas II in 1912 took advantage of the weakened Chinese state by issuing an agreement with Mongolia that partially recognized Mongolia's independence and most importantly outlined exactly how the Russians and Mongols could aid each other.³⁷ Eventually the governments of China, Russia, and Mongolia in June of 1915 would meet to discuss and sign a tripartite agreement.³⁸

These treaties were an important part of Russia's plan for Mongolia; they could be used to intimidate other countries from attempting to take control. China and Russia were not the only two countries interested in Outer Mongolia, as Russia signed a secret treaty with Japan in 1907 that outlined which sections of Mongolia they were authorized to exert influence over.³⁹ So these agreements could be used as a shield against China or Japan; however, with the weakening of Tsarist Russia and the uprising of Lenin in 1917, the Soviet government recanted almost all of the treaties and agreements made under Tsarist rule, bringing to light and canceling out all secret

³⁶ Division of International Law, Mongolia, China, and Russia, "Treaty Respecting the Re-establishment of Chinese Authority in the Country of Ili," *Outer Mongolia Treaties and Agreements*, Pamphlet Series of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of International Law, No. 41: 1.

³⁷ Mongolia, China, and Russia, "Agreements in Regard to Relations Between Russia and Autonomous Mongolia," *Outer Mongolia Treaties and Agreements*, 16-23.

³⁸ "Tripartite Agreement in Regard to Outer Mongolia," *Outer Mongolia Treaties and Agreements*, 32.

³⁹ Ernest Batson Price, *The Russo-Japanese Treaties of 1907-1916 Concerning Manchuria and Mongolia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1933), 107.

treaties made with countries like Japan.⁴⁰ The formation of these treaties allowed Tsarist Russia to begin asserting influence throughout the country and then allowed the Soviet Union to resume these negotiations over Mongolia with China on a clean slate. Through the analysis of these treaties, it seems as though Russia did not want to anger the Chinese government, they simply wanted more influence and control over their border, which eventually led to numerous diplomatic conflicts over Outer Mongolia and the formation of the MPR. After the formation of the MPR, a traveler from China by the name of Ma Ho-T'ien began to explore the country of Mongolia, writing about the life experiences of the Mongolian people under the MPR and Soviet Union exploring everything from the Chinese merchant class in Mongolia to education, propaganda, and the effects of the Mad Baron Ungern Von Sternberg on the formation of the alliance between the MPR and the Soviet Union.⁴¹

One of the first instances of Russia utilizing diplomatic relations to gain a foothold in Mongolia began with a treaty signed between the governments of Russia and China in 1881.⁴² The treaty of 1881 is essentially at its core a trade agreement between Russia and China, however this agreement laid out key details that would allow Russia to begin exerting some influence on the people of Mongolia. The agreement allowed Russian merchants to enter Mongolia for trading purposes free of duty.⁴³ The treaty of 1881 allowed the Russian merchants

⁴⁰ Baabar, *Twentieth Century Mongolia*, 180.

⁴¹ Ma Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, trans. John De Francis (Boston: Johns Hopkins Press, 1949).

⁴² China, and Russia, "Treaty Respecting the Re-establishment of Chinese Authority in the Country of Ili," *Outer Mongolia Treaties and Agreements*, 1-10.

⁴³ China, and Russia, "Treaty Respecting the Re-establishment of Chinese Authority in the Country of Ili," *Outer Mongolia Treaties and Agreements*, 2.

to trade in a zone that extended 50 versts (33.1 miles) on either side of the frontier.⁴⁴ It should be noted that at any time the term ‘frontier’ is used by Chinese or Russian officials they are referring to the territory of Mongolia that borders their own, so for the Russians the frontier would be northern Mongolia, and China’s frontier would be southern Mongolia. This treaty also allowed Russian consulates to build homes wherever they were stationed in China or Mongolia, allowing the Mongolian people to see first-hand what Russian architecture looked like.⁴⁵ Tsarist Russia under Alexander II in 1881 officially had access to Mongolia, and from this point, the Russian government began working tirelessly toward bringing Mongolia into their sphere of influence, even making treaties with Japan over the territory.

With the Russian merchant class able to freely trade in Mongolia, the Japanese began to fear that through the diplomatic relations between China and Russia, they would be effectively shut out of Mongolia and unable to exert their own influence over the area. The Japanese government eventually met in secret with the Russian government in 1907 to work out the details of what should be done with Outer Mongolia and who should have the area in their sphere of influence; this treaty left a large portion of Outer Mongolia under Russian influence.⁴⁶ The treaty of 1907 was followed by a secret convention in 1912 that extended the duration of the 1907 treaty and had Japan hand over the western half of Inner Mongolia to a pre-revolution Russia.⁴⁷ The treaty of 1907 and the following convention of 1912 allowed the Tsarist government time to

⁴⁴ China, and Russia, “Treaty Respecting the Re-establishment of Chinese Authority in the Country of Ili,” *Outer Mongolia Treaties and Agreements*, 4.

⁴⁵ China, and Russia, “Treaty Respecting the Re-establishment of Chinese Authority in the Country of Ili,” *Outer Mongolia Treaties and Agreements*, 3.

⁴⁶ Ernest Batson Price, *The Russo-Japanese Treaties of 1907-1916 Concerning Manchuria and Mongolia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1933), 107.

⁴⁷ Price, *The Russo-Japanese Treaties of 1907-1916 Concerning Manchuria and Mongolia*, 117.

focus on its own revolution during the Russian Civil War without worrying about Japan attempting to encroach on Mongolia. However, with the defeat of the Tsarist government by the Bolsheviks, these plans were discarded and the Soviet Union took a more proactive role in the development of Mongolia into a satellite nation. During this period, China had also entered a revolutionary state in 1911, allowing the Mongolian government to take advantage of the chaos.

With the collapse of Qing rule in 1911, the Mongolian government under Bogd Khan established a Mongolia independent from Chinese authority, and on November 3, 1912, the Russian government under Nicholas II signed an agreement with the Mongolian government partially recognizing Mongolia's independence from China. The agreement of 1912 first recognized that Djebzoun Damba-Khutukhta was the new ruler of Mongolia, and the agreement itself states “The old relations between Mongolia and China thus came to an end.”⁴⁸ This agreement was carefully worded so that the Mongolian government would assume that they could count on the Russians to aid them against their Chinese neighbors, however the agreement of 1912 does not actually state that the Russians recognize that Mongolia is completely autonomous from China. The Russians likely worded the agreement carefully, so that once Imperial China had finished with their Revolution, the Russians could still utilize all the trading and immigration benefits provided to them through the treaty without angering the newly minted Chinese Republic. The first article of this agreement states that the Imperial Russian Government would assist Mongolia in maintaining autonomous rights and would not admit Chinese colonization of Mongolia.⁴⁹ The second article allowed the Russians to freely trade and live in

⁴⁸ Mongolia and Russia, “Agreements in Regard to Relations Between Russia and Autonomous Mongolia,” *Outer Mongolia Treaties and Agreements*, 16-17.

⁴⁹ Mongolia and Russia, “Agreements in Regard to Relations Between Russia and Autonomous Mongolia,” *Outer Mongolia Treaties and Agreements*, 17.

Mongolia as they saw fit while the third article was worded in a way that allowed the Russian government to modify the agreement if Mongolia wishes to sign treaties with China or other foreign powers.⁵⁰ This treaty only recognized that Mongolia had selected a new ruler, that the Russians would try to prevent Chinese colonization, and that the Russian people could come and go and trade as they pleased. The annexed portion of the agreement is longer than the actual agreement and only outlined the ways in which Russian citizens were allowed to trade and how much the duties were supposed on imported or exported goods from Mongolia; this treaty got rid of duties.⁵¹ This annexed portion of the agreement shows that Russia was only interested in Mongolia to improve border security and to bolster Russian economics. The subsequent treaty signed between Mongolia and Russia was on May 25, 1913, and simply outlined an agreement for Russia to install telegraph lines in Mongolia.⁵² This was most likely done so that Russian officials could contact their consulates or Mongolian officials at will and illustrates that the Russians were showing continued interest in what was happening in Mongolia, as they struggled to remain independent from China.

When the Chinese Revolution of 1911 finally came to an end, the new Manchu government ruled by Yuan Shikai, demanded to know why Russia and Mongolia were meeting to discuss the autonomy of Mongolia, specifically pertaining to the agreement signed between the two nations in 1912, and on November 5th, 1913, the Russian government met with Chinese officials to sign an agreement pertaining to Mongolia. The agreement signed between Russia and

⁵⁰ Mongolia, and Russia, "Agreements in Regard to Relations Between Russia and Autonomous Mongolia," *Outer Mongolia Treaties and Agreements*, 18.

⁵¹ Mongolia and Russia, "Agreements in Regard to Relations Between Russia and Autonomous Mongolia," *Outer Mongolia Treaties and Agreements*, 19.

⁵² Mongolia and Russia, "Agreements in Regard to Relations Between Russia and Autonomous Mongolia," *Outer Mongolia Treaties and Agreements*, 22.

China in 1913 outlined the autonomy of Outer Mongolia without actually including Mongolian representatives in the agreement discussion and it was within this agreement that “Russia recognizes that Outer Mongolia is under the suzerainty of China.”⁵³ The agreement also dictated that China recognized the autonomy of Outer Mongolia while simultaneously promising that they would not send troops into Outer Mongolia.⁵⁴ The agreement of 1913 was made without representation from Mongolia, and this agreement acted much like the agreement between China and Russia in 1915 with the key difference being that Mongolian officials had been involved in the process of the tripartite agreement. According to Baabar, the discussions that led to the signing of the tripartite began on September 8, 1914, meaning that the discussion for this particular agreement lasted almost a year and included 40 official meetings, with the Mongolians ceding much of what they desired to get out of the agreement such as a Pan-Mongolia.⁵⁵ While at the conference, the Mongolian delegates refused to accept the first two points of the agreement and were bullied into submission by the Chinese delegates after the Russian delegates that were in attendance refused to acknowledge that Russia once recognized Mongolian independence.⁵⁶ At the same time Russia and China threatened to continue the talks with or without Mongolia as Mongolia clearly recognized the agreement between China and Russia, otherwise they would not be in attendance for the tripartite, and through these bullying tactics China and Russia convinced

⁵³ China and Russia, “Declaration, and Accompanying Exchange of Notes, in Regard to Outer Mongolia,” *Outer Mongolia Treaties and Agreements*, 25.

⁵⁴ China and Russia, “Declaration, and Accompanying Exchange of Notes, in Regard to Outer Mongolia,” *Outer Mongolia Treaties and Agreements*, 25-26.

⁵⁵ Baabar, *Twentieth Century Mongolia*, 163-164.

⁵⁶ Baabar, *Twentieth Century Mongolia*, 165.

Mongolia to sign the agreement.⁵⁷ Mongolia vied for independence from China, but China refused to let Mongolia secede and form an independent nation, even though Mongolia had done just that in 1911. Mongolia would not be completely independent from China until the formation of the MPR in 1924, however even after the formation of the MPR the Mongolians still had trouble in keeping Chinese farmers, soldiers, and laborers out of their country, forcing them to continue to rely on the aid provided by the Russian Tsarist government and eventually the Soviet Union under Vladimir Lenin and later Stalin.

In an attempt to revive national independence and to secure a leader for Mongolia who would not submit to foreign demands as easily as the Bogd Javzandamba Hutagt had done during the tripartite signing in 1915, a group of educators and those with the spirit of revolution formed a group called the Consular Hill Group that included members such as Choibalsan, Dogsomiin Bodo, and Buriad Elbegdorj Rinchino.⁵⁸ A second group formed titled the East Huree Group that included other revolutionaries, such as Soliin Danzan and Dansranbilegiin Dogsom, with the intent of merging with the Consular Hill Group and peacefully taking over the government to form the MPR.⁵⁹ After China had stripped Mongolia of its autonomy in 1919, these groups formed with the sole purpose of reverting back to an independent nation. According to Baabar, these groups sent letters to Russia on the same day that Mongolian autonomy had been relinquished to China in 1919 in the hopes of igniting a joint struggle against China.⁶⁰ Both groups began to meet in secret among their members and discuss what should be done about the

⁵⁷ Baabar, *Twentieth Century Mongolia*, 165.

⁵⁸ Baabar, *Twentieth Century Mongolia*, 197-198.

⁵⁹ Baabar, *Twentieth Century Mongolia*, 198.

⁶⁰ Baabar, *Twentieth Century Mongolia*, 199.

relinquishing of autonomy to China; these groups varied in degrees of radicalism with the Consular Hill Group acting more nationalistic and faithful to the Khan while the East Huree Group was violent and planned attacks and raids on Chinese caravans.⁶¹

With indirect support from their Russian allies, the East Huree Group met on June 25, 1920, to found the MPR by merging with the Consular Hill Group. With the MPR formed at least on paper, the group split in order to spread out and contact other governments that might be willing to lend support; Choibalsan and Danzan were sent to Hiagt to contact Makstenek, who was the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Mongolia, while another group sought the aid of Tsarist Russia. However, neither group fared well in finding aid to rid Mongolia of their Chinese oppressors.⁶²

Following the invasion of Mongolia by Baron Roman von Ungern-Sternberg in October of 1920, a traveler from China by the name of Ma Ho-T'ien set out with a small group to explore the Mongolian steppe from 1926-27. Ma Ho-T'ien was a specialist of frontier affairs who traveled Mongolia as a political agent, attempting to learn about life on the Mongolian frontier.⁶³ Ma Ho-T'ien began his journey out of Kansu, China, and traveled to the city of Urga (Ulaanbaatar), documenting everything that his party came across such as how the tax offices treated Chinese merchants, Russian propaganda, the textbooks utilized in education, and social restrictions.⁶⁴ The travels of Ma Ho-T'ien in Mongolia after the formation of the MPR take a good look at life on the steppe, how the Mongolian people felt about the Chinese now that they

⁶¹ Baabar, *Twentieth Century Mongolia*, 200.

⁶² Baabar, *Twentieth Century Mongolia*, 204.

⁶³ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, V.

⁶⁴ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*.

were independent from them, and how influence from the Soviet Union had begun to take hold in everything from education to architecture in Mongolia.

After Mongolia lost independence through their 1919 agreement with China, Baron Roman von Ungern-Sternberg, sensing defeat at the hands of the Soviets, took his army into Mongolia in October of 1920 under the guise of aiding Mongolia in their fight against their Chinese oppressors as a delegate from Tsarist Russia.⁶⁵ In February of 1921, the Baron seized control of Urga from the Chinese soldiers posted there, placing the living buddha as his puppet ruler in Mongolia.⁶⁶ The Baron began manipulating the political scene in Mongolia. The people of Mongolia desired independence but not at the cost of their own freedom, so they began to seek aid from China and the Soviets to drive the Baron out.⁶⁷ Ma Ho-T'ien attributes the invasion of Baron Roman von Ungern-Sternberg as a key factor in China losing Outer Mongolia to the Soviet sphere of influence because the invasion went unanswered by China. This lack of Chinese response afforded the Soviet Union the opportunity to send in troops to annihilate the Baron during the summer of 1921.⁶⁸ With the Baron out of the way and the Soviet Union acting as the heroes of Mongolia, the people of Mongolia were wholly absorbed into the Soviet sphere of influence, eventually renaming the city of Urga to Ulan Bator Khoto, which means the City of the Red Hero.⁶⁹ The invasion of Mongolia by the Baron and the subsequent neglect of the Chinese government allowed for the Soviet Union to take action, free from consequence since

⁶⁵ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 82-83.

⁶⁶ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 83.

⁶⁷ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 83.

⁶⁸ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 83.

⁶⁹ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 34.

the Soviet's had shed the treaties of Tsarist Russia. With the Soviet Union acting as the heroes of the MPR, Mongolia fully embraced every aspect of the Soviet life imitating them as often as possible.

After the formation of the MPR was completed and backed by the Soviet Union, the Mongolian tax offices began in the mid-1920s, to heavily tax Chinese merchants and travelers who wanted to do business within the borders of Mongolia. The Chinese firms operating out of Mongolia were so heavily taxed by the Mongolian government that they began to pack up their shops and return to China; the number of firms dwindled from just over a hundred to only five at the time of Ma Ho-T'ien's travels in 1926-1927.⁷⁰ While conversing with Chinese merchants in the area, they informed Ma Ho-T'ien that "When a Chinese trader comes to Mongolia, he pays three dollars for a passport; if he remains, he pays twelve dollars for a permit, five dollars for a passport inspection, and in addition a business tax which varies according to the amount of a firm's capital."⁷¹ To make matters more convoluted for the Chinese merchants, the tax offices of Mongolia were split into three offices: the local banner, the office of the Urga government, and the office of animal diseases.⁷² The office of the local banner was responsible for directly taxing the firms, the Urga government office taxed travelling merchants, and the office of animal diseases taxed all live-stock. The merchants themselves were responsible for reaching out to the correct office in order to pay taxes and receive permits lest they be fined.⁷³ A Paot'ou merchant complained to Ma Ho-T'ien on his travels stating that the Mongolian government made it illegal

⁷⁰ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 18.

⁷¹ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 18.

⁷² Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 19.

⁷³ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 19.

to drive livestock to the south, and he could no longer return to China with the two thousand sheep he received as a payment.⁷⁴ An additional grievance laid out by Ma Ho-T'ien was that the local firms were taxed ten dollars to maintain the theaters, however the merchants were then forced to attend plays that depicted the oppression of the Mongols by Chinese officials lest they be fined an additional sixty dollars.⁷⁵ The Mongolian government was attempting to make it as difficult as possible for Chinese merchants to make money off the Mongolian people while simultaneously attempting to drive the merchants out of their country.

A popular tool of the Soviet Union was propaganda; this propaganda was used to subtly influence the population into a certain way of thinking. Even though Mongolia had sided with the Soviet Union, they were no exception to the rule, and examples of propaganda can be found on posters and within the education system of Mongolia. While traveling Mongolia between 1926-1927, Ma Ho-T'ien was afforded the opportunity to examine some text books utilized in the Mongolian education system, and within the yurt of a lama, he discovered a series of posters being kept in a chest.⁷⁶ The textbooks found in the Mongolian education system ranged from Mongolia grammar, arithmetic, and scriptures to the *Journal of the Mongol People's Party* and a magazine that was published by the Revolutionary Youth League of Mongolia entitled *Youth Magazine*.⁷⁷ The journal was separated into different sections, covering oppressed peoples, communism, Japanese imperialism, and the revolutionary struggle in China.⁷⁸ The magazine

⁷⁴ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 26.

⁷⁵ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 20.

⁷⁶ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 35-39.

⁷⁷ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 36-37.

⁷⁸ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 36.

covered topics ranging from the duties of the Revolutionary Youth League, to Lenin and the youth, to stories of party members, and even to the future of the universe.⁷⁹ The primary use of these documents within the education system was to invoke a feeling of revolutionary pride in the people of Mongolia and to educate the youth on the oppressive nature of their southern neighbors, all while promoting communism. Under the MPR, the youth of Mongolia was afforded the opportunity to have a better education than their ancestors, while still invoking those feelings of national pride and revolution that led their ancestors to conquer Asia. While visiting a lama's yurt Ma Ho-T'ien discovered a chest of revolutionary posters that depict scenes playing out between the Soviet Union, Mongolia, China, Japan, and even the United States:

The right hand section of one poster showed sunlight radiating from behind a fat, snarling Japanese standing arrogantly astride the sea with one foot planted on the Chinese and the other on the Koreans. This represented Japan's outrageous actions in the eastern seas, her crushing rule in Korea, and her affronts to China. In addition, an American was depicted as an onlooker in the center of the ocean. Several dogs in Japanese hats were drawn below with snarling mouths pointing avidly toward Mongolia. A Mongol gazing from a distance expressed fear at the sight. A red-clad Russian holding a gun was about to open fire.... On the left half of the poster a Russian, a Mongol, a Korean, and a Chinese were shooting the fat Japanese into the ocean. An American was also firing from above.⁸⁰

These posters were used to push the agendas of the Soviet Union and the MPR; the propaganda was used as a tool by both governments to influence the Mongolian people to begin thinking about their lives and the revolutions of the past that helped to shape them as a people and a nation. An additional poster was described by Ma Ho-T'ien, and one half of this poster depicts some Mongolians wearing old traditional clothes carrying heavy bundles on one half while the other half illustrates happy Mongols delivering packages on horseback wearing modern

⁷⁹ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 37.

⁸⁰ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 38-39.

clothing.⁸¹ This poster illustrates the difference in how the Mongolian people felt before and after their revolution. The people of Mongolia even had a propaganda training facility that was adorned by a large picture of Karl Marx who is often depicted as a hero in Russian literature; this facility was also used to hold party meetings.⁸² A cultural shift had begun to take place in Mongolia where the people of Mongolia started emulating the Soviet Union and shedding the Chinese traditions that had begun to seep into Mongolian culture.

With the MPR in full control of their nation, they were embracing the culture of their Soviet neighbors in full, adopting similar policies regarding social activities such as drinking and the use of drugs. While attempting to emulate China, opium had run rampant through Mongolia prior to the Opium Wars of 1839; however, with the desire to emulate the Soviets, the Mongols adopted the practice of cigarette smoking instead.⁸³ Mongolia also placed a flat ban on all gambling in Outer Mongolia, and this policy can be likely attributed to the fact that gambling had become popular in Urga because of the Chinese.⁸⁴ The use of liquor in Mongolia was permitted as long as the Chinese did not take place in the trade of liquor, because of Chinese merchants taking advantage of how fond Mongolians were of drinking and the importance of verbal agreements to the Mongols.⁸⁵ The Mongolian government wanted to push the people into having more in common with their Soviet neighbors than they did with the Chinese, so they

⁸¹ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 39.

⁸² Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 63.

⁸³ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 77.

⁸⁴ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 77.

⁸⁵ Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia*, 77.

began to implement laws that aided in structuring the social lives of Mongolians to better emulate the Soviets.

Ma Ho-T'ien spent a year traveling the countryside of Mongolia, learning about their new shifts in culture, the adoption of the Soviet Union as the Mongolian protectorate, and the spread of propaganda through educational reform. The travels of Ma Ho-T'ien, although written through the eyes of a Chinese merchant traveling a land that spent the better portion of the last 40 years trying to become independent from China, are crucial for the study of a Pre- and Post- MPR formation in Mongolia. His travels shine a light on the cultural shifts taking place as the Mongols adopted Soviet habits like cigarette smoking and the use of Karl Marx's photographs in their meeting halls. The cultural shifts that were taking place in the mid to late 1920s in Mongolia are a direct result of the diplomatic relations and unfair agreements made by the Russian and Chinese governments. The people of Mongolia were looking to distance themselves from Chinese tradition and the best way to do that was to shed those traditions and embrace new ones.

Conclusion

The formation of the MPR has been explored through a variety of methods such as the economic conditions in Mongolia or by exploring the Industrial Revolution within Mongolia, however with these topics historians are often stuck writing about life in Mongolia after the formation of the MPR and not the cause of the formation. Through the exploration of diplomatic agreements and treaties, a stronger image of life in a pre-MPR Mongolia is formed. The treaties and agreements explored herewith illustrate the diplomatic landscape that formed in Mongolia, showing that they fought for independence from China with little assistance from the outside world until Russia and the Soviet Union became involved. The exploration of diplomatic

relations between these three nations is paramount for understanding the history of Mongolia and why they fought so desperately to become and remain independent from China.

The formation of the MPR in 1924 and the following policies that were enacted by the communist government can be attributed to many factors playing out in Mongolia between 1880-1924 including the tense diplomatic relations between China, Russia, and Mongolia over the area known as Outer Mongolia. Through an examination of the treaties and agreements between the three governments, a picture begins to form, illustrating the tense political battlefield that Mongolia became when all the Mongolians were attempting to do was to distance themselves from China and to be recognized as an independent nation capable of governing itself. From the formation of a treaty that allowed Tsarist Russia to begin importing and exporting goods out of Mongolia, duty free, to the agreements between China and Russia over the suzerainty of Mongolia, until the formation of the MPR was completed, each treaty played a key role in how the government and people of Mongolia came to the conclusion that they were better left to govern themselves with assistance from the Soviet Union than they were under the oppressive thumb of China.

The treaties and agreements also illustrate how unwilling China was to let Mongolia leave. As soon as they had the chance the Chinese government seized independence from Mongolia in 1919, which led to a series of unforeseen events at the hands of Baron Roman von Ungern-Sternberg. Because of China's inability to recognize the independence of Mongolia, the Baron came into Mongolia to eliminate the Chinese threat and declare himself the ruler of Asia. Thanks to China's unwillingness to react to the Baron driving them out of Mongolia, the Red Army came to the assistance of Mongolia driving the Baron out and executing him, effectively ending all control that China had in the area or would ever achieve again. The Soviet Union had

officially become the heroes of Mongolia by doing what China refused to do, and with these actions, the Mongolian government would never have to recognize their suzerainty to China again.

Following the establishment of the MPR in 1924, the traveler known as Ma Ho-T'ien set out to document life in the MPR. This account is one of the earliest known documents of someone traveling and writing about everything they encounter from education to political establishments to the use of propaganda in the Mongolian People's Republic. This account helps to illustrate what life was like for the average Mongolian living on the steppe, and what affects the new trade laws were having on Chinese merchants in Mongolia. Through the exploration of the treaties and political climate that lent to the formation of the MPR, it becomes apparent that the use of treaties and agreements, and the exploration of life in Mongolia through these treaties and agreements is vital for understanding the process that leads to a country so desperately vying for independence no matter the cost.

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