CHAPTER III

MONGOLIAN REVOLUTION AND

SOVIET ASSISTANCE
Revolution is a characteristic of modernisation. It refers to a drastic change in the established social order and thereby an essential ingredient of nation building. In the political context, revolution presupposes change in political institution, leadership, government policy, and social structure. In revolution, "the sense of making a new social order is always as important as that of overthrowing an old order."¹ Thus, the goal of all revolutions is to bring a completely new order of society. "A full scale revolution thus involves the rapid and violent destruction of existing political institutions, the mobilisation of new groups into politics, and the creation of new political institutions."² In Mongolia also, revolution occurred for making Mongolia free from feudal theocratic regime and for establishing a new regime of the people of the land.

There are sequences in making a revolution successful. For a revolutionary possibility, the social surface must be prone for overthrowing the established regime. This is generally created by the misrule of

¹. Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of culture and society* (Great Britain, 1980), pp. 228-29.
existing regime and endless exploitation of people. This creates a fertile ground for upheaval. It is created by the psychological make-up of people which generally is a product of the endless exploitation by the existing regime. It is because of this that "the causes of revolution have given primary emphasis to its social and psychological roots."\(^3\) This must be accompanied by a revolutionary ideology to guide a revolution. "Without revolutionary theory there can not be revolutionary movement." Real revolutionary movements, "do not allow any bargaining over principles, do not make theoretical concessions." This is because the "role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory."\(^4\) This necessitates the need of a group to lead the revolution. Without a vanguard group the frustration of people can not be channelised to stand against the established political order. It is a universal experience that "every revolutionary ideology is in search of a structure-party, institution - capable of transforming its vision into reality."\(^5\) The revolutionary group must have revolutionary commitment

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commensurate to the aspiration of people and dedicated enough to stand the repression of the regime. In addition, there is a need of favourable external political environment which may help generate revolutionary atmosphere. In case of Mongolia, the last factor played the most crucial role in bringing revolution. This is the subject matter of this section.

The revolution of 1921 is an epoch making turning point in the history of Mongolia. There are, however, two schools of thought about the goals and strategy of Mongolian revolution. One school of thought is advocated by the Marxist - Leninst thinkers of Russia and Mongolia. They claim that, the Mongolian Revolution was for the National Independence, and it was

6. First Group of Thinkers:

a) Kh. Choibalsan, G. Demid, and D. Losol, Mongolyn Ardyn Undsenii Khuv'Sgalyyn Ankh Uiiisch Baïguulsny Tovch Tüük (Short History of the Original Birth and Establishment of the Mongolian People's National Revolution); Volumes 1 & 2 (Ulan Bator, 1934).

b) A.Amar, Tüükhin Tobch (Brief History of Mongolia) (Ulan Bator, 1926) (in Mongol)

c) D. Dendev, Mongolyn Tovch Tüük, Short history of Mongolia (Ulan Bator, 1934), (in Mongol).

d) I.M. Maiskiy, Mongoliya nakanune revolyusii (Moscow,1959), (2nd edn.)


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a social revolution to establish new society, i.e. socialist society. They attest this thesis on the ground that the Mongolian revolutionaries had gone through an open debate over the question of non-capitalist road to socialism for Mongolia. The revolutionary role of the Mongolian People's Party was conceived from the Communist ideology. The Mongolian People's Party was a Party of the Mongolian poor arats. In the opinion of the communist scholars and historians, the Mongolian revolution was successful only due to the assistance given by the Soviet Union. The revolution occurred under the influence of October Socialist Revolution of the Soviet Union and by the active participation of arat masses.

The second line of thought includes predominantly the work of Western Scholars, though some Mongolian scholars also hold the same view. They hold the

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<th>7. Second Group of Thinkers:</th>
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<td>b) D. Dashpurev and S.K. Soni</td>
<td>Reign of Terror in Mongolia (New Delhi, 1992).</td>
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<td>d) G.G.S. Murphy,</td>
<td>Soviet Mongolia: A Study of the Oldest Political Satellite (Berkeley, 1966)</td>
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opinion that the Mongolian revolution was an exported revolution from Soviet Russia to Mongolia. The essence of their arguments is that the Soviet Russia imposed communist revolution on Mongolia, it was not a genuine revolt for establishing a socialist order of society. "We can not take seriously any claim that the Soviet forces marched to Urga at the request of a responsible government with a broad mandate . . . . Whatever equation we use, 20 party members and 400 troops from a country of 750,000 population do not amount to a revolution." 8 And "The plan was to achieve Mongolian liberation with Russian assistance. When ten thousand Red Army troops enter Mongolia alongside seven hundred Mongolian ones, however, it was hard to avoid to interpretation that Russia was directing events." 9 They base their arguments on the fact that ideology (Leninism), structure of MPP, strategy of action and military intervention all came from the Soviet Union through the Mongolian leaders working under the direct instructions of the leaders of the Soviet Union.


1. The Origins of the Revolution

In the 20th century Mongols had several historical events in their social life. One of them was the revolution of 1911, often called as the "First Mongolian Revolution". It was an outcome of long time grievances and strain against the Manchu-Chinese domination in Mongolia which lasted for more than 200 years. The departure from Outer Mongolia of the Manchu governor of Urga in December 1911 marked Mongolia's status as an independent state. It was a nationalistic movement for colonial liberation from Manchu. This gets attested from the declaration of the committee of princes and high lamas: "Our Mongolia has been an independent state since the very beginning of its existence, and therefore according to the ancient law, Mongolia declares itself to be an independent state with a new government. From now on we Mongol will not submit to the Manchu and Chinese officials, whose power is being completely abolished." 10 Official opinion of this view was announced in the Mongolian government's messages to other country's governments. 11


11. See: 'To the Ambassador of France in Russia 1914' Unen (Ulaan Baator), 16 November 1991 No 145 and also "From the Bogd Khaan To Japanese King" 19 January 1914', Shine Ue (ULan Baator) 11-20 November, 1991, No.9,
The movement of 1911 was the beginning of the awakening of the Mongol people, and an important step in the future struggle for the progress of Mongolia as a nation. But what the 1911 movement did was that it simply removed the reactionary Manchu officials and troops from the administrative structure of Mongolia. It did not make fundamental restructuring of Mongolian social order. The experience of the eight-nine years of autonomy since 1911 clearly showed that a revolutionary preparation was necessary for fundamental change. It became clear that for overcoming the backwardness of Mongolia, what was required was not just reform but a social revolution capable of destroying the feudalistic structure, which was at its decaying end. Revolution was essential for achieving progress in Mongolia. 12 The Kyakhta conference of Mongolia, Russia and China, which lasted for eight months, from the autumn of 1914 until May 1915, proved to be a failure as far as Mongolia was concerned. 13 Mongolia aimed at establishing an independent Mongol state, uniting both Inner and Outer Mongolia. But even Russia did not agree to it since it would have


13. See: 'From the Minutes of the Kyakhta Conference', Unen (10 December 1991, No 154, Ulaan Baatar)
involved "great financial expense and enormous labour" to Russia.14 Thus, the tripartite agreement refused to accept the Mongolian demand for recognition of the country's complete independence. It agreed only for an autonomy to Outer Mongolia. This put an end to Mongol hopes for a united Mongolian state. And in 1919 even the autonomous status of Mongolia was altogether abolished by the Chinese troops which came back to Urga and resorted Chinese rule from Peking. This was the background of Mongolian revolution. An important additional point to note is that one "delegation of Mongol princes and high lamas had been sent to St. Petersburg in the summer of 1911 to seek Russian support for an independent Mongolia."15

2. Impact of Bolshevik Revolution

Assistance to Mongolian Revolution of 1921 began, imperceptibly, with the success of October Revolution of 1917 in the Soviet Russia, the closest neighbour of Mongolia. The Great October Socialist Revolution marked


the beginning of an era of socialist transformation the world over.\textsuperscript{16} The October Revolution was the starting-point for uniting the national liberation struggle into a single force capable of overthrowing the existing regime. October Revolution helped Mongolian Revolution in many ways. The October Revolution demonstrated that a revolution could be possible if the arats, workers and oppressed unite to overthrow the regime. It ushered in an era of hope that feudal framework of Mongolian Society could switch over to socialism if the determined group of revolutionaries make concerted effort to overthrow the ruling regime of Mongolia.

Soviet Russian communists actively assisted the Mongolian revolutionaries from the beginning of the revolution because Russia's communist leader, V.I. Lenin, was clear in his mind that the Russian revolution would be successful only if the Russian revolution would be closely connected with other revolutionary movement of the Eastern countries. It was under this framework of Russian design that the first group of Mongolian revolutionaries established their base at Irkutsk. It was from this organisation that the Soviet Union arranged to send help to Mongolian revolutionaries prior to the revolution.

\textsuperscript{16} MPR Academy of Sciences and USSR Academy of Sciences, \textit{History of the Mongolian People's Republic} (Moscow, 1973), p. 269.
From 1918-1920 the Soviet Russian communists attempted to spread Marxist-Leninist ideology in Mongolia. They propagated October Revolution's consequences to the Mongolian arats. The ideological influence matured when the revolutionaries began to publish a Mongolian newspaper called, Mongolyn Unen (Mongolian Truth) in November 1920 in Irkutsk, to spread the idea of Marxism-Leninism of the Great-October Socialist Revolution. The first issue of Mongolyn Unen appeared on November 10, 1920. Through this paper, the revolutionaries exposed the betrayal of the Mongolian feudalists and their standard practice of plotting with the gamin and Ungernists. The revolutionaries appealed to the arat masses to struggle for the establishment of genuine people's power. In one of the issues it wrote:

"If we want to make all the people united in strength, to have equal rights, and to be enlightened and happy, we must establish power that is chosen by the arat masses, that is trustworthy, and according to the people's ideas, and the power first must be one of only the working arats. Secondly, it must be power that would give the people freedom, liquidate their enemies and create a few life."17 After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 a large number of Mongols, even in

17. The newspaper Mongolyn Unen (Ulan Bator) Dec. 20, 1920, No. 3.
the countryside, heard that the Tzar had been overthrown and that the people of Russia have become equal, and in Urga itself communist Russians explained the ideas of Marxism to their Mongol fellowmen.18

The emergence of Soviet socialist state on the border of Mongolia created a favourable condition for the successful development of revolutionary activities. It radically changed the situation and greatly increased the work of people's revolution in Mongolia. It offered hiding place and ensured direct contact between the progressive sections of the Mongolian arats and the Socialist Russia. The Mongolian revolution went through these experiences and developed under the direct ideological influence of the Bolshevik Socialist Revolution of Russia. The Mongolian revolutionary leaders, who played a prominent part in the people's revolution, used to assemble in the Soviet Union. With the help of Russian Communists, Mongolian revolutionary groups were united and sent their representative to Russia. After receiving Mongolian representatives in Irkutsk, Russian communists gave advises on how to organise revolutionary army, and how to organise revolutionary party. They also advised on how to

receive Russian assistance.\(^{19}\)

3. **Emerging People's Party in Mongolia**

The history of the ruling revolutionary party (MPR) begins with the establishment of two small underground revolutionary groups in 1919. The progressive people organised underground political organisations in Mongolian capital, Urga. This was the time when the Mongolian feudals, like Bogd Khaan and others, were trying for support from other countries like Japan. It was precisely at this time that Bogd Khaan received Soviet government announcement that it completely renounced the advantages and privileges which had been seized by Tzarist - Russia under the unequal treaties imposed by the latter.\(^{20}\) The appeal said: "Because the Russian people have completely renounced any treaty concerning Mongolia concluded in former Tzarist times with the two governments of Japan and China, henceforth the Mongolian Nation is an independent, sovereign united state. Only the Mongolian Nation itself should control governmental authority and

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19. See: To Mr. Karahan, Deputy Minister of the Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Russia, Moscow, 10 November, 1920, Irkutsk, Unen, 1 March, 1990.

legal matters within Mongolian territory - that no foreigners have any right to interfere in Mongolian internal affairs, that as an independent country the Mongol Nation has the right to establish direct relations with any country without reference to Peking or Petrograd, and that you will despatch people representing free Mongolia to our Red Army." The Mongolian Government made no reply to this letter, but continued its activities hostile to the Soviet Government on the advice of the Kotchak. At this time some middle progressive feudals and middle government official personnels organised two underground (separate) organisations. One of them was Urga group and the other was Consular group.

The first revolutionary group, was the Urga group which spread up in the centre of the city. Its

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23. This group was also known as Zuun Khuree.
members included small feudal and middle government personnel like Danzan, Sukhbaatar, Dogsom, Dendev, Dugarjav, Jam'yan Gün, Galson Togtokh, Dash, Tsend and Balsan (Balsanov). In the beginning the group had some 10 people. Sukhbaatar occupied a leading position in the group.

The second group was called, Consular group, which came into being at Consul's Hill, which was in the eastern edge of the capital. This group included mainly some progressive Buddhist monks, teachers, middle personnel like Bodoo, Choibalsan, Jimmiddorj, Shagdarjav, Namsrai, Bavuu, Losol, Bayar and others.

At the outset the two groups had no organised form or programme. Each of the group operated independently and distributed anti-Chinese pamphlets and acquired weapons. Kh. Choibalsan, Losol and Demid have mentioned it in their book, entitled Short History of the People's Revolution, that the Urga group discussed the questions of restoring autonomy and liberating the masses from social and national

24. Shirendyb and Sanjndorj, op. cit., p. 68.
25. Ibid, p. 68.
Oppression.\textsuperscript{27}

The revolutionary elements of the groups' membership insisted on to establish friendly relations with the workers' class of Soviet Russia in the struggle to liberate the Mongolian masses from national and social oppression. However, Danzan and Bodoo limited the establishment of relations with Soviet Russia merely to the goal of restoring Mongolia's Autonomy and establishing national independence as well as revolutionary changes respectively.\textsuperscript{28} In the initial stages Sukhbaatar of Urga Group was more 'nationalistic' whereas Choibalsan of Consular Group was more 'revolutionary'.\textsuperscript{29} Mongolian revolutionaries contacted Russian Communist in Urga. Particularly Bodoo and his group i.e. Consular group, had developed close contact with Russian political activists in Urga, like Ya. V. Kemberjinski.

\textsuperscript{27} Kh. Choibalsan, D.Losol and G.Damid, Mongolyn Ardynd Undsenii Khuv'Sgalyn Ankh Ulsich Baiguulsny Tovch Tuukh (A short history of the original Birth and Establishment of the Mongolian People's National Revolution) (ULan Bator, 1934), 2 Vols. The works is printed in the old Mongol script.

\textsuperscript{28} B. Shirendyb, History of Mongolian People's Republic (London, 1976), p. 70.

\textsuperscript{29} Owen Lattimore, Nationalism and Revolution in Mongolia (New York, 1955), p. 67.
After one year of the establishment of the two groups, they held their first meeting on 25 June 1920 and decided to unite under the name "Mongolian People's Party" (MPP). Its leaders were Danzan and Bodoo. They also agreed on a document called "Oath of the Party Members." This document contained a brief reference to the aims and objects of the future party, the chief of which were: "----- to rid the country of bitter enemies----- to strengthen the state ----- to be adamant in protecting the Mongolian nation, to review and change the country's domestic policy, showing concern in every possible way for the interests of the arat masses, to safeguard their rights and put an end to the sufferings of the masses of the working people and the oppression of man by man." The Oath also required not to betray their comrades in case they are captured by the enemy. Earlier the two groups differed on opinion of Soviet assistance. Danzan group had the opinion to continue struggle against the Chinese occupied area and then demand Mongolian independence and wanted to proclaim Bogd Gegeen as Mongolian Khaan. This group also wanted to develop Mongolian tradition and religion

30. MPR Academy of Sciences and USSR Academy of Sciences, History of the MPR, op.cit., p.279.
later on. Danzan wanted Soviet assistance particularly during the struggle for independence. The Bodoo's group, on the other hand, had different opinion. They preferred to struggle against Chinese army and develop Mongolian tradition and religion and they wanted to establish an independent government headed by the People's representatives. In other words, Consular group preferred republic whereas Urga group wanted a separate independent country with Bogd Khaan as the head of the state. Bodoo group wanted to acquire Communist Russian assistance for the revolutionary change in Mongolia. The difference between these groups was that one (Urga) group wanted to fight for national war of independence, whereas the second (Consular) group was fighting for the independence as well as for revolutionary changes. 32

In their first meeting of the party they sorted out their differences and were united under one party. The first meeting also decided to send a delegation to Soviet Russia, to seek aid and to negotiate for assistance. The delegates of two groups consisted of Bodoo, Sukhbaatar, Choibalsan, Danzan, Dogsom, Losol, Shagdarjav. In June 1920, the first group of

delegates, headed by Bodoo and the second group headed by Danzan, left Urga for the north a little later. On 22 July, 1920, the two groups were united in Verkhneudinsk (then the centre of the Far Eastern Republic), and set off for Irkutsk, where they met representatives of the Soviet Russia (RSFSR) government and the Comintern, on 15 August 1920.33 The Russian authority suggested to them to take an official letter to Soviet Russia for Soviet Russian assistance. The Mongolian revolutionaries had a letter from Bogd Gegeen to Soviet Russian government for their support. Russian suggested to them to take also a letter in the name of the party.34 This was a serious issue since there were differences of opinion among the members of the delegates. One group consisting of Bodoo and Danzan strongly objected to the idea of appealing to the Soviet government on behalf of the revolutionary organization. There was a discussion between the members of the delegation on the question whether to authenticate its appeal with the seal of the Bogd Gegeen or with the seal of the revolutionary organisation. On the insistence of Sukhbaatar the problem was resolved and the delegation

33. MPR Academy of Sciences and USSR Academy of Sciences, History of the MPR, op. cit., p.281.

decided to certify their documents with the seal of the revolutionary organization.

In Irkutsk, the group members appealed to the government of the RSFSR for help and explained their future programme. They stated, "We, the members of the People's Party, on behalf of our Party, appeal to mighty Russia and ask for help. In alliance with service elements (Mongolian military servicemen) on whom we count for military support, we seek to restore the autonomy of Mongolia, while retaining for the Khutukht Bogd the title of limited monarch. Next we desire to carry through the necessary measures for limiting the hereditary rights of the princes. Having achieved independence for the country, we, with the benefit of the experience of other countries, shall continue the struggle for the rights and interests of our people. The growth of the arats' national self awareness will enable us in a year or two to advance the revolution further so as to abolish finally the rights of the ruling princes."

The same group held another meeting of the members on 24 August, 1920, at which they decided that

they should split into three groups: One group consisting of Danzan, Losol and Shagdarjav who would go to Moscow; another group, with Bodoo and Dogsom as members, would return to Urga; and the third group consisting of Sukhbaatar and Choibalsan would remain in Irkutsk to direct the work of the revolutionary organisation in Mongolia and act as liaison with the delegation in Moscow.

The delegation under Danzan, Losol and Shagdarjav reached Moscow in mid September 1920, where they met Lenin. He apparently told them that "the only correct path for the working people of Mongolia in their struggle for independence is to ally with the workers and peasants of Russia". The delegates gained an increasingly clear idea of the aim of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution from the counsel of Lenin and also from the working of the Soviet regime. On 16 November 1920, the Mongolian delegates returned from Moscow to Irkutsk with the Soviet Russian assurance of help to the Mongolian revolutionaries. The Mongolian revolutionaries had organised military groups under the name 'Partisan'.

36. Okladnikov and Bira, op. cit., p. 311.
Meanwhile, the Tzarist ('White Guards') Baron Van Ungern - Sternberg had entered Mongolia in October 1920 with a large force of cavalry and artillery and was backed by the Japanese. Under the pretext of restoring Mongolia's autonomy and to protect the 'Yellow Faith' (Lamaism), Ungern recruited Mongolian troops to set up a provisional government. At first he was defeated by the Chinese troops in Urga in November. Ungern reformed his troops at Terelj. He made secret contract with the Bogd Khaan, and had him moved to Mandzshiriyn Hiyd Monastery, near Dzuunmod. In February, 3-4 1921, Ungern's troops defeated the Chinese armies. Subsequently, Urga temporarily became independent of Chinese influence, and Bogd Khaan was re-enthroned. Other 'White Guard' groups which were defeated by the Red Army in Siberia joined forces with Ungern and Khobdo was captured by them in March 1921.

After occupying Urga, Baron Ungern subjected the working arats to grievous exploitation and destruction, while at the same time spared the property of the vans, guns, khans, and khutukhtas.\(^{37}\)

Kh. Choibalsan writes that "the majority of the Khüree's (Urga's) population was practically cut off

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from provisions" of daily existence. After the attack of Ungern on Mongolia, Sukhbaatar and other leaders of the Revolutionary group studied the situation of their country and informed the representative of the RSFSR People's commissariat of Foreign Affairs as well as the Eastern Bureau of the Comintern. With the assurance given by the Soviet Russia to Mongolia of its assistance, the Mongolian revolutionaries intensified their struggle. The national army of Sukhbaatar and Choibalsan crossed the border on December 18, 1920, and visited families and met with the arat masses and discussed the reasons for and significance of revolutionary matter. In February 1921, Sukhbaatar gathered about 50 volunteers from among the local arats and guards of the Khiran Frontier Post and organised the first unit of the People's Army called the 'Partisan Army'. The revolutionary groups began to organise large-scale political work among the arat masses and established voluntary partisan units from among them. Organising Partisan Army units and laying the foundation for the first Partisen Army regiment, D. Sukhbaatar appointed B. Puntsag as regimental commander, Khasbaatar was appointed as regimental lama (in view of the religious devotion of the partisan group), and the Damdinsuren and Bumtsend

38. Choibalsan, Demid and Losol, op. cit., p. 95.
were appointed as battalion commanders. 39

Thus, under the influence of the October Revolution, the Mongolian Revolutionary Groups began to organise masses with the clear revolutionary goal of opposing imperialism and feudalism under the banner of Marxist - Leninist ideology. They relied on the international workers' movement; first, on workers of Soviet Union; and second, on Mongolian workers which were largely composed of the arats. 40

The first Congress of the Party was held on March 1, 1921 in Kyakhta. It was chaired by Sukhbaatar and attended by a maximum of twenty six delegates. After discussing in details the problems of internal situation, the congress agreed on the need to rely on the support of the Soviet Russia and the Comintern. The Partisan detachments were reorganised as the people's revolutionary army. 41 Among the delegates of the meeting were - D. Sukhbaatar, Damdinsuren, Sodnomdarjaa, Puntsag, Daszeveg, Navaan, Losol, Dambadorj, Danzan and Jamsran. 42

41. Sanders, op. cit. p. 17.
42. Shirendyb Sanjdorj (ed.), op. cit. 105.
Representative of the Soviet Russia's People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, Makstenek, attended the congress and personally greeted the congress saying, "I extend you hereby greetings from our government of Soviet Russia on the occasion of the establishment of the Mongolian People's Party for the noble accomplishment of the great cause of liberating the Outer Mongolian People ......, of establishing power, and of benefitting the people." He declared that Soviet Russia would render aid to the Mongolian people in their efforts of nation building.

The political programme adopted at the congress emphasised on the importance of October revolution and the role of the Comintern in the successful struggle of the oppressed masses for their freedom. The document approved by the Congress, was called, "Ten Aspirations". The document defined anti-imperialist and anti feudal goals. The programme defined the basic task of the revolution - the task of winning power for the arats. The programme aimed at a people's revolution. The party decided that "all those who wish to join our People's Party, who favour the permanent

43. L. Demberel, Mongol Ardyn Khuv'Sgalt Namyn 1-r Khural (The first congress of Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party) (Ulan Bator,1931), pp.42-43.
44. Shirendyb, Sanjdorj (ed.), op. cit., p. 106.
interests of the Mongolian nation high or low lamas, and commoners, be they men or women .... Party's ideology and follow Party discipline" .... will be accepted into the party.\footnote{The newspaper Monglyn Unen, March 25, 1921, No.5.} The Central Committee elected by the Congress included leaders like Danzan, Losol and Damdadorj. Because of the growth of the Mongolian revolutionary movement in 1921 several changes were made in the Oath.\footnote{MAKH-Yn Tüükhin Zarim Chukhal Barimtuud Enkhtegrsen B. Tseden G. Chimid (1920-1924)(Certain Important Documents of the History of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party Compiled by B.Tseden and G.Chimid (Ulan Bator,1946), pp.24.28.}

The Central Committee of the People's Party considered to establish a Revolutionary Provisional Government which can lead the work of preparing an armed uprising and make that uprising successful. So, on March 13, 1921 a Party conference of representatives of People's Party units of Partisan detachments (Army) and certain hoshuns (or Khoshuns) and Shav' took place at Troitskosavsk (part of Kyakhta). This conference established the first Provisional People's Government in Mongolia. It consisted of Shagderjav (President of the Government). Sukhbaatar held the post of Minister of War and Commander-in-chief of the armed forces while Choibalsan became Deputy Commander-in-chief.

On March 16, 1921, the Central Committee of the Party and Provisional People's Government took a decision to liberate Maimachen town from the Chinese, where some 10,000 Chinese troops were concentrated. Fighting started on March 18, 1921, between the Mongolian People's Army and the Chinese army. The battle ended on the night of March 18, 1921 with the victory of the Mongolian People's Army, which was small in number. Maimachen was later renamed as Altan-Bulak. This victory is considered as the "birthday of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Army".\footnote{MPR Academy of Sciences and USSR Academy of Sciences, History of the MPR, op. cit., p.293.}
People. This was the end of the preparation for a revolution. Now onward the revolution became a reality. Henceforth, Maimachen became free of Chinese influence and Provisional Government was installed on Mongolian soil. In May and June 1921, Ungern sent his forces north for an attack on Maimachen but they were defeated in a joint operation by the Mongolian revolutionary army and Soviet troops.

The Central Committee of the Party and the Provisional People's Government prepared to attack the capital of the country Urga for its liberation with the help of the detachments of the Red Army of Soviet Russia on 10 April, 1921. The Mongolian People's forces under the command of D. Sukhbaatar, together with the units of army of Soviet Russia, fighting against the White Guards (Ungern's troops), entered the Mongolian capital on 6 June, 1921.\(^{48}\) In accordance with the plan the Mongolian - Soviet troops moved in the following two directions; in the main direction towards the capital - the main force of the Mongolian People's Army and units of the Red Army; and in the South Western direction along the banks of the Selenge river - a special detachment commanded by Kh. Choibalsan.

After a series of battles with the White Guards covering Urga, on the morning of 6 July, 1921, the advanced detachments of the revolutionary troops entered the capital and two days later, on July 8, arrived in Urga. The government of "Urga", restored by the White Guards, was deposed and a people's Government under a limited monarchy was proclaimed on 11 July 1921, which is now celebrated as the Mongolian National Day. On 16 July 1921 a permanent People's revolutionary government was established with Bogd Gegeen as the Khaan of Mongolia with limited power, and Bodoo, Prime-Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Bogd Gegeen became a constitutional monarch and head of the states without the power to veto any

legislation. This is the end of Mongolian revolution and Russian armed collaboration, so far the success of revolution is concerned.

4. **Behind Soviet Assistance**

There are two contradictory interpretations of the Soviet assistance to Mongolian revolution. One view is that Soviets initiated revolutionary movement and ultimately embarked on military intervention in Mongolia for the purpose of future prospect of economic gains from the rich natural resources of Mongolia. The other view is that it was the geo-political consideration and the fear of counter-revolution that led to Soviet interest in Mongolia. This must be examined in the context of the process in which Soviet assistance was offered to the Mongolian revolutionaries.

It does not appear to be correct that Soviet Union had their eyes on the natural resources of Mongolia. Soviet Union of their own had plenty of natural resources to tap. The natural resources of Mongolia was scattered and there was no modern means of transportation. In early 20s the Soviet economy was actually on the point of collapse. 49 It, therefore,

does not sound to reason that the Soviet Union had expansionist idea at that time. On the other hand, the Soviet Union did not want to offend China. "When Danzαn and Shagdarjav were received by Lenin they were told to abandon any thoughts they might have of totally destroying the Chinese in Mongolia, but instead of fraternize with them, to fight against both Chinese and Japanese imperialism and, above all, to struggle for their own economic and political independence." The need for co-operation with the Chinese revolutionary forces was repeated by the delegates of the Mongolian People's Party.

The People's provisional government, formed on 13th March 1921 on Russian Kyakhta, moved to Mongolian side and made a formal request for Soviet military intervention but the Red Army did not enter Mongolia. On 15th June Ungern moved his forces against Russian Kyakhta. On 16th June the Politbureau of the Russian Communist Party took the decision to extend their military operation into Mongolian territory so that Ungern is defeated. And on 27th June the Red Army crossed the border. There are two features to the Soviet action. First, the Ungern attack was perceived by the Soviet Union as a part of the civil war, which

50. Isono, op. cit., p.131.
now spilled over into Outer Mongolia. In fact, it was the geo-political condition, prevailing at that time, which necessitated Russia to attack Ungern. And second, the objective revolutionary condition had changed. "Anti-Chinese feeling ceased to be the common factor in Mongolian dissidence, and was replaced by a confrontation between conservative Mongols allying themselves with Ungern on the one hand, and progressive Mongols supported by Soviet Russia on the other. These evidences do not appear to corroborate the idea that the Soviet Union from the beginning was prepared to intervene in Mongolia.

5. **Post Revolution Phase of 1921-24**

Mongolia revolution concluded on 16 July 1921. But this was not an end to the war of revolution; neither the success of revolution was guaranteed nor the construction of a new social order was possible. There are many under-currents which need to be explained in this context. The People's Government was installed at Urga, the capital, with Bogd Khaan as its head. In the new government Bogd Khaan had very limited power. He could veto only once. In the next round of discussion, passed by the party, Bogd Khaan

could do nothing but to pass it. All the power lied with the revolutionary party.

The establishment of Peole's Government at the capital of Mongolia was not a sufficient condition for all time success of revolution. Mongolia, however, had to tackle two intricate problems before it could claim full success of revolution. One was related to the arms uprising in West Mongolia and the other with the counter revolutionaries among masses and within the Party. In the presence of these impending issues, revolution could not have remained safe and stable. The Peoples Government was not strong enough to bring these problems to order. It needed active Russian assistance.

West Mongolia was a disturbed area even after the success of Mongolian revolution and the establishment of Peoples' government in Urga. This region of Mongolia was not at peace with the Peoples' Government at the centre. "West Mongolia was still in the hands of the White generals who had driven out the Chinese officials and troops in the region of Uliastai and Khobdo".\textsuperscript{52} There was another problem in West

Mongolia which needed immediate attention. The government under Bogd Khaan was dominated by Khalkha tribe. Non-Khalkha tribes of the West were unhappy about it. On this social and political surface of West Mongolia, Ungern was trying to reorganise the White forces against the revolutionary government. He had sent secret message to the Bogd Khaan to escape to the West. But the potential danger of West Mongolia was resolved due to two favourable events. First, Ungern was betrayed by prince Sundui, who had been the last commander to follow Ungern, and finally handed him over to the Soviet side. And second, the coup of Magsarjab helped the revolutionaries to tie over the problems in West Mongolia. He was sent to Uliastai to command the troops in the West against the interests of the revolutionaries. But having been approached by the Peoples' Party through Choibalsan, he sided with the revolutionaries. The remaining White forces were captured and the trouble in the West came to an end. This was a decisive stage in the post revolutionary period for the consolidation of revolution.

From the very beginning of the Party formation there were two ideologically distinct groups the Urga group and the Counsel group. But for the sake of making the revolution a success they were together in
overthrowing the regime in power. In the beginning of March 1921, the Peoples' Party held its First Party Congress. This was attended by 20 participants. In this meeting the Congress posed a more revolutionary posture. This was fully exhibited in the preamble of the resolution rather than in the contents of the resolution. It set the immediate objective as 'liberation from the oppressive rule of the Chinese' whereas the ultimate goal was to secure an independent Mongol state. In Article 4 of the resolution of the Congress it stated: "After having restored the rights of the Mongols, the Party will establish the firm discipline of a revolutionary party". There were heated discussion between more nationalistic and more revolutionary members on the objectives of revolution.

The difference of approach between the groups of Urga and Counsel, about the future form of society, had never been thoroughly resolved though it never disturbed their work while fighting for revolution. In this background of the post revolutionary period, the reform measures adopted by the peoples' government had hurt the traditional ruling princes since their heirs, now onwards, had to be confirmed by the people. They

were in search of creating trouble for the peoples' government. The ideological differences surfaced when the action programme of the new government came to be adopted. Bodoo as Prime Minister wanted to establish a republican government on the Marxist - Leninist lines and Danzan, on the contrary wanted a peoples' government with limited monarchy. It was discovered that Bodoo was conspiring against the Party line and he, along with other members, was executed in this connection in 1922. Danzan elected high feudal, Jalhanz Hutagh Damdinbazar as the next Prime Minister. But it was discovered that Danzan had affiliation with foreign capitalistic forces. Danzan was accused for this and executed in 1923. All these provide sufficient indication that the political scenario was ripe with instability which was impossible to be tackled by the government of Mongolia without the assistance of Soviet Union.\(^{54}\) It was under these volatile political atmosphere that the Peoples' Government of Mongolia had requested that "Red Army forces be stationed in Mongolia until the anti-revolutionary elements could be brought under control."\(^{55}\)

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55. Isono, F.N. 52.
The Soviet assistance was availed by Mongolia even after the revolution of 1921. The Red Army, therefore, which had entered Mongolia to fight against Ungern actually withdrew from Mongolia only in March 1925. In the meantime the Mongolian Peoples' Party decided in its Third Party Congress in 1924 to put an end to monarchy in Mongolia. Subsequently, the First Great National Assembly was convened in November 1924 which formally proclaimed the Mongolian People's Republic and adopted the First Constitution. Since then, the MPR moved on vigorously to achieve the goals of revolution. And in all its efforts and politicies the Soviet Union assisted handsomely and in time.

6. An Overview on Mongolian Revolution

There is a direct relationship between Mongolian revolution of 1921 and Soviet assistance. Mongolian revolution would not have succeeded had there been no Soviet support. A large part of initiative, training and help for igniting and waging revolution came from the Soviet Union. It is because of this that a section of historians claim that the Mongolian revolution of 1921 could not have been possible without the Soviet assistance.

1921 was imposed by the Soviet Union since there was no genuine revolt out of the class forces of society and was not fought out of indigenous resources, leadership, strategy or arms. Mongolia, therefore, remained a passive tool in the hands of the Soviet Union and thus had to pay heavily for it. In other words, the assistance offered by the Soviet Union in making revolution of Mongolia a success was really an expression of expansionist outlook and policy and not a genuine revolution for switching over to a socialist mode of nation building.

The perception of exported revolution from the Soviet Union is not true even if the fact remains that had there been no Bolshevik revolution in Russia, Mongolia would not have seen the light of revolution and the mission of Mongolian revolutionaries would have been a repetition of what had happened in 1911. Mongolia had no chance of initiating the framework of nation building on the models of Western Europe. A country sandwiched between two powerful nations had almost no opportunity to remain autonomous. There was no possibility for a landlocked country with nomadic population to achieve modernisation irrespective of geo-political condition. For Mongolia, the alternative model of Western democracy had no scope to be
practiced. In Asian countries Western democracy was introduced in the form of imperialism and colonialism supported by local feudals. There was no such avenue of nation building for Mongolia.

The circumstances facing Mongolian Revolution and the facts revealed through Mongolian sources, have different story to tell. In a wider historical context, the entry of Soviet army into Outer Mongolia on 27th June 1921, which brought rapid victory to Mongolian revolution, was not an occupation exercise. The Mongolian source materials reveal that the objective conditions were ripe in Mongolia and the Soviet Union came due to their contemporary military and diplomatic exigencies. Our investigation have substantiated that Mongolian revolution was an indigenous outcome initiated by local people and committed to create new political institutions. This can be attested on three grounds. First, the revolution of 1911 failed to bring any fundamental change in the society of Mongolia though it aroused powerful nationalistic feeling among people throughout the country. The Tripartite Agreement of Kyakhta of June 1915 was a bluff to arat masses since it made no change in the de facto power of the propertied class. The exploitation of masses did not change. On the
contrary the life of herdsmen became even worse. They were compelled to pay the same corvee for the Bogd Khaan government which they had to do for the Manchus. On top of it, the messages of overthrowing Tzar and of introducing new system of equality were reaching Mongolia. A sense of discontent and betrayed by the ruling classes accounted for the formation of two secret groups by the end of 1918. The class conflict, therefore, was developing in Mongolia at the time when Mongolian revolutionaries were preparing for contacting Soviet leaders.

Second, the movement of revolt which began was nationalistic in the beginning but had all traits of revolutionary potential. The risks taken and the uncertainties faced by the revolutionaries, like Sukhbaatar, Choibalsan and Danzan, are testimony to their commitent for a revolutionary change. It may be noted that when Gapon, Russia leader, asked the Mongolian group, on 15 August 1920, whether they wanted direct armed intervention by the Soviet army, the Mongolian revolutionaries answered that if they could make sufficient preparation "they would themselves be able to drive out the Chinese." They made it clear to the Russian counterparts that the assistance they wanted was financial help, military instructions and supplies of arms.
And third, the assistance from the Soviet Union did not come in a way as if the Soviet Union was very eager for armed intervention from the very beginning. In fact, the Soviet Union made up their mind for military assistance in phases. In the initial stages though Russia had never lost sight of Mongolia, the Soviet Union did not show much interest in helping the revolutionary groups. There are reports that "the Bolsheviks had hesitated to intervene in Mongolia until they felt forced to act by Ungern's use of Mongolia as a base." Moreover, the Soviet Union was not in a position to engage itself in territorial expansion in 1921. When the Soviet Union visualised Ungern's invasion as a part of civil war and as a danger of foreign intervention that they plunged into military intervention. "By the middle of 1921 it was apparent if the menace of the reactionary forces could not be removed, their very existence, even without an attack, would drain the life-blood of the country (the Far Eastern Republic) and make it an easy prey." The fall of the Far Eastern Republic opened the flood gate of hostility with powerful Japan.

Mongolian revolution was indigenous in spirit but would have had of no consequence without Soviet help. The Soviet Union helped it under a complex power relationship and a difficult geo-political situation. Soviet Union helped a genuine revolution and at that historical time it was not an expansionist design. It wanted to prevent the growth and expansion of counter revolutionaries, Japanese aggression and Chinese domination. "Soviet military intervention in Mongolia was designed to prevent Outer Mongolia being used as base for counter revolutionary activity. 59 From these accounts it appears clear that Russian assistance to Mongolian revolution was a positive step to help achieve a complete destruction of old social order of Mongolia and its replacement by a new socialist order of polity.