

# THE FACTS ON OUTER MONGOLIA

*The 'people's republic'  
has been under control  
of the USSR since 1921*

**T**HE QUESTION of admitting the Mongolian People's Republic to the United Nations was first raised in the Security Council in September 1946. No decision was taken then. In December 1948, the United States delegate declared that Mongolia should prove that it was an independent nation. In July 1949, the rejection of Mongolia's application was based on lack of evidence that it was a peace-loving nation. In the November session of the General Assembly in 1953, Mongolia was rejected on the ground that it was not eligible under the provisions of Section 4 of the United Nations Charter. Finally, the question of membership was raised in 1955, but this time it was vetoed by Nationalist China. This brief survey shows that something is fundamentally wrong with the Mongolian People's Republic.

Prior to 1924, the Mongolian People's Republic was known as Outer Mongolia; it had been a Chinese dependency since the 17th century. When revolution occurred in China in 1911, Outer Mongolia, aided by Tsarist Russia, became autonomous; though Chinese sovereignty over

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Nicholas Poppe is one of the world's greatest authorities on Outer Mongolia. Born in China in 1897, he was educated in Russia and was a professor at Leningrad University from 1925 to 1941. A member of the USSR Academy of Sciences from 1933 to 1942, he made several expeditions to Mongolia. He escaped from the Soviet Union in 1943 and after the war became an American citizen. He now teaches at the University of Washington.

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*By Nicholas Poppe*

Mongolia was recognized by Tsarist Russia in 1915 and by the Soviet Government in 1924. The autonomous government was headed by the Khutuktu or Living Buddha, spiritual leader of all Mongols.

After the Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917, Mongolia became a battlefield in the Russian civil war. In July 1921, the capital, Urga (now Ulan Bator, "the Red Hero"), was occupied by the Red Army, and power passed to the Mongolian People's party, which had been founded in 1920 with the help of Russian Communists.

The "People's party" is actually a full-fledged Communist party which became a member of the Comintern as early as 1921. Mongolia now has a one-party system, and all candidates for Government positions are Party-sponsored. The country's first Red boss was Rinchino, a Russian citizen and graduate of the St. Petersburg University law school. He and the Comintern representative were the real rulers of Mongolia, although the official head of the nation was still the Living Buddha. The two most outstanding "Com reps" in this period, Ryskulov and Amaguyev, were both Russian citizens. When the Living Buddha died in 1924, Mongolia was proclaimed a "people's republic."

The first purge was conducted in 1922. Several members of the Government and many leading officials were shot. Among the victims was Prime Minister Bodo, one of the organizers of the People's party. He

was accused of leniency toward former princes, but recent Soviet propaganda has made him *ex post facto* an American spy.

Many key positions were occupied by young Mongols trained in the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in Moscow. These fully indoctrinated individuals were responsible for Communizing the Government and helped to conduct another purge. This time, in 1924, Finance Minister Danzan was shot for resisting the new Party line aimed at socializing the economy. In the same year, a new constitution on the Soviet model was adopted. The non-proletarian elements were disfranchised and a Government-controlled economy and foreign-trade monopoly were introduced. Mongolia officially became an "anti-imperialistic, anti-feudal" nation.

Thus, by 1924 Mongolia had definitely become a Soviet satellite, both economically and politically. While in 1923 Mongolian exports to the USSR did not exceed 13.8 per cent, in 1928 they amounted to 85.5 per cent. Soviet advisers were placed in strategic positions. The chief of the Army general staff was a Russian named Kangelari.

The new Party line demanded the liquidation of all large private land holdings. In the years 1929-31, according to Soviet sources, 1,566 holdings were confiscated and 711 owners jailed and/or shot. At the same time, forced collectivization of cattle farms was introduced. Buddhist temples were closed, and a great many lamas were imprisoned or deported to Siberia. This Communist

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terror resulted in 1932 in an all-out uprising in which even units of the Mongolian Army participated. Soviet Air Force and tank units were rushed in to crush the outbreak.

The Mongolian uprising alarmed Stalin, who convoked a session of the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Ultimately, so-called "left-wing deviationists" were held responsible for the disaster, although they had merely been following orders from the Kremlin. Private trade was partly restored, forced collectivization halted, and a few concessions made to religion.

The uprising demonstrated that Mongolia was not ready yet for full-fledged Communism; hence, the remnants of the opposition had to be eliminated. The final blow fell in 1935-36. This time, the purge affected thousands of people in all strata—Party members, the Army, and officials of the Government and local administration. The President of the Great Assembly, Gendun, and Prime Minister Amor were among the victims. According to Soviet sources, 2,000 lamas were shot.

On the eve of World War II, the Mongolian People's Republic was ripe for incorporation in the USSR, and a plan was under discussion to merge it with the Buryat-Mongolian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. The plan was dropped when war broke out, and Mongolia remained nominally independent. However, it actively supported Soviet foreign policy in every way. Mongolia had had a mutual-aid pact with the USSR dating back to 1936, in violation of the Soviet-Chinese treaty affirming Chinese sovereignty over the area. When the Soviet Union entered the war against Japan in 1945 five days before the Japanese surrender, Mongolia participated.

The intervention of Mongolian troops against Japan had great propaganda value, for it made Mongolia an ally of the United States and Great Britain. One condition under which the Soviet Union declared war on Japan was that the status quo in

Mongolia be recognized by the Allies. The latter understood by the status quo Chinese sovereignty over Mongolia, but Moscow was referring to Mongolia's status as a "people's republic" independent of China. Nationalist China objected but finally gave in and agreed to recognize Mongolian independence if a plebiscite was held. A Soviet-style plebiscite was held in October 1945, and the unanimous vote was in favor of "independence."

This is the history of the Mongolian People's Republic, a Soviet Asian satellite which actually has less independence than any of the Eastern European "people's democracies." During a trip to Mongolia in 1927, I found that the acting Soviet Ambassador, Lev Berlin, instead of contacting members of the Mongolian Government through the Foreign Ministry, called on them in person and gave them orders. When I visited Mongolia in 1929, the hotel room across the corridor was occupied by a Soviet colonel named Konorov, the new chief of the Mongolian secret police. Western scholars who wanted to visit Mongolia had to apply for a Soviet visa, and Roy Chapman Andrews in 1925 was the last to be admitted. In 1941, the Mongolian script used since the 13th century was replaced by the Russian alphabet. Mongolian literature today consists mainly of translations from Russian, including much anti-American material.

The Mongolian People's Republic is of considerable strategic value to the Soviet Union. Several railroads run from Russia into Mongolia, one of them continuing to Peking. If she is admitted to the United Nations, Mongolia will provide Moscow with another automatic vote on every issue, and her admission will surely help pave the way for that of Red China. This has been blocked for the past ten years, and there is ample evidence of Mongolia's total subjection to the Soviet Union to justify her continued exclusion from the world organization.