

CHAPTER 7* THE ILLUSION OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

2. THE COMMUNIZATION OF OUTER MONGOLIA

Soviet Russia encroaches on Outer Mongolia

Shifting our focus to the Far East, we see that the situation there bore absolutely no resemblance to international cooperation. First of all, we should establish the fact that post-revolutionary Soviet Russia, or the RSFSR (Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic), as it called itself at the time, had gained a great deal of power. After the revolution, the communist state was fast on its way to achieving its objective, i.e., becoming the largest military state in the world. Not having been a participant in the Washington Conference, nor being confined by the Nine-Power Treaty, the RSFSR was free to do as it pleased, a situation that gave rise to problems of the utmost seriousness.

When the Washington Conference began in July 1921, Soviet Russian troops invaded Outer Mongolia, ostensibly in pursuit of White Russians. The Soviets manipulated their puppet organization, the Mongolian People's Party, to form the Mongolian People's Revolutionary government. Now I will provide a brief discussion of the communization of Outer Mongolia, referring mainly to Gotō Tomio's *A Political History of Mongolia*.

Mongolia's communist government asked that Moscow not withdraw Soviet troops from Mongolian territory until the threat from their common enemy vanished. Unsurprisingly, the Soviet Union gladly acceded to this request. In place of the Soviet partisans then stationed in Kulun (now Ulaanbaatar), the RSFSR dispatched a regular army unit, the 308th Regiment, to Outer Mongolia.

A great many powerless Russians who had absolutely no connection with Russian domestic strife fell victim to the RSFSR's campaign to free Mongolia from capitalist control. Although the majority of White Russian troops escaped to Manchuria with their lives, a great many innocent Russian civilians who had emigrated to Mongolia before World War I, or fled there to escape the chaos in Russia, met horrible fates. The Red Mongol Army perpetrated horrifically cruel acts on those defenseless people. They looted and plundered, and pitilessly massacred any and every human being they encountered — men and women, young and old, even children and infants. With the exception of the very few who managed to escape, every single resident of the Russian colony in Uliastai was murdered. Like the massacre in Nikolayevsk in 1920, that assault was not spur of the moment. Though it may have seemed spontaneous or even justifiably vengeful, it was the result of careful planning.¹

The fate of Tannu Uriankhai

Uriankhai (also known as Tannu Uriankhai) is situated in a remote region of western Mongolia. It is here that the headwaters of the Yenisey River arise. Uriankhai lies between 50° and 53° north

¹ Gotō Tomio, *Mōko seiji shi* (A political history of Mongolia) (Tokyo: Takayama Shoin, 1938).

latitude, and 89° and 100° east longitude. It is surrounded in the north by the Sayan mountains, in the south by the Tannu-Ola mountains, and in the east by extensions of these mountain ranges. Because it is surrounded by steep mountains, Uriankhai is virtually inaccessible. In area it measures 170,000 square kilometers, making it the size of Portugal, Switzerland, and Belgium combined. Uriankhai abounds in resources: it has many gold mines, as well as rich deposits of other minerals, such as platinum, uranium, copper, iron, and coal. The soil is fertile; picturesque pastures abound. Forests, which occupy 25% of the country's area, yield valuable timber. The inhabitants are Turkic and closely resemble the Kyrgyz. The population was nearly 60,000 in 1925.

For a long time this region was *terra nullius* (territory that belongs to no state). Even in the Treaty of Kyakhta, concluded in 1727, the borders of Uriankhai with Russia and China remained vague. The Sayans were designated as the southern border of Russia, and the southern slopes of the Tannu-Ola as the border with China. Accordingly, Uriankhai was under the sway of neither Russia nor China. Some historians are of the opinion that neither Russian nor Chinese authorities were aware even of the existence of Uriankhai, and believed that the Sayans and the Tannu-Olas were one and the same.

Russia set out to possess Uriankhai at the beginning of the 20th century, during the reign of its last emperor, Nicholas II. In the autumn of 1914, when World War I commenced, Russia issued a declaration to the inhabitants of Uriankhai to the effect that Uriankhai was now a Russian protectorate. During the European war, both China and Mongolia registered several protests, but they were ineffectual. When the Russian revolution erupted, Bolshevik forces wasted no time in making an appearance in Uriankhai. In August 1921 Soviet troops arrived and created the Tuvan People's Republic.

Two years later, in August 1923, the Tuvan People's Republic was renamed Tannu Tuvan People's Republic, real control of which was in the hands of the Soviet government and the Comintern. The Tannu Tuva People's Republic was the first Soviet satellite state.

What lay in store for Uriankhai? In June 1941, when war broke out between Germany and the Soviet Union, the Tuvan puppet government convened a Soviet-style parliament called a Khural, which proceeded to declare war on Germany. On August 17, 1944 the Soviet government petitioned (or more accurately, commanded) the Tuvan government to merge with the USSR. In October 13 of the same year Tuva acknowledged its status as an autonomous soviet socialist republic. Thus Tannu Tuva was absorbed into the massive belly that was the USSR and disappeared, its life as a nation having come to an end. Forcing a puppet government to "petition" for inclusion in the Soviet Union and having the Supreme Soviet shamelessly "acknowledging" the "petition" is the exact same blatantly transparent method used by the USSR when it occupied and absorbed the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania). An examination of a map of Asia reveals that part of the former Outer Mongolia, i.e., the region north of 50° north latitude and between 89° and 100° east longitude had been completely obliterated, as had the Tuvan People's Republic and Tannu Uriankhai. The only trace of them on the map is Tuvinskaya Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.

Why the Soviets seized Outer Mongolia

Let us return to the topic of Outer Mongolia.

On November 5, 1921 the RSFSR and Outer Mongolia concluded the Agreement Between the Mongolian People's Government and the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic Regarding the Establishment of Friendly Relations. According to that agreement, "[t]he People's Government of Mongolia declares that it recognises in respect of Russian citizens possessing in Mongolia plots of land or buildings the same rights of possession, lease and occupation of building plots, and that it will apply the same methods of exacting taxation, rents and other payments in the same proportions as are recognised or applied, or shall be recognised and applied, in respect of the citizens of the most favoured State."²

The Mongolians were granting the exact same privileges to the RSFSR as they had to Imperial Russia. The November 5 agreement was kept secret for a time. When it was made public in the spring of 1922, the Chinese Foreign Ministry sent a protest to the Soviets, which maintained that the Soviet government had broken the promises made to the Chinese government in a manifesto issued by Deputy Foreign Commissar Lev Karakhan, i.e., that "all previous treaties made between the Russian Government and China shall be null and void, that the Soviet Government will unconditionally and forever return what has been forcibly seized from China by the former Imperial Russian Government and the Bourgeoisie.

"Now the Soviet Government has suddenly gone back on its own words and secretly and without any right concluded a treaty with Mongolia. Such action on the part of the Soviet Government is similar to the policy the former Imperial Russian Government assumed toward China," adding that Mongolia "is a part of Chinese territory."³

The Chinese continued to assert that Mongolia was part of China, but the response from the RSFSR was, invariably, that the citizens of Mongolia had appealed to the Soviets to send Russian troops to defend Mongolian freedom. The Soviets insisted that Mongolia could not maintain its independence without the help of the RSFSR, and that the whole world knew that without that help, Mongolia would end up as the prey of a neighboring nation. They justified their continued occupation of Mongolia with their usual argument: "We are responding to an earnest request from Mongolia."

Along this same vein, another argument the Soviets used, so typical of them, was, "We are occupying Mongolia for Mongolia's sake." This is a foreshadowing of the excuse the Soviets used in August 1945 when they unilaterally scrapped the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact and proceeded to encroach on Japan.

The Soviet Government considers that this policy is the only means able to bring peace nearer, free the people from further sacrifice and suffering and give the

² Jane Degras, ed., *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy (Volume 1, 1917-1924)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), 484-487; <https://archive.org/details/sovietdocumentso0000jane/page/486/mode/2up?q=484>.

³ Alfred L.P. Dennis, *The Foreign Policies of Soviet Russia* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1924), 324; <https://archive.org/details/foreignpolicieso006529mbp/page/336/mode/2up?q=%22unconditionally+and+forever+return%22>.

Japanese people the possibility of avoiding the dangers and destruction suffered by Germany after her refusal to capitulate unconditionally.⁴

We must never allow ourselves to forget what the Soviets did later in Manchuria and Sakhalin. Did they free the Japanese there from “further sacrifice and suffering” and help them avoid danger and destruction? Far from it! They inflicted unspeakable violence and cruelty on them.

Before long the Soviets (now the USSR) promulgated a Soviet-style Constitution on behalf of its puppet Mongolian government and established the Mongolian People’s Republic, which became the second satellite state of the Soviet Union in November 1924. That was a sign that China’s suzerainty over Mongolia was now only a formality. The Constitution of the Republic of China stated that Inner and Outer Mongolia were part of the “territory of the Chinese Republic,”⁵ but these were empty words. For all intents and purposes, Outer Mongolia would follow the trajectory of a closed communist country under the thumb of the Soviet Union.

Setting the stage for the Manchurian Incident

Japan’s Siberian Expedition was practically coincidental with Soviet intrusion into Outer Mongolia and Tannu Uriankhai. Though the objective of Japan’s mission in sending troops to Siberia was to prevent the infiltration of communist forces into the Far East, the US viewed it with a jaundiced eye, and Japan soon became the target of international criticism. The Americans failed to comprehend the terrible significance of the invasion and communization of Outer Mongolia and Tannu Uriankhai. They uttered not one word of criticism against the Soviets; to make matters worse, they did not even attempt to check the Soviet menace. And what was the outcome? The communization of Outer Mongolia, which set the stage for the communization of China. Moreover, it facilitated the penetration of communism into Manchuria. The assertion that the Soviet usurpation and communization of Outer Mongolia accelerated the threat of communism in the Far East, and set the stage for the Manchurian Incident, which erupted 10 years later, is in no way an overstatement.

Soviet encroachment on Outer Mongolia and Uriankhai was clearly a violation of the Karakhan Manifestos issued in 1919 and 1920, and a blatant betrayal. I have already mentioned the Chinese protest. The Soviet Union invasion of Outer Mongolia and the Uriankhai region the year after the second manifesto was issued came as a surprise. Furthermore, the period during which the Soviet Union tightened its grip on Outer Mongolia and Uriankhai is exactly contemporaneous with the one during which the Soviet Union was pressuring the Chinese Nationalist Party to align itself with the communists. In the history of the Far East, there had heretofore been no display of outrageous, shameless behavior the likes of this one.

⁴ “Soviet Declaration of War on Japan,” The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy <https://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/s4.asp>.

⁵ M. Joshua Bau, *Modern Democracy in China* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1924), 394; <https://archive.org/details/moderndemocracyi0000baum/page/n19/mode/2up?q=%22provisional+constitution%22>.

Impotence of the Washington Conference

Actions taken by the Soviet Union, as described above, were attempts to challenge the ethos of the Washington Conference. Consider the Nine-Power Treaty that emerged from the conference. In Section (3) of Article I, the Contracting Powers, other than China, agree “to use their influence for the purpose of effectually establishing and maintaining the principle of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations throughout the territory of China.”⁶ In Section (4) they agree “to refrain from taking advantage of conditions in China in order to seek special rights or privileges which would abridge the rights of subjects or citizens of friendly States, and from countenancing action inimical to the security of such States.”⁷

The Soviets, however, did not participate in the Washington Conference. It is true that Outer Mongolia and China are not one and the same. But the RSFSR, seizing upon the opportunity provided by the chaos that prevailed in the early 1920s, infiltrated Outer Mongolia and Uriankhai, communized the region, and closed it off to all other states. It seemed as though by doing so, the Soviets were not only contradicting the international objectives and ideals symbolized by the Washington Conference, but also willfully and deliberately challenging them.

The US and the other participants in the Washington Conference made prodigious (and successful) efforts to deprive Japan of its special interests in China and Manchuria, and to discourage Japanese advancements into China. On the other hand, those same nations worried not a bit about Soviet government encroachment on Outer Mongolia and Uriankhai, and what is more, did not lift a finger to stop them. Consider the serious effects their inaction had on Far Eastern history in later years. The documents signed at the Washington Conference are characterized by the complete absence of a force that would guarantee stability in Asia.

When we contemplate subsequent events, such as the Manchurian Incident and the 2nd Sino-Japanese War, we must not forget that preceding them by more than 10 years, was the usurpation of Outer Mongolia, which is contiguous with Manchuria and North China, by the Soviets. They now had a frontline base for their campaign to communize Asia.

Arms reduction, the Open Door Policy, and international cooperation represented the ideals and spirit of the Washington Conference. The Soviets ignored them all and set about trampling on them. Japan, and only Japan, had the insight to awaken to the seriousness of the situation, and to foresee its horrific outcome.

⁶ Treaty Between the United States of America, Belgium, the British Empire, China, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, and Portugal, Signed at Washington February 6, 1922, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/tr22-01.asp.

⁷ Ibid.