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RUSSIAN CONSULATES IN  
MONGOLIA IN THE MONGOLIAN  
NATIONAL LIBERATION  
MOVEMENT IN THE EARLY 20<sup>th</sup>  
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## **THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE RUSSIAN CONSULATES IN MONGOLIA IN THE MONGOLIAN NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN THE EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY<sup>2</sup>**

This article examines the objectives, specific features and the results of the political and diplomatic work of the Russian consulates in Outer Mongolia during the rise of the Mongolian national liberation movement in the 1900-1910s. The article is based on a wide range of sources, including archives, in Russian, English, Chinese and Mongolian. In the period after the Xinhai revolution, Russian representatives were actively involved in the settlement of the political disputes between China and Mongolia which sought independence from the former and facilitated the achieving the autonomous status by Mongolia. The Russian diplomats participated in the elaboration and implementation of important international agreements, organization of the technical and financial help to the Mongolian government and prevention of the spread of the Pan-Mongolist movement. Therefore, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian consulates not only served as powerful protectors of Russia's strategic interests in Mongolia, but also played a significant regulating role in the political processes in this country. Above that, they were important for maintaining the Russian Empire's political contacts with China and Mongolia and the political status quo in the regional system of international relations.

Keywords: Mongol problem, Mongolian autonomy, Russian foreign policy, diplomacy, consulate, Russian-Chinese-Mongolian relations, Mongolia, China.

JEL Classification: Z.

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## **1. Introduction**

At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the strategic interaction between Russia, China and Mongolia entered a new stage and it has become increasingly important to investigate the history of the Russian diplomatic service in these countries and bridge lacunas in knowledge of particular aspects, such as the contribution of Russian consulates in the trilateral relations at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The consular network of pre-revolutionary Russia was one of the most extensive in the world. By the end of 1917, the number of consular representatives in China and autonomous Mongolia (officially a part of China from 1691 to 1946) was 24. However, the significance of these institutions for the development of contacts between Russia and China, and the mutual international influences in the regional and global systems, the degree of its importance for the protection of Russia's interests and the implementation of its Far Eastern policy has not received substantive discussion in academia.

The first Russian consulate in Outer Mongolia was established in 1861, in accordance with the Sino-Russian treaty of Beijing 1860, while consulates in Western Mongolia opened only in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century after Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese war and the transformation of the empire's Far Eastern strategy. The experience of the Russian imperial consular service in Mongolia and its role in the regulation of political contacts of Russia with China and Mongolia, the regional features of the consular service, the consulates' importance for Russian-Mongolian contacts, the revival of Mongolian statehood and its socio-economic development are of particular historical interest.

The political role of the Russian diplomatic representatives in China and Mongolia and in Russia's relations with these countries in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century has been a relatively new topic for historiography. Research has mainly focused on the aspects of political relations between Russia, China and Mongolia and the foreign policy of these countries in the framework of the Mongol liberation movement. A specific study on the functioning of the Russian imperial consulates in Mongolia and their participation in international political relations in the region has not been undertaken.

This article presents a part of the results of the author's comprehensive research on the prerevolutionary Russia's consulate service in Mongolia and examines the role which the Russian Empire's consulates played in the political life of Mongolia and specifically in the Mongolian national liberation movement in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It analyses the consulates' contribution to maintaining Russia's relations with China, Mongolia and the other actors in East Asia, and the balance of power in Northeast Asia during the 1910s. The article also considers the reasons why the role of these institutions in the trilateral international contacts and regional processes was so significant.

The theoretical framework of this research is represented by the complex approach, which is predetermined by the interdisciplinary nature of the subject under study. Basic concepts of political realism are put in the centre of the approach and complemented by the theory of "multi-factor equilibrium"<sup>3</sup>. Elements of the world-system theory are relevant in the explanation of the specificity and importance of consulates in Mongolia for developing contacts between Russia and China in the "zones of convergence", meaning Mongolia, Siberia and the Far East. To discuss the importance of the cultural, not only political, factors in the rapprochement of Russia and Mongolia in 1900-1910s, it was useful to include a civilizational component in the analysis. This reveals the role of consulates as agents of development and conductors of Russian culture and values.

In this research, a wide range of methods were used, such as genetic, comparative, classification, and systematization methods which were very significant for the in-depth study of the Russian diplomatic role in the Mongolian political processes in one of the most turbulent periods of Mongolian history.

## **1.1. Historiography**

Some aspects of history of the pre-revolutionary Russian consulates in China and Mongolia are reflected in the works on the political, economic and cultural relations between Russia, China and Mongolia, foreign policy and the diplomatic service of Russia, and the history of the Russian oriental studies. We will provide a brief overview of the main contributions.

In Russian historiography, the major input on the political interplay between Russia, China and Mongolia in the Far East and Russian diplomatic activity in Mongolia at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was made by Chimitdorzhiev, Belov, Lusyanin, Moiseev, Datsyshen<sup>4</sup> and other authors. In these works, the authors comprehensively discuss, in addition to the political problems of the bilateral and trilateral relations, the issues of border demarcation between Russia and China. Border issues were also substantially examined in the works of

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<sup>3</sup> The concept of the "multi-factor equilibrium" was proposed and applied to the Russian-Chinese relations by Alexey Voskresenskiy. See: Voskresenskiy A.D. 2004, *Kitay i Rossiya v Evrazii: istoricheskaya dinamika politicheskikh vzaimovliyaniy*, Moscow, Muravey.

<sup>4</sup> Chimitdorzhiev Sh.B. 1987, *Rossiya i Mongoliya*, Moscow, Glavnaya redaktsiya vostochnoy literatury izdatel'stva "Nauka"; Belov E.A. 1997, *Rossiya i Kitay v nachale XX v. Russko-kitayskie protivorechiya v 1911–1915 gg.*, Moscow, IV RAN; Idem. 1996, *Tsarskaya Rossiya i Zapadnaya Mongoliya v 1912–1915 gg.*, *Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka*, №1, pp. 96–105; Idem. 1999, *Rossiya i Mongoliya (1911–1919 gg.)*, Moscow, IV RAN; Luzyanin S.G. 2000, *Rossiya - Mongoliya - Kitay v pervoy polovine XX v. Politicheskie vzaimootnosheniya v 1911–1946 gg.*, Moscow, Nauka; Moiseev V.A. 2003, *Rossiya i Kitay v Tsentral'noy Azii (vtoraya polovina XIX-1917 g.)*, Barnaul, Az Buka; Datsyshen V.G. 2000, *Istoriya rossiysko-kitayskikh otnosheniy v kontse XIX - nachale XX vv.*, Krasnoyarsk, RIO KGPU; Idem. 2014, *Ocherki istorii Mongolii v XIX - pervoy polovine XX vv.*, Moscow-Berlin, Direkt-Media.

Galenovich<sup>5</sup> and the collective monographic volume "The Borders of China: the history of formation" (Granitsy Kitaya: istoriya formirovaniya)<sup>6</sup>.

The causes and the political, economic, cultural and international implications of the Mongol liberation movement in the context of Russian-Chinese-Mongolian relations are extensively covered in pre-revolutionary, Soviet and modern Russian historiography. This issue was addressed in the writings of Froze, Kushelev, Tomilin, Volossovich, Mayskiy, Zlatkin, Gorokhova, Chimitdorzhiev, Kuzmin and other researchers<sup>7</sup>. Among the recent publications on the problem are the collective volume "Russian and Chinese Policies in Central Asia from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (Politika Rossii i Kitaya v Tsentral'noy Azii vo vtoroy polovine XIX - nachale XXI v.) edited by Startsev, which contains a separate chapter on Russian-Mongolian relations in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>8</sup>.

In 1990–2000s, the history of Russians in China including the Russian diplomatic service in the Qing Empire and the Republic of China attracted increased attention of historians. Previously unknown facts about the "Russian China" and "Russian Mongolia" were discovered by Russian and foreign scholars. Some topics related to Russian diplomatic service in several regions of China were developed by Chernikova, Galiev and other authors<sup>9</sup>. Issues of Russian diplomatic training for service in China were discussed by Khokhlov<sup>10</sup>.

The distinguishing feature of approaching the Russian consulates in Mongolia in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the published works is that the main emphasis is put on the consulate in the

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<sup>5</sup> Galenovich Yu.M. 2001, *Rossiya i Kitay v XX v.: granitsa*, Moscow, Izograf; Idem. 2011, *Istoriya vzaimootnosheniy Rossii i Kitaya*, Moscow, SPSL, *Russkaya panorama*, Book I, *Dve natsii - dve transformatsii* (XVII - nachalo XX v.), Book II. *Dva gosudarstva - tri partii* (1917–1949).

<sup>6</sup> Myasnikov V.S., Stepanov E.D., eds. 2001, *Granitsy Kitaya: istoriya formirovaniya*, Moscow, Pamyatniki istoricheskoy mysli, 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Froze B. 1911, *Vostochnaya Mongoliya i ee kolonizatsiya*, *Vestnik Azii*, Issue 10, pp. 90–136; Kushelev Yu. 1912, *Mongoliya i mongol'skiy vopros*, St. Petersburg, *Russkaya skoropechatnya*; Tomilin V. 1913, *Mongoliya i ee sovremennoe znachenie dlya Rossii*, Moscow, Vernost'; Volossovich M. 1916, *Pis'ma iz Mongolii: Preobrazovanie Mongolii*, *Vestnik Azii*, Issue 37, Book 1, pp. 44–50; Idem. 1914, *Rossiya i Mongoliya*, *Vestnik Azii*, Issue 31–32, pp. 42–50; Idem. 1915, *U sosedy. Pis'ma iz Mongolii*, *Vestnik Azii*, Issue 34, pp. 209–223, Issues 35–36, pp. 62–69; Mayskiy I.M. 1921, *Sovremennaya Mongoliya* (Otchet Mongol'skoy ekspeditsii, snaryazhennoy Irkutskoy kontoroy Vserossiyskogo Tsentral'nogo Soyuza Potrebitel'skikh Obshchestv "Tsentsosoyuz"), Irkutsk, Irkutskoe otdelenie Gosudarstvennogo izdatel'stva; Idem. 1960, *Mongoliya nakanune revolyutsii*, Second edition, Moscow, *Vostochnaya literatura*; Idem. 1996, *Cherez 600 let*, *Al'manakh "Arabeski istorii"*, Issue 3–4. *Russkiy razliv*, Volume 2, Moscow, *DI DIK Tanais*, pp. 288–311; Zlatkin I.Ya. 1957, *Ocherki novoy i noveyshey istorii Mongolii*, Moscow, Nauka; Gorokhova G.S. 1980, *Ocherki po istorii Mongolii v epokhu man'chzhurskogo gospodstva* (konets XVII - nachalo XX v.), Moscow, Nauka; Chimitdorzhiev Sh.B. Op. cit; Kuz'min Yu.V. 1997, *Mongoliya i "Mongol'skiy vopros" v obshchestvenno-politicheskoy mysli Rossii* (konets XIX - 30-e gg. XX v.), Irkutsk: IGU; Idem. 1994, *Russko-mongol'skie otnosheniya v 1911–1912 godakh i pozitsiya obshchestvennykh krugov Rossii*, *Mongolica-III*, St. Petersburg, *Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie*, pp. 75–79; Startsev A.V., Startseva A.A. 2007, "Mongol'skiy vopros" nachala XX v. v sovremennoy kitayskoy istoriografii", *Sibir' i Tsentral'naya Aziya: problemy etnografii, istorii i mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniy, Tret'i nauchnye chteniya pamyati E.M. Zalkinda. Materialy mezhdunarodnoy nauchnoy konferentsii*. (Barnaul, 18 maya 2007 g.), Barnaul: Az Buka, pp. 194–212.

<sup>8</sup> Startsev A.V., ed. 2014, *Politika Rossii i Kitaya v Tsentral'noy Azii vo vtoroy polovine XIX - nachale XXI v.*, Barnaul, Azbuka.

<sup>9</sup> Chernikova L., *Zemlyu pod fundament privezli s Rodiny. Ocherki istorii General'nogo Konsul'stva Rossii v Shankhae*. Available at: URL: <http://www.russianshanghai.com/literature/consulate.php&h> (accessed 15 June, 2012); Galiev V.V. 2011, *Rossiyskie konsul'stva v Cin'tsyzane* (konets XIX - nachalo XX vv.), Almaty, Atamyr.

<sup>10</sup> Khokhlov A.N. 2001, "Podgotovka kadrov dlya rossiyskoy konsul'skoy sluzhby v Kitae (studenty-stazhery pri Poslannike diplomaticheskoy missii v Pekine)", *Rossiyskaya diplomatiya: istoriya i sovremennost'. Materialy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii, posvyashchennoy 450-letiyu sozdaniya Posol'skogo prikaza*. (29 oktyabrya 1999 g., MGIMO), Moscow, ROSSPEN, pp. 336–359.

central city of Mongolia Urga (modern Ulaanbaatar). However, the consulates in Western Mongolia (Uliastai, Khovd, and Sharasume) established at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were equally actively involved in settling the problems induced by transformation of the political situation in Mongolia. The most significant contribution to investigation of the formation, characteristics and daily routine of the Russian consulate in Urga, and biography of the consul Yakov Shishmarev was made by Edinarkhova and Darevskaya<sup>11</sup>. In one of the chapters of her book, Darevskaya concentrated on the political aspect of the life of the Russian diaspora in Mongolia in the period from the revolution of 1905 to the days of the Civil war in Russia. However, these works did not analyse the political work of the consulates in the periods after the Xinhai revolution, the overturn of the Manchurian ambans (办事大臣, governor) in Urga and other cities which were followed by the declaration of Outer Mongolia's independence under the rule of Bogd Gegen.

Significant contribution to addressing the Mongol problem have been made by the Mongolian authors Choibalsan, Natsagdorzh, Liguu, Shirendyb, Sandag, Zhamsran, Dashpurev and Usha Prasad, Magsarzhav, Lkhamsuren, Baabar, Khishigt, Demberel, Batsaikhan, Batbayar<sup>12</sup>, and others. Nevertheless, the significance of the Russian consulates in the political processes in Mongolia during the growth of the liberation movement, the declaration of independence and the subsequent events and specifically in Mongolia's autonomy negotiations has never been analysed in this literature.

The role of the Russian consulates in Mongolian political events of 1911–1919 was partially touched on in the works of British historians Fritters and Tan<sup>13</sup>. Fritters describes in detail the actions of the consuls Lavdovsky and Miller during the talks with Chinese and

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<sup>11</sup> Darevskaya E.M. 1994, *Sibir' i Mongoliya: ocherki russko-mongol'skikh svyazey v kontse XIX - nachale XX vekov*, Irkutsk, IGU; Edinarkhova N.E. 1999, *Iz istorii prebyvaniya russkikh v Mongolii (do 1917 g.)*, *Diaspory*, Issues 2–3, pp. 81–99; Idem. 2005, “Vzaimootnosheniya russkogo konsula s urginskimi pravatelyami (60-e gody XIX v.)”, *Chetvertye vostokovednye chteniya BGUEP. Materialy mezhdunarodnoy nauchnoy konferentsii* (Irkutsk, mart 2005 g.), Irkutsk, BGUEP, pp. 70–75; Idem. 2008, *Russkoe konsul'stvo v Urge i Ya.P. Shishmarev*, Irkutsk, Reprotsentr A1.

<sup>12</sup> Choybalsan Kh. 1952, *Kratkiy ocherk istorii Mongol'skoy narodnoy revolyutsii*, Translated from Mongolian. Moscow, Izdatel'stvo inostrannoy literatury; Natsagdorzh Sh. 1958, *Iz istorii aratskogo dvizheniya vo Vneshney Mongolii*, Moscow, AN SSSR; Liguu B. 1960, *Iz istorii russko-mongol'skikh otnosheniy v kontse XIX – nachale XX vv.*, Moscow, Izdatel'stvo Vysshey partiynoy shkoly i Akademii obshchestvennykh nauk; Shirendyb B. 1963, *Mongoliya na rubezhe XIX–XX vv. (istoriya sotsial'no-ekonomicheskogo razvitiya)*, Ulan-Bator, Komitet po delam pechati; Idem. 1971, *Istoriya Mongol'skoy narodnoy revolyutsii 1921 g.*, Moscow, Glavnaya redaktsiya vostochnoy literatury izdatel'stva “Nauka”; Sandag Sh. 1966, *Bor'ba mongol'skogo naroda za gosudarstvennyuyu nezavisimost' i stroitel'stvo novoy zhizni*, Ulan-Bator, Gosizdat–Ulan-Bator; Zhamsran L. 1992, *Mongolyn sergen mandaltyn ekhen, 1911–1913*, Ulaanbaatar, Soembo khevleliyn gazar; Dashpurev D., Usha Prasad. 1993, *Mongolia: Revolution and Independence. 1911–1992*, New Delhi, Subhash & Associate Magsarzhav N. 1994, *Mongol ulsyn shine tuukh, Ulaanbaatar: Tuukhiyn khureelenba Mongol ulsyn zasgiyn gazryn arkhiv*; Lkhamsuren B. 1995, *Mongolyn gadaad orchin, toriyn tusgaar togtol, Ulaanbaatar; Baabar Bat-Érdéniin. 1999, Twentieth Century Mongolia*, Cambridge, White Horse Press; Khishigt N. 2001, “Mongolo-rossiyskoe sotrudnichestvo v voennoy oblasti (1911–1916 gg.)”, *Rossiya i Mongoliya: novyy vzglyad na istoriyu vzaimootnosheniy v XX v.*, Moscow, IV RAN, pp. 31–42; Demberel K. 2002, *Vliyanie mezhdunarodnoy sredy na razvitie Mongolii: sravnitel'nyy analiz v istoricheskom kontekste XX v.*, Irkutsk, Ottisk; Batsaykhan O. 2007, *Mongolyn tusgaar togtol ba Khyatad, Oros Mongol gurvan ulsyn 1915 ony Khiagtyn geree, 1911–1916*, Ulaanbaatar, Mongol ulsyn shinzhlekh ukhaany akademi; Batbayar Ts. 2008, *Olnoo Örgөгдсөн Mongol ulsyn gadaad khariltsa, Ulaanbaatar, Mongol ulsyn Shinzhlekh ukhaany akademi Түүххиин кhyrreelen*.

<sup>13</sup> Fritters G. 1951. *Outer Mongolia and Its International Position*, L., Duke University Press; Tang P. 1959, *Russian and Soviet Policy in Manchuria and Outer Mongolia, 1911–1931*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1959.

Mongolian government representatives. Both authors emphasize their decisive role in the success of Russian diplomacy at the international conference in Kyakhta (1915). Despite the fact that Tang labels Russian policy in Mongolia and Manchuria aggressive, he clearly identifies Russia's interests in these regions and paid attention to the history of Russian-Chinese agreements and the establishment of Russian consulates in Xinjiang and Mongolia. Other relevant works of Western writers on Russian-Chinese and Russian-Mongolian relations at the turn of 19–20<sup>th</sup> centuries include books by Rockhill, Lattimore, Nachukdorji, Cheng, Rupen, Swartz, Bawden, Clubb, Ewing, Onon and Pritchatt, Carruthers, Paine,<sup>14</sup> and others.

The Chinese researchers' contribution to the study of Russia-China-Mongolia interaction and the Mongols' national liberation movement in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is also very significant. The translation and analysis of a number of the publications, especially of the 1960–80s, demonstrated that the conviction of many Chinese historians' about the aggressive nature of Russia's policy in the border regions of China in this period had not transformed since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and to a large extent remained ideology-driven. In the entire set of works published in this period and even in some publications of the 2000s, there are conclusions that Russia developed expansion plans in Outer Mongolia and intended to seize the region<sup>15</sup> which does not fully correspond with the historical facts. However, only a small number of works emphasize the role of the Russian consuls in Mongolian political events at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, Liu Cunkuang in describing the negotiation process in Kyakhta in 1915, noted that the consul in Urga sought to "capture" the initiative and threatened Chinese delegates in order to coerce them recognize the autonomy of Outer Mongolia<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Rockhill W.W. 1914, *The Question of Outer Mongolia*, *Journal of the American Asiatic Association*, May, Vol. 14, pp. 102–109; Lattimore O., *Nachukdorji Sh. 1955, Nationalism and Revolution in Mongolia*, Oxford, Oxford University Press; Lattimore O. 1962, *Nomads and Commissars: Mongolia Revisited*, N.Y., Oxford University Press; Cheng Tien-Fang. 1957, *A History of Sino-Russian Relations*, Wash., Public Affairs; Rupen R. 1964, *The Mongols of the Twentieth Century*, Vol. 1, Bloomington, Indiana; Idem. 1979, *How Mongolia is Really Ruled. A Political History of the M.P.R. (1900–1978)*, Stanford, Stanford University Press; Swartz H. 1964, *Tsars, Mandarins and Commissars: A History of Chinese–Russian Relations*, Philadelphia–N.Y., J.B. Lippincott Company; Bawden C.R. 1968, *The Modern History of Mongolia*, N.Y., Frederick A. Praeger; Clubb O.E. 1971, *Russia and China: The "Great Game"*, N.Y.–L., Columbia University Press; Ewing T.E. 1980, *Between the Hammer and the Anvil? Chinese and Russian Policies in Outer Mongolia, 1911–1921*, Bloomington, Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies; Onon U., Pritchatt D. 1989, *Asia's First Modern Revolution. Mongolia Proclaims Its Independence in 1911*, Leiden, Brill Academic Pub.; Carruthers G. 1994, *Unknown Mongolia. A Record of Travel and Exploration North-West Mongolia and Dzungaria*, New Delhi, Asian Educational Services; Paine S.C.M. 1996, *Imperial Rivals: China, Russia, and Their Disputed Frontier*. L., M.E. Sharpe Inco.

<sup>15</sup> Sha E qinlue Hua shi, 1978, Vol. 1, Beijing, Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe; Sha E qinlue Zhongguo xibei bianjiang shi, 1979, Beijing, Renmin chubanshe; Fu Sunming. 1982, *Sha E qin Hua shi jianbian*, Changchun, Jilin renmin chubanshe; Mo Yongming, ed. 1986, *Sha E qin Hua shi*, Shanghai, Shanghai renmin chubanshe; Gu Minyi. 1987, *Zhongguo jindai waijiao shilue*, Changchun, Changchun chubanshe; Cheng Daode. 1988, *Zhonghua Minguo waijiao shi ziliao xuanbian. 1911–1949, Part 1. 1911–1919*, Beijing, Beijing daxue chubanshe; Menggu zu jianshi, 1985, *Khukh-Khoto, Nei Menggu renmin chubanshe*; Li Yushu. 1990, *Mengshi lun cong*, Taibei, Yongyu yinshuachang; Guo Tingyi. 1999, *Jindai Zhongguo shigang*, Beijing, Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe; Huang Dingtian. 1999, *Dongbei Ya guoji guanxi shi*; *Jindai guoji guanxi shi*, Haerbin, Heilongjiang jiaoyu chubanshe; Fang Minfang, 2004, "1912 nian "E Meng xieyue" ji E Meng "Shangwu zhuantiao" zhi qianding", in *Zhong E guanxi de lishi yu xianshi*, Kaifeng, Henan daxue chubanshe, pp. 167–185; Yang Jun, Zhang Nai, eds. 2006, *Dong Ya shi: cong shiqian zhi 20 shiji mo*, Changchun, Changchun chubanshe; Xiong Jiangjun, Chen Shaomu. 2007, "Guanyu Minguo shiqi Wai Menggu duli shijian de huigu yu sikao", *Dang shi yanjiu yu jiaoxue*, Issue 2, pp. 72–77; Bi Aonan, *Alatengaoqier Wulan*. 2010, "Zhong E guanxi yu Menggu wenti, 1911–1924", in *Zhongguo lishi xuan'an de zhongjie*, Beijing, Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, pp. 21–70.

<sup>16</sup> Liu Cunkuang. 2004, "Zhong E guanxi yu Wai Menggu zi Zhongguo de fenli (1911–1915)", in *Zhong E guanxi de lishi yu xianshi*, Kaifeng, Henan daxue chubanshe, pp. 151–166.

As can be seen from the above, there has not been a separate study in English targeted at the political activities and the role of the Russian consulates in Mongolia in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This circumstance preconditions the necessity of shining a light on this under-explored issue which has a great significance for the political history of Mongolia and its relations with its northern and southern neighbors – Russia and China.

## 1.2. Primary sources

This work is based on a wide range of primary sources, part of which has not been introduced before. The legislative sources include treaties between Russia and China signed in 1858-1881 and supplements to them, such as "The Rules for the Land Trade" (Pravila sukhopotnoy trgovli) issued in 1862, 1869 and 1881.<sup>17</sup> We considered Russia's agreements with the Urga and Beijing governments and regional authorities of 1911-1916,<sup>18</sup> and with Japan and Great Britain on the "spheres of influence" in China. The legislative sources are also represented by the Russian Consular Statute, the Trade Charter, the Code of Civil Service and other important documents regulating Russian foreign relations and consular service<sup>19</sup>. The Chinese legislative sources include the Legal Code of the Lifan Yuan (理藩院, the Chinese Court of Colonial Affairs)<sup>20</sup>.

A solid amount of data were discovered in the published consulates' reports and correspondence, orders and regulations of the Russian Foreign Ministry<sup>21</sup> and the documents reflecting the decision-making process on the improvement of the conditions of the Russian trade with Mongolia<sup>22</sup>. A large part of the relevant sources were found in the collections of documents on Russia's relations with China and Mongolia, the "Mongol problem" and the process of negotiations on the autonomy of Mongolia. These are collections published in prerevolutionary, Soviet and modern Russia, such as "The Collection of Documents on the "Mongol Question"" (Sbornik dokumentov po mongol'skomu voprosu), "The Red Archive" (Krasnyy arkhiv), "International

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<sup>17</sup> Myasnikov V.S., ed. 2004, Russko-kitayskie dogovorno-pravovye akty. 1689–1916. Moscow, Pamyatniki istoricheskoy myisli, pp. 64–69, 70–79, 91–95, 101–107, 117–124, 125–131.

<sup>18</sup> Op. cit., pp. 413–415, 420–426, 432–437, 550–558, 561–562, 566–569; Russko-kitayskie otnosheniya, 1689–1916. Ofitsial'nye dokumenty. 1958, Moscow, Izdatel'stvo vostochnoy literatury.

<sup>19</sup> Dobrovolskiy A.A., ed. Polnyy svod zakonov Rossiyskoy imperii. Vse 16 tomov so vsemi otnosyashchimisya k nim prodolzheniyami i s dopolnitel'nymi uzakonenyami po 1 sentyabrya 1910 goda. V 2 kn. Izdanie neofitsial'noe. St. Petersburg, Izdanie knizhnogo magazina "Zakonovedenie", 1911.

<sup>20</sup> Ulozhenie Kitayskoy Palaty vneshnikh snosheniy, 1828. Translated from Manchurian by S.V. Lipovtsov, Moscow, Tipografiya Departamenta narodnogo prosveshcheniya, Volumes I-II. Lifan Yuan was a government bureau established by Qing dynasty in the 17th century to control the Beijing's relations with the China's subjects in Inner Asia. The institution was reorganized in the Ministry of Dependencies in 1907. The title of this court has numerous different translations into English. Available at: <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Lifan-Yuan> (viewed 20 May, 2015).

<sup>21</sup> "Doneseniya Imperatorskikh Rossiyskikh konsul'skikh predstaviteley za granitsey po torgovo-promyshlennym voprosam," Zhurnal Ministerstva trgovli i promyshlennosti, Otdel trgovli, St. Petersburg, Ministerstvo trgovli i promyshlennosti, 1912–1916; Ezhegodnik Ministerstva inostrannykh del / Annuaire Diplomatique de L'Empire de Russie, St. Petersburg, Tipografiya Trenke i Fyusno, 1895–1916.

<sup>22</sup> Zhurnal Osobogo Mezhdovedomstvennogo soveshchaniya, byvshego v St.-Peterburge pod predsedatel'stvom irkutskogo general-gubernatora, egermeystera L.M. Knyazeva, po rusko-mongol'skim delam, 1913, Irkutsk, Gubernskaya tipografiya; Trudy soveshchaniya po voprosam o razvitii torgovykh snosheniy s Mongol'ey, sozannogo irkutskim general-gubernatorom, egermeysterom L.M. Knyazevym v dekabre 1912 goda i v yanvare - fevrale mesyatsakh 1913 goda, 1913, Irkutsk, Gubernskaya tipografiya.



Relations in the Imperialist Epoch” (Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya v epokhu imperializma), “Russian-Chinese Treaty Documents. 1689-1917” (Russko-kitayskie dogovorno-pravovye akty. 1689–1916)<sup>23</sup> and other collections. Among the most significant Chinese sources are Bi Guifang’s notes about the Russian-Chinese negotiations about the status of Outer Mongolia<sup>24</sup>.

The greater part of the sources used in this research were extracted from the archives, mainly from the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (Arkhiv vneshney politiki Rossiyskoy imperii) (AVPRI). Among them there are the reports of consulates in Mongolia and China and diplomatic Legation in Beijing to the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the correspondence between consuls in Mongolia and their counterparts in other regions of China. The archives also contain Russian consular letters, statements and requests to envoys based in Beijing, administrations of the Siberian and the Far Eastern regions of the Russian Empire, to the Mongolian and Manchurian (since 1915 Chinese Republican) local authorities in Urga and other places of Mongolia. Here also we can find the telegrams, reports on trade, reports from the consul generals and other documents<sup>25</sup>.

The personal provenance documents are of particular importance for this work. Memories of Russian statesmen and diplomats, such as Ivan Korostovets, the former envoy to China and a special official at the Russian-Mongolian negotiations on Mongolia’s autonomy in 1912-1913<sup>26</sup>, Sergei Witte, the first Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Empire,<sup>27</sup> the Russian diplomat and publicist Esper Ukhtomsky,<sup>28</sup> and the ataman Grigory Semenov<sup>29</sup> who served in the consular guard in Mongolia, are of significant historical interest. The memoirs of the ataman The memoirs and correspondence of a Russian trader in Mongolia and a witness of Mongolia’s struggle for independence Alexey Burdukov<sup>30</sup> have also become an indispensable part of the source base. Due to the fact that he was in a constant correspondence with consuls and travelers in Mongolia, he described certain events of the national liberation struggle with great fidelity. The works of Russian scientific expeditions and the notes of the journeys of Potanin, Kozlov,

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<sup>23</sup> “Sbornik diplomaticheskikh dokumentov po mongol'skomu voprosu (23 avgusta 1912 g.- 2 noyabrya 1913 g.)”, 1914, St. Petersburg, V.F. Kirshbaum; “Tsarskaya Rossiya i Mongoliya v 1913–1914 gg.”, 1929, Krasnyy arkhiv, Volume 7 (37), Moscow-Leningrad; “Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya v epokhu imperializma. Dokumenty iz arkhivov tsarskogo i Vremennogo pravitel'stv 1878–1917 gg.” Moscow-Leningrad, Gossotseconomizdat, Ser. 2, Issue 1, Volumes 18–20, 1938–1940, Ser. 3, Volumes 1–10, 1931–1938; Myasnikov V.S., ed. 2004, Russko-kitayskie dogovorno-pravovye akty. 1689–1916. Moscow, Pamyatniki istoricheskoy myisli.

<sup>24</sup> Bi Guifang, 1968, “Wai Meng jiaoshe shi moji. Chen Lu. Zhishi biji”, Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan. Book 17, Issues 168–169, Taipei, Wenhai chubanshe.

<sup>25</sup> Within the framework of the research project “The Consular Service of Russia in Mongolia (1861-1917)”, the author worked with more than 50 archive files from several archives. In this article, only a part of these files is used.

<sup>26</sup> Korostovets I. 1994, “Devyat' mesyatshev v Mongolii. Dnevnik russkogo upolnomochennogo v Urge I.Ya. Korostovets. Avgust 1912 - may 1913 g.”, Rossiya v Azii, Part. 1, Issue 1, pp. 133–249, Part 2, Issue 2, pp. 85–213, 1996, Part 3, pp. 225–292; Idem. 2004, Ot Chingiskhana do Sovetskoy Respubliki (kratkaya istoriya Mongolii s osobym uchedom noveyshego vremeni), Ulan-Bator, Emgent.

<sup>27</sup> Vitte S.Yu. 1960, Vospominaniya, Moscow, Gossotseconomizdat, Books 2-3.

<sup>28</sup> Ukhtomskiy E.E. 1901, Iz kitayskikh pisem, St. Petersburg, Parovaya skoropechatnya “Vostok”.

<sup>29</sup> Semenov G. 1999, O sebe. Vospominaniya, mysli i vyvody, Moscow, Izdatel'stvo AST: Geya Iterum.

<sup>30</sup> Burdukov A.V. 1969, V staroy i novoy Mongolii. Vospominaniya. Pisma, Moscow, Nauka.

Grumm-Grzhimaylo and other famous travelers<sup>31</sup> were the supplementary sources for this research. The work also employed the memoirs of the Chinese contemporary Huang Yuanyong<sup>32</sup>. Russian and foreign press of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is extensively employed in this study.

## **2. The early political work of the Russian consulates in Mongolia**

The legal basis for the foundation of the Russian consulates in China in the 19<sup>th</sup> century lies in the Sino-Russian Kuldja Treaty (1851), the Tianjin Treaty (1858), the Beijing Treaty (1860) and the Saint-Petersburg Treaty (1881). Their opening was necessitated by the growth of Russian economic and political interests in China, especially in the zones of Russia's "special interests": Xinjiang, Outer Mongolia and Outer Manchuria. One of the main objectives of the Russian consulates in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was to develop Russian trade in those areas. Because of the expansion of the great powers in China at that time and the Qing government's colonization policy in the border regions of China, such as Outer Mongolia, the Russian consular institutions in China and in Mongolia in particular faced a number of serious obstacles.

A distinguishing feature of the consulates in Mongolia was the great variety of functions they had to fulfil. Until the early 1910s, the diplomats were the first and only Russian authorities who resided in this remote and unexplored country for long periods of time. The sphere of consular powers was both broad and diverse. The consuls were responsible for collecting commercial, political and cultural information about Mongolia and neighboring regions (Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Manchuria), assisting the Russian diaspora in legal, administrative, commercial, personal and practical matters. A special consular court was established to solve disputes among the Russian settlers and between the latter and the local population. Another important function which from the start was informal, but developed with time was diplomatic representation of the Russian state in this region. In fulfilling this mission the consuls faced numerous difficulties. The main obstacle lay in the confrontation with the Qing local authorities (after 1915 – the representatives of the Republic of China) striving to prevent Russia's influence from spreading. The frequent tensions between Mongolian and the central authorities in Beijing,

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<sup>31</sup> Pis'ma G.N. Potanina, 1987–1991, Irkutsk, IGU. Volumes 2-5; Potanin G.N. 1892, "Russkie v Mongolii", *Russkoe bogatstvo*, Issue 9, pp. 239–248; Kozlov P.K. 1947, *Mongoliya i Amdo i mertvyi gorod Khara-khoto*, Second edition, Moscow, Geografiz; Idem. 1948, *Mongoliya i Kam*, Moscow, OGIZ; Grumm-Grzhimaylo G.E. 1926-1930, *Zapadnaya Mongoliya i Uryankhayskiy kray*, Leningrad, Gosudarstvennoye geographicheskoye obshchestvo; Idem. 1922, "Rossiya i Mongoliya", *Ekonomicheskaya zhizn' Dal'nego Vostoka*, Chita, Issues 3–4, pp. 3–18; Obruchev V.A. 1940. *Ot Kyakhty do Kul'dzhi: Puteshestvie v Tsentral'nuyu Aziyu i Kitay*, Moscow–Leningrad, AN SSSR.

<sup>32</sup> Huang Yuanyong. 1984, *Yuan sheng yizhu*, Volume 2. Shanghai, Shangwu yinshuguan.

the cultural and climatic specificities of the country, the problems of communication with Saint-Petersburg and other factors increased complexity to the consular work.

The formal status of the Russian consulates in border regions such as Mongolia used to be very specific. Firstly, the consulates possessed an extraterritorial right and consular jurisdiction. Secondly, since the consulates and the Imperial Legation in Beijing were the only official Russian institutions in the Qing Empire until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, so the scope of the consuls' competence was both large and diverse. Besides fulfilling traditional consular functions, such as the protection of Russian citizens' rights, and assisting the development of trade, the consuls also served as diplomatic representatives and political agents. Thirdly, the consuls were quite autonomous in decision-making, therefore the level of Russia's influence and effectiveness of Russian policy implementation in Mongolia were to a large extent dependent on them.

Prior to the 1910s the consulate general in Urga was primarily engaged in regulating Russian trade affairs in Mongolia. Russian-Mongolian border trade was of significant importance for Russia since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In light of acceleration of Russia's social and economic development in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Khalkha<sup>33</sup> became of interest for governmental and business circles of Russia and was viewed as a profitable market for industrial products, a source of raw materials, and later the most important transit country for Russian-Chinese trade. The rapid development of Russian trade with Mongolia<sup>34</sup> stimulated the growth of Russian colonies in this country<sup>35</sup>, and the organization of their life was the consuls' responsibility.

From the beginning of 1900s, Mongolia attracted Russia's attention in political and strategic respects. In Russian strategy, this region was supposed to become a "buffer zone" between Russia and China and ensure a "balance of power" in East and Central Asia where the rivalry of great powers started to intensify. However, Russia took the real steps toward strengthening its influence in Mongolia only after the painful defeat in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905, when Japan bolstered its influence on Qing court's policy in Mongolia<sup>36</sup>. After the war, the spread of Russian influence in China was limited, and it could not expand further to South Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, which was fixed by the agreements with Japan in 1907 and 1910. Since then, the Russian "sphere of interest" comprised Northern Mongolia and Northern Manchuria, and the interests in South Manchuria had to be given up.

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<sup>33</sup> Khalkha is a historical territory of Northern Mongolia.

<sup>34</sup> Startsev A.V. 2003, *Russkaya trgovlya v Mongolii (vtoraya polovina XIX - nachalo XX v.)*, Barnaul, AltGU, p. 185.

<sup>35</sup> According to some sources, by the middle of the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Russian diaspora reached from 1500 to 3000 people. See: Kuz'min Yu.V., Demberel K. 1994, "Russkaya koloniya v Urge (1861–1920) v rossiyskoy istoriografii", *Diaspory v istoricheskom vremeni i prostranstve. Natsional'naya situatsiya v Vostochnoy Sibiri*, Irkutsk, IGU, p. 118.

<sup>36</sup> Tang P. Op. cit. p. 288.

Unlike in Xinjiang, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian consuls in Mongolia did not have to conduct active intelligence and political work as other foreigners did not arrive until the 1880s. More so, China launched its colonization policy in Khalkha only in the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, by the international treaties with Britain and Japan of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries Outer Mongolia was recognized as a sphere of Russia's special interests, and the allies did not attempt to set up claims to expand their influence there. The Tibet issue was the only exception which required constant and active intelligence work for the needs of Russia's successful participation in the "Great Game". The Urga consulate had carried out observations of the situation in Tibet since the 1870s<sup>37</sup>, collected information from pilgrims and merchants who traveled from Mongolia to Lhasa, and provided assistance to Russian scientists and expeditions. However, Russian consulates' full-scale efforts in monitoring and coordinating political relations with China and Mongolia followed only during the Mongols' struggle for national independence in the 1900s.

### **3. Mongolia's pursuit of independence and the consuls as the political agents of Russia**

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Mongolia, which by this time had experienced more severe oppression by the Manchus, expanded the national liberation movement for separation from Qing China. The Mongolian aristocracy had cherished a liberation idea for several centuries. However, only at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the socio-economic and political crisis in the Qing Empire worsened<sup>38</sup> fueled by foreign expansion and the military defeat by Japan in 1895, the Mongols expressed a more distinct aspiration to break from Manchurian rule.

The deepening systemic crisis of the Qing Empire forced the Emperor's court to revise its policy in Mongolia in the early 1900s in favor of fundamental administrative and military reforms in the region and encourage Han colonization with the aim of turning Mongolia into an ordinary Chinese province<sup>39</sup>. Mongolian khans and dzasaks (rulers of khoshuns) lead by the spiritual head of Mongolian Buddhists Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu opposed the "new policy" of the Qing dynasty aimed at strengthening its authority in Mongolia. In 1909, the Qing government approved the "colonization plans" and the project of the agreement with the Mongolian rulers allowing the sale of areas suitable for agriculture in favor of the Qing court very cheaply<sup>40</sup>. The threat of assimilation and the loss of national identity as well as the increased economic pressure pushed Mongolian elites and common people to the liberation movement. With the progress of

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<sup>37</sup> AVPRI, Coll. 143, Inv. 491, F. 562, pp. 162 back–165, 312.

<sup>38</sup> Parker E. 1903, "Kitay, ego istoriya, politika i torgovlya s drevneyshikh vremen do nashikh dney." Translated from English, St. Petersburg, Tipografiya Trenke i Fyusno, pp. 206-210.

<sup>39</sup> AVPRI, Coll. 143, Inv. 491, F. 566, pp. 10 back-11 back.

<sup>40</sup> Yaskina G.S. 2007, ed. *Istoriya Mongolii. XX vek*, Moscow, IV RAN, p. 17.

the movement, its leaders put forward Pan-Mongolist slogans calling for the unification of all Mongols, including, and Inner Mongolia's, and the restoration of lost statehood.

The Russian diplomats in Mongolia and the Russian Legation in Beijing were the first to realize that the transformation of the Chinese government's course in Outer Mongolia would shortly lead to Beijing's dominance in Mongolia. They reported to Saint-Petersburg that these actions were aimed at the colonization, sinicization of the population and the internationalization of trade which would open Mongolia's doors to the Japanese capital, which in turn would change the political, military and economic balance in the region. The alarming comments and evidence of China's expansion processes were widely represented in the Urga consul's correspondence with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>41</sup>. The estimate of this situation by the majority of the diplomats implied that if Beijing imposed its will in Outer Mongolia, it would result in a deterioration of the economic and social life in Mongolia, hindering any progress and, what was more dangerous, would pose a military threat to the Russian state in that border region<sup>42</sup>.

The Mongolian elites shared a vision that in pursuing self-determination goals they could expect assistance only from the northern neighbor Russia and its "white tsar" with whom they had been in friendly relations for decades. According to the historical documents, during the China's war with Japan and later the Mongolian rulers expressed to the Russian consul general in Urga their aspirations to be liberated from the Manchus' rule and create their own state under Russia's protectorate<sup>43</sup>. In order to demonstrate their serious intentions and good will to the Russian government, the Mongolian authorities assisted the Urga consul in the protection of "Mongolor", Russia's first joint-stock ore mining company (founded in 1900) which the Qing government was trying to close at the time of the Boxers' insurrection. In 1904-1905 the local anti-Manchurian protests followed, but the Russian Foreign Ministry still did not have a certain policy toward the emerging "Mongol issue", so it ordered the Urga consulate general to take those anti-Qing protests and manifestations under control and persuade the Mongolian aristocracy from the radical actions<sup>44</sup>.

The starting implementation of the Beijing's new policy toward Mongolia<sup>45</sup> and the deepening of the systemic crisis of the central power in China in 1911 eliminated the last barriers containing the liberation movement of the Mongols. In July 1911, the Mongol local leaders convened for a meeting to decide the future fate of the country<sup>46</sup>. As a result they addressed the Russian consulate general and asked to render them military and political help to carry out the

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<sup>41</sup> AVPRI, Coll. 143, Inv. 491, F. 565, p. 50.

<sup>42</sup> Fritters G. Op. cit, p. 54.

<sup>43</sup> AVPRI, Coll. 143, Inv. 491, F. 562, pp. 333-334.

<sup>44</sup> Tsarskaya Rossiya i Mongoliya, pp. C. 4-6.

<sup>45</sup> Grumm-Grzhimaylo G.E. 1926-1930, Zapadnaya Mongoliya i Uryankhayskiy kray, Vol. 2, pp. 741-743; AVPRI, Coll. 143, Inv. 491, F. 566, p. 10 back.

<sup>46</sup> Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya v epokhu imperializma, Ser. 2, Issue 1, Vol. 18, Part 1, p. 271.

national liberation acts. Vladimir Lavdovsky, an alternate consular general in Urga that time, discussed intensively the possible reaction to these requests with the Foreign Ministry and his colleagues in Mongolia and Beijing. The consulate in Urga in the numerous letters to the Ministry recommended the Russian government to render assistance to the Mongolian rulers otherwise Russia could lose its influence in Mongolia for good<sup>47</sup>.

Taking into consideration the great powers' sharpening competition, the preserving the status quo in Asia, including a balance in its relations with China, and security of its eastern borders were the foreign policy priorities of Russia. Independence of Mongolia and potential deterioration of relations with China over the Chinese-Mongolian disputes did not correspond with the important foreign policy goals of Russia. In this situation, Russian government agreed to support Outer Mongolia only in achieving autonomy under China's suzerainty.

On August 15, 1911 the special Mongolian deputation of the high-ranked officials visited Saint-Petersburg and passed the Khutukhtu's request to the Russian Tsar to take Outer Mongolia under the Russia's protectorate<sup>48</sup>. On August 17, 1911, the special ministerial meeting for the Far East under the chairmanship of Petr Stolypin decided not to support the Mongols by force and arms, but agreed to play the mediating role in the Chinese-Mongolian conflict and increase the contingent of the consular convoy in Urga to 200 Cossacks<sup>49</sup>. In addition, the ministers formulated the "three demands" to China which included the demands not to colonize Outer Mongolia, not to send the troops and not to impose the Manchurian authority in that territory. The Urga consulate continued to play a deep game monitoring the Mongolian elites' and the public's sentiments. The Foreign Minister Sazonov informed the Russian envoy in Beijing that if the Mongols' rebellion would become unavoidable, Russia would provide some military supplies to the country<sup>50</sup>. In November 1911, Lavdovsky succeeded to reach an agreement with the Minister of War Sukhomlinov concerning the providing of 15 thousand rifles and sabres to the Mongolian leaders (for the defense purposes).

The proclamation of independence by Mongolia in December 1911 brought the Russian consulates to the forefront of the complicated diplomatic game between Russia and China over Mongolia. The consular officials and the Russia's envoy in Beijing had to carry out the mediating and coordinating functions in the interest triangle comprising the interests of the governments of China, the self-declared state of Mongolia and Russia. To find a strategic compromise between Urga striving to secede from China and unite the Mongols of East Asia within the framework of "Great Mongolia", Beijing insisting on Mongolia's historically

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<sup>47</sup> AVPRI, Coll. 143, Inv. 491, F. 566, p. 20.

<sup>48</sup> Belov E.A. 1999, *Rossiya i Mongoliya*. pp. 39–45, 48–49.

<sup>49</sup> Moiseev V.A. *Op. cit.*, p. 268.

<sup>50</sup> *Tsarskaya Rossiya i Mongoliya*, p. 13.

belonging to the Chinese state; and Saint-Petersburg aiming at preserving Outer Mongolia in its sphere of influence and not allowing the Mongols either to separate from China or to be under the total Chinese control, was a challenging goal.

During the rebellion, the Russian consulates took the active measures to deter the aggressive acts while the takeover of the power from Manchurian ambans (governors) and the Uliastai jiangjun (governor general), so in fact they played a role of the security guarantors for the civil population and the country<sup>51</sup>. On December 1, 1911, Urga declared independence and the foundation of a new state under the Bogd Gegen Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu. Shortly in 1912, the liberation movement erupted in Western Mongolia. Although the Urga consulate rendered the indirect help to the revolutionaries by refusing to restore the Qing amban San Do's power in Urga after it was seized by the rebels, the consulate's head Lavdovsky virtually saved San Do's life by providing him the shelter in the consular building. More so, guided by the "Consular Charter", Vladimir Lavdovsky organized the evacuation of San Do from Urga to Beijing sending him under the escort of the Russian Cossacks through the Siberian territory. Additionally, during the insurrection in Urga the Russian consular official took the Russian and Chinese civil population under its shelter and prevented the abuse of the property of the Chinese telegraph office and the branch of the Da Qing Bank (State Bank). The similar actions were taken by the consuls in Uliastai, Khovd and Sharasume where the Manchurian officials relatively easily gave up the power to the rebels. The consuls prevented the violent form of the power transition in these cities. For instance, in Uliastai the consul Alexander Valter assisted to arrange the Manchurian jiangjun's accommodation in the consular yard in late January 1912 and his safe evacuation to China through the Russian territory<sup>52</sup>.

On December 29, 1911, Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu ascended the throne of the Great Khan of Mongolia which heralded the formation of the theocratic state of the Mongols. In this situation, the Urga consulate's task was to persuade Bogd Gegen to contain the Mongol's aspirations for independence and that the Russia government would support them only in achieving autonomy and elaborating the most suitable terms of coexistence with China<sup>53</sup>. The diplomatic role of the consulate general at that stage also was in preventing the direct communication of the Urga government with Beijing over the Outer Mongolia's independence issue as soon as some members of the government were eagerly advocating the idea of independence and inclined to make inconsistent political decisions which could influence Russia's negotiations with China.

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<sup>51</sup> AVPRI, Coll, 143, Inv. 491, F. 566, p. 76.

<sup>52</sup> Burdukov A.V. Op. cit., p. 55–56.

<sup>53</sup> Izvestiya MID. 1912. Book III, pp. 85–86.

Playing a role of a mediator, the consul general Viktor Lyuba at the same time supervised the arrival of the Russian technical and financial assistance to the Khutukhtu's court and the work of the Russian military instructors whose help was requested by the Mongols<sup>54</sup>. In addition, the consuls in Urga and Western Mongolia strengthened their observation work in the key regions of the country. On another hand, the diplomats used efforts to promote a positive image of Russia and the Russian capital and trade in the Mongolian society and keep the increased good feelings of the Bogd Gegen court and population towards Russia which dramatically increased in Mongolia after the declaration of independence<sup>55</sup>.

In 1912, the Russian policy towards Mongolia became more shaped and structured. Through the increasing the technical and financial aid to the Khutukhtu's government, rendering the assistance in the establishment of the government institutions in Urga, training the Mongolian elites in the field of state management and other types of support, Russia sought to secure its influence in Mongolia and solidify in the region. These were supposed to be measures not only to protect the national economic interests, but also to moderate the Mongolia's liberation sentiments and prevent China's attempts to dominate Mongolia which could influence the balance of power in this part of Asia.

#### **4. Independence versus autonomy: the Russian diplomats in the negotiations over Mongolia's political status in 1912-1913**

The "Mongol problem" and Russia's possible reaction to the Urga's request to set up the Russian protectorate over the independent state of Mongols was a highly debated issue in the political, military and intellectual circles of the early 1910s. The discussants expressed the polar views on the issue. While the right wing represented by Kuropatkin, Kushelev, Tomilin and others favored annexation of Khalkha, the liberals and social democrats criticized this idea even taking in consideration that Outer Mongolia voluntarily requested the protectorate of the Russian Empire. The support of the complete independence of Mongolia was expressed by such intellectuals and public figures as Svechnikov, Pozdneev, Burdukov and Pershin<sup>56</sup>. The Russian Foreign Ministry realized that the reconfiguration of the international setting in the Far East after the Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese War was not favorable for any radical changes because they could shake the regional balance of power<sup>57</sup>. After the heated discussions, the Russian government and the Emperor Nicholas II supported the more pragmatic strategy toward

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<sup>54</sup> AVPRI, Coll. 143. Inv. 491. F. 566. p. 35–35 back

<sup>55</sup> Opt. cit., p. 49.

<sup>56</sup> Kuz'min Yu.V. 1994, *Russko-mongol'skie otnosheniya v 1911-1912 godakh*, pp. 75-79.

<sup>57</sup> Yaskina G.S. Opt. cit., p. 20.



the Mongolian case proposed by the moderate political and business community<sup>58</sup>. The strategy was based on the approach considering the vital interests of Saint-Petersburg, Urga and Beijing. The practical implementation of this more or less shaped “Mongolian policy” became the responsibility of the Foreign Ministry, the Russian envoy to Beijing and the consular staff in Mongolia.

On February 13, 1912, Yuan Shikai was announced the President of the Republic of China. The Chinese government declared Mongolia and Tibet the ordinary provinces of China<sup>59</sup> and called the "Mongolian issue" "an internal affair" of the Republic. Beijing sent the special telegrams to Urga informing Bogd Gegen of the necessity to establish the relations on the Chinese terms. Trying to moderate the reaction of the Urga court to these moves of the Republican government and to take Mongolia's contacts with China under control, the Russian consul general recommended Bogd Gegen not to answer the telegrams from Beijing. He also spent a significant time discussing with the Mongolian ministers and local rulers their options in the current political setting and persuading them from the support of the separatist sentiments in Inner Mongolia.

Concurrently, the consulates in Uliastai, Khovd and Sharasume strained after the containment of the Pan-Mongolist movement in the west of the country. In January 1912, they used efforts to prevent the attempts of Barga (Khulunbuir) and Uryankhai to create a separate political entity under the rule of Urga<sup>60</sup>. Additionally, the diplomats in Western Mongolia contributed to the settlement of the local uprisings and did not let the former to connect with the unrests in Eastern Mongolia, such as the rebellion of the duke Udai who sought Russia's support in the secession from China<sup>61</sup>.

The negotiations of the Russian Foreign Ministry with its Chinese counterpart on the Mongolian issue did not demonstrate visible progress since the declaration of independence by Urga. By July 1912, it became clear that Beijing was not going to cooperate with Saint-Petersburg and still making attempts to secretly reach the Urga government. Therefore, the Russian government broke off the talks with Yuan Shikai, and the main focus was shifted to the Urga consulate and the Legation's work with the Khutukhtu's court. Beijing continued to intimidate the Mongols, but the latter carried on their activities aimed at creation of the “Great

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<sup>58</sup> Kuz'min Yu.V. 1991, “Pozitsiya demokraticheskoy intelligentsii Rossii v “Mongol'skom voprose” posle Sin'khayskoy revolyutsii”, XXIII nauchnaya konferentsiya “Obschestvo i gosudarstvo v Kitae”. Tezisy dokladov, Part II, Moscow, pp. 68-72.

<sup>59</sup> Tikhvinskiy S.L., ed. 2013, *Istoriya Kitaya s drevneyshikh vremen do nachala XXI veka*, Vol. VII, Moscow, Vostochnaya literatura, p. 723.

<sup>60</sup> Bogoslovskiy V.A., Moskalev A.A. 1984, *Natsional'nyy vopros v Kitae (1911–1949)*, Moscow, Glavnaya redaktsiya vostochnoy literatury izdatel'stva “Nauka”, pp. 26-29; Belov E.A. 1995, “Problema Uryankhayskogo kraya v russko-kitaysko-mongol'skikh otnosheniyakh (1911-1914 gg.)”, *Vostok*, Issue 1, pp. 56-67.

<sup>61</sup> Belov E.A. 1996, “Antikitayskoe vosstanie knyazyia Udaya vo Vnutrenney Mongolii (1912 g.)”, *Vostok*, Issue 3, pp. 39-44.

Mongolia”. These were the factors complicating the Russian-Mongolian negotiations on the agreement.

To persuade Bogd Gegen and his ministers to abandon the ideas of independence, the consul general Lyuba and the imperial envoy in Beijing Korostovets even resorted to the warnings about the possible refuse of the Russian government to provide any support to Mongols. Upon the consultations with the Foreign Ministry, they promoted the idea of the agreement which would legalize the Mongolia’s autonomous status and prohibit Han colonization, deployment of the Chinese troops and operation of the Chinese authorities in Mongolia.

To fulfill the responsible mission of the elaborating the terms of the Mongolian autonomy, the Russian government sent to Urga the special official Ivan Korostovets, the former Russian envoy to Beijing<sup>62</sup>. Along with the consulate general headed by Viktor Lyuba, he drove the hard bargain with the Mongolian government. The consular staff took up all the translation and consultation work, the communication with the Bogd Gegen’s court and other local authorities and the preparation of the draft text of the agreement<sup>63</sup>. The negotiations were held at the Russian consulate. After the talks started, the Mongolian ministers found unacceptable the whole set of the Russian initiatives on the document, especially those related to the used terminology. To speed up the progress, the Russian negotiators even made the terminological concessions to the Mongolian partners. For instance, at their request, the diplomats agreed to replace the term “Outer Mongolia” with the word "Mongolia" in the text<sup>64</sup>. At the same time, the Russian consul succeeded to influence the Mongolian stand by making the Urga government withdraw influential Da Lama, the chairman of the Council of Ministers and an ardent supporter of Mongolian independence, from the negotiation process<sup>65</sup>.

Finally, on October 21 (November 3), 1912 the painstaking work of the Russian diplomats and their Mongolian counterparts finished. The the texts of the bilateral agreement and the supplement to it were approved. The Urga government agreed to temporarily recognize Mongolia autonomy under suzerainty of China<sup>66</sup>. These documents gave start to the “open door” policy for the Russians in Mongolia, who were granted broad rights and economic privileges. In its turn, Russia pledged to continue the support of Mongolia and recognized unacceptable the penetration of Chinese authorities and military troops to its territory as well as the colonization of this land.

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<sup>62</sup> See: Korostovets I. “Devyat' mesyatsev v Mongolii. Dnevnik russkogo upolnomochennogo v Urge I.Ya. Korostovets. Avgust 1912 - may 1913 g.”, *Rossiyanе v Azii*, Part. 1, Issue 1, pp. 133–249, Part 2, Issue 2, pp. 85–213, 1996, Part 3, pp. 225–292.

<sup>63</sup> AVPRI, Coll. 143, Inv. 491, F. 566, p. 90.

<sup>64</sup> Opt. cit., pp. 107-111.

<sup>65</sup> Belov E.A. 1999, *Rossiya i Mongoliya*, p. 82.

<sup>66</sup> *Russko-kitayskie otnosheniya, 1689–1916. Ofitsial'nye dokumenty*, pp. 122-126.

The signing of this document actually gave Russia the legal basis to influence the Chinese-Mongolian conflict in Western Mongolia. By that time, the conflict in the Khovd and Altai regions had acquired a violent form and endangered the regional security and the future of the Russian trade<sup>67</sup>. The Russian consuls requested to increase the Cossack contingent for the consular guards in Uliastai and Kobdo and to send there a division of the Verkhneudinsk regiment. The Urga consulate assisted in the preparation of this division to the dislocation in Western Mongolia<sup>68</sup>.

The Mongolian ministers were dissatisfied with the results of their agreement with Russia. Even in early 1913 they still fostered a hope that the country would reach the independent status in the nearest future and persisted in requesting Russia's support. In the summer 1913, the status of the Russian consular general was upgraded to the diplomatic agent, and the Russian representative acquired more political authority. Until the signing of the Kyakhta agreement in June 1915 Mongolia virtually remained a self-governing polity under the "supervision" of Russia. In fact, the consul general became the main consultant of the Bogd Gegen's government on the issues of internal policy, financial management, relations with China and in other fields as soon as the Mongolian elites did not have enough experience in state administration and diplomacy<sup>69</sup>. The consulate kept explaining to the Mongolian ministers that the autonomy and the Russian support were the factors of survival of the country before it was ready to become an independent state.

Along with the maintaining a close contact with the Mongolian authorities, the consul general Lyuba carried on the work related to the technical aid to the Urga government. He discussed with the Head of the Far Eastern Department of the Foreign Ministry the Mongols' requests to provide them the weapons. In September 1912, he managed to obtain a permission of the Russian Ministry of War to send 6 thousand rifles, 3 million cartridges, 2 thousand sabres and a few cannons. The Russian government instructed the consul to ensure that these weapons would be employed for no other purpose except the protection of Khalkha from the Chinese aggression. The Mongols were as well obliged not to purchase foreign weapons<sup>70</sup>. During the Korostovets' stay in Urga the Russian party signed the one-year agreement concerning the providing to the Bodgo-gegen's government a group of the Russian military advisers<sup>71</sup>. Every year thereafter until 1917, such agreements were concluded with the Mongolian party. Mongols' military preponderance and the progress of the Pan-Mongolist movement would have destabilizing and probably irreversible consequences for the regional status quo Russia.

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<sup>67</sup> Moiseev V.A. Op. cit., p. 278.

<sup>68</sup> AVPRI, Coll. 143, Inv. 491, F. 566, pp. 152–153 back.

<sup>69</sup> Paine S.C.M. Opt. cit., p. 290.

<sup>70</sup> Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya v epokhu imperializma, Ser. 2, Vol. 20, Part 2, p. 303.

<sup>71</sup> Khishigt N. 2001, "Mongolo-rossiyskoe sotrudnichestvo v voennoy oblasti (1911–1916 gg.)", pp. 31–42.

However, with the rise of popularity of the “Great Mongolia” ideas, the control of the use of weapons became a difficult mission.

The consulate general played a big role in negotiating the financial assistance to the Bogd Gegen’s government with the Russian ministries. On insistence of the consul, in 1913-1914 the Russian government granted three large loans to Urga and the consul was assigned to conduct the expenditure control. The purposes of these loans of 100 thousand, 2 million and 3 million rubles were to support the structural economic and administrative reforms in the Mongolia and organization of the army<sup>72</sup>. In reality, inappropriate expenditures of funds were rather widespread in the Mongolian government, and the large sums were spent on purchase of the luxury items for the Khutukhtu’s court. The consuls often emphasized in their reports the necessity of introducing the systematic monitoring of the Mongolia governmental expenditures and the assistance in the state budget planning. In 1914, the special financial advisor Kozin was sent on mission to Urga and along with the consul supervised the Mongolian government’s spending. The special attention was paid to the prevention of the weapons purchase which helped the Russian officials to take under control the use of the granted funds for the liberation struggle Inner Mongolia and other unauthorized purposes<sup>73</sup>.

The Republic of China did not recognize the Russian-Mongolian agreement and continued the struggle for Kobdo and Altai regions in Western Mongolia. In the autumn of 1912 the Beijing government sent the military troops to Altai. In November 1912, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Sazonov offered a "mutually acceptable decision" of the "Mongol problem". He suggested signing of the Russian-Chinese agreement on the autonomy of Outer Mongolia with the consideration of the terms of the 1912 Russian-Mongolian agreement.

One of the main roles in the preparation of this agreement was played by the consulate general in Urga which is extensively reflected in the historical documents. First of all, the consulate officials made a great contribution to the intelligence work, observing the sentiments of the Mongolian elites, ensuring the fulfillment of the Russian-Mongolian agreement and detecting Beijing’s spies in Khalkha<sup>74</sup>. They had to prevent the attempts of some ministers to conduct the separate negotiations with Yuan Shikai or to find allies in China and Russia to struggle for the creation of “Great Mongolia”. For instance, the consulate succeeded to intercept the letter of the Sain-Noyon-Khan Namnansuren to the emperor of Japan<sup>75</sup>. The joint efforts of the consulate general and the vice-consulate in Hailar helped to deter Da Lama from travelling to Japan in search of support to the Mongolian independence.

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<sup>72</sup> Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya v epokhu imperializma, Ser. 2, Vol. 20, Part 2, p. 245; Korostovets I. 2004, Ot Chingiskhana do Sovetskoy Respubliki, pp. 230, 239–240.

<sup>73</sup> Startsev A.V. 2003, Russkaya trgovlya v Mongolii, p. 101-102.

<sup>74</sup> Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya v epokhu imperializma. Ser. 2, Vol. 20, Part 2, p. 238.

<sup>75</sup> Belov E.A. 1999, Rossiya i Mongoliya, p. 113-114.

The Russian diplomats' arduous negotiations with Beijing resulted in signing of the Russian-Chinese declaration on October 23 (November 5), 1913. The document formalized Russia's recognition of China's suzerainty over Mongolia, and China recognized the autonomy of Outer Mongolia. The parties agreed not to interfere in the internal affairs of Mongolia, not to colonize it and not to dispatch any forces to this territory<sup>76</sup>. China also agreed to refrain from establishing the military and civilian authorities in this country. According to the special note, Saint-Petersburg and Beijing were obliged to coordinate the positions towards the territorial and political issues related to Mongolia<sup>77</sup>.

The reaction of the Bogd Gegen's government to the signing of the declaration was very negative. Some ministers expressed rather hostile opinions concerning the Russia's secret actions and noted that "It is better to have no independence than to stand in the middle of the road"<sup>78</sup>. In fact, they neither realistically estimated the regional international setting and the Mongolia's place in it, nor the configuration of Russian-Chinese relations at that moment. Despite the dissatisfaction of the Mongolian elites, the declaration of 1913 proved to be the next step to the recognition of country's autonomy.

## **5. The liberation movement in Western Mongolia and the Russian consulates**

The consulates in Uliastai, Khovd and Sharasume played an important role in the preventing a full-scale conflict in Western Mongolia and finding a modus vivendi in the Mongolian-Chinese relations. While Beijing, Urga and Saint-Petersburg negotiated the fate of Outer Mongolia, the Chinese government took actions to suppress the activities of the rebels in the northwestern periphery of the former Qing Empire. Beijing's attempts to preserve its influence in Western Mongolia encountered the opposition of the population. The local rulers addressed the Russian officials with the request to help them to unite under the rule of Urga. As soon as Khovd and Altai regions were ethnically and geographically close to Khalkha and constituted a "buffer zone" between Russia and China, the Russian Foreign Ministry found it significant to render possible help to the rulers of this part of Mongolia. The Russian consul in Khovd and Sharasume Mikhail Kuzminsky made a considerable contribution in defending the interests of both Russia and Mongolia in the intense dispute between China and Mongolia<sup>79</sup>. The

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<sup>76</sup> Myasnikov V.S., ed. 2004, *Russko-kitayskie dogovorno-pravovye akty*, pp. 420–426.

<sup>77</sup> Moiseev V.A. *Op. cit.*, p. 285.

<sup>78</sup> Belov E.A. 1999, *Rossiya i Mongoliya*, p. 111.

<sup>79</sup> Sizova A.A. 2015, *Konsul'skaya sluzhba Rossii v Mongolii (1861–1917)*, Moscow, Nauka – Vostochnaya literatura. p. 131-135.

consul in Uliastai Alexander Valter, in his turn, played an important role in the maintaining security and political stability in Uliastai region and its post-conflict restoration<sup>80</sup>.

The consul Kuzminskiy became a mediator at the Chinese-Mongolian talks in the period of the siege and destruction of the fortress in Khovd in 1912<sup>81</sup>. The diplomat even got wounded on his way to the fortress for the negotiations<sup>82</sup>. After the Mongols took the stronghold by storm on August 20, 1912, the Khovd consulate sheltered 675 Chinese people, including the soldiers and organized the massive and technically complex evacuation of them to China through the Russian Altai (Kosh-Agach and Biysk)<sup>83</sup>. Kuzminskiy's efforts to resolve the Mongolian-Chinese conflict peacefully helped to prevent the attack of the Chinese forces on Khovd in the in the autumn of 1912. Anticipating the revenge of the military governor of Xinjiang Yang Zengxin the consul asked the Russian Foreign Ministry to increase the consulate's guard in Khovd with a limited contingent of the Siberian Cossacks. This security measure played the considerable role in maintaining the military balance in the region in the period of the Khovd's struggle with the Chinese at the end of 1912 and early 1913<sup>84</sup>.

The Russian consul in Khovd and Sharasume put a great effort to the coordination of the positions and plans of the leaders of the liberation struggle in Western Mongolia who were rather often disorganized. The Mongols were set to continue the struggle in the spring 1913 while the Russian diplomats anticipating the trend of a protracted conflict increased the pressure on Beijing to stop the military actions in the region<sup>85</sup>. The humane act of evacuation of the Chinese citizens, the Russian protection measures toward Western Mongolia, and the great powers' pressure softened Yuan Shikai's position in the question concerning the Khovd's status and demarcation in the northwestern part of Mongolia. In early January, 1913 Beijing broke off the offensive in Northwestern Mongolia and entered the negotiations with Russia.

In Altai district, the fierce battles between the Mongolian and Chinese forces continued until the summer 1913. The Chinese government sent the Dungan forces to this region in the autumn 1912, and the struggle brought the numerous casualties and the considerable damage to the economic development of the region. At the direction of the Russian Foreign Ministry Mikhail Kuzminsky brought the opposing sides to the negotiation table and elaborated the terms of the armistice with the governor of Altai region Palta Wang<sup>86</sup>. In the course of the intensification of the conflict in Altai district, the bringing of the artillery and infantry units of

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<sup>80</sup> Sizova A.A. Op. cit., pp. 130-131, 140-142.

<sup>81</sup> Burdukov A.V. Op. cit., pp. 77-84.

<sup>82</sup> AVPRI, Coll. 188. Inv. 761. F. 975. p. 7-9.

<sup>83</sup> Belov E.A. 1996, *Tsarskaya Rossiya i Zapadnaya Mongoliya*, p. 98; Khokhlov A.N. 2008, "Gumannaya aktsiya Rossii v otnoshenii naseleniya Kitaya i Mongolii v 1912 g.", *Voprosy istorii*, Issue 9, pp. 87-90.

<sup>84</sup> Moiseev V.A. Op. cit., p. 279.

<sup>85</sup> *Sbornik diplomaticheskikh dokumentov po mongol'skomu voprosu*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>86</sup> Moiseev V.A. Op. cit., p. 280.

the Verkhneudinsk regiment from Biysk to Sharasume in autumn 1913 at the request of the Russian consulates in Sharasume and Khovd was also one of the decisive factors of ceasing hostilities and further negotiations of the combatants.

Under the agreement of December 21, 1913 the military operations stopped in the Northwestern Mongolia. From the Russian side the agreement was signed by the consul Kuzminsky. The Chinese forces left the strategic point Tsagaan-Tunke, Khovd district was recognized a part of Outer Mongolia and there was drawn the temporary border line between the Chinese and Mongolian forces in Altai and Khovd districts<sup>87</sup>. When the temporary agreement expired in July, 1914, Mikhail Kuzminsky succeeded to reach understanding with the governor of Altai district Liu Changbing and the military governor of Xinjiang on the preserving of the borders of Khovd and Altai regions without changes<sup>88</sup>.

Although Altai region remained under suzerainty of China, this document formalized the accession of Khovd region to Khalkha under the rule of Bogd Gegen. Later it was documented in the Trilateral Russian-Mongolian-Chinese agreement of Kyakhta (1915). With the start of the war in Europe in 1914 and the revolution events in Russian Empire the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not able to complete the work related to the final determination of the status of Altai. Later, the “Altai problem” was resolved in China’s favor. However, in the second half of 1910s the Russian influence in Altai region remained very significant.<sup>89</sup> Until the end of their duty as imperial consuls in 1917 the Russian diplomats contributed in promoting and enhancing the Russia’s influence in Uliastai, Khovd and Altai.

## **6. The role of the consul general at the trilateral negotiations in Kyakhta**

The Urga government’s discontent raised by the Russian-Mongolian declaration on the autonomy of Mongolia (1913) led to certain estrangement with Russia. The consular officials felt the growing distance in communication with the Bogd Gegen’s ministries, although Khutukhtu himself never lost his hopes for Russia and his friendly attitude to the Russian representatives. However, the Mongolian authorities continued their attempts to conclude a separate peace agreement with Beijing and a certain number of the Mongolian senior officials discussed a return to China as a possible option. In these circumstances, the consular officials gave the significant input to the improving of the Russia’s image in the eyes of the Mongols and maintaining the constructive relations with the Urga government. In August 1913, the Mongolian authorities concealed from the new Russian consulate general and diplomatic agent Alexander Miller the Beijing’s telegram inviting to start the negotiations. When the diplomat exposed these actions of

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<sup>87</sup> Myasnikov V.S., ed. 2004, *Russko-kitayskie dogovorno-pravovye akty*, pp. 413-415.

<sup>88</sup> Moiseev V.A. *Op. cit.*, p. 290.

<sup>89</sup> Belov E.A. *Tsarskaya Rossiya i Zapadnaya Mongoliya*, pp. 102-103.

the Mongolian counterparts, he used the considerable efforts to persuade the ministers Namnansuren and Handa-Dorji that the arrival of a Chinese representative to Urga for the secret talks conflicted with the Russian-Mongolian agreement of 1912 and the non-disclosure of such important information from their protectors contradicted with the principles of the parties' friendly communication<sup>90</sup>.

Deterring the secret talks between Urga and Beijing and the final legal formalizing of the Mongolia's autonomy and Russia's broad rights in this country became the principal diplomatic goals of the consul general Miller and the Russian envoy in Beijing Krupensky. The Bogd Gegen's government sought to conduct the open discussion of its independence with China. Russia was not interested in holding the trilateral talks on the "Mongol problem" as soon as all the terms of the Russia's relations with Mongolia and China had already been fixed in the previous documents of 1912 and 1913. However, to neutralize the Mongols' dissatisfaction with the declaration of 1913 and their attempts to conduct the separate talks with Beijing, the idea of the trilateral conference was realized. The conference opened in the Russian border town Kyakhta on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August, 1914 and finished on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May, 1915 with the signing of the tripartite Russian-Mongolian-Chinese agreement on the autonomy of Outer Mongolia<sup>91</sup>. The Treaty of Kyakhta became the final stage of the process of solving the Mongolian autonomy problem, but not the "Mongol issue" itself.

In Chinese historiography, the Kyakhta agreement is often described as an "aggressive" act of "military-feudal" Russia, and the behavior of the consul general at the talks is described as "offensive". Historian Liu Cunkuan writes: "... Russia fiercely threatened and pressured China, acted rudely and unceremoniously and violated the given words... and it finished the negotiations only after the unconditional acceptance of its unreasonable demands by China"<sup>92</sup>. The historian Huo Hanwen remarks that after the signing of the Kyakhta agreement Mongolia became a "semi-dependent state under the Russian protectorate"<sup>93</sup>. The interpretation of the Russian actions in terms of satisfaction of its aggressive interests, isolation of Mongolia and transformation of it into a protectorate are quite well-spread in the works of the Chinese authors<sup>94</sup>. In these works China is portrayed as a victim of the imperialist expansion, while Mongolia is represented as a separatist region which violated the sovereignty of China being directed by Russia. However, such estimation appears to be rather simplistic and tendentious.

From the political point of view, the conference in Kyakhta was a success of the Russian diplomats, first of all, the consular staff in Urga. The main role at the negotiations was played by

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<sup>90</sup> Belov E.A. 1999, *Rossiya i Mongoliya*, p. 117.

<sup>91</sup> Myasnikov V.S., ed. 2004, *Russko-kitayskie dogovorno-pravovye akty*, pp. 420-426.

<sup>92</sup> Liu Cunkuan. *Op. cit.*, p. 158.

<sup>93</sup> Tang P. *Op. cit.*, p. 340.

<sup>94</sup> Liu Cunkuan. *Op. cit.*, p. 161.



the consul general Alexander Miller. He became the head of the Russian delegation, which emphasizes the high profile and important role of the Russian consul in Mongolia as a diplomatic agent at that time. The conference was unique in many respects, but the most significant fact is that the Mongols who had been under the China's rule since 1691 took part in the talks with the Chinese as an equal party.

During almost 40 rounds of the intense talks in Kyakhta the Russian diplomats persisted to fulfill two main objectives. Firstly they tried to consolidate and moderate the polar positions of the Mongols and Chinese on the political status of Outer Mongolia<sup>95</sup>, taking in consideration the vital interests of the Russian Empire in the region. And secondly, it was necessary to confirm and formalize and in the enhanced rights and privileges acquired by Russia in Mongolia under the Russian-Mongolian declaration of 1912.

The delegation lead by the consul general Miller succeeded to defend the Russian variant of the draft agreement before the Mongolian and Chinese negotiators partners<sup>96</sup> and neutralized the Chinese party's attempts to narrow down the rights of the Bogd Gegen's government. The Russian delegation took a tough stance toward the colonization issues, the organization of the post service (urtons), the construction of the railways and telegraph, trade tariffs and other aspects of the Mongolia's relations with Russia and China. The Russian party even had to interrupt the negotiations when the dispute over the trade tariffs (on the foreign goods imported into Khalkha) reached a deadlock. The critical colonization issue was also solved in favor of the Mongols. The territory between Outer and Inner Mongolia was provided to the Mongols and the colonizing it by the Chinese was prohibited. The Inner Mongols who participated in the liberation struggle were granted amnesty.

In many respects, the Russian position on the final version of the trilateral agreement proved to be decisive. In addition, at the Kyakhta conference, on September 17, 1914, Miller succeeded to sign with the Urga representatives the agreement concerning the construction of the railway in Mongolia and its junction with the Russian railway, in spite of the heated discussions with the Mongolian party and the Chinese representatives' attempts to interfere in this matter. Another bilateral agreement related to the construction of the telegraph network in Mongolia from the station Mondy to Uliastai<sup>97</sup>. Thus, the trilateral agreement of Kyakhta confirmed and even enhanced Russia's trade and economic benefits in Mongolia.

The Mongolian autonomy formalized by the Kyakhta agreement lasted until 1919 when China abolished it. By the end of 1917, due to the dramatic events related to the world war and revolutionary events in Russia, the consulates' influence on the political processes in Mongolia

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<sup>95</sup> Korostovets I. 2004, *Ot Chingiskhana do Sovetskoy Respubliki*, pp. 401–404.

<sup>96</sup> Paine S.C.M. *Op. cit.*, p. 299.

<sup>97</sup> Myasnikov V.S., ed. 2004, *Rusko-kitayskie dogovorno-pravovye akty*, pp. 566–569.

gradually decreased and eventually faded. However, even after the Russian revolution in October 1917, the diplomats stayed at their posts and sought to protect the interests of compatriots in Mongolia until 1920.

The important contribution of the Russian diplomatic agent in Kyakhta was the strenuous and consistent efforts to defend Mongolia's autonomy. The multiple discussions in the governmental and diplomatic circles concerning the future of Mongolia and the ways of Russian cooperation with the Mongolian side are reflected in the documents. The diplomats, including the Russian envoy in Beijing Krupensky, realized the possible consequences of the total Chinese domination in the country and at the same time they understood that in the existing political setting Mongolia would not survive as an independent state. The difficulties that Russia experienced in that period due to the entering the war in Europe predetermined the shift of the Foreign Ministry's focus from the Mongolian issue, so it was critical for Russia to preserve a balance in the relations with its East Asian neighbors. The autonomous status of Mongolia was considered to be the best form of Mongolia and China's coexistence which would not ruin the peace in the regional system of international relations, and the Russian negotiators gave a visible input to save it. At the same time, signing the agreement was also favourable for the Republic of China since it formally retained Outer Mongolia under its rule and prevented the spread of the Pan-Mongolist movement in other regions. For Mongolia, this agreement marked the beginning of a new period in its history – the period of the broad autonomy.

## **7. Conclusion**

To sum up, it should be noted that in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the period of 1911-1915, the Russian consulates had a significant influence on the political processes in Mongolia. The consulates in Mongolia had an active political role to play in the years of the Mongols' liberation movement and assisted the Urga government in its quest for autonomy. During the period under study, the consular network of Russia constantly developed, with the increasing number of the consulates and improving of the status of institutions. With the broad powers, constantly being in the formal and informal interaction with the local elites and the administration on all levels, they were deeply integrated into the regional political life.

Being the representatives of the influential Russian Tsar they used major effort to put the self-announced Mongolian government off track when pursuing independence from China and helped Mongolia to legalize its autonomy. Achieving the autonomy was an important step in the development of Mongolian statehood and the extremely difficult diplomatic compromise between Russia, Mongolia and China. The imperial consulates took part in the elaboration of the important international agreements which guaranteed the Mongolian autonomy during 1912-

1915. The skilful diplomatic work on the “Mongol problem” ended with the signing of the tri-party agreement of Kyakhta in 1915 which formalized Mongolia’s autonomous status and confirmed a wide range of economic advantages granted to Russia under the Russian-Mongolian agreement of 1912. With the Russia’s support, at the Kyakhta conference, Mongolia for the first time after several centuries negotiated with the Chinese on the equal terms, which significantly increased its political status and strengthened its position in relations with China.

At the same time the Russian consulates in Urga and Western Mongolia took part in settling the Mongolia-China disputes in Khovd and Altai regions. Equally, these institutions played a crucial role in limiting the Pan-Mongolist movement and sought to limit foreign influence in the region which endangered not only national security of Mongolia, but also regional security.

The professional and consistent diplomatic efforts of the consular representatives in Urga, Uliastai, Sharasume and Khovd helped to reduce China’s pressure on the national political process in Mongolia, stimulated the development of the country, and establishment of its political and economic institutions. After Mongolia declared independence in 1911, the consular officials did the major work in the field of the organization of the Russian technical and financial help to the Mongolian government and the local rulers. The Bogd Gegen government members and local administrations received the diplomats’ significant assistance in mastering public administration, civil service and economic management skills. The Russian diplomats intensified this work after the Chinese representatives returned to Mongolia under the Kyakhta agreement of 1915. Until the end of their stay in Mongolia, the Russian consulates worked for the maintenance of the political and strategic status quo in the region and protection of the Mongolia’s national identity.

In spite of the numerous difficulties faced by the diplomats, during this period the institute of Russian consulates in Mongolia succeeded to provide the reliable protection of the political and strategic interests of the Russian Empire and made a significant contribution to the strengthening of the Russia’s influence in Mongolia. Also, the consular officials in Urga, Uliastai, Khovd and Sharasume were the key regulators of the Russian-Mongolian-Chinese relations. Their strenuous work and initiatives were significant for the maintenance of the multi-factor equilibrium in the Russian-Chinese cooperation, regional security and the balance in the international system of Northeast Asia.

As it follows from the analysis, the Russian imperial consulates became the powerful protectors of Russian political interests in Mongolia and the Russian international prestige at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the circumstances of the Mongolian national liberation movement, they were also deeply involved in the political processes in the country and provided

the comprehensive support to Mongolia in its pursuit of self-determination. The consular officers introduced the numerous initiatives regarding the improvement of the political, economic and social life and the modernization of this country. Their active diplomatic work had as well a positive impact on the maintaining of the constructive relations with China and also the balance of power and the international status quo in Northeast Asia. At the same time, with support of the Russian diplomats, Mongolia in the early 1910s succeeded in obtaining its autonomous status in China and made the first steps on the road to statehood.

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